

JANUARY 2024 NEWSLETTER



Mt. Zion EXPO & TASTE

Mt. Zion Convention Center
Saturday, March 16, 2024 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

February 2, 2024 Expo Early Bird Due Date

One of the Chamber's benefits is to participate in the annual Expo & Taste to showcase your business or organization. Last year's Expo & Taste was a great success! A great Expo is being planned again this year. We hope you will participate to display your products and services at this year's Mt. Zion Expo & Taste on Saturday, March 16, 2024 at the Mt. Zion Expo & Taste. We will have some St. Paddy and Easter themed events.

There are early-bird prices for sponsorships and booths. Information for all are in this newsletter or the PDFs can be downloaded from our website at <https://www.mtzionchamber.org/>
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President's Message

Shelly Coslow

Happy New Year.

Wow! I can't believe we are looking into 2024 already. What a great 2023 year we had in the Chamber and in the community. We were able to implement new events with increased community involvement. That's just awesome.

Moving on to 2024. A new year is an exciting time for many business owners. It marks another year to look at growth, personal development, and implement new goals. Let me ask you: Is one of your 2024 goals to grow your business? Then we encourage you to let the Mt. Zion Chamber be part of your 2024 business plan. Let's take those New Year Resolutions to the next level that builds the whole year long.

The Chamber is focused on helping business and the community grow. Let's look at some ways to prepare for the new year:

- Look at your growth strategy in your staff. Do you have the right people in the right seats? Do you have the right resources to develop current staff to lead to succeed?
- Do you need to bring on new employees? How will you implement that into your budget?

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UPCOMING

JANUARY 10th LUNCHEON

12:00-1:00

LOCATION

Fletcher Park Recreation Center

TOPIC

"How to Be a Great Director"

SPEAKER

Bruce Nims

Member cost \$15
RSVP by Tuesday, Jan. 9th

JANUARY 10th Ribbon Cutting & Business After Hours

Mt. Zion Peridontics
5-7 p.m.

JANUARY 25th Ribbon Cutting & Business After Hours

Mount Zion Health and Rehab
4-6 p.m.

FEBRUARY 14th LUNCHEON

Mt. Zion Fletcher Park
Recreation Center
Speaker: Ellen Hite



January Luncheon



Our speaker for the January 10, 2024 luncheon is Bruce Nims. The luncheon is at the Mt. Zion Fletcher Park Recreation Center and starts at 12 noon.

Bruce Nims will present "How to Be a Great Director". His presentation is a "Highlights Reel" of ideas on being an effective and valuable member of a Board of Directors. He will identify the key responsibilities of a Board, which all Board Members together must accomplish. Bruce will also clarify how each individual Board Member should approach their role, and the expectations they should be prepared to fulfill.

Bruce Nims serves as Entrepreneur-in-Residence and teaches an Entrepreneurship course at Millikin University. In addition, Nims offers consulting services and seminars for not-for-profit organizations and local businesses, with special emphasis on Leadership and effective Boards of Directors.

Come enjoy our speaker and Crawford's catering for lunch. Bring your business cards and network. If you have any information flyers you want to put on the luncheon tables before the luncheon begins, please do so but be sure to pick up any remaining flyers at the end of the luncheon.

The cost of the luncheon is \$15. Please send your RSVP's to mtzionchamber@gmail.com by Tuesday, January 9th or at www.mtzionchamber.org/events/meetings/reservations. If you have a prepaid luncheon, you still need to RSVP for each month's luncheon so that we have an accurate count of members attending.

2023-2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Shelly Costlow, President –
Decatur Earthmover Credit Union



Kim Rhodes, Vice President –
Physicians Choice Wellness



Kayla Marsh, Treasurer – Hickory
Point Bank & Trust



Ashley Batchelder, Secretary – Mt.
Zion District Library



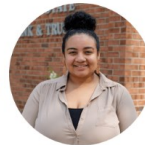
Allie Braden – Traditions Health



Danielle Diskey – Decatur Family
YMCA



Chad Hatayama – ApexNetwork
Physical Therapy



Ashley Hawkins – Prairie State
Bank & Trust



Doug Palmer – Synergy
HomeCare



Jay Woodrum – Peerless
Cleaning & Restoration



Linda Harper, Administrator – Mt.
Zion Chamber of Commerce



Dan McNeely, Outgoing Officer
Advisor – Dimond Bros.
Insurance, LLC



Member
Spotlight



The Mt. Zion Chamber of Commerce loves its member businesses and wants you to learn more about them by bringing you this month's Member Spotlight—JCG Midwest, Inc. Look no further for a family-owned supplier of drainage water management products. JCG Midwest is your local supplier for drainage pipe, concrete structures and septic products and services. Connect with them today at 217-423-5653 or visit them at 100 Green Valley Drive, Mount Zion, IL or JCGMidwest.com to learn more about their services. JCG Midwest – delivering more than just products.



