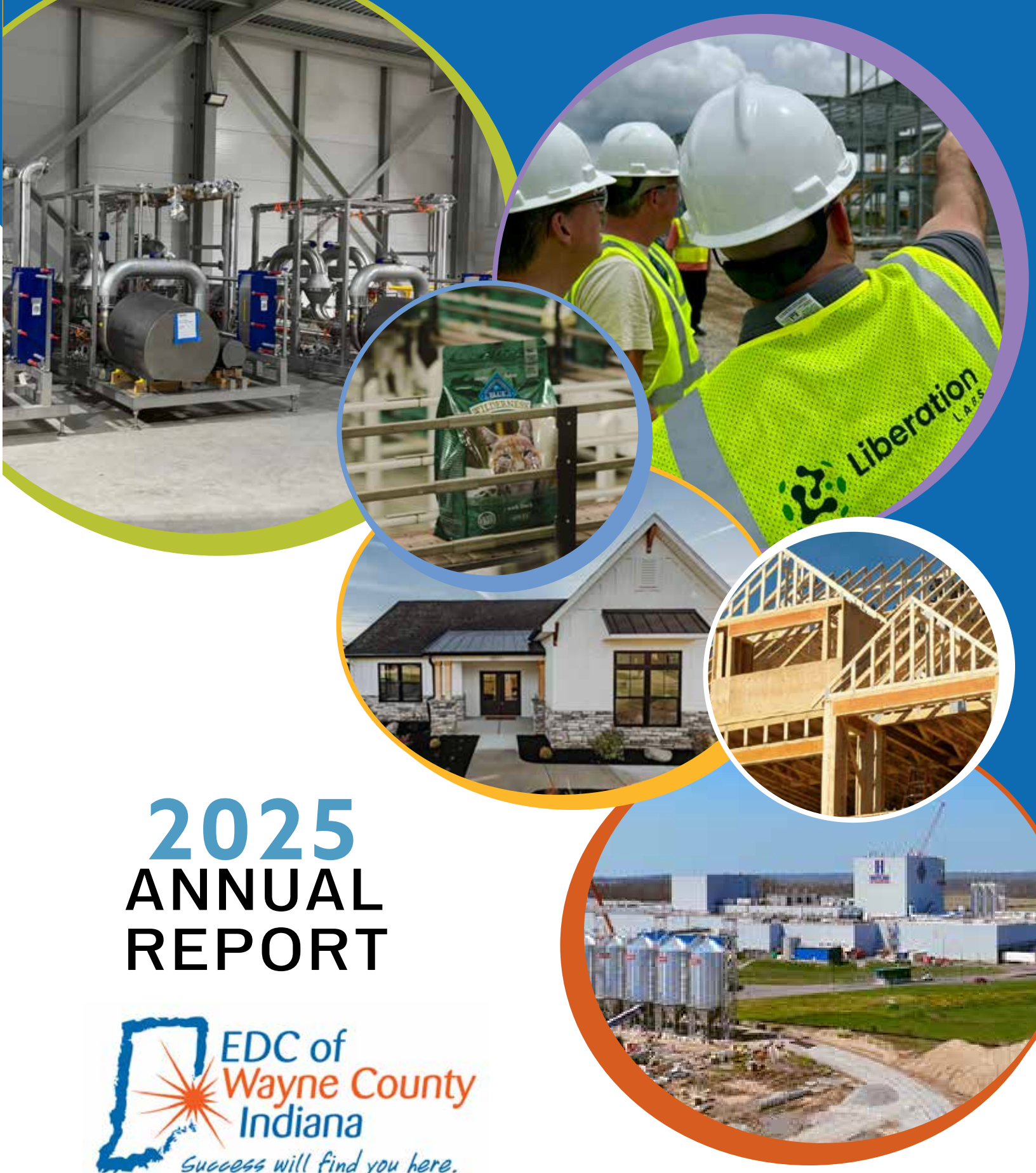




2025 ANNUAL REPORT



whywaynecounty.com

LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

We are pleased to present the EDC of Wayne County's 2025 Annual Report, highlighting the meaningful progress we have made with our partners. This past year has been about much more than just counting wins. It has been about momentum. When we look back at what we have achieved together over the last twelve months, we do not just see projects. We see a community that is deciding its own future. We have moved away from organizational silos and transitioned into a highly collaborative environment where our goals are aligned and true partnerships have formed.

