



NW ILLINOIS
Economic Development

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

NWILED Celebrating 17 Years in Business - Serving Jo Daviess and Carroll Counties

Photo by Henry Mattiessen III

NORTHWEST ILLINOIS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Northwest Illinois Economic Development was formed in 2008 by the Jo-Carroll Energy Board of Directors whose main goals were to spearhead economic development structures, funding and progress in Jo Daviess, Carroll, and Whiteside counties in Northwest Illinois. The board's main focus was to form a regional development organization concentrating on growing the economy and public/private partnerships to achieve these goals.

NWILED is an entity that works to enhance the prosperity of the communities it serves, specifically those in Jo Daviess and Carroll counties.

And while this work may be different for each community, NWILED is a regional organization committed to improving the quality of life for their members and communities through economic development leadership, which includes attracting new companies, helping existing companies grow or assisting entrepreneurs with their aspirations.



Northwest Illinois Economic Development

WHO WE ARE

NWILED 2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chelsea Beyer
*Business Lending Consultant,
Dupaco Community Credit Union*

Mike Casper
President and CEO, JCE Co-op

Gavin Doyle
Vice-President, UMB Bank

Diane Gallagher
Jo Daviess County Board

Susan Jacobs
Carroll County Board

Chris Kuberski
President, Highland Community College

Matt Oldenburg
City Administrator, City of Galena

Patrick Powaser
Founder and President, Gradient Coaching & Consulting

NWILED EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

William Jahnke – Chair
President, Napcor Corporation

Joseph Mattingley – Vice Chair
CEO, Arrow Group

Amy Baker - Secretary
President and CEO, Citizens State Bank

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

OUTGOING 2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ron Smith
Jo-Carroll Local Redevelopment Authority Board

NWILED STAFF

David Schmit
Regional Director

Barbara Sue Grass
Program Coordinator

INDEPENDENT NWILED CONTRACTORS

John Hudetz: *getVRtours.com - Photography*

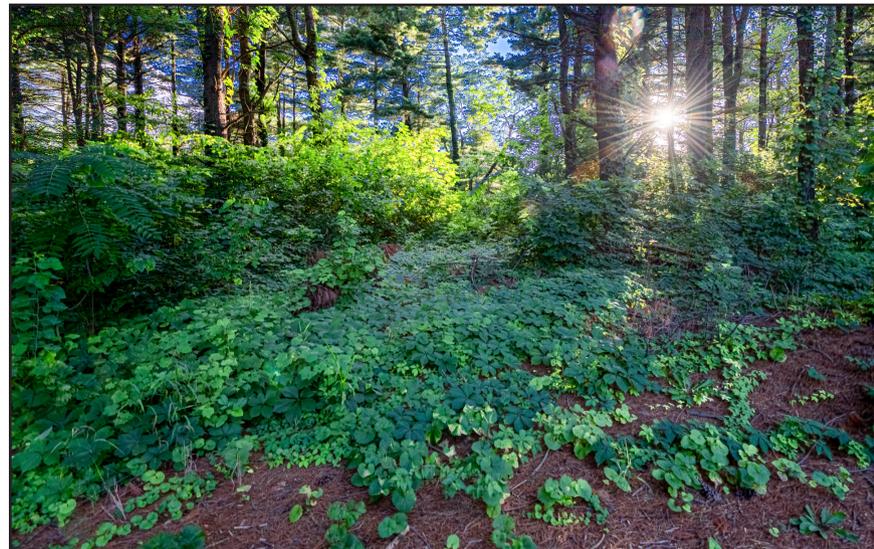
Christine Melaas: *Basket Case - Digital Marketing*

Christine Soat: *Site Marketing Services*

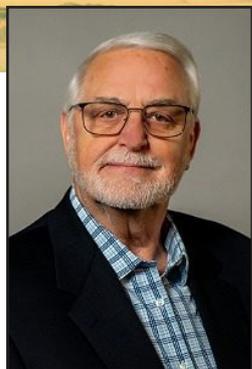
JCE Co-op: *Technology Support*

Terry Kurt: *Legal Services*

Lisa Vakharia: *Growth Strategy Consultant*



FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD



In 2025, NWILED was able to work with JCE to make presentations and key industry contacts to Jungbunzlauer International AG of Basel, Switzerland, with their feasibility work that resulted in their purchase of the International Flavors and Fragrances facility south of Savanna. We welcome them to our community and look forward to continuing to work with them with their program needs, as well as the planned expansions for other operations. This represents the largest business commitment that we have seen in the area in over a decade.

