

2026



America's 250th

La Porte 4th of July Parade



Generations of
FREEDOM



HAPPY 4TH OF JULY!



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Happy 250th Birthday, America!

For one special day each year, Lincolnway becomes more than a street in downtown La Porte—it becomes a gathering place for multiple generations. Today, as we celebrate America’s 250th birthday and our own 80th La Porte 4th of July Parade, we are reminded that the strength of both our nation and community are found in their people, the ones who come together to serve, celebrate, and carry traditions forward.

Some in the crowd today are experiencing this parade for the very first time. Others remember attending as children, later bringing their own families to the curbside with lawn chairs, blankets, and stories from years gone by. For 80 years, this parade has connected neighbors, families, veterans, businesses, organizations, and visitors through a shared love of country and community. That connection inspired this year’s theme: **Generations of Freedom.**

As America marks two and a half centuries of independence, we honor the generations who built this nation with courage, sacrifice, hard work, and hope. We celebrate the freedoms protected by those who served before us, the opportunities we enjoy today, and the responsibility we share to leave a stronger future for those who follow. Freedom is not found in history books or on monuments – it lives on in communities like La Porte, where traditions endure because people continue showing up for one another, year after year.

Today’s celebration begins with a jet flyover overhead, anticipated between 10:15 and 10:30 a.m., followed by the sights and sounds that make this parade a cherished tradition: marching bands, creative floats, veterans, dignitaries, classic vehicles, community groups, and countless smiling faces making their way down Lincolnway. Every entry reflects the pride, creativity, and spirit that continue to define La Porte.

The Kiwanis Club of La Porte is honored to organize this event and continue a tradition that has become part of our city’s identity. We are deeply grateful to our sponsors, volunteers, first responders, city departments, parade participants, and supporters whose generosity and dedication make today possible. Their service reflects the very best of what community means.

As you enjoy today’s celebration, we hope you take a moment to appreciate the generations beside you – the grandparents sharing stories, the parents creating memories, and the excited children who will one day continue these traditions themselves. Together, they are living the unfolding story of both America and La Porte.

From all of us at the Kiwanis Club of La Porte, thank you for being part of this historic celebration. May this 80th La Porte 4th of July Parade remind us of all that freedom grows stronger when it is shared across generations.

Bob

Bob Taschler
Kiwanis President
Parade Chair

Penny

Penny Thomas
Kiwanis Vice President
Parade Co-Chair





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City of La Porte is Capital for the Day



Since the mid-1940s, the City of La Porte has been recognized for its excellence in 4th of July celebrations. This year is the 80th year in which the sitting Governor of the State of Indiana has seen fit to name the City of La Porte, "Capital for the Day". Thanks to its citizenry, which lines the 2 1/2-mile-long parade route, La Porte continues to rise above the rest. As written in the Proclamation:

- **Whereas**, July 4th is a day set aside for celebration and renewed dedication to the principles of our priceless American heritage; and
- **Whereas**, July 4th, 2026, marks America's 250th Birthday, the mantle of responsibility for the continuation of our free nation rests on the shoulders of every American citizen; and
- **Whereas**, the strength and progress of our nation will remain strong only through continued vigilance, education and commitment to the preservation of our legacy of liberty and justice for all; and
- **Whereas**, as citizens of the 19th State to be admitted to the Union, Hoosiers are enthusiastic celebrants of our National Day of Independence; and
- **Whereas**, the Kiwanis Club of La Porte seeks to encourage such recognition and respect for the traditions and principles of our American heritage with this year's celebration theme, "Generations of Freedom".

Now, therefore, I, Mike Braun, Governor of the State of Indiana, do hereby proclaim July 4th, 2026, as **City of La Porte Capital for the Day...**

