

SJ woman joins LMC board

By **RALPH HEIBUTZKI**
H-P Correspondent

BENTON TOWNSHIP
— Lake Michigan College's newest board member is a Lakeland Health-Care administrator who sees herself as a strong advocate for education – because she's placed that emphasis first in her own life.

LMC trustees unanimously named St. Joseph resident Debra Johnson on Tuesday to fill a vacancy created when longtime board member Renee Williams resigned last month.

“Debra has a strong record of leadership,” LMC Board Chairman David Maysick stated in the college's news release. “Her experience in management and the health care industry will bring valuable perspective to the board as we seek ways Lake Michigan College can grow the economy through local educational achievements.”

Johnson will serve through December, but

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must decide to run by this fall to seek a full six-year in her own right.

When asked what prompted her to seek the vacancy, Johnson said, "I served on the St. Joseph school board in 2004, and 2005 – that started firing my passion because education is important. I believe in education."

LMC President Bob Harrison said the board chose Johnson from three applicants for the vacancy.

Johnson holds a master's degree in business administration from Indi-

ana Wesleyan University and a bachelor science degree in nursing from DePaul University, the college's release stated.

She began her education at Malcolm X College, a community college in Chicago.

"I'm passionate about education because, without education, I wouldn't be here today," Johnson said. "You never stop learning. As a community we have a responsibility to lead and guide young people of tomorrow because they're our future. We have to instill in them high qualities, and I believe this is a high quality institution. I believe in the local community col-

lege."

Johnson is an administrator for Lakeland Regional HealthCare in Niles, where she directs and supports day-to-day operations there, the release said.

Johnson has worked at Lakeland at 1983, and has previously served as Lakeland's director of nephrology, psychiatric and support services, as well as executive director of its acute care unit.

Johnson is also a member of the Niles Chamber of Commerce, the Niles/Buchanan Rotary Club, the Niles Downtown development Authority, and several professional nursing organizations.

Tuesday's meeting also marked the last one for Greg Koroch, LMC's vice president of institutional advancement, who's retiring after 30 years, Harrison said.

"He's going to take some time off and do a little work for us as a consultant. We've got a lot of irons in the fire yet. He's a good member of the team, and we will definitely miss him," Harrison said.

Asked whether LMC will launch a search to replace Koroch, Harrison responded, "We're doing some internal reorganization, and we'll look where we are with his position in another year."