Also, for 2026, some of our tried-and-true business enhancement programs will continue including Build it Grow it and Lunch and Learn.

David Schmit, our Regional Director, has been reaching out to many of you and has been a regular presence with the other community agencies that are all involved in making our community a better place to do business and live. His success with the Manufacturing & Trades Day site visits and learning programs for our high school students continues to further connect our community.

Barbra Sue Grass has spent this last year making us look better with our communication materials including brochures, company profiles, data analysis, and getting articles published in local papers bringing a greater awareness of NWILED. She has developed a new initiative whereby starting with herself, we will be authoring personal articles on NWILED in the local papers to enhance awareness of our organization.

Additionally, we initiated a new membership development program working to spread the work on what we do

to enhance our membership numbers. We employed Lisa Vahkaria of Galena to work with us for this membership enhancement program. The growth has been steady and in a positive direction which resulted in an increase income and allowed us to continue and enhance our program offerings, providing continued value to our membership and community.

For 2025 we continued to administer the Genz Fund that provided financial contributions to new or expanding business where conventional loan facilities are not available. The Genz Memorial Fund program distributed funds to several businesses that allowed them to acquire equipment to enhance their business capacity and retain or expand employment.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William H. Jahnke". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.



Northwest Illinois Economic Development AT WORK IN 2025

LUNCH AND LEARN PROGRAMS

NWILED hosted three business focused lunch and learn events in 2025. These events brought experts into the Northwest Illinois community to help educate and inspire change.

- 1) Hosted at Illinois Bank & Trust the Belonging at Work Lunch & Learn with Highland Community College.
- 2) Group Retirement Plan Lunch and Learn with Citizens State Bank.
- 3) All-Things Carroll County Tourism event at the Davis Community Center in Mount Carroll with the Carroll County Hotel/Motel Board and Visit Northwest Illinois

PRESENTATIONS

- Greater Dubuque Regional Partners with the University of Northern Iowa Institute for Decision Making roundtable on regional economic planning specific to Greater Dubuque and attended Tri-State Economic Development Practitioners meetings, hosted by Greater Dubuque Development.
 - Roundtables with FEH Design and Carroll and Jo Daviess libraries about re-imagining their spaces as mixed use facilities.
- Highland Community College's annual Leadership Forum benefitting area entrepreneurs and businesses.
- Galena Rotary Club meeting discussing organization accomplishments and goals.

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 the Jo Daviess Carroll Career - Technical Education Academy to offer this regional event. In 2025 over 34 businesses and agencies participated, as well as the 330 regional high school students.

Save the Date

The next event is scheduled for Thursday, Oct. 8, 2026.



Chadwick-Milledgeville High with the Carroll County Highway Department during their site visit to Zurn Elkay Water Solutions in Lanark, Illinois, at the 2025 Manufacturing & Trades Day.

2025 GENZ FUND RECIPIENTS



Entrepreneurs and businesses based in Carroll and Jo Daviess counties in Illinois have a source of financing thanks to the generosity of the late John “Jack” Genz of Galena. Administered by UMB Bank of Galena, the Genz Small Business Development Fund was formalized in 2020 to assist individuals who have been turned down for a traditional bank loan. The fund, which totals over \$500,000, is intended to serve as gap financing, to aid with pilot projects, or fill in gaps not filled by equity and traditional capital.

Eligible applicants include retailers, small manufacturers, wholesalers, those in the hospitality industry, along with farmers and food processors. Awardees can use the money for capital purchases, to purchase an existing business or farm, or for startup and pilot projects. The fund does have requirements. As of Dec. 31, 2025, 11 Genz awards have been given to eligible recipients.

Awardees in 2025 used their funds to assist with their new business start up costs and included:

- **High Point Garage** of Scales Mound
- **Main Street Laundry** of Stockton
- **Dittmar Farms and Orchard** of rural Elizabeth
- **SoundSafe.ai** of Galena

Since first awarded in 2020, a total of \$97,672 has been dispersed through 2025.

