

***Pulaski County Economic Development***

Winamac Municipal Utilities Complex

Winamac, Indiana

5 June 2012

**Guest Presentation**

PCED members present: President Rod Button (Winamac), Secretary Andrew Fritz, Past President David Broad, Membership Officer Jamie Bales (Francesville); Christy Perdue (Chamber); Becky Anspach, Dave Zeltwanger; Executive Director Nathan P. Origer (*ex-officio*).

Guests: Donny Link, Link Environmental Equipment/Linkster's; Courtney Poor.

Mr. Link appeared before the Board, at about 6:40 p.m., to discuss his family's two enterprises in Winamac, as well as their histories and futures. This year marks Link Equipment's twenty-fifth anniversary, and an open house would be occurring on 15 June. Mr. Link's father started the business out of his front room after fourteen years of employment with Galbreath, Inc. The company focuses on waste- and recyclables-handling-distribution equipment, with fifteen employees and a full-service shop; the primary customer area covers Indiana, Ohio, and Michigan. Because of manufacturers' regulations, they are limited in geography on new-equipment sales, but they have *carte blanche* on used-equipment sales. The company rehabilitates used equipment in-house. In summer 2012, the company will launch a retail truck-equipment line, offering plows, toolboxes, bed liners, and related equipment; additionally, Link has become a franchise affiliate of a hose-and-fitting supplier. "We're diversifying," Mr. Link noted.

Responding to an enquiry from Mr. Poor, Mr. Link noted that despite past incidents with County government, the company remains committed to the community, both in terms of operating here and being willing to service local-government entities. Mr. Broad enquired as to Mr. Link's vision for the next twenty-five years; increased alternate-fuel usage and recycling should be expected, he replied. The important question will be one of affordable processing.

Regarding Linkster's, the family's downtown-Winamac boutique cigar shop, Mr. Link called it "our fun place" and "Dad's dream". They hope to see new additions to downtown's business district. In addition to these ventures, his mother operates the Winamac Events Center, a building available for rental for meetings, parties, and the like. Mr. Link was thanked for his entrepreneurial service to the community and his taking time to address PCED.

**Regular Meeting Minutes**

PCED members present: As noted above. PCED members absent: Vice-President Cheryl Stone; County Commissioner Ken Boswell, County Councilor Alex Haschel, Medaryville Board-of-Trustees Vice-President Derrick Stalbaum, Monterey Board-of-Trustees President Jim Fleury; Bill Champion.

Guests: Mary Perren, Pulaski County *Journal*.

**Call to Order**

President Button called the meeting to order at 7:17 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes**

After brief review, a motion to approve the minutes of the 1 May 2012 meeting was made by Mr. Broad. Mr. Zeltwanger seconded, and all approved without further discussion.

**Executive Director's Report**

*Strategic Relationships:* The director reported on having attended the monthly MidWest Indiana (now called 'Indiana's Technology Corridor') meeting, which he would discuss further in Old Business. He lunched with Jack Moore, of CenturyLink, who later provided him with maps showing where CenturyLink offers fiber-optic service in Pulaski County. (He noted that Eric Galbreath also provided maps showing where TVCable provides this service.) He had a breakfast meeting with a local resident, who recently moved back to Winamac, to discuss what is going on in

the community. He attended the monthly Chamber-board meeting, and is working on a fundraising program with the Chamber's executive director and one other board member. Discussion regarding the inaugural issue of the quarterly Pulaski County *Economic Development Dispatch* also occurred; it was quite well received.

*Infrastructure:* The director assisted Greenspace Winamac with another grant application for the proposed pocket park at the corner of US-35 and Washington Street; the previous month's grant had been awarded. The director noted that the Advisory Plan Commission continues to wait on the final land-use maps; Rhein-Bach has promised to deliver the electronic files, and WTH has agreed to finish them as appropriate. The director met with Messrs. Fritz and Zeltwanger, along with Brad Neihouser, to discuss west-side real estate for and possible community response to the PC-CARE; following that, Director Origer met informally with one landowner.