At the heart of everything we do is a simple belief that for our economy to thrive, our people must thrive first. That is why we have spent so much energy this year on housing, neighborhood revitalization, and downtown development, otherwise known as place making. We know that if individuals and families choose not to live here or can't find adequate housing to meet their needs, we will not sustain a viable workforce that allows our businesses to grow and thrive. From finishing existing subdivisions, creating a new subdivision, rebuilding neighborhoods, and developing various apartment options for maintenance-free living, we are working hard to diversify our housing stock at all types and price points.

That same spirit of building for the future carried over into our industrial parks where we eagerly await the opening of Liberation Bioindustries' \$115 million biomanufacturing facility that will be adding 45 well-paying jobs. We also continue to stay focused on ensuring adequate utility capacity is available to ensure Wayne County remains competitive for new and expanding industrial investment opportunities.

The most prominent evidence of collaboration can be found in Downtown Richmond. The EDC is proud to be at the center of the revitalization under development alongside our private development partners, Earlham College's Revitalize Richmond plan, and the newly formed Wayne County Land Trust. Together, we are leading historical investment and redevelopment of the heart of the city.

As we look toward the year ahead, the foundation under our feet is solid. The path is laid for continued momentum by executing the various projects under way. Economic growth is not something that happens to us. It is something we create when we believe in our own potential. Thank you for being a part of this journey, we could not be more excited to see what we build next, together.



