

Mayor's Office

Lou Ann Hazen, Administrative Assistant

Although the Mayor's Office is responsible for executive and administrative matters concerning the City, the Office also performs community services and recognizes members of the community who are exceptional and contribute to making Mishawaka strong. The following are highlights of significant happenings in 2014.

Martin Luther King Drum Major Award for Community Service

On January 20, 2014, the Drum Major for Community Service Awards were presented during the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Service Recognition Breakfast. These awards are presented to individuals who unselfishly give their time and resources to help improve St. Joseph County. The award's title represents a famous sermon Dr. King preached on February 4, 1968 about the importance of community service and love for all humanity. Following are the City of Mishawaka recipients who were presented the award by Mayor Dave Wood:

Larry & Judy Garatoni

Larry & Judy Garatoni have made a significant impact throughout the St. Joseph County community including the City of Mishawaka. Their passion for education has led to noteworthy accomplishments in the development, funding and founding of the South Bend Career Academy, a career-focused middle and high school with free tuition which serves all of St. Joseph County. The Academy opened its doors in August 2011. The impact of Judy and Larry's work and gifts to the community is far reaching as well. From skilled students graduating from the South Bend Career Academy to the substantial philanthropic support of many institutions that provide basic necessities and education opportunities, Larry and Judy have truly made St. Joseph County a better place to live.

Mike Hayes

A Mishawaka native, Mike Hayes is Director of the Mishawaka Food Pantry. As Director, Mike coordinates the provision of over 100,000 meals and the distribution of clothing to over 20,000 people on an annual basis. Mike's other community accomplishments include Penn Township Trustee for eight years, member of the Indiana Township Association, Solid Waste Management District Board, Mishawaka Lions Club, St. Joseph County Step Ahead Council and St. Joseph County Youth Development Commission. In 2005 Mike received the Indiana Township Trustee of the Year Award. Mike was also a firefighter and paramedic for the City of Mishawaka for 21 years. Mike has stated that "all of his adult life he has been a public servant and over time he has realized that is all he truly wants to be."

Marcia Wells

Marcia loves to give back to the Mishawaka community. Her many positions include the Penn Harris Library Board, Mishawaka Lions Club and the St. Joseph Catholic Church. Marcia is a positive person with a bright smile and a caring heart. She was President of the Mishawaka Lion's Club from 2008-2009 and she will serve again as President in 2014-2015. She co-chairs the annual flower sale and has received the Melvin Jones Fellowship Award. Marcia also assists her husband, Chris, with the daily operation of the Goethals & Wells Funeral Home. She started

and handles the annual Christmas ornament program for the benefit of families in the Mishawaka community. She has also been instrumental in caring for families at their time of loss through running the Aftercare Program. Marcia also serves as a Eucharistic Minister delivering food to the needy as part of the St. Vincent DePaul Society.

Mayor's Youth Council

The 2014 Mayor's Youth Council started out their year, Mishawaka Strong. This year's group was made up of 23 students, 9 from Marian High School and 14 from Mishawaka High School and began the year with a Fiesta in the Park. Their Swearing-in Ceremony was in the City of Mishawaka Council Chambers where all members took their official Oath of Office. Elections were held in September for the Youth Council Officers. Elected officers were:

Haley Wood	President
Zach Lytle	Vice-President
Nick Shide	Treasurer
Maria Tordi	Secretary

The Mayor's Youth Council volunteered for many community activities. The Youth Council's biggest community service project, the Thanksgiving Food Drive, was a great success. Their goal was to provide complete Thanksgiving Dinners to 40 Mishawaka families, but the need was so great this year that they were asked to provide 50. Twenty-five recipient families were selected by the Mishawaka Food Pantry, ten by Stone Soup Kitchen, and fifteen by HealthLine.



