

## 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).

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### Sewer Project US 41 North



A significant need identified during BR&E was improved sewer service along U.S. 41 North. This prompted discussion between the Parke County Redevelopment Commission and the Town of Rockville to create a partnership to execute this sewer project. In addition to improving and providing service, the project will be sized to prepare for new development.

The Town of Rockville selected American Structure Point to design the project. To date, they have completed preliminary design documents, worked on right of ways/appraisals, and coordinated connecting services to those residents and businesses not currently served by sewer. Placement of new lift stations is currently being worked on with property owners. The preliminary schedule has construction beginning in May 2019.

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### Update on Economic Strategic Plan – USDA Grant



The Strategic Economic Development Steering Committee along with our consultants, HWC Engineering, have been hard at work. Two steering committee meetings have taken place so far to uncover the vision for Parke County. HWC has also met with several stakeholders as a part of this process. The next committee meeting will focus on site development.

The ability to develop a Strategic Economic Development Plan was made possible by a USDA Rural Development Grant received by the Parke County Redevelopment Commission. The plan is scheduled to be wrapped up in April 2019.

Steering Committee members are Jim Coffenberry, Larry Gambaiani, Christie Jacob, Carolyn Kilby, Jim Meece, Jay Norris, Dan Overpeck, Nathan Peters, Cyndi Todd, Mary Helen Weisheit, and Roy Wrightsman.

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## Business Retention & Expansion (BR&E) – Round 2

The Task Force has been brought back together along with a couple new members to begin Round 2 of Business Retention & Expansion (BR&E). A BR&E program is geared to stay engaged with the business climate of a community and to ensure good relationships with those providing employment. Almost 80% of new job creation comes from existing employers. The program includes a process in which businesses are chosen for on-site interviews. These interviews can uncover critical needs that could impact the health of a company.

The development of our BR&E program wrapped up in January of 2017 with the assistance of Purdue Extension Community Development. We were able to take what we learned from our on-site visits of five companies and create an action plan. The plan consisted of fairly simple tasks such as assisting with a pesticide license renewal all the way to a very large sewer improvement project that is being implemented.

The BR&E Task Force is looking forward to our 2019 on-site visits and uncovering any challenges that may be impeding our Parke County businesses. Our goal is to schedule a new round of BR&E every two years. The Task Force members are Steve Gerrish, Kim Grayless, Christie Jacob, Carolyn Kilby, Stacey Milner, Cyndi Todd, and Tracie Yelich.

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## Broadband Readiness



Governor Holcomb announced the Next Level Connections program that includes \$100M allocated to expand broadband internet service to rural communities. Our local county government has pledged their full support in helping Parke County along this journey. Program guidelines have not been announced as of yet but we're taking what we believe are the steps to be ready. Here are the steps taken so far:

- Create a Readiness Committee
- County Council will give favorable consideration to broadband infrastructure
- County Commissioners pass ordinance assigning one point of contact for providers
- Parke County is certified by Indiana Economic Development Corporation as a Broadband Ready Community
- Engaged consultant to perform a feasibility study that will provide a strategic plan that addresses financial strategies, business model, and organizational plan to provide access to all residents and businesses in our County
- Launched survey to collect information from our residents and businesses that will help form the business model

Watch for our announcement on a public meeting set for late January!

Partnership Parke County is the assigned point of contact for broadband inquiries. The broadband feasibility study is slated to be complete in April 2019. Our Readiness Committee members are Ronja Branson (Bloomington Home Telephone), Melissa Caldwell (Healthcare), Abby Cleghorn (Education), Chadd Jenkins (REMC), Kurt Lanzone (Agriculture), Jeremy Montgomery (Community Foundation), Cyndi Todd (Economic Development), and Roy Wrightsman (County Council).

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## Office of Community & Rural Affairs (OCRA) Grant Application - Rockville



Our Partnership Parke County Executive Director is an Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) certified grant administrator. We've been working with the Town of Rockville on a wastewater rehabilitation grant request. Rockville's application was not selected as one of the awarded projects during the OCRA Community Development Block Grants earlier this year. OCRA did a second round of grant applications and we applied again for the Town. A significant deficiency of awarded points in Round 1 came from the lack of community engagement. Thankfully, the Town had a very successful second public hearing regarding the second application with several residents attending.

Partnership wants to encourage residents of our county to express their concerns and provide feedback. It made all the difference in making this grant application more competitive! Awards for the second round will be announced in January 2019.

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## Lee Alan Bryant / Indiana Brownfields

The former Lee Alan Bryant facility has been vacant since the State of Indiana stopped funding the operation. The company that has deeded to the seven-acre parcel has been dissolved and property taxes have not been paid by the lien holder since 2010. We know through Environmental Assessments that asbestos is present. What can we do?

Multiple discussions have occurred over the past three years with Indiana Brownfields and the Environmental Protection Agency requesting assistance with resolving this issue. Last fall, Indiana Brownfields stepped up with a plan. They will fund the removal of the asbestos and perform a groundwater inspection if the County is willing to pursue ownership through the delinquent property tax process. The Commissioners have verbally agreed to do this if the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) will put in writing the actions they will take and not hold the County responsible for potentially any new containments found at a later time. IDEM is working on the letter and we've started the process of transferring the property. The desire is to have this portion completed before summer 2019. In the meantime, the State will be performing current Environmental Assessments.

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### **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.

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