



1915



2015

# 100 Years in Chamber History

A publication of the Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce



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# Congrats Bloomington Chamber of Commerce on your 100th Anniversary!

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Here's to the next 100 years from your past and future partners, Indiana University Health Bloomington Hospital and IU Health Southern Indiana Physicians. We're proud to work alongside the Chamber and its members to make Bloomington and our surrounding communities a better, healthier place to live and work.



Bloomington Hospital

# One Hundred Years and Counting

Any time you reach an anniversary milestone, it is cause for celebration. As you arrive at those markers, you should also take the opportunity to thank those that stood alongside you as you moved forward, reflect on the events that transpired as you traveled onward and take time to plan for what comes next. It has taken us 100 years to get to this place in our organization's story. That's ten decades—each chock-full of history, events and people.

From our humble beginning in 1915 when a group of businessmen gathered together and discussed the need to create an organization that would watch out for the interest of business, promote commerce and industry and advocate for a community that is welcoming of business entrepreneurship and innovation to the nearly 900-member-strong organization that we are today in 2015, we have remained true to our focus. Better business. Better community.

This past year has been a wonderful celebration where we delved into the history books, the scrapbooks and the remaining archives that allowed us to chronicle every decade of The Chamber's history. We shared stories and pictures at almost every event and gathering of our members. Our board of directors, volunteer ambassadors and Chamber staff reached out numerous times throughout the year to thank members of every size and industry for being a part of the Bloomington and Monroe County business community. And at the Chamber's Centennial Gala & Annual Meeting, we celebrated the success of three businesses that truly represent our community's vibrancy and entrepreneurship. We congratulate our 2015 Business of the Year award winners: Mother Bear's Pizza, Scholar's Inn - Bloomington, and Weddle Bros. Construction Co. The indelible legacy of our 2015 Lifetime Achievement honoree can be seen throughout our community, region and state. We congratulate and thank Steve Ferguson with Cook Group, Inc., for his contributions of leadership, support and vision.

To share our Centennial celebration with our members, volunteers and community partners has made this past year that much more special. Our history speaks to collaborations and partnerships with city and county officials, Indiana University, Ivy Tech Community College – Bloomington, our schools, downtown businesses, religious, civic and not-for-profit groups. We have



Jeb Conrad, President and CEO. Photo by David Snodgrass.

members dating back to the early years of our existence, great volunteer leadership that guided the Chamber through decades of dynamic evolution, and continued partnerships that are important and thrive today. Working together with stakeholders, decision makers and volunteers to help drive out the best possible solutions is a part of the Chamber's history and our community is stronger because these partnerships.

Another group that I also want to thank is the Chamber team. Never does a day go by when a member does not provide me with a compliment about the quality, professionalism and leadership that our staff executes. They have made the Centennial special for the Chamber and the community and I truly thank them for all of their commitment and dedication to the Chamber.

I also thank all of our members for making the Chamber a component of their business engagement. We cannot provide the effort in areas of advocacy, workforce and talent development, marketing and networking, and serve as the voice of business without you. Since 1915, the members have led the Chamber strategies and programs that have helped shape the community we all cherish.

So what comes next? Looking to the next 100 years, we have a solid foundation to continue to build upon and a legacy to enhance. As an organization we are on solid financial footing, well respected in the community, have a voice at the local, state and federal level and have a focus on what matters—our members and being the leading advocate for business.

You have our commitment that we will continue to strive for excellence in all that we do on behalf of business in this community. We appreciate the continued support of so many and are proud to serve you as we continue to build better business, better community into the next century.

**Jeb Conrad**  
Chamber President and CEO



In the 1920s, Showers Brothers was the biggest producer of furniture in the United States, shipping 16 train-car loads a day. Today, the Bloomington City Hall occupies a small part of the original 15-acre Showers complex. Herald-Times file photo.

## 1915-1949: The Chamber in Its Infancy

### Collaboration for Commerce

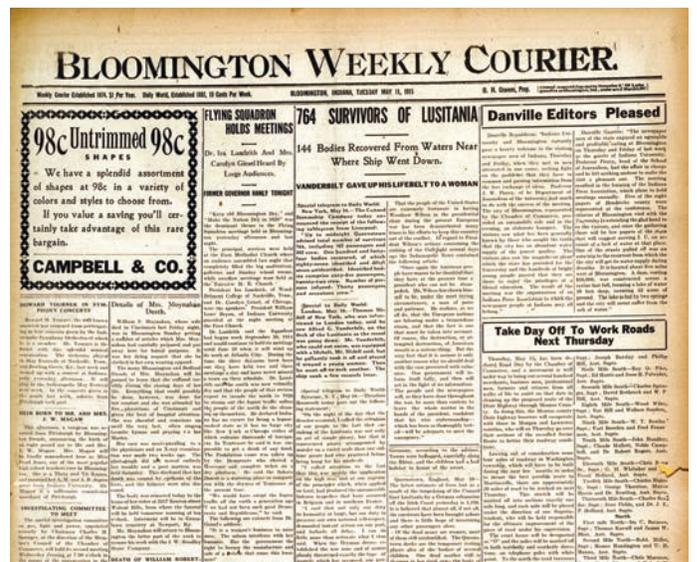
Since the start of the twentieth century, Bloomington business leaders have collaborated in merchant organizations to support the city and attract employers to the area. The success of their efforts is clear from Bloomington's modern-day reputation as a stable and attractive city.

The Retail Merchants' Bureau and the Commercial Club were two groups that formed in the early 1900s to address business concerns in the community. The Commercial Club was a loosely-organized predecessor to the Chamber of Commerce. It published "Souvenir of Bloomington," a booklet highlighting community features and opportunities.

In spring 1915, local businesses and organizations came together to officially form the Chamber of Commerce. It quickly gained members and expanded its business-focused efforts to include advocacy in city government.

Early Chamber of Commerce efforts focused on improving roads, publicizing the town and bringing a sense of unity to the Bloomington business community. Meetings were held in the courthouse and in the nearby Gentry Building.

Chamber of Commerce members were encouraged to support the Dixie Highway project—known to us now as State



The Bloomington Weekly Courier's front page from May 11, 1915 includes stories from the survivors of the Lusitania and ads from local businesses Kahn Clothing Company, The Eagle and Campbell & Company. A front page story describes one of the new Chamber of Commerce's first events, Road Day, to benefit the The Dixie Highway—now known as State Road 37. Courtesy The Herald-Times.

Road 37—by rolling up their sleeves and helping with road work. The Bloomington Weekly Courier's front page from May 11, 1915 implores businesses to help:

"A movement is well under way to bring out several hundred merchants, business men, professional men, farmers

and citizens from all walks of life to assist in cleaning up the proposed route of the Dixie Highway through Monroe County. Superintendents have been instructed to get at least one wagon to haul dirt and fill any existing holes; to provide themselves with several shovels, rakes, picks and other implements such as scythes, axes, saws, etc. to cut down any bushes or tall grass which may be growing along the route.”

Chamber of Commerce members were eager for the Dixie Highway, because aside from the railroad Bloomington was rather unconnected to the rest of the state. No good highways yet existed between Bloomington and Indianapolis or Chicago. The Dixie Highway was the brainchild of Carl Graham Fisher, owner of the country’s first auto dealership and a major investor in the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. Within months of the idea hitting newspapers, small towns and cities across Indiana were clamoring to help build it. Bloomington was no exception.

Road Day was a success for highway preparations, and on October 8, 1915 local officials traveled Monroe County roads rallying rural farmers and business leaders to help polish off road cleanup before the upcoming visit of the Dixie Highway commission. When the commission arrived on October 11, 1915, they were greeted by a large group of school children offering enormous bouquets of flowers, the Indiana University Drum Corps and three automobiles owned by notable Bloomingtonians William Graham, Harry Howards and W. N. Showers.

The commission granted further construction. Today the path of the Dixie Highway is roughly followed by State Road 37, although it originally traveled through Bloomington on what is now Walnut Street.

### Early Leadership

One of the early powerhouses of Chamber leadership was R. G. Brusch, secretary-manager. He worked full-time for the Chamber and created a path for it to follow. Although his time with the Chamber was short, he accomplished much in terms of setting the tone for Chamber members.

Brusch stepped into the spotlight after Stanford Teter, the elected president, unexpectedly fell ill and became bedridden. Teter was vice president of the Showers furniture company, an influential Bloomington business. Teter eventually recovered from his illness, but during the struggle his health issues were frequent front-page news in the Bloomington Courier.