MADE IN NORTHWEST ILLINOIS 2025 SPOTLIGHTS

MAY 2025

Made in Northwest Illinois

NWILLINOIS
Economic Development
Celebrating 16 Years in Business!

SPOTLIGHTING MANUFACTURERS AND MAKERS IN CARROLL AND JO DAVIESS COUNTIES

The Cat's Out of the Bag!

S&K Packaging of East Dubuque, Illinois, is a company that is literally a "mixed bag." As one of the tri-state area's leading supplier of high quality bag type packaging for a wide range of industries, S&K "has it in the bag" in every sense of the phrase. The mixed bag includes a plethora of high quality, bulk bags, woven-polypropylene based packages and silag plastics they provide to customers in industries such as dairy and beef farming, animal feed and food ingredient manufacturers, landscape material supplies, industrial factories and foundries and much more.

The company had humble family beginnings with Shawn Stackis collaborating with his grandfather, Harold Koppes, in early 2000. The two were reconditioning used Flexible Intermediate Bulk Container (FIBC) - industrial size bulk bags made from flexible fabric. These bags in particular are designed to store



Shawn Stackis, owner of S&K Packaging, proudly displays one of his products, and the company's ability to even print on the multitude of bags the company sells during a site visit by members of the Jo Daviess County Board.

and transport, dry, flowable materials like powders, granules and fertilizers. The business took off and they successfully incorporated in 2005.

And while the two started out in a

additional of 3,000 of warehouse S&K is all purchases buy in



MAY 2025

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SPOTLIGHTING BUSINESSES IN CARROLL AND JO DAVIESS COUNTIES



Shank's Veterinary Equipment Inc. is making an industry impact in a BIG way—in every sense of the word. When you are a leading manufacturer of large animal surgery tables the competition pool may be small, but the impact of developing one-of-kind veterinary-type products is HUGE.

Meet Todd Short, owner of Shank's Veterinary Equipment Inc. located in the town of Milledgeville, Illinois, population 1,026. "We're a small company that does big things," said Todd. "I think we're a little gem people don't know about."

The company manufactures products for veterinarian needs in a wide range of industries, from veterinarian medicine to universities, zoos, marinas and private and corporate clients.

"Veterinary medicine has come a long way over the last 40 years," Todd said. "We've even had a rhinoceros on our tables before."

That being said, the company isn't new by any means, nor was it always located in Milledgeville. It was founded in 1957 by Eldon Shank in Sterling, Illinois, and called Shank's Machine Co., Inc. At that time, the company was manufacturing one simple veterinary table that could support a partially sedated large animal and lay it from a standing position to its side.

Shank's also made anything and everything at that time as a machine shop in a rural community," Todd noted.



In 1985 Eldon sold the business to his son, Carl Shank, and the company officially changed its name to Shank's Veterinary Equipment Company. Four years later, in 1989, Carl sold the company to an existing company employee and his son, Alvin and Mark Dettman. As a result, the business really started to change.

The two new owners moved the

company approximately 15 miles north to its present location in Milledgeville.

Alvin retired in 1996, leaving Mark to run the business and taking it to a new equestrian level after receiving some unique inquiries from the veterinary population.

The company continued to grow as the specialized needs of the veterinarian practitioner increased. Shank's expanded quickly into other areas of the large animal market products with customized surgery tables, necropsy tables, stocks and transfer carts, as well as marketing and manufacturing a line of heavy-duty recovery stall doors, induction/crowding gates and a wide range of pertinent industry products.



The proverbial 800# gorilla in the room at the Rotterdam Zoo in Rotterdam, Netherlands! Shank's tables have held everything from horses and rhinoceroses to gorillas and large marine life over their years in production.

SPOTLIGHTING THE MAKERS AND MANUFACTURERS OF CARROLL AND JO DAVIESS COUNTIES

Originally launched in 2021, the Made in Northwest Illinois Business Spotlight continues to be a popular series.

The spotlights are designed specifically to give businesses in Carroll and Jo Daviess counties an opportunity to tell their success story.

There were three featured Illinois businesses in 2025:

- S&K Packaging of East Dubuque.
- Fergedaboudit Vineyard & Winery of Hanover.
- Shank's Veterinary Equipment of Milledgeville.

All three of these spotlights, in addition to another 15 previous spotlights, can be found in their entirety on the NWILED website at www.nwiled.org under the "Living Here" tab.