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GRAND CELEBRATION MARSHALS

Russ & Judy Bernacchi



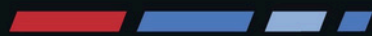
In 1906, three young teenage boys, Angelo, Gino, and Vic Bernacchi traveled from Italy to pursue their American dreams. Who knew that multiple generations of this family would impact La Porte County through flowers and produce for over 120 years? Angelo and his wife, Enis, had 7 sons, one of whom was Joseph. Joseph originated the Bernacchi's Oak Valley Greenhouses we know today and with his wife, Mary, had 3 children, one of which was Russ. He and his wife, Judy, we celebrate today. These families persevered through various iterations of growing and selling, different businesses for different families, and lots of adapting to economic conditions, innovation, and opportunity.. Raising four children and married for 58 years, Russ and Judy now work closely with their children, especially Kristine Lebo , who is the newest owner (since 2018) of the business. And now Kristine's daughter, Sadie, joins the lineage of family playing a role across five generations. In addition, Russ and Judy's daughter, Sarah Bernacchi works hand-in-hand with Kristine adding her expertise in native plants and sustainability. Russ and Judy have 2 more children,

Anthony and Amata, who are also still involved on a part-time basis. For family businesses, there are many hurdles to overcome in one generation, let alone five, and they all realize they are among the last of their kind. Small businesses, especially family businesses, with personable customer service are disappearing. The family remains grateful for decades of community support and loyal customers.

JULY 4 | LA PORTE, IN

Happy Fourth of July

From your neighbors at Sera Group



Wishing La Porte a bright, safe, and happy Independence Day. Enjoy the parade!

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PROUDLY LOCAL

In Celebration of La Porte's 80th Parade!

Parades have long been a staple in La Porte history, drawing residents and tourists who celebrate together. Dating back to the late 1800s, we find references of how those early days were highly anticipated community-wide experiences:

"The impressive parade was led by four marshals dressed in white uniforms on horseback. In the afternoon there would be baseball games. There was a balloon ascension, a parachute leap, a fiddlers contest, a Japanese juggling slack wire performance and trick bicycle riding to round out one's day of entertainment in the 'Maple City.'" (wrhistoricalsociety.com)

Despite great early energy and support, it is believed a hiatus was caused by World Wars and the Great Depression. The parade was finally revived through the efforts of the La Porte Jaycees (Junior Chamber of Commerce) in 1946, and their ongoing commitment brought it to life for decades until the Kiwanis Club of La Porte caught the baton in 2021. The Kiwanis Club is proud to pick up the mantle and relies not only on its membership for volunteers, but also on valuable community sponsors and entries to inspire each year's parade.

The Thaddeus C. Gallery is featuring its fourth poster in a series entitled, "La Porte Traditions." All of these posters were created in collaboration with Handel Design. Artist Laura Cutler created the original painting for the poster, with graphic art by Deb Handel. The Drum Major in the image is inspired by Zach Kabacinski, the La Porte Slicers drum major in 2023, and is titled "La Porte Proud". Join us in celebrating 80 years!



Available for purchase at
<https://www.thaddeusc.com/shop>



Microsoft

GRAND PARADE MARSHAL

Jim Roy, Owner/President of The Floor Store



Jim Roy, owner of The Floor Store, is a lifelong La Portean, and for the last 25 years, he's made flags his focus. What began as a desire to show support for our country after 9/11 by providing 90 flags out on Boyd Boulevard and East Lincolnway has evolved into providing flags for the rest of the city and beyond. In celebration of the 250th anniversary of the country, his county-wide approach includes nearly 1,400 flags with 750 lining La Porte streets, 450 for Michigan City, and groups of 10-40 flags in most of the outlying communities, depending on size. Each year, this project involves purchasing all new flags, bands, and brackets. His team at The Floor Store puts everything together with the poles. He also includes a number of flags specific to the Armed Forces: EMT (green), Fire (red), Police (blue) and this year, 250th Anniversary Flags for the overpass! The flags go up around Memorial Day and decorate our communities all summer. His purpose is simply to make people feel good when they see the flags lining the streets.

