



NWILLINOIS
Economic Development

2024

ANNUAL REPORT

Celebrating 16 Years in Business - Serving Jo Daviess and Carroll Counties

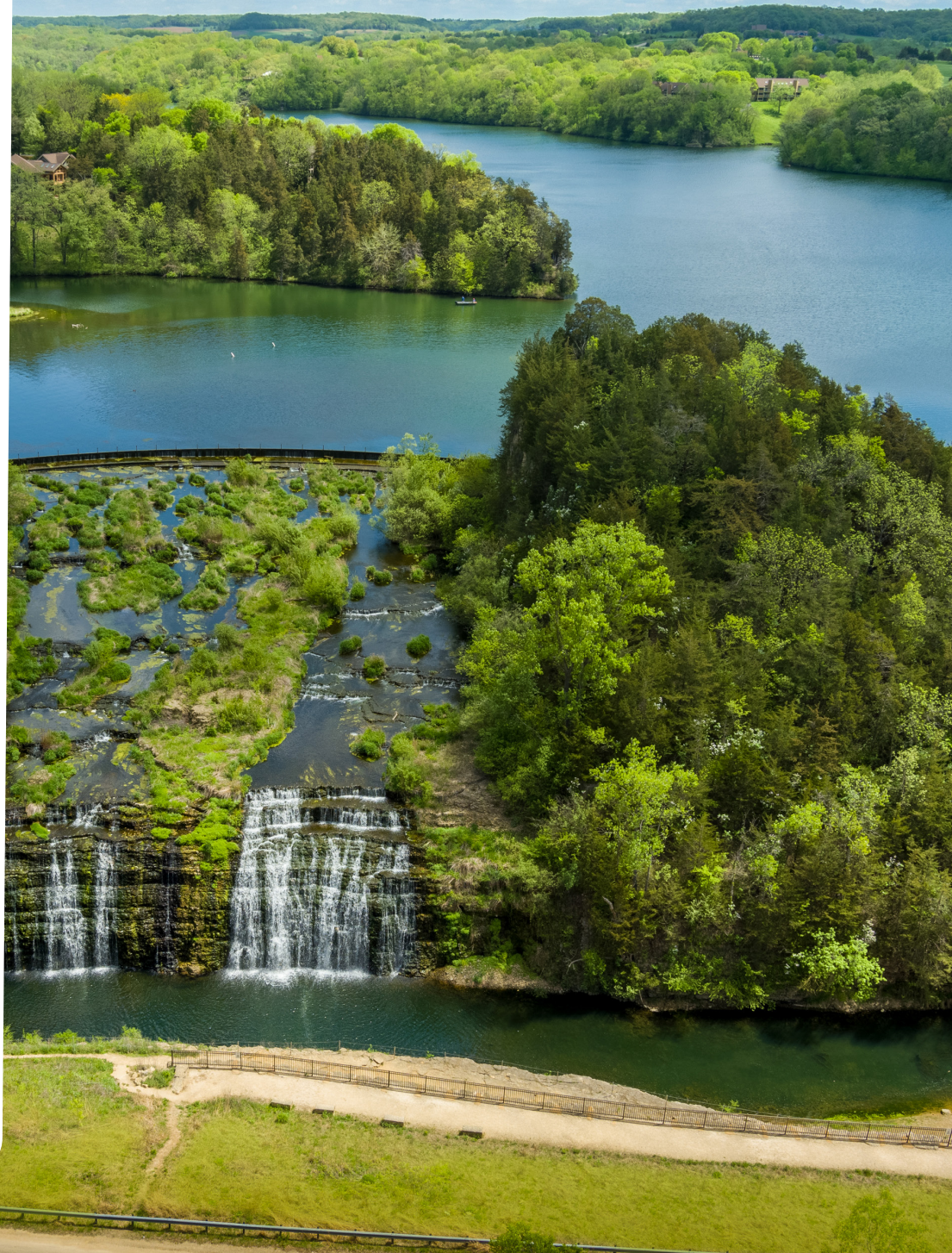
ABOUT NORTHWEST ILLINOIS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Northwest Illinois Economic Development was formed in 2008 by the Jo-Carroll Energy Board of Directors whose main goals were to spearhead economic development structures, funding and progress in Jo Daviess, Carroll, and Whiteside counties in Northwest Illinois. The board's main focus was to form a regional development entity concentrating on growing the economy and public/private partnerships.