The timing of Teter’s illness was unfortunate, but Brusch stepped in at a crucial point. The Chamber of Commerce was at work on its largest undertaking yet.

The Pageant of Bloomington and Indiana University, a centennial celebration and local showcase, was a three-day event held May 16 to 18, 1916. It featured a three-part stage production by William C. Langdon, a parade and festivities throughout town. Bloomington businesses closed in honor of the event.

More than 3,000 people attended the pageant, paying 50 cents to one dollar apiece. At the Hotel Bowles, guests could get dinner for another dollar and the menu included—according to the 1916 Annual Chamber newsletter—oyster stew, salted almonds, sour gerkin, roast leg of veal, roast



The Coca-Cola bottling plant was built in 1924. This photo is from its Art Deco façade period. It was restored in 2008. Herald-Times file photo.

suckling pig, potato snowflakes, hot tea rolls, metropolitan ice cream, cakes coffee and cigars.

The Pageant was a way for Bloomington businesses to showcase their products and services, and it was also an opportunity for Chamber officials to spread the message about membership. Brusch gave a passionate speech extolling the benefits of joining for a stubborn Bloomington businessman. A key selling point of Chamber membership at the time was the Retail Credit Information Bureau, a new way for businesses to receive credit references for potential customers. Another benefit of membership, which appealed to many farmers in the still-rural community, was access to a Purdue agent who offered help with crops.

New Chamber officers were elected during the 1916 pageant and afterward all members rose to their feet in honor of president Teter, who lay sick in bed at home.

When secretary-manager Brusch left for a job in Indianapolis in May 1916—a year after the Chamber began—C. G. Creighton replaced him. Coming from the Durham, North Carolina Chamber of Commerce, Creighton brought many ideas for day-to-day operations.

### Water Woes

In the early 1890s, the city relied on a water well at the courthouse. This source was soon determined to be too close to privies and easily contaminated. Bloomington Water Works, a private company, was established in 1892 but proved insufficient at meeting Bloomington’s constantly-expanding need for water.

The Chamber joined with the city in support of adopting Leonard Springs as a water supply in 1916. This solution worked for a short time but failed to meet the needs of Indiana University. The university developed its own lake, but soon outgrew this supply as well.

By 1921, water had become a major focus in the community. Residents were completely without water for periods of 30 to 60 days several times in the early 1900s, and city leaders realized they needed a larger-scale solution. The Chamber of Commerce issued the following purpose statement:

“The object of this organization is to work for the prosperity of the City of Bloomington and Monroe County, through co-operation and harmonious methods, with unceasing efforts in



Firemen battle a fire at the Indiana Theater in 1933. The theater is now a community performing arts center owned by the City of Bloomington. Herald-Times file photo.



This photo from the early 1930s shows the Kresge Building at 101 North College Avenue with its original tenant, Kresge & Co. Built in 1930 and now on the National Register of Historic Places, it was recently home to Talbot's clothing store and is now occupied by The Tap, a craft beer bar. Herald-Times file photo.

boosting the town.” Finding a water solution was part of this unceasing effort.

For a time, it seemed a solution was found in the development of Twin Lakes, Weimer Lake and Leonard Spring Lake. However, each was located over porous limestone rock bed and the stored water leaked out, causing continued concern about drought periods.

Griffy Lake was identified as a potential—and possibly permanent—solution to decades of water issues. This option became a political battlefield, with each side fighting for what they viewed as best for the community. Some thought Leonard Springs would remain adequate as a water supply for generations to come. They demanded investment in dams and other methods of managing its supply. Others considered Leonard Springs inadequate and called for investigation into other solutions including Griffy Lake.

The Chamber stood in support of finding a quality and long-term water supply for residents and businesses. At a Chamber banquet on May 24, 1922, president J. E. P. Holland stated that the leaking lake at Leonard Springs was just another temporary solution. The Chamber went on record as opposed to continued development of Leonard Springs and protested waste of city funds on the project.

During the controversy, experts inspected Bloomington's water options and fire specialists determined that the risk of fire was prompting insurance companies to raise their rates within the city—40% in one instance. Chamber officials spoke out in strong support of fire protection for the city.

A 1922 letter from IU President William L. Bryan to the Chamber shows an alliance on the issue.

“Never was any city more surely at the parting of ways than Bloomington is now if partisan feeling can make our people submit again to the miserable policy which has given us famine after another. It cannot help but drive prosperity out of our town.”



The north side of the courthouse square is shown in 1939. Herald-Times file photo.

After four years of debate, the Griffy Creek Valley was selected as Bloomington's primary water source. Burton Myers, author of "History of Indiana University: 1902-1937" acknowledged the Chamber's role in settling the issue:

"Credit has been given to the Chamber of Commerce for staging the initial hearing before the State Tax Board which disallowed the bond issue for further development at Leonard's Spring, and for leadership of the officers of the Chamber, the directorate, and membership throughout four long years."

### **Business and Beyond**

In the 1930s, the Chamber focused on bringing new people and businesses to Bloomington. The Chamber actively sought young, charismatic leaders. A Chamber of Commerce Civic Unity Banquet in the mid-1930s included a call for cooperation with organizations like the Rotary Club and Kiwanis Club in building the strength of the city.

In 1938, attendees of the Civic Unity Banquet discussed the idea of an improved airport. Herman B. Wells, Indiana University's president at the time, believed it was necessary.

"Any city without an airport would soon be off the beaten path, as much as one now without highways and railroads," he said.

Three locations were considered: the present-day site, the Alva Eller farm and the Charles Townsend farm. The city's engineering department made counter maps of the sites and investigated soil, grading, drainage and construction costs. The site was selected and officials from the Civil Aeronautics Authority of Washington D.C. supervised construction progress. The Bloomington Evening World newspaper documented the development and completion of the Monroe County Municipal airport throughout 1938.

The Chamber of Commerce of the late 1930s was focused on extending its reach beyond business alone, into the betterment of Bloomington on all fronts. B. Ralph Jones, a former board director, gave an overview of the Chamber in 1939.

"While the Chamber of Commerce is essentially a business institution, its horizon extends a little beyond pure business

alone. There are factors involved that embrace loyalty, civic pride, community service, and the willingness of individuals to perform work they do not have to do ... not only to better commercial opportunities but richer possibilities of getting the most out of life."

A keystone Chamber event of the era was the The Chamber of Commerce Smoker—a drive for community and membership growth. According to tallies in the Bloomington Evening World newspaper, Chamber membership continued to grow.

### **Community Fixture**

The 1940s brought a new set of concerns for the Chamber. As the nation focused on supporting efforts in World War II, the Chamber took on an important role as the rationing office for Bloomington. Chamber officials distributed rationing cards for basic food staples and home supplies. They organized drives for goods—such as military vehicle tires and clothing for European civilians—and acted as a community base for war-related information.

Women began to enter the workforce in large numbers and Bloomington's RCA plant hired women to help produce military goods. Many Bloomington businesses set aside regular business and aimed significant resources at supporting the nation's war efforts.

At the war's completion, the Chamber resolved to help rebuild morale in Bloomington. What better way than to create a new event that would be cause for celebration?

The Monroe County Fair was developed as a hometown celebration that would honor the area's rural and agricultural members, as well as attract people throughout the county to the IU campus, where it was held. The Chamber hosted the Monroe County Fair for just a few years before handing its management over to a board of organizers, but it set the stage for a celebration that continues today as one of the county's most beloved events.

By the end of the 1940s, the Chamber was revamping its programming to foster social and economic growth in the community. The "Blueprint for Bloomington" was born.



Women assemble products in the RCA plant in Bloomington in the late 1940s. Photo courtesy Monroe County Historical Museum.

### **Blueprint for Bloomington**

In 1949 the Chamber developed the idea of a blueprint that would guide the city as it moved into a new decade. Proposed to encourage business development while preserving certain aspects of the city, the Blueprint for Bloomington would be presented as a set of suggestions. These suggestions were gathered from the community in a series of meetings. There would be eight meetings focusing on the retail and service sectors, followed by eight meetings focusing on the ideas of owners and top management.

One of the “planks” of the blueprint would be a membership drive that would increase the Chamber’s numbers while ensuring all potential members could weigh in on the blueprint. Henry Boxman, chairman of the blueprint committee, created a network of blueprint salespeople who would actively recruit feedback and membership from local businesses. Boxman believed the blueprint held the key to Bloomington’s future.

“It will build prestige. It will help build profitable business, and it offers an opportunity for security and better living for all Bloomington,” Boxman said. He set a goal of collecting \$15,000 in support of suggestions in the blueprint.