Jim Tanner
2025 Chair



Valerie Shaffer
President

2025 BOARD OFFICERS

Jim Tanner, Chair

- Appointed by Mayor of Richmond

Peggy Cenova, Vice Chair

- Appointed by Wayne County Commissioners

Mike Gaddis, Secretary

- Appointed by Mayor of Richmond

Jim King, Treasurer

- Appointed by Cambridge City Town Council

Pete Zaleski, Past Chair

2025 BOARD MEMBERS

Sherrilyn Johnson

- Appointed by Wayne County Commissioners

Rodger Smith

- Appointed by Wayne County Council

Brandi Jackson

- Appointed by Richmond Common Council

Greg White

- Appointed by Centerville Town Council

Brian Ballenger

- Appointed by Wayne County Area Chamber of Commerce Board

Marty Van Der Burgt

- Appointed by Wayne County Area Chamber of Commerce Board

Tony Foster II

- Appointed by Wayne County Area Chamber of Commerce Board

Brad Robinson

- Appointed by Hagerstown Town Council

STAFF MEMBERS



Sarah Mitchell
Economic
Development
Manager



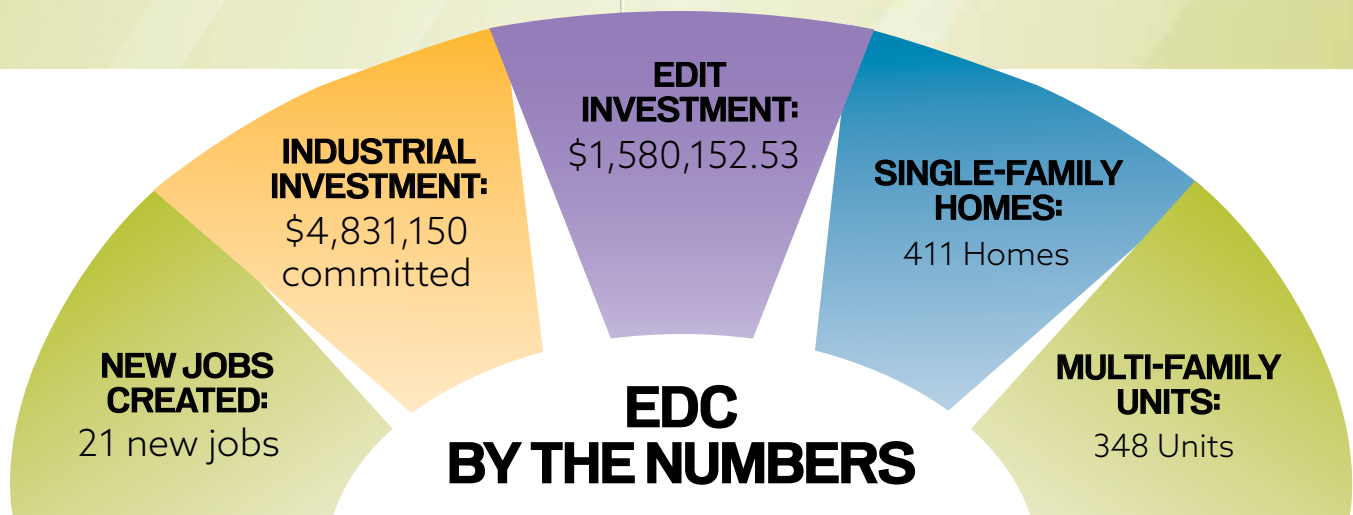
Theresa Lindsey
Business &
Workforce
Development
Manager



Kayla Robinson
Marketing &
Communications
Manager



Lee Ann Bowman
Office Manager



BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION

In 2025, the EDC of Wayne County remained focused on supporting business attraction, expansion, and retention efforts across the community. The EDC was eager to support three companies through active attraction and expansion initiatives while maintaining strong engagement with existing employers.

Throughout the year, EDC staff completed 65 business visits with local companies. Many of these conversations centered on workforce needs, recruitment challenges, and connecting employers

with educators to strengthen the talent pipeline. The EDC also provided guidance on funding opportunities, grants, and available incentives, helping businesses navigate resources that support growth and long-term success.

These efforts laid the foundation for the projects highlighted in the following section and reinforced the EDC's role as a trusted partner to Wayne County employers.

Milestone Trailer Wash LLC

We are excited to welcome Milestone Trailer Wash LLC to Wayne County. This family-owned business, led by Richmond natives Joel and Greg Eberlein, is investing \$2.36 million in a 9,000-square-foot facility on 5.7 acres in the Midwest Industrial Park. Designed to meet FDA standards, the facility will provide comprehensive cleaning services for food-grade and refrigerated trailers, primarily focused on supporting our region's growing pet food sector.

The project is expected to create 6 new jobs paying \$20 per hour, plus benefits. To assist with development, the EDC Board approved a \$26,000 EDIT Grant and facilitated the sale of the site, for the city of Richmond.

By filling a critical gap in local services, Milestone Trailer Wash strengthens supply chain efficiency, supporting our local businesses, and demonstrating the impact of residents investing back into their own community.





Ahaus Tool and Engineering

Ahaus Tool & Engineering expanded into a second facility across from its headquarters, creating space to grow its specialized design and build capabilities in advanced manufacturing, automation, robotics, workholding, and assembly. A fourth-generation, family-owned company, Ahaus remains a cornerstone of Wayne County's manufacturing economy while serving a global client base.

The expansion supports the company's existing 99-person workforce and adds 15 new jobs with an average wage of \$25 per hour. The project represents a \$2.47 million investment, supported by a \$32,500 EDIT grant and tax abatement.

Known for its family-oriented culture and nationally recognized apprenticeship program, Ahaus continues to strengthen Wayne County's advanced manufacturing sector while delivering high-quality tooling and automation solutions worldwide.



Liberation Bioindustries

Liberation Bioindustries continued making progress on the completion of its facility on 36 acres in the Midwest Industrial Park, with operations expected to begin later in 2026. The company plans to invest \$115 million in the facility, marking Wayne County's first biotech company and the nation's first purpose-built commercial precision fermentation plant, positioning Richmond as an emerging hub for advanced biotechnology.