NWILED promotes economic development by fostering business growth and assisting expanding and relocating businesses.

The organization aids in determining these needs for growth with cooperation from government and business partners.

NWILED encourages entrepreneurs by assisting with access to resources to begin and grow their businesses and employs all available resources to create a welcoming business environment, aligning the skills of the available workforce with the needs of businesses, and building political and economic capital.



Northwest Illinois Economic Development: WHO WE ARE

NWILED 2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chelsea Beyer

*Business Lending Consultant
Dupaco Community Credit Union*

Mike Casper

President and CEO, JCE Co-op

Gavin Doyle

*Vice-President, Illinois Bank & Trust,
a division of HTLF Bank*

Diane Gallagher

Jo Daviess County Board

Susan Jacobs

Carroll County Board

Chris Kuberski

President, Highland Community College

Patrick Powaser

Founder and President, Gradient Coaching & Consulting

Ron Smith

Jo-Carroll Local Redevelopment Authority Board

NWILED EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

William Jahnke – Chair

President, Napcor Corporation

Joseph Mattingley – Vice Chair

CEO, Arrow Group

Amy Baker, Secretary

President and CEO, Citizens State Bank

Amiee Schoenhaar - Treasurer

CEO, COO, and CFO, Riverport Railroad

OUTGOING 2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND NWILED STAFF

Tiffany Brandt

Dupaco Community Credit Union

Caleb Caft

International Union of Operating Engineers Local 150

Rob Davies

Savanna Industrial Park

Marisa Kappes

TBK Bank

Christine Soat

NWILED Marketing Manager

NWILED STAFF

David Schmit

Regional Director

Barbara Sue Grass

Program Coordinator

INDEPENDENT NWILED CONTRACTORS

Christine Soat

Site Marketing Services

Christine Melaas

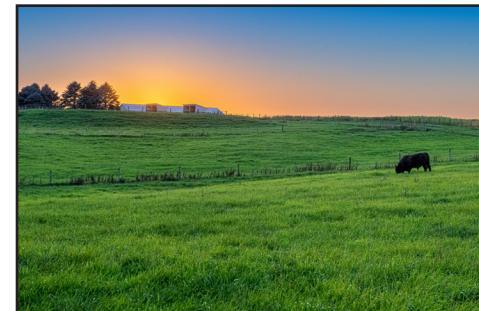
Basket Case, Digital Marketing

JCE Co-op

Desktop Support

Terry Kurt

Legal Services



FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

As I write this at the end of December 2024, I look back over the year and continue to be amazed as to the progress that we have made as an organization. Our Regional Director, David Schmit's involvement with all the various entities in NW Illinois has continued to grow, resulting in the recognition of Northwest Illinois Economic Development as a strong economic development entity. While our organization has a primary focus on Jo Daviess County, inroads are being made in Carroll County.

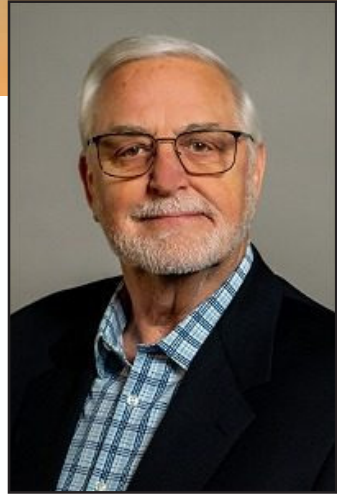
NWILED has evolved into becoming the "Go To" organization for many aspects of economic development. We have utilized the experience of our Board Members to perform business plan and financial analysis of the applicants' submissions for our available grant and loan programs. Among these ongoing programs are the management of the Genz Trust awards and the overview of the Jo Carroll Revolving Loan Fund. NWILED has continued to present programs such as Manufacturing & Trades Day to expose our high school level students to the many employment

opportunities that are available with our local businesses.

For 2025 we were proud to have received a grant from The Foundation for Northwest Illinois. This grant will allow us to administer our Build it Grow it program at no cost to the attendees. This no cost benefit will allow new business owners the ability to attend while their startup costs are most severely impacted. Other programs such as our Lunch and Learn programs have seen high levels of turnout. The round table discussions provided valuable insight to all the attendees.