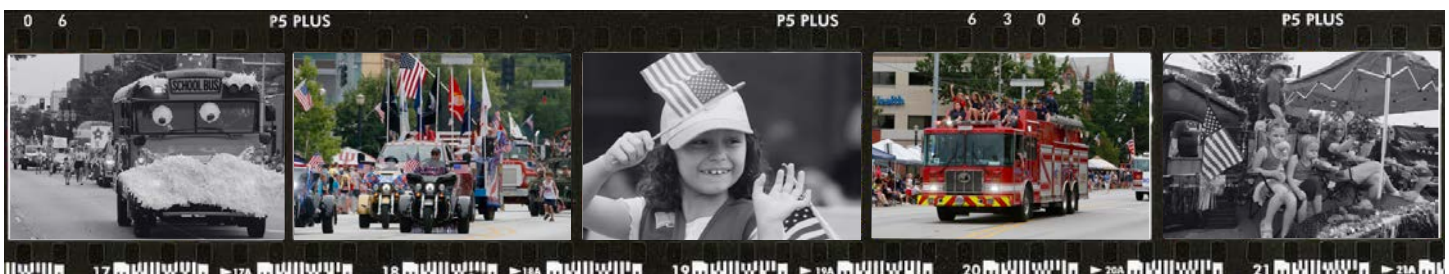
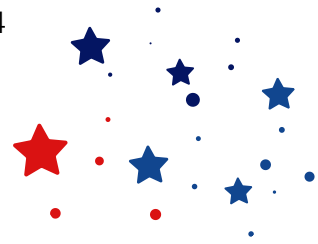
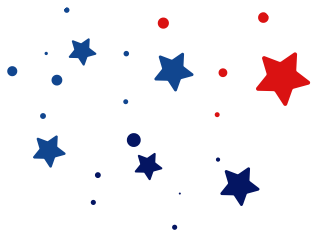
Jim Roy has supported 4-H auctions and fundraising for 40 years. He says that 4-H "builds something in our kids and changes them." He's also been donating to the work around Pioneer Land for decades. In recognition of his consistent efforts to make a difference, Roy was awarded the "Key to the City" in 2013 and recently saw "Jim Roy Day" declared in June 2025, adding to his many other awards over the years.



2026 PARADE LINEUP

As of June 24, 2026

1. Lasalle Council Scouting USA
2. Vietnam Veterans Inc., La Porte, IN
3. Veterans of Foreign Wars Post #1130, La Porte IN
4. American Legion Post 83
5. TBD
6. The Great Lakes Museum of Military History
7. Guardian Riders
8. City of La Porte Mayor Tom Dermody
9. The La Porte City Band
10. Indiana State Police
11. Westville Correctional Facility ERO
12. La Porte County Sheriff's Office
13. La Porte County Sheriff's Office Mounted Posse
14. La Porte County EMS
15. La Porte City Police Dept.
16. La Porte City Fire Dept.
17. Kingsbury Volunteer Fire Dept.
18. Kankakee Township Volunteer Fire Dept.
19. Kingsford Union Fire Dept.
20. Coolspring Township Volunteer Fire Dept.
21. Lincoln Township Volunteer Fire Dept.
22. Center Township Volunteer Fire Dept.
23. Noble Township Volunteer Fire Dept.'s 80th Anniversary
24. Scipio Township Volunteer Fire Dept.
25. Springfield Township Volunteer Fire Dept.
26. Pleasant Township Volunteer Fire Dept.
27. Westville Volunteer Fire Dept.
28. MC Doors
29. La Porte City Boxing/PNA Club
30. Michiana Clowns
31. La Porte High School Marching Band
32. La Porte Lacrosse
33. **Grand Celebration Marshal Russ & Judy Bernacchi**
34. La Porte High School Cheerleading
35. Door Village Harvest Festival
36. Gann Mechanical
37. Girl Scouts of La Porte
38. Classic Model A
39. State Representative Jim Pressel
40. GoMetz Farm
41. La Porte County Parks Dept.
42. Edison Eagle Squadron Marching Band
43. Kiwanis Club of La Porte - Declaration of Independence
44. Greater La Porte Pop Warner
45. La Porte Invitational-Premier High School Basketball Event
46. La Porte County Democrats
47. South Central High School Rockettes
48. Bougie the Clown
49. La Porte Lions Club - America Roaring at 250
50. Orak Shrine
51. 1956 Ford Thunderbird
52. Polish Falcons Nest 564