The state-of-the-art facility will include 600,000 liters of fermentation capacity with integrated downstream processing to support commercial-scale production and the next generation of food and bioindustrial innovation. Liberation Bioindustries is expected to create 45 high-demand jobs in biotechnology, engineering, and quality control, with competitive wages and benefits. The company has already secured more than 50% of the plant's capacity under contract or in late-stage agreements.

In partnership with Ivy Tech Richmond, Liberation Bioindustries will also launch training and upskilling programs later this year to prepare employees for highly technical operations, strengthening the local talent pipeline and expanding access to careers in advanced life sciences and manufacturing.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



Lilly Endowment Inc.

A private foundation since 1937

Building a Stronger Wayne County

In 2024, Wayne County successfully deployed state and federal funds to accomplish important quality of place improvements through collaborative planning efforts. That momentum continued into 2025 with successful READI 2.0 applications in partnership with Forge East Central Indiana and the Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC). Housing and blight elimination remain the primary focus of these grant awards, advancing the county's housing goals.

Building a stronger Wayne County starts at the neighborhood level by ensuring residents have

access to safe, attainable, and high-quality places to live. In response to long-standing housing challenges and the need to remain competitive in attracting and retaining talent, the EDC of Wayne County secured a \$5.1 million READI 2.0 award supported by Lilly Endowment Inc. This investment is a strategic effort to remediate blight and redevelop core areas across the county.

By anchoring this strategy in philanthropic and state support, the EDC is leveraging more than \$55 million in total public and private funding to drive meaningful, lasting impact on the local economy.

Historic Starr Neighborhood Revitalization

The Historic Starr Neighborhood is a critical focus for Richmond to strengthen housing, support downtown vitality, and promote long-term economic growth. Once, a thriving residential district just north of downtown Richmond, the neighborhood has faced prolonged disinvestment and is now among the county's most distressed areas. Its historic Italianate and Queen Anne architecture, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, represents untapped potential that is central to the city's identity.

To catalyze revitalization, the IEDC is providing \$976,000 in READI 2.0 and Lilly Endowment Inc. funding to support the acquisition and rehabilitation of up to 20 properties in the neighborhood and return them to home-ownership. In partnership with Interurban, a center within the Sagamore Institute, the EDC is developing a comprehensive, community-driven plan that will further stabilize the neighborhood beyond home restoration. Interurban will engage residents, local organizations, and housing experts to assess housing conditions, identify financing solutions, and guide marketing to new homeowners and renters, ensuring a sustainable transition that strengthens neighborhood stability.





Vaile Neighborhood Groundbreaking Event

Vaile Neighborhood Revitalization

Stable neighborhoods and strong schools are closely connected, making the Vaile Neighborhood prime for new investment. By utilizing vacant lots formally owned by the Richmond Housing Authority and Habitat for Humanity, the EDC recruited non-profit developer Intend Indiana to build 22 new in-fill homes on the vacant lots. Through its HomeMatters program, Intend Indiana will deliver new, affordable housing designed to serve working families and strengthen long-term neighborhood stability.

The \$7.2 million project is supported by \$1.12 million in READI 2.0 funding and a \$1 million local impact investment loan from the Wayne County Foundation. Site preparation and infrastructure improvements are underway, with construction anticipated in spring 2026.



Revitalizing Downtown Districts and Reducing Blight

Downtown districts play a vital role in expanding housing options, supporting small businesses, fostering entrepreneurship, and improving quality of life across Wayne County. To strengthen these assets, we applied for and received \$3 million in READI 2.0 funding supported by Lilly Endowment Inc. to advance upper-story housing, façade improvements, and commercial revitalization.

