

Be Noble

Noble County Economic Development



2024 Annual Report



Kendallville Main Street



B&J Medical



LA Kammerer LLC

Be Noble Inc.

401 E. Diamond Street

Kendallville, IN 46755



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About Us

Be Noble Inc. is Noble County Indiana's local economic development organization (LEDO) and 501c3 nonprofit, charitable organization focused on ensuring a thriving economy.

Our team is dedicated to serving as a connector to help individuals and organizations discover and leverage the many talents, abilities, gifts, skills, and resources available in our communities. We are unique positioned to help Noble County thrive in the following focus areas:

- Workforce / talent development systems
- Business attraction, retention, and expansions
- Small business start-ups and resources to grow
- Quality of life, placemaking & cultural enhancement initiatives
- Infrastructure development
- Grant programs
- Access to demographic and other local data
- Business, site, and land development projects
- Access to Incentives, including tax abatements
- Collaborations & project management



Meet Our Team



MELANIE KELLOGG EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Melanie Kellogg brings a wealth of experience and a passion for community development to her role as Executive Director. With a background in public relations and marketing, Melanie earned her undergraduate degree from Indiana State University before furthering her education with an MBA from the Scott College of Business at Indiana State University in 2022.

Committed to giving back to her community, Melanie volunteers her time as a member of Noble County Junior Achievement and serves as the board president of Whitley County Junior Achievement. Additionally, she holds the position of board president at Warriors Inc., where she dedicates herself to supporting and empowering local veterans.

Melanie's dedication and leadership have been recognized by the Fort Wayne Business Weekly, which named her one of their esteemed "40 under 40" honorees.

As Executive Director, Melanie is driven by a vision of fostering collaboration, innovation, and sustainable growth within the community. With her strong leadership skills and deep-rooted commitment to service, she is poised to lead our organization to new heights of success and impact.



TARA STREB OPERATIONS DIRECTOR

Tara Streb brings a dynamic blend of experience and commitment to community development through her multifaceted roles in the Economic Development Corporation (EDC). Joining the EDC in 2019, Tara has since been an integral force in fostering growth and innovation within the local landscape.

Tara's dedication extends far beyond her role at the EDC, as she serves on various boards that shape the fabric of her community. Notably, she plays a pivotal role on the Thrive by 5 initiative, recognizing the critical importance of early childhood development. Additionally, Tara's contributions to the Kendallville City Council ensure the efficient functioning of essential municipal services, while her involvement with the Historic Downtown Kendallville board underscores her commitment to preserving the rich heritage of her region.

In recognition of her outstanding achievements and leadership, Tara was honored as a Fort Wayne Business Weekly 40 under 40 recipient, a testament to her exemplary contributions to both the business and civic spheres. Furthermore, her relentless pursuit of excellence led her to complete the Ambassador Institutes Academy for Civic Engagement in 2024, further enhancing her capacity to effect positive change in her community.

Tara Streb's passion for community development, coupled with her strategic vision and collaborative approach, continues to drive transformative initiatives that uplift and empower those around her. Through her unwavering dedication and tireless advocacy, Tara exemplifies the epitome of leadership and service, leaving an indelible mark on the fabric of her community.

Vision And Mission



Vision

**Ensuring a thriving
economy in Noble
County, Indiana**

Mission

Noble County is growing and full-of-life, a place in which businesses choose to operate and grow. The region is known as a hub of innovation and home to a strong entrepreneurial ecosystem. Residents enjoy a high quality of life made possible by engaged leaders, a diversity of culture and amenities, and ample opportunities to enhance personal wealth.

Financial Snapshot



\$100,000 from Be Noble Inc.'s Investment Trust Fund was invested in Thrive by 5 Early Childhood Coalition to help develop Noble Early Learning, which will become Noble County's second licensed child care center. This new high-quality facility will serve up to 38 children ages 6 weeks through 5 years old.

\$29,000 from the Investment Trust Fund was invested in 231 Main Kendallville Co-Working space to replace 2 smaller garage doors on the building with insulated garage doors and assist in finalizing payment in purchasing the building.

General Operating Fund

2024 Income	\$247,525.23
2024 Expenses	\$223,225.70

Fund Balance 12/31/24

Unrestricted CDs	\$260,209.12
Manufacturing Exp.	\$3,507.40
Robotics Program	\$168.37
Wage and Benefit	\$4,468.00
Kendallville Site	\$3,015.00

Total Funds Available \$295,554.87

Investment Trust Fund

2024 Income	\$222,356.89
2024 Investments	

Thrive By 5	\$100,000
231 Main Street	\$29,000

Fund Balance 12/31/24

Cash in Bank	\$286,116.70
CDs	\$589,037.20

Funds Allocated \$548,085.43

Funds Available \$336,068.47

2024 in Review



1

Over \$107M in Capital Investments in the County

Companies in Noble County invested over \$107M in real estate and equipment investments.

2

Childcare Advancements

The Early Childhood Coalition has worked to address both quality and capacity in Noble County by creating new licensed childcare seats with help from Be Noble's Investment Trust Fund and community partners.

3

Entrepreneurial Ecosystems

231 Main, Noble County's first co-working space, had their grand opening in Kendallville along with new partnerships with Northeast Indiana Innovation Center and Indiana Small Business Development Center.

4

Main Street Growth

Historic Downtown Kendallville saw over \$910K in local investments through building renovations and housing updates.

