



Be Noble

Noble County Economic Development



ANNUAL REPORT 2021

Photo: Noble County Shell Building, Kendallville





Downtown Albion. (Photo courtesy of NEIRP.)

Our Mission

To ensure a thriving economy in Noble County, Indiana.

Noble County Economic Development Corporation is a non-profit organization supported by public and private investments, dedicated to serving as Noble County's single point of contact for:

- Business attraction, retention, and expansion efforts
- Championing critical infrastructure development
- Maintaining an inventory of available industrial sites and buildings
- Business incentives
- Workforce and talent development initiatives
- New business start-ups and entrepreneurial growth
- Local economic data
- Leadership and support for collaborations that support a thriving economy



Gary Gatman
Executive Director



Lori Gagen
Operations Director



Tara Streb
Admin Assistant



Dear stakeholders,

To say the past year was challenging is an understatement. Despite the challenges, Noble County experienced tremendous successes in 2021 worthy of acknowledgement. The metrics for 2021 are significant, perhaps even historic, with 21 employers committing to new or expanded operations in Noble County. They have occupied (or soon will) over one million square feet of industrial space. Their commitments of more than \$41 million in capital investments project to add over 400 new jobs.

With our partners, we engaged in a wide range of efforts in 2021 to enhance the local economy, strengthen our workforce, and ensure the success of our small business community. Highlights include:

- A new “smart factory” lab will soon house both high school and adult training programs to ensure a multi-generational talent pipeline for local manufacturers.
- The early childhood coalition took shape with the hiring of a full-time coordinator; significant work is already underway to identify strategies to increase local access to high-quality and affordable childcare options.
- Significant investments were committed to downtowns and main streets across Noble County, culminating in Kendallville being named a PreservINg Main Street Pilot Community and grant award of \$2 million to support the redevelopment of the city's historic downtown.
- The distribution of over \$500,000 dollars in grants to small businesses across the county assisted them in dealing with the impacts of COVID-19.
- Significant work was completed on projects designed to bring additional housing and expanded broadband service to Noble County.

No review of 2021 would be complete without acknowledging that Noble County's forward progress can only be accomplished with the full support and engagement of community leaders. It is terrific to see so many partners from our communities working together. The results over the past year are proof that this collaborative approach is taking Noble County in the right direction. For your support and collaboration, thank you. Your EDC team looks forward to working with you in 2022!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gary Gatman".

Gary Gatman, Executive Director

Strategic Priorities Update



Business
Retention &
Expansion

Business Retention & Expansion

Record-setting year brought announcements of \$41,071,888 in real property and personal property acquisitions and 410 new jobs projected.



Build
Development
Sites

Build Development Sites

Committed \$500,000 to leverage additional funding to expand the Avilla East Industrial Park, invest in construction of 75,000 square foot industrial shell building in Kendallville, and in construction of a new road in the Ligonier Industrial Park to enhance traffic flow and accommodate industrial growth.



Build
Talent
Development
System

Build Talent Development Systems

Brought together multiple organizations to develop new Industry 4.0 lab to be housed at the Community Learning Center in Kendallville.



Build
Entrepreneurial
Ecosystem

Build Entrepreneurial Ecosystem

Became an approved programmer at the Community Learning Center in preparation of the launch of a restaurant incubator program to help transition new businesses to fill downtown vacancies.



Build
Housing
Stock

Build Housing Stock

Fulfilled commitment of funds in support of Kendallville Restorations Inc. (KRI). Prepared and championed multiple Noble County housing project proposals included in Northeast Indiana's Growing With Vision plan.

Build Coalitions for Stellar Communities*

Collaborated with multiple organizations in development of Kendallville's pitch for PreservINg Main Street, culminating in being named a Pilot Community and recipient of \$2,000,000 grant.



Build Effective Child Care Infrastructure

Collaborated with other organizations in strategic planning and hiring of a full-time coordinator and the launch of Noble Thrive by 5, an early childhood education coalition dedicated "to helping the community thrive by increasing access to and quality of child care in Noble County".



Enhance Organizational Sustainability

Enhanced efforts to deliver high quality, high impact leadership and deliverables. Executed fundraising campaign in support of annual operating fund. Sought the first increase in allocation of County Economic Development Income Tax (CEDIT) since inception of organization in 2006.



*Stellar Communities program on hiatus in 2020-2021 due to COVID-19.

