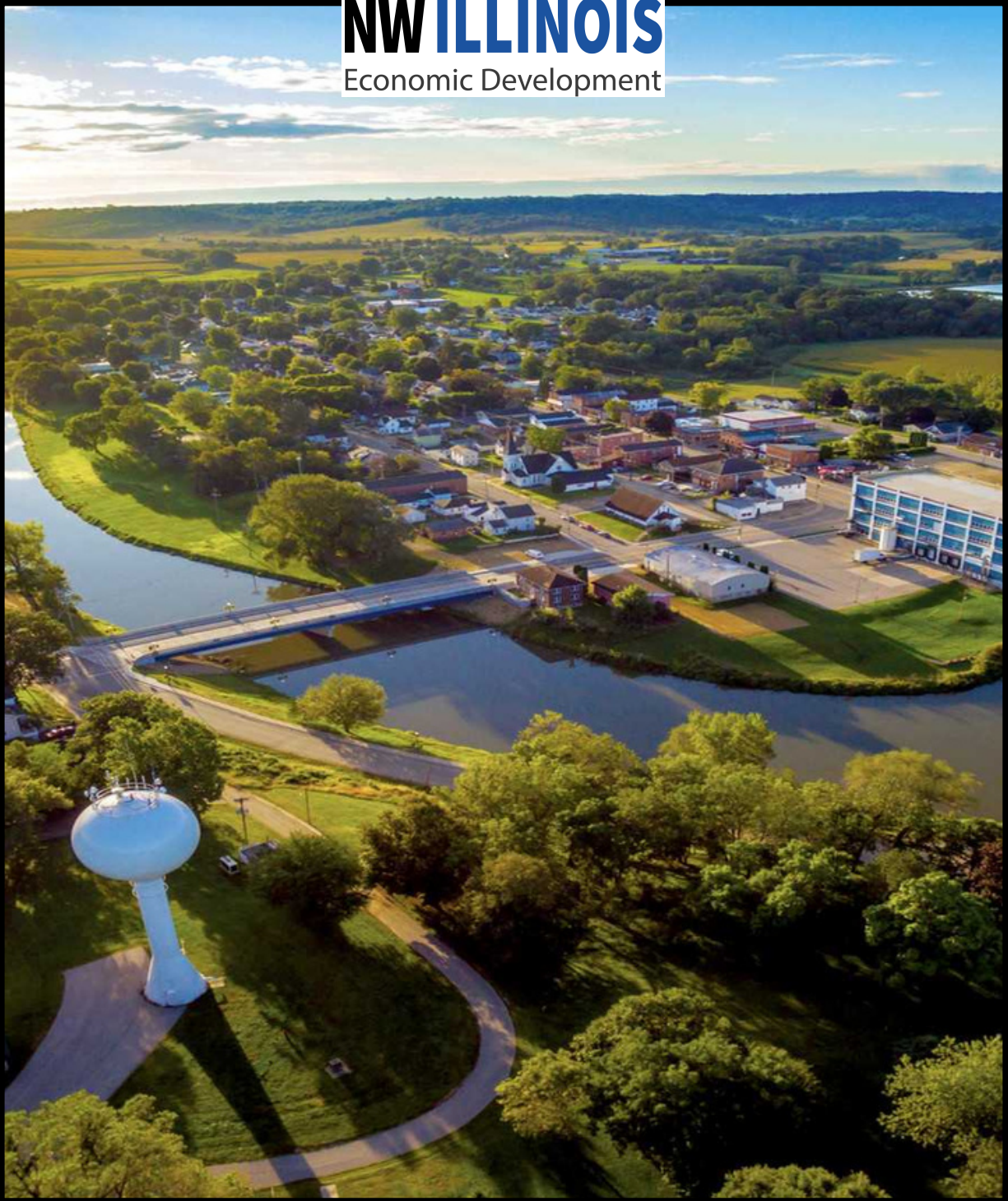




**NW ILLINOIS**  
Economic Development



## **2023 ANNUAL REPORT**

**NORTHWEST ILLINOIS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

***“CELEBRATING 15 YEARS IN BUSINESS”***

# NWILED: WHO WE ARE

## **NWILED 2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Chair - William Jahnke, President, Napcor Corporation**