Mayor's Youth Council 2014

In January, Leadership Project teams were randomly chosen and these students knew they would have to work together for the next five months on leadership presentations. During this time, they also visited City departments to learn more about their local government departments in action. City Engineer, Gary West, made a presentation on the intricate workings of our city, both underground and along the streets, and Community Development Coordinator, Dave Thomas, presented

his Department's capabilities. They visited the Wastewater Treatment Facility in May, participated in Relay for Life, helped with the Survive Alive 30th Anniversary celebration.

The Youth Council also presented Leadership Projects to City managers Ken Prince, City Planner, Dave Thomas, Community Development Director and Terry Zeller, Parks Superintendent. The projects were ranked according to the potential for their solutions to be implemented, their overall presentation skill and their creativity. Based on these criteria, the top three teams were:

- 1st Place—Group 4: Evan Frasz, Anna Rohrer, Maria Tordi, and Mary Kate Mattimore - The judges felt this group had a multitude of ideas related to public recreation for youth. They had a very interactive and inclusive approach to their presentation and were very knowledgeable on their subject matter.
- 2nd Place—Group 6: Zach Lytle, Michael Voelker, and Haley Wood - This group promoted the development of a smartphone application to solve both a problem with paper use citywide and to expand the City’s online presence to connect with the public. This group was clear in their purpose, had done their research on the topic, and provided a very realistic solution that could be implemented in the near future for the City.
- 3rd Place—Group 5: Nick Shide, Jacob Rivers, Nick Pingel, and Hunter Wiczorek - This group had a very organized presentation and provided a lot of data on ways to improve safety citywide, from increased lighting in neighborhoods, Park Watch programs to curb vandalism and improper public space behavior. They seemed very engaged in their subject and solutions and offered great feedback to questions.

All groups did a very good job overall, and it was difficult to rank them. They all had great proposals and ideas for solutions to many problems we face as City employees on a daily basis.

This Youth Council was busy throughout the year volunteering at many City of Mishawaka events while maintaining their extracurricular activities at school and their above-average high school grades. We are proud to call our members of the Youth Council, “world-class” students that balance an extremely busy schedule and yet take time to give back to their community and its citizens.



Their final field trip was in June at the Lineman Training Facility to see just what these electrical linemen do. They wore their gear, ran some of their equipment and learned how to climb utility poles. We invited some previous Youth Council members, home on break from their first year of college, to share their college experience with the group. Sam Schrader, Mitch Hixenbaugh, Gina Portolese and Madeline Landgrebe attended to tell of their first-year college experiences and

share and give advice. These Youth Council members continue to give back and make a difference in their community. The future of Mishawaka is bright with these young adults!

Mishawaka Business Association Annual Meeting & Dinner

On Thursday, February 20, 2014, the Mishawaka Business Association held their annual Meeting and Dinner to honor a Mishawaka Business and Person of the Year. This year's dinner took place at Windsor Park in Mishawaka and Gary Sieber of WNDU was the emcee. Karen Barnett, President/CEO of Valley Screen Process of Mishawaka was the keynote speaker. Karen is very active in the community, serving on several non-profit boards with a focus on advocating for women in business and underserved women.

This year's Business of the Year was the Beiger Mansion. The Beiger Mansion has been the cornerstone of historical downtown Mishawaka for over 100 years. The Mansion has served as an ambassador for Mishawaka drawing visitors and guests from coast to coast as well as abroad, and has received numerous awards from national magazines and writers. Congratulations to Ron Montandon and Dennis Slade, owners of the Beiger Mansion, on their award as MBA Business of the Year.

This year's Business Person of the Year, Stacy Vervynckt, is a Commercial Lines Specialist working out of the Mishawaka office of the McCarthy Insurance Group, with whom she has been associated since 2003. Stacy is a native of Mishawaka and a graduate of St. Bavo Grade School, Grissom Middle School, and Penn High School. Stacy is well-known throughout our Mishawaka Community and well-deserving of this coveted award.

The Mishawaka Business Association and its members are yet another example of Mishawaka Strong.