*Business Retention/Expansion and Entrepreneurial Development:* Three of the Summit run-up events had been completed to-date: the presentation on the Revolving Loan Fund (with decent attendance), the Small Business Administration workshop (with abysmal attendance: The director simply discussed SBA programs with the representative.), and the talk by the business consultant from the Northwest Indiana Small Business Development Center. Additionally, on the morning of the board meeting, Director Origer met with an attendee of the RLF presentation; she and her husband have purchased a building in Winamac with the intent of opening a small lunch-service restaurant, and may require supplemental financial assistance. Despite the minimal attendance, the director expressed his view that as long as even one or two entrepreneurs is introduced to helpful resources, then the programming is worth the effort.

*Marketing:* The director attended the monthly Rural and Rustic meeting in Rochester.

*Other:* Director Origer noted that he continues working with Pulaski Memorial Hospital on their Community Health Needs Assessment; both parties have been delayed on this project, though.

*Workforce Development:* Pulaski County's unemployment rate was 6.2 percent, down from 6.9 percent in April and 7.1 percent in May 2011. The director suggested that the real unemployment rate is about 7.3 percent, based on the ratio between the official and real national-unemployment rates, but added that this is a rough estimate, with no easy way to calculate the rate precisely. Discussion ensued regarding the causes of the local-climate improvement.

*Financial Report:* At the end of May, \$82,644.75 remained in PCED's budget; the entire CREDIT Fund had a balance of about \$1.86 million not appropriated. The balance of the Donation Fund remained just below \$3,000, and the Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) had a balance of more than \$136,000. All borrowers continue to repay on time. Discussion ensued regarding legitimate uses of CREDIT moneys under current State statute, and regarding Winamac Lumber Yard, an RLF borrower.

Mr. Broad moved to approve the Executive Director's and Financial Reports, and Mr. Zeltwanger seconded. With no further discussion, the Reports were approved by all.

*Priority List and Monthly Calendar:* Forthcoming events on the director's schedule for June and July were reviewed; those of note were the Winamac/County/Plymouth-Tube/Indiana-Municipal-Power-Agency meeting on Friday, 8 June, regarding the proposed substation for Plymouth Tube and the financing thereof; Link Environmental Equipment's open house and the Chamber of Commerce's golf outing (15 June); the last Summit-run-up event and the Summit (18 and 28 June); PCED's County-Council appointment to discuss the 2013 budget at some point in July; and the August board meeting, in Monterey. The director also pointed out the County Fair (30 June – 6 July), Power from the Past (19 – 22 July), and the Winamac town-wide yard sales (21 July).

### Old Business

*Ivy Tech update:* The director noted that the primary issue continues to be that a suitable building owned by a willing landlord has yet to be found, and the payback costs on a building purchased and appropriately renovated by a qualifying non-profit organization is longer than the life of a lease that Ivy Tech can promise. Discussion ensued regarding whether other communities in the county would be feasible, or if Winamac alone works, as well as potential buildings. Additionally, it was suggested that approaching Ivy Tech with a small committee of community members, to show the broad community support for the project, may be advisable. The director would continue to work with Ivy Tech and other involved players to bring Ivy Tech to the community.

*Economic Summit 2012:* The director reported on the last pre-cursor event, with the Purdue Center for Regional Development, on 18 June, at 6:00 p.m. at the Francesville-Salem Township Fire Station. Focusing on economic gardening and the Indiana Home Town Competitiveness Program (HTC), this event would be, Director Origer noted, “the most important [of the pre-cursor events]”; brief overviews of economic garden and HTC were provided. The director continued to work on organizing the 28-June Summit: he had yet to reach potential caterers whom he had been trying to contact, and he had yet to hear back from a potential panelist, although another small businessman had approached him about assisting. The next day in the office would bring forth continued efforts.

*Brownfields Assessment (KIRPC):* Having met with KIRPC officials, KIRPC-region economic-development directors, and consultants from IWM, Director Origer reported that KIRPC would be applying for a regional-coalition brownfield-assessment grant; he asked the Board to provide to him any sites worth considering for this project — abandoned factories, grain elevators, gas stations, mechanic shops, and the like. On a tangent from the mention of grain elevators, he noted that he had contacted someone from Tate & Lyle, which recently had purchased the Overmyer Grain facility north of Francesville.

