

Be Noble

Noble County Economic Development



TOP FIVE Economic Stories of 2020

Led by manufacturing, Noble County still thrives

Ranked fourth in the U.S. for concentration of employment in manufacturing, Noble County is fortunate to enjoy a local economy that has been relatively resilient in 2020, despite the coronavirus pandemic. Unemployment in Noble County peaked at 28.1% in April and quickly rebounded to 4.8% by November. Employers continue to seek to fill about 400 jobs locally.

The Noble County EDC appreciates local business leaders, funding partners, service agencies, and members of the workforce who allow us the privilege to collaborate to help

Noble County's economy thrive. We look forward to the many possibilities the new year brings!

#1



Industrial growth

Over \$13 million in tax abatements were approved by local governments for new equipment and expansions planned by McLaughlin Furnace, Kraft Heinz, Bosch, B&J Specialty Inc., and Flint & Walling. McLaughlin Furnace became the first to build in Avilla's new East Industrial Park, a \$4.6 million development project in which the Noble County EDC Investment Trust Fund committed \$300,000 of matching funds. Kammerer Dynamics and Airframe Components expanded into new facilities. Kammerer Inc. broke ground on an expansion to be finished in 2021. Noble County industrial employers were boosted by \$879,000 in employee training reimbursements made possible by an expansion of the Next Level Jobs program as part of Indiana's Rapid Recovery for a Better Future initiative.

#2



Support for small businesses

Nearly 80 percent of all Noble County business establishments employ fewer than 10 people, making their success essential to local quality of life and livelihoods. Small businesses, and their patrons, were aided in efforts to shop local through initiatives including [SHOPNoble](#), [ShopLoyal](#), and [Noble Mainstreet](#). Social media became a reliable tool for local restaurants and bars to promote curbside and carry-out options. Noble County micro-grants totaling \$93,750, plus \$65,545 in Indiana Small Business Restart grants, helped many weather the impacts of the pandemic. Still more were aided by federal grants and low-interest loan programs. Local Chambers of Commerce united to offer additional services to members and non-members to support small businesses across the county. Kendallville's Main Street received a significant upgrade with all new sidewalks, 5G fiber optic service, and streetlights, a project that will continue into 2021 with new paving, landscaping, and a public address system.

#3



Early childhood alliance

Stakeholders including representatives from the local industrial sector, nonprofits, educators, and economic development joined to define the work ahead for Noble County's newly formed Early Childhood Education coalition. The coalition was launched to develop strategies to meet the community's need for high quality early learning. A kickoff meeting of a steering committee in October laid a foundation for their work to continue in 2021.

#4



Housing starts up

New, single-family homes and senior living options continued to multiply across Noble County. Noble Creek became Kendallville's first new subdivision in a decade, with 72 residential lots planned. Construction is expected to begin in 2021. Ligonier set a record with 16 new home building permits issued, five by a developer of the Park Meadow neighborhood where 85 lots are platted. Avilla continued to grow with housing starts in Cranberry Reserve. Construction is well underway in Albion's Northridge Village where developers are adding 10 senior living apartments. Blight removal and the rehabilitation of older homes made strides through the efforts of Kendallville Restorations Inc. and local wholesale real estate investors in multiple communities.

#5



Investments in well being

While the pandemic changed the way people got together, enthusiasm and determination reigned. The new Community Learning Center, housed in the former Kendallville Middle School, reached current capacity following the first phase of renovations, with eight agencies now in residence. The venue provided a wide variety of programs for all ages. Augusta Hills Learning, Recreation and Community Center took up occupation of a former golf clubhouse west of Albion and broke ground on a gymnasium made possible by the successful launch of a major capital campaign. The venue is expected to open in early 2021 and offer rental

opportunities, programs, and fitness activities. Ligonier completed Phase II of the Strawberry Valley Cultural Trail and introduced a "fresh and new" identity for their Parks and Recreation Department. Albion Parks and Noble Trails expanded trails for public enjoyment. The Northeast Indiana Make It Your Own Mural Fest was a huge success, garnering the attention of Forbes and Midwest Living, among other major media outlets.

To learn more, and stay up to date on how Noble County's economy thrives, visit www.noblecountyedc.com and [subscribe](#).

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