Welcome Home Vietnam Veteran's Day

March 30th marked the official Vietnam Veteran's Day in the City of Mishawaka and Mayor Wood, along with the local Chapter 1027 Vietnam Veterans of America, held a ceremony in the City of Mishawaka Council Chambers to honor these long-forgotten heroes of the Vietnam War. Mayor Wood and the City of Mishawaka were the first city in the State of Indiana to recognize this day as set forth by a resolution passed early in 2011 by the United States Senate. Since that date, other cities in Indiana have followed suit, proclaiming March 30th as Welcome Home Vietnam Veteran's Day. At this year's ceremony, Governor Mike Pence sent an official proclamation from the Indiana Governor's Office which was presented to the local chapter and read by Chapter Member, David Rothenhoefer. The ceremony was attended by local Vietnam veterans and their families, Congresswoman Jackie Walorski, Meredith Perks, a representative from Senator Joe Donnelly's Office and many other citizens wishing to pay tribute to these Vietnam Veterans. It is a date that these local veterans will remember Mayor Wood by, as he was instrumental in making this date official, not only in the City of Mishawaka, but in the State of Indiana as well.

Local Students Honored by Optimists Club

The Mishawaka Optimist Club has continued their yearly tradition and honored two students from each of the Mishawaka High Schools with the Youth Appreciation Award. This year's award breakfast was attended by Mayor Wood and he had the privilege of presenting these awards to the students. Following are the 2014 award recipients:

- **Marian High School** – Marissa Koscielski and Matthew Lesh
- **Mishawaka High School** – Carly Piatkowski and Joseph Sanchez
- **Penn High School** – Adam Battalio and Lindsey Daoust

Mishawaka Education Foundation – Mishawaka Strong with the Mishawaka Promise

The Mishawaka Education Foundation is a group of volunteers committed to the students of the School City of Mishawaka that was established in 1994. The founders recognized that public funding could not always provide for the kind of academic enrichment that encourages high achievement and excellence. Therefore, to meet this need, the Mishawaka Education Foundation was formed. The mission of the Mishawaka Education Foundation is to form community partnerships that enhance the overall educational environment for all School City of Mishawaka students by funding creative initiatives and unique educational opportunities. Since its inception nearly 20 years ago, the MEF has provided hundreds of thousands of dollars in grants to School City of Mishawaka teachers and students. While public school funding has limitations, the passion that MEF supporters have for education and its potential to reach students is unlimited.

The newest initiative, *The Mishawaka Promise*, is the MEF's most ambitious program yet and promises to be its most successful. The new initiative is to raise awareness and funding for Mishawaka public schools. The campaign's goal over five years is to raise \$2.5 million to use for classroom initiatives that will make School City of Mishawaka unique. At the MEF's 2nd annual Growing the Future Dinner, Mayor Wood announced that the City of Mishawaka would become a partner with the MEF on *The Mishawaka Promise*. The City pledged \$50,000 as a dollar for dollar match of any contribution up to \$50,000 and challenged the guests at the dinner, including many business and community leaders, to contribute to the worthy program. Spence Walton, grandson of former Mishawaka Mayor E. Spencer Walton, answered the challenge as his law firm, May Oberfell Lorber, also made a similar commitment.

It is import to note that the funds Mishawaka committed did not come from our taxpayer funded budget. These were gifted funds from the University of Notre Dame which made their commitment to local education even more relevant. The City committed these funds in part because of the well-publicized financial challenges facing School City and because we have great confidence in the MEF who will direct these dollars straight into the classroom to the benefit of Mishawaka students and teachers. The \$50,000 number is not arbitrary. We encourage every prominent Mishawaka business that is capable to donate an equal match and would also encourage those living in, or participating in School City to donate one dollar toward *The Mishawaka Promise*. This will quickly turn the original commitment to the Mishawaka Education Foundation into \$150,000! This will be a great start for *The Mishawaka Promise*, but more importantly, it would make a big difference in the education of our future leaders.

