

2024 Annual Report

whywaynecounty.com

OVERVIEW

To sum up the work of the EDC in a few words is nearly impossible. Economic development in Wayne County is critical to our future and prosperity. I have a great appreciation of the value of the EDC through my years in county government and time on the board. I first want to thank the staff and fellow board members for their efforts and contributions. I also want to thank all the communities that contribute their portion of the Economic Development Income Tax (EDIT) that funds the EDC and assists in funding many of the projects. We are stronger working together.



Peter Zaleski, 2024 Chair

The work of the EDC in 2024 went well beyond just new business attraction. The work also included existing business development support, industrial park development, talent attraction and retention, and community development. The EDC has been integral in collaborating with town and city officials, county officials, local not-for-profits, primary and secondary schools and institutions, regional partners, and state partners. We are stronger working together.

The staff continues to be active collaborating with local businesses and regional and state partners. EDIT Grants were awarded to assist with local business expansions including Richmond Beverage Solutions and Transcendia. With support from Indiana Economic Development Corporation, we celebrated the grand opening of Anchor Ingredients and witnessed construction progress of Liberation Labs' new plant and the expansion of Blue Buffalo. We are stronger working together.

There has also been an emphasis on talent retention and attraction and community development. Based on surveys of businesses, child care, housing, and overall improved quality of life in our communities were some of the most important needs to attract and retain a high quality workforce. The staff continues to assist with multiple grants including READI 1.0, READI 2.0, HELP, and Revitalize Richmond, that will infuse millions of dollars to improve our communities through blight elimination, new playgrounds and amenities, housing projects, and Main Street revitalization. Childcare training and accessibility of childcare through TOOTRiS is assisting businesses and employees with connections to childcare. The Housing Accelerator Program, Wayne County Blight Program, and a county landbank are all new projects in process overseen by the EDC that will improve our housing shortage alongside the EDC's work on multiple new housing developments. We are stronger working together.

I encourage everyone to visit whywaynecounty.com to keep up on the activities of the EDC. Again, I am grateful to the staff who continue to support and facilitate economic development in Wayne County. We are stronger working together.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP AWARD

The Economic Development Partnership Award recognizes individuals or organizations who have gone above and beyond to strengthen Wayne County's economic development efforts.



Richmond Fire Department

The EDC would like to recognize the Richmond Fire Department (RFD) as a partner in economic development for their work in helping make the new addition to the Midwest Industrial Park shovel ready so it could be marketed for future development. When the City of Richmond and Wayne County Government partnered with the EDC to purchase 335 acres for the new Phase III in the industrial park there were 19 structures on the properties that needed to be removed. Economic Development Manager, Sarah Mitchell worked with RFD to coordinate a controlled burn on the 3 farmsteads, including several accessory structures. Following surveys for asbestos and other environmental hazards that needed to be removed prior to the controlled burns and demolition, RFD scheduled the controlled burns. In addition, they provided other county fire departments the opportunity to use the controlled burns as a training exercise. We recognize the RFD for their unwavering commitment to assisting with the controlled burns in the Midwest Industrial Park and acknowledge the time and dedication needed for the project in addition to providing training to neighboring rural fire departments.

RECOGNITION OF OUTGOING BOARD MEMBERS

The EDC of Wayne County is happy to recognize the contributions of outgoing board members.

Chad Bolser (served two 3-year terms) *Served on the Marketing & Communications Committee*

Ann Fennimore (served one 3-year term) *Served on the Marketing & Communications Committee*

Kyle Turner (served two 3-year terms) *Served as Secretary in 2022 - 2024*

Peter Zaleski (served two 3-year terms) *Served as Treasurer 2020 - 2022, Vice Chair in 2023, and Chair in 2024*

