

# HarborCountry<sup>®</sup>

Chamber of Commerce



## 2023-2024

### ANNUAL RECAP REPORT

# PROMISING SYNERGY FOR HARBOR COUNTRY®

It is the role of the Harbor Country Chamber of Commerce to share the wonderful stories of our beloved Harbor Country area. Our organization propels forward on our mission to advocate for business and lead economic development efforts to make Harbor Country the premier place to stay, play, work, create, and make home. Our effort rides upon the strong shoulders of our Members who work hard to open the door each day, provide a living for employees and greet customers with a winning attitude.

I am proud and lucky to lead this group for seven years. It takes years to get good at something and get better. To be fully committed to our goals, Patty Knicker, my Executive Assistant was brought on board to collaborate with you and aid me. After 43 years, the Harbor Country Chamber continues to remain flexible in meeting challenges while maintaining a standard of excellence and staying true to its essence. The Chamber appreciates your trust in our efforts to explore new opportunities that can benefit all the people living and working here.

We dedicated the past year to discovering new technologies and expanding our digital influence. The private Member Facebook page and the LinkedIn Harbor Country business page were launched. The Harbor Country Guide evolved to include editorial content for a truly good read. The current guide will be present at the South Bend Boat Show and Chicago Travel Show.

We plan to pursue large impactful economic initiatives with local municipalities, broaden the Harbor Country® brand's influence, and leverage our state and regional tourism partners this coming year. Together with you, we will continue to attract visitors seeking thrills and those seeking peaceful repose while nurturing welcoming communities for our residents.

Thank you for being a part of our noble endeavor,

**Kimberlee Wendt**

Executive Director

Harbor Country® Chamber Of Commerce

**“Our organization propels forward on our mission to advocate for business and lead economic development efforts to make Harbor Country the premier place to stay, play, work, create, and make home.”**



**FIFTH THIRD  
BANK**

# PRESIDENT'S LETTER

What a year! We continued to see more people investing in Harbor Country and choosing this beautiful area to live in and start their small businesses. The fall season is always my favorite time of the year because I finally have the time to experience everything this area has to offer. Once again, I really enjoyed seeing our members at all of the summer Happy Hours that David McNabb and I hosted and the Chamber Mixers that Kimberlee and Patty did such a fantastic job of organizing. I've always believed in strength in numbers and the power of connected communities. When I attend, I always learn something new about a fellow business owner or neighbor. I look forward to spending more time with you in the upcoming year.

This past year went very smoothly because of our Members, our Staff, and our Board of Directors. A huge thank you to our dedicated staff Kimberlee, Patty, and Emily for their continued support of the Chamber and their creativity. It is felt in everything you do! And to our Board of Directors, I really enjoyed working together and getting to know you all. We are currently in search of new Directors. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me personally if you are interested. We would love to have you! This year concludes my second three-year term on the Board of Directors and my second year serving as President. I am happy to announce that David McNabb will be taking over as President when I step down. It's been a wonderful six years. I truly valued getting to know many of our members and their businesses.

Looking ahead, the Chamber is excited to host the member-exclusive Guide Reveal Party on April 18th. Harbor Country Guide ad sales are ongoing, please contact Kimberlee for more information.

I hope everyone has a fantastic Holiday Season. I look forward to seeing all of you at our December mixer at The Drawing Room in Three Oaks. Here's to another year of strong small businesses, community building, and continued success for all of you!