Christmas 2014

The arrival of Santa and the Tree Lighting Ceremony traditionally marks the beginning of the Christmas Season in the City of Mishawaka. The City of Mishawaka Mayor's Office along with



Tree Lighting Ceremony

the Mishawaka Business Association welcomed the arrival of Santa Claus on Friday, December 5, 2014 for the annual lighting of the City Christmas tree. The Christmas tree was found at the Sarah Street home of Chris Freitag who, along with his family, were honored guests at the ceremony. This year's Christmas tree was about 30 ft. tall, perfectly shaped and was placed on the Northeast lawn in front of the Mishawaka Police Department for our citizens to enjoy whether traveling North, South, East or West.

Christmas carols that evening were led by Mrs. Susan May and the Treble Clef Singers of Mishawaka, and the Mayor's Youth Advisory Council served hot chocolate and cookies which were donated by Coffel Vending and Martin's Supermarket. Santa arrived with the Mayor on a decorated Mishawaka fire truck and the tree lighting took place without a hitch.

The Friday night event led into a weekend of fun-filled festivities which continued on Saturday, December 6th in Merrifield Park. Mayor Dave and his Youth Council volunteered at this family-friendly, free event hosted by the Mishawaka Parks Department. The weather was mild that evening and a record number of Mishawaka families attended the event to be served hot chocolate, cookies and popcorn from the Mayor's Youth Council and enjoyed the many activities that were provided by the Mishawaka Parks Department.



Santa arrives

The Mishawaka Business Association sponsored the Christmas Coloring Contest for all kindergarten through sixth-graders in Mishawaka Schools. A coloring page was passed out to the schools and was also made available at the Winterfest Event. Hundreds of decorated pages were delivered to the Mayor's office for judging. The winner in each grade group received a \$50.00 gift certificate to Build-A-Bear, located in University Park Mall.

After much deliberation by Mayor Wood and his family, the following winners were chosen:

Kindergarten	Layten Anglemeyer	Emmons School
1st Grade	Maddie Dill	Mishawaka Catholic
2nd Grade	Lucas Simon	Beiger School
3rd Grade	Loralie Hensel	Hums School
4th Grade	Elizabeth Krueger	LaSalle School
5th Grade	Hope Ward	Liberty School
6th Grade	Isabella Kukla	Liberty School

2014 Mayoral Proclamations

The City of Mishawaka and its citizens call upon the Mayor’s Office to offer support when celebrating noteworthy dedications and events. This year has been no different and our office has officially proclaimed certain dates in our city to honor its businesses, employees, residents and events. 2014 seemed to be a “retirement year” in and around the City of Mishawaka.

Following are the Official Mayoral Proclamations celebrating the many retirements:

- Murray Winn, Laidig of Mishawaka – 1/4/2014
- Phil Fick, City of Mishawaka Code Enforcement – 3/28/2014
- Bruno Trimboli, City of Mishawaka Water – 3/21/2014
- Don Demeter, City of Mishawaka Wastewater – 3/21/2014
- Mike Watson, City of Mishawaka Street Commissioner – 3/31/2014
- Jim Garrett, Coach & Teacher, PHM Schools – 5/18/2014
- Miss Judy Nace, Teacher, First United Methodist Church – 5/22/2014
- Steve Govorko, PHM Teacher & Founder of Fire Safety Obstacle Course – 5/30/2014
- Carl A. Loesch, Marian High School Principal – 5/30/2014
- Ed and Kim Chamberlin, Teachers for Mishawaka Public Schools – 6/13/2014
- Bob Lux, WSBT – 6/30/2014
- Bonnie Bonham, City of Mishawaka HR Director – 7/31/2014
- Peg Strantz, City of Mishawaka Planning – 8/28/2014
- Rick Zeiff, Meijer of Mishawaka – 10/23/2014
- Marsha McClure, County Commissioner – 11/25/2014

Other notable Mayoral Proclamations included:

