



Big changes are happening at Lafayette! After 21 years leading the organization, **Rob Libera** is officially retiring as CEO/Executive Director. Don't worry—he's not disappearing! Rob will continue to consult and stay involved (we wouldn't have it any other way), but the close of this year marks the start of his well-earned "**Robtirement**."

Stepping into the role of CEO is someone very familiar to all of us—**Stacey Elster**. Stacey has been part of Lafayette's leadership team for years, and there's no one better suited to take the helm. Her creativity, energy, and vision have helped shape many of the programs that make Lafayette what it is today. She's passionate about our employees, families, and staff, and she's ready to keep building on the strong foundation Rob helped create.

Under Rob's leadership, Lafayette grew from one workshop to three, launched *STEPUP* and the new Legacy program, and became known throughout the region as a leader in employment and opportunity for adults with developmental disabilities. He's guided Lafayette through times of change and growth, always keeping people at the heart of every decision.

As we turn the page, we're excited about what's next. Stacey will continue the mission with the same heart and purpose that have defined Lafayette for nearly 50 years—helping people build dreams, create opportunities, and find joy in meaningful work.



Now it's our turn to celebrate this exciting transition. Join us at our upcoming Open House as we thank Rob for more than two decades of dedication, leadership, and laughter—and as we welcome Stacey into her new role as CEO. Stop by to share a story, say congratulations, and help us honor Rob's "**Robtirement**" celebrating the beginning of Stacey's leadership. (*See inside this issue for full Open House details.*)



Rob Libera

CEO & Executive Director
rlibera@lafayetteindustries.com

Mission: The mission of Lafayette Industries is to provide employment opportunities to persons with developmental disabilities and to persons with other disabilities who are 18 years or older.

Goals: ♦ To provide a meaningful and productive work experience to persons who are disabled ♦ To maintain a safe and pleasant work environment ♦ To teach and to train persons with disabilities to acquire better work habits ♦ To enhance self-worth and dignity through employment ♦ To provide high-quality business service through packaging, light assembly and commercial mailings ♦ To operate the center in a professional, fiscally responsible manner ♦ To provide fair wages and good benefits

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO OUR DECEMBER FOLKS!!

NORTH

Markus	Allen	1
Lois	Ross	1
Tim	Hubbard	3
James	Nelson	3
Michael	Sweeney	3
Tina	Tackett	5
Jamika	Jones	10
Tiffany	Sudin	10
Angela	Taylor	12
Glen	Moore	14
Sheila	Zigrye	16
Torrey	Watson	19
Christina	Sanders	26
Glendall	Davis	29

WEST

Daniel	Zeller	1			
Atul	Kakaiya	7	Camille	Lawrence	17
Ian	Wainz	7	Jeffrey	Beckerle	18
Vicky	James	10	Mackenzie	Carr	19
Keenan	Retzlaff	12	Daniel	Scholl	26
Anna	Walters	13	Samantha	Behlmann	29
Elizabeth	Goodwin	14	Emily	Prado	29
Matt	Berry	16	Grace	Quinn	30

JEFFCO

Sara	Smith	10
Kimberly	Carter	15
Norman	Wooldridge	25



WINTER EARLY ARRIVAL

Winter is coming soon so it's important that you dress warmly. If you arrive before normal business hours in the mornings and it is excessively cold, **please wait to drop-off until the building opens at 7:30 am.** This is particularly important as we cannot open the doors to employees before that time. Make sure to dress appropriately for the weather and stay safe



SAFETY THOUGHTS FOR DECEMBER 2025

By Tom Heitert (The Safety Guru)

HI-YAH!!

The Safety Captain has long thought that he should enroll our daughter, and now her daughter and son in a martial arts class. I have yet to do so. Schedules and procrastination have managed to stymie that from occurring. I believe it would build confidence and would give them some ability to protect themselves. I am in the early stages of researching what type would be best for them. There are so many different ones. The following is what I have learned so far.

#1 Self-defense classes CAN be an effective way to empower people with the skills, confidence, and mindset needed to protect themselves in potentially dangerous situations.

#2 Traditional martial art classes focus on traditional techniques, form, and sparring. But they may not offer real world applications. A scenario of a surprise attack for instance, or multiple assailants for another.

#3 MMA or Mixed Martial Arts offer a more well-rounded focus, showing striking movements and grappling. These don't include a lot of real world applications either.

