

Welcome Back Home.

Summit: Quality of life matters for economic development

“TALENT IS THE SINGLE MOST important element in local economic development, and quality of place is a primary factor in a community’s ability to attract and retain talent.” So proclaimed Dick Heupel, director of community and economic development at Ball State’s Building Better Communities (BBC) program and keynote speaker at the 2014 Economic Development Summit.

Mr. Heupel presented and discussed various demographic and economic statistics about Pulaski County (some encouraging, others damning) and spoke of the importance of creating a place where people want to live. Discussing BBC’s Primacy of Place™ programming, he stressed the following keys to success: arts integration, community design, community collaboration for educational excellence, community well-being, municipal governance, and community readiness for change.

He finished his excellent, interactive presentation by offering suggestions on how to think about quality-of-place improvements. Assuring the audience there is no need to make Pulaski County into the next Metropolis or Capital City, he instead urged them to ask themselves, “What makes our

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DID YOU KNOW ...

that the Revolving Loan Fund still has funds available to help to finance start-ups, expansions, and relocation projects?

Contact us to learn more!

Second student-business-plan competition wraps up; future expansion being investigated

A second business-plan competition in the classroom of Winamac Community High School teacher Brandon Burgess culminated in January with the taking of first place by The Tippy Lodge, a hotel planned by students Kyle Hettinger and Levi Schultz – who, to PCED’s chagrin, have made more progress on the hotel-development front than PCED! Lane Button and Miranda Nelson’s Button Learning Service, a tutoring business, followed in second place. The eleven student-participants all deserve commendation for their hard work and fine plans.

Thanks go out to Mr. Burgess and the school administration, Ron Gifford of the Small Business Development Center, Ben Schaller of the First National Bank of Monterey, the Chamber of Commerce for prizes for the first- and second-place winners, and PCED and Chamber Board members for judging the plans.

The program is on hiatus for evaluation this spring, but expansion to West Central and continuation at Winamac in the fall are under consideration. It is further hoped that, once a young professionals organization has been established, its members will be able to support this fine program.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ...

Chuck Mellon on his forthcoming retirement after thirty-plus years of service to the community, and to Don Street, his successor!

Antares Trailers on a smooth start-up in Winamac!

Winamac Coil Spring on its expansion into the former Eaton/Chesapeake building!

Pulaski County on 175 years of awesomeness!

Business Profile: Clear Decision Filtration

It has always been Tony Holliday's ambition to own his own business, and in 2007 he finally achieved this goal with the opening of Clear Decision Filtration (CDF). After more than twenty years in the trailer-fabrication industry, Tony got his start in the filtration business, bringing his sales and purchasing expertise to Krystil Klear Filtration as the director of operations. When Krystil Klear was purchased by Pentair International, Tony was given more responsibility, and with that came the confidence that he needed to branch out on his own.

A short two years after the acquisition, Tony recognized a need in the market that was not being met by the industry. While large filtration companies like Pentair built their business models on the sale and maintenance of filtration equipment, the filters themselves were of secondary concern. These companies stocked replacement filters for their equipment, but product lead time was longer than a week on average. Tony and his wife, Melanie, knew that they could do better, and, in the spring of 2008, they left their jobs for good. In the fall of that same year, CDF hit the ground running in Francesville.

The economic downturn in 2008 and 2009 made for a difficult time to start a business, but CDF had a number of factors working in its favor. First and foremost, the company started with a clear, focused business model that addressed an area of weakness in the market at the time. Tony entered into the business with established contacts, so the company not only had the ability to meet a market

demand, but also a ready pool of consumers. Help from the Pulaski County Revolving Loan Fund bolstered the start-up, allowing them to jumpstart production. Early on, a positive attitude and an enthusiastic sales approach flew in the face of CDF's competitors, who were tightening their belts and scaling back sales. By being aggressive early on, Tony and Melanie secured enough clients to start out on the right foot despite the poor economic climate.