2024 OFFICERS

Chair, Peter Zaleski

•Wayne County Council

Vice Chair, Jim Tanner

•Mayor of Richmond

Treasurer, Jim King

•Cambridge City Town Council

Secretary, Kyle Turner

•Centerville Town Council

Past Chair, Sherrilyn Johnson

•Wayne County Commissioners

BOARD MEMBERS

Peggy Cenova

•Wayne County Commissioners

Mike Gaddis

•Mayor of Richmond

Ann Fennimore

•Richmond Common Council

Brad Robinson

•Hagerstown Town Council

Chad Bolser

•Wayne County Area
Chamber of Commerce

Marty Van Der Burgt

•Wayne County Area
Chamber of Commerce

Tony Foster II

•Wayne County Area
Chamber of Commerce

•APPOINTING ENTITY

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

The EDC helped to facilitate \$67.8 million of new investment and EDC staff made 73 business retention and expansion visits to Wayne County companies in 2024. These projects led to the creation of 118 full-time jobs. The EDC partnered with Richmond Beverage Solutions, Transcendia, and Vantor Corporation providing each company with varying degrees of assistance based on their unique needs and expansion plans. We are grateful that they see the benefit of growing here in Wayne County and choose to do so.



Richmond Beverage Solutions

A subsidiary of Dairy Farmers of America, Richmond Beverage Solutions invested \$44.8 million at their facility located at 1590 NW 11th Street. The company added new equipment to modernize its manufacturing process resulting in the creation of 65 full-time jobs. The company received an EDIT Grant of \$215,000 which could be used toward building improvements, purchase and installation of new equipment, or employee training. They also received tax abatements from Richmond Common Council. Richmond Beverage Solutions began operations as Wayne Dairy in 1921. In 1994, the company was purchased by Smith Dairy and became Richmond Beverage Solutions in 2022. The company produces a variety of extended shelf-life dairy and non-dairy beverages, ice cream, and shake mixes for retail and food service customers.



Vantor Group, Inc.

Vantor Group, Inc. purchased 1400 Industries Road, in Richmond Indiana - the former Dana/Wolverine office building. With this expanding footprint in Wayne County, Vantor has consolidated its shared services staff into one location along with a Customer Care Center, Starmark Products show room, and R&D Center. Merchants Bank of Indiana also expanded in Wayne County sharing 1400 Industries Road with Vantor. All told in 2024, Vantor created 23 new full-time jobs and invested more than \$6 million into Wayne County. Further, in early 2025, Vantor partnered with the purchaser of 3700 West Industries Road making it possible for Vantor's Progress Paper Tubes division to move from its current location in Richmond to a much larger space in the former TBK building. Progress Paper Tubes, also known as PPT, serves many industries including food, wire and cable, and other packaging.



Transcendia, Inc.

The extruded plastics manufacturer added a new production line and state-of-the-art equipment at their plant at 300 Industrial Parkway. They also created additional manufacturing capacity in a second plant at 305 Industrial Parkway that was previously used for warehousing. The company is in the process of investing a total of \$17 million between the two locations. The new machinery will enhance technology as well as increase speed and efficiency for the production of complex composite films required for the healthcare and food and beverage packaging markets. The company will add 30 new full-time jobs. Both new and existing employees received training in classroom as well as on-the-job settings. The company received an EDIT Grant of \$95,000 to be used toward reduction of costs associated with employee training, improvements to buildings, or the purchase and installation of equipment. They also received tax abatements from Richmond Common Council.



Plastics made by Transcendia, Inc.



Anchor Ingredients Cuts Ribbon on New Facility

We were excited to celebrate the grand opening and ribbon cutting ceremony for Anchor Ingredient's brand-new facility in the Midwest Industrial Park in 2024. This project was announced in 2023 and represents an investment of \$40 million and the creation of 30 full-time jobs. Anchor Ingredients is a leading provider of high-quality ingredients for the pet food industry. Strategically positioned in the heart of pet food manufacturing, the new facility enhances Anchor's capabilities as a preferred supply chain partner offering bulk storage, climate-controlled warehouse space, safety stock management, grain origination, quality assurance testing, and on-site processing. Easy truck access off I-70 and service from Norfolk Southern's mainline railway equips the facility to provide high-quality, reliable ingredients to pet food manufacturers across the region and throughout North America. Co-founder and CEO, Al Yablonski said at the ribbon cutting, "This marks a significant milestone for Anchor Ingredients, reaffirming our commitment to the pet food industry. By enhancing our logistics and processing capabilities, we are well-positioned to meet the growing needs of our customers, while contributing to economic development in the Richmond community."

