

Be Noble

Noble County Economic Development



June 1, 2023



DREAM

Aspirations for a better community

Annual Meeting June 28

Be Noble Inc.'s annual meeting will take place on Wednesday, June 28 at the historic 57c Public House in Ligonier. Doors will open at 8:00 a.m. and a one-hour program

will begin at 8:30. Light breakfast selections will be provided. The theme is "Dream: Aspirations for a better community." Keynote speaker Keith Gillenwater, a Central Noble graduate, President and CEO of Grow Wabash County, will share information about that community's recent successes in attracting new housing developments. Be Noble will also provide updates on local economic development strategies. The public is invited.

Register for Annual Meeting

Invest in growing Noble!



Be Noble Inc. is a 501c3 non-profit, charitable organization, the only one that works exclusively to ensure a thriving economy in Noble County. We are a connector, working to help reduce duplicity of effort, streamline processes and communications, and enhance results. Our continued dedication to collaboration helps Noble County and its communities leverage capital, attract new business, retain business and jobs, innovate, and grow. Please give today and support our Annual Operating budget to help sustain Be Noble's services. Contributions are tax deductible! [Learn more.](#)

INVEST NOW



Employees weigh in on child care crisis

Last November, employed parents across Northeast Indiana participated in a survey conducted by the Northeast Indiana Regional Early Childhood Coalition. The results are in, and officials say there was a strong response and broad participation.

The survey was designed to help those engaged in identifying current barriers faced by families seeking high quality child care develop and execute strategies to address those challenges. The insights gained will help guide the work of the coalition, including Thrive by 5 serving Noble and LaGrange counties.

Read more

Strategic Development Commission awarded \$30M

The Indiana General Assembly approved \$30 million in economic development funds for the Northeast Indiana Strategic Development Commission (SDC). The commission, established in 2021, will use funds to implement the five-year plan that was released in November 2022. It involves a series of strategies to improve three key areas for the 11-county region: housing, talent attraction and retention, and talent development. The commission says they will accomplish their goals to expand the regional labor pool, strengthen the existing quantity and quality of the labor force, and increase land use density to meet growing residential demands.

About the SDC Plan

Municipal leadership changes in Noble

Earle Franklin was sworn in as Ligonier's next mayor recently. He succeeds four-term Mayor Patty Fisel, who passed away on April 25. Franklin previously served as the city's building inspector and has worked for the city for more than 10 years. He will serve out the remainder of Fisel's term, which ends in December. Franklin was already the Republic Party's nominee, having been unopposed in the primary. He is currently unopposed on the ballot this fall as well and will seek a full four-year term in the election.

Avilla Town Manager Tena Woenker resigned from her position in mid-May. Woenker had been working in Avilla since July 2021 and, during her tenure, was key to receiving \$759,553 in state READI funds to spur more housing development there. She also helped lead the Avilla Redevelopment Commission through the purchase of a blighted downtown building that is now undergoing major renovations and is no longer at risk. Woenker most recently helped Avilla reach an agreement with NIPSCO to extend gas services to the east

industrial park, paving the way for continued growth. She left Avilla for the town manager job in Leo-Cedarville.

Pioneer Awards 2023

[NEI's Pioneer Starts Here event](#) took place at Electric Works in Fort Wayne on April 27. The inaugural event served as the launch of the Pioneer Starts Here digital storytelling platform for Northeast Indiana and the 11-counties that make up the region, which includes Noble County.

[Read more](#)



[Free online courses for Hoosiers](#)

The Ivy+ IT Academy, through a partnership with Jobs For the Future (JFF), are now offering Google Career Certificate courses for free to Hoosiers, for a limited time. Certificates in Data Analytics, Digital Marketing & E-Commerce, IT Support, Project Management, and UX Design can be obtained through completely virtual courses.

Learning is self-paced through the Coursera learning platform, with on-site support from instructors and other Google learners. The programs can be completed in as little as 3-6 months when dedicating under 10 hours of flexible study per week.

Sign up link

Do you know a leadership candidate?

Seeking cohort candidates & sponsors

Thrive Noble County will soon launch Engage Noble, a new Noble leadership academy designed to cultivate civic leaders, build regional capacity, and ensure a thriving economy. Individuals and employers interested in receiving application details for the first cohort in Fall 2023 are encouraged to sign up now to receive that information as soon as it becomes available.



Learn more

Sponsorships are also available for employers and other stakeholders to invest in this important initiative. Sponsorships can include tuition for one or more cohorts to attend. Tax deductible gifts will help cover costs of program development and sustainability. For more information, call (260) 636-3800.