- Ross Portolese 90th Birthday – 2/5/2014
- Dot Wiekamp’s 100th Birthday – 3/15/2014
- Equal Pay Day – 3/19/2014
- Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day – 3/30/2014
- Arbor Day – 4/25/2014
- Worker’s Memorial Day – 4/28/2014
- Survive Alive Day – 5/14/2014
- Kappa, Kappa, Kappa Sorority Day – 6/6/2014

- Conn-Selmer Institute Day – 6/8/2014
- Olympic Day – 6/20/2014
- Albright’s Cycling 100th Anniversary – 6/21/2014
- MHS Class of 1964, 50th Class Reunion – 7/25/2014
- Beiger School PTA National School of Excellence Award – 9/12/2014
- 10th Anniversary of the Marine Mud Run – 9/13/2014
- Mental Illness Awareness Week – 10/7/2014

The City of Mishawaka is Debt-Free!

For the first time in over 100 years, the Princess City begins 2015 with no General Obligation Bond (GOB) debt after making our final payments in late December. GOB debt is particularly important because it is paid back with property tax revenue. We paid off our latest bonds, originally issued between 2005-2007 for \$12.3 million to finance various projects such as the City’s radio communication system and major park improvements, several years early.

Back in 2012, Mayor Wood announced one of the major initiatives of his administration: the ambitious goal of paying off our debt early and becoming debt-free as a means of insulating the City against unforeseen circumstances that cannot be anticipated such as economic downturns, emergencies, State funding source changes, etc. A debt-free status, though rare among our peers, is indicative of our fiscal responsibility. When you look at fiscal health, whether you are a country, state, or city, there are growing disparities between the haves and have-nots. Those with healthy budgets tend to trend healthier and those with a weak budget trend weaker. This only makes sense. As an individual, family, or businesses, what type of community do you want to live, work and invest in?

Our goal of paying off GOB debt is unusual as most cities in the State have GOB debt. According to the latest State report, there are 191 Indiana communities carrying debt that is paid back with property tax revenue. Close to home, the city of Chicago’s credit rating has been downgraded on fears that the city’s massive and growing unfunded liabilities threaten the city’s fiscal solvency. The city of Detroit’s well-publicized bankruptcy proceedings continue to generate news while also impacting their ability to provide even basic services to its residents. Here in Indiana, the city of Carmel has nearly \$1 billion in debt or roughly \$12,500 per citizen.

While becoming debt-free is a solid foundation for long-term financial health, we are not out of the woods yet. Further planning is necessary to weather the property tax caps reductions coming in 2019 that will once again reduce the City’s property tax revenue. Property tax reductions help out property owners, but continued cuts make it more difficult for local government to fund and provide the services you have come to expect. As we did in our mission to become debt-free, we will carefully plan and execute all steps necessary to remain financially sound for years to come while at the same time providing world-class service.

Being debt-free is good news on many fronts. Being debt-free is itself a calculated investment that will place the City in a favorable position not only to support our existing families and businesses, but will be an obvious indicator of our fiscal health for prospective investors. As the economy continues to improve, Mishawaka continues to be well-positioned to take advantage of our financial position and build our future on our past successes.

Our citizens will see benefits as well in the form of a modest property tax cut. On your tax bill you will no longer see a line item for Municipal Bond debt. At the rate of .0466/\$100 of assessed value, a home assessed at \$100,000 will see a tax reduction of \$46.60.



Debt-Free Celebration Cake

Getting there was not easy. Thanks to the help of then City Controller, Yvonne Milligan, we developed a plan to make extra payments from within our budget using only available funds while not going out for more credit or cutting existing services. Thanks also go to current City Controller, Rebecca Miller and First Deputy City Attorney, Larry Meteiver for processing the early debt payoff, and the Mishawaka City Council for approving the appropriations in the budget to allow for the early debt payoff. This initiative is yet another example of good people working together to accomplish extraordinary things. The Princess City is once again leading the way and is Mishawaka Strong.