

Brookings to Partner with Seymour, 2 Others on Project Focused on Expanding Equitable Economic Opportunity

Aimed at closing geographic and racial gaps in economic opportunity, the Brookings Institution’s Bass Center for Transformative Placemaking and the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) will work with three Indiana towns, including Seymour, over the next year to co-create “community-centered economic inclusion” (CCEI) programs.

The project, which also includes Michigan City and Warsaw, is supported by the Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC) and is focused on small cities located in the state of Indiana’s READI program regions. The lead convening organizations representing each Indiana town are: Jackson County Industrial Development Corp (Seymour); Economic Development Corporation of Michigan City; and Kosciusko Economic Development Corporation (Warsaw). These organizations will be working closely with other city, community, and regional stakeholders to co-create and implement CCEI efforts in each city.

“We are extremely excited to be selected as a part of this program,” said Jim Plump, Executive Director of Jackson County Industrial Development Corporation. “The value that this study can have on our future efforts is tremendous, and we can’t wait to get into the actual process in the coming months.”

Plump mentioned that Jackson County’s economic development activities, the JCIDC Workforce Partnership and the population growth that was revealed with the announcement of the 2020 Census were factors in the selection of Seymour.

“This is an amazing opportunity for smaller communities to become the focus of inclusive economic development in the state,” said Vincent

Ash, Vice President of Development at the IEDC. “While well-intentioned, many economic development strategies miss integral needs because they’re developed from the top-down. Sourcing from the community will go a long way toward ensuring greater economic growth and equity in communities that need it. Further, I’m looking forward to sharing these community-centered agendas with a national audience to help position Indiana as a leader in inclusive economic development.”

Through this 12-month Learning Lab, Brookings and LISC will offer research, technical assistance, and structured opportunities for the three local teams (“the cohort”) to come together to discuss specific challenges and best practice strategies for advancing community-centered economic inclusion.

Plump said a 4-person “core team” in Seymour-Jackson County has been assembled and includes Seymour Mayor Matt Nicholson and Dan Davis, president and CEO of the Community Foundation of Jackson County, along with Jackie Hill and Plump of JCIDC.

“We are in the process of putting together our advisory team and hope to have that together early in 2023 with our first meeting scheduled in February,” said Plump.



Kevin Gabbard, President of JCIDC Board of Directors (left), and Jim Plump, Director (right), congratulate Chip Orben as he announces his retirement from Duke Energy after 36 years. Chip served on JCIDC Board of Director's for over 20 years.

*The staff at JCIDC wish you
a wonderful and prosperous
2023!*



Happy New Year

**Check Out An interview With Jim Plump
in The Nov/Dec 2022 issue Of Business
Facilities Magazine, Page 130. Go To:**

<https://businessfacilities.com/2022/12/transp-ort-success-in-seymour-jackson-county-in/>

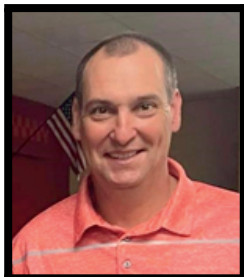
In Memoriam

1963 - 2022



*Jody Deckard, a
beloved JCIDC staff
member, passed away
on September 30.*

1971 - 2022



*Mark Reynolds (a
member of Brownstown
Town Council and a
JCIDC board member)
passed away on
December 3.*

New Investment for Valeo; O&k Expansion Will Shift More Production to U.S.

Valeo North America Inc. and O&k American Corp have announced investment plans for 2023 in Seymour.

At the November 28th meeting of the Seymour City Council, officials from both companies appeared to request tax abatement on nearly \$35 million of new investment.

Valeo plans investment of \$32 million for new equipment which will support business growth and retain the 1,958 workers employed at the company's locations at Freeman Field.

O&k officials announced plans to ultimately invest more than \$4 million in equipment that will result in shifting more production from Japan to the U.S. The investment will also result in the creation of 20 new employees.

Phase I of the project is expected to total \$2,455,000 in personal property and \$500,000 in real property during 2023.

According to a company press release, "these expansions include adding 2 wire drawing machines that would shift more production to Seymour to improve supply chain logistics and response time to the company's major customers."

O&k manufactures cold heading wire, which is the material used to produce screws, nuts, bolts and other products, and employs 61 associates at its East Side Industrial Park facility. The company located in Seymour in 2010.