**Vice Chair - Joseph Mattingley, JCE Co-op Board**

**Secretary - Tiffany Brandt, Branch Manager Galena, Dupaco Community Credit Union**

**Treasurer - Amiee Schoenhaar, CEO, COO, CFO, Riverport Railroad**

**Amy Baker, President and CEO, Citizens State Bank**

**Mike Casper, President and CEO, JCE Co-op**

**Rob Davies, Deputy Director, Savanna Industrial Park**

**Diane Gallagher, Jo Daviess County Board**

**Caleb Craft, Organizer, International Union of Operating Engineers Local 150**

**Christina Kuberski, President, Highland Community College**

**Ron Smith, Jo-Carroll Local Redevelopment Authority Board**

### **Outgoing 2023 Directors:**

**Kathleen Gable, Village of Hanover Board**

**Rose Noble, President and CEO, Galena Country Tourism**

**Mark Szula, Organizer, International Union of Operating Engineers Local 150**

**Patrick Winders, Senior IT Risk and Compliance Analyst, Workiva**

## **NWILED STAFF**

**David Schmit, Regional Director**

**Barbara Sue Schubert, Program Coordinator**

**Christine Soat, Marketing Assistant**

## **NWILED MISSION**

**Founded in 2008, NWILED promotes economic development by fostering business growth. We assist expanding and relocating businesses in determining their needs for growth with cooperation of our government and business partners. We also encourage entrepreneurs by assisting with access to resources to begin and grow their businesses. We employ all available resources to create a welcoming business environment, aligning the skills of our workforce with the needs of businesses, and building political and economic capital.**



## **FROM THE BOARD CHAIR**

As we close out 2023 and enter 2024, many of the challenges we faced last year are still with us, including staffing shortages and the continued decline in work ethics. NWILED has continued to present programs such as Manufacturing & Trades Day to expose our high school level students to the many employment opportunities that are available with our local businesses. For 2024 we are enhancing our involvement with existing businesses in providing educational programs in business planning, financial management and marketing. We are looking to give them the tools to grow, expand profitability and to further enhance our communities.

For 2024 we are enhancing our Build It Grow It, Sip and Lunch and Learn events. David Schmit, our Regional Director, has been reaching out to many of you this last year while Christine Soat has covered many of the office duties. Midyear we welcomed Barbra Sue Schubert to our staff. Barbra Sue has been tasked with improving our communication materials including brochures, company profiles, data analysis, and getting articles published in local papers bringing a greater awareness of NWILED.

For 2024 we are continuing to administer the Genz Small Business Development Fund that can provide financial contributions to new or expanding business where conventional loan facilities are not available. In 2023 we oversaw the Genz Fund distribution of grants to two businesses that allowed them to acquire equipment to enhance their business capacity and retain or expand employment. Our annual scholarship fund continues with the goal of helping those students in need of funds pursue educational opportunities that they would have otherwise found difficult.

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 either creating or supporting. Our goal is to focus on existing businesses in Northwest Illinois by bringing our knowledge and programs to those businesses, as well as working with other partners to attract new businesses to our region.

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

William H. Jahnke, NWILED Board Chair

# NWILED GOALS

In 2020, the NWILED Board of Directors approved three strategic goals that were to be completed by the close of 2023.

## 1 COMPLETED!

Assist 24 business starts/expansions, with project value below \$300,000.

|         | <u># Clients</u> | <u># SBDC Referrals</u> |
|---------|------------------|-------------------------|
| 2021    | 35               | 16                      |
| 2022    | 13               | 7                       |
| 2023    | 27               | 16                      |
| TOTALS: | 75               | 39                      |

## 2 COMPLETED!

Assist three business expansions/relocations, with project value above \$300,000.

|         | <u># Clients</u> | <u># SBDC Referrals</u> |
|---------|------------------|-------------------------|
| 2021    | 3                | 0                       |
| 2022    | 13               | 4                       |
| 2023    | 18               | 1                       |
| TOTALS: | 34               | 5                       |

## 3 COMPLETED!

Launched two new programs to help expand the economy of the Northwest Illinois region.