As blueprint suggestions were gathered, it became clear that its contents could take the full \$15,000 and many years of study. Some items were immediately actionable and others would take generations of effort.

Vernon Huffman, Chamber president at the time, said of the suggestions, “By this method we will secure a cross-section of the best community thinking on what we should do about our business and civic problems and our opportunities for business and civic advancement.”

### **The Blueprint for Bloomington - January 24, 1949:**

- Unification of county citizens, such as meetings with representative of all small towns, county picnics and get-together events.
- Active support of the University in all its activities and needs.
- Inauguration of twice-a-year special retail sales days.
- Improved selling by merchants through sales training programs to key up sales.
- Development of one way traffic on some east side streets.
- Development of a park between Walnut and College streets.
- Restricted parking in residential areas.
- Never destroy the beauty of Third Street by the campus.
- Create a healthier business climate.
- Create a good governmental program on the local level whereby, through active committees, the Chamber would work closely with city and county officials for the best interest of the community so that every paying member of the Chamber feels he is needed and his views mean something.

The Blueprint campaign quickly hit the 80% mark of financial success and its committees helped negotiate with two industries looking at Bloomington as a possible location for their plants. In addition, a questionable solicitation scheme

was shut down in Bloomington, a water supply committee expanded its efforts and the Chamber's efforts to support retail businesses expanded considerably.

In February 1949, the Chamber's retail committee expanded to include such notable Bloomingtonians as James Schmalz, George Mueller, W. H. Griffith, Merritt "Pep" Calvert, Byron Haas, Fee Ullom, Chester Thompson, Curtis Hall, Robert F. Allen, Ben Parish, James Bowen, Mel Currie and Jewel Asher. The committee created a new campaign called "Bloomington Value Days."

In other cities, Value Days had been a successful way for businesses to mark down prices for a day and attract an influx of sales. Some cities offered free parking for these days and Bloomington officials endorsed the approach.

The first Bloomington Value Day took place on Thursday July 18, 1949 and came to be known as "Christmas in July" due to its overwhelming success. According to a report in the World Telephone newspaper, many businesses met their sales goals by 10 a.m. and saw crowded stores throughout the day. Customers enjoyed sales that went beyond buy-one-get-one savings—many businesses offered three-for-one deals. The only hitch was parking, as shoppers swarmed spaces around the courthouse square and several surrounding blocks.

Several more successful Value Days were held before the program was discontinued. It seemed to be a victim of its own success—its savings brought businesses too much conflict with holiday sales.

## 1950-1969: The Chamber at Mid-Century

### Nation in Recovery

As the nation emerged from the Great Depression, citizens valued a stable and dependable economy. Connecting supply chains and improving delivery routes were top priorities for every community.

Highways were hailed as a part of the solution to the nationwide need for economic growth. In much the same way that the Dixie Highway held promise for the early members of the Chamber, a Bloomington bypass and better surrounding roads promised better transportation within and through the city in the early 1950s.

The Chamber advocated for the extension of State Highway 46 from Columbus to Nashville and an improvement project for the road between Nashville and Bloomington. These changes would allow local businesses to better connect to regional suppliers and markets. East-west traffic, which had plagued Third Street with congestion, was diverted to a new bypass around the northeast side of the city. A bypass of State Highway 37 was proposed on the city's west side to prevent industrial traffic from clogging downtown routes. In 1956, downtown traffic was rerouted along College Avenue and Walnut Street from two-way to one-way traffic.

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Commerce

*A century of better business, better community*

1915-2015

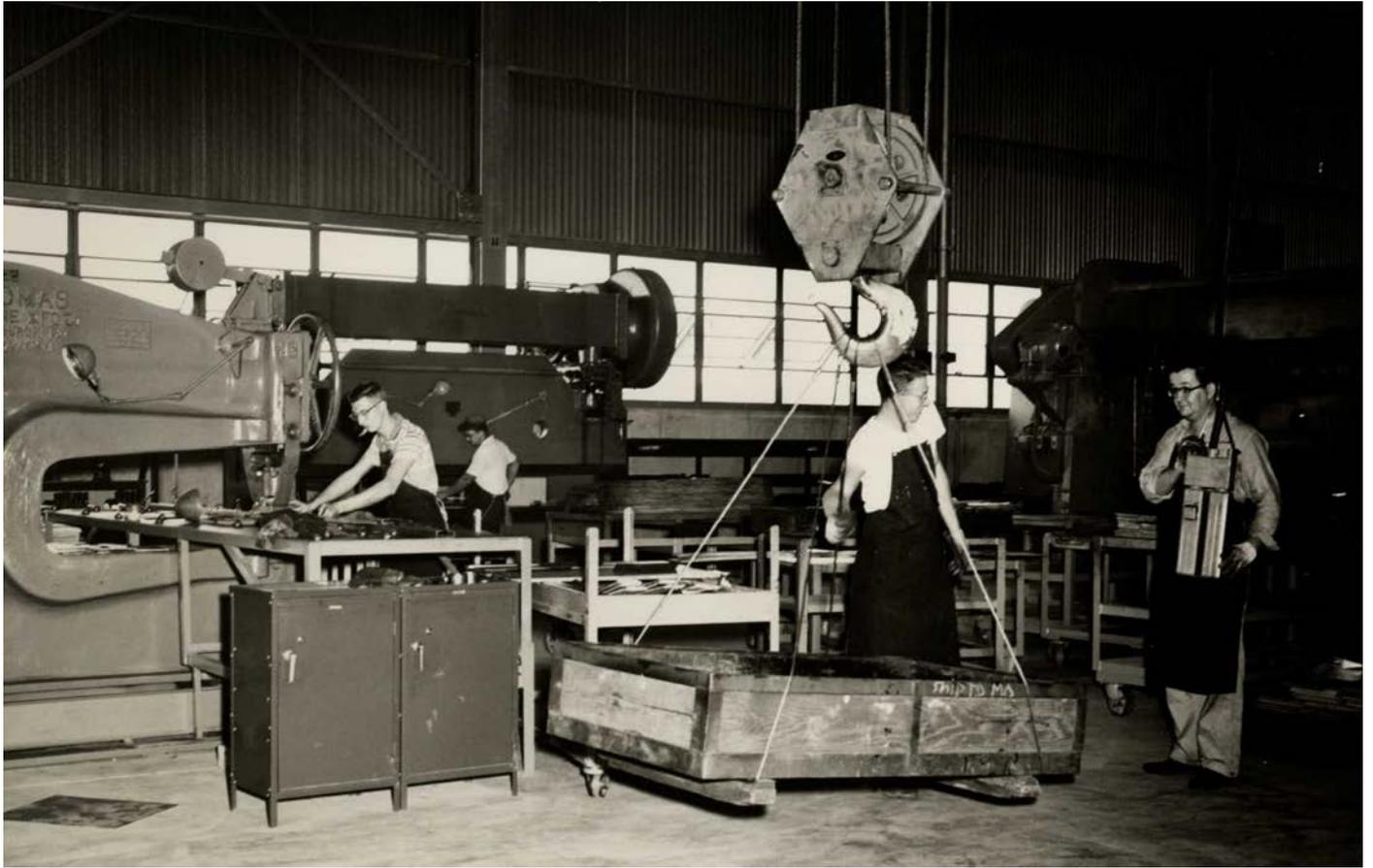


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Men work inside the Sarkes Tarzian factory in the 1960s. Photo courtesy Monroe County History Center.

The Bloomington City Council was in charge of these street decisions, but Chamber efforts undeniably influenced the decision. A story from the Bloomington Herald-Telephone in April 1956 noted, “The Chamber of Commerce voted in favor of the change, and the Council finally agreed to give the one-way system a trial.”

Air transportation and rail lines were also upgraded at this time. Rail lines connected Bloomington to Indianapolis, Columbus and other nearby cities, effectively adding Bloomington to the national railway system. This made the region much more attractive to companies looking for opportunities to build new plants and factories.

### The Booming 50s

Major business and demographic changes took place in 1950s Bloomington. The RCA plant—then the most productive color television plant in the world—and Showers Brothers factory—a major producer of furniture—created hundreds of jobs, attracting new business and new residents. According to the 1956 census, the number of people employed in Bloomington doubled from the previous four years.

The Chamber announced at its 1956 annual meeting that Westinghouse Electric planned to open a multi-million dollar plant in Bloomington. The Bloomington Herald-Telephone reported that officials from Westinghouse praised the Chamber of Commerce as an organization that sold them on the benefits of Bloomington.

