

# Partnership Parke County Newsletter

Want to know about some of the exciting developments in Parke County and be a part of the positive conversations taking place? Continue reading our newsletter and visit our website at [www.partnershipparkecounty.com](http://www.partnershipparkecounty.com).

---

## Awards

We are honored to receive these rewards. Our purpose is to improve quality of life and provide direction for economic growth. We appreciate the recognition of our leadership and dedication to Parke County.

### *“Way-to-Go”*

We were a recent recipient of a “Way-to-Go” Grant check from the Parke County Community Foundation. We are very honored to receive this recognition.

The Board of Directors received the check from Nick Sauter from the Parke County Community Foundation.



**Front:** Nick Sauter, Craig Newby, Mary Jo Harney, Carolyn Kilby, Cyndi Todd  
**Back:** Brandon Bennett, Allen Cobb, J.T. Jukes, Jim Meece, Alan Ader, Dan Overpeck  
**Absent:** Rich Keller, Marilyn Rode

### Vision

We were recognized at the Parke County Chamber of Commerce Annual Meeting in January and received the “Vision” Award for 2018.

#### CRITERIA

- Demonstrates a strategic and/or innovative investment in the development of the community
- Offers an innovative solution or model for other communities
- Actively exemplifies a commitment to the future improvement of the community



**Front:** Alice Finch, Cyndi Todd, Carolyn Kilby  
**Back:** Mary Jo Harney, Jim Meece  
**Absent:** Alan Ader, Brandon Bennett, Allen Cobb, J.T. Jukes, Rich Keller, Craig Newby, Dan Overpeck, Marilyn Rode

---

## Training

### Annie's Project



**Front:** Stefanie Sisson, Kelley Redman, Ann Testa, Tracy Wilson, Cyndi Todd, Cindy Mandolini, Diane Hall, and Adrene Brown  
**Back:** Judy Fitzpatrick, Cheryl Fitzpatrick, Becky Holbert, Connie Warner, Tracy Morgan, Amy Newnum, and Debbie Barnett

Purdue Extension-Vermillion County facilitated a six-week Annie's Project Class in March-April 2019. The Annie's Project mission is to empower farm and ranch women to be better business partners through networks and by managing and organizing critical information. Local class sponsors were: Vermillion County Farm Bureau, Parke County REMC, Scott Pet Products, Tractor Supply Company, and Cargill that provided funding for venue rental and catered meals. State-wide sponsors were: Nationwide, Farm Credit, and Purdue Extension-Women in Agriculture. For more information about Annie's Project contact the Vermillion County Extension Office (765-492-5330) or visit the national website at [www.anniesproject.org](http://www.anniesproject.org).

---

## Parke County 4-H Fair – Commercial Building Activities



Partnership Parke County along with the Parke County Community Foundation and Operation Round-UP through the REMC, sponsored the vendors/exhibitors in the Commercial Building during the Parke County 4-H Fair in July. We had nine new vendors/exhibitors this year. Even though it was a very hot week for the fair, we had an excellent turnout of people coming through the building. We hope that you had a chance to walk through the Commercial Building while you were at the fair. Congratulations to those individuals who won gift cards during the evening drawings.

## Parke County Economic Plan

Parke County Redevelopment Commission adopted this plan in April 2019.

As Parke County leaders worked on this plan to attract economic development opportunities, they paid close attention to state-wide trends related to where employers chose to expand or locate. In particular, today's businesses are choosing locations where they have the best opportunity to attract a large workforce. This means businesses are choosing to locate in settings that have an outstanding quality of life that attracts the workforce they need.

The good news for Parke County is that the same things that make it attractive to millions of visitors every year, also make it an attractive place to live. Even more, investments to improve quality of life not only make the county more appealing to residents, but will attract more visitors. This plan recommends investments in trails, local parks and downtown districts to improve quality of life and expand tourism opportunities.

While investments in quality of life are important, Parke County also needs to take additional steps to capture the opportunities created by the investment. Namely, this plan recommends creating shovel ready development sites, actions to improve the capture of tourism spending, and implementation of broadband infrastructure. Together, these investments will position Parke County for a bright future.

This plan was made possible through a USDA Rural Development Grant.

