

The Mayor's Office

David A. Wood, Mayor



Mayor David A. Wood

Mishawaka's government continues to set an example that I believe serves as a model in our region. Our brand of local government remains open, honest, friendly, personal and accessible to all of our citizens. That is not only my expectation for how this government (or any) should operate, but it is a direct reflection of the citizens that call the Princess City home. We never lose sight of the fact that the Mayor's office, Council Chambers, City Hall or any City facilities belong to the citizens of Mishawaka. Likewise, I constantly remind our 550 staff members that they work for our citizens, not a Mayor or department head. Our citizens place a great deal of trust in their public servants and it is that trust that we strive to uphold.

It is our duty to provide essential services to our 50,000 citizens and that is a job we take very seriously. It is my expectation that the services we provide will be the best that they can be. We also strive to treat each citizen with a professional, customer-service friendly attitude. This is not only my expectation, it is our mission. Since that is my expectation for the whole of City Government, the Mayor's office will first lead by example. My Assistant, Lou Ann Hazan and office receptionist, Marie Macri set the tone for our office with their friendly, sincere and helpful demeanor. We are here to help by answering questions and concerns honestly and directing citizens to the proper department to make sure that residents get the proper service that they deserve. We are here to serve. We take pride in serving; after all, it is the *Mishawaka way*.

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One of the many virtues of living in Mishawaka is that progress is constant. We adapt to changing times, yet we hold fast to unchanging principles. These principles are best described in our mission statement: *Working together to build the "Best Hometown in America"*.

It continues to be the highest honor of my life to serve as Mayor of Mishawaka. One of the blessings of the job is that no two days are the same. There were some very notable events that occurred in 2012. Here are a few that my office was involved in:

“Fighting Irish” Street Re-naming Ceremony Brings Together Two Communities

A Season-long celebration of Notre Dame Football brought together the Cities of Mishawaka and South Bend. Mayor Dave Wood and Mayor Pete Buttigieg agreed to participate in two street re-naming ceremonies to recognize and celebrate the 125th year

of Notre Dame Football. Commemorative banners, in honor of the 125th Anniversary celebration, adorned North Main Street in Mishawaka leading to the new “Fighting Irish Drive” location. This was the first time a street name change was coordinated to take place in both South Bend and Mishawaka at the same time.



The street name change unveiling took place at Main and Douglas where a short stretch of Douglas Road was renamed “Fighting Irish Drive”. Mayor Wood and Rob DeCleene, Executive Director of Visit South Bend Mishawaka, and representatives from Notre Dame’s athletic office were on hand to witness the unveiling of the sign designed and constructed by Mishawaka’s Central Services Division.

Mayor’s Youth Advisory Council

The Mayor’s Office continued its youth initiatives in 2012. Mayor Wood is involved in numerous projects and activities with the youth in our community and the Mayor’s Youth Advisory Council continues to be a strong, active and ever-growing initiative.



The 2012-13 year marks the 9th year of the Mayor’s Youth Council. The Youth Council had six members graduate from their group, therefore, Mishawaka High School, Marian High School and Penn High School were contacted to let them know that recommendations were being taken for new members. A record number of nominations were received and applications were sent to all. After reading through and selecting new members, acceptance letters were sent to those nominees and the total membership in the Youth Council is at an all-time high of 30. The group includes 17 students from

Mishawaka High, 8 students from Marian, and 5 students from Penn. Students must be between the age of 14 and 18 and live in the City of Mishawaka.



The 2012-2013 Mayor's Youth Council began with an "Old Fashion Picnic" at the Mayor's house. This enabled them to meet each other, get acquainted, and learn the goals and agenda for the coming year. They also were given a compilation of the "Youth Council Important Issues" taken from their applications. This list would be used in deciding the topics for their Leadership Projects which will be due at the end of the year.

