



Standish Area Chamber of Commerce - 107 N Main Street
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2025 Year in Review Standish Area Chamber of Commerce

Dear Members and Partners,

As we reflect on 2025, the Standish Area Chamber of Commerce is proud to celebrate a year defined by growth, resilience, and renewed community spirit. Throughout the past twelve months, our business community has faced challenges and embraced opportunities, all while working together to strengthen the economic vitality of the Standish area.

This year, we welcomed several new members, hosted successful networking events, and began a program to launch initiatives focused on supporting local entrepreneurs. We have welcomed five new businesses to the area, and hosted five Ribbon Cutting Ceremonies for new businesses in our area.

KFC

Marigolds

The Brook at Eden Fields – Standish

Jay's Fruit Market

Vintage VibeZ

The Chamber has also been able to provide support for our community's non-profit activities.

Arenac Christmas for Kids Golf Outing

Vintage Car Show at the Standish Depot

Standish Historical Depot and Welcome Center's Summer Concert Series

Relay for Life – American Cancer Society

Standish Historical Depot and Welcome Center's 21st Annual Depot Days

Standish Historical Depot and Welcome Center's 6th Annual Santa Parade and Depot Lighting

We instituted monthly Coffee Hours, the first Thursday of the month, 9:30 am – 10:30 am. Area businesses have taken turns hosting. Check the Chamber website or Facebook page for locations. This has been an excellent opportunity to network with other members.

Currently we have 47 paid memberships, having secured 10 new memberships. Our 2026 goals are to:

Add business memberships

Bring back STANDISH STRONG – stay tuned.

We are grateful for your continued support and engagement. The achievements of 2025 would not have been possible without the dedication of our members, volunteers, and community partners. As we look ahead, we remain committed to fostering growth, advocating for business interests, and making Standish an even better place to live and work.

Thank you for being an essential part of our Chamber family. Wishing you a prosperous and joyful 2026!

Sincerely,

The Board of Directors

Meet Your Board

President – Dennis Whitney

I am Dennis Whitney, the Chamber President. My wife, Linda, are “Santa Connections” providing all things Santa for your holidays. We participate in many parades, especially the Santa Parade and Depot Lighting in Standish. I have been a chamber member for several years and currently serve on the board President. I am very involved in our community as a volunteer and board member at the Standish Historical Depot, a member of the DDA and the Rotary Club of Pinconning and Standish. I come from a military family and am a supporter of the Arenac County Veterans Affairs. I love parades, Christmas lights and the American flag and enjoy giving back to the community. You will be seeing more of me in 2025 as I continue promoting your business and our community through the Standish Area Chamber of Commerce.

Vice-President – Curt Hillman

Hello Members, I have been an active member of the Standish Area business community since 1976, working at RO Savage Funeral and more recently, Lee Ramsay Funeral Home – Standish Chapel. In the interim years, I owned Arenac Abstract and Title Company. I also served as a City Council member and Mayor in the 1990’s. I have volunteered as a member and chair of the Downtown Development Authority, the Industrial Corporation, and the Economic Development Corporation (EDC). As Chair of the Standish Historical Depot and Welcome Center, and as your VP, I will continue to promote all business and recreational activities in the Standish Area.

Secretary – Michelle Lee

Hello Chamber Members and Friends,

I grew up in Sterling and am a proud graduate of Standish-Sterling Central. After spending several years working out of state as an engineer, I returned to my roots, purchasing a home in Sterling in 2018. In 2019, I launched my own financial services office through Primerica. I’m passionate

about helping families and small businesses achieve financial freedom. I'm also very excited to be part of the Chamber and continue serving the community that raised me.

Treasurer - Wendy Hillman

I have been in Standish since 1976. Our daughter Karie and son Michael are graduates of Standish Sterling High School. I am a retired nurse and nurse educator, having worked at Standish Community Hospital (MyMichigan Medical Center – Standish Hospital) and Kirtland Community College. I have volunteered for several organizations over the years, most recently the Standish Historic Depot and Welcome Center. I spearhead the Social Media for the Depot (Webpage, Facebook, and the LED sign project). I have several years' experience of managing the accounting for our business, Arenac Abstract and Title Company. As your Treasurer, I will continue to maintain the financial integrity of the Chamber monies. I will also serve as Social Media Manager. Please reach out to me at the Chamber email for any postings on our Webpage or Facebook, or the LED sign at the Depot (for non-profit, community projects/activities).

Director – Mary Baker

I graduated from SSC, joined the Air Force, met my husband of 35 years, and had three children. With the addition of his son from a practice marriage, we have four children (Jeremy, Rachel, Nathan and Nikolas) four “in-law” children (Jo, Joe, Mallory and Emma) and three beautiful granddaughters, Aubrey, Goldie, and Billie.

With many twists, turns and travels around the world, Standish is where we call home.

As a representative of the Arenac County Veterans Affairs Committee, it is an honor to be a part of the Standish Area Chamber of Commerce. With 15 years active duty in the Air Force and 10 years of service in the Veterans Affairs Police Department, I've retired from the law enforcement field and continue to serve veterans as a Peer Specialist on the Suicide Prevention Team.

My hope as a trustee is to be a part of a team filled with ambitious participants striving to get our city and the surrounding area booming with excitement and prosperity!

Although my aspirations to operate a coffee shop here in Standish (The Coffee Break 2004-2007) didn't work out, I learned there are other ways to contribute to our town, and this is one of them.

Director - Derek Wilk

I am a 2019 graduate of Standish Sterling High school and Standish resident. I own *Wilk Entertainment*, which provides professional DJ services to the area and serve as the Head Lighting and Sound Technician for the SSC auditorium activities. I am a car enthusiast and Mustang owner. I enjoy volunteering to make our community a better place. As a volunteer for the Standish Historical Depot, I am a member of the light and decorating department. I actively volunteer for Relay for Life and am looking forward to serving on the Chamber to benefit our community and advance area businesses.