JULY 2025

Made in Northwest Illinois

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SPOTLIGHTING BUSINESSES IN CARROLL AND JO DAVIESS COUNTIES

Sit back, relax and... Fergedaboudit Vineyard & Winery
HANOVER, ILLINOIS

Meet the Rosario and Bruno family.

Just keep growing," said Vicki Bruno Olson, Fergedaboudit's co-owner and spokesperson. "For the first half of our time here it was an expensive hobby."

Fast forward through the last 25 years of Rosario's labor of love: the family's vineyard residence and one room sprang from the meager res. The tasting room celebrates its 12th year in July and a tented private indoor space, has most recently been added for weddings, summer parties, special events and a summer music series.

The property itself is breathtaking at every turn and visitors are able to walk the three acre vineyard and grounds freely—picking the vineyard itself supports three acres of Midwestern hardy grapes: the Marechal Foch, Leon Millot, Petite Pearl, St. Vincent, Marquette, Brianna, Frontenac, Geneva Red, Blanc and New York.

Inventory stands proudly at approximately 14,000 to 18,000 bottles a year and offers a wide selection of over 25 wines to their invited 300 visitors a week.

2025 SUPPORTING PARTNER INITIATIVES

- NWILED routinely partners with the Foundation for Northwest Illinois on community development efforts, most specifically the Northwest Illinois' Community Impact Grant Cycle and new CEO Program with the Midland Institute for Entrepreneurship. Notably also, the foundation awarded NWILED \$25,000 in 2025 for the annual Build It Grow It Small Business Entrepreneurial Boot Camp with funding from Compeer Financial.
- Citizens State Bank 'Pooled Employer Group Retirement Plan." NWILED worked with Citizens State Bank to launch a regional Pooled Employer Group Retirement Plan program through Cetera Investment Services. In response to the Illinois Community Reinvestment Act compliance, this alternative gives an additional option to area businesses and farms.

- In 2025 Jo Daviess County rolled out a suit of new economic development tools including:

- Jo Daviess County Transit Comprehensive Ridership Analysis that aims to increase ridership and enhance demand response services, including those available to businesses.

- Awarded a \$25,000 Revolving Loan Fund award to S&K Packaging of East Dubuque. NWILED markets and facilitates this program.

- Launched the Jo Daviess County Small Business Development Grant and disbursed \$100,000 to county businesses. NWILED marketed and vetted applications.

- Created the First Time Homebuyer Assistance Loan Program to help draw new people to Jo Daviess County by offering down payment loans to first time homebuyers and thereby promoting workforce housing options.

2025 COLLABORATION AWARD RECIPIENTS

- Collaborator of the Year Award - Christine Soat
 - Member of the Year - Adkins Energy
- Board Member of the Year - Diane Gallagher
- Community of the Year - Village of Hanover
"The Best Little Village by a Dam Site!"



Photo by Henry Mattiessen II.

Northwest Illinois Economic Development BEHIND THE SCENES IN 2025

- Congratulations to NWILED! In 2025 it confirmed its 60th member marking the organization's largest one-time membership base since its inception in 2008.
- Continued to maintain our regional online site map of for sale commercial and industrial properties which ties into State of Illinois site selection tools.
- Revived our LinkedIn page and created a new Constant Contact marketing system for eblasts.
- Created a new online JOBS page that updates monthly with sustaining member listings.
- Moderated The Parker Project community meeting in Galena on Feb. 19, 2025, for approximately 100 attendees with the project's development team.
- Marketed many new incentive type opportunities to area businesses and worked over 60 client relationships – big and small – connecting them with resources.
- Facilitated an EDGE Agreement for a client with the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity - the first one ever in Jo Daviess or Carroll County.
- Co-hosted with BEST Inc. the Carroll and Jo Daviess County Job Fair and presented at their at Job Search Workshops.
- Participated in the U.S. Penitentiary, Thomson's Mock Job Fair and regularly participate at their community relations board meetings.
- Partnered with Highland Community College and others for the Room to Grow – Career Pathway Endorsements project.
- Judged applications for Blackhawk Hill Regional Council's multi-generational housing design competition.
- Worked with Galena Area Chamber and Galena Country Tourism to update the Jo Daviess County New Residents' Welcome Kit.