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Quality of Place Projects

Regional Economic Accelerator and Development Initiative (READI)

Working with the East Central Indiana Regional Partnership (ECIRP), Wayne County along with seven other counties, worked together to develop applications for both READI 1.0 and 2.0 funding rounds, a program led by the IEDC. The program required regional planning as well as being able to work together to identify the top projects that will make the biggest impacts throughout the region. Partnering counties include Blackford, Delaware, Fayette, Grant, Henry, Jay and Randolph.

READI 1.0

The ECIRP was awarded a \$15 million allocation from the IEDC. Wayne County received a pledge of \$2.95 million for development costs associated with the redevelopment of the former Elder Beerman site, now called 6 Main.

READI 2.0

The ECIRP was awarded a \$35 million allocation which is the second highest amount awarded across the state. While the ECIRP partnering counties have selected the priority projects to be funded, we are waiting for final approval from the IEDC to announce the Wayne County funded projects.

Hoosier Enduring Legacy Program (HELP)

Commonly known as HELP, the program supports communities planning to spend their American Rescue Plan Act funds to build capacity, create a peer network system between participating communities, develop a strategic investment plan, and provide access to an additional \$1 million in Community Development Block Grant funds from the Office of Community and Rural Affairs. Towns who participated include East Germantown, Economy, Cambridge City, Dublin, Milton, Richmond, Spring Grove along with Wayne County Government. The EDC was one of many local partnering organizations that helped with the planning and execution of projects. Additionally, the EDC Board of Directors allocated \$500,000 from the Consolidated EDIT Fund with support from the Commissioners. Those funds will be used to support three programs identified in the Strategic Investment Plan.

EDC HELP Funded Projects

- ◆ Provided a total of \$50,000, \$10,000 for each public school district, to My Community, My Vision student community engagement programs. Those programs are still under development and should be implemented in 2025.
- ◆ Provided \$60,000 to the Creating Places program administered by IHCD which provided \$10,000 towards the development of six new park projects across Wayne County in six different communities. Five have been completed.
- ◆ The Wayne County Blight Program works with participating HELP & EDIT communities to identify blighted, vacant, and/or abandoned homes that are beyond repair. The identified homes need to be demolished but due to limited funds cannot be. Sarah Mitchell, Economic Development Manager, created the blight program to execute the need identified by the Strategic Investment Plan. The goal of the program is to help stabilize neighborhoods and property values. \$390,000 in Consolidated EDIT funds were provided and Wayne County Government matched that amount to create the program that is administered by the EDC. The program will demolish an estimated 44 blighted homes throughout the county. Five to date have already been demolished and 28 environmental reviews have been conducted.

Housing Accelerator Program (HAP)

HAP was developed in 2024 to be launched in 2025 for costly infrastructure needed to complete the blight throughout the county. The EDC is managing this program.

Housing

Housing continues to be an economic development priority for Wayne County. Attracting and retaining residents continues to be a challenge without new, modern housing options both for rent and to purchase. The EDC continues to promote the results of our housing study to developers to attract diverse housing options. Here are some of the projects that are currently underway throughout the county.

Smith Hill Subdivision

In 2024 the City of Richmond, Reid Health and the EDC worked together to cultivate the interest of 11th Street Development to develop an 80-acre site along South 37th Street in Richmond. The site's proximity to nearby amenities and surrounding residential neighborhoods make it an ideal site for a new housing subdivision. The City of Richmond approved the new Planned Unit Development that will allow for multiple single-family housing types to be built in one neighborhood. The Smith Hill Subdivision will include approximately 285 housing units with five different home collections that offer a wide variety of residential options. This includes approximately 99 townhomes in the northwest corner of the project site and the remainder of homes will offer a variety of sizes and price ranges. This development will help close the gap on housing needs in the community.