2026 PARADE LINEUP

As of June 24, 2026

- 53. La Porte County Family YMCA
- 54. Iron Horse Saloon
- 55. La Porte Community Federal Credit Union
- 56. Smokey Stovers Foo Mobile
- 57. La Porte County Meals on Wheels
- 58. Collins Celebration Creations LLC
- 59. New Prairie Marching Cougars
- 60. New Prairie Middle & High School Cheerleaders
- 61. **Grand Parade Marshal - Jim Roy, Owner/President of The Floor Store**
- 62. Works in Motion Dance Company
- 63. Centier Bank
- 64. La Porte Municipal Airport
- 65. E-Pak Machinery
- 66. La Porte County Sunday Farmers
- 67. Rumley Allis-Chalmers La Porte Heritage Center
- 68. La Porte High School Dance Team
- 69. The Salvation Army
- 70. Reform Pilates Studio
- 71. Diaz Construction & Roofing LLC
- 72. La Porte County 4-H Z-Z Riders Drill Team
- 73. La Porte High School Class of 1966
- 74. Swanson Center
- 75. La Porte United States Postal Service
- 76. Horizon Bank Radio Flyer Wagon
- 77. Mangled Axles Jeep Krew
- 78. Santa Parade Float
- 79. McColly Real Estate
- 80. La Porte Assembly of God
- 81. Michigan City High School Wolfpack Pride
- 82. XINSURANCE Great Lakes Grand Prix - Logan's Heroes
- 83. La Porte County Republican Party
- 84. La Porte County Commissioner Joe Haney
- 85. Elevate Athletics
- 86. Pioneer Land
- 87. La Porte County Agriculture Association
- 88. 2026 La Porte County Fair Queen Contestants
- 89. Arts in the Park
- 90. Culver's of La Porte
- 91. Right to Life of Northwest Indiana
- 92. Judge Jaime Oss
- 93. NG Lawncare LLC
- 94. Ralphs Auto Parts & Cores
- 95. Immediate Movers & Storage
- 96. Andrew Coates Racing LaPorte Indiana
- 97. Robert Tyлиз Appliance
- 98. City Zoom - O'Hare Transportation Shuttle Service
- 99. Warrior's Oath VMC of Plymouth
- 100. LifeWise Academy
- 101. Chaoticon Anime & Pop Culture Con
- 102. Night of Destruction Crew - New Paris Speedway
- 103. Waste Management



Scan for
Most
Current Lineup

Portable Toilets

- 2 at Bigby Coffee up front by the corner
- 2 in Horizon Bank parking lot
- 2 at corner of Lincolnway by the Northwest Health Bldg
- 2 in Flagstar Bank parking lot
- 2 at Archie's restaurant property





FLYOVERS

Last year we were fortunate to have multiple flyovers, and once again, we encourage you to look to the skies for those amazing jets and planes that have become a staple of our 4th of July parades! We gratefully receive our military F-16 jet flyover from our own Indiana Air National Guard out of Fort Wayne, Indiana.



But did you know, at a time when the government sequestered military flights for parades, Stuart Glenn was asked to fly the La Porte Parade, and he says he jumped at the opportunity, bringing his passion for flight and his 1956 A model T34 to our local audience for many years now! The Kiwanis Club and the community of La Porte are grateful for his generosity and patriotism as it adds much to the excitement of our 4th of July.

LAPORTE PROUD!

Kabelin **ACE**



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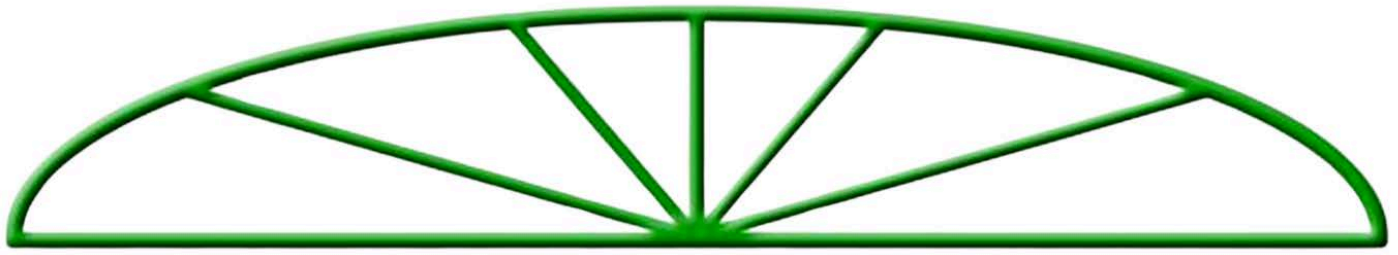
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La Porte: A Community that Comes Together!