*ITC (MidWest Indiana)/Northwest Indiana Forum — Financial-investment obligations:* Continuing discussion from the May meeting regarding Pulaski County’s regional identity/ies regarding continued membership in Indiana’s Technology Corridor (ITC; formerly MidWest Indiana), joining the Northwest Indiana Forum, or embracing both directions, Director Origer presented two potential expenses relating to ITC membership: a one-time licensing fee of \$1,650 for PCED use of *Executive Pulse* (economic-development customer-relationship-management software), and \$2,000 local-match contribution for the grant recently awarded to ITC by the Indiana Economic Development Corporation for marketing, especially through a new, vastly improved Website to be developed by Brand Acceleration. After lengthy discussion, Mr. Broad moved to approve both expenditures; with a second from Ms. Perdue, the Board approved unanimously. At this time, the Board’s position, as expressed in the discussion, was to try to be involved with both ITC and the Forum.

*OSHA 30 training:* Returning to a topic from April, the director presented information from Heritage Safety group about the company, the programs that it offers, and the OSHA 30 training that it provides. The Board supports hosting the programming, but specific PCED involvement remains to be determined. Members suggested that it be delayed until late fall or winter, when more potential participants — especially self-employed contractors — would be available; enquiring as to whether any municipal employees would benefit from this was also encouraged.

*Public outreach — County Fair:* Having attended the Chamber-board meeting at which the idea of again having a booth at the Fair was met with skepticism, the Director asked the Board if this would be worth pursuing. Given the general ineffectiveness of last year’s attempt, the idea was scrapped, with the director noting that he would spend one or two evenings, in a CDC shirt, walking the fairgrounds and engaging residents as appropriate.

*Election-2012 debates:* The director, having spoken with one candidate for State office from this district, expressed concern about whether PCED could successfully conduct a debate without risk of creating too much commotion, given the heated nature of legislation passed in the most recent session. The issue was tabled until the August meeting.

### New Business

*IEDA Summer Conference: Best Practices:* Director Origer requested permission to attend this conference, in mid-June in Merrillville, noting that the agenda looks to be quite relevant to PCED’s current objectives. On a motion from Mr. Zeltwanger and a second from Ms. Perdue, the Board voted unanimously to approve the request without further discussion.

*Youth summer-employment flyers (CWI/WorkOne):* The director noted the flyers from CWI, distributed electronically; companies are encourage, when possible, to offer summer-employment opportunities to high-school students and other young adults. The flyers included examples of wage break-outs, tips for youth seeking employment, and how firms can make best use of young summer help.

## Community Reports

- Mrs. Anspach: Bonnell Grain Handling is grateful for the mention in the inaugural Pulaski County *Economic Development Dispatch*; their business is picking up, with projects now in Lake and Jasper Counties. The Star City sewer tie-ins are going well; a local contractor was hired for this project. The system is online and “doing its job.”
- Mr. Bales: Things are looking better from Alliance Bank’s perspective: borrowing needs are increasing, and they are seeing record numbers of deposits. Lake City Bank in Medaryville was robbed over the weekend; the owners of Medaryville’s Peak Inn have made some significant improvements to their establishment.
- Director Origer: Alliance Bank was named a top-fifteenth-percentile community bank, nationwide, for 2011.
- Mr. Broad: Alliance EMS is still hiring new paramedics as it transitions into ALS. The specialty clinic at the hospital is coming along smoothly, with drywall now up.
- President Button: Volleyball has consumed much of his time. The town park is looking better now, after a rough spring of early rains, a sick superintendent, and insufficient help; utility workers assisted in addressing the park’s needs.
- Secretary Fritz: Farmers are well ahead of schedule this spring. Despite the dry late spring, an agronomist has remarked that Pulaski County has some of the best-looking crops in the state. Secretary Fritz enquired about the status of the County’s proposed irrigation ordinance; Ms. Perren noted that it died, but that a revised ordinance will be discussed.
- Ms. Perdue: Because light fuel usage during the mild winter, Plymouth Tube’s markets are soft right now, but the company is keeping busy, and new competitors are coming online in Ohio and Texas.
- Mr. Zeltwanger: He now has yard signs for his business, and one is up in Winamac, where he recently performed work for a resident. He’s interested to see how effective this sort of marketing is, noting that his business is “all about referrals.” His son currently interning in Minnesota is intent upon returning to Pulaski County after his college careers is concluded.

## Adjournment

With no additional business, President Button called for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Bales moved to do so, Ms. Perdue seconded, and all approved to end the meeting at 8:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Andrew Fritz, Secretary