Financial snapshot

General Operating Fund

2021 Income	\$	156,569
2021 Expenses	\$	228,853
Cash on Hand	\$	7,390
Certificates of Deposit	\$	246,271
Operating Funds Balance	\$	253,661

Investment Trust Fund

2021 Income	\$	200,000
2021 Investments	\$	181,024
Cash on Hand	\$	297,028
Certificates of Deposit	\$	676,804
ITF Funds Balance	\$	973,832
ITF Funds Allocated	\$	(609,400)
ITF Funds Unallocated	\$	364,432



Small Business Sector

Sylvan Cellars Event Center & Tasting Room, Rome City.
(Photo courtesy of Visit Noble County.)

Small businesses received support through the administration of COVID relief and recovery grants, the SHOPNoble platform, and the launch of the Be Noble Gift card program.

\$582K

COVID-19 RELIEF /
RECOVERY GRANTS

26

SMALL BUSINESSES
GRANT SUPPORTED

230

SHOPNOBLE DIRECTORY
PARTICIPANTS

33

BE NOBLE GIFT CARD
PARTICIPANTS



shopnoblein.com

Image: Sylvan Cellars Tasting Room & Event Center, Rome City, IN

Child Care Infrastructure

Noble County reached a new milestone in the effort to increase access to and quality of child care with the hiring of a full-time coordinator for Noble Thrive by 5, the county's early childhood education coalition.

Noble Thrive by 5 is dedicated to helping the community thrive by increasing access to and quality of child care in Noble County.

noblethriveby5.org



Jenna Anderson
Early Childhood
Coalition Coordinator

Talent Development



An Industry 4.0 lab, the first of its kind in the region, went from concept to reality. Beginning fall 2022, the lab will provide hands-on learning opportunities for youth, teens, and adults to learn about "Smart Factory" environments that are transforming the manufacturing world.

The Industry 4.0 lab is the culmination of multiple organizations coming together and collaborating. The lab will be housed at the Community Learning Center with equipment funded by the Don Wood Foundation.



thecommunitylearningcenter.org



Interior of an IBEX Travel Trailer, now produced in Ligonier.
(Photo courtesy of Forest River.)

Sites & Buildings

Industrial buildings vacant prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, or vacated during the pandemic, were put back into use in 2020-21, accommodating the growth of ten existing employers and attracting six new employers to Noble County.

21

INDUSTRIAL
PROPERTIES
NEWLY OCCUPIED

1,061,154

SQUARE FEET OF
INDUSTRIAL SPACE
RE-PURPOSED

Image: Atomic Filament, Kendallville, IN.

ZoomProspector
noblecountyedc.com

Industrial Growth

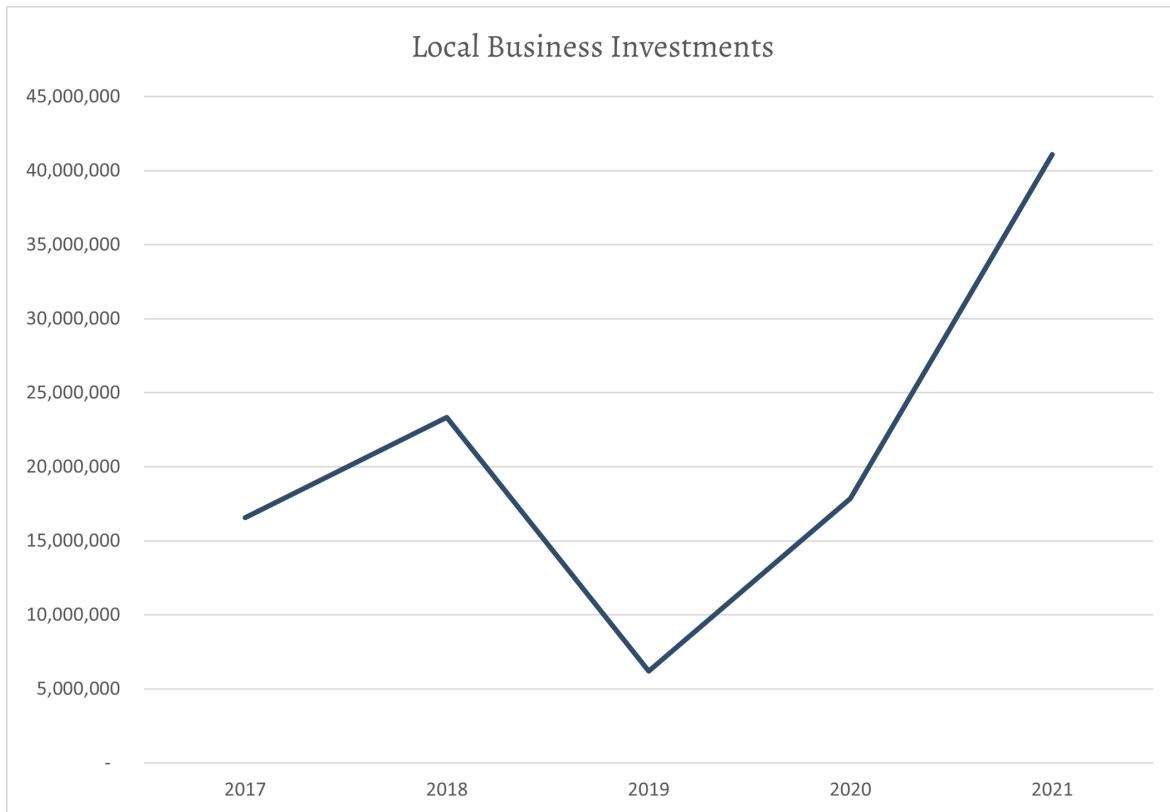
Industrial employers and developers announced record-setting investments in real and personal property in Noble County in 2021.