The Seymour City Council granted 10-year tax abatement for both projects. In addition, the Indiana Economic Development Corporation awarded O&k \$175,000 in EDGE tax credits.

Guardian Bikes Partners with Crothersville High School



Corey Engleking and Brayden Crater, Crothersville High School FFA members, look over the Guardian bikes assembled for the annual toy and food drive.

It was an extra special year for some children in Crothersville and Vernon Township who received a shiny new bike for Christmas. Through a partnership between Guardian Bikes and Crothersville High School's FFA Program, 72 unassembled bike boxes were delivered to the high school for the annual Toy & Food Drive.

Brady Riley is an employee at Guardian Bikes and a former student at Crothersville High School and past member of FFA. His brother, Baron, is a current student at Crothersville High School and an FFA Officer.

"Baron asked if we could partner with the school and donate some bikes for their annual drive," said Sam Markel, VP of Manufacturing & Operations at Guardian Bikes. "Management quickly jumped on this idea and we rented a U-Haul, loaded up the bike boxes, and delivered them to CHS.

Corey Engleking and Brayden Crater, students at CHS and FFA members were part of the team that assembled and distributed the bikes. "It was a challenge to organize an assembly line assigning jobs, keeping track of inventory, and making sure each bike met the individual requirements," said Engleking. "But what a great feeling when the bikes started coming together." Crater added, "We quickly ran out of room in the classroom so we asked permission to use the outside garage to store the bikes."

Linda Myers is a teacher and FFA advisor at Crothersville High School. She said, "At first the project seemed overwhelming but the students jumped in and started assembling one by one. It was great as a teacher to watch the students work through problem solving, addressing storage issues, etc. Myers added, "I am so proud of what they accomplished and so grateful to Guardian Bikes for giving my students this opportunity."

Markel said Guardian Bikes is extremely happy to be in Seymour-Jackson County and always willing to partner with schools and organizations. Guardian Bikes established operation in Seymour earlier in 2022 and is located at Freeman Field Industrial Park.

NATIONAL MANUFACTURING DAY RETURNS TO JACKSON COUNTY

After a 2-year hiatus due to the COVID pandemic, National Manufacturing Day returned to Jackson County on October 21, 2022. JCIDC's Workforce Partnership along with seven county manufacturing companies welcomed 220 students from four county high schools for the day's activities.

Seymour Engine Plant hosted all the students in the morning and representatives from the supporting companies participated in roundtable discussions.

Following the morning session, students were divided into five groups and spent the afternoon at one of the companies for lunch, tours, and various training activities.

"MFG Day is a way for industries to help close the workforce gap and inspire the next generation of manufacturers," adds Mandy Rohdert, Workforce Partnership Coordinator. "It was a fun and informative day and I'm already looking forward to next year's event!"

Participating companies were Aisin USA, Dicksons, Guardian Bikes, Lannett, Pet Supplies Plus, SEP, and Valeo.

2023 Maverick Challenge Finalists

The following are the Jackson County Finalists for the 2022-23 Maverick Challenge:

Brownstown Central High School

Lucky Farrier Equipment – Luke Imlay
SR Automotive – Karson Rollins & Aaron Skaggs

Seymour High School

Cruzin Cabs – Breanna Lawrence
Custom Attire Truck – Enrique Morales & Madelyn Ramp
La Repas International – Diliaana Juan
Mental Massage – Averie Linville
Pink Armor – Maria Gamiz
R.E.S.T.– Lorelai Dixion & Chloe Long
THRSS (Tiny House Recovery Support Services) – Melanie Castro

Trinity Lutheran High School

Wehmiller Welding – Blaine Wehmiller

These students will make oral presentations on Wednesday, January 18, 2023. The Jackson County winner will compete in the regional competition in February 2023.

The Maverick Challenge is a business planning competition for high school students in Southern Indiana. The program aims to further develop the innovative spirit of our region by reaching out to high school students and showing them viable career opportunities through entrepreneurship. Since 2011, Jackson County students have received over \$77,000 in cash awards at the county, regional, and state levels.

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(SIHO)

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Andersons
Cerrowire
Comcast Business
Cornerstone Environmental
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GAI Consultants
Gaylor Electric
Goecker Construction
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Silver continued...

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Lawyer Excavation
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Workforce Partnership

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