Grants for recycling projects

The Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) has grant funding available for recycling projects. Eligible candidates may seek a grant ranging from \$50,000 to \$500,000. Proposals are being accepted **now through June 21, 2023**. Public and private businesses, local government, solid waste management districts, and nonprofit organizations located and doing business in Indiana are eligible to submit proposals for funding.

[Learn more](#)

Interested in going solar at your business?

Staff at Be Noble Inc. were recently invited by colleagues at Greater Fort Wayne Inc. to attend a breakfast they hosted at the Parkview Mirro Center featuring the topic "Federal Law, Local Impact - The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)." A panel of experts were on hand to share their own experiences as Northeast Indiana businesses that have either installed solar energy systems, or are planning to do so soon. Representatives from [Sweetwater](#), [Junior Achievement of Northeast Indiana](#), [Turnstone Center](#), and Solar Solutions Technologies helped make a case to an audience of business owners and executives considering solar energy an alternative. They also shared lessons learned and tips for conducting due diligence when screening solar installers, as well as questions to ask utility providers.

[Read more](#)



Support available for housing development plans

Housing Resource Hub is asking community stakeholders, including local governments, developers, builders, banks and lenders to request support for their housing development plans, either envisioned or underway, by visiting their "Communities" webpage and clicking the "Request Help with My Project" button. If you have a potential site for a housing development, are interested in receiving support for projects with barriers, or offer mortgage loans, construction loans, or other financial tools for housing, please reach out.

Contact the Hub



Resources for local entrepreneurs online now

Be Noble Inc. has added a landing page to the economic development organization's website to provide "one-stop" access to local resources and development partners focused on local entrepreneurial growth. Resources are available within Noble County, many of them free.



Entrepreneurial Resources

The Smiling Cat opens in Kendallville

A new restaurant, The Smiling Cat, has opened at 227 S Main Street in Historic Downtown Kendallville. The business now occupies the historic "Berhalter" building, constructed in 1860, serving lunch and dinner. Menu items feature "fusion food", which combines elements from two different food cultures to create unique dishes. The fare is made without use of any freezer, fryer, or microwave in the kitchen. Menus will change based on fresh, seasonal ingredient availability.

New businesses in Albion moving to a new location

Taylor Home/Interiors by Evonne and The Dude's Corner, recently opened at a location on East Main Street in Albion, have announced the purchase of an historic and recently vacated building on the south side of the courthouse square. The owners will move their retail stores to 104 W Main Street at the end of June.



[St. Martin's Healthcare](#), serving Noble, DeKalb, Steuben and LaGrange counties, will soon receive delivery of a new mobile clinic, removing transportation barriers for many residents across Northeast Indiana. The mobile clinic will offer the same services as are now offered in the clinic in Garrett. The unit was funded by grants from United Ways, community foundations, fundraising events, and community donations at a cost of \$590,000.

Sr. Theresa Renninger, 90, was recently honored with the dedication of the Renninger Reading Room, a special area set aside within the St. Mary's school in Avilla. Renninger is a past principal and teacher at the school and still drives there every day to check out and restock books. She also helps younger children with their reading and has done so for more than a generation of students.

The community is invited to help fund the development of a **new skatepark in Kendallville**. A group of citizens has officially launched a campaign to raise the remaining

funds needed to build. Plans lay out construction costs of about \$357,000 for a new space at the Kendallville Outdoor Recreation Complex. Gifts from the Olive B. Cole Foundation and Dekko Foundation have provided \$170,000 in funding. For more information, visit www.kendallvilleskate-park.com.

Where does one find 50 birdhouses in Noble County? Casey Myers, Albion Park Superintendent, found his at **The Arc Noble County Foundations**. Director Kay Craig said the project, which enabled people with disabilities the opportunity to learn and construct the houses, was "perfect for us," according to a local news report. The Arc is working to put more and more of its clients into the work force and this project illustrated their abilities to contribute. Anyone with a business or volunteer opportunity is encouraged to contact Craig at 260-636-2155 to explore opportunities.

Residents and businesses donated 5,206 pounds of food for **Friendship Connection**, the food pantry program of Common Grace Ministries in Kendallville. Mail carriers collected the donations as they made their delivery routes on Saturday, May 13. Common Grace volunteers contributed 108 volunteer hours in total to help neighbors eat healthy.



Be Noble Inc., 110 S Orange Street, Albion, IN 46701, 260-636-3800

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