#4 Krav Maga is interesting. It has been developed by the Israeli Defense Forces. It teaches how to defend against armed and unarmed assailants. It emphasizes instinctive movements, situational awareness, and the use of everyday objects as weapons.

There are some psychological benefits to taking one of these courses. They increase self-confidence, they give you enhanced situational awareness, improved mental resilience, reduced fear and anxiety, and provide development of assertiveness skills.

Choosing the classes that are best for you will require some research. Researching instructors and programs is job one. Assessing the class structure and content will be next. Does it cover both the physical and the psychological components? Attending a trial class would be excellent if allowed. Finally, evaluate the comfort level and the environment.

SAFETY IS NO ACCIDENT - MORE LATER!



Join Lafayette as we Celebrate Rob Libera's “Robtirement”

January 16, 2026

Open House 12-2 pm.

snacks and refreshments available
throughout

Lafayette Industries

179 Gaywood Drive
Manchester, MO 63021

Please rsvp to rsvp@lafayetteindustries.com



JOIN US FOR SUPPER *BENEFITING*



December 8th – December 11th
4:30PM to 7:00PM

25% OF SALES DONATED

210 N Kirkwood Road, Kirkwood, MO 63122

Lafayette Industries presents:

GLEE CLUB

Rhythm Hunters



Come out and enjoy
some live music,
dance performances,
and holiday tunes!

December 3, 2025

**Manchester United Methodist Church
129 Woods Mill Rd, Manchester, MO 63011**

6:30–7 pm Refreshments and Art Show

7–7:30 pm Glee Club Concert

In cooperation with **Music Therapy St. Louis**



ESTHER AND MARX ADVANCE TO STATE SPECIAL OLYMPICS

By Ellen Esther (Proud Lafayette Parent)

James Esther and Jason Marx brought home the Gold for Lafayette West in bowling in the Men's Doubles competition at the regional Special Olympics on Saturday, November 8th. They will participate in the state competition in January

VACATION REMINDER

If you have any vacation days left for the year, use them soon. You have until the end of the month. Any vacation that is left unused after the end of the year will be lost and your vacation time will reset for the new year. Use your time wisely and the most important thing of all, enjoy it! Thank you all for your hard work



MANCHESTER METHODIST MEN'S CLUB TREE LOT

The Manchester Methodist Men's Club operates a Christmas Tree Lot starting the day after Thanksgiving, supported by more than 200 youth and adult volunteers.

Proceeds from the sale of 1,500 trees directly benefit non-profit organizations—like ours—serving communities across the St. Louis Metro Area.

We invite you to stop by, pick out a beautiful tree, and support a great cause. The lot is conveniently located on Manchester Road near Highway 141 in Manchester, MO 63011.



RYAN PRESTON'S UNIVERSAL STUDIOS TRIP

On November 7, Ryan Preston went with family to Universal Studios in Orlando Florida for a fun vacation and a family wedding. Lafayette would like to extend a big congratulations to the family and we hope they had as much fun as these pictures suggest.



NOVEMBER CAUGHT YA'S

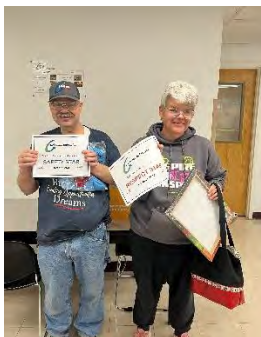


West Caught Showing Respect

L to R: Danielle B., Suzy M., John L., Rob Libera (Staff)

West Caught Being Safe

L to R: Oanhna Thach (Staff) Dan Mauer (Staff), Richard H., Mackenzie C., Lydia O., Rob Libera (Staff)



JeffCo Caught Being Safe and Respectful

Mike Kelly and Cathy Schmid

North Caught being Safe and Respectful

Vaughan Caldwell

Demitri Jamison





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4621 World Parkway Circle, Berkeley, Missouri 63134
2065 Pomme Road, Arnold, MO 63010
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December 2, 2025

Last week's Thanksgiving celebration reminded us of the importance of gratitude, and now we look forward to sharing gifts and joy with loved ones during the upcoming holiday season. We are especially thankful for the opportunities that employment provides, and for the fulfillment our daughter Claire has experienced as part of Lafayette Industries.