President's Message continued from [page 1](#):

- Do you need to expand your building/space?
- Do you have the right advisors for your team: Board of Directors, CPA, attorney, financial adviser, financial institution, and insurance agency that understands your growth and financial plan to achieve the highest level of success for this year?
- Marketing – How are you promoting your business? How does the community know about your business?
- Giving back to the community. Are you teaming up with a non- for-profit agency? What is your 2024 goal?

How can the Mt. Zion Chamber assist you and your business in personal growth and professional growth? Here are some ways:

- Monthly luncheons – Great speakers focusing on professional and personal growth. Great networking opportunity to have conversations with other business owners and collaborate ideas.
- Volunteer on the Board
- Volunteer for the Ambassador program
- Volunteer at Fundraisers and Events
- Upcoming Events:
 - ♦ March 16 – 2024 Mt. Zion Business Expo and Taste
 - ♦ April 18 -- 2024 Awards Banquet
 - ♦ Many more in the planning

Let's grow your business and have great success in 2024 together!

Shelly Coslow
President

Welcome New Members



Big Hungry's Daylight Donuts is owned by Joshua Minnes and is located at 2890 Mt. Zion Road, Suite B, Decatur. You can come inside to buy your donuts that are made daily or come through their drive-up window. They have Classic, Deluxe, Specialty, and House Mix Donuts as well as Sausage Rolls, coffee, milk, water, and soda. Call 217-619-3391 to order.

2023 New Members

Big Hungry's Daylight Donuts
Brinkoetter Realtors—Jimmy Rade
Gentiva Hospice
Good Samaritan Inn
Heartland Bank and Trust
IQ Electric Inc.
JCG Midwest, Inc.
Kraft Concrete Inc.

Main Place Real Estate
MCCI Decatur
Mike Hall Auction Co.
Mt. Zion Periodontics
Storage Masters Mt. Zion
The SOLVR Group
Three Link Media
TWM Engineering & Geospatial Services



MOUNT ZION PERIODONTICS

Ribbon Cutting & Business After Hours
1465 E. Village Parkway
Mt. Zion, IL 62549
Wednesday, January 10, 2024
5-7 p.m.

Join us to celebrate this new business in Mt. Zion and congratulate Dr. Michelle Hickey on her new practice.

- Mix, mingle, and enjoy some refreshments
- Network & share your business cards



Ribbon Cutting, Business After Hours & Open House

Thursday, January 25, 2024 from 4-6 p.m.
1225 Woodland Drive
Mt. Zion, IL 62549

Join us to celebrate this new business in Mt. Zion.

- Mix, mingle, and enjoy refreshments
- Take a tour and enter the drawing
- Network & share your business cards



Prioritizing Top Trends in Small Business

So, you want to grow your business? But you have limited budget, time, and resources, right? That means you'll have to make choices about what to work on to maximize growth.

Here are the things you should concentrate on first:

The Digital Imperative

Small businesses can do big things. Technology is one of the great "levelizers" between big and small business. With the help of the right tech, small businesses with smaller staffs can do what previously was done by much larger companies. Look at your processes and see how they might align with the technology out there. You might be surprised how many efficiencies have been created since you last auditioned tech.

Growth Strategies

Commit to creating strategic methods behind your growth undertakings including:

1. **Holistic Digital Presence.** It's not just about having a website. You want a holistic digital presence across channels. Focus on creating a seamless online experience that includes social media engagement, a user-friendly website, and personalized content. This is no easy task but that's where you'll achieve the most growth.
2. **Data-Driven Decision-Making:** You need to do more than just collect it. Leverage data analytics to make informed decisions. Understand your customers' behavior, preferences, and pain points. A small business owner I know worked with a Facebook ad professional to design high-converting ads. The business owner provided him with images of her business and products. He then created three designs. One used her image and the two others he designed had *NOTHING* to do with her business. He chose pictures of the beach and sunflowers. This angered her. He told her it didn't matter what she liked but what her *audience* liked.

She was irritated with him until she saw the results. His ads with beaches or sunflowers outperformed her "true to business" images every time, both in clicks and in conversions. She couldn't argue with results. To this day she can't quite understand why people preferred images so far removed from her business, but those ads sold products. And that's what she wanted.

Community Engagement

You won't grow without support—personally and professionally. Actively engage with your local community through events, partnerships, chamber membership, and social initiatives. This not only strengthens your brand but also fosters a sense of loyalty among customers. If they know you, and see you around town being a part of the community, they'll want to support you even when you're not the lowest price or the quickest delivery.

Balancing Growth and Sustainability

While business growth is what everyone is after (at least from the perspective of keeping the doors open), sustainability and [eco-friendly practices](#) are becoming more and more important to customers, particularly those under 30. Adopt practices that reduce your environmental impact. Easy ways to do that include embracing eco-friendly packaging, reducing waste, and exploring renewable energy options. (Solar panels are much more affordable than they once were and there may be tax credits for e-vehicles.) Communicating these efforts to customers can enhance brand credibility and influences how they feel about you and your company.

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Prioritizing Top Trends in Small Business continued from [page 7](#):

Adaptability and Exploration

Adaptability is crucial for small businesses. Keep an eye on emerging technologies, industry trends, and consumer behavior. Regularly assess and update your strategies to ensure they remain relevant and effective. Stay curious and embrace a growth mindset about continual improvement.

[Christina Metcalf](#) is a writer/ghostwriter who believes in the power of story.

2024 Mt. Zion Expo & Taste continued from [page 1](#)

[events](#). We **rolled back** the prices last year for Early Bird prices on the Gold and Silver Sponsorships as well as an individual booth; and we are keeping the prices the same this year. The due date to order and pay the Early Bird Price is February 2, 2024.

The committee has been working on putting on a great Expo & Taste. We are going to have a Golden Candy Coin Hunt, coloring contest, the Golden Ticket Expo game that was introduced last year that the exhibitors liked because it achieves more meaningful engagement between the attendees and the exhibitors, Irish Celtic music by the Broken Brogue, martial arts demo, MTZ drumline, and more.... The Taste is always a great attendance drawer too for attendees to sample the local food. The Taste contract is in this newsletter and on our website. Taste vendors only have to be a member; they do not pay a fee to have a booth.

In addition to our Gold and Silver sponsorships, we are also looking for the following Extra Sponsorships:

- Golden Candy Coin Hunt Sponsor \$250
- Expo Game Sponsor \$250
- Photobooth Sponsor \$250
- Coloring Contest Sponsor \$250
- Stage Shows Sponsor \$250

If you also order a Gold or Silver sponsorship, \$50 will be reduced for each Extra Sponsorship. Each Extra Sponsorship above will receive signage at the Expo and social media promotion of their sponsorship. (

Spaces fill up quickly so get your spot soon.

You won't want to miss this fun 2024 Expo & Taste. Email mtzionilchamber@gmail.com. The Expo sponsorships, Booth contract, and the Taste contract are included in this newsletter on [pages 9-11](#).

2024—2026 Board Nominations

If any member is interested in serving on the Mt. Zion Chamber of Commerce Board for 2024-2026, email mtzionilchamber.org by January 12, 2024. The Board ballot election for the two-year term June 1, 2024 - May 31, 2026 will be at the March 13, 2024 luncheon. Here is some information about being a Mt. Zion Chamber of Commerce Board member:

- Agree to serve a two-year term with the possibility of serving an additional two-year consecutive term (pending the chamber member's vote).
- Represent the Chamber within the community.
- Agree to attend monthly hour long Board meetings the Tuesday after the Wednesday luncheon (second Wednesday) every month. If three consecutive meetings are missed, a replacement board member will be appointed to fill out the term of the absentee one.
- Agree to attend appointed committee meetings. Each Board member serves on at least one committee.
- Actively participate in the planning of fundraisers and faithfully attend Chamber sponsored events.



Expo and Taste

March 16, 2024

Gold or Silver Sponsorship Packages Due February 16, 2024
Early Bird Sponsorships & Booths Payment Due [February 2, 2024](#)

	Gold Sponsorship \$650	Silver Sponsorship \$400	Booth Space \$250/Early \$200 <i>Non Member: \$425/Early \$375</i>
Booth space	Two 8x8 booths Electricity included	8/8 booth Electricity available \$25	8/8 booth Electricity available \$25
Sponsor Promotion	Designated as Gold Sponsor at Event	Designated as Silver Sponsor at Event	
Sponsor publicity	Sponsor name announced at Event	Sponsor name announced at Event	
Sponsor Inclusion	Sponsor name and logo on all Expo communications.	Sponsor name and logo on Expo communications.	
Sponsor inclusion in Pre-Expo event advertisement	Sponsor logo on Expo flyer & newspaper ad. Sponsor logo on all Expo email and social media messages. Email blast your ad & on Chamber Facebook page.	Sponsor name on Expo flyer Email blast your ad	
Early Bird Pricing If registered and paid before Feb. 2, 2024	\$600	\$350	\$200 member \$375 non member

Business Name & Contact Name: _____

Gold: _____ Silver: _____ How Many Booths: _____ Electricity: _____

Email: mtzionilchamber@gmail.com

Mail Payment to: P.O. 84, Mt. Zion, IL 62549



Mt. Zion Chamber of Commerce 2024 EXPO Contract

Show Date: March 16, 2024 | 9:00 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Mt. Zion Convention Center

Set Up Date: March 15, 2024 | 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Booth Space: 8' x 8'

Fee: Early Bird Non-Member \$375 or Early Bird Member \$200 per booth space, if registered by Feb. 2, 2024.

