

City of St. Joseph

History

St. Joseph's history began almost 100 years before the American Revolution. In 1679 the explorer LaSalle and his 14 men cleared a piece of land and constructed a fort on the bluff above the St. Joseph River. LaSalle's stay was not long, and the area remained unsettled until 1785 when William Burnett established a trading post and became the first permanent settler.

The Carey Mission Treaty of 1828 opened the area and St. Joseph began to grow in earnest. The settlement grew into a village, which was originally called Newberryport in honor of a prominent businessman. The village grew so rapidly that it was incorporated on March 7, 1834 and was renamed St. Joseph. In 1891 the village officially became the City of St. Joseph. The original name "St. Joseph" was first given to the mission which was established at the mouth of the river about 1700, and designated in the records of the Catholic church as "The Mission of St. Joseph of Lake Michigan." St. Joseph was the patron saint of Canada, or New France, from where Jesuit priests came to convert the Indians. At its first village meeting, \$400 was set for operating funds and a tax was levied. Struggling villagers, unable to pay the tax, dug stumps from village streets at \$.25 per stump in lieu of payment to the village tax collector. The shrewd quickly pulled the small stumps to pay their taxes, while those who were not as ambitious paid a heavier physical toll because they were left with the large, difficult-to-pull stumps.

The City became the permanent seat of County government in 1894. By the 1890's tourists had discovered St. Joseph. Hotels were erected and the Silver Beach Amusement Park was opened not long after. This park remained a popular tourist attraction until the late 1960's. Although no longer an amusement park, Silver Beach is once more a tourist attraction.

Industry also prospered in the City. Steamers, freighters, and pleasure boats found the St. Joseph River to be an ideal Lake Michigan port that continues to the present day.

The City of St. Joseph prospered by encouraging a balanced mixture of industry, commercial, and residential development. This philosophy has not changed and the City continues to offer a high quality of life to all.

Ben King, a well-known nineteenth-century poet, wrote the following poem honoring idyllic St. Joseph....

"Where the thistle-down pauses in search of the rose
And the myrtle and woodvine and wild ivy grows;
Where the catbird pipes up and it sounds most divine
Off there in the branches of some lonely pine;
How oft on its banks I have sunk in a dream,
Where the willows bent over me kissing the stream,
My boat with its nose sort of resting on shore,
While the cat-tails stood guarding a runaway oar;

It appeared like to me, that they sort of had some
Way of knowing that I would soon get overcome,
With the meadow lark singing just over the spot
I didn't care whether I floated or not -
Just resting out there for an hour or so
On the banks of the tranquil old River St. Joe."

From: "The River St. Joe" by Ben King

Observations

St. Joseph is well known for its beautiful location on Lake Michigan, its abundance of beaches and parks, its affluent community, and high-quality public schools. The public services are among the best in the county with excellent police and fire departments, water and sewer lines extended throughout, and 14 beautifully maintained recreational areas. Due to the presence of large employers such as LECO Corporation, Lakeland Regional Health Systems, Whirlpool Corporation and the Berrien County government, the population of St. Joseph nearly triples on the average workday. The City encourages well-balanced commercial within its boundaries. The ideal location of St. Joseph has attracted many second-home buyers, mainly from the Chicago area. The quality of housing units and residential neighborhoods enhance the City's attractive image. The blending of all these characteristics makes the City of St. Joseph one of the most sought-after places in the county in which to live and raise a family.

Taxes

In March 1994, Michigan voters approved a new tax structure (Proposal A). The following table provides a simplistic look at the taxes currently levied within this community. Property tax is based now upon taxable value, not state equalized value.

General Taxes

County - General	4.7723
County - Extra Voted	0.9000
City - General	12.5000
City - Extra Voted	4.2844
Subtotal	22.4567

School Taxes

<i>St. Joseph Public Schools - Berrien County RESA</i>	
State Education Tax	6.0000
School - Operating	18.0000
School - Extra Voted	4.5446
LMC College	1.7854
Berrien RESA - General	0.1745
Berrien RESA - Special Education	2.1954
Subtotal	32.6999

Total Homestead

Total Non-Homestead 55.1566



Government

Municipal Hall

St. Joseph City Hall
700 Broad Street
St. Joseph, MI 49085

Phone: (269) 983-5541
Fax: (269) 985-0346
Website: www.sjcity.com

Council Meetings

Two Mondays Per Month
Start: 6:00 p.m.

