

Northwest Illinois Economic Development – An Organization with a Deliberate Goal!



By Barbara Sue Grass, Program Coordinator for NWILED

Why should a business, government entities and community organizations consider becoming a member of an economic development organization in their community? Economic development organizations play a crucial role in fostering economic growth, attracting, retaining and creating job opportunities, and enhancing the overall prosperity of communities within their regions. In Jo Daviess and Carroll counties, Northwest Illinois Economic Development (NWILED) in particular serves as a catalyst for sustainable development and acts as an intermediary between public and private sectors, coordinating efforts to drive economic progress.

Becoming a member of Northwest Illinois Economic Development is beneficial for several reasons. Some of the programs NWILED has developed and implemented, which are often outside of what many municipalities offer to enhance business development, including:

- Assisting entrepreneurs plan out the launch of their new business or advising a corporation looking to relocate in the county on site selection and incentives that are available to them on local, state and or federal levels.
- Acts as a conduit for new and existing businesses with a network of peer contacts, businesses, officials, local chambers, and regional planning organizations and other economic development organizations and bureaus.
- Conducts numerous professional lunch and learn workshops, an entrepreneurial boot camp and workforce development events such as Manufacturing & Trades Days. NWILED also maintains an online Jobs board.
- NWILED also takes active roles in housing efforts, site readiness activities, tourism marketing and collaborations and alliances with other neighboring counties and regions.

- NWILED's website (www.nwiled.org) is an active resource center that includes more detailed information about the organization to assist its members and outside venues in exploring opportunities.

NWILED exists because of the generosity of its members. Since 2008 operational programming has been supported by member contributions from both public and private contributors. Currently NWILED has 60+ members, which allows for top notch programming like Build It Grow It and Manufacturing & Trades Day, and a board of directors with representation across multiple industries. Together this makes NWILED a viable organization whose top goal is to bring economic resources and opportunities to northwest Illinois and specifically Carroll and Jo Daviess Counties.

Not all members are a bank, utilities, or units of government. Many are small businesses that have experienced NWILED's outreach and wish to show their support. But the organization is grateful to have the backing of JCE Co-op and Jo Daviess County as its top supporters. This spectrum of investors means NWILED can field inquiries both big and small coming from all corners of our region quickly and purposefully.

In addition, the organization solicits its active membership for subject matter expertise from businesses and organizations. Membership levels are designed and tiered to offer options and choices that meet most business or organization's budgets. Each tier comes with some very targeted and specific value-added components as well!

If a business, municipality or individual wishes to become a member, membership information is available at www.nwiled.org, or a personal call or visit can be arranged with the organization's Regional Director, David Schmit, by calling 815-297-7361 or via email at dschmit@nwiled.org. Membership dedication supports NWILED's success to continue to support, enhance and continue their goals and objectives for our growing communities.