After Feb. 2, 2024 booth space will be allocated on a first-come first-serve basis at

Non-Member Price of \$425 or Member Price \$250 Registration Form & Payment Due by Feb. 16, 2024.

(Non-member price for both Early Bird and non-Early Bird includes a free membership.)

- All Early Bird booth contracts and checks must be received by Feb. 2, 2024 to retain a discounted booth space.
- All exhibitors must restrict their exhibit to the business registered with the Mt. Zion Chamber of Commerce.
- All multiple businesses that are Chamber members, must register each business they wish to exhibit.
- Doors will be open for setup on Friday, March 15, 2024 at 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

All exhibitors are to be set up by 5:00 p.m.

- Exhibitors will park the day of the Expo to the immediate north & east of the Convention Center on March 16, 2024.
- Exhibitors will **NOT** remove their display before 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, March 16, 2024.
- Exhibitors will **NOT** sell any illegal items.
- Exhibitors will remove all trash, paper, boxes, tape, etc. from their space.
- Exhibitors will cooperate with all requests of show personnel.
- Exhibitors **MUST** keep display within confines of their space and not go into the aisles.
- The Mt. Zion Chamber of Commerce or the Mt. Zion Convention Center will not be held liable for any losses, damages or injuries sustained by exhibitors in any manner whatsoever.
- No refunds or credits for cancellations for any reason after February 16, 2024.
- Exhibitors will be supplied (1) table, (2) chairs, table cloth, pipe and drape on three sides.
You must supply extension cords and display accessories. Wall booth spaces are for booths that need electrical outlets.

Electrical Booth space will be available to those who pay the \$25.00 fee.

- Door prizes can be announced during the Expo. It is suggested that you arrange for door prize and sign-ups and/or drawings at your booth.
- All Chamber exhibitors must be a member in good standing at the time of the Expo with dues paid in full; the 2024 membership dues is due January 1, 2024.
- For questions or special requests, please call the Chamber at 217-864-2526.
- Make checks payable to: Mt. Zion Chamber of Commerce. Mail to: P.O. Box 84, Mt. Zion, IL 62549.

Return The Bottom Half With Your Payment

Business Name (Please Print) _____

Contact Person (Please Print) _____

Phone _____

Electricity: Yes _____ No _____ (110v)

Note: **There is an added \$25 charge for booth electricity. (\$25.00)**

Booth: Business _____ Taste _____ Electricity _____

Early Bird Non-Member \$375 or \$200 Member per booth price. After
Feb. 16, 2024, price for Non-Member \$425 or Member \$250 per booth.

Mail to:
Mt. Zion Chamber of Commerce
P.O. Box 84
Mt. Zion, IL 62549



2024 TASTE Contract

Do not miss this opportunity to serve one of your delicious entrees to the crowd of local residents attending the EXPO & TASTE on Saturday, March 16, 2024.

Setup is Saturday, March 16th from 9 A.M. to 10:30 A.M.

- NO CHARGE for Taste Booth for Chamber members – Booth size 8 x 8
- Serve time: 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
- Each booth provides a minimum of 200 single food servings for one ticket
- Each booth provides necessary serving items (extension cords, napkins, plates, forks, etc.)
- Taste tickets will be for sale the day of the event at the Mt. Zion Chamber Booth only in packs of 5 tickets for \$8
- **Vendors will be reimbursed \$1.00 for each ticket turned in by 2:00 p.m.**

If you would like to be part of the TASTE, please complete the attached reservation and return by mail: PO BOX 84, Mt. Zion, IL or email: mtzionchamber@gmail.com by **Feb. 16, 2024.**

BOOTH RESERVATION

Business Name: _____

Contact Person: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

December Photo Gallery

Bell Ringing December 5, 2023



Christmas Luncheon December 13, 2023



\$300 MZCC Shop Local Winner Marianne Stenger at Kenney's Ace Hardware on 12/18/23





MT. ZION
CHAMBER
of Commerce