For the past 12+ years, Claire has started her weekdays getting up at 6 am, getting ready for the day excited to help her team achieve their goals. When asked before she leaves for work what she is going to do that day she says "Listen, work hard and have fun". Every evening, she tells us about the work she did, whether the team succeeded, and what's coming next. Claire is proud of her Safety and Respect stickers and enjoys explaining how she and her peers earned them.

Claire has developed strong relationships with both her fellow employees and the staff over the years. She feels sincerely grateful for everyone at Lafayette Industries, and we are also appreciative of the staff who make each employee's job rewarding and meaningful.

To show appreciation for the staff's valuable contributions, we invite you to thank them during the holiday season. You might even consider offering a small gift to brighten their holidays this year.

If you wish to contribute, any amount is appreciated—\$30 is suggested. Please write your check out to *Lafayette Industries* with **Bonus** noted on the memo line. For cash donations, place it in a sealed envelope with your name and **Bonus** written on the outside. Alternatively, you can give online at lafayetteindustries.com. Use the **DONATE NOW** link; in the **Please Pick a Campaign to Support** box near the bottom of the page, click the downward arrow and select **Bonus**.

Best wishes for a happy holiday and prosperous New Year,

Cathy and Ray Gardiner

(Proud parents of Claire Gardiner, Co-Host of the Monthly Anniversary Awards)

DECEMBER 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3	4	5 JeffCo Holiday Breakfast	6
7	8	9	10 PAY DAY	11	12 North's Annual Holiday Pancake Breakfast – 7:30-10a (will serve as our only Free Lunch)	13
14	15	16	17	18	19 West Holiday Party at First Free Church on 1375 Carman Rd., Ballwin, 63021 11:30a – 1:00p (will serve as our only Free Lunch)	20
21	22	23 PAY DAY	24 HOLIDAY EVE <u>ALL</u> WORKSHOPS CLOSED	25 HAPPY HOLIDAY!! <u>ALL</u> WORKSHOPS CLOSED	26 POST HOLIDAY <u>ALL</u> WORKSHOPS CLOSED	27
28	29 NORTH AND WEST ARE OPEN JEFFCO CLOSED	30 NORTH AND WEST ARE OPEN JEFFCO CLOSED	31 New Year's Eve North and West are <u>open!</u> North – Closing at 1:00p West – Closing at 2:30 pm JEFFCO CLOSED	January 1 <u>ALL</u> WORK- SHOPS CLOSED		



North Location 2026 Holiday Schedule

Paid Holidays in Green
Early Dismissals in Orange

<u>HOLIDAY</u>	<u>DATE CELEBRATED</u>	<u>SCHEDULE</u>
New Year's Day 2026	Thursday, January 1	Closed
<i>Martin Luther King Jr. Day – Monday, January 19</i> <i>Lafayette open – No OATS – Plan transportation accordingly</i>		
<i>President's Day – Monday, February 16</i> <i>Lafayette open – No OATS – Plan transportation accordingly</i>		
Memorial Day	Monday, May 25	Closed
<i>Juneteenth – Friday, June 19</i> <i>Lafayette open – No OATS – Plan transportation accordingly</i>		
Independence Day Before	Thursday, July 2	Leaving early 1:00
Independence Day (Observed)	Friday, July 3	Closed
Labor Day	Monday, September 7	Closed
<i>Columbus/Indigenous Peoples' Day – Monday, October 12</i> <i>Lafayette open – No OATS – Plan transportation accordingly</i>		
<i>Veterans Day – Wednesday, November 11</i> <i>Lafayette open – No OATS – Plan transportation accordingly</i>		
Thanksgiving Day Before	Wednesday, November 25	Leaving early 1:00
Thanksgiving Day	Thursday, November 26	Closed
Day after Thanksgiving	Friday, November 27	Closed
Christmas Eve Day Before	Wednesday, December 23	Leaving Early 1:00
Christmas Eve	Thursday, December 24	Closed
Christmas Day	Friday, December 25	Closed
New Year's Eve 2026	Thursday, December 31	Leaving early 1:00
New Year's Day 2027	Friday, January 1	Closed



West & JeffCo Locations 2026 Holiday Schedule

Paid Holidays in Green
Early Dismissals in Orange

<u>HOLIDAY</u>	<u>DATE CELEBRATED</u>	<u>SCHEDULE</u>
New Year's Day 2026	Thursday, January 1	Closed
<i>Martin Luther King Jr. Day – Monday, January 19</i>		
<i>Lafayette open – No OATS/JC TRANSIT – Plan transportation accordingly</i>		
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