CDF has experienced steady growth since 2008. Between 2011 and 2014, the company experienced 122-percent growth in sales thanks to their singular focus on their product and customer service. While many filtration companies spread themselves thin over a wide variety of products, CDF focuses on producing high-quality liquid filter bag replacements — and on doing it better than anyone else. Their central location in Pulaski County allows the company to deliver orders to customers as far away as North Carolina and Colorado days ahead of competitors. The company primarily sells to distributors, and their 100% client-retention rate is a testament to the quality of both their products and service. CDF currently has 14 full-time employees and seeks to hire a production supervisor. They look to continue their controlled growth into the future, seizing market share from their larger competitors across the country while maintaining high-quality service and production. Tony Holliday and Clear Decision Filtration are proof that entrepreneurs with a vision can achieve great success in Pulaski County.

Featured Job Bank Listings

Position

[Production Supervisor](#)

Company

Clear Decision Filtration

Description

Personnel management and motivation, employee training, production scheduling, quality and delivery maintenance, production-improvement and SOP implementation

Contact

CDF, Inc.

4571 Sout 1450 West

Francesville, Indiana 47946

tholliday@cleardecisioninc.com

219-567-2008, ask for Tony

Position

[Design Engineer](#) (Job ID: 103276)

Company

Pentair

Description

Project leadership; identification, definition planning, scheduling, coordination, and implementation of product designs and improvements; efficiency improvements; VE support and leadership.

Contact

Pentair

9449 South 550 West

Winamac, Indiana 46996

douglas.mcleod@pentair.com

574-278-7161, ask for Doug

The State of the County Economy, 2014

I don't want to jinx things, but Pulaski County is in pretty dangd good shape right now. A month or so ago, in the wake of the December labor-force report, Indiana economist Morton J. Marcus published some reflections, in which he noted that, relative to December 2007, just before the Great Recession, Indiana had a job deficit of 1.12 percent — something like 28,000 jobs shy of that December-2007 mark. In Pulaski County, we were one job shy. Now, in fairness, I have to point out that the estimated population of Pulaski County has decreased by roughly 400 since then — a trend that we absolutely must stop, unless we want to become a county of old-folks'-home residents and employees —, but it's hard to say how many of those would be in the workforce. It's also important to note that we have a higher unemployment rate than we had in December of 2007, 5.4 percent, which is still pretty fantastic, compared to 4.3 percent — and this is actually a good thing: we have as many people employed now as we had then, but we actually have more people actively looking for work now than then. Where are they going to find jobs?

As most of you are aware, the Braun Corporation announced a significant expansion last summer. They were able to retain 30 existing jobs, moved 28 positions from Michigan to Winamac (a handful of which were filled by transferees), and are adding nearly 40 jobs over the next couple of years. A few weeks ago, the Winamac Town Council approved tax abatements to secure Antares Trailers' commitment to Winamac, bringing new life and 40-plus jobs to the former Tippecanoe Beverage facility. And just last night, the County Commissioners formally approved a forgivable-loan agreement with Winamac Coil Spring, the fruit of months of discussions and progressive thinking on the company's part. This is bringing redemption to the darkly clouded Eaton/Chesapeake building, and although right now they're only transferring a handful of existing employees, they hope to create ten to 20 new positions over the next five to ten years. Just these three projects are going to create at least 100 new positions in Winamac, to say nothing of the increases to the local property-tax base. And this doesn't hit on the rest of our largest

employers, each one of which has, at some point, been considering plans that would further increase production and employment locally. Some of these plans have been put on the backburner, and some are still in their inchoate stages, but things are looking great here.

[...]

We declared 2012 'the Year of the Entrepreneur' and hosted a number of entrepreneurship events. [A number of factors] have sidetracked us from continuing to emphasize the importance of entrepreneurial development to our economy as much as we should be, but we've not been totally dormant. Pairing this focus with ever-important youth-retention efforts (Remember what I said about old folks' homes?), we've completed two very small student-business-plan competitions at Winamac Community High School. We're on hiatus this spring, allowing me to determine necessary improvements and to figure out how to open the program to more students, including at West Central, but this program will continue.

Right now, we're working on starting a young professionals organization in Pulaski County. The specifics are going to be decided by the members, but this group is going to provide opportunities for networking, mentoring, and civic engagement and philanthropy — a place where young professionals who stayed here, came back after college, or decided that big-city living isn't for them can have a sense of belonging in a community from which, regrettably, too many bright youths have fled for allegedly greener pastures. This group, I sincerely hope, will cultivate generations of Pulaski County leaders.