Beyond our sponsors, the parade doesn't happen without a lot of support from our Kiwanians, other community-minded individuals, and generous local businesses!

- **Kiwanis Parade Committee** - prioritizing the planning and stepping up in big and small ways
- **Kiwanians** - committees prioritizing the Run for Riley and creating the Kiwanis Club of La Porte float
- **Kiwanians and Volunteers** - logistics, sponsorships, communications, social media, accounting, design and preparation of the parade sponsor book, starters, and road rangers
- **Big Comedy La Porte** - support for small businesses layout on back cover
- **Bob Wellinski and others** - various photographs generously shared for public use over the years
- **Auto Park Ford of La Porte** - use of a van to distribute all the program booklets along parade route
- **Al Ott & LPHS Girls Basketball Team** - Trash Box Distribution, year after year
- **Packaging Logic** - generous ongoing contributions of all the cardboard trash boxes that line the route
- **Waste Management** - Trash Box Pick Up - always dependable
- **Hawkins Print Shop** - support for parade sponsor book printing
- **Haynes International** - custom made medals by Haynes with lanyards gifted for Run for Riley winners
- **Urban Enterprise Association** (UEA) grant award - financial support and encouragement
- **City of La Porte** - assistance with road closures, police protection, proclamation request, security, emergency preparedness, and more
- **Flyovers** - Indiana Air National Guard with F16s & Stuart G. Glenn with his own T-34A "Mentor"

If anyone was forgotten, please know it is our desire to thank one and all who helped make today possible!

Kids need Kiwanis, and Kiwanis needs you!

www.kiwaniscluboflaporte.org



Happy Fourth of July!



ALCO | **ACCESS**
LA PORTE COUNTY
www.accesslaportecounty.org

You're at the LaPorte 4th of July Parade? So are we!
We will have the replay of today's parade available for you to enjoy tomorrow night (or anytime after!).

Where to watch:
Comcast Cable Channel 97 and 99 in
Michigan City and LaPorte
(Guaranteed Showing on Sunday, July 5 at 7 p.m.)

Streaming on our website at www.accesslaportecounty.org
(Guaranteed Showing on Sunday, July 5 at 7 p.m.)

Watch it anytime at our YouTube Channel
[@AccessLaPorteCountyMedia](https://www.youtube.com/@AccessLaPorteCountyMedia)
(Available on or before Sunday, July 5 at 7 p.m.)



**Riley
Children's
Foundation**

Indiana Kiwanians have supported the work of Riley Hospital for Children in Indianapolis for over 100 years, and the La Porte Kiwanis Club has been repeatedly acknowledged for its long commitment to fundraising support and generous donations to Riley. The Kiwanis Club of La Porte organizes the 4th of July "Run for Riley" to occur right before the parade along the parade route. 100% of net proceeds from the run are directed to Riley. Last year, this event created a donation to the Riley Children's Hospital in excess of \$8,000!



Kiwanis
CLUB OF LA PORTE



What if you joined the Kiwanis Club of La Porte?

The Kiwanis Club of La Porte is proud to support the projects and organizations that contribute to the health and quality of life for children in our community and beyond where our goal this year has been 24K Gold and Blue impact targeting the contribution of 24 donations and 24 acts of service within our club.

- **Two Wednesday meetings a month (at noon)**
- **4th of July Parade planning and coordinating**
- **Spring pancake breakfast - free to the community**
- **Pop-up picnics at area parks - free to the community**
- **Student-led clubs in our schools - sponsored by Kiwanis**
- **Shenanigans and new friends**
- **Fundraisers like "Radio Days", an annual golf outing, and the Run for Riley (see above)**
- **Impactful financial donations to youth-related organizations and programs serving La Porte (see below)**

Contact Kiwanis Club of La Porte President, Trudy Menke, at kiwaniscluboflaporte@gmail.com and/or visit our website at Kiwaniscluboflaporte.org to download an application.



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Thanks to the generous support of the Kiwanis Club of La Porte, our new innovative outreach vehicle is bringing YMCA programs, activities, resources, and opportunities directly to neighborhoods and families across La Porte County. This vehicle will help us reach more people and strengthen connections throughout our community.