- The Build It Grow It Program, a small business entrepreneurial boot camp, will launch February 2024!
- In 2021, the Genz Small Business Development Fund was launched to serve as a gap tool for businesses and entrepreneurs in Carroll and Jo Daviess counties. The fund's present balance stands at \$464,937.

|         | <u>Business Assisted</u> | <u># of Jobs Created</u> | <u>Capital Investment</u> |
|---------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| 2021    | getVRtours.com           | 3 contractors            | \$6,450                   |
| 2022    | Lola's Deli              | 1 part-timer             | \$8,000                   |
|         | Meat Masters             | 1 part-timer             | \$4,000                   |
| 2023    | Trolley Depot            | (TBD)                    | \$7,727                   |
|         | 1826 Creative Co         | (TBD)                    | \$9,5511                  |
| TOTALS: | 5                        | 5                        | \$35,688                  |



# GENZ FUND RECIPIENTS



Lola's Deli, a restaurant and deli in Elizabeth, used Genz for startup costs. NWILED also assisted with their Jo Daviess County Revolving Loan Fund award.

getVRtours.com, a commercial photography business based in the Galena Territory, used Genz to purchase new drone and computer equipment.



Meat Masters Processing Co., a specialty meats producer based in Stockton, used Genz to help renovate an outbuilding used for equipment storage and refrigeration.



Trolley Depot Coffee & Tea Co., a specialty coffee house based in Galena, used Genz to purchase a new coffee roaster that will help them expand into the wholesale market.



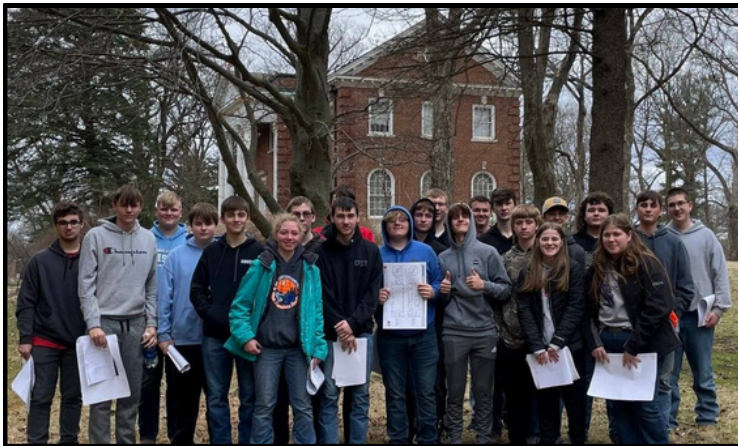
# NWILED @ WORK

## MANUFACTURING & TRADES DAY

A signature event on the NWILED calendar, Manufacturing & Trades Day is an occasion where manufacturing and trade companies showcase their industries to high school students to help create a talent pipeline for local quality in demand careers. NWILED works with JCE Co-op, and the Jo Daviess Carroll Career Technical Education Academy to offer this regional event.

**Save the Date - The next event is scheduled for Thursday, October 3, 2024!**

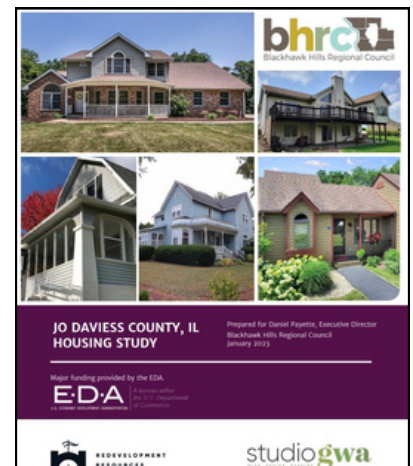
|               | <u># of Businesses/Orgs</u> | <u># of Schools</u> | <u># of Students</u> |
|---------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| <b>2022</b>   | <b>16</b>                   | <b>10</b>           | <b>300</b>           |
| <b>2023 A</b> | <b>14</b>                   | <b>7</b>            | <b>220</b>           |
| <b>2023 B</b> | <b>27</b>                   | <b>10</b>           | <b>352</b>           |
| <b>Totals</b> | <b>57</b>                   | <b>27</b>           | <b>872</b>           |