Steering Committee Members include:

- Nathan Peters – Scott Pets
- Jay Norris – Town of Montezuma
- Larry Gambaiani – Parke County Councilman
- Carolyn Kilby – Parke County REMC
- Jim Coffenberry – West Central Economic Development Corporation
- Jim Meece – Parke County Commissioner
- Mary Helen Weisheit - Futurex
- Dan Overpeck – Overpeck Gas Company
- Roy Wrightsman – Parke County Councilman
- Christie Jacob – Purdue Extension
- Cyndi Todd – Partnership Parke County

To read the full plan go to: [www.partnershipparkecounty.com](http://www.partnershipparkecounty.com) and click on the link "[Economic Development Plan](#)"

---

---

## Broadband Readiness Committee Update

The Broadband Committee of Parke County has set several goals to accomplish and we are well on our way. We would like to provide an update to you on where we are currently on our journey. While we have had a lot of positive input and support, there are several roadblocks preventing us from moving forward and achieving our top priority goal – providing robust and reliable internet service to all residents and businesses in Parke County. Please see the outline of our successes, current challenges and plans for moving forward.

### Successes:

- Applied and became the second county in the state to be deemed Broadband Ready Certified
- Created an active and sustainable Parke County Broadband Readiness Committee
- Successfully deployed a survey by Vantage Point Solutions and completed a Broadband Readiness Feasibility Study
- Identified areas that need coverage with the assistance of residents and providers to truly understand where service is lacking
- Received support by local officials to move forward with the Broadband Readiness initiative which included centralizing permitting, waiving permitting fees, and creating an Infrastructure Development Zone for broadband, as well as exempting local personal property taxation for broadband projects

### Challenges:

- Large majority of our county does not have access to reliable internet connection
  - Current FCC 477 does not accurately reflect service provided in our county. This has limited our ability to find a partner provider willing to apply for the Indiana Next Level Connection for Broadband or other funding programs
- Over 70% of the population in Parke County lives outside of incorporated towns
- The population density averages 6 homes per mile (using average meter counts or rural utility provider)
- Provide ROI is not attainable during the construction phase of this project
- Searching for a provider willing to serve all addresses within previously funded census blocks that are not currently served

### Plan for Overcoming Challenges:

- Continue to engage in direct dialogue with potential providers
- Prepare for future rounds of potential government funding
- Attend the West Central Indiana Broadband Summit

We continue to meet with providers to discuss option, pilot programs, and opportunities in Parke County.

---

## **“Powering Rural – The Heartland Tour” Held in August**

A panel of representatives from Federal, State, and Local government agencies all focused on supporting economic development in rural areas of Indiana were available for an interactive discussion with attendees to describe the resources available from their agencies, the ways they might be employed to support economic activity and how they have teamed up with one another to support entrepreneurs and communities across Indiana. This was an opportunity to provide connections to people and resources that may make a positive impact in West Central Indiana.

Panelists included:

Partnership Parke County

U.S. Small Business Administration, Indiana District Office

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Indiana Rural Development

Indiana Economic Development Corporation

State of Indiana, Office of Community and Rural Affairs

Indiana Procurement Technical Assistance Center

Indiana Department of Revenue

Indiana Small Business Development Center

If you are interested in more information, we have a Small Business Resource Guide in our office. It has success stories from across the country.

---

### **The Purpose of Partnership Parke County**

The purpose of Partnership Parke County, Incorporated is to enable Parke County, Indiana to improve their quality of life and provide direction for economic growth. As a non-profit organization, we have performed vigorous investigation of other successful like counties, multiple discussions with Parke County, Indiana's incorporated towns, residents, and local organizations to identify needs, and in-depth discussions with our local county government.

### **Our Programs, Services & Responsibilities**

Partnership Parke promotes programs and activities once performed by Parke County Redevelopment Commission in the pursuance of economic growth and development by implementing those activities and programs for private individuals, businesses, local municipalities, and community groups.

---

Cyndi Todd  
Executive Director  
Partnership Parke County  
108 S Market St  
Rockville, IN 47872  
[partnershipctodd@gmail.com](mailto:partnershipctodd@gmail.com)  
765-569-0226



or visit our website: [Partnership Parke County](#)