5

Regional Workshops

Be Noble Inc. hosted regional workshops designed to foster growth and innovation. These workshops provided valuable insights and tools to small businesses and entrepreneurs.

6

4H Youth Investment

Be Noble Inc. sponsored the Noble County 4H program for STEM events that include robotic sessions, engineering camps, electrical workshops, in school STEM support and other learning workshops.

7

Educational Partnerships

Working to integrate manufacturing experiences through tours, camps, and career fairs, to provide students with hands-on exposure to the industry and inspire future career paths.

8

Workplace Preparedness Grant

This grant, in partnership with the Noble County Community Foundation, gave out \$5,000 in grant dollars for students seeking certifications and to acquire tools and supplies to begin their career.

9

Northeast Indiana Innovation Center (NIIC) Partnership

Be Noble Inc. has partnered with the NIIC for an entrepreneurship coach to support the entrepreneurship and small business initiatives of Noble County.

10

Broadband Expansion

In 2024, LigTel expanded its network by adding 2,672 new customers and constructing 201.9 miles of fiber in Noble County. By expanding broadband access, LigTel is helping communities grow by improving connectivity, fostering business opportunities, and enhancing educational and social services.

2025 Strategic Priorities



1. Enhancing Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E)

Goal: Strengthen existing businesses to ensure sustainability, foster job growth, and attract new business opportunities.

Strategic Priorities:

- Develop Comprehensive BR&E Marketing & Communication Plan:
 - Create tailored marketing campaigns that highlight local business success stories, available support resources, and growth opportunities.
 - Focus on showcasing the benefits of being a part of the community, highlighting local assets, incentives, and workforce capabilities.
 - Utilize digital, print, and community channels for outreach.
- Build Strong Relationships with Local Employers:
 - Engage in regular check-ins with companies to assess their needs, gather feedback, and identify opportunities for business expansion or retention.
- Conduct Targeted Outreach for BR&E Visits:
 - Track businesses that have not had a visit in recent years and prioritize outreach to re-establish connections.
 - Set clear objectives for BR&E meetings (e.g., problem-solving, exploring expansion opportunities, addressing concerns).
- Create Collaborative Support Programs:
 - Develop partnerships with local chambers of commerce, business incubators, and other organizations to deliver joint support for business development.
 - Promote programs such as workforce development, financial assistance, and grants to existing businesses.
- Expand Support for Local Entrepreneurs:
 - Offer mentorship, training, and networking opportunities to foster entrepreneurship through our partnership with the Northeast Indiana Innovation Center.
 - Provide mentorship, training, and networking opportunities to support entrepreneurship and business development by organizing workshops focused on Hispanic-owned businesses.
 - Offer mentorship, training, and networking opportunities to foster entrepreneurship and business growth by hosting workshops featuring industry leaders.

2. Developing Infrastructure for County-Wide Growth

Goal: Ensure the county has the infrastructure and resources necessary to support business growth, attract new investments, and sustain a high quality of life.

Strategic Priorities:

- Invest in Key Infrastructure Projects:
 - Focus on upgrading and expanding infrastructure
- Plan for Future Economic Development Zones:
 - Identify and prioritize areas in need of infrastructure upgrades to position them as prime locations for new businesses and industries.
 - Work with local governments to create or expand industrial parks, business incubators, or mixed-use commercial spaces to attract new businesses.
- Foster Collaboration on Regional Infrastructure Development:
 - Engage neighboring communities and local governments in joint planning efforts for region-wide infrastructure projects (e.g., sewer systems, water supply).
 - Explore funding opportunities and partnerships with state and federal agencies to expedite infrastructure development.

2025 Strategic Priorities



- Support Housing and Workforce Development Infrastructure:
 - Align infrastructure development with workforce housing needs. Prioritize residential developments near business districts to minimize employee commute times.
 - Advocate for investment in local housing to support workforce attraction and retention.
- Improve Access to Capital for Infrastructure Projects:
 - Research available federal, state, and private funding sources to support large-scale infrastructure projects.
 - Provide resources and guidance to local governments and private developers on securing funding for infrastructure initiatives.

3. Enhancing Local Talent

Goal: Build a skilled and adaptable workforce to meet the evolving needs of local businesses and attract new industries.

Strategic Priorities:

- Enhance Educational and Training Opportunities:
 - Partner with local schools, vocational training centers, and community colleges to develop educational programs that match local workforce needs.
 - Increase the availability of training programs in high-demand fields such as manufacturing, agriculture, and information technology.
- Promote STEM and Manufacturing Education:
 - Support initiatives like manufacturing camps, STEM education programs, and internships for middle and high school students to introduce them to career opportunities in local industries.
 - Work with schools to create pathways for students from high school to local industries or technical colleges.
- Encourage Regional Talent Development:
 - Partner with regional employers to create apprenticeship and internship programs that allow young adults to gain experience while working toward certification or college degrees.
- Foster Entrepreneurial Talent and Innovation:
 - Develop support structures for local entrepreneurs, including incubators, mentorship programs, and small business grants to support the startup ecosystem.
 - Collaborate with regional innovation hubs to connect local entrepreneurs with larger networks and investors.
- Promote Remote Work and Telecommuting Opportunities:
 - Encourage businesses to explore remote work options and leverage technology to attract talent from outside the county while retaining the local workforce.
 - Create marketing campaigns to promote rural living advantages, appealing to remote workers seeking a high quality of life in rural areas.



Be Noble

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Contact Us



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