

Welcome Back Home.

PCED PILOTS YOUNG-ENTREPRENEUR INITIATIVE

AS PART OF ITS ONGOING youth-retention and entrepreneurial-development efforts, Pulaski County Economic Development, with support from the Northwest Indiana Small Business Development Center (ISBDC) and the Pulaski County Chamber of Commerce, coordinated a student-business-plan competition in Mr. Brandon Burgess's Business Management class at Winamac Community High School this spring.

Six students participated in the program, researching business plans, and laws, regulations, and restrictions by which businesses must abide; hearing from guest speakers; and drafting plans, which they then amended and re-submitted after receiving comments from ISBDC's Ron Gifford and PCED Executive Director Nathan P. Origer. The plans were judged by five representatives of PCED and the Chamber.

Competing young entrepreneurs included Austen Brown, Nicole Heims, Kristen Maroney, and Kenny Stamper, plus runner-up Zachary Shidler, whose Winamac's Alley would bring bowling back to Winamac, and winner Adam Sommers, whose food-truck business would offer a new lunch option to industrial-park employees.

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Savor (Pulaski County,) Indiana

With filming tentatively set for the last week of August, Pulaski County will be hitting the small screen this fall. Associated Images Moving Picture Company, of Indianapolis, visited the area to scout potential venues in early August and will return, script in hand, to film an episode of their PBS-aired *Savor Indiana* community-profile/tourism-marketing program.

The show will highlight between five and ten tourist draws and other attractions of which visitors to the area may otherwise be unaware, but which could be of interest to them. A bicycle enthusiast interested in riding the Panhandle Pathway, for example, could decide that a visit to Tippecanoe River State Park should be added to his Pulaski County itinerary.

Divided into six or seven segments, the episode will guide viewers on a televised tour across Pulaski County, taking them to outdoor-recreation venues, agri-tourism destinations, and maybe a place or two where they could grab a bite to eat.

PCED, which is financing the project, will hold a license to use the final footage, as well as cutting-room outtakes, for further tourism-marketing endeavors by PCED and participating venues.

For more information, contact PCED Executive Director Nathan P. Origer and check out <http://www.savorindiana.com/>.

DID YOU KNOW ...

that the Northwest Indiana Small Business Development Center, with a local representative in Knox, provides many free and low-cost services to entrepreneurs and small businesses?

Contact us to learn more!

CONGRATULATIONS TO ...

Fratco, Pulaski County's first Indiana Companies to Watch honoree!

Pulaski Memorial Hospital, a national top-20 critical-access hospital for quality!

Dr. Robert Klitzman, on his retirement after nearly three decades of service to the community!

All of the participants in the student-business-plan competition, especially Adam and Zachary!

The State of the County Economy, 2013

Last year, although I certainly noted the positive things happening, I offered a pretty bleak outlook. It was probably unnecessarily pessimistic, but I felt compelled to play the role of Cassandra. This year, I'd like to offer a more optimistic report. Certainly, things are not perfect, and some of the concerns that I raised last year are at least as relevant, if not more so, now. We still have skills gaps, empty downtowns, brain-drain concerns, a diminishing workforce, and an aging, shrinking population, the latter two of which I addressed in an op.-ed. piece earlier this year. Nonetheless, I am upbeat about the present and maybe even hopeful for the future of this county.

Our unemployment rate consistently remains best or second-best in the northwest quarter of the state and in the top 10-to-20 percent of all Indiana counties. At 6.8 percent in May, with a *real* rate of closer to 12 percent, it's still too high for my liking, but if "the new normal" is anywhere from 6.7 percent to 9 percent, then we're in a good place, and we remain in better shape than the state and the nation. A few weeks ago, Eric Doden, president of the Indiana Economic Development Corporation, visited Winamac. During a small-group roundtable discussion, he remarked that he had been surprised and pleased by our average-income statistics. Although below the state median, our annual average wages per job and per capita income are superior to those of most of our neighbors and generally impressive for a small, rural county.

In the last seventh months, we've lost two noteworthy businesses in Winamac. To me, the silver lining is much brighter than the greyness of this news. Most, though not all, of those who lost their jobs when Chesapeake Recycling and Tippecanoe Beverage ceased operations have found new opportunities, and for the first time during my tenure here, we have buildings — two of them, attractive and with highway access — available for relocation, expansion, or start-up development. Too often in the past, when the State has distributed project leads, I've had to disregard them because I had no existing facility to offer. Already, we've seen some interest expressed in one of these facilities, and the other has multiple serious prospects.