In reading this report, you will get an understanding of the activities that are taking place in Northwest Illinois and the range of support services and forward-looking activities that we are either creating or supporting. Our goal is to focus on existing businesses in Northwest Illinois by bringing our knowledge and programs to those businesses as well as working with other partners to attract new businesses to our region.

All of us at NWILED thank all of you for your continued support of our efforts to make Northwest Illinois a great place to live and conduct business.



William H. Jahnke

William H. Jahnke
NWILED Board Chair



Northwest Illinois Economic Development: AT WORK IN 2024



Lunch & Learn program held at the Davis Community Center in Mount Carroll, Illinois

LUNCH AND LEARN PROGRAMS

NWILED hosted three small business focused lunch and learn events in 2024. These events brought experts into the Northwest Illinois community to help educate and inspire change.

- 1) Apprenticeship and Job Shadow Programs with Business Skills Team at the Elizabeth Business Hub in Elizabeth in May.
- 2) Succession Planning and Exit Strategies with Gradient Coaching and Consulting at Illinois Bank & Trust In Galena in May.
- 3) Invest in Your Future Workforce with Business Employment Skills Team and the Illinois Department of Employment Security at the Davis Community Center in Mount Carroll in November.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH PRESENTATIONS

- Destination Northwest Illinois: Celebrating National Travel and Tourism Week event with Galena Country Tourism
 - Highland Community College's annual Leadership Forum
 - The Foundation for Northwest Illinois "Stronger Together" symposium
 - Savanna Rotary Club member meeting



Eastland High School students following their site visit to MacLean-Fogg Component Solutions – Metform north of Thomson, Illinois

MANUFACTURING & TRADES DAY

A signature event on the NWILED calendar, Manufacturing & Trades Day is an occasion where manufacturing and trade companies showcase their industries to high school students to help create a talent pipeline for local quality in demand careers. NWILED works with JCE Co-op, and the Jo Daviess Carroll Career - Technical Education Academy to offer this regional event.

Save the Date

The next event is scheduled for Thursday, October 9, 2025!

2024 GENZ FUND RECIPIENTS



Entrepreneurs and businesses based in Carroll and Jo Daviess counties in Illinois have a source of financing thanks to the generosity of the late John “Jack” Genz of Galena. Administered by Illinois Bank & Trust, the Genz Small Business Development Fund was formalized in 2020 to assist individuals who have been turned down for a traditional bank loan. The fund, which totals over \$450,000, is intended to serve as gap financing, to aid with pilot projects, or fill in gaps not filled by equity and traditional capital.



Eligible applicants include retailers, small manufacturers, wholesalers, those in the hospitality industry, along with farmers and food processors. Awardees can use the money for capital purchases, to purchase an existing business or farm, or for startup and pilot projects. The fund does have requirements. To date, seven Genz awards have been given to eligible recipients.

Awardees in 2024 included:

- **1826 Creative Company** in Galena who used their award for a new camera and lighting equipment.
- **Dry Creek Beekeeping** of rural Galena who used their funds to help cover their startup costs.
- **Lola's Deli** in Elizabeth (their second award) used funds to renovate a storage room into a lounge space.



Since first awarded in 2020, a total of \$53,302 has been dispersed through the fund.

MADE IN NORTHWEST ILLINOIS 2024 SPOTLIGHTS

June 2024

Made in Northwest Illinois
SPOTLIGHTING BUSINESSES IN CARROLL AND JO DAVIESS COUNTIES

NWILLINOIS
Economic Development
Serving the Business Community Since 2008

EXTRA! EXTRA! READ ALL ABOUT IT!

The Carroll County Mirror-Democrat and Savanna Times-Journal are Alive and Well

With a loss of nearly a third of all newspapers in the United States over the last two decades, two Carroll County newspapers have successfully withstood the brutal sands of journalistic times and continue to be a unique staple to the communities they serve. "Newspapers throughout the United States are facing very challenging times as social media has upended the traditional business plan," said Robert (Bob) Watson of Mount Carroll, Illinois, owner and publisher of the Carroll County Mirror-Democrat and Savanna Times-Journal.

"The Mirror-Democrat and Times-Journal are the lone remaining newspapers in Carroll County, after two decades of publication within the past years," Bob said. "I would suggest that the Mirror-Democrat and Times-Journal is unique, as well as a success."

The Carroll County Mirror-Democrat was founded in 1860 and eventually merged with the Savanna Times-Journal in October 1919, becoming the Mirror-Democrat. Savanna Times-Journal, The Register and the Mirror-Democrat.

