

Be Noble

Noble County Economic Development



August 2022

Be Noble's annual meeting held

A call to action to support entrepreneurs

Over 70 people attended the annual meeting of Be Noble Inc., Noble County's local economic development organization, on August 27. They gathered to enjoy breakfast in the historic Strand Theatre in downtown Kendallville and to hear local updates and keynote speaker Julie Heath, VP of Entrepreneurial Ecosystems for the Indiana Economic Development Corporation.



Before Heath took to the podium, Mayor SuzAnne Handshoe, President of Be Noble's board of directors, provided brief updates in each of the organization's strategic work areas, which included business retention and expansion, development sites, talent development, housing, child care, and entrepreneurial support. Handshoe was followed by Tom Leedy, a member of Be Noble's board of directors and Thrive Noble County steering committee, who shared data to illustrate the impact and opportunities presented by entrepreneurs and small businesses in Noble County. Be Noble executive director Gary Gatman ended the one-hour program by sharing a "blueprint" for the development of an entrepreneurial ecosystem in Noble County.

Gatman noted that just one year ago, at the 2021 annual meeting, the audience was left with a call to action to develop an Industry 4.0 training initiative. That message catalyzed the iSMART Lab that will welcome its first learners this fall at the Community Learning Center. Gatman hopes that entrepreneurship will garner the same kind of enthusiasm and collaboration in the year ahead.

Avilla eyes building for co-working space

Members of Avilla's Redevelopment Commission began discussions around the idea of purchasing a vacant building in downtown Avilla to open up a co-working space. Co-working spaces are popping up all across the county to serve remote workers and others who desire an environment where they can interact with others and enjoy resources like video-conference rooms, office equipment, a physical "work" address, and access to mentors, among other amenities not as easily accessible when working from home. The building under consideration is on Albion Street, adjacent to the town's pocket park, making it an ideal location to help attract and grow local small business ventures.

WATCH: iSMART Lab to support Industry 4.0

Inside Indiana Business with Gerry Dick



On July 22, 2022, the Regional Development Authority (RDA) heard a pitch by Gary Gatman, Melissa Carpenter (Freedom Academy) and Julia Tipton (Community Learning Center) requesting \$198,450 in Indiana READI funds to purchase equipment for a shared simulated Smart Factory lab for advanced training opportunities within the iSMART Lab. This additional equipment will enable learners to progress through the Fundamentals and Specialist lab then put their skills to practical use in the simulated Smart Factory lab. Stay tuned!



[About PMS](#)

Next steps outlined for PMS grant

The City of Kendallville was awarded a \$2 million grant from the state Office of Community and Rural Affairs in late 2021 to improve downtown. Now, officials say the city is ready to submit its project for approval. In total, 10 buildings are on the roster for facade improvements through the grant.

Locations that stand to be transformed through new windows, brick repairs, cleaning and repainting storefronts, and restoring and/or preserving historic features, include 100 Main, Strand Theatre, Love Me 2 Times on Main, Hosler Realty, Kendallville Auto Parts, Jeny's Tacos, Kropp Insurance, Treehouse Realty, and the former Relaxation Station. Leaders hope to receive approval for the project by the end of August after which bids will be sought. The city hopes the bidding process will begin in October.

ABCD: A call on neighbors to "meet up"

Community members from across Noble County are cordially invited to learn about Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) and how they can make a difference in their neighborhood. Two free community "meet-ups" will be hosted by the group of ABCD advocates, one in the "east" and one in the "west", this month. The first will be a lunch event at the Kendallville Public Library on Tuesday, August 16 from 11 AM to 1 PM. The second will take place at the Ligonier Public Library on Thursday, August 18 from 5:30 to 7:30 PM. Meals will be provided at both meet-ups and free child care available during the Aug. 18 meet up. Learn more about ABCD and register to attend using the links below.

Aug. 16 Kendallville

Aug. 18 Ligonier



Parkview Noble a 100 Top Hospital

Fourth time in five years

Parkview Noble Hospital has again been recognized as one of the top 20 Small Community Hospitals in the nation. Although the list calls out the "100 Top" hospitals in the U.S., only 20 Small Community Hospitals (out of an estimated 850 nationwide) are recognized each year for exceptional performance across a variety of categories. Small Community Hospitals are those with 25 to 99 beds.

"I am very proud to be part of an organization that takes safety and quality so seriously," commented Gary Adkins, hospital president, in an email announcing the news.

Work close to home!

Explore over **450 jobs** on **WorkNoble.org**

worknoble.org

Noble County
A great place to live, play and work!