On the other side of the county, although we're behind schedule, we're slowly making progress on the premier Key Action Step of our strategic plan, the development of a rail-served ag.-tech/ industrial

park. CSX is on-board, and, already, existing companies are intrigued; even businesses twenty miles from the railroad will have the opportunity to benefit from freight rail when the proposed team-track dock facility is operational.

We'd likely be moving more rapidly on this project, but one obstacle stands in our way, one about which it's hard to complain too much. Finding landowners willing to consider selling right now, especially for a low price, is difficult. This, of course, is because agriculture, one of our most important industries, is so strong. Unfortunately, the best place for industrial development in the county, is also home to some of the best farmland in the area. That's still better than not having excellent ground or development potential, and you'll never hear me complain that such an import economic sector is in such good shape.

Late last year and early this year, GalFab, under new ownership, announced plans for significant investment in Winamac with the promise of 20 new jobs over the next four year. Recently, I've met with management at two companies, one of which is planning a substantial investment, with new jobs, and the other of which may secure a contract that will require even more investment than has already been made recently and even more hiring. I'm aware of two or three other larger companies contemplating expansion projects.

As I recently highlighted in the spring newsletter and the Pulaski County *Journal*, our community is reaping the successes sown by the Revolving Loan Fund. Adaptasoft is thriving and growing as a white-collar business in Francesville. Clear Decision Filtration gains more customers every month and hopes nearly to double its workforce over the next few years. T&S Recycle is buzzing with

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(Bonus!) CONGRATULATIONS TO ...

The Braun Corporation, on its planned multi-year, multi-million-dollar expansion in Winamac!
(Expect full coverage in the fall newsletter.)

1st Source Bank, on being "Your Partners from the First" in Greater Michiana since 1863!

First Federal Savings Bank, on serving north-central Indiana for 40 years!

Carol Fernandez, our new assistant at PCED!

Pulaski County: A Healthy Economy

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activity — and the sounds of saws. And we still have a public-oriented lumberyard, one that has substantially increased and diversified its line of products this year. Over the past several months, we've also seen the opening of a bakery, an antiques-and-more shop, a breakfast-and-barbecue restaurant, and a health-goods/at-home-independence store in Winamac. In Francesville, Five Loaves Bakery is under new management and still serving delightful baked goods and lunches.

This spring, with support from the Chamber of Commerce and the Indiana Small Business Development Center, we piloted a student-business-plan competition in the Business Management class at Winamac Community High School. There were some rough patches and growing pains, but it was an eye-opening experience; we intend to expand this program to a class at West Central, and eventually to open it to any high-school-aged student in the county. Later this year, younger members of the CDC and I shall get the ball rolling on a Pulaski County Young Professionals Network. I still hope, within the next few years, to establish an internship program, either locally or regionally, and some sort of "junior CDC" comprising civic-minded high-school students.

In 2012, the Indiana Department of Education gave 'A' grades to both of our high schools, up from an F for one of the schools and a B for the other in 2010. Although still well below average, our rate of higher-education attainment has increased. The percentage of the population with at least an associate's degree has risen by more than five percentage points since 2000; we've seen a slight decline in the associate's-only

rate, while more residents have earned a Bachelor's, graduate, or professional degree.

Finally, our wonderful natural resources, like the Tippecanoe River and the state park bearing its name, and the long-necked migratory birds as Jasper-Pulaski, continue to bring visitors — and potential future residents — into our community. Slowly, but surely, the Panhandle Pathway creeps farther and farther northward. Right now, we await word from the County Council on a requested additional appropriation that would allow us to fund the production of a tourism-marketing television episode to help us to sell Pulaski County to a broader audience. My office and the Town of Winamac are even working with a consulting firm on a hotel-feasibility study. That's a pretty cool step forward if you ask me.

Many concerns need to be addressed, and some may never fully be fixed, but I am quite confident in stating that, all things considered, Pulaski County is in good shape. In order for it to remain so, and to go from good to great, the CDC and I, county and municipal officials, the Chamber, local businesses, and every citizen have to take on our share of the responsibility for moving forward in a healthy, responsible way. We'll never be Mayberry again, but the desiccation of the Heartland is not foreordained, and I truly believe that it is within our power to make Pulaski County into Mayberry 2.0.