### Water Woes Revisited

Like a wave from the 1920s, water issues swelled again in the 1950s. The lack of water was obvious—a local school construction project was halted when there wasn’t enough water to run sinks and toilets.

A spokesman from the Chamber of Commerce summarized the issue in a 1953 speech.

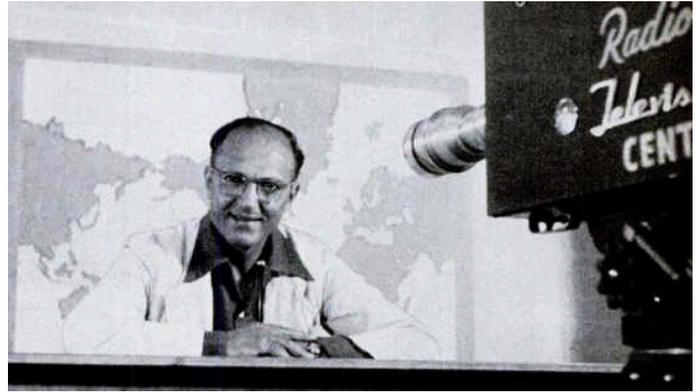
“Despite the city’s new lake reservoir, the water problem is still preventing new industry from locating here. The reason for that is that in the logical areas for industries to locate, water pressure is not sufficient to service a large factory . . . The city’s growth problem is directly related to the extension of water and sewerage.”

In March 1953, Sarkes Tarzian—an RCA plant engineer who founded technology company Sarkes Tarzian Inc.—was elected president of the Chamber. Tarzian worked with city and university officials to address Bloomington’s urgent need for a water solution. On his eighth day in office, he called a meeting to coordinate housing, industry and public utility efforts. Mayor Emmett Kelly, John Barnett from the State Chamber of Commerce and dozens of other officials participated in meetings about these issues in the following days. At the 88th General Assembly, the Legislature placed more power in the hands of local officials with a declaration of home rule in municipalities.

The Herald-Telephone ran an article highlighting the three major steps taken by the Chamber as a result. First, the housing committee called for an immediate start on



Bloomington Hospital is shown in this photo from 1948. Photo courtesy Bloomington Hospital.



Sarkes Tarzian, founder of a technology company and owner of the Bloomington WTTV station, was elected president of the Chamber in 1953. Courtesy photo.



In 1956, Westinghouse Electric announced plans to build a plant in Bloomington, in part due to the recruitment efforts of the Chamber. Herald-Times file photo.

construction of 200 new low-cost homes. Then President Sarkes Tarzian appointed a committee to investigate the possibility of building homes. Finally, the industrial committee called for the completion of the city's original waterworks project, which had been stalled due to insufficient funds from a bond.

Bean Blossom reservoir, located 12 miles east of Bloomington and renamed Lake Lemon, officially became a \$1.75 million water expansion project. As land was acquired for the project, the Herald-Telephone ran a countdown in its headlines: "1911 Acres Purchased, 400 To Go."

The new lake meant more water, more sewers, waterworks plants, housing developments and tourism. The Chamber was poised to support expansion and promised to call for speedy completion of the water-related facilities. The Chamber's board of directors voted to create a nonprofit corporation within the Chamber to raise money for the effort, called the Bloomington Improvement Corporation.

The Lake Lemon project held great promise for the community. Mayor Kelly publicly stated that the city would do everything in its power to carry out the improvements proposed by the Chamber.

"It is a foregone conclusion," he told The Herald-Telephone on April 29, 1953, "that the big new lake will attract to Bloomington, to rural Monroe County, and to Brown County, large numbers of money-spending tourists from throughout the state and also from many other states."

Just two years later, however, it was clear that Lake Lemon alone could not support the Bloomington boom. Another water

source was already needed to provide adequate water and sewer support. In 1955 Bloomington officials began work on Home-Rule legislation, which included House Bill 93 addressing the water problem and flood issues. Chamber leaders wrote personal letters to state representatives describing the serious nature of the water situation.

The bill was passed in March 1956 and work began on Lake Monroe. Almost 24,000 acres—originally acquired from native Americans during Harrison's Purchase in 1809—would be dedicated to the man-made reservoir. Bloomington residents would benefit from timber clearing by early settlers and fertilization by decades of farming, which created an area geographically suitable for the lake. It was completed in 1964 and settled the water problem for decades to come.

### Taking on Tourism

As Lake Monroe was completed, the Chamber recognized an increased need for tourism efforts. The economy as a whole was growing, and the region was keeping pace. In 1967 the Chamber sponsored a new Lake Monroe brochure and in 1968 it financed 25 billboards throughout the state promoting Lake Monroe and Bloomington tourism.

Billboards proclaimed, "The Place to Go is Lake Monroe—Indiana's Inland Sea." Five tourist booths were installed in the Bloomington area and the Chamber became the first place tourists turned for visitor information.

A Chamber official said the Chamber "serves as the front door to Bloomington, answering thousands of inquiries from

tourists, prospective residents, school children and business firms, as well as leading the action on matters of community development.”

Chamber dues were increased in order to support this “front door policy” and the Chamber increased its role in advertising the attractions of Bloomington.

### Keeping Pace

In 1967 the Chamber developed a new program called “Keep Pace With Opportunity” to bring a long-term view to business, industry and civic development. After a series of public meetings, a fundraising goal of \$40,125 was set and program topics were named: highways, downtown, educational facilities, water and sewage, city limits, traffic, beautification, hospitals and fire protection.

A nationally-known chamber of commerce consultant, Lloyd A. Wilson, was hired to help build a practical program. Wilson had helped with similar programs in Indiana cities like LaPorte, New Albany and Logansport.

- Goals for the Keep Pace With Opportunity project were:
- Service to present industries. Cooperate with and aid them in every way possible on needs and problems.
- Encourage and seek suitable, diversified new industries, consistent with labor supply and other pertinent factors.
- Keep industrial data current through continuous research.
- Prepare briefs and brochures for prospects.
- Advertise advantages and potentials.
- Foster a good industrial climate.
- Strive diligently to promote good labor management relations.
- Promote community conditions attractive to plant executives and employees.
- Show suitable industrial sites for locations.
- Fund goal at \$40,125.

### Future Focus

The Chamber of the 1960s was future-focused. As the baby boom generation expanded Indiana University enrollment, many Bloomington organizations focused on preserving and beautifying the city for future generations.

At the request of the Chamber then-president Gene Davis, a property improvement awards program was reactivated after many years. The program encouraged beautification and recognized business people who made major improvements to their property.

A project in cooperation with the Farm Bureau Co-Op Store promoted planting trees around the city. Chamber members and non-members alike purchased trees from the program and the Chamber held a photo contest encouraging businesses to send photos of their pretty properties. The Herald-Telephone headlined a story about the project, “Chamber To Help City Blossom Out.”

As trees blossomed, so did the city’s relationship with Indiana University. A university enrollment boom of the 1940s was soon overshadowed by the boom of the 1960s as baby boomers began to contribute to the local economy. Construction projects kept employment low as new dormitories, office buildings, stores and restaurants offered job opportunities—and ways of

spending disposable income.

Times were changing in Bloomington, and Chamber leaders sensed a need to change with the times. In 1968 the name of the Bloomington Chamber of Commerce changed to Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce.

“We like what we see and hear,” wrote the editors of the Bloomington Tribune, “as the local chamber inducts a new manager, takes a new and complete inside-out look at itself, and dons a new cloak of responsibility in facing up to Bloomington’s new complex of avenues of endeavor as Indiana’s second fastest growing city.”

With the name change came a location change. In March 1968 Chamber officials left their south College location, home since 1923, and remained without a permanent office until the end of the decade.

## 1970-1989: Era of Revitalization

### Old to New

In a reflection of social movements across the United States, the Chamber took on initiatives for community-building, urban development and other revitalization projects in the 1970s. Downtown Bloomington saw old buildings renovated, new structures erected and a downtown landscape that was noticeably different from the decades prior.

New president Lloyd Olcott led the Chamber as it supported programs like a shuttle service to the Bloomington airport, the Lake Monroe “Dial-a-Fish program” for fishing conditions, tree planting programs, and efforts to spruce up the exteriors of local businesses.

When the book collection housed by what is known today as the Monroe County Historical Society began to outgrow its quarters, city leaders stepped in to create a state-of-the-art book space. In November 1970, the new Monroe County Public Library opened on the corner of Kirkwood and Lincoln, funded by a \$620,000 gift from the estate of Alice Freese.