The downside of our recent successes is that we have just about no available industrial property left in the county. It's nice not to have vacancies, but it's not so great not to be able to offer anything, other than some acreage south of Braun, with neither rail nor major-highway access, when companies are looking to expand or to relocate. To that end, only a few years behind schedule, we've hired Territorial Engineering, out of Koontz Lake, to conduct feasibility studies on some properties in the U.S.-421/CSX corridor. Studies on two locations are nearing completion, and we're working on securing

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Moving the County Economy Forward

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access to a third site. Pulaski County's is primarily a homegrown economy — and a fabulous testament to the grow-your-own method —, but at least being able to compete to attract from the outside is important. So is being able to offer infrastructure-served industrial land for the next generation of local entrepreneurs. And when this rail-served industrial park does finally get built, it'll even offer team-track rail access for companies nowhere near the railroad.

In order to attract those outside companies — and tourists —, the CDC has stepped up marketing efforts like never before. Early this year, our *Savor Indiana* and *ExtraordINary Indiana* episodes debuted on PBS stations across the state, on demand with some cable providers, and online. These episodes are fantastic, far exceeding my expectations. We still have a lot of work to do to make sure that as many people across Indiana, the Midwest, and the whole world see them; once we make this happen, I'm quite sure that these videos won't fail us: companies will keep Pulaski County on their look-into lists, and vacationers near and far will decide that a day on the river, some paintball, and a monstrosity of a burger at the Patio are calling them to our neck of the woods.

We're also investing in a complete overhaul of *Pulaski Online*, which hasn't looked current and fresh in about five years. The new Website will be much more attractive, user-friendlier, and [administrator]-friendlier [...], with a vastly improved economic-development toolkit and a greater wealth of information and documents available to local residents. This project is the Website equivalent of HGTV's *Curb Appeal* — no more uncut grass, peeling paint, or brown hedges for us!

If, as I'm optimistic will be the case, we do see an increase in tourism, where are the people going to stay? Our bed-and-breakfasts don't allow for much occupancy, so, as some of you are aware, we're working on developing a hotel in Winamac. This is moving more slowly than I'd prefer, but I'm so committed to seeing this through that I'm going to be in Peru — Miami County, not South America, thankfully — at 9:00 a.m. tomorrow to meet with a colleague who's worked with the same company in his community and a hotel-finance specialist.

Finally, the project of which I think I'm proudest right now: working with Ivy Tech and human-resources and operations officers from our major employers, we've started workforce-training programming locally. Right now, with an early focus on leadership skills, we're hosting training workshops for current employees; I hope that we can expand to more hands-on programming, including maintenance, mechanical, and electrical, in the near future. Eventually, bringing WorkOne into the partnership more fully, I hope that we can begin to offer training outside of companies, for the unemployed looking to improve their chances and for the employed looking for opportunities to climb the ladder. We've only offered one class, with the second taking place on Friday, but, so far, the responses have been overwhelmingly positive.

So, there you have it: the state of the Pulaski County economy.

[This report was originally delivered by Executive Director Nathan P. Origer at the 2014 Pulaski County Economic Development Summit on Tuesday, 4 March, at the Winamac Event Center.]

PCED reorganizes, welcomes new members

At a brief meeting prior to the 2014 Economic Development Summit, the Community Development Commission elected its 2014-2015 officers. Incumbent President Bill Champion will serve a second term in that capacity, now with Monterey's Lawrence Loehmer at his right hand. David Zeltwanger continues as secretary, with Krysten Hinkle now filling the role of Membership Officer. Andrew Fritz rounds out the executive board.

In addition to electing officers, PCED also welcomed two new members. Winamac Town

Council President John E. Plowman replaced six-year member Rod Button in the Town's seat on the Commission, and Pulaski Memorial Hospital CFO Gregg Malott came aboard in an at-large role, filling the vacancy left by six-year member David Broad.

These two new members will serve through February 2017 and be eligible for one additional consecutive term. PCED still has one at-large vacancy, and the search for the ideal community-oriented member is underway.

ExtraordINary Pulaski County businesses

In February, Pulaski County made its second television appearance of the year, starring in an episode of *ExtraordINary Indiana*, produced by Associated Images, of *Savor Indiana* fame. Filmed last fall with the support of PCED, this program emphasizes reinvention as it takes a close look at the local economic climate. Highlighting three successful businesses — Fratco, Adaptasoft, and the Braun Corporation —, hosts Ron Gifford and Laura Sheets make the case for Pulaski County's economic strengths.