Sincerely,  
**Maggie Martin**  
President



## THE PIZZO GROUP



SPECIALTY COFFEE  
ROASTING COMPANY  
13933 RED ARROW HWY  
HARBERT, MICHIGAN  
@REDARROWROASTERS





# ANNUAL DINNER MEETING

Wednesday, October 18, 2023

5:30 pm - 8:00 pm, Tabor Hill Winery Estate Tent

## Program:

- 5:30 pm – 6:15 pm Social Hours - Cash Bar + Appetizers
- 6:15 pm – 7:15 pm Dinner Buffet
- 6:30 pm – 7:00 pm Annual Report, Announcements
- 7:00 pm – 7:15 pm Installation of Officers & Board of Directors
- 7:15 pm – 8:00 pm Member To Member Award Presentations

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### President

David McNabb - *Edward Jones*

### Vice-President

Jessica Nance - *Red Arrow Roasters*

### Treasurer

John Quackenbush - *Social Member*

### Secretary

Colleen Neubauer - *Social Member*

### Directors

Erika Milovich - *Bluefish Vacation Rentals*

Rachel Watkins - *Fifth Third Bank*

Justin Frederickson - *Gather All Day*

Bob Sima - *Ghost Isle Brewery*

### Special Recognition Of Service To The Chamber

Margaret Martin - *Mak Salon And Spa*  
(2 consecutive 3 year terms\*)

Jennifer Thompson - *Chikaming Open Lands*

(2 consecutive 3 year terms\*)

Kurt Hauseman - *Lake Home Realty And New Buffalo Inn And Spa\**

*\*Covid Era*

### Ambassador Committee

Chair: Karen Poff - *Horizon Bank*

Jan Tomecek

Mary Lou Johnson

Louise Valentin

Betty Scanlan

### Finance Committee

Dick Saurman - *Everwise Credit Union*

John Quackenbush - *Social Member*

Frank Tomecek - *Social Member*

Rick Scanlan - *Social Member*

### Marketing Committee

Kurt Hauseman - *Lake Home Realty*

Emily Hojara - *Social Media Manager*

Colleen Neubauer - *Social Member*

Cathi Rogers - *Fusion Design Group, Ltd*

Tim Rogers - *Fusion Design Group, Ltd*

Patty Knicker - *Executive Assistant*

Kimberlee Wendt - *Executive Director*

Hillary Stiffler - *Garden Grove Inn*

### Staff

Kimberlee Wendt - *Executive Director*

Patty Knicker - *Executive Assistant*

Emily Hojara - *Social Media Manager*

## HONORING HARBOR COUNTRY ANNUAL DINNER 2024

### Major Sponsors

Horizon Bank

Fifth Third Bank

Journeyman Distillery

New Buffalo Business Association

Tabor Hill Winery

### Annual Recap Report Sponsors

Everwise Credit Union

Red Arrow Roasters

The Antero Group

The Pizzo Group

WAUS 90.7 FM

*Thank you to our creative and talented Annual Dinner Task Force for making this evening possible*

### Centerpieces

Jennifer Baron, Home Love

Diane Wallenius, Vintage Goods

Colleen Neubauer, Board Director

Kimberlee Wendt, Harbor Country

Chamber of Commerce

Patty Knicker, Harbor Country

Chamber of Commerce

Karen Poff, Horizon Bank,

Ambassador Committee Chair

Jan Tomecek, Ambassador

Mary Lou Johnson, Ambassador

*Thank you to our creative and talented Annual Dinner Task Force for making this evening possible!*

# RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONIES

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Friends of New Troy Community Center -  
Digital Activities Room, New Troy  
Jackson Family Cycle, Three Oaks

Neighborhood Hotel, New Buffalo  
Neon Moon Gelato, Union Pier  
Villwock's Outdoor Living Greenhouse, Berrien Springs

## NEW MEMBERS

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### Current Membership - 413 Members

