



the greater
BRIDGMAN
area chamber and growth alliance

2017 ANNUAL REPORT



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was made possible with the support of the Board of Directors of the Greater Bridgman Area Chamber of Commerce and Growth Alliance and the generous contributions from the

City of Bridgman and Lake Charter Township

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Staff

Calli Berg Executive Director
Peg Stine Bookkeeper

MEMBERSHIP PROFILE

- 143 Members (10% annual increase)
 - 131 Active Base / 12 Reciprocal
 - 21 New Members
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- Bethel Park Retreat Center
 - Capture Studios
 - Catania's 4th Generation Barbershop
 - Classic Communications
 - Damon Automotive
 - Doggie Bag
 - Farm Bureau Insurance
 - Grape and Grain Tours
 - Haymarket Brewery and Taproom
 - Hoof-to-Hanger Fiber Mill
 - Lazy Ballerina Winery
 - Ruoff Home Mortgage
 - Saint Joseph Orthodox Church
 - SLS Farms LLC
 - St. Julian Winery
 - Starbucks Blueberry Farm
 - Stonegate Landscaping
 - The Yoga House on Moon Acres
 - Tower Hill
 - Turfix
 - WNSN WQLQ Radio

Chamber Master and Website Development – In late 2016 we began the record conversion process to Chamber Master – a membership management software package designed to manage daily operations and streamline processes. 2017 was a building and learning year with Chamber Master, which also included a website upgrade for the CGA. Following the release of the new website, members were given the option to create **Member Information Centers** within our website and were given the flexibility to add **job openings to our website** and events to our **Events Calendar** upon completion of the redesign in 2017.

PROJECTS, PROGRAMS, PEOPLE, AND PLACES

Hotel Study –In 2016 the CGA contracted with HVS to provide a Hotel Market Feasibility Study which was completed in 2017. The study, which is available on our website along with a support letter from the Cook Nuclear Plant, indicates the greater Bridgman area can support a limited service 65-85 room property. A limited service hotel typically offers a breakfast dining area, workout room, indoor pool, fitness room, lobby workstation, sundries counter, guest laundry room, and vending areas. Armed with the study, the CGA is courting several hotel developers for the community.

Trail Planning – As interest in non-motorized pathways becomes a stronger demand for residents and visitors in southwest Michigan, the CGA has gotten involved with formal and informal organizations to explore the possibilities of connecting within and to the greater Bridgman area. The CGA has been involved in trail planning with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Warren Dunes, Weko Beach, Berrien County Road Commission, Southwest Michigan Planning Commission, and Friends of Chikaming.

Scholarships – The CGA went from giving out one \$500 scholarship in 2015 to giving three \$500 scholarships in 2016. In 2017, the CGA elected to broaden the impact of the \$1,500 scholarship money by awarding six \$250 scholarships for Bridgman High School students.

Involvements and Partnerships– the CGA participates on regional teams on many programs and initiatives and partners for collaboration, project management, and information and resource sharing.

- American Electric Power / Indiana Michigan Power
- Berrien County Community Development
- Blossomtime Queen’s Breakfast at Weko Beach
- Bridgman Public Library Strategic Planning
- Chamber Directors of Berrien County
- City of Bridgman Master Planning/Zoning Rewrite Processes
- Community Economic Development Strategies Committee
- Cornerstone Alliance
- Cornerstone Chamber Chief Elected Officials Council
- Cornerstone Chamber Networking Group
- Corridor Improvement Authority, City of Bridgman
- Economic Development Corporation of Berrien County
- Harbor Country Chamber of Commerce
- Kinexus/Michigan Works
- Landbank Authority of Berrien County
- Michigan Economic Developers Association
- Michigan Economic Development Corporation
- Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center
- Michigan Small Business Development Center
- Miss Michigan Outstanding Teen Open House
- Procurement Technical Assistance Center
- Real Estate Developer Community Tour
- Redevelopment Readiness Communities Best Practices
- Shoreline Hotel Association Annual Meeting
- Small Scale Development Seminar
- Southwest Michigan First
- Southwest Michigan Planning Commission
- Southwest Michigan Tourist Council
- Strategic Leadership Council - Best Practices Committee
- TwinCats – Berrien County Transportation Planning

Events – The CGA facilitated several events for membership or open to the public.

- Annual Meeting
- Haymarket Ribbon Cutting
- Yoga House Ribbon Cutting
- Visitors Guide Kickoff Party
- MTM Centre Work-in-progress Tour
- Hoof to Hanger Ribbon Cutting
- Lake Michigan Shore Wine Festival
- Supertour 360 Learning Breakfast
- Lazy Ballerina Ribbon Cutting
- Kendall Lucille Hair Co. Ribbon Cutting
- Lazy Ballerina Open House
- Weko Beach Brewers Festival

Holiday Village this was the first year that the street was closed for the event and it created a huge increase in attendance. We were able to measure the increased interest through our Facebook event, which was reached by 14,669 people, and measured the success of Holiday Village 2017 by these indicators:

- 150 goodie bags shared by Kendell Lucille Hair Company
- 120 candy canes given out by Santa and Mrs. Claus
- 200 Bags of popcorn handed out by Edgewater Bank (ran out!)
- 250 hot dogs given out by Rocheforts (ran out!)
- 85 Alphabet Soups shared by Friends of the Library (ran out!)
- 90 ornaments made at China Café
- 2 dogs adopted (and more interest raised during the event)
- 26 large cheese pizzas given out by Lake Street Eats

PR & MARKETING

Social Media – We continue to use Facebook as our top social media tool, adding 225 posts resulting in 150 new ‘likes’ – a 14% increase – bringing our fan base to 1,066 at year end.

