



Northwest Illinois Economic Development

“Build It Grow It” Program Now In It’s Fourth Year



By Barbara Sue Grass, Program Coordinator for NWILED

One of Northwest Illinois Economic Development’s on-going programs is their annual “Build It Grow It” program, a multi-week entrepreneurial bootcamp designed to empower aspiring business owners and entrepreneurs throughout Jo Daviess and Carroll counties and beyond. The event is moving into its fourth year and offers a series of concentrated and accelerated seminars that help equip entrepreneurs with the knowledge and skills needed to kickstart their businesses, while also offering something new and substantial to more established business owners. The program is open to small business owners, managers, entrepreneurs and even high school and college students.

The event is held in January and/or February and usually entails four weekly sessions in various locations across Jo Daviess and Carroll counties, since NWILED serves both counties. The sessions are 90 minutes in length and costs of the series is priced reasonably.

Each year the event is theme oriented, and each session includes a different topic from professional presenters – from business VPs to college educators - sharing their hands-on

expertise and encouraging group discussions, case studies and fluid question and answer sessions. The 2027 series, “What Scares You,” will be addressing human resources topics, copyrighting and budgeting. Advertising for this early 2027 event will start by year’s end.

Participants gain practical insights into applicable business planning, marketing strategies, customer service, financial management and numerous best business practices. Some of the topics in the past included financial literacy for small businesses, succession planning, accounting practices, software challenges, marketing, social media, branding, artificial intelligence.

To date over 120 people have attended the program with 60 graduating with a certificate of accomplishment – a great addition to their resumes. Many of the attendees come every year to the event.

The Jo-Carroll Energy Board of Directors created Northwest Illinois Economic Development to spearhead economic development structures, funding and progress in Jo Daviess, Carroll, and Whiteside counties in Northwest Illinois. Founded in 2008 and now in its 17th year of successful service, NWILED continues to be a regional development entity concentrating on growing the economy and public/private partnerships.

NWILED promotes economic development by fostering business growth, assisting expanding, and relocating businesses. The organization aids in determining these needs for growth with cooperation from government and business partners. NWILED encourages entrepreneurs by assisting with access to resources to begin and grow their businesses and employs all available resources to create a welcoming business environment, aligning the skills of the available workforce with the needs of businesses, and building political and economic capital. NWILED’s commitment to success also produces programs, ventures and events that nurture educational business growth and overall business community involvement.

For more information about the upcoming “Build It Grow It” Program, interested people can contact Northwest Illinois Economic Development or go to www.nwiled.org or by emailing infor@nwiled.org. With 17 years in business, NWILED’s office is located at 1 Commercial Drive, Suite 2, Hanover, Illinois. Their phone number is 815-297-7361. The organization has active accounts on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram.