

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 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 380-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.

2019 City of Niles Fireworks Spectacular is July 3!

The 2019 City of Niles Fireworks Spectacular will be taking place on Wednesday, July 3! Join the Greater Niles Chamber of Commerce and the City of Niles in celebrating our nation's Independence Day with a family-friendly community event that features delicious concessions, face painting, and a stunning fireworks display!

Parking for the 2019 City of Niles Fireworks Spectacular will be held at the Four Flags Apple Festival grounds, the Ring Lardner parking lot, and the Niles High School parking lot. Gates will open at 6:00 p.m. and the show will take place at dusk (approximately 9:30 p.m.). A \$5 donation for parking is requested.

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

The Chamber's Mission

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

Berrien County Public Transportation

On Thursday, May 23 the Berrien County Board of Commissioners voted unanimously to begin a two-year pilot project to help solve Berrien County's public transit obstacles. The new pilot project will be effective January 1, 2020.

Over the past decade, individuals have been evaluating the needs of the local transportation system. An outcry from area community members has established that the current system is limited in service hours and in its service area. Four separate transportation entities within the area have been working independently of one another and with limited funding, leaving the transit climate in desperate need of change.

The transportation systems included in the discussions include Berrien Bus, Niles Dial-a-Ride, and Buchanan Dial-a-Ride. Berrien Bus has been the focus of this initial proposal. Without changes to the existing nature of the Berrien Bus, the service is projected to be broke in less than three years.

The two-year program was proposed by Transportation and Planning Coordinator for Berrien County, Evan Smith. This plan expands the services of Berrien Bus to include flex routes. Including flex routes means that buses with their regularly planned routes would be able to deviate to pick up riders from additional requested locations.

The plan intends to keep the same amount of buses in service and maintain the same ride fare. This plan will also cost an additional \$200k to the already existing costs of the system. \$100k will be provided by the county, while that other half will half to be matched by the Berrien Bus fund balance. However, this plan is not a permanent solution, and will require further evaluation in the coming years. Smith claims that the installation of the program will benefit riders by connecting the north and south county, as well as by providing much needed insights into the ailments of the transportation systems. The new program will collect information on essential funding and the demand of ridership.

The future goal for public transportation idealizes a transit system that reaches all areas of Berrien County, while also reaching Michigan City and South Bend.

At this time, Niles Dial-a-Ride will see no changes to their services but will be included in further evaluation as the pilot project continues.

Public transportation is a key element of developing sustainable communities. Effective transportation systems not only assist in lowering an area's per capita carbon footprint but heightening our quality of life by increasing accessibility to the job market and business community.

If one would like to contact Niles Dial-a-Ride for more information, please call [Kelly Getman-Dissette](tel:269.684.5150) at 269.684.5150. Additionally, if you or your business would like to get involved in the discussion of public transportation within Berrien County, please contact the Chamber by emailing info@greaternileschamber.com.

Meet Kathryn Humphrey

[Kathryn Humphrey](#) is the newest addition to the Greater Niles Chamber of Commerce! She and her husband moved to the Midwest from Texas where she served as executive director for Silsbee Chamber of Commerce for almost two years.

During her time in Silsbee she was selected for Leadership Southeast Texas and created one of the largest fundraisers which was a canoe and kayak race. Before this, Kathryn held roles in sales and customer service around the country.

Outside of work, Kathryn enjoys painting, listening to podcasts, and playing with her bichon poo, Wally.

Please join the Chamber in welcoming her to our team!



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.



Marijuana Industry Currents

New legislature has the marijuana industry looking to the greater Niles area. Regardless of one's stance, the results of the coming months will have a major impact on the local community and local economy. The two types of marijuana to become familiar with are recreational and medical. Both approvals and denials for both types will change our communities and impact business regulations in our area. Below are the current highlights as to what is happening within the Niles communities.

Niles City Council has opted into the sale of medical marijuana but is still in discussions as to whether or not the sale of recreational marijuana will be allowed within city limits. At this time, Niles City Council has granted several preapprovals to medical marijuana provisioning centers looking to open in the area. In January, Niles City Council voted to allow up to four provisioning centers to operate within the city limits. Three businesses have already been selected for fill these positions.