6 Linden LLC, Three Oaks  
Adams & Son, Inc. Heating & Cooling, Benton Harbor  
Aeon Hearing, Three Oaks  
Anion Blinds, Burns Harbor  
Armida Sopa - Home Stager, Lakeside  
Art Loft Studio and Gallery, New Buffalo  
Baird & Warner Residential, Orland Park  
Birdies, New Buffalo  
Cavvy Concierge, Benton Harbor  
Courtyard Gallery, Inc. New Buffalo  
CR Lawn Service, Baroda  
Craig Palmer @properties, New Buffalo  
Creative Landscaping & Design, St Joseph  
Dawn McKenna Group - Coldwell Banker Realty, New Buffalo  
Diane Giancaspro, Social Member  
Dunes Arts Foundation, Michiana Shores  
Eastern Standard Time, New Buffalo  
Far Out Fishin, New Buffalo  
Forge Electric & Construction, Sawyer  
Ghost Isle Brewery, New Buffalo  
Golden Muse Winery, Baroda  
Goods & Heroes, Three Oaks  
Harbor Country Property Management & Cleaning, Three Oaks  
Harbor Shores, Benton Harbor  
Hartley Botanic Greenhouses, New Buffalo  
Home Love, Stevensville  
Home Watch of Southwest Michigan, LLC, Saint Joseph  
Jackson Family Cycle, Three Oaks  
Jeffrey Lane, Social Member  
Joseph Stack-Coldwell Banker Realty, New Buffalo

Keith Claunch Realty, New Buffalo  
Kono Design & Build, Valparaiso  
Lakeside Goods, New Buffalo  
Luisa's Harbert Swedish Bakery & Market, Harbert  
Mara Walsh Peoples - Property, Sawyer  
May + October Seasonal Self-Care Planner, Valparaiso  
MC Doors, Michigan City  
Mikey's Drive-In, Bridgman  
Mix & Mingle, New Buffalo  
Monogram Centre, Bridgman  
Nature Therapy of Michiana, Benton Harbor  
Neon Moon Gelato, Union Pier  
Patricia Carpenter, Social Member  
Pool Tech LLC, Sodus  
Rainbows End, New Buffalo  
Robin Carroll, Social Member  
Roti Roti Art Center of Buchanan, Buchanan  
Seahawk Sport Fishing Charters, St Joseph  
Shady Creek Winery, Michigan City  
Shore - MI, New Buffalo  
Stephanie Polka- Coldwell Banker Realty, New Buffalo  
Sunset Dunes, Bridgman  
The Bottle Run, Dowagiac  
The Detail Guy, LLC, New Buffalo  
The Grace Effect, Baroda  
The Kid's Stop, New Buffalo  
Third Coast Vacations, New Buffalo  
Twisted Yogurt, New Buffalo  
Window Shopping, Sawyer  
Wintrust Mortgage- Bradley Martin, Franfort

**Congratulations!**

*Proud to support the Harbor  
Country Chamber of Commerce*



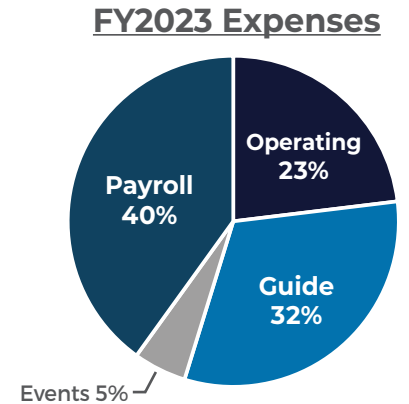
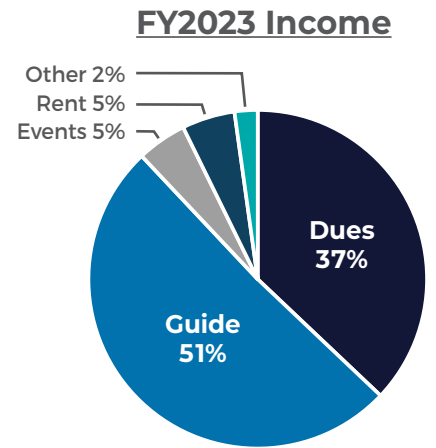
# CONTINUED GROWTH AND FINANCIAL SOUNDNESS

Membership dues and guide ad sales continued to rebound from pandemic lows. Rental income grew as the number of tenants in the Chamber building increased.

Guide costs continued to increase significantly due to higher paper and printing costs. Payroll expense increased year-over-year but remained below FY2018 and FY2019 levels. Operating costs decreased year-over-year as building repair and maintenance costs returned to normal levels. Net Operating Income came in slightly positive for the year at \$100.