## WORKFORCE HOUSING

The NWILED lead Jo Daviess County Housing Needs Assessment Study was released January 2023. NWILED has since developed a three-pronged approach to driving the study's 21 recommendations:

- Created a Housing tab on the NWILED website for tools and resources.
- Hired two housing consultants to help deliver findings and actionable solutions to county municipalities.
- Created an informal housing taskforce of stakeholders to maintain long-term focus.





# NWILED @ WORK

(continued)

## LUNCH & LEARN EVENTS

**NWILED hosted three small business focused lunch and learn events in 2023. These events brought experts into the Northwest Illinois community to help educate and inspire change.**

**No Excuses Innovation with author Bruce Vojak**  
*Sponsored by Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Centers*

**Bet the Farm with author Beth Hoffman**  
*Sponsored by Illinois Farmers Union*

**Hispanic Businesses Networking Event**  
*A NWILED Diverse Businesses Initiative event sponsored by the Galena Area Chamber of Commerce, Illinois Bank & Trust, Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity, including their Office of Minority Economic Empowerment, Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation, and Vendeezy Vending.*



## COMMUNITY OUTREACH PRESENTATIONS

- **Jo Daviess County Mayors Association**
- **Galena Country Tourism - Live@ThePlaza**
- **Highland Community College Leadership Forum**
- **Galena Rotary Club**
- **Village of Hanover Board**
- **NorthWest Illinois Alliance of Realtors Board**
- **IL DCEO's "What Does ED Mean to Me?"**
  - **Anchored by Secretary Richards**
- **JCE Co-op Board of Directors**



# MADE IN NW ILLINOIS

## SPOTLIGHTING THE MAKERS AND MANUFACTURERS OF CARROLL AND JO DAVIESS COUNTIES

Back by popular demand in 2023 was the relaunching of the Made in Northwest Illinois business spotlight campaign. The series is designed specifically to give businesses in Carroll and Jo Daviess counties an opportunity to tell their success story - with the help of NWILED's channels of communication in pushing it out to the public.

Featured businesses in 2023 were Clara Joyce Flowers from rural Stockton, and Carroll Industrial Molds/EVS Hobbies USA of Milledgeville. Both of these spotlights can be found in their entirety on the NWILED website at [www.nwiled.org](http://www.nwiled.org) under the "News" tab.

Coming in 2024 to kick off the new year will be a spotlight on Guideline Industries of rural Scales Mound, Illinois.

October 2023

**Made in Northwest Illinois**

**NWILLINOIS**  
Economic Development

SPOTLIGHTING BUSINESSES IN CARROLL AND JO DAVIESS COUNTIES

### Clara Joyce Flowers - A Blooming Business

Meet one of Jo Daviess County's best kept secrets: Clara Joyce Flowers and 20 acres of a horticulturist's dream come true. For Drew Groezinger it is just that and more. Hidden out in the lush farmland of Stockton, Illinois, he spent a childhood growing and selling his homegrown flowers which bled into a very successful 4-H project. Nurtured by a rich family history in agriculture, his love of plants literally took root and bloomed into a full scale flower producing operation in 2016.

As unique as the name is, it also reflects the innovations of a very non-traditional "flower shop." You can buy fresh flowers via their "Petals on the Porch" program - they literally sell themselves - but what Clara Joyce Flowers is mostly about is the thousands of specialty wholesale cut flowers they grow, sell and deliver weekly to Chicago, Madison and Milwaukee florists, in addition to shipping fresh seasonal product across the country. Specific targeted small wedding and event floral design is another area of their expertise, as well as young plant propagation throughout their off season.