Print – To remain diversified in our message, we also invested in several print marketing opportunities including advertising in the Miss Michigan Program Book and the Southwest Michigan Symphony Orchestra Mendel Center Mainstage Program Book and we became an investing partner in the Bridgman Community Buzz (facilitated by Bridgman Public Schools), contributing three articles to the quarterly publication. We also enjoyed wide-spread press release coverage and event follow-up coverage from various media including the Harbor Country News, Moody on the Market, the radio stations of Midwest Family Broadcasting, ABC57, and the Herald Palladium.

Visual/Virtual – The CGA enjoyed two **ABC57 Interviews** – one about our 2017 Visitors Guide and Kick-off Party and one about the Hotel Study, and the CGA was also featured on one of WNIT’s **Economic Outlook** Programs focusing on the Lake Michigan Shore.

Visitor Centers - This year, Lake Charter Township joined our trio of visitor centers already located in Bridgman City Hall lobby, Weko Beach House, and the BP Amoco. All centers are stocked with CGA member marketing materials and community information.

Brochure Swap – The CGA continues to take advantage of membership with the Southwest Tourist Council to participate in the annual brochure swap, held each spring as an opportunity to share marketing materials with other member organization and bring back materials to stock our visitor centers.

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Attraction – The CGA maintains a site database with details on building and land sites that are for sale or lease. This database is used to respond to prospects and entice new development in the greater Bridgman area. Several buildings and land sites experienced changes in ownership and redevelopment that provides more opportunities for entrepreneurs to find desirable high-traffic locations (downtown), more industrial sites to present to prospects (manufacturing), and more greenfields and brownfields suitable for hotel development.

The greater Bridgman area continued to enjoy a surge in interest in 2017 and we fielded many entrepreneurial/small business-related prospects who are looking to open a coffee shop, bakery, distillery, and other assorted interests. The CGA also received many opportunities through the Michigan Economic Development Corporation to submit proposals for confidential manufacturing projects.

Retention and Expansion – the CGA actively works with area businesses in many capacities, from small business development to partnering on projects or events, with the goal of mitigating challenges that affect business health and providing tools to help companies grow.

Because of the strong job creation and multiplier factors, one of the key foundations of a strong economic development program is retention aimed at manufacturers and larger employers. In 2017 the CGA met with several target businesses, often in partnership with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation or the Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center:

- Apollo Seiko
- B&L Information Systems
- Eagle Technologies
- Great Lakes Stair and Case
- Industrial Fabrication
- Krueger Tool
- M&M Die Cast
- Sunset Tool

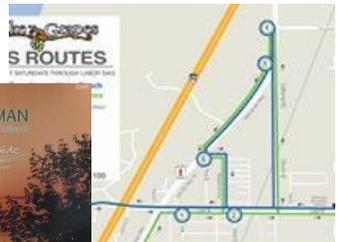
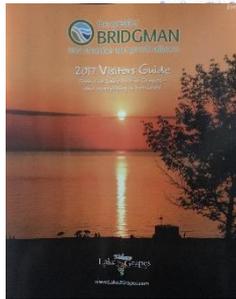
WAYFINDING

Bus Transportation – the CGA continues to be one of the few organizations/municipalities in Berrien County to hold an annual transportation contract with Berrien Bus. This year, we supported the City of Bridgman’s second season of offering a summer Saturday from Memorial Day to Labor Day weekends, running a shuttle between Warren Dunes, Weko Beach, and several stops throughout the greater Bridgman area. This year, we also supported local events with public transportation, including Celebrate Bridgman, Building Bridgman, and Holiday Village.

Supertour 360 – In 2017 we had more new businesses joined the supertour on the lake2grapes website. The newest members of our virtual interactive community map include B&L Information Systems, Shuler Farms, and Zielke Homes & Improvement. This new technology, that combines drone footage with 360⁰ photography, and Google business tools, is available only to CGA members and is another way to reach potential customers and tourists to the region.

Visitors Guide – 10,000 copies were printed in 2017 and were distributed through our visitor centers, placed with advertisers, area businesses, other chambers and business associations, and shared through Warren Dunes, the New Buffalo Welcome Center, and the Southwest Michigan Tourist Council and their member businesses. In 2017 we increased advertising by 5% - this is significant because we use the guide as an attraction tool and the more advertisers we have, the better first impression we make. If the advertiser base continues to grow, we will increase the book size for the second time since 2014 to 40 pages.

PICTURE GALLERY





Lake To GrapesTM

The logo for "Lake To Grapes" features the text "Lake To Grapes" in a stylized, outlined font. The word "To" is smaller and positioned between "Lake" and "Grapes". A decorative vine with a cluster of green grapes hangs from the bottom of the text. The vine starts under "Lake", goes down to the grapes, and then goes up to end under "Grapes". A small "TM" trademark symbol is located at the bottom right of the vine.