Chamber finances remained sound due to the Operating Reserve Fund established during 2018–2019. As interest rates rose during 2023, the Operating Reserve Fund generated \$5,620 in interest income compared to a budgeted level of \$523. An objective third-party audit of FY2023 is underway to ensure that the Chamber’s financial statements are fair and accurate.

**John Quackenbush**  
Treasurer



# DIGITAL MARKETING YEARLY REPORT

The digital marketing efforts of the Chamber are accomplished by Emily and Patty. The membership and tourism communications have been divided for clearer messaging for our local businesses, year-round travelers and members. Looking ahead we will refresh logos and website presentations while collaborating under a cohesive theme.

## Facebook

Follows - 6.5K  
Posts - 2k  
Page views - 14k  
Comments - 810  
Impressions per post - 700  
Page likes - 16k

## Instagram

Followers - 4k  
Posts - 220  
Profile visits - 5K  
Mentions - 95

## HC Chamber Facebook Group

140 members

## Linked In

Re-established page in May  
Followers - 40  
Posts - 28  
Reactions - 128  
Reposts - 18  
Unique Impressions - 1,105



# HARBOR COUNTRY ANNUAL MEMBER AWARDS

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*Member-to-Member vote award. We applaud their efforts!*

## **MOST COMMUNITY MINDED BUSINESS**

Harbor Country Mission – 12816 Red Arrow Hwy, Sawyer Director of Operations: Dave Heyn

## **OUTSTANDING YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR**

Red Arrow Roasters - 13933 Red Arrow Hwy, Sawyer, Harbert Owner: Jessica Nance

## **LARGEST ECONOMIC IMPACT**

Journeyman Distillery - 109 Generations Dr, Three Oaks. Owners: Bill and Johanna Welter

## **MONTHLY NETWORKING**

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### **- Harbor Country Mixers**

ReMax Harbor Country/Sideyard, Sawyer  
Annual Dinner: Village of Grand Beach/Skip's Restaurant  
Local Pour, Sawyer  
A Drawing Room, Three Oaks  
Section House, Sawyer  
Ray and Al's, Galien  
Neighborhood Hotel Grand Beach  
Fernwood Botanical Gardens, Niles

### **- Harbor Country Happy Hour**

SideYard, Sawyer  
Timothy's, Union Pier  
Shady Creek Winery, Michigan City

### **- Harbor Country Guide Reveal Party**

Ghost Isle Brewery

## **BUILDING & TECHNOLOGY IMPROVEMENTS**

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- Established restroom designated Google map point
- Two new long-term tenants
- Daily room rental traffic increased

## **COMMUNITY EVENT PROMOTIONAL SUPPORT**

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- Art Attack
- St Mary's Festival - New Buffalo
- Summer concert series – New Buffalo Township, New Buffalo Harbor, Three Oaks
- Flag Day Celebration - Three Oaks
- Three Oaks Strolls Spring, Fall and Winter
- Fourth of July fireworks - City of New Buffalo beach
- Oaktoberfest – Three Oaks
- Harvest and Wine Festival - New Buffalo Business Association
- Farmers Markets - New Buffalo, Skip's European Market, Three Oaks Market
- Apple Cider Century
- Festival of Lights – Fernwood Botanical Gardens
- Holiday community observances

**Tabor  
Hill**

**Horizon  
Bank**

# Harbor Country Guide New Horizons



The vision for the 2022 Harbor Country Guide was to add inspirational content to support the Harbor Country® promotional brand message "Coast In". Bold modern graphics and striking photography was selected to bring the splendor of Harbor Country® to the forefront. Editorial interest was added with splashy member showcase stories to begin each section. The digital version features hyper-links that direct to member websites. Distribution began to Traverse City and Northwest IN and as always Michigan Welcome centers, South Bend airport, Notre Dame and Union Station. The publication serves as our member directory.

2023 Harbor Country® Guide member-exclusive ad sales are now open.  
[HarborCountry.org](https://www.HarborCountry.org) - Membership