The property sports numerous large scale greenhouses and 13 acres of field produced annuals and perennials alone, all grown from seed secured from providers across the globe such as Japan, Indonesia, and Australia to name a few. The farm doesn't come without a warehouse and shipping location, a design studio and numerous storage facilities. All can be viewed from the property's "mother" house, which overlooks it all. It is the estate's family home, which Drew purchased from his parents to continue the family growing legacy.

The operation has grown in leaps and bounds, now offering over 130 varieties of flowers, but not without good help, which can be a challenge given where the farm is located in Jo Daviess County and the same staffing shortage many employers suffer from.

With a summer staff of eight, and a trimmed back crew of four in the winter, Clara Joyce Flowers has successfully solved their staffing problem through the U.S. Department of Labor's H-2A Visa Program that helps employers with a lack of available domestic workers to bring foreign workers to the U.S. to perform temporary or seasonal work. The program allows these foreign workers to work in the U.S. for 10 months and then return to their homeland for two months. For Clara Joyce Flowers the program has been a gift to helping keep their production running smoothly and progressively with the help of a consultant they use that specializes in the H-2A program. Clara Joyce Flowers has even gone so far as to buy a house in



CLARA JOYCE FLOWERS  
STOCKTON, ILLINOIS

NORTH-WEST ILLINOIS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
[www.nwiled.org](http://www.nwiled.org)

December 2023

**Made in Northwest Illinois**

**NWILLINOIS**  
Economic Development  
Celebrating 15 Years in Business!

SPOTLIGHTING BUSINESSES IN CARROLL AND JO DAVIESS COUNTIES

### Common Sense Manufacturing

Milledgeville, Illinois, a town of 1,085 people, is home to Carroll Industrial Molds Inc., and Carroll Innovative Manufacturing. It is also one of the town's biggest employer with 18 "home grown" employees.

But CIM is big stuff outside the city limits in more ways than one. Housed in a 36,000 square foot building, this 38-year-old family owned business produces molds for foam products such as retail coolers, pharmaceutical shipping containers, automotive parts, appliance parts and appliance packaging as well as mold components on the industrial side of their business. On the innovative side of the business, the company specifically supplies small or large batch machining, tools and/or coating, based on customer supplied information and designs.

To the non-manufacturing savvy population, a mold is a hollowed out block - or negative cavity space - that sets the shape of the product being made. A material is injected to create the part or tool. Molds can be made of different materials, the most common of which are aluminum, steel, alloys and copper.

At CIM, all molds are made of 98% aluminum, with the other 2% being brass, steel or urethane. Products from both of these companies have had global distribution, although most are distributed primarily to North American manufacturers.

However, big companies do infringe on CIM's customer base, pushing out the smaller companies such as them.

Curt Dusing, Owner and President of CIM, says they are always looking to grow the business and expand into additional ventures. According to him, adding the Innovative side of the business was a natural progression. "It is just common sense manufacturing," he said.

Since they make all their own tools and parts for their operation, they are totally self-sufficient. Combined with their total state of the art CNC automation and machines that can run 24 hours a day unattended once set, the businesses are capable of producing much more.

"We're always looking for new business. We'll manufacture anything we can make money on," Curt said. "We are always trying to think of what's the next thing we can make."

Curt says he is actively and aggressively talking to other companies across the country about making their products with CIM in the U.S. instead of abroad.

"We also want to see what we can do to help more local businesses with their needs as well, instead of having to go outside the area for them," Curt said, noting that their location and overhead is going to reflect on lowering the customer's cost in many ways.

Curt specifically cites a project the company took on during COVID when



CIM  
Carroll Industrial Molds

Aluminum mold

CIM "home grown" employee base of 18

NORTH-WEST ILLINOIS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
[www.nwiled.org](http://www.nwiled.org)



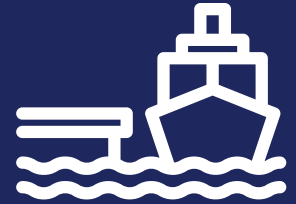
# SUPPORTING PARTNER INITIATIVES

## JO-CARROLL LRA INTERMODAL PORT

The Jo-Carroll Local Redevelopment Authority, a NWILED member, in tandem with the Upper Mississippi River International Port District, presented the U.S. Army a reuse plan for their Parcel 20 for a proposed intermodal port at the confluence of the Apple and Mississippi rivers.