As a result of the covid pandemic, along with the continuing adverse weather advertising from

Mirror Democrat
Serving Carroll County Since 1860

NWILLINOIS
Economic Development
Celebrating 15 Years in Business!

NOVEMBER 2024

Made in Northwest Illinois
SPOTLIGHTING MANUFACTURERS AND MAKERS IN CARROLL AND JO DAVIESS COUNTIES

NWILLINOIS
Economic Development
Celebrating 15 Years in Business!

Galena Mill & Steel A Business with Lots of Angles

If you asked Galena Mill & Steel to build you a "Stairway to Heaven," owner Ryan McClain would most likely stroke his flowing beard in thought, cock his head, and then agree to at least draw up the plans for it for starters, based on your directive.

The recently re-branded Galena business, previously known as Woodshed Mill and Metalworks, has evolved over the past year and a half into a fine-tuned, high-end designer, developer and manufacturer of custom furniture, stairs, handrails and more.

"We design and fabricate high-end custom wood and metal residential and commercial projects," said Ryan. "We can accommodate single pieces and large commercial products."

For Ryan, Woodshed Mill and Metalworks was a jumping off point in 2000 where he started his career in residential carpentry, building houses and specializing in custom trim work and kitchen cabinets. In 2004 he also enrolled in an ironworker's apprenticeship program through the Local 89 Iron Workers Apprenticeship in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, excelling in fabrication and welding. The program includes on the job training for the apprentices and in Ryan's case that meant working the majority of it for Cedar Valley Steel. From there his creativity grew into projects that evolved into more unique and creative products that incorporate wood and steel in new, distinctive ways.

And when Ryan says unique, he also means it in an "old school" way as well. There is no CAD/CAM computer-aided design/software used to design Galena Mill & Steel products. All his designs are drawn by hand and based on his own engineering and architectural experience and skills.

According to Ryan, the software technology boasts that it can do it all, but it cannot take into account the human reality or environmental variables that come into play when creating a design that is error-free or fits the need. And when there is that kind of computer generated error is "things get worse and more expensive" he says.

"You can't teach a computer what hands-on experience can do," he said. As a result, that's exactly one of Galena Mill & Steel's biggest attributes and he says.

"I think the unique thing about our business is our experience and creativity, which sets us apart from other custom job shops," he said.

Galena Mill & Steel occupies two locations. In 2016 he opened his home-based sawmill operation on North Cross as a journeyman ironworker. His fabrication shop, which opened in 2023, is housed in two gigantic areas he leases from the Lemfco building in downtown Galena, on the Water Street side. The areas themselves are huge works in progress for optimum usage, but they are already as useful as they are big. Here the work is big and dirty and producing amazing products.

The company's client base is generated from all the usual ways: his on-line

Galena Mill & Steel

NORTH-WEST ILLINOIS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
www.NWILED.org

SPOTLIGHTING THE MAKERS AND MANUFACTURERS OF CARROLL AND JO DAVIESS COUNTIES

Originally launched in 2021, the Made in Illinois Business Spotlight continues to be a popular series. The spotlights are designed specifically to give businesses in Carroll and Jo Daviess counties an opportunity to tell their success story.

There were three featured businesses in 2024:

- The Carroll County Mirror-Democrat and Savanna Times-Journal in Mount Carroll and Savanna, respectively.
- Guideline Industries of rural Scales Mound.
- Galena Mill & Steel in Galena.

All three of these spotlights, in addition to another 15 previous spotlights, can be found in their entirety on the NWILED website at www.nwiled.org under the "Living Here" tab.

August 2024

Made in Northwest Illinois
SPOTLIGHTING MANUFACTURERS AND MAKERS IN CARROLL AND JO DAVIESS COUNTIES

NWILLINOIS
Economic Development
Celebrating 15 Years in Business!

Guideline Industries

Precision Metallurgy at it's Finest - Literally

If ever there was a niche business to be had in Jo Daviess County, Guideline Industries in rural Scales Mound, Illinois, definitely found it. With over 30 years of experience, Guideline Industries has found its niche with his innovations. But the family wanted to get away from city life and find something more peaceful. So, he migrated to Illinois in the 1960s, where he spent his extra time in a spare room in their home creating Guide Line Industries with his innovations. But the family wanted to get away from city life and find something more peaceful. So, he migrated to Illinois in the 1960s, where he spent his extra time in a spare room in their home creating Guide Line Industries with his innovations. But the family wanted to get away from city life and find something more peaceful. So, he migrated to Illinois in the 1960s, where he spent his extra time in a spare room in their home creating Guide Line Industries with his innovations.