\$41M

INDUSTRIAL
INVESTMENTS
ANNOUNCED

410

NEW JOBS
PROJECTED



Business Retention & Expansion

Advanced Metal Etching

Expansion of operations in Ligonier added new equipment and computerized operating systems to expand product offerings and be poised for growth.

Atomic Filament

Acquired and renovated long-vacant 15,000 square foot building in industrial complex west of Kendallville to accommodate relocation of production from California.

Baseline 4x4 Recyclers

Consolidated and expanded operations from Albion to Kendallville to accommodate growing business.

B&J Medical

Added 26,000 square foot building expansion in Kendallville and acquired new CNC machines to add production capacity in Wawaka to enhance competitiveness and sustainability.

Dexter

Acquired newly vacated 82,756 square foot industrial building to accommodate new warehouse expansion; acquired new, automated and computerized manufacturing equipment for Albion production facility.

Flint & Walling

Acquired new equipment to replace aging and obsolete equipment at Kendallville facility to increase capacity and enhance quality and efficiency.

Forest River

Acquired two recently vacated industrial buildings in Ligonier, adding nearly 160,000 square feet for relocated and expanded production of Ibex Travel Trailers, and a parts and service center.

Hendrickson

Added a 17,725 square foot expansion for warehousing and operations at Kendallville facility.



United Ortho, LaOtto. (Photo from NCEDC archive.).

Precision Medical Technologies

Acquired new CNC machines and computer technologies for Rome City facility.
Acquired a vacant 3,600 square foot building in Albion for expansion of production operations.

Pulver Asphalt

Acquired vacant industrial building in Albion, adding 27,600 square feet for expanded operations.

Reliable

Acquired new equipment, including machine-trending robot and CNC machines, to increase production capacity at Kendallville facility.

StepSaver Inc.

Acquired 24,960 square foot vacant industrial building in Kendallville to accommodate relocation and growth of salt processing operations.

United Ortho

Acquired long-vacant industrial building in LaOtto to accommodate relocation and expansion of distribution and customer service center for medical supports and braces.

Wickfab

Acquired new equipment to add capacity in Avilla facility.



Investment Trust Fund

Lt. Governor Suzanne Crouch in Kendallville.
(Photo by NCEDC.)

Noble County CEDIT funds, distributed through the Noble County Economic Development Corporation Invest Trust Fund, were committed to support infrastructure, industrial development, education, downtown development, and housing growth.

\$68K

KENDALLVILLE
MAIN STREET

\$200K

LIGONIER
IND PARK

\$300K

AVILLA IND
PARK

\$175K

IND SHELL
BUILDING

\$75K

AUGUSTA
HILLS LRCC

\$100K

KENDALLVILLE
RESTORATIONS

TOP ECONOMIC 5 STORIES OF 2021



#1

Industrial retention and growth

\$41 million in capital investments announced, to create 410 new jobs; 21 existing industrial buildings became occupied or re-occupied.

#2

PreservINg Main Street Pilot Community

\$2 million grant awarded to City of Kendallville to spark historic restoration, preservation, and spur downtown growth and vibrancy.