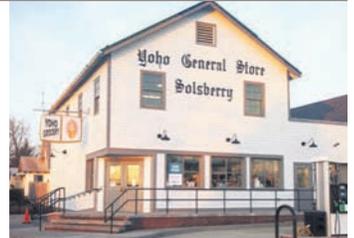
State Highway 37 was revitalized at this time, after highly-publicized highway fatalities were caused by congestion on the two-lane road. Ruel Steele was honored by the Chamber



This photo from the mid-1970s shows the West Side Community Center, now known as the Banneker Community Center. Herald-Times file photo.



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Peoples Park is seen in this undated photo from the early 1970s. A sign on the fence says "Please don't rip-off the plants. They're for everyone to enjoy." The message board includes a flier for a June rock 'n' roll concert featuring Bill Wilson. Herald-Times file photo.



Demolition work began on the old Bloomington High School Gymnasium at Second Street and College Avenue on April 7, 1975. The space was replaced by a Kroger supermarket. Photo by Larry Crewell.



During the worst of the Blizzard of '78, Bloomington's downtown square was nearly deserted. J.C. Penney and Ben Franklin stores can be seen on the right. Photo by Larry Crewell.

after his work on expanding the highway to four lanes with a divided median, providing a quicker and safer route between Bloomington and Indianapolis. A section of the highway is now called "Ruel Steele Highway" in his memory.

The 1970s also saw the development of a \$5.9 million multi-story building on the northwest corner of the downtown square that would house a city/county police headquarters and jail.

During this time, Indiana University became the largest employer and the most-grossing business in Bloomington. The Chamber saw an opportunity to reach out to IU and familiarize students with Bloomington's amenities. The Town-Gown Project was created to arrange one-on-one talks between students and business owners, host after-dinner roundtable

discussions with community stakeholders, hold an all-day university symposium and give IU personnel the opportunity to speak on local issues.

### New Home

The Chamber had resided in a series of temporary downtown spaces throughout the 1960s and early 1970s. A concert mishap in the mid-1970s resulted in the Chamber leaving its downtown home—a country singer arrived at a Chamber-sponsored concert intoxicated, could not perform, tickets were refunded and the situation resulted in a major financial loss. In a bind, the Chamber sold its building and moved to Gourley Pike to share an office with the Convention Bureau.

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Employees of B&L Roofing work atop the Monroe County Courthouse during its renovation in June 1984. Herald-Times file photo.



The south side of Bloomington's courthouse square resembled this 1985 view for decades. It has since undergone a transition, primarily by Bill Cook and CFC Properties, with the development of Fountain Square Mall. Photo by Larry Crewell.

In the shared office, directors of the two organizations developed conflicts and were both fired. As it struggled with funds and leadership, the Chamber was encouraged by Mayor Tomilea Allison to relocate to downtown as part of a revitalization project. In November 1984, board president Lynn H. Coyne announced that the Chamber would move to the renovated Wicks Building on the north side of the downtown square.

“The choice of a location on the square,” Coyne said, “gives the Chamber of Commerce an opportunity to show its support for the revitalization of this important area of the community.”

### Lending Support

A 1982 survey by The Herald-Times showed the Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce was considered the most influential organization in Bloomington at getting things accomplished, even over the city government and Indiana University. Michael Brooks, the Chamber’s executive director, attributed some of this notoriety to success bringing over 1,000 jobs to town with new businesses including Peck Inc., Mayhill Homes, B.F. Goodrich, St. Regis Paper Co. and Columbia House.

As new businesses flourished, a prominent older business began to flounder. The Chamber helped RCA through a difficult transition. Television manufacturing had changed since the 1950s, when the first TV rolled off the assembly line and the possibilities for sales seemed limitless. Unstable employment

and large layoffs came with a changing market. The Chamber of Commerce offered assistance to those affected, providing employment workshops and seeking federal money for job retraining. The Chamber also helped RCA seek tax breaks, so they could reinvest in plants and equipment.

In 1982 the Chamber began hosting hosting Expos—business-to-business trade shows in which members could network and show off products and services. Annual membership drives called Executive Loans—where executives could take a week off to work with the Chamber—also took place during this period. Both drove membership in the early 1980s.

Leadership Bloomington Monroe County (LBMC) was formed in 1984 with a one-year grant from Eli Lilly. Concerned about whether the program was sustainable, and whether the Chamber was the right organization to host it, Executive Director Mike Brooks approached Indiana University about a partnership to support it. LBMC continues to promote civic involvement by bringing together a mixture of citizens, employees and community representatives to enhance leadership and problem-solving skills.

Partners in Education was another program launched in the 1980s, establishing a mentoring program between students and positive role models from the business community. It was a precursor to today’s Franklin Initiative, which takes the relationship between business and schools even further.

Business After Hours, one of the most enduring and popular





Mike Ladyman works on an order at Ladyman's Cafe in 1988. Photo by Kent Phillips.



Jeff Mease, left, and Lennie Busch stand outside their first Bloomington pizza outlet in this 1985 photo. Mease and Busch co-founded One World Enterprises, parent company of Pizza X, Lennie's, Bloomington Brewing Company, One World Catering and Loesch Farm. Photo courtesy One World Enterprises.



The RCA television production plant on South Rogers Street in Bloomington is shown in this photo from 1984. Herald-Times file photo.

Chamber programs, formed in 1984 as a way for business people to socialize casually while networking. After just five years of the program, between 200 and 300 members were attending each month.

The Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) began in 1985 to assist struggling business owners. Although some people assumed SCORE actually gave out loans, it focused on helping businesses at critical financial times with free advice and referrals.

The Venture Capital Club was also organized in 1985 in

partnership with the Small Business Development Center. Its goal was to introduce small businesses to possible investors. Entrepreneurs gave five-minute pitches during monthly lunch meetings and potential investors determined their level of interest.

By the end of the 1980s, the Chamber had found a new downtown home and a new role lending support to businesses in a changing marketplace. More changes were in store for the start of a new millennium.



Downtown Bloomington has seen many changes since this aerial view of the courthouse was photographed in 1986. Herald-Times file photo.

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Riley Meyers, a Tascus molding operator, works in a U-Cell station where three machines are placed in a U shape for easier access. Tascus Corporation celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2014. Photo by Chris Howell.

## 1990-2015: In a New Millenium

### Educational Investment

In the early 1990s, the Chamber was focused on propelling education in Bloomington to new heights. The Partners in Education program, which had evolved into the Franklin Initiative, had helped many at-risk children find internships, mentors and new educational opportunities. The Friends in Education awards helped the Chamber and the community celebrate these efforts. Programs like Teacher Appreciation Night and the School-to-Work program rounded out the Chambers educational efforts.

After the addition of a fundraising element, The Franklin Initiative became 100 percent funded by local businesses and community donations. More than 450 local businesses joined to the benefit of more than 4,000 students.

The People's University, a lifelong learning program that encouraged experts to teach community members about specific talents like basket weaving and wine making, was also launched during this period.

### Showers Project

The location of the former Showers Brothers factory—now commonly known as the Showers building—was the site of a major 1990s revitalization project. The Chamber and then-president Tom Hirons played a major role in the \$15 million



After the original burned in the 1990s, a new clock tower was built on the IU campus. Photo by David Snodgrass.

project. Approved in 1990, the project was completed in 1995 and turned the 2,000 square foot facility into an office center and research park.

Hirons envisioned it “humming with research equipment and bustling with several hundred people.” The Showers building indeed became a busy office space, hosting numerous businesses, government meetings and community events.

### Smoking Ordinance

In the early 2000s, smoking in public spaces became a controversial issue. Issues of secondhand smoke and public health sometimes seemed at odds with the community of independent Bloomington businesses. It was hard to predict which business owners would support—or not support—a ban on smoking in and around businesses.

The Chamber called for laws that “do not impair business or tourism; businesses that permit smoking in the workplace pay more in maintenance and health care and workers should not have to choose between their health and their jobs.” Six Chamber members who opposed the ordinance left their membership, with one calling it an “unwelcome and unjustified intrusion in the the rights of businesses.”

The city settled the issue, for the most part, on March 27, 2003, when it passed a smoking ordinance banning smoking in public places and places of employment.

### Leadership Changes

The Chamber experienced numerous leadership changes at the turn of the millenium. Mike Brooks, president from 1981 to 1991, moved to an economic development position in Lafayette and the Chamber held an extensive four-month national search for a replacement.