Guideline Industries is a precision metallurgy company located in Scales Mound, Illinois. The company specializes in the production of high-quality wire guides for industrial machinery. The company was founded in 1960 by Deena and Ryan Pingel. The company has a long history of providing high-quality products and excellent customer service. The company is currently owned and operated by Deena and Ryan Pingel. The company has a strong reputation for its precision metallurgy products and its commitment to customer service.

NORTH-WEST ILLINOIS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
www.NWILED.org



From left to right: David Pingel, Owner, President and Engineer, Deena Pingel, HR, Sales and Administration; Diane Brosamer, Owner, Vice President and Production Manager and Ryan Zmich, Production Manager.

2024 SUPPORTING PARTNER INITIATIVES

JO DAVIESS COUNTY PROGRAMMING

- NWILED is working with the Jo Daviess County Transit Department on their Comprehensive Ridership Analysis Study due for release in the spring of 2025. A study goal will help aid in determining the feasibility of a proposed large employer/employee cluster fixed and scheduled service route.
- NWILED worked with the Jo Daviess County Planning and Development Committee to establish their new Small Business Development Grant program which aims to award \$100,000 in funding to county-based businesses in the spring of 2025.
- NWILED worked with Jo Daviess County and MSA Professional Services to complete a rewrite of the county's Comprehensive Plan, which was released in the summer of 2024.

CITIZENS STATE BANK "POOLED EMPLOYER" GROUP RETIREMENT PLAN

- NWILED assisted Citizens State Bank in creating a new 'Pooled Employer' Group Retirement Plan program for the businesses of Northwest Illinois, which is set to launch in the spring of 2025.

In response to Community Reinvestment Act compliance, this alternative reduces employer administration and liability, professionally manages investment selections and oversight, reduces costs, is an economic way to move from a small employer plan to a 401k with more customized features, has a flexible design, and will allow for 24/7 access. It is sponsored by Cetera Investment Services LLC, Member FINRA/SIPC.

ILLINOIS FINANCE AUTHORITY

- NWILED worked with the Illinois Finance Authority to enable their Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE) financing program in Carroll County.

The program aims to accelerate private investment in green energy projects (solar, double-paned windows, smart roofs, LED lighting). NWILED has now helped establish programs for both Carroll and Jo Daviess counties, in addition to parallel programs in Galena and Mount Carroll and looks to bring forward projects with a minimum value of \$2M.

CARROLL COUNTY TOURISM

- NWILED is working with the Carroll County Hotel/Motel Board and Visit NW Illinois Convention and Business Bureau to launch a new Visit Carroll County website in 2025 that will have all new branding and technology tools that will be managed via a new partnership with McDaniels Marketing.