County Commissioner

Catherine Thieneman
(District 5)
1417 Newberry Hills
St. Joseph MI 49085
Phone: (269) 983-7103
cathythieneman@hotmail.com

State Governor

Rick Snyder (R)
P.O. Box 30013
Lansing, Michigan 48909
Phone: (517) 373-3400
Fax: (517) 335-6863
Rick.Snyder@michigan.gov

State Senator

John Proos (R), District 21
P. O. Box 30036
Lansing, MI 48909-7536
Phone: (517) 373-6960
Fax: (517) 373-0897
SenJProos@senate.michigan.gov

State Representative

Al Pscholka (R), District 79
Michigan House of Representatives
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909-7514
Phone: (517) 373-1403
Fax: (517) 373-3652
AlPscholka@house.mi.gov

U.S. Representative

Fred Upton, 6th Congressional District
2183 Rayburn H.O.B.
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: (202) 225-3761
Fax: (202) 225-4986
tellupton@mail.house.gov

U.S. Senators

Debbie Stabenow (D)
133 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
Phone: (202) 224-4822
stabenow.senate.gov/email.htm

Carl Levin (D)
269 Russell Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510
Phone: (202) 224-6221
levin.senate.gov/contact/index.cfm
Access via website Contact Center

Public Services

Police

Chief of Police: Mark Clapp
Phone: (269) 983-2571
Sworn Officers: 18
Reserves: 12
RSVP: 14
Number of Cars: 5

Fire

Fire Chief: Al Todd
Phone: (269) 983-4641
Number of Stations: 1
Professional Firemen: 12
Part-Time Paid: 5
Volunteers: 6
Insurance Rate Class: 5

Trash Collection

Best Way Disposal
Phone: (269) 463-3232
Type: Independent
Pick Up Day: Varies
Cost Per Month: Taxed
Recycling: Bi-weekly curbside pick-up
plus a recycling center

Recycling

Berrien County Community Development
Jill Adams, Environmental Specialist
(269) 983-7111 Ext. 8234
Program information available online at
www.berriencounty.org/recycle.
(800) 311-6424

Water

Department of Public Services Water Dept.
Phone: (269) 983-6324 – Billing
Source: Lake Michigan
Capacity: 16,000,000 GPD
(Excess Capacity: 11,000,000 GPD)

Sewer

Department of Public Services Sewer Dept.
Phone: (269) 983-6341
System Type: Activated Sludge
Capacity: 18,000,000 GPD

Telephone

A T & T
Residential Customers (800) 244-4444
Business Customers (800) 660-3000

Gas

Michigan Gas Utilities
1-800-778-3802

Electric

American Electric Power Company
(800) 311-6424



Education

The City of St. Joseph is served by the following school district:

St. Joseph Public Schools
2214 S. State Street
St. Joseph MI 49085
Phone: (269) 982-4621
Enrollment: 2,860

Demographics

All Demographic Information is based upon the 2009 Census Estimate

Population

1980 Census	9,622	
1990 Census	9,214	4.24 % decrease
2000 Census	8,789	4.61 % decrease
2009 Census Estimate	8,491	3.39 % decrease

Personal Income

Median Family	\$72,958
Average per Capita	\$33,034
Median Household	\$491,250

Labor Force

Total Work Force	4,736
Unemployment Rate	5.6 %

Principal Economic Base Employers

Berrien County Government.....	677 Employees
Hoffman Die Cast.....	170 Employees
IPC Print Services.....	215 Employees
Lakeland Regional Health.....	3600 Employees
Leco Corporation.....	600 Employees
Vail Rubber Works.....	120 Employees

Housing

Number of Dwellings	4,157
Owner Occupied	3,435
Renter Occupied	400
Median Rent	\$870
Median Home Value	\$156,100

Building Permits – 2010

	Number Issued	Dollar Amount
Residential	4	\$524,200.00
Commercial	22	\$920,654.00
Other	323	\$1,862,336.00
Total	349	\$3,307,190.00

Economic Development

Berrien County Community Development
701 Main Street
St. Joseph, Michigan 49085
Contact: Daniel Fette, Director
Phone: (269) 983-7111, Ext. 8617

Cornerstone Alliance
38 West Wall Street, P.O. Box 428
Benton Harbor, MI 49023
Contact: Wendy Dant-Chesser, Exec VP
Phone: (269) 925-6100



This Community Snapshot has been prepared by the Berrien County Community Development Department. For more detailed information on services available in Berrien County, please visit our website at www.berriencounty.org/CommunityDevelopment.

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information. However, as data is constantly changing, Berrien County will be held harmless for any omissions or errors contained herein.