The group held an election at the September meeting and selected their 2012-13 officers: President, Mitchell Hixenbaugh, Vice-President, Madeline Landgrebe, Secretary, Gina Spalding and Treasurer, Nick Shide. Field Trips were chosen for the year, meeting dates and volunteer initiatives were discussed and voted upon. The year started with the planning of the 2nd Annual Thanksgiving Food Drive for needy Mishawaka families. The Youth Council planned to feed 20 families (10 more than last year) but the need was so great, they ended up providing Thanksgiving Dinners for 30 Mishawaka families. The Mishawaka Food Pantry and Stone Soup Kitchen provided names of needy families. The Youth Council has also helped with the Relay for Life "Mishawalkers", Memorial Day Parade Ceremonies, Pre-School Trick or Treat event at Battell Center, the Tree lighting ceremony in downtown Mishawaka, the Main Jr. High Apartments ribbon cutting and Winterfest in our Hometown in Merrifield Park.

This Youth Council continues to grow and make a difference in our Community

This Youth Council continues to grow and make a difference in our Community. The contribution of their time, energy and ideas, while also being involved in many school activities, is an indication of the leadership qualities these students already possess. I look for great things to come from these Youth Council Members in the future.

Mishawaka and Shiojiri Celebrate 40-Year Sister City Anniversary

On Sunday, June 24, 2012, a delegation from the City of Mishawaka made the long journey to Shiojiri, Japan to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of our sister-city relationship. Brock Hundt, City of Mishawaka Building Commissioner, Charles and Yoko Lavelle, Don and Nancy Crawford along with their sons Matt and Steve were the official representatives for the City of Mishawaka. These dedicated citizens traveled at their own expense to further our important friendship.

The anniversary of our Sister-City relationship with the city of Shiojiri gives us cause to reflect on how much our community has been impacted by this experience. Perhaps the

best example is the establishment of our beautiful Japanese strolling garden, Shiojiri Niwa where the residents of Mishawaka are exposed to traditional Japanese gardening practices. According to Japanese tradition, these gardens create a tranquil, serene and peaceful environment which takes its visitors away from everyday life to a reflective communion with nature. Not only does this garden provide our residents with a calming atmosphere, but it also provides us with a lesson in diversity. Originally planted in 1976, this garden has created a “bridge to understanding” which is beautifully represented by the red bridge that is the focal point of the garden. This garden introduces the residents of Mishawaka a culture that is quite different from our own. If you have yet to experience our Japanese strolling garden, I strongly urge you to do so. It is one of Mishawaka’s treasures.



When asked to describe his trip to Japan, Brock Hundt said, “I had a hard time trying to put together a brief summary of my trip. My experience in Japan will be one that I will never forget and to write only a few sentences really doesn’t do it justice. Sure the travel to get there was long and tiresome (approximately 36hrs) but to experience Japanese

culture and meeting new friends will be with me the rest of my life. I will always cherish the brief time I spent there and the people that showed me around. I do hope someday that I will be able to travel back and see the many friends that I made. Shiojiri, the Sister-City of Mishawaka, should definitely be on everyone’s travel bucket list.”

While the delegation was in Shiojiri, they attended a celebration that included gift exchanges. At that event, Mr. Hundt presented a sculpture, “The Buffalo” created for the occasion by local artist Bob Kuntz, to Mayor Oguchi, Council Members, and the Citizens of Shiojiri. The City of Mishawaka received some beautiful lacquer-ware wall decorations and Saki glasses which are special products made in the City of Shiojiri. If you are not familiar with the history of this relationship, Mishawaka has a Japanese room in its Hannah Lindahl Children’s Museum, several displays in the Mishawaka Public Library and previous gifts from Shiojiri along with a decorative Samurai warrior doll in City Hall.

Mishawaka Optimist Club Youth Appreciation Breakfast

The annual Mishawaka Optimist Club Youth Appreciation Breakfast took place April 18, 2012. As Mayor, I am honored to be part of this ceremony and also have the privilege of helping in the presentation of awards. This year's award recipients come from the four Mishawaka High Schools and are as follows:

First Baptist Christian School – Aubrey Nicks and Kimberly Post

Marian High School – Colleen Dalton and Michael McNamara

Mishawaka High School – T.J. Benner and Alison Zylstra

Penn High School – Abigail Downey and Vincent Sipocz

These young Mishawaka citizens live by the Optimist Creed and our community is proud of these students who take pride in themselves and their community, and give so much to others.