Early projections for the new port:

- Buildout Cost = \$45-65 million
- Jobs Created = 1,400 to 1,700
- Economic Development Impact = \$70 to \$150 million



## JO DAVIESS COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Working with Jo Daviess County, NWILED has embarked on a strategic planning process to update their Comprehensive Plan, which was last revised in 2012. Once completed, the plan will guide decision makers for the next 20+ years.



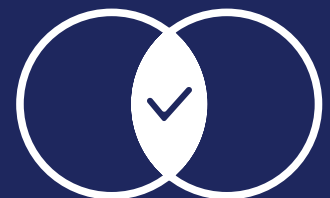
## C-PACE ENABLEMENT

NWILED worked with the Illinois Finance Authority to enable their new Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (“C-PACE”) financing program for the City of Galena, and Jo Daviess County. The program aims to accelerate private investment in green energy projects (solar, double-paned windows, smart roofs, LED lighting).



## INTERSECT ILLINOIS PROJECTS

Intersect Illinois is the only statewide economic development organization focused on bringing new businesses, jobs, and investments to Illinois. In 2023, NWILED fielded 64 Intersect Illinois business recruitment project requests for both Carroll and Jo Daviess counties resulting in 1 project response.



# NWILED BEHIND THE SCENES

- **NWILED is the first point of contact for the Jo Daviess County Revolving Loan Program. NWILED reviews applications prior to advancing them to the JDC Board. Since 2022, NWILED has worked on two projects.**
- **Awarded the 2023 NWILED John D. Cooke Memorial Entrepreneurial Scholarship distributing \$6,000 to high school students in Carroll and Jo Daviess Counties that are entrepreneurial, want to start a business or pursue a career in business, and who intend to maintain strong relationships with the Northwest Illinois region.**
- **Conducted 22 site visits throughout the Northwest Illinois region.**
- **Held three legislative meetings, specifically with Representative LaHood, Senators Durbin and Duckworth's staff, Illinois Senator Chesney, and Kristin Richards, Director at Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.**
- **Generated eight public service announcement mail campaigns and six press releases.**
- **NWILED Staff Professional Development:**
  - **34th Annual IL Institute for Rural Affairs - Rural Community Economic Development Conference.**
  - **Jo Daviess County Soil & Water Health Coalition field day event.**
  - **Illinois Economic Development Association annual summit.**
  - **Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity Roadshow.**
  - **Southern Illinois University's Basic Economic Development boot camp.**
- **Maintained the NWILED online site map, which details industrial sites and commercial storefronts that are for sale in Carroll and Jo Daviess counties and which feeds into the Intersect Illinois business recruitment system.**
- **Drove regional awareness of the State of Illinois's Back to Business grants for hotels, restaurants, and creative arts program, and their Back to Business New Business Grant program specific to pandemic-born businesses.**

# NWILED BEHIND THE SCENES

(CONTINUED)

- **NWILED Regional Director Appointments:**
  - **City of Savanna - Advisory Committee, Savanna Riverfront Development Board, Appointee.**
  - **Jo Daviess-Carroll Joint Action Solid Waste Agency, Board of Directors.**
  - **Quad Cities Regional Economic Development Authority, Board of Directors.**
  - **Savanna Chamber of Commerce, Board of Directors.**
  - **Jo Daviess County Comprehensive Plan, Project and Steering Committee Appointee.**
  - **Highland Community College, Decennial Committee Community Appointee.**
  - **Visit NW Illinois, Board of Directors.**
  
