St. Joseph County

The maps and tables in this publication were prepared using PCensus 7.06 for MapInfo and MapInfo Professional 7.0.
St. Joseph County is located in Northern Indiana and borders Michigan. It is also bordered by the following counties: Elkhart to the east, Marshall to the south, Starke to the south and southwest, and La Porte to the west. U.S. Highways 31 and 20 and Interstate Highways 80 and 90 cross the county. Elevation is 700 to 950 feet.

The landscape is mostly nearly level, but slightly sloping in the south central areas. The landscape features hickory, oak, maple, birch and beech trees. The county pertains mainly to the Southern Michigan and Northern Indiana Drift Plain land resource area, except the southeast corner, which is in the Indiana and Ohio Till Plain land resource area.

St. Joseph county is in the Eastern Time Zone and observes DST. Average daily temperatures are 16°/32° in January and 62°/83° in July. Annual precipitation is 38 and snowfall about 72 inches. Due to the warming effect of Lake Michigan, the extreme northwest part of the county has a later first freeze October 10-20) and an earlier last freeze (May 1-5) than the rest of the county (October 5-10 and May 5-10). The growing season lasts about 148-173 days.

Agricultural activity is diversified. Main crops are hay, soybeans, corn for grain and winter wheat. Apples are an important fruit. Sweetcorn, Irish potatoes, and dry onions are important vegetables, apples and important fruit. Livestock include cattle/calves, milk cows, and hogs/pigs. Mint and popcorn are special crops. Almost three-fifths of the land is in farms and about four-fifths of that is in cash crops. Important natural resources include construction sand, gravel and forestland. Water resources include many lakes/reservoirs (the largest being Bass, Chamberlin, Mud, Pinhook, Riddles, Sously, South Clear, South Chain, Lakes and Eagle Point bayou Bay); the St. Joseph, Kankakee, and Yellow Rivers; and several streams (the Potato and Pine Creeks and the Geyer and Kline-Rouch Ditches).

Communities include the cities of Mishawaka and South Bend, the county seat; and the towns of Indian Village, Lakeville, New Carlisle, North Liberty, Osceola, Roseland, and Walkerton.
St. Joseph County is not a tobacco-producing county, according to the Strategic Development Group’s “Alternative Agricultural Strategy” (Bloomington, March 15, 2001) report, which is part of Governor Joseph E. Kernan’s “Recipient Final Reports for Office of the Commissioner of Agriculture Grant Programs” (http://www.in.gov/oca/grants/valueadd/VAFinalReports.html):