

*Welcome Back Home.*

## HCI team chooses placemaking building block

THE PULASKI COUNTY Hometown Collaboration Initiative (HCI) team selected the Placemaking/Primacy of Place™ building block as the next step in the HCI process during a session on 12 May facilitated by Scott Hutcheson of the Purdue Center for Regional Development (PCRD).

Commenting on the session, Hutcheson noted, “The group gave serious consideration to each of the building blocks, weighing all the evidence from the community survey, the public forum, the data snapshot, and the other strategic plans that have been completed recently.”

The HCI team will reconvene in early August with Sharon Canaday, of Ball State’s Building Better Communities (BBC), who will guide them through taking stock of physical assets; exploring the integration of the arts, culture, and historic preservation into built assets; or focusing on enhancing Pulaski County’s local food system.

It is estimated that Pulaski County will benefit from nearly \$100,000 in training and support from the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs and The Office of the Lieutenant Governor, PCRD, and BBC as part of HCI.

### Third student-business-plan competition wraps up

A third business-plan competition in the classroom of Winamac Community High School teacher Brandon Burgess culminated in December with the taking of first place by Derek Dotlich and his Panhandle Bikeshop. Other businesses proposed were two coffeehouses, a microbrewery and restaurant, a clothing store, and an arcade with swimming pool.

Over the course of the semester, they heard from multiple guest speakers who walked them through the various steps of planning, financing, and operating a business, the final guest having been Tony Holliday of Clear Decision Filtration in Francesville, a successful Revolving Loan Fund borrower.

### Business-plan workshop set for mid-June

Partnering with Purdue Extension - Pulaski County, PCED will be hosting an interactive business-plan workshop put on by the Northwest Indiana Small Business Development Center. This limited-seating workshop, to take place in the Extension computer lab, will allow attendees to be guided through an online business-planning tool by professional business advisors. Details will be forthcoming.

### *DID YOU KNOW ...*

**that the Revolving Loan Fund has almost \$100,000 available to help to finance start-ups, expansions, and relocation projects?**

*Contact us to learn more!*

## CONGRATULATIONS TO ...

Galfab, a Wastebuilt company, on receipt of a WorkOne Achievement Award for its contributions to the economy and commitment to community!

Heartland Markets on their recent acquisition of Curts IGA in Francesville (and Ray’s Super Foods in North Judson). Welcome to Pulaski County!

Phillip Woolery, our new Extension agricultural educator. Welcome to Pulaski County!

# The State of the County Economy, 2015

The successes of the past year, which we've repeatedly noted has been about capacity building, have been a bit different than I've reported at our last couple of summits. A year ago, we celebrated the Braun Corporation's expansion, Winamac Coil Spring's decision to relocate its growing wire-form line to the former Eaton Controls building, and Antares Trailer's selection of the former Tippecanoe Beverage facility for its Midwestern hub — now the site of the office of the president of Direct Trailer, a company with which Antares recently merged.

Since last March, we haven't had a single headline-worthy expansion or start-up project like this, but that hasn't stopped growth in the local economy. In December 2013, our unemployment rate was 5.4 percent; at the end of 2014, it was down to 4.8 percent. Those numbers rarely tell the entire story, and sometimes they're even misleading. Here's what really matters: the number of people who officially count in the labor force increased by more than 100, and 170 more people were employed in December 2014 than a year prior. In a county of only 13,000, that's huge. We've actually eclipsed the number of people employed in December 2007, before the recession hit.

In my line of work, we get credit for these things, which is nice. Sure, I do some "hand-holding" for companies when they grow, and I'm not going to shy away from congratulations, but these private-sector companies, and others that have grown quietly, deserve the real credit; I'm just here to help. That's not to say that the CDC and I aren't making our contributions to sustainable economic growth in the community, though.

In 2013, we had episodes of *Savor Indiana* and *ExtraordINARY Indiana* about Pulaski County produced to help us to improve marketing of our community. Over a longer-than-expected process over the last year, we had our County Website completely overhauled. There's still a lot of content-generation work to be done, but our new 'site is live. And it is beautiful. Check it out: <http://www.pulaskionline.org/>. What a welcoming front door to Pulaski County it's going to be for tourists, businesses, and potential new residents alike!

To increase our capacity for industrial growth, we had feasibility studies completed on three sites along U.S.-421 and the CSX line. Our committee

will be convening soon to review the reports in-depth and to take next steps: approaching landowners and investigating funding sources for land acquisition and infrastructure development.

Working with our Advisory Commission on Industrial Development, I've had appraisals completed on the land in the industrial park in Winamac; I completed a request for information for one company potentially interested in building there, and I've been in talks with the broker representing another. Both of these could fall through, but for the first time in a long while, we have some serious interest in the land that we already have.

Next week, I'm accompanying a local company as they request a small tax abatement from the County Council to help them to make expansion — with an expected labor-force increase of 30 over the next few years — fiscally feasible. We're working with state partners on a lucrative, but somewhat complicated, opportunity for growth of another employer.

For manufacturers to compete and to grow, we have to build workforce capacity. Over the last 18 months or so, we've had nearly 100 employees of a half-dozen companies attend various soft-skills courses that my office has hosted and Ivy Tech has conducted. These sessions continue.

As I trust you all know, we successfully applied for a grant for more than \$80,000, and raised nearly \$30,000 in local support, to establish a brand-new maintenance and technology program at West Central High School.

This. Is. Huge. This program won't have the effect of making kids maintenance-team-ready the day after graduation, but the skills that they'll develop, including soft skills, and the preparedness that they'll have are going to be crucial to moving them and our local economy forward.

