

GREATER NILES  
Chamber of Commerce

# CHAMBER CURRENTS

A monthly newsletter from the Greater Niles Chamber of Commerce

## What is the Greater Niles Chamber of Commerce?

The Greater Niles Chamber of Commerce (“the Chamber”) was created to be an advocate for the business community, to promote and raise the profile of the community, and to drive economic growth in the service area. The Chamber was founded in 1919 by a group of Niles business owners and consists of more than 300-member businesses. The organization serves the communities of the City of Niles, Niles Charter Township, Bertrand Township, Buchanan, Galien, Three Oaks and Cass County. The Chamber three primary focus areas are economic development, business advocacy, and member services.



## 100th Anniversary Luncheon is May 14

Please join the Greater Niles Chamber of Commerce in their 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Luncheon and Awards Ceremony on Tuesday, May 14! This annual celebratory event is an opportunity to gather with fellow business professionals and community leaders to celebrate the greater Niles area. This year, the Greater Niles Chamber of Commerce is proud to present five awards: Business of the Year, Volunteer of the Year, Young Professional of the Year, Chamber Ambassador of the Year, and the Community Leadership Award.

If one is interested in supporting this event through sponsorship opportunities, please contact [Eileen Villanueva](#) at 269.683.1833

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## Michigan Increases Minimum Wage to \$9.45

Effective Friday, March 29, Michigan’s minimum wage is \$9.45 per hour. Additionally, as of Friday, March 29, businesses with more than 50 workers are required to offer one hour of paid medical leave for every 35 hours worked, regardless of the employee’s full or part-time status.

Over the past year, the topic of minimum wage rates in Michigan has seen fervent debate. Minimum wage is currently projected to continue its increase in yearly installments until reaching \$12.05-per-

hour in 2030.

This change was brought about by the Michigan Legislature after lawmakers removed this proposal from the November general election ballot and therefore retained their ability to amend and pass the proposal within legislature.

Below is a list of the projected minimum wage increase per year until the full amount is reached in 2030.

\$9.45 effective 3-29-19  
\$9.65 eff. 2020  
\$9.87 eff. 2021  
\$10.10 eff. 2022  
\$10.33 eff. 2023  
\$10.56 eff. 2024  
\$10.80 eff. 2025  
\$11.04 eff. 2026  
\$11.29 eff. 2027  
\$11.54 eff. 2028  
\$11.79 eff. 2029  
\$12.05 eff. 2030

Michigan is not the only state making strides towards higher wages, 18 additional states began this new year with higher minimum wages, including Alaska, Florida, Minnesota, Montana, New Jersey, Ohio, South Dakota, and Vermont. Michigan, along with Delaware, D.C., and Oregon are increasing their minimum wages during the 2019 calendar year.

At this time, the 90-day, \$4.25-per-hour rate for training newly hired employees, ages 16-19, will remain the same. Furthermore, overtime requirements will also remain the same.

A full list of exemptions for the Paid Medical Leave Act can be found [here](#).

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## The Chamber's Mission

**Serving businesses and our members by providing products, programs, and services that drive company and community growth**

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## Iron Shoe Distillery Opens its doors to Niles April 10



April 10 | 2:30-3:30 PM

Please join [Iron Shoe Distillery](#) and the Greater Niles Chamber of Commerce as we celebrate the grand opening of this new business on Wednesday, April 10 from 2:30 p.m. until 3:30 p.m. The long awaited business will be opening its doors at 3:00 p.m., marked with a commemorative ribbon cutting,

and will remain open until 10:00 p.m. that evening. Be sure to swing by and congratulate this awesome business on this achievement.

Additionally, there will be a grand opening celebration that will take place on Friday, April 12 from 5:00 p.m. until midnight, with drink specials all evening and live music from acoustic, folk singer/songwriter, Lexi Adams.

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## The Chamber's Vision

**To be a trusted source of information, an effective resource, and an influential advocate for the business community in the greater Niles area.**

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## Indiana-Michigan River Valley Trail

Niles Township, in conjunction with the state of Michigan, could possibly begin the construction of the final piece of the Indiana-Michigan River Valley Trail as early as this spring.

The completion of this path will produce a continuous 17-mile stretch from Niles to Mishawaka to be utilized by walkers, runners, and cyclists.

On Thursday, March 28, the Niles Township board approved a low bid of \$1.2 million from Anlaan Construction of Grand Haven, Michigan. To fund the project, the Michigan Department of Transportation will be attributing \$627,000, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources will be contributing \$300,000, and Niles Township will be providing \$284,000.

This project has been in the works for years and will hopefully come to fruition by the fall season of 2019.

The Michiana Area Council of Governments will be hosting pop-up events regarding the regional trail branding to be put into place upon completion of the path. Have your voice be heard by visiting Niles District Library on April 9 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. to discuss the trail's identity within our region.

If you are unable to attend, [click here](#) to fill out an online survey regarding the trail's brand.

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## Business After Hours

May 2 | 5:30-7:00 PM

Join the Greater Niles Chamber of Commerce and [Fernwood Botanical Garden](#) on Thursday, May 2 from 5:30 - 7:00 p.m. for the May Business After Hours. Relax and network after work with fellow business professionals and community leaders.

Refreshments will be provided, courtesy of United Federal Credit Union.

[Register](#)

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## Preliminary Approval Granted to Two Medical Marijuana Businesses in Niles

On Thursday, March 21, Grow Operations HDS and MichiCann, two medical marijuana businesses hoping to open within Niles, received preliminary approval from the Licensing and Regulatory Affairs Board.

Thursday's approval was a significant movement within the Niles business community as these were the first medical marijuana businesses to receive pre-approval in the area. However, this approval is not a guarantee for the businesses' success in opening in Niles. Both operations still need to complete building inspections and will need to obtain licenses from the state of Michigan.

Upon approval, HDS Investments has proposed an investment of \$1 million into facilities on the corner of 13<sup>th</sup> and Lake Street. This building would harbor a 1,500-plant grow operation under a Class C Grow license. Additionally, MichiCann will be looking at opening facilities within the city's industrial park under a Class A Grow license.

According to Michigan's Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, a Class A Grower's license allows for the capitalization amount of \$150,000 within the facility, while a Class C Grower's license requires the capitalization amount of \$500,000. This capitalization can be demonstrated through liquid or non-liquid assets.

This is a time of great change within the state of Michigan, and it is important to the Greater Niles Chamber of Commerce that our business community is armed with the information prevalent to our community's state of economy and business development. As the Chamber is representative of our business community, it is important that we hear from you regarding your thoughts on the changes in our area. Please click [here](#) to share your thoughts.

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## Welcome our New Members!

*Please give a warm welcome to Clean as Crystal and Iron Shoe Distillery, the Greater Niles Chamber of Commerce's newest members.*

**Clean as Crystal** is a small, family-owned and operated business, that takes special care when it comes to the detail and care of your home or business. Clean as Crystals strives to provide the healthiest and most sanitary environment possible. Clean as Crystal is licensed, bonded, and insured to provide our customers peace of mind.

[More Info](#)

**Iron Shoe Distillery** is a small batch distillery, cocktail bar, and restaurant, opening its doors to Niles, Michigan on Wednesday, April 10!

[More Info](#)

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