Glenda Murray became the Chamber’s new leader, coming from Bloomington’s Redevelopment Department. She developed several influential programs and led the Chamber to its highest membership level ever, however the Chamber’s executive committee clashed with her. She resigned and the board began a new search.

Steve Howard, former commander of the Naval Surface Selection Warfare Center, became president in September 1994. The Chamber had 1,000 dues-paying members, seven employees and a budget of about \$500,000. Howard joined the Chamber at a time when Crane Naval Surface Warfare Center was in danger of closing and causing a negative economic impact on the area.

Along with his relationship with Crane, Howard developed relationships with the Bloomington Economic Development Corporation and the Mid-Continent Coalition. He encouraged the Chamber to renew its dedication to advocacy by writing articles in the local paper and doing radio interviews.

Interstate 69 expansion dominated newspaper headlines during Howard’s tenure, and he led the Chamber in coming out strongly in support of it. Despite losing business membership due the controversy, Howard encouraged the organization to stand firm and “try to make intelligent decisions based on the majority opinion” which—based on polling—showed that 55% of members favored I-69 expansion.

### Urban Sprawl

The I-69 issue “brought out the worst in us” according to Howard, and brought the hot-button term “urban sprawl” to the forefront. Some in the community feared seeing businesses and homes sprawl out to demolish Bloomington’s remaining green space and rural charm.

Bloomington’s city council issued a statement rejecting the I-69 plan:

“If I-69 runs through Bloomington it will cause urban sprawl, threaten downtown revitalization, attract criminal and drug activity, increase pollution and drastically change Bloomington’s unique small town character.”

Howard disagreed with the council’s assessment.



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Throughout the 1980s, 1990s and into the 2000s, the Chamber hosted numerous successful Business EXPO events, helping businesses network and expand customer contacts. Courtesy photos.





Cook's new west side headquarters is under construction in this photo from 2001. Photo by Chris Howell.

its focus to the small business community. The “Chamber U” informational series began in early 2007. The series focused on businesses with fewer than 25 employees and addressed topics such as marketing, networking and low-cost promotions. The Chamber also welcomed guest speakers from member businesses and other leading Indiana companies to share their ideas, tips and successes.

**Education Improvements**

In the spring of 2007 the Chamber of Commerce teamed up with the Monroe County prosecutor’s “Live Better Campaign.” This campaign raised awareness about the importance of high school attendance and graduation, and fit nicely with

the mission of the Chamber’s Franklin Initiative. Together the partners worked to organize the first drop-out prevention summit.

The event, which was geared toward service providers, discussed how to “encourage our youth to appreciate and value education as a foundation for the rest of their life,” said Bloomington Mayor Mark Kruzan. He also stressed the importance of the summit as a forum for collaboration on how to tackle the challenge.

**Parking Problems Revisited**

Just like in 1915—the first year of The Chamber’s existence—the City faced a parking conundrum. Almost 100 years later

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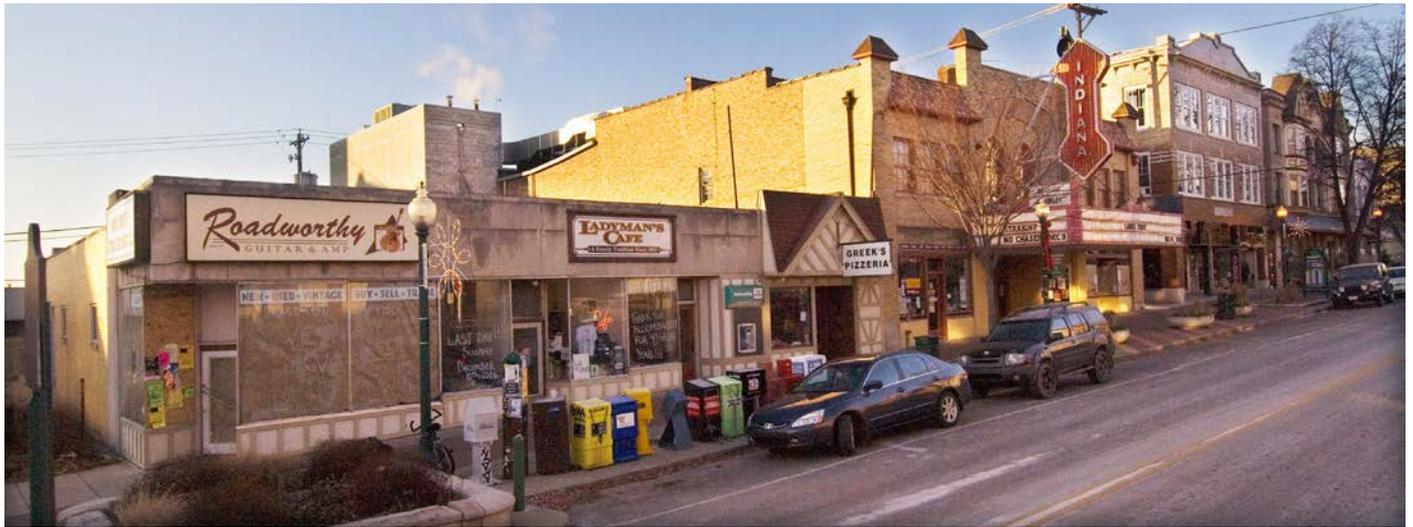
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This stretch of downtown businesses was in transition in December 2006. Roadworthy Guitar shows a “We’ve moved” sign and Ladyman’s Café was in its final week of business. Photo by David Snodgrass.



In this photo from 2001, Oliver Winery owner Bill Oliver dumps a lug full of grapes into a machine to remove the stems and begin the process of collecting the juice. The winery opened in 1972 and is now one of the largest wineries in the eastern United States. Photo by Pete Schreiner.



MarDon Salon, Pisce and Bloomington Sandwich Company are pictured in a refurbished space along Kirkwood Avenue in November 2010. Photo by David Snodgrass.

there were thousands more vehicles, the downtown area was bustling with businesses and the traffic moving in and around downtown was fast and often congested.

In 2008—shortly after the City of Bloomington contracted Indianapolis-based parking management company REI to manage its three main garages—Mayor Mark Kruzan requested the assistance of the Chamber of Commerce’s parking team. This volunteer committee, made up of individuals representing the diversity of Bloomington’s business community, focused its efforts on the issues of technology, geography, and rates and restrictions. The goal was to preserve and maintain the integrity and strength of downtown, according to a Herald-Times interview with Kruzan at the time.

The Chamber’s parking team accepted the request and split into three sub-committees to closely study the situation before making a recommendation to the City. It would be nearly five years later that the Chamber released a position on the issue and publicly voiced its lack of support for the proposed downtown parking.

In its formal position in 2013, the Chamber stated that it feared that the absence of a comprehensive parking plan

could potentially compound parking challenges and create unintended consequences for downtown businesses. This position was substantiated by feedback given in a survey of Chamber members. More than 68% agreed that metered parking would harm their business.

The Chamber also voiced concerns about the hours of enforcement, absence of parking space time limits and that the revenue would be distributed into the general fund as opposed to being set aside for future parking improvements. While the Chamber recognized the city’s need to offset revenue shortfalls, they urged Bloomington city officials to study the full range of impacts on the business economy before moving forward.

### Privacy and Jobs

With parking issues still under debate, the Chamber shifted its focus to stressing the protection of Indiana workers’ privacy and jobs. The bill at the center of the issue was federal legislation that would make changes to the process used to organize and certify a union within the workplace. Pro-business advocates maintained that the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA)—also known as the “card check”—threatened to eliminate and employees’ rights to a private ballot in



Baxter employees suit up before entering the sterile working environment in this photo from 2002. Photo by Chris Howell.



A 2010 Chamber Employment Fair matched graduating seniors with jobs. Courtesy photo.



Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels, right, and Bloomington Mayor Mark Kruzan sit together during a 2007 Chamber of Commerce luncheon. Photo by Jeremy Hogan.

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union organizing drives. It could, they feared, allow federal government arbitrators to impose workplace pay and benefits, and force unfair mandates on small businesses. The card check bill was introduced in the House on March 10, 2008 with 223 co-sponsors and 40 Senate co-sponsors. Both had seven fewer sponsors than when it originally hit the House floor in 2007.

In May 2008 several representatives from Bloomington businesses joined a delegation of nearly 50 Indiana businesspeople on a Washington, DC trip to voice opinions on the EFCA. According to Morgan Hutton, then-director of advocacy, their goal was to prevent a movement that was “harmful for Indiana’s workers and businesses...adversely affect[ing] our state’s economy.”

