

# ST. JOSEPH COUNTY STATEMENT ON CIVILITY

St. Joseph County is committed to encouraging, creating and sustaining an environment that honors the inherent dignity of every member of our community. Respectful behavior should always be the norm in all forms of communications and in all situations.

As a community . . .

- We welcome a diverse range of perspectives and opinions and uphold the importance of civil debate.
- We fully support the free exchange of ideas and beliefs, as well as the expression of provocative or less popular ideas.
- We believe that only through the process of open and honest dialogue can we generate knowledge and deepen our mutual understanding.
- We believe all members of the community have a responsibility to behave in a manner that does not harm others and shows respect for those with different opinions.
- Behavior that attacks, humiliates, belittles, or conveys personal hatred towards others diminishes our thriving and safe community environment.
- Words and actions matter.
- Everyone is asked to do their part in creating a healthy and positive community and a culture that truly values each person's uniqueness, experiences, and perspectives.

It's alright to disagree but not to be disagreeable.  
(paraphrased) Attributed to Father Hesburgh, Notre Dame

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## Sturgis Area Chamber of Commerce

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Sturgis, MI  
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## Three Rivers Area Chamber of Commerce

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Three Rivers, MI  
49093

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# ST. JOSEPH COUNTY STATEMENT ON CIVILITY

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE



AND THE



## WHY WAS THIS STATEMENT CREATED?

## HOW WILL THIS STATEMENT BE IMPLEMENTED?

## WHO COULD PARTICIPATE?

- To increase the effectiveness of the meeting process both at open meetings and organizational meetings
- To allow for dialogue to occur in meetings in a respectful manner
- To allow opinions to be heard, respected and better understood
- To make community meetings more open and allow more diverse opinions
- To see a decrease in disrespectful dialogue and personal attacks during meetings

- In the early implementation it should be read at the beginning of the meeting to help set the tone of the meeting
- It can be posted on the wall of the meeting location
- Have copies available for the public when they arrive
- Do some publicity with our local media to raise awareness of the statement
- Hold a meeting for Board Chairs, Mayors, Board Presidents to introduce the statement
- Board members could be required to sign statement

- Chambers of Commerce Boards and Committees
- County Commission and Committees
- Road Commission
- Cities
- Villages
- Townships
- Foundations
- Libraries
- Hospitals
- Educational Institutions
- Non-Profits
- Local Governmental Support Groups
- Anyone else