The program begins with an overview of what makes the community a great place in which to live and to operate a business, citing such amenities as a first-rate library, a theater, thriving local businesses, and Pulaski Memorial Hospital —rated as a top-twenty critical-access hospital by the National Rural Health Association. The featured businesses uniformly list such amenities as a major benefit.

The profiles begin with drainage-pipe manufacturer Fratco. Its segment consists of numerous shots of the company's manufacturing and storage facilities, and an interview with President Chris Overmyer. He lists easy access to highway and rail, available storage infrastructure, an excellent school system, a ready workforce, and the welcoming culture of Francesville as the primary benefits of doing business in Pulaski County.

Staying in Francesville, Mr. Gifford next brings viewers to Adaptasoft, a company that creates and manages payroll software for tens of thousands of businesses across the country. The segment features an interview with Adaptasoft's president, Tim Troxel, who discusses the business's history and operations, as well as the company's unique focus on its employees. An interview with developer Joe Wagner, who left sunny Southern California for Salem Township, makes clear that the combination of Francesville's small-town



New polyolefin corrugated pipe being produced in Fratco's Francesville plant

atmosphere and amenities make it a great asset, allowing the company to attract talent from all over.

Last, but certainly not least, comes the Braun Corporation. The largest employer in Pulaski County began in the humble garage of Ralph Braun's parents, and *ExtraordINary Indiana* prominently features Mr. Braun's path to leading

America's largest producer of accessible vehicles. President and CEO Nick Gutwein takes us through the company's philosophy of collaboration with the community, and plans for increased production. He also points to the workforce as a driver of Braun's success and acknowledges Pulaski County's role in attracting great employees.



A Braun welder makes his contribution to what eventually will provide mobility to a grateful customer.

The Pulaski County episode of *ExtraordINary Indiana* can be viewed on *Pulaski Online* or at <http://www.extraordinaryindiana.com/>.



PULASKI COUNTY, HOME TO ...

- the 21-miles-long-and-growing Panhandle Pathway multi-modal trail.
- Tippecanoe River State Park (and the lovely Tippecanoe River).
- Jasper-Pulaski and Winamac Fish and Wildlife Areas.

**PULASKI COUNTY:
WELCOME BACK HOME.**

The importance of quality of place

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community authentic?" How do we make Pulaski County the best Pulaski County that it can be?

As the State of the County Economy Address (page 3) makes clear, Pulaski County has enjoyed many successes. However, serious concerns exist. John Karras, of the Weblog *urbanSCALE*, remarks, "If your [community]'s job growth ... was significantly stronger than its population growth, your quality of life is lacking." In Pulaski County, we add jobs while *losing* residents each year. More and more Pulaski County workers pay property and income taxes to support services elsewhere; less money for local services ultimately means fewer and worse services, making for a less-attractive community.

Communities that cannot retain talent will always struggle to attract it. This will be a matter of serious soul-searching for PCED, as it should be for everyone invested in the vitality of Pulaski County. In 2014 and beyond, our focus as a community must be on capacity-building. We must continue to improve if we want to retain and to attract the families who will keep Pulaski County thriving.

**THE PULASKI ONLINE
JOB BANK**

*IF YOU'RE AN EMPLOYER IN PULASKI COUNTY
LOOKING FOR QUALIFIED LOCAL WORKERS,
THEN CONTACT PCED TO ADD A JOB LISTING,
FREE OF CHARGE, TO THE ONLINE JOB BANK.
([HTTP://WWW.PULASKIONLINE.ORG/CONTENT/
VIEW/178/609](http://www.pulaskionline.org/content/view/178/609)). CHECK IT OUT IF YOU'RE
LOOKING FOR A JOB IN PULASKI COUNTY, TOO!*

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

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
2014-2015 Leadership**

President: Bill Champion, Fratco
Vice-President: Lawrence Loehmer, Town of Monterey
Secretary: David Zeltwanger, DK and Sons, LLC
Membership Officer: Krysten Hinkle, Four County
Counseling Center
Board member: Andrew Fritz, Fritz Black Sand Farms

Executive Director: Nathan P. Origer
nporiger@pulaskionline.org
Assistant to the Director: Terry L. Howard II
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