Princess Mammo-Waka

The City of Mishawaka was asked by Kate Voelker from RiverBend Cancer Services to participate in an annual fundraiser, “Bras Around the Bend”. Every year they ask different companies and businesses to “decorate a bra”. Well you can imagine the variety of entries - the South Bend Chocolate Factory even decorated a chocolate bra. Mayor Wood, of course, said that we would be happy to participate in this fund-raiser and he passed the task along to Lou Ann Hazen and Marie Macri. We could not decide on a theme and the Mayor suggested something to do with “Princess Mishawaka.” The creative vibes started flowing and together, we started to visualize different ideas for this bra. Mary Ellen Hazen and Linda Dotson from the Clerk’s Office put in their two-cents worth and a wonderful creation started to develop. Marie spent many long hours on this task and was single-handedly responsible for decorating the bra. The finished product was a success, but we



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couldn't think of a name. Tim Calderone, our IT Director, thought up the winning name - Princess Mammo-waka! Needless to say, the bra was a huge success and went for \$180.00. “That was one of the highest prices paid for a silent-auction bra”, according to Nancy from RiverBend Cancer Services. When Kate first saw the finished product she was very impressed and can't wait to see next year's entry.

Martin Luther King Drum Major Award for Community Service

On January 16, 2012, the 26th Annual Celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. began with the Community Service Recognition Breakfast at Century Center. During this breakfast, the recipients of the “Drum Major Award” for Community Service are recognized and announced by the Mayors of Mishawaka and South Bend. There were three awards given by the City of Mishawaka to distinguished citizens well-deserving of the honor.

Robert & Herta Johnston

Mr. & Mrs. Johnston have been volunteers at St. Joseph Regional Medical Center for the past eight years. Being the proud parents of three daughters and foster parents to 21 babies, their expertise with newborns over the course of their lives provided Bob & Herta with the necessary skills to spend every Tuesday morning at SJRMC caring for newborns. Since 2003, Bob & Herta have logged over 2,600 volunteer hours being “cuddlers” to babies. Mr. Johnston says the time spent with the newborns makes you feel good, like you are doing something useful in life.

Debra Ladyga-Block

Ms. Ladyga-Block was first elected as the Mishawaka City Clerk in 1992 and is serving her sixth term. Many of her proudest accomplishments have been through the Indiana League of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers where she has logged over 346 continuing education hours, served on various committees, chaired conferences and made life-long friendships. She is involved in her community by serving on various boards and commissions, and is a Team Leader for the American Cancer Society’s, “Making Strides Against Breast Cancer” Walk.

Michael Poole

Mr. Poole has spent much of his life educating and mentoring youth. In 1996, he was hired at The Montessori Academy, where he received additional training and became a teacher in 1998. For the past 15 years, Michael has not only served youth as a teacher, but he also volunteered his time on nights and weekends through a program he developed called “Positive Outlook”. Positive Outlook serves youth from third grade to high school using basketball to reach at-risk youth. This program is staffed by caring adults who demand academic achievement and a sense of personal responsibility.

The Arrival of Santa and the Annual Tree Lighting

A time-honored Mishawaka tradition marking the beginning of the Holiday Season is the arrival of Santa into Downtown, and the lighting of the Downtown Mishawaka Christmas Tree. This year, the tree lighting ceremony’s location was moved to the empty lot on the southeast side of the Main Street Bridge. This premiere location meant that you could see

the Christmas Tree for miles while traveling north or south on Main Street, and east or west on Mishawaka Avenue.