Renew Landbank

Landbanks are a critical blight elimination tool that allows communities to be able to acquire, hold, and help facilitate returning vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties back to productive use. In 2024, we laid the groundwork for the creation of a landbank for Wayne County to tackle blight in our communities to improve quality of place. We entered into a five-year contract with Renew Landbank who will work with us to establish and manage a landbank based on Wayne County's unique needs. The goal is to establish a fully functioning landbank, while also identifying the funding and scope of operations so that an entity in Wayne County can be formed to manage the landbank prior to the expiration of the Renew Landbank's contract in 2029.

5. The program's focus is to provide grant funding build-out of platted, yet unfinished subdivisions program.

6 Main

The demolition of the former Elder Beerman department store began late in 2024 and was completed by January of 2025. Once site work is completed the property will be turned over to Flaherty & Collins to begin construction of the new 6 Main apartment complex. The complex will consist of 150 luxury market-rate units and many unique amenities. The EDC was happy to partner with the City of Richmond and Wayne County Government to bring this project to fruition.



Rendering of 6 Main



Earlham College received a \$25 million grant from Lilly Endowment, Inc. to accelerate community development efforts in Richmond's downtown and strengthen the connection between the campus and the community. Projects include new urban housing, improved transit, new outdoor recreation in the Whitewater Gorge as well as other quality of place improvements and business development efforts. The EDC's role is to continue efforts to develop new urban housing by facilitating a new project with another developer seeking to revitalize up to five Historic Downtown Richmond properties. These revitalized properties will result in approximately 100 new upper-story apartments and rehabilitated commercial spaces ready for occupancy of new retail and service providers.

TALENT RETENTION & ATTRACTION

Manufacturing Day

Known nationally as Mfg Day, this annual initiative of the Manufacturing Institute, a nonprofit workforce and education partner to the National Association of Manufacturers, is held in the beginning of October. The EDC works with employers to plan and host tours for high school students. Students get a first-hand look at warehousing and production environments, culture, and products produced as well as skills needed and income potential. Company tours instill a sense of pride of

the products that are made here and are also a way to demonstrate to students they can remain in Wayne County and have a successful career and quality of life. In 2024, seven companies opened their doors to approximately 180 students from four school districts. We really appreciate our employers willingness to host students for a day and allow them to learn about various employment opportunities they have to offer.



Participating Employers:

Osborn

Hill's Pet Nutrition

Transcendia, Inc.

Taconic Biosciences

SugarCreek

Dot Foods

Ahaus Tool & Engineering

Participating High Schools:

Hagerstown

Northeastern

Richmond

Centerville





MakeMyMove

Our participation in the Make My Move program resulted in 21 remote workers and their families moving to Wayne County at the end of 2024! We have 8 movers who have made Wayne County their home for over a year and have plans to remain here. We are on track to reach our goal of 30 movers by the end of the current contract in September 2025. Some of the things we've learned from our Make My Move residents is how much they appreciate being in a smaller community, how polite and nice people have been, and how our cost of living provides so much more buying power for them as compared to their previous home location. We're very happy to welcome these new residents to Wayne County!

TOOTRiS®

Child Care Initiatives

TOOTRiS is a web-based platform that connects working parents to child care options. Through a grant from Duke Energy and funding from the Consolidated EDIT Fund the TOOTRiS platform offered 1,700 slots to employees at participating companies helping to connect them to open childcare seats, a benefit to working parents. Seven companies participated in the year-long pilot program. As a result some employers are exploring options to continue to provide the service. The experience also demonstrated the need for additional child care facilities in the county. With grant funding from Ball State's Training Resource Advocacy Center a Jump Start training program was created and provided training for 10 individuals which helped a new child care facility to open in Hagerstown.



Home in Wayne – From Here I Can!

How do you distill the personality of a place into a single tagline and accompanying logo? It wasn't easy, but we spent the better part of 2024 doing just that. Home in Wayne, the talent retention and recruitment initiative, underwent a rebranding strategy. Through surveys, one-on-ones, focus groups, and workshops the community

created a new brand for Home in Wayne. One of our goals is to reduce the EDC's identity as the owner of Home in Wayne and make the initiative available to our community partners and employers to use when talking about and promoting Wayne County. While we'll still run the social media and manage the website, we want the brand to be accessible and to become a part of our partners and employers' marketing efforts.