In Washington, the local delegation discussed the issue with Senator Bayh, one of only a few democrats who did not sponsor the bill. During the visit, he asserted that the proposed bill went too far and that the secret ballot must be protected.

Although the majority of Chamber members surveyed voiced support for the EFCA, The Chamber’s position on this legislation was not without controversy. While the Chamber had always been a fervent advocate for its member businesses and had a history of strongly supporting efforts to maintain a strong business environment, this issue appeared to be too far out of the organization’s usual areas of concern. Backlash came in the form of picketers and protests outside the Chamber’s 7th Street office.



In 2014, Midwest Color Printing was the Chamber of Commerce small business of the year. A display shows a variety of the company’s dimensional sign creations. Photo by David Snodgrass.

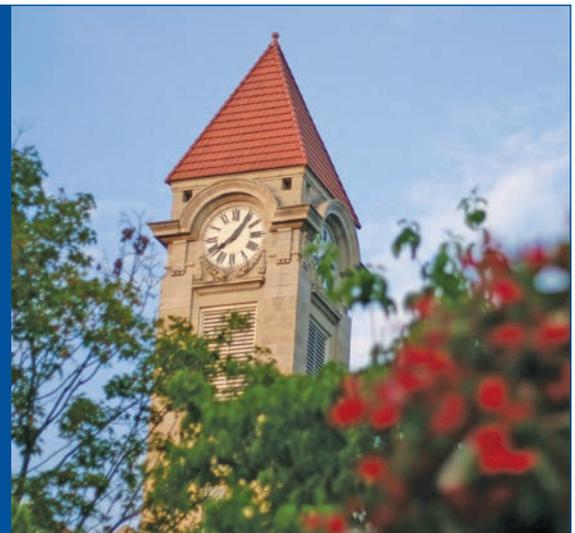
### Health Care Reform

The Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce added their voice to the prominent federal health care reform debate by issuing their position on the measure in September 2009. The Chamber’s Legislative Council and Healthcare Team drafted the position with the approval of the Chamber’s board of directors. Christy Gillenwater, Chamber president and CEO, described the debate as a “critical issue” that affected not only individuals and their families, but also providers and businesses.

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The Showers Building is home to small businesses, City Hall and Indiana University Research Park. Herald-Times file photo.



This photo from 2006 shows landscaping around the large mill structure in the Woolery Stone project. Photo by Monty Howell.



The ABB building on North Curry Pike, the former Westinghouse Electric plant, was in the process of being demolished in November 2006. Photo by Monty Howell.



Indiana University Athletic Director Fred Glass speaks to a Chamber of Commerce audience at Business Expo 2013. Photo by David Snodgrass.

“Reform is in everyone’s interest, but it must be done smart and not rushed to meet self-imposed deadlines,” Gillenwater cautioned.

The Chamber maintained that reform should protect the aspects of our system that work, guarantee quality care and continue to drive research and innovation in medicine that is led by entrepreneurs in the United States. However, it should not threaten small businesses—such as those in the Bloomington community—with increased costs, taxes, fees, mandates and regulatory burdens. The Chamber of Commerce advocated that concrete steps be taken in order to build on the market-

based and employer-sponsored system’s strengths to help more Americans and Bloomington locals receive better and more affordable health care.

Once again, the Chamber was involved in a sweeping federal debate over proposals and legislation that would play out on the national stage. Following its involvement with health care reform and its controversial position on EFCA, the Chamber renewed its advocacy mission to focus on legislation and issues that more locally affected its membership and for which the organization would be in a better position to effect real change on behalf of its members.

### Award Winner

2010 was a banner year. The organization revamped its approach to membership and introduced a new tiered dues structure. More than 134 members joined in 2010 and the retention rate remained higher than the national average for chambers of similar size. The Chamber also made it a priority to stay on the leading edge of social media and technology by not only embracing these innovations for marketing and public relations efforts, but also by educating the business community on how to utilize the new technology. An advocacy initiative that the Chamber implemented in 2010 was a community-wide initiative to encourage healthier lifestyles through public policy and environmental change. Through the Chamber’s two designation programs—Healthy Business Bloomington and Green Business Bloomington—the organization elevated its leadership.



The Chamber was designated Chamber of the Year for 2012 by the American Chamber of Commerce Executives. Courtesy photo.

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Indiana Gov. Mike Pence chats with people at a 2014 Chamber of Commerce luncheon in Alumni Hall, including Indiana University President Michael McRobbie, left, and Bill Stephan, IU vice president for engagement. Photo by David Snodgrass.



Workers renovate the Kroger on College mall road in August 2014. Photo by Matthew Hatcher



A construction project is underway at Ivy Tech Community College in May 2015. Photo by Emily Sobecki.

The Indiana Chamber Executives Association (ICEA) recognized The Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce as the 2011 Indiana Chamber of the Year. The award, given at the Chamber's 2011 Annual Governor's Lunch with Governor Mitch Daniels, was based on the organization's 2010 accomplishments.

### Voices for I-69

In February 2012, The Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce announced a new partnership with Hoosier Voices for I-69, a public advocacy organization comprised of citizens,

businesses and organizations from across Indiana with a mission to support the approval, funding, and construction of a direct route extension of Interstate 69 from Indianapolis to Evansville. The partnership made a great deal of sense, as The Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce has supported and advocated for the highway for many years. Interstate 69 construction was advancing toward Bloomington and Monroe County, so this partnership was seen as an opportunity to further advocacy efforts and educate the community throughout the process.

At the time of partnership's formation, the Chamber's



A worker screws down metal flooring on the second level of the new bus station on July 29, 2013. A glimpse of Fountain Square's American flag and the Monroe County Courthouse dome can be seen in the background. Photo by Chris Howell.

director of advocacy and public policy, Morgan Hutton, was named the executive director for Hoosier Voices for I-69. Hutton continued her role at the Chamber in addition to staffing Hoosier Voices.

### More Recognition

In 2012 the Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce was selected as finalist for the American Chamber of Commerce Executives' (ACCE) national Chamber of the Year award. The award honored chambers from all over the country in four categories: operations, member services, community leadership and impact on key community priorities. Chambers competed against others from similar total income levels to be

narrowed down to two finalists and ultimately one winner.

President and CEO Christy Gillenwater summed up the organization's feeling about the honor.

"To be named a finalist for this award is an incredible honor for the Chamber's board of directors, volunteers and Chamber staff of last year who set off on an ambitious strategic plan. It is a tribute to the innovation and passion of the more than 450 individuals that work so hard to build better business and better community in greater Bloomington," she said. "We are deeply honored to be selected as a finalist."

August 2, 2012 was a day of celebration. The Chamber was named 2012 Chamber of the Year by the ACCE at the organization's annual conference held in Louisville.

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The C3 Bar on Bloomington's east side advertises its opening in July 2014. Herald-Times file photo.



In this photo from May 2015, Interstate 69 is under construction near Bloomington. Photo by Jeremy Hogan.



Curry Auto Center is also celebrating its 100th anniversary. Cary Curry stands next to a photo of the original dealership building, which housed a combination horse and carriage stable, one car and one employee: W.S. Curry. Four generations and 100 years later, the modern facility houses up to 250 cars, around 100 employees plus iPads and computers. Things have changed, but the family's values have not. "Our vision is a place where people love to work and customers love to come. Anything outside of that is outside of the vision. We're here to serve," said Cary Curry. Photo by David Snodgrass.



A customer exits Lucky's Market during its grand opening on the south side of Bloomington. Photo by Jeremy Hogan.



Partners Rick Dietz, left, Adam Quirk, and Jeff Wuslich launched Cardinal Spirits in Bloomington. Pictured with them are a few of the bottles of infusions, mead and liqueur they have made using store bought spirits as a part of their research and development. Photo by Chris Howell.