NWILED REGIONAL DIRECTOR APPOINTMENTS

- Birth to Five Illinois - Region 8 Action Council
 - Carroll County Hotel Motel Tax Board
 - Jo Daviess-Carroll County Joint Action Solid Waste Agency Board
- Quad Cities Regional Economic Development Authority Board
 - Visit NW Illinois Board
- The Foundation for Northwest Illinois Board



Photo courtesy of Galena Country Tourism

LOOKING AHEAD AT 2026

FOCUS ON SITE READINESS

Site readiness is a cornerstone function of NWILED. In 2025 we began working with the Village of Stockton for their Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity Site Readiness program application for feasibility planning dollars to potentially bring online 100 new acres of industrial acreage in coming years. Several large existing industrial sites also went idel in 2025, and NWILED continues to leverage membership to backfill those sites with new tenants, including Jungbunzlauer who purchased the former International Flavors and Fragrances site north of Thomson, Illinois, in November.

MEMBER CULTIVATION

Starting in 2025, NWILED began to spearhead a new membership campaign to help attract new active investor members to assist the organization in their economic development goals and programing efforts. A retooled membership form calls for new workshops, a forum with elected leaders, special sustaining level member gatherings, and new privileges for members.

ENHANCED REGIONAL COLLABORATION

NWILED acts locally and collaborates regionally. Interactions with groups like the Tri-State Economic Development Practitioners, Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee for Northwest Illinois, and the Region 8 Action Council of Birth to Five Illinois continue to grow.

Adding to this roster, NWILED routinely works with:

- The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity
- Blackhawk Hills Regional Council
- The Small Business Development Center at Sauk Valley Community College
- Business Employment Skills Team
 - Illinois Finance Authority
- The Foundation for Northwest Illinois
 - Whiteside County, Illinois
- The Quad Cities Regional Economic Authority
 - Greater Freeport Partnership
- Jo-Carroll Area Chambers of Commerce



Highway 20 West - Stockton, Illinois

Photo by John Hudetz

CURRENT INVESTOR MEMBERS As of 12.31.25

Community Champion: \$10,000 and Up



Community Leader: \$5,000 to \$9,999

Adkins Energy
Baranski Hammer Moretta & Sheehy
Eagle Ridge Resort & Spa
First Community Bank of Galena
Louie's Trenching Services

Community Advocate: \$2,500 to \$4,999

Conlon Construction
Citizens State Bank
City of Galena
Dupaco Community Credit Union
Galena Roasters
Riverport Railroad
UMB Bank
Village of Elizabeth
Village of Stockton

Community Builder: \$1,000 to \$2,499

Carroll County Housing Authority,
Carroll County | City of Mount Carroll
Commonwealth Edison
Galena Territory Association
Gradient Coaching and Consulting
Highland Community College | ITC Midwest
Jo Daviess County Housing Authority
Nicor Gas | Village of Hanover

Community Service Partner: \$250 to \$999

Arrow Group
Blackhawk Hills Regional Council
Business Employment Skills Team
DC Rise Real Estate
Fried Green Tomatoes
Galena Country Tourism
getVRtours.com
Greater Freeport Partnership
Highway 20 Brewing Company
Hoskins Building Center
Jail Hill Inn
Jo Daviess County Transit
LEMFCO
MSA Professional Services
NW Illinois Alliance of Realtors
Origin Design | Pearl Valley Farms
RE/MAX Prime Properties - Jackie Debes
State Rep Tony McCombie - IL District 89
TBK Bank | The Bridgewater Inn
Timmerman's Supper Club
Village of Milledgeville
Visit NW IL
Zurn Elkay Water Solutions

2025 Friends of the Program: \$75 to 249 / In-Kind

Basket Case | Birth to Five Illinois - Region 8
Diane and Warren Gallagher | Dry Creek Beekeeping
Ergotips - Colleen Nielsen, QTR/L
FEH Design | Galena Area Chamber of Commerce
Jo Daviess Carroll Career Technical
Education Academy
Keller Williams Realty Signature - Angela Stodden, Realtor
Morrison Area Development Corporation



NW ILLINOIS

Economic Development

1 Commercial Drive | Suite 2 | Hanover, Illinois 61041

Photo courtesy of Galena Country Tourism