Northwest Illinois Economic Development: BEHIND THE SCENES IN 2024

- NWILED received the 2024 Matt Marvin Community Impact Award from The Foundation for Northwest Illinois at their 50th Anniversary Gala.
- NWILED remains the first point of contact for the Jo Daviess County Revolving Loan Program and reviews applications prior to advancing them to the county.
- Awarded the NWILED John D. Cooke Memorial Entrepreneurial Scholarship distributing \$6,000 to high school students residing in Carroll and Jo Daviess counties that are entrepreneurial, want to start a business or pursue a career in business, and who intend to maintain strong relationships with the Northwest Illinois region.
- Conducted 22 site visits throughout the Northwest Illinois region.
- Held two legislative meetings, specifically with U.S. Congressman Darin LaHood, and Illinois State Senator Andrew Chesney.
- Generated eight public service announcement mail campaigns and six press releases.
- NWILED staff attended the 34th Annual Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs - Rural Community Economic Development Conference in Springfield, Illinois.
- Maintained the NWILED online site map, which markets industrial sites and commercial storefronts that are for sale in Carroll and Jo Daviess counties and which feed into State of Illinois site selection systems. NWILED also began marketing commercial properties that are for lease/rent publishing those details quarterly on the www.NWILED.org website.
- NWILED Regional Director appointments:
 - Birth to Five Illinois - Region 8 Action Council, Council Member
 - City of Savanna - Advisory Committee, Savanna Riverfront Development Board, Appointee.
 - Jo Daviess-Carroll Joint Action Solid Waste Agency, Board of Directors.
 - Quad Cities Regional Economic Development Authority, Board of Directors.
 - Savanna Chamber of Commerce, Board of Directors.
 - Jo Daviess County Comprehensive Plan, Project and Steering Committee Appointee.
 - Highland Community College, Decennial Committee Community Appointee.
 - Visit NW Illinois, Board of Directors.
 - Carroll County Hotel/Motel Board of Directors
- Issued letters of support for eight initiatives:
 - Highland Community College's Northern Illinois Strengthening Community Colleges program for their welding and manufacturing/CNC programs.
 - ComEd's Middle-Mile Grant: ComEd Digital Divide Programs.
 - United Way of Northwest Illinois' Collaboration Planning Grant for GROWTH's Shimer Square Daycare Project.
 - Illinois Department of Transportation for planning and development funding from the Federal Railroad Administration for passenger rail service through Jo Daviess County.
 - JCE Co-op's Connect Illinois Grant Program to advance fiber internet.
 - SOO Green's clean energy transmission route for Midwest energy markets.
 - Highland Community College's "Room to Grow" workforce pathways grant.
 - JCE Co-op's USDA Community Connect Grant for rural fiber buildout.

LOOKING AHEAD AT 2025



BUILD IT GROW IT

On Giving Tuesday 2024, NWILED received confirmation of a \$25,000 grant from The Foundation for Northwest Illinois. The Rural Vitality grant is part of The Foundation's Rural Collaboration Project partnership with Compeer Financial. Funds were earmarked for Build It Grow It 2025 allowing NWILED to offer the annual program for free. It offers a comprehensive curriculum that covers all the essential aspects of running a successful business.

NEW STAFFING

For 2025, Jo Daviess County switched from an in-kind to a monetary contribution. This new funding will allow NWILED to hire a part-time person complementing the organization's existing staff and group of independent contractors. This new position will focus on enhancing community engagement throughout NWILED's service area.

ENHANCED REGIONAL COLLABORATION

NWILED acts locally and collaborates regionally. Interactions with groups like the Tri-State Economic Development Practitioners, Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee for Northwest Illinois, and the Region 8 Action Council of Birth to Five Illinois continue to grow.

Adding in a roster of relationships with partner organizations including Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Blackhawk Hills Regional Council, the Small Business Development Center at Sauk Valley Community College, Business Employment Skills Team, Illinois Finance Authority, and the Foundation for Northwest Illinois, NWILED's access to resources continues to flourish.



CURRENT INVESTOR MEMBERS as of 12/31/24

Platinum: \$10,000 and Up



Gold: \$5,000 to \$9,999

**ARROW
GROUP**

CONLON

Silver: \$2,500 to \$4,999

Baranski Hammer Moretta & Sheehy
Citizens State Bank
City of Galena
Dupaco Community Credit Union
Illinois Bank & Trust
Riverport Railroad
The Foundation of Northwest Illinois

Bronze: \$1,000 to \$2,499

Carroll County, Illinois
City of Mount Carroll
Commonwealth Edison
First Community Bank of Galena
Gradient Coaching and Consulting
Highland Community College
ITC Midwest
Nicor Gas
TBK Bank
Village of Elizabeth
Village of Hanover
Village of Stockton

Ambassador: \$250 to \$999

Adkins Energy
Carroll County Housing Authority
Galena Territory Association
Galena Country Tourism
getVRtours.com
Hoskins Building Center
Jail Hill Inn
Jo Daviess County Housing Authority
LEMFCO, Inc.
Louie's Trenching Services
MSA Professional Services
NW Illinois Alliance of Realtors
Pearl Valley Farms
The Bridgewater Inn
Timmerman's Supper Club
Visit NW IL
Zurn Elkay Water Solutions

Friends of the Program: \$75 to 249 / In-Kind

Basket Case
Birth to Five Illinois - Region 8
Community Growth Group of Shannon
Galena Area Chamber of Commerce
Jo Daviess Carroll Career-Technical
Education Academy
Keller Williams Realty Signature - Angela Stodden, Realtor
State Rep. Tony McCombie - IL District 89





NW ILLINOIS

Economic Development

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Landscape and Aerial Photography by John Hudetz Photography