The goal of this grant award is to create at least 20 new upper-story housing units, reactivate underutilized commercial buildings, and leverage additional private investment from building owners and tenants by launching additional rounds of the Downtown Revitalization Grant Program. Demand for this approach was demonstrated in 2024, when 55 project applications totaling \$14 million competed for \$2 million in available funding from the Wayne County HELP program, reinforcing the need to scale downtown reinvestment countywide. The EDC plans to launch the new grant program in early 2026 by offering three applications rounds to provide ample time for applicants across the county to prepare their projects.

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT



Housing continues to be a top priority in supporting workforce growth and community vitality across Wayne County. This year, the EDC advanced several key initiatives, including a partnership with AP Development on new residential construction, another expansion of the Chester Heights Apartments, and implementation of the Housing Accelerator Program.

We also extended the Wayne County Blight Program, reinforcing our commitment to revitalization and neighborhood improvement. Together, these efforts reflect strong momentum toward expanding quality housing options throughout the county.

Smith Hill Subdivision

The Smith Hill Subdivision continues to move forward as a key project aiding in our regional housing shortage. Designed to bridge the gap between current inventory and community demand, the development will feature 285 new housing units offering five distinct home collections, including town homes.

This project is supported by a \$4.33 million grant from READI 2.0 that will subsidize the cost of infrastructure into the first phase of the project. Partners of the EDC on the project include the City of Richmond, Reid Health, HWC Engineering, the IEDC and Forge ECI. Progress is being made behind the scenes as the developer advances site and engineering plans.



Wayne County Blight Program

The Wayne County Blight Program continues to remove unsafe and dilapidated structures across the county. A total of 44 properties have been approved, with 40 environmental inspections completed by Heartland Environmental to support bidding and demolition planning. Asbestos containing materials were identified in 26 properties, ensuring proper abatement prior to removal.

To date, 23 structures have been demolished, including 14 in Richmond, 3 in Dublin, 2 in Centerville, and one each in Hagerstown, Cambridge City, Economy, and Williamsburg. This coordinated countywide effort improves public safety, reduces blight, and prepares sites for future reinvestment and neighborhood stabilization.



Chester Heights Apartments

Progress continues on the third phase of Chester Heights Apartments, with completion anticipated in July 2026. This phase will add 73 new one- and two-bedroom units, further expanding rental housing options in Richmond.

Located along Chester Boulevard, the development is strategically positioned near local college campuses, Reid Health, and major employers, supporting housing demand for young professionals, students, and workforce residents. The EDC assisted with this project by facilitating the sale of the former Berryfield Park property owned by the City of Richmond, helping make the development possible.

Housing Accelerator Program

The Housing Accelerator Program was created to rapidly increase the supply of single-family housing by jumpstarting stagnant, unfinished subdivisions. Established by the EDC of Wayne County in partnership with Wayne County Government, the program provides competitive grants to complete public infrastructure in existing platted subdivisions, enabling projects to advance from planning to construction more efficiently.

In 2025, the program committed \$820,000 in infrastructure funding to leverage \$26 million in private housing investment. To date, participating developments have advanced through permitting and early construction planning phases, with completed or ongoing improvements including water line installation, street and curb construction, excavation, and site preparation. These infrastructure milestones position each site for vertical construction and home delivery as development phases progress.

The program is supporting 82 single-family homes across five developments including Meers Estates near Cambridge City, Willowbrook Place in Centerville, and Garwood Acres, Sandbridge Hills, and Hidden Valley in Richmond. By prioritizing speed, market diversity, and efficient use of existing subdivisions, the Housing Accelerator Program strengthens the county's housing pipeline, supports workforce retention and attraction, and ensures Wayne County is prepared to meet long-term residential demand.



Revitalize Richmond & AP Development

In November 2025, AP Development moved forward on its \$30 million downtown Richmond investment, focused on preserving and reactivating underutilized historic properties. The multi-building project will bring approximately 105 new apartment units to the downtown core while maintaining the architectural character that defines the city.

