



Northwest Illinois Economic Development’s “Site Map” Provides Valuable Information to Developers, Community Leaders and the Public



By Barbara Sue Grass, Program Coordinator for NWILED

As one of their main objectives, Northwest Illinois Economic Development promotes economic development in Jo Daviess and Carroll counties by fostering business growth and assisting expanding and relocating businesses in determining their needs for growth with the cooperation of their community government and business partners. NWILED supports entrepreneurs by providing access to resources to start and grow their businesses, utilizing all available resources to create a welcoming business environment, matching the skills of the available workforce with business needs, and fostering the development of political and economic capital.

As part of that, NWILED has an interactive Geographic Information System-based (GIS) visual “site map” right on their website (www.nwiled.org) that shows where Jo Daviess and Carroll County business opportunities, infrastructure and economic activity exists, helping planners, investors and communities make data-driven decisions.

The site map is designed to identify and showcase opportunities, such as available commercial and industrial existing building and land spaces, and industrial “opportunity zones” or clusters of business. By highlighting these locations and their specific criteria for new or existing

enterprises, the site map supports business retention, expansion and attracting new business as well.

The GIS system itself is a user-friendly, specialized platform that can overlay multiple data layers such as zoning, population and industry presence. It also allows users to search by location, industry, or business type and provides interactive features such as clickable pins, images, and links to more details. It also supports scenario analysis, such as “what-if” site selection for a new business.

GIS-based site selection tools also help municipalities evaluate locations for new businesses by matching criteria such as accessibility, market size, and infrastructure. The benefits of GIS help reinforce data-driven decision-making by reducing guesswork in site selection and investment. It also helps with stakeholder engagement that makes complex data accessible to investors, entrepreneurs, and the public. As a result, it also helps with strategic alignment by supporting local economic goals, tourism, workforce development, and infrastructure planning.

In short, site maps in economic development are visual, data-rich tools that turn raw information into actionable insights, helping communities attract investment, retain businesses, and plan growth effectively. NWILED’s site map plays a pivotal role in helping showcase prime sites located throughout northwest Illinois that have gone dormant or which seek new ownership and regularly engages with site selectors seeking such spaces. NWILED’s site map profiles numerous sites and updates the website regularly.

For more information about the site map, 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.