Business attraction is wonderful, but relatively uncommon. Expansion is crucial — and clearly happening. At the root of all economic growth is entrepreneurship. Even the largest companies started in someone's garage, an old warehouse, or a small storefront. We haven't lost our focus here. In late August, we were one of the first two communities to participate in the Community Entrepreneurship Initiative, co-sponsored by the Indiana Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and the

# The State of the County Economy, 2015

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Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA). We're still working out the details about what the long-term results of this are to be, but we're not sitting by idly while we do so. We're following the kick-off session up with numerous small-business workshops. We're also looking at ways to strengthen and to recapitalize our fantastic Revolving Loan Fund program.

Perhaps the most fundamental aspect of capacity building is general community capacity building: making sure that this is a place where people want to be. After [sitting] on the backburner for far too long, our young professionals group is finally moving forward; our first meeting with a core team is tomorrow evening.

And, of course, we're a participant in the first round of the State's brand-new Hometown

Collaboration Initiative. I'm not going to spoil our keynote address tonight, and this is Krysten's pet project, anyway, but, well, this thrills me immeasurably.

There's always work to be done, but we're doing it. Our major employers are growing, our workforce is improving, more residents are finding work, and we're working to make this community a place that people want to call home, where companies want to operate, and tourists want to visit. Things are heading in the right direction. We are building Mayberry 2.0.

*[This report was originally delivered by Executive Director Nathan P. Origer at the 2015 Pulaski County Economic Development Summit on Tuesday, 3 March, at the Cornerstone Event Center in Francesville.]*

## PCED reorganizes, welcomes new members

At a brief meeting prior to the 2015 Economic Development Summit, the Community Development Commission elected its 2015-2016 officers. Incumbent President Bill Champion received the nod to serve a third term in that capacity, again with Monterey's Lawrence Loehmer at his right hand. Pulaski Memorial Hospital Director of Business Development Gregg Malott has taken over as secretary, with County Commissioner Larry Brady now filling the role of Membership Officer. Former Winamac Town Council President John E. Plowman rounds out the executive board.

In addition to electing officers, PCED also welcomed one new member, Extension Director Natalie Federer; in February, the Commission had accepted the Town of Francesville's new appointee, Darlene Mellon, who replaced Jamie Bales, and new at-large member Annie Scholz, of Alliance Bank.

Also currently serving on the Commission are County Councilor Doug Roth, Amy Jo Cantu of the Chamber of Commerce, Becky Anspach, Greg Comoglio, Andrew Fritz, and Dave Zeltwanger. One vacancy currently exists, the Town of Medaryville's seat.

## Double your gift, support your community PCED improving Revolving Loan Fund

Thanks to Lilly Endowment, Inc., the Pulaski County Community Foundation (PCCF) has the opportunity to match up to \$500,000 in the GIFT Phase VI initiative. Through 31 March 2016 (or while matching funds last), donations to the Community Grants Fund will be matched dollar for dollar.

Last fall, the Community Grants Fund awarded \$37,000 to 12 local organizations and programs. Through the GIFT VI matching program, Lilly offers an opportunity to magnify PCCF's ability to address changing needs into the future.

For more information, contact PCCF at 574-946-0906.

Seeking to continue to provide financial assistance to start-ups and growing small businesses for projects that are strong, but in some way not fully bankable, while strengthening the security of the program, PCED has contracted the Regional Development Company (RDC), a Valparaiso-based SBA-504 small-business lender, to provide financial-administration and loan-closing services for the Pulaski County Revolving Loan Fund (RLF). This new relationship will provide additional protections for the RLF while providing the RDC with a new vehicle for advertising its services to small businesses looking to grow in Pulaski County.



**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.**

## Honoring and Seeking Innovators

The Society of Innovators of Northwest Indiana, commencing its second decade of celebrating innovation and innovators in the region, will spend the first half of June on a news-conference road trip. At the seven conferences, representatives of the Society will be announcing Expedition Innovation 2015 — A Call for Nominations.

The goal of Expedition Innovation is to discover more innovators and to encourage more innovation among start-ups, entrepreneurs, and established businesses. Selected nominees will be inducted into the Society later this year.

At the Pulaski County news conference, scheduled for 11:00a.m. EDT on Tuesday, 11 June, at PCED's office, a representative of the Braun Corporation will present "The Five Lessons of Ralph Braun"; Mr. Braun was honored as a 2010-2011 Lamkin Fellow of the Society.

The nomination period for innovation awards runs through Monday, 6 July; those wishing to learn more or to nominate an innovator should visit <http://www.ivytech.edu/northwest/Innovation/>.

## THE PULASKI ONLINE JOB BANK

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COUNTY, TOO!*

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[HTTP://DEVELOPMENT.PULASKIONLINE.ORG/](http://development.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  
2015-2016 Leadership**

President: Bill Champion, Fratco  
Vice-President: Lawrence Loehmer, Town of Monterey/  
Loehmer's Hardware and Farm Supply  
Secretary: Gregg Malott, Pulaski Memorial Hospital  
Membership Officer: Larry Brady, Commissioner  
Board member: John Plowman, Town of Winamac/  
Link Environmental Equipment

Executive Director: Nathan P. Origer  
[nporiger@pulaskionline.org](mailto:nporiger@pulaskionline.org)  
Project Coordinator: Krysten L. Hinkle  
[cucasst@pulaskionline.org](mailto:cucasst@pulaskionline.org)

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