



Mary Jo Orłowski, director of the Michigan City Area Chamber of Commerce, right, awards a raffle prize during the Chamber's annual Biz Expo.

Getting a piece of the action



Photos by Jessica O'Brien

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By JESSICA O'BRIEN - Staff Writer

Stephan Kowalczyk has been playing the accordion for decades and, as someone who teaches others how to play, says there has been a resurgence of interest in the instrument.

Recently, he has been looking for a way to boost his business and make it easier for prospective students to find him – and considered creating a website.

His mission was accomplished Thursday at the Michigan City Area Chamber of Commerce's annual Biz Expo held at Blue Chip Casino.

There Kowalczyk happened upon the booth of JM2 Webdesigners, where owner John Marx said he could absolutely help Kowalczyk with his business needs.

"We do a ton of web design," Marx said. "We release three to five sites per week."

This was just one of many such connections made during the business expo, and Chamber director Mary Jo Orłowski said this was exactly the purpose of the annual event – for people to socialize, network and make connections with local business professionals.

The goal was to connect businesses with other businesses, and businesses with the community, so people would become more aware of the products and services available in this area.

"I know there have been some really meaningful leads that have come out of these events," Orłowski said. "Even if the businesses only get one (lead) in terms of meaningful business, it's worth being a part of."

About 40 businesses exhibited this year – which was on par with last year's numbers, Orłowski said. She heard from one exhibitor who really enjoyed taking part in the Michigan City event because "it is the right size for businesses to participate, it's held for the right amount of time so they don't have to commit a lot of staff, and they reap the most benefit as far as return on investment for why they are here."

The event was open to the public and admission was free as long as the guest presented a business card. More information about the Michigan City Area Chamber of Commerce is available by calling 219-873-1204 or emailing info@mcachamber.com.