

2020/2021

ANNUAL REPORT

NORTHWEST ILLINOIS ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT



FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

2021 has brought renewed hope with the re-opening of many businesses especially in the restaurant and hospitality sectors. Although businesses are open, the challenge of hiring employees remains. With the enhanced unemployment benefits being phased out, businesses may see more individuals re-entering the marketplace. I extend my congratulations to those business who have reopened and who have had to put in the extra time to cover these shortfalls.

In reading this report, you will get an understanding of the activities that are taking place in Northwest Illinois and the range of support services and forward-looking activities that we are creating or supporting. Our goal is to support new and existing businesses in Northwest Illinois by bringing our knowledge and programs to those businesses. To this end we have enhanced our staff with the addition of David Schmit who will be working full-time in the office to allow our Executive Director, Emily Legel to spend more time calling on and assisting all of you.

All of us at NWILED thank all of you for your continued support of our efforts to make Northwest Illinois a great place to live and conduct business.

William H. Jahnke, NWILED Board Chair, 2020 - 2021

NWILED GOALS

On August 12, 2020, the Board of Directors approved three new goals to be completed by September 1, 2023. They are as follows:

1. Help with 24 business starts or expansions, project value below \$300,000,
2. Help with 3 business expansions or relocations, project value above \$300,000, and
3. Launch 2 new programs to expand the economic ecosystem of our region

Goal 1 Status

COMPLETED as of September 2021 - Board to reset in 2022
NWILED staff conducted 35 business consultations since January 2021 that resulted in 16 direct referrals to the Small Business Development Center at Sauk Valley Community College. One consultation resulted in the first payout from the Genz Memorial Investment Fund. Three others resulted in 2021 ribbon cuttings: Basket Case Gifts; Scent Workshop; and Big Miniature Farms.

Goal 2 Status

NWILED staff conducted 2 business consultations since January 2021. One consultation with Goldenflow Studios is resulting in their relocation from Minneapolis to Galena's Main Street. Another consultation has resulted in the WPPO, a maker of pizza ovens, to moving into the former Carter Motor site in Warren.

Goal 3 Status

NWILED launched the Genz Memorial Investment Fund for businesses, including agriculture, in Carroll and Jo Daviess Counties. The program provides gap financing for for-profit businesses having trouble seeking financing. Awards are between \$4,000 - \$10,000, and applications are received on a rolling basis with both English and Spanish-language versions available. The first payout was awarded to getVRtours.com of Galena Territory in August.

WORKFORCE AND INDUSTRY

COVID Relief

COVID-19 affected many businesses across our region and NWILED stepped up with daily Facebook Lives sessions and multiple workshops to help with economic injury disaster loans, the Paycheck Protection Program and others spending dozens of hours counseling businesses about the programs available. NWILED staff also helped publicize and review applications for relief for the Jo Daviess County grants.

Local Foods Study

NWILED is working with Blackhawk Hills Regional Council, Northern Illinois University, and others on a local foods aggregation project to help build food and food processing conditions in NW Illinois. We are currently engaging with a survey and exploring the feasibility of a local food aggregator. As of August, the group has received a study that will soon be sent to area farmers with focus groups planned for restaurants later this year.

Manufacturing Day

One of our most popular events from past years is returning spring 2022. Manufacturing Day will take high school students from across Carroll and Jo Daviess Counties into area manufacturing facilities to expand their knowledge and perception of manufacturing careers. NWILED is collaborating with regional stakeholders to offer the event.

Made in NW Illinois

NWILED is pleased to present the Made in NW Illinois campaign spotlighting manufacturers and makers in Carroll and Jo Daviess Counties. The first three profiles were Galena Cellars Winery and Vineyard, Big Miniature Farms in Mount Carroll, and Metform, a division of MacLean-Fogg from Savanna. Then came Scent Workshop, LEMFCO, and Galena Spoon Company all from downtown Galena. Additional spotlights are planned for 2022.

Daycare at CTE Academy

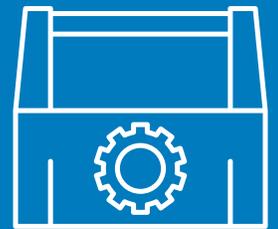
Repeatedly a major concern for our workforce, the CTE Academy in Elizabeth was able to expand their early childcare education program. With the help of NWILED staff and other community members, the program now includes before and after school care, along with expanded day programming.

EMERGING INITIATIVES

The Jo Daviess County Housing Needs Assessment kicked off August 5th with a Zoom meeting hosted by Redevelopment Resources and Blackhawk Hills Regional Council. Steering committee members include (but are not limited to) Ed Bochniak of the Housing Authority, Loras Herrig of East Dubuque, Steve McIntyre of the Jo Daviess County Board from Elizabeth, and Sam VenHuizen from Citizens State Bank and the Stockton Chamber of Commerce.



In an effort to recruit and welcome new residents and businesses to the area NWILED created a New Residents Welcome Kit for Jo Daviess County in collaboration with the Galena Area Chamber of Commerce, Greater Galena Marketing, and the City of Galena. Additionally, a new business welcome guide will debut in October, and a new residents kit is planned for Carroll County in early 2022.



NWILED is proud to embark in a strategic planning process with our communities. Using a collaborative approach, we have been meeting with community leaders compiling data to ensure the plan is as inclusive as possible. Results are expected spring 2022.



ADDITIONAL PROJECT LIST:

- Steering the Rockford - Dubuque Passenger Rail Feasibility Study
- Participating in the Highland Community College Strategic Planning Committee
- Expanding NWILED's Spanish-language outreach
- Capping the Jo Daviess County Revolving Loan fund interest rate at 2%
- Driving regional workforce and employee retention efforts
- Growing the Build It Grow It Seed Money Competition
- Growing NWILED's Build It Grow It Entrepreneurial Scholarship
- Pushing for infrastructure upgrades in eastern Jo Daviess County

NWILED MEMBERS

Diamond (\$20,000 +)



Jo-Carroll Energy

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

JO DAVIESS COUNTY
Illinois

Gold (\$10,000 - \$19,999)



ILLINOIS
BANK & TRUST

Bronze (\$0 - \$4,999)

Basket Case Gifts

Carroll County Housing Authority

City of East Dubuque

City of Galena

City of Savanna

Commonwealth Edison

Community Development Foundation of Galena

Dupaco Community Credit Union

Eagle Ridge Resort and Spa

Galena Area Chamber of Commerce

William Jahnke

Jo Daviess County Housing Authority

Local Redevelopment Authority

Logistics Park Dubuque

Nicor Gas

Operating Engineers Local 150

Riverbend Gallery

Riverport Railroad

The Workshop

Village of Warren

Patrick Winders

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MISSION STATEMENT



NW ILLINOIS
Economic Development

NW Illinois Economic Development has come a long way since 2009, when the Jo-Carroll Energy Board of Directors studied economic development structures, funding and progress in Jo Daviess, Carroll, and Whiteside counties in Northwest Illinois. The Board decided to form a regional development entity concentrating on growing the economy and public/private partnerships – Tri County Economic Development Alliance (TCEDA).

Over recent years TCEDA has broadened its outreach, with new partners and sponsors, and increased membership in the private and public sectors.

In our efforts to continuously improve, we've changed our organization's name to NW Illinois Economic Development to reflect our location more accurately in the country and around the world.

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