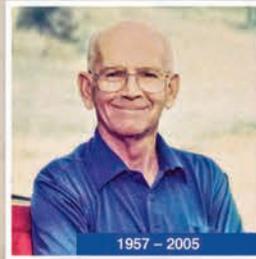
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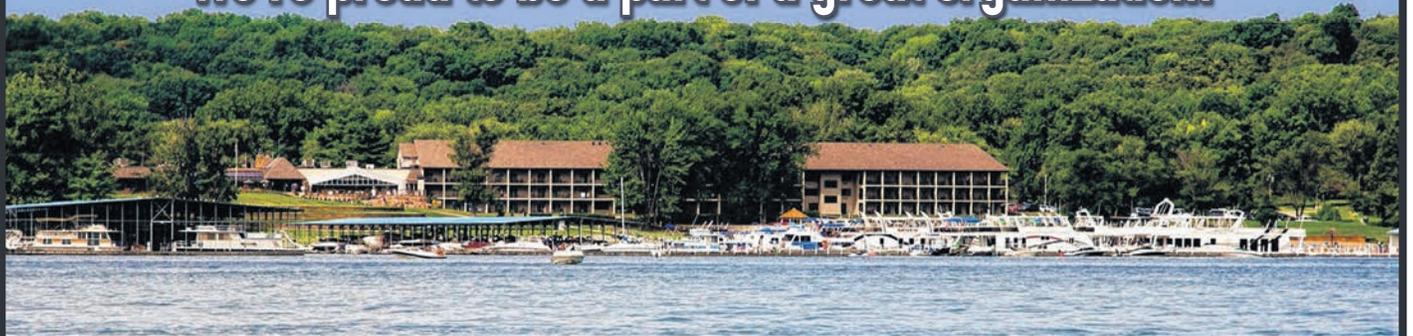
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Looking southeast from downtown Bloomington, this April 2015 photo shows the location of a 12-acre proposed tech park near the Showers Building (lower center) and the home of the Bloomington Chamber of Commerce in the Johnson Creamery Building (middle right). Photo by David Snodgrass.

# Happy 100th Anniversary, Bloomington Chamber of Commerce! We're proud to be a part of a great organization!



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HT-6271293

“We are grateful to our dedicated volunteers and members. We are extremely humbled to receive this honor as we recommit to continue to serve our stakeholders with excellence,” Gillenwater said. She accepted the award along with board chair, Jim Whitlatch of Bunger & Robertson Attorneys at Law.

According to Whitlatch, it was “a proud moment for everyone associated with the Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce” as the prestigious award highlighted some of the organization’s key programs and services.

### Losing a Team Member

Days before the conference where the Chamber would be named the 2012 Chamber of the Year, tragedy struck the organization and its close-knit staff. Morgan Hutton, who served as the organization’s director of advocacy and public policy, was fatally injured in an auto accident. She was 30 years old and had been with the Chamber since 2008.

### Leadership Transition

At the end of 2012, Christy Gillenwater announced she would be stepping down as president and CEO to accept a similar role with Evansville’s Chamber of Commerce of Southwest Indiana, after seven years of leadership. Jim Shelton was named interim president and CEO of while the organization conducted an executive search to replace Gillenwater. Shelton continued to serve as the Chamber’s Government Relations Manager for the County.

Jeb A. Conrad accepted the Chamber’s leadership position in May 2013. He was formerly the president and CEO of the Greater Kokomo Economic Development Alliance and had been a student at Indiana University.

### Community of the Year

Just as it seemed that the Chamber of the Year celebrations were winding down, the Chamber and the city of Bloomington found new cause to celebrate. In August 2014 Bloomington was named the Community of the Year by the Indiana Chamber of Commerce. The announcement was made at a press conference attended by local government, civic and business leaders.

The Indiana Chamber commended Bloomington on its quality of life, amenities and its emergence as a major high-tech sector for the state as a whole. Other impressive technology endeavors included the 65-acre Certified Technology Park, advancement in IU’s School of Informatics and the establishment of Ivy Tech’s Cook Center for Entrepreneurship.

The Chamber joined city leaders, state leaders and the entire community to celebrate what local citizens have always known—that Bloomington is a terrific place to work and live.

### CELEBRATE 100 YEARS!

Join the Chamber today and secure your place in history. For more information about Chamber membership, please contact us at 812-336-6381 or ChamberBloomington.org.

*Congratulations* from a 90-year-old company to a 100-year-old organization

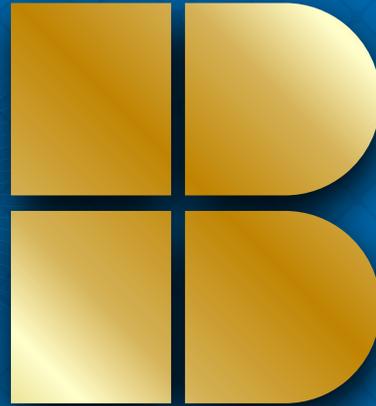
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*Our sincere thanks to the contributors for*  
**1915-2015: 100 Years in Chamber History**  
*and its predecessor*

**The Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce: A History**

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-Cathy Johnson, Event Coordinator at CFC for 24 years  
Bloomington

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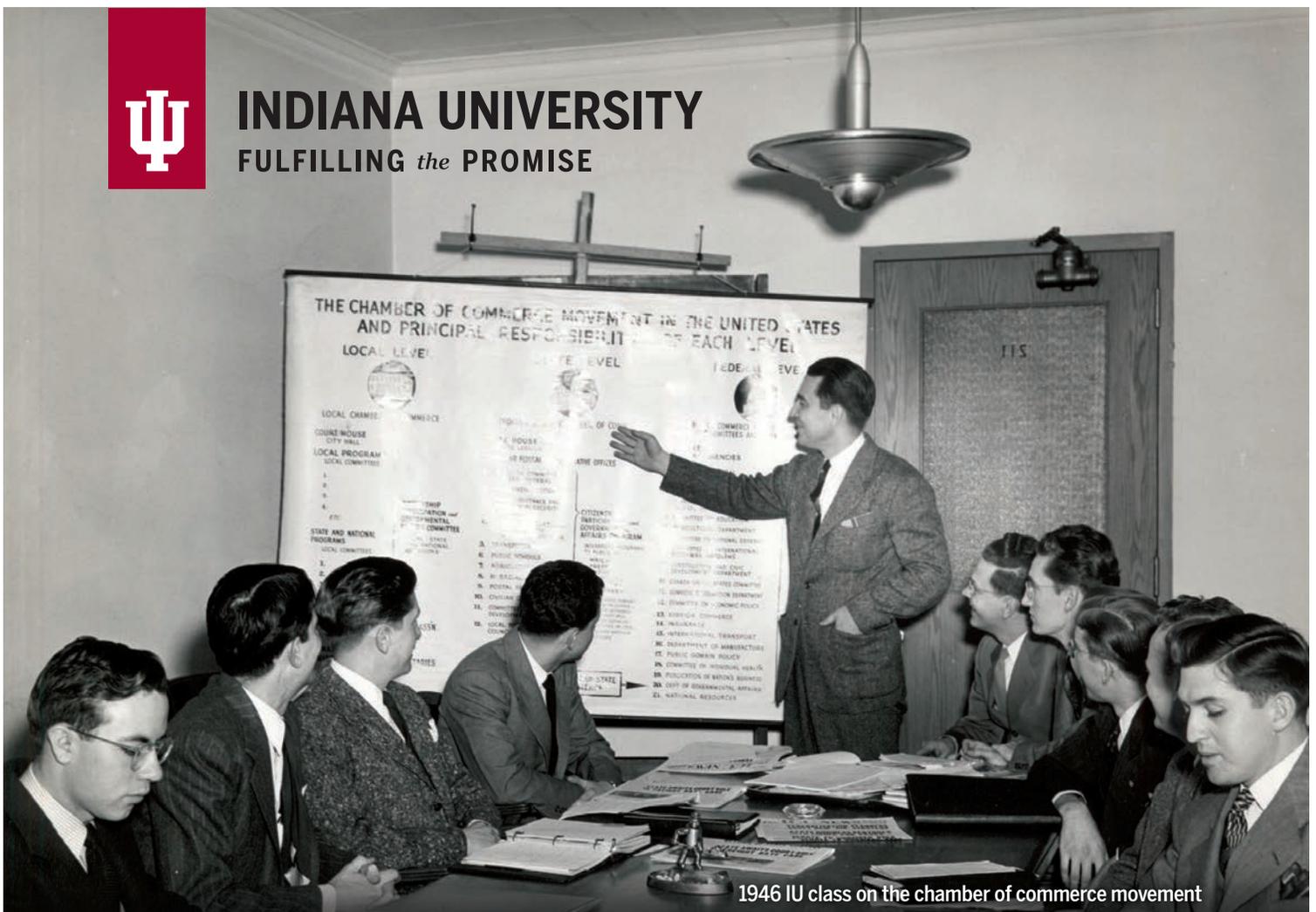
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1946 IU class on the chamber of commerce movement

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on 100 years of success.

**Since 1915**, the Bloomington Chamber of Commerce has been fulfilling its promise to make Bloomington a great place to live and work. IU takes pride in calling Bloomington home.