With support from Earlham College's Revitalize Richmond initiative, the EDC continues to work

alongside AP Development as restoration progresses on the Odd Fellows Building, Knollenberg Building, Harris Bank Building, Jenkins Building, and Hittle Building. A sixth property, the Kresge Building at the corner of South 8th and Main Streets, has recently been added to the scope.

Together, these properties will convert primarily vacant structures into active mixed-use spaces that support residential living, commercial activity, and continued downtown investment.

TALENT ATTRACTION & RETENTION

Home in Wayne continues to be a vital platform for attracting talent and connecting residents, employers, and partners to the opportunities that make Wayne County a great place to live, work, and grow. This year, the platform featured 5 new "From Here I Can" stories highlighting individuals who chose Wayne County as their home.

Each story illustrates how Wayne County attracts talent and inspires people to build their lives here. Pete Shaffner, a software engineer for Google, returned from Paris to enjoy a lower cost of living and slower pace. Tega Ogaga moved from New York, completed his degree at IU East, and now lives in Richmond. Ella Mull came back after college, drawn by local trails, biking, and outdoor recreation. Collectively, these individuals represent a range of professions and experiences, demonstrating the county's ability to attract talent across sectors.

"From Here I Can!" harnesses the power of authentic storytelling to spotlight remarkable individuals who are living, working, and building futures in Wayne County. Through these stories, a transformation is underway in our communities, driven by the people who choose to call this place home. They challenge perceptions and showcase what is possible when talent meets opportunity. Home in Wayne also strengthens the local workforce by connecting employers with skilled talent, through the Wayne County Job Finder. This year, the platform reached more than 5,400 site visitors, with nearly 20% of new users exploring local job opportunities. In the coming year, the EDC plans to expand promotion through newsletters, social media, and additional storytelling, amplifying the platform's impact and encouraging more individuals to make Wayne County their home.



Pete Shaffner and Family



Make My Move continues to be a strong driver of talent attraction for Wayne County. Last year we completed our goal of attracting 30 remote workers and their families to Wayne County. This resulted in 71 individuals; 48 adults and 23 children, relocating from out of state with an average personal income of \$102,000.00. This year, the EDC launched its third round of the program, this time promoting both the Remote Worker and Job Seeker programs, allowing us to actively recruit new residents who strengthen the local workforce and economy.

Our new program features 20 available spots for new movers and job seekers choosing Wayne County. To date, we have welcomed five new residents working in fields including engineering, marketing, federal government, and healthcare. These individuals relocated from Oklahoma, Illinois, Virginia, Ohio, and California, bringing diverse experience and skills to the community.

The program outperforms comparable communities at every stage of the recruitment funnel, with particularly strong acceptance and move rates. The average salary of new movers is \$97,000, generating an estimated annual economic impact of \$2.8 million for Wayne County.

MakeMyMove participants consistently speak highly of the quality of life in Wayne County. New residents value the slower pace, small-town charm, and lower cost of living, reinforcing Wayne County's position as a competitive destination for attracting and retaining talent.

Teega Ogaga and Friends

Local employers and schools who participated in Manufacturing Day

- Belden Wire and Cable
- Contract-Industrial-Tooling
- Ahaus Tool and Engineering
- Northeastern Wayne Schools
- Richmond Community Schools



Manufacturing Day continues to be an important investment in building a future-ready workforce for Wayne County. In 2025, the EDC partnered with local manufacturers to engage 77 students from Northeastern High School and Richmond High School who expressed interest in manufacturing and skilled trades.

The event introduced students to modern manufacturing environments through hands-on learning experiences and facility tours, offering behind-the-scenes access to companies producing parts and products right here in Wayne County.

Students were exposed to advanced technologies, automation, and in-demand skilled careers, helping them connect classroom learning to real-world applications.

By providing early exposure to local manufacturing careers, Manufacturing Day strengthens the talent pipeline and supports long-term workforce development. The program reinforces Wayne County's commitment to preparing students for meaningful careers while ensuring local manufacturers have access to skilled, future-ready talent.

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 Economic Development Corporation of Wayne County Indiana

 Home In Wayne

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