#3

Setting the stage for continued growth

Continued new housing starts, new 117-acre mixed use annexation, and multiple industrial investments announced in Ligonier.

#4

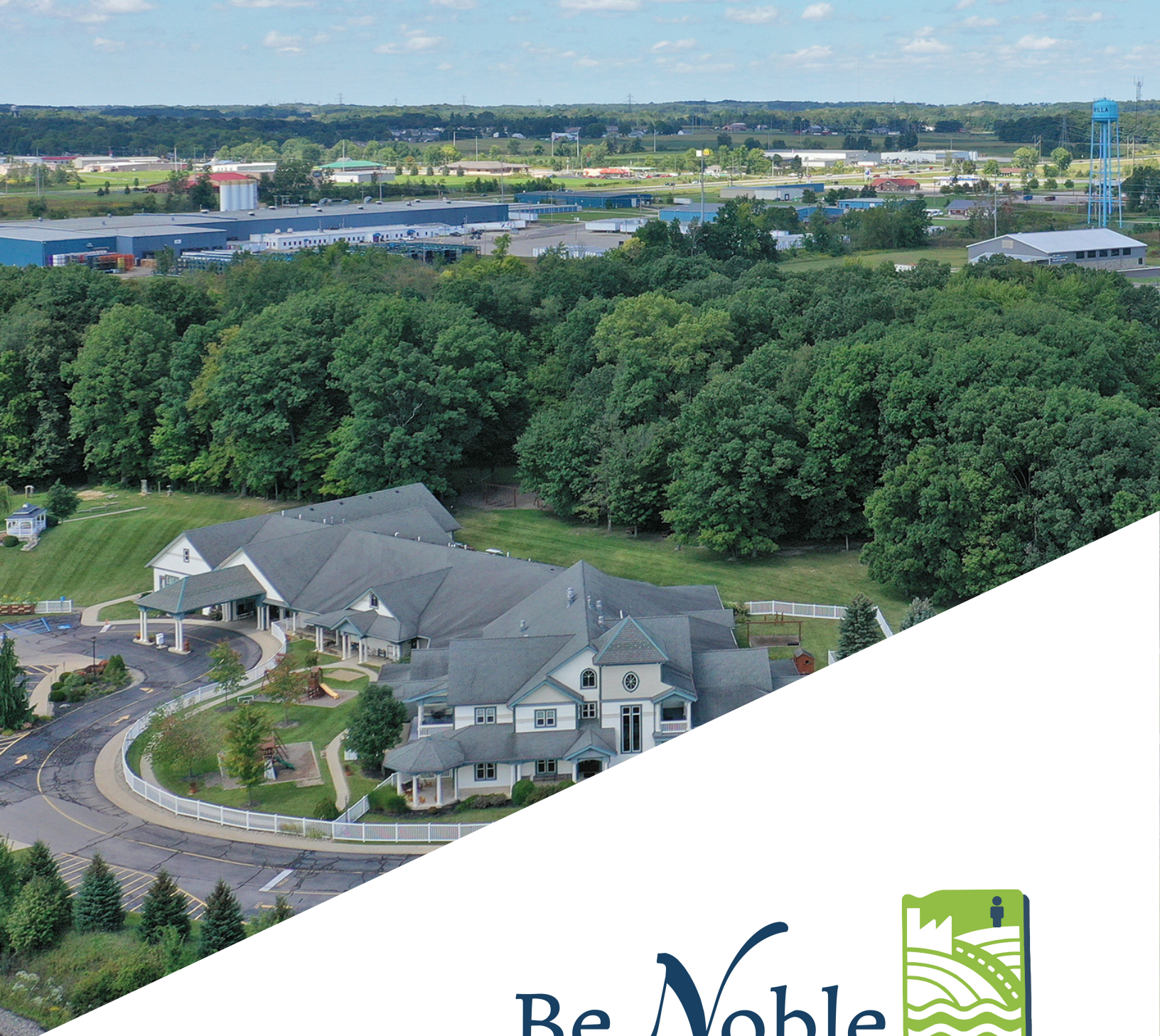
New shell building project

Milestone public-private partnership brought 75,000 SF industrial shell building development project to fruition.

#5

i4.0 talent pipeline laid with new lab

Collaborations and grant funding established the region's first cutting-edge tech training lab.



Be Noble

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Photo: Oak Farm Montessori School, Avilla