One of the most recent actions was approval for a growing and processing facility by [Green Stem, LLC](#). Green Stem, LLC from Orion Township has already been approved for a provisioning center, but is now also one of the first to be approved for a license by the city council to start growing and processing marijuana. Green Stem, LLC has their sights set on the previous building where Simplicity Pattern Company was once located on Wayne Street. There are several businesses that hope to snatch these licenses up, but there is still much discourse taking place regarding the intricacies of this new territory.

Additionally, this past week Niles Township voted strongly against the sale of recreational marijuana. This concern from leaders sparked controversy as this decision to opt out would affect the economic development in this area. In December of 2017, Niles Township also chose to opt-out of the sale of medical marijuana within the township. Some residents continue to urge the township trustees to revisit this topic, but no decisions have been made to change this ordinance.

In opposition, the City of Niles Planning Commission sees the potential of the marijuana industry in the business community and moved to approve several pro-marijuana agenda items last week. The biggest approval included supporting a medical marijuana land request which will allow a medical marijuana business known as HDS Investments to build a marijuana growing and processing facility. The next meeting on this topic will be June 10th at city council and will include voting on amending the zoning ordinance for greenhouses and recreational marijuana.

If one is interested in voicing their thoughts and opinions to the Niles City Council, please feel free to visit the Niles City Council Meeting on Monday, June 10 to speak during the Council's open forum. Additionally, the Chamber welcomes all members with any questions, comments, or concerns to contact the office at 269.683.1833 or info@greaternileschamber.com.



Business After Hours, Hosted by South Bend Cubs

June 4 | 6:00 PM

Four Winds Field

501 W. South St.
South Bend, IN 46601

Please join the Greater Niles Chamber of Commerce and the [South Bend Cubs](#) for the June Business After Hours! This event will take place at Four Winds Field, beginning at 6:00 p.m. and will provide an amazing opportunity to connect with fellow area business professionals and community leaders after work!

Registration will close on Monday, June 3 at 4:00 p.m.

Come for the networking, and stay for the game! The South Bend Cubs will be facing off against the Bowling Green Hot Rods.

The gates will open at 6:00 p.m., and the game will begin at 7:05 p.m. Watch the game from the esteemed Pepsi Stadium Club while enjoying appetizers and access to a cash bar!

Your ticket is included when you RSVP with the Chamber, but parking will cost \$7. (Guests may park in any lot except for Lot A)

Seats are limited! One must RSVP to receive their ticket! Visit the following link to reserve your ticket today!

Upon reserving a seat through the Chamber, one may pick up their ticket from the 1st Base Box Office on the day of the game!

Please contact [Eileen Villanueva](#) at 269.683.1833 with any questions.

Register



Eye Opener Breakfast, Hosted by The Morris Estate and 2C Construction

June 28 | 7:30-9:00 AM

The Supper Club by The Morris Estate
1245 S. 11th St.
Niles, MI 49120

On Friday, June 28, join the Greater Niles Chamber of Commerce, [The Morris Estate](#), and [2C Construction](#) for the June Eye Opener Breakfast. This event will be an opportunity to network before work with fellow business professionals and community leaders while enjoying breakfast with The Supper Club by The Morris Estate.

This event will take place from 7:30 a.m. until 9:00 a.m. at The Supper Club by The Morris Estate, 1245 S. 11th St., Niles, MI 49120.

Register

Welcome our New Members!

Please give a warm welcome to Schrams Self Defense and Casperson's Books and Art, the Greater Niles Chamber of Commerce's newest members.

Schrams Self Defense is a self-defense retailer that offers top of the line personal alarms, surveillance systems, security devices, and self-defense products such as mace pepper sprays, pepper foams, and pepper gels. Schrams Self Defense is in the business of keeping you and the community safe.

[More Info](#)

Casperson's Books and Art, established in 1964, offers a unique inventory that showcases rare and unique books, records, and collectible paper items from over 100 categories. As Casperson's Books and Art premieres in its brand-new location at 302 Broadway in Niles, the shop will also be featuring unique artwork and will look to offer a variety of art workshops to the community.

[More Info](#)

[Chamber Website](#)

[Chamber Facebook](#)

[Email Jeff](#)

[Email Kathryn](#)

[Email Eileen](#)

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