

NWILED UPDATE

START - EXPAND - RELOCATE



Build It · Grow It

3rd Annual Pitch Competition held virtually

On October 22nd NWILED concluded the Build it · Grow it program with the Annual Pitch Competition. River Bend Gallery and the Mikol Family of Galena took first place with their 'Picture This' pitch, and were awarded \$1000 in seed money to help implement their idea. 'Picture This' focused on their need for new website software that allows online shoppers to layer an image of their room with one of River Bend Gallery's images thereby allowing the customer to better visualize how the image will appear in their home or office.

Second place went to The Workshop's Community Meals program in Galena. Third place was awarded to Lisa Huisman of White Meadow Candles in Whiteside County, and fourth place went to Carrie Haas of Celebrations Without Boundaries, which is part of Little Valley Organizers in Elizabeth.

Photo Credit: Galena Gazette

Jo-Carroll Energy receives \$14 million USDA grant

Regionally 250 square miles affected

A \$14 million grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture will accelerate buildout of high-speed fiber internet to rural areas by Jo-Carroll Energy's broadband division. USDA Deputy Under Secretary for Rural Development Bette Brand made the announcement on October 19th while in Elizabeth stating, "In this day and age, all of America needs robust, modern infrastructure to thrive. This is a necessity and not an amenity."

Jo-Carroll Energy and Sand Prairie will use the \$14 million grant to bring access to an area covering approximately 250 square miles in portions of Jo Daviess, Stephenson, Carroll, and Whiteside counties. Mike Casper, JCE President and CEO and NWILED Board Member, when asked what the grant means to members, said, "Two simple words, the future!"



BIG UPDATE

New Business Interruption Grants were awarded in November to area businesses: Timmerman's Supper Club in East Dubuque, JJ & Freddie's in Stockton, Cotton Expressions, Ltd. in Warren, and The Hanover Tap and Charlie's Place in Hanover.

FALL BULLETINS

3 News Tips: National Apprenticeship Week, Hunters with Disabilities Hunt at Old Army Depot, and Corn Belt Ports.

6 Press Releases: Pitch Competition (2), New Board Members, COVID-19, November Networking Event, and Business Education Network.

NWILED NEWS:

New Board Members: Rob Davies and Robin Pearson were appointed in August, Chris Kuberski in October, and Amiee Schoenhaar in December.

New Staffer: David Schmit was hired as Program Coordinator in September.

Corn Belt Ports

National and international recognition

For the first time in U.S. history, ports in the Heart of the Corn Belt are recognized and ranked on the Principal U.S. Ports List. Collectively, the Corn Belt Ports, at 31.1 million tons of freight handled in 2019, ranks as the 22nd largest port in the United States (similar in size to the port of Tampa, Florida).



New Business Profile

Big Miniature Farms expands in Mount Carroll

It may have started with wanting to live a healthier lifestyle, but in less than two years, Big Miniature Farms in rural Mount Carroll, has grown from a small home garden into a USDA Specialty Grower and Farm. Big Miniature Farms made their debut at the Mount Carroll Farmers Market in 2019, and has now expanded in downtown Mount Carroll with a USDA Production Kitchen and store where they sell jams, cheesecakes, and soups.

Photo Credit: Big Miniature Farms

Afterhours November Networking Event

Area Chambers bring together over 30 businesses

NWILED facilitated the November Networking Event on November 19th. Sponsored by the Galena Area Chamber of Commerce and the Stockton Chamber of Commerce, this opportunity brought over 30 businesses together via Zoom allowing them to share information about what they do, and create pathways of communication. "I am thrilled with the outcome and I know so many benefited from this learning, networking, and advertising event." said Caitlynn Greve of the Stockton Chamber of Commerce. "Here's to future growth and expansion for our members!"

Apprenticeship Grant Announcement

Multiple Jo Daviess and Carroll companies engaging

BEST, Inc. has received a grant from the IL Dept. of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to expand apprenticeship opportunities in Northwest Illinois. Outreach will include making businesses aware of the benefits of sponsoring an apprenticeship program, the process of developing an apprenticeship program, and linkage to the US Department of Labor's Office of Apprenticeships. Locally, the project looks to add 20 new registered apprentices along with 5 new programs. BEST, Inc. is a non-profit that administers federally funded programs in eight Illinois counties, including Carroll, Jo Daviess, and Whiteside. Its focus is assisting adults and youth gain meaningful employment through training, job search assistance and work experience.

Director's Update of Strategic Goals

Having an impact

In September, NWILED announced 3 goals for 2020-2023, including 24 business starts or expansions below \$300,000; 3 business expansions project with a value above \$300,000, and the launching of 2 programs to impact the regional economic ecosystem. As of December 2020, NWILED has 3 expansion projects and 1 programmatic project in progress.

Upcoming Events & Updates

Stay informed....

- Business Education Network coming early 2021
- Jo Daviess County Relocation Guide to be released in January
- NWILED Board of Directors meeting on February 10, 2021
- NWILED marketing flyers distributed by mid December
- New business financing program to be announced in February
- Entrepreneurial scholarships open in January