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& Framing
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Pl. #4

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La Porte Seamless
Gutter
1520 Lake St.

#15
Cannon's
Automotive
Service+
710 Tyler St.

#14
Generations
Hair Salon
428 Perry St.

#13
Danny's
Fireworks
1006 Lincolnway

#12
LaPorte Firehouse
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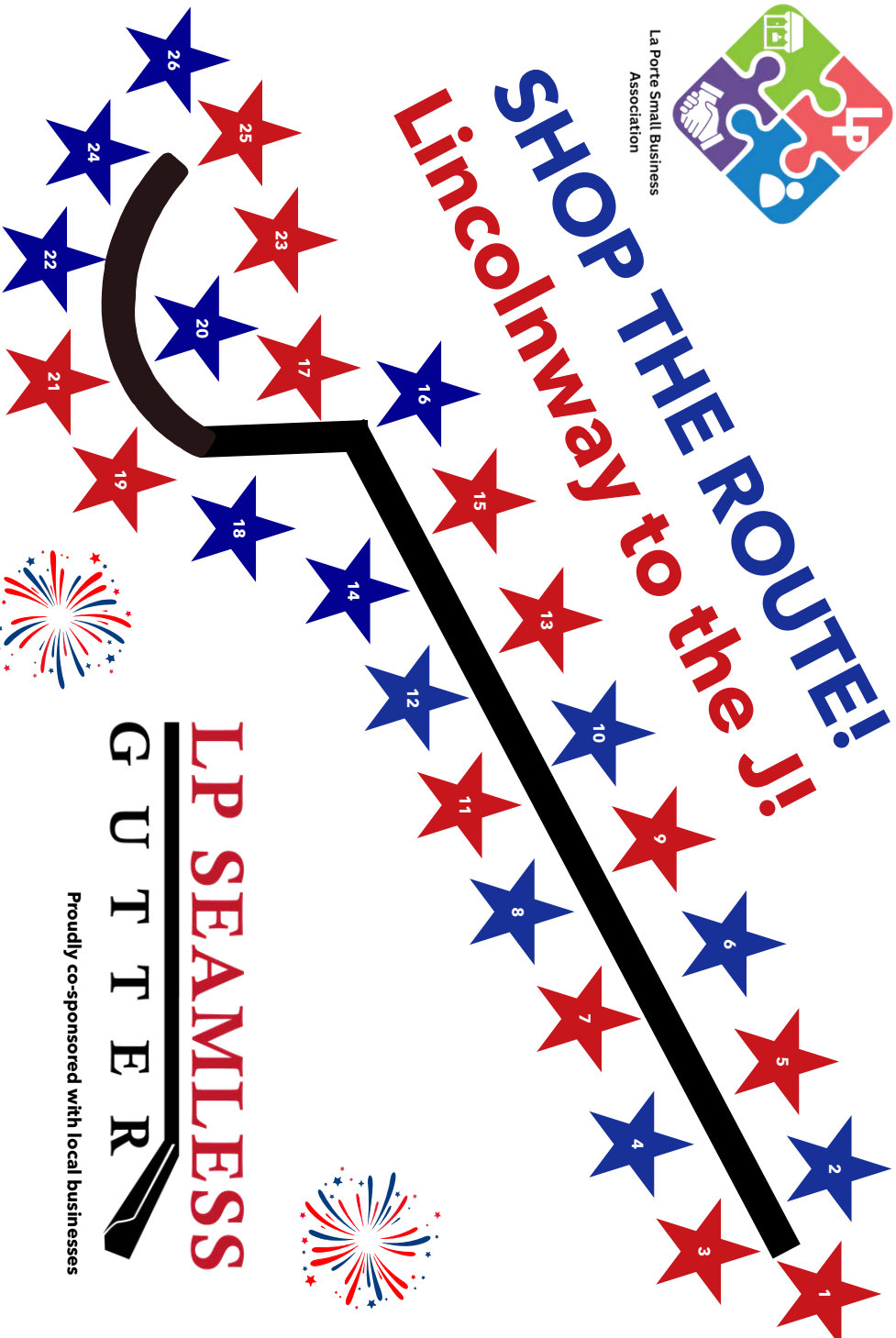
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& Catering
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