- **Issued letters of support for 8 initiatives:**
  - **Highland Community College's Northern Illinois Strengthening Community Colleges program for their welding and manufacturing/CNC programs.**
  - **ComEd's Middle-Mile Grant: ComEd Digital Divide Programs.**
  - **United Way of Northwest Illinois' Collaboration Planning Grant for GROWTH's Shimer Square Daycare Project in Mount Carroll.**
  - **Illinois Department of Transportation for planning and development funding from the Federal Railroad Administration for passenger rail service through Jo Daviess County.**
  - **JCE Co-op's Connect Illinois Grant Program to advance fiber internet.**
  - **SOO Green's clean energy transmission route for Midwest energy markets.**
  - **Highland Community College's "Room to Grow" workforce pathways grant.**
  - **JCE Co-op's USDA Community Connect Grant for fiber buildout in Mount Carroll.**



# NWILED LOOKING AHEAD

## **BUILD IT - GROW IT**

In 2021 NWILED wrapped the Build It - Grow It program, a multiyear commitment that provided "Business 101" workshops throughout Carroll, Jo Daviess, and Whiteside counties. The new Build It Grow It program is a collaboration between NWILED, Highland Community College, Gradient Coaching & Consulting, the IL Small Business Development Center at Sauk Valley Community College, and Illinois Bank & Trust, a division of HTLF Bank. It's a small business entrepreneurial boot camp launching in February 2024 and graduating in June 2024. Monthly attendees receive in depth knowledge on how to launch or grow their business. Parallel sessions will run in both Galena and Savanna.



## **CARROLL COUNTY OUTREACH**

Monthly NWILED satellite office hours began at the Carroll County Courthouse in Mount Carroll in April 2023. This expanded local presence will help advance NWILED's reputation in the county, build new professional relationships, and lead to new business starts and expansions. Note: Carroll County rejoined NWILED in December 2023. They were last a member in 2010. NWILED was founded in 2008.

## **NWILED METRICS**

As part of a strategic planning exercise, the NWILED Board of Directors and regional stakeholders convened in December 2023 for a visioning session to determine the future course of the organization. This exercise resulted in the NWILED Executive Committee forgoing the establishment of new strategic goals opting instead for a set of metrics that will be used going forward to gauge the value and impact of NWILED.

# NWILED INVESTOR MEMBERS

(44 total members, increasing from 28 in 2022)

## Platinum (\$10,000 +)



JO DAVIESS COUNTY  
*Illinois*

## Gold (\$5,000 - \$9,999)

Conlon Construction Company

## Silver (\$2,500 - \$4,999)

Baranski Hammer Moretta & Sheehy  
Citizens State Bank  
City of Galena  
Dupaco Community Credit Union

Jo-Carroll Local Redevelopment Auth.  
Logistics Park Dubuque  
Riverport Railroad

## Bronze (\$1,000 - \$2,499)

Carroll County, IL  
City of Savanna  
Commonwealth Edison  
First Community Bank of Galena  
Highland Community College

Nicor Gas  
Operating Engineers Local 150  
Village of Elizabeth  
Village of Hanover  
Village of Stockton

## Ambassador (\$250 - \$999)

Adkins Energy  
Carroll County Housing Auth  
Galena Territory Association  
Galena Country Tourism  
Gradient Coaching & Consulting  
Hoskins Building Center  
Illinois Farmers Union

Jail Hill Inn  
Jo Daviess County Housing Auth  
LabelMill  
LEMFCO, Inc  
Louie's Trenching Services  
MSA Professional Services

NW Illinois Alliance of Realtors  
Pearl Valley Farms  
Rockfarm Supply Chain Solutions  
The Bridgewater Inn  
Timmerman's Supper Club  
Zurn Elkay Water Solutions

## Friend of the Program (\$75 - \$249 / In-Kind)

Elizabeth Area Chamber of Commerce, Jo Daviess Carroll Career Technical Education Academy,  
Keller Williams Realty Signature - Angela Stodden, River Bend Gallery





**NW ILLINOIS**

Economic Development

**NWILED CONTACT:**

**DAVID SCHMIT**

**REGIONAL DIRECTOR OF NORTHWEST ILLINOIS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**DSCHMIT@NWILED.ORG**

**1 COMMERCIAL DRIVE, STE 2, HANOVER, IL 61041**

**815-297-7361**