The thought process behind the new brand is that by choosing to live and work in Wayne County, current and potential residents are empowered to take control of their future, achieve their goals, and build a fulfilling life. "From Here I Can" emphasizes that Wayne County provides the foundation, support, and environment necessary for personal and professional growth. It's about turning potential into reality, all within a community that values growth, relationships, and opportunity.

At the heart of this brand is human connection, and we've kept connection at the forefront of our minds as we developed the design and messaging. The energetic designs provide options that are bold and empowering, warm and welcoming, and some that are playful and whimsical. These elements reinforce the strong, welcoming community that is Home in Wayne. We want to thank our partners at IronGate Creative for their leadership and creativity throughout this process and Stratavize Consulting for their expertise in facilitation and consensus building.

INDUSTRIAL PARK DEVELOPMENT

The EDC of Wayne County, with support of its Industrial Park Committee, markets and oversees the development of two industrial parks in Wayne County: the Midwest Industrial Park located in Richmond, and the Gateway Industrial Park located near the I-70/Cambridge City interchange. Below are important updates on the development of each park.

Midwest Industrial Park

- In 2024 demolition of 19 structures on the 335 acres of Phase III was completed. Planning began on securing shovel ready status for the new acreage and we began marketing the land for development opportunities.
- The EDC's partnership with the Richmond Sanitary District continues as they finalize the Preliminary Engineering Report to expand wastewater treatment capacity to serve new and existing park tenants. Planning has been ongoing since the EDC purchased MIP Phase III and construction is slated to begin in 2025.
- In the summer of 2024, we contracted with a drone videographer to create new marketing videos for all three phases of the industrial park. The new footage will be used to promote the park and is used on the industrial park webpages of the EDC's website as well as each property listing in Zoom Prospector.

Gateway Industrial Park

- Work is underway to expand water capacity in the industrial park with the construction of a new water tower. The town of Cambridge City, along with partners including Wayne County Government, Wessler Engineering, Eastern Indiana Regional Planning Commission, Southeastern Indiana Regional Planning Commission, and the EDC applied for and received a federal grant from the Economic Development Administration in the amount of \$2.8 million. The funding will be used to buy down the cost of the construction of the new water tower which will provide 1 million gallons of new storage capacity. This will fix current water storage limitations as well as provide capacity for future development. The total cost of the project is estimated around \$6.3 million.
- New marketing tools were created for the promotion of the industrial park. A new billboard, located alongside I-70 was installed promoting the available sites. Hoosier Energy created a promotional video for us that is located on the Gateway Industrial Park's webpage on the EDC website, on each property listing in Zoom Prospector, and will be used to market the park to site selectors and prospective companies.





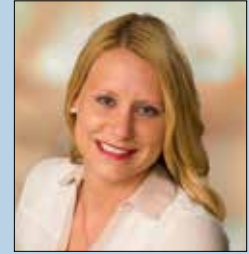
The EDC was awarded Non-Profit of the Year by the Wayne County Area Chamber of Commerce.

Success Will Find You Here! New Messaging for the EDC

New messaging was adopted for the EDC's brand in 2024. The Marketing and Communications Committee, along with staff, worked with IronGate Creative to develop messaging with a focus on what Wayne County has to offer. The former tagline "Hard Working, Easy Living" was replaced with "Success Will Find You Here". The expanded message "It's your move. Growth-driven opportunities, access to diverse resources, and a proven track record" details the value behind the tagline. We retained our brand colors as well as the logo. You'll begin to see the messaging in new banners used at events, on the website, and in our external marketing.



STAFF



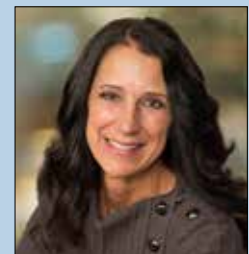
Valerie Shaffer
President
19 years of service



Renee Doty
Marketing & Communications
Manager
22 years of service



Sarah Mitchell
Economic Development
Manager
7 years of service



Theresa Lindsey
Business & Workforce
Development Manager
5 years of service



Rhonda Fisher
Office Manager
3 years of service

2024 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES

Cambridge City
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