Thank you.

[This report was originally delivered by Executive Director Nathan P. Origer at the 2013 Pulaski County Economic Development Summit on Thursday, 27 June, at the Monterey Town Hall.]

Summit 2013: Our Treasure, the Tippecanoe

In addition to the 2013 State of the Economy report, attendees were treated to a delightful meal catered by a Monterey resident and two engaging talks about the Tippecanoe River.

A Winamac native formerly with the Nature Conservancy, Chad Watts is now project director for the Conservation Information Technology Center in West Lafayette; he spoke with passion and knowledge about the quality and ecological diversity of the river.

One of the top rivers in all of North America, the Tippecanoe is a benchmark by which flowing bodies of water are judged. Mr. Watts explained that its high regard is based on quality testing, species diversity and health, and habitat variety and quality. Home to a number of species of mussels, the river

also hosts otters; it was amongst the rivers chosen for settlement when the river otter was reintroduced to Indiana in 1996.

Following Mr. Watts's talk, the crowd heard from Connie Scott, who with her husband operates Riverside Rentals, a canoe/kayak/tube livery on the river just east of the Winamac Town Park. In 2012, she reported, they floated about 9,500 people, nearly 90 percent of whom were non-residents. A group-discount offering through Living Social in Chicago and general group-outing options have helped to make their business an attractive outdoor-recreation option for urbanites seeking respite in our paradise on the Tippecanoe.

PULASKI COUNTY, HOME TO ...

- Moss Creek and Pond View Golf Courses.
- Shadyhill Speedway.
- Acorn Oaks, Broken Arrow, Rising Sun, and Small Acres USA Horseman's Campgrounds.

**PULASKI COUNTY:
WELCOME BACK HOME.**

WHY PULASKI COUNTY?

THE WINAMAC INDUSTRIAL PARK, WINAMAC, AND PARTS OF OTHER TOWNS HAVE FIBER-OPTIC CONNECTIVITY READY TO SERVE YOU.



CONTACT PCED @ 574-946-3869, OR VISIT
[HTTP://WWW.PULASKIONLINE.ORG/](http://www.pulaskionline.org/)

Local Students Explore Entrepreneurship

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Messers. Sommers and Shidler received Chamber Checks, courtesy of the Chamber, and all participants received a prepaid MasterCard from H&R Block.

PCED's objectives for the competition are to provide real-life business lessons to students, to open their minds to the possibility of being entrepreneurs in their home community, and to reveal to them the behind-the-scenes efforts required to make a business successful. It is hoped that the program will continue in 2013-2014 and expand to a class at West Central, with a longer-term goal of opening the competition to all high-school-aged students in Pulaski County.

Many thanks go out to Mr. Burgess, Dr. Robert Klitzman and Principal Rick DeFries, Mr. Gifford, Amy Jo Cantu of H&R Block - Winamac, Chamber Director Angie Anspach and the Chamber Board, guest speakers Doug Capper and Courtney Poor, and the panel of judges.

Contact Mr. Origer for more information about or to volunteer with the program.

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LOOKING FOR A JOB IN PULASKI COUNTY, TOO!*

Our Mission

Pulaski County Economic Development holds to a mission to promote and improve the quality of economic development throughout Pulaski County in pursuit of excellence through the following endeavors:

- *Supporting the expansion and continued investment of Pulaski County businesses.
- *Recruiting new business and industry into Pulaski County.
- *Promoting tourism and the increase of transient spending in Pulaski County.
- *Developing and supporting business services such as workforce development, infrastructure, planning, financial programs, technology initiatives and entrepreneurial programs.
- *Conducting charitable and educational activities.

**Pulaski County
Community Development Commission/
Economic Development
2013-2014 Leadership**

President: Bill Champion, Fratco
Vice-President: David Broad, Alliance EMS
Secretary: David Zeltwanger, DK and Sons, LLC
First Past President: Rod Button, Town of Winamac
Membership Officer: Jamie Bales, Alliance Bank

Executive Director: Nathan P. Origer
nporiger@pulaskionline.org

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