Work Noble

The advertisement features a hand holding a stack of US dollar bills, with a satellite dish and a laptop in the background. A map of Noble County is shown on the right, with one county highlighted in orange. The text 'Work Noble' is visible in the bottom right corner of the ad.

Campaign promoted local jobs

Be Noble conducted a paid social media campaign for four weeks in June and July to raise awareness of the hundreds of jobs available across multiple sectors in Noble County. The Facebook campaign featured WorkNoble.org, the website dedicated exclusively to helping promote Noble



Jobs Portal

County employers looking to fill jobs that pay at least \$15 an hour. The ad was seen 9,988 times and reached 4,359 people. 224 of those people clicked on or "liked" the ad and 17 added a personal reaction. 10 users shared the ad. 85 users clicked through to visit the WorkNoble.org website.

Of the 9,988 people who saw the ad, 64% identified as female and 36% male. They represented an even distribution of ages from 25 to 64 years. The campaign was targeted only to Facebook users in Noble County's communities. Employers with eligible jobs are

encouraged to continue adding/updating their free WorkNoble.org jobs profiles. For more information, call Be Noble at (260) 636-3800.



YMCA looks at child care in Ligonier

Three community conversations moderated by staff from the Cole Center YMCA were held recently in Ligonier in an effort to gather information and identify barriers to accessing early childhood education and care.

Many parents said a lack of daycare options meant they had to stay home instead of working, yet Ligonier employers, many of which continue to seek workers, were noticeably absent from the series of community conversations. Other barriers noted by participants were transportation, because working parents may not leave work to pick up their children from a local half-day preschool program, and affordability. Parents cited the need to weigh the costs of childcare against potential earnings.

Casey Weimer, chief executive officer at the Cole Center YMCA, said the goal the organization has is to open a preschool program in Ligonier by the 2023-24 school year. The YMCA is already investing in staff training at their Central Noble program in order to have staff ready to move to a program in Ligonier. Individuals, organizations, and employers who have the capacity to offer any form of assistance are encouraged to contact Weimer at (260) 347-9622 or reach out to Jenna Anderson, coordinator of Noble Thrive by 5, a coalition dedicated to helping the community thrive by increasing access to and quality of child care in Noble County.



Kolton Bailey, a recent CNHS graduate, was honored by Future Farmers of America for the growth of his agribusiness. Bailey received the "star award" at a recent state competition in recognition of his ability to manage KB Hay Supplies, which serves as a dealer for agriculture supply company Protexia. Bailey will attend Huntington University this fall to study agricultural marketing while continuing to spend time with his local business.

Zach Pruitt has opened a new office where he is ready to serve as a State Farm agent. Pruitt's office is located at 852 N Lima Road in Kendallville. A ribbon cutting was held on July 1 to mark the opening.

The Noble County Council on Aging is not only celebrating 45 years of service to the community, it also held an official ribbon cutting recently to mark the official opening of a new building. Located at the former Max Platt Ford dealership address on South Main Street (near Drake Road) in Kendallville, the new center is more spacious and offers enhanced accessibility for seniors. New programming will begin soon. The new building was funded by grants and private gifts at a cost of \$750,000. More information is available at <https://www.noblecountycoa.org/>.

Arian Gunder has elevated her local start-up business by opening a brick-and-mortar boutique store on East Main Street in downtown Albion. Reds Rusty Nail Boutique, previously known as a "pop-up shop" and online seller, now offers women's and children's apparel and accessories at 108 E Main Street in Albion. The store is open Wednesday through Saturday.

Local Chambers of Commerce have named members of the community honored for their exceptional community support. Recent honorees include:

- Sylvan Shores Diner, Rome City Business of the Year
- Veterinarian Dr. June Vandevir, Rome City Citizen of the Year
- Dentist Dr. Bruce Dragoo (retired), Ligonier Business of the Year
- Johnetta Lutton and Bill Doege, Ligonier Co-Citizens of the Year

Innovative thinking has led to a creative approach to boosting retail sales for a Rome City grocery store impacted this summer season by the removal of the overpass at SR 9 and Northport Road on the north edge of town. The Rome City Town Marshall's office is giving away 100 \$25 gift cards, awarding random drivers who are noticed for avoiding excessive

speeds as they navigate detours. Cards can be redeemed at Miller's Super Valu. The project is called Operation Northport Bridge. Being pulled over in Rome City may not be a bad thing.



Albion STAR Team - Fall Celebration Committee, c/o 110 S Orange Street, Albion, IN 46701, 260-636-3800

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