Sponsored by the Mishawaka Business Association and the Mayor's Office, luminaries decorated by Twin Branch students lined the four corners of Main and Church Street to light the way to the tree. This year the honor of "flipping the switch" was given to two



Mishawaka High School students who received State honors in their respective sports. Anna Rohrer, Gatorade's Indiana Girl's Cross Country Runner of the Year, and Sam Schrader, Gatorade's Indiana Football Player of the Year lit the tree. The two arrived in style atop the City's newest fire truck with sirens blaring and a Police escort. It was a mild November evening and hundreds of children and adults surrounded the tree waiting for the big event. The Treble Clef Singers, a new community children's choir, led the crowd in carols while awaiting the arrival of Santa. The Mayor's Youth Council served cookies, donated by Martin's Supermarkets, and hot chocolate, donated by Coffel Vending. Santa, the Mayor, and guests of honor arrived and the countdown began.....three, two, one.... the switch was flipped, and over 10,000 lights adorned the massive tree.

*... you could see the
Christmas Tree for miles*

Our Town

WNIT presented a unique opportunity to all residents of Mishawaka to create an hour-long documentary featuring the City of Mishawaka. Mayor Wood called upon our citizens to participate in this project.

WNIT, our local public broadcasting station, had approached the City to take part in a project called “Our Town”. The concept of the program would be a positive look at Mishawaka through the eyes of its citizens. We asked for the citizens of Mishawaka to consider becoming volunteer videographers to help tell the great story of the Princess City. The volunteers were asked to create a video scrapbook of stories that make Mishawaka special. They could develop and complete a project individually, or form a small team to create a segment. They not only shot the video, but were also asked to do an interview as a narrative to the video that they produced. All videos and productions were edited by WNIT for inclusion in the final broadcast. Around 15 different stories were included in the program. WNIT suggested that the program content should include historical sites, landmarks, hang-outs, churches and colleges, etc. WNIT also conducted a free videography class to train the amateur volunteer videographers in the basics of shot composition.

On Thursday, June 28th, a meeting was held at Battell Center for all interested videographers, and approximately 35 people showed up to express their interest and “pitch” their ideas for the program’s content. Many interesting ideas (about 22) were presented, from Princess Mishawaka, to the changes on Grape Road over the last 40 years. For the next few weeks citizens were seen around the City of Mishawaka taping different sights and landmarks. All of the volunteers turned in their videos to WNIT for editing and met to be interviewed and give a narrative to the documentary that they filmed. Finally, the project was completed by WNIT and a Premiere event for the videographers and their families was held in the Battell Center Auditorium on Thursday, August 16th. Broadcast day was August 19th and the videographers answered phones in the WNIT studios while taking pledges from callers watching the broadcast. Videos of Our Town Mishawaka can still be obtained by contacting WNIT and making a pledge to the radio station.

Proclamations

The Mayor’s Office honors and recognizes many citizens and groups in the Mishawaka Community each year with 2012 being no exception. Throughout the year, many noteworthy people and organizations were “officially proclaimed” by Mayor Wood. Following are many of the Proclamations that were made:

- **Arbor Day Celebration – 4/25/12**
Honoring the special day set aside for planting trees
- **National Senior Health & Fitness Day – 5/30/12**
Honoring the common goal to keep older Americans healthy & fit
- **40th Anniversary of the Sister City Relationship between Shiojiri, Nagano, Japan and Mishawaka, Indiana, USA – 6/24/12**
- **St. Joseph Visiting Nurse Association Home Care Day – 8/27/12**
Celebrating 110 years of providing home care services to Michiana

Proclamations (cont.)

- **International Day of Peace – 9/21/12**
Devoted to commemorating and strengthening the ideals of peace among all nations and peoples
- **Marian Knights Girls Soccer Team Day – 10/30/12**
Honoring them for their 2012 Class 1-A State Championship
- **Alzheimer’s Disease Awareness Month – 11/8/12**
To recognize individuals and families affected by this devastating disease
- **St. Paul’s Episcopal Church 175th Anniversary Day – 11/11/12**
To recognize this Mishawaka Church on the day of their 175th Anniversary
- **Bethel College Campus Store Day – 12/3/12**
Honoring the expansion of the place of spirited connections and gatherings for the campus and community
- **John Moore Day – 12/5/12**
Honoring the founder of the Mishawaka High School Alumni Group
- **Anna Rohrer National Champion Day – 12/10/12**
Honoring her many Cross Country accomplishments including becoming the Footlocker Cross Country National Champion