

Contact Information

Blackhawk Hills
Regional Council
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Upcoming Events

Click event title for more
information.

Blackhawk Hills Regional Council Meeting

June 1, 2015

6:00 PM

Lanark Heritage Center
106 South Broad Street
Lanark, IL 61046

Zoning Administrators Meeting

June 10, 2015

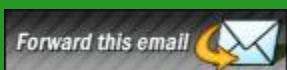
9:30 AM

Ogle County Planning and
Zoning Department
911 West Pines Road
Oregon, IL 61046

Quick Links

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BLACKHAWK HILLS Regional Council



Jo Daviess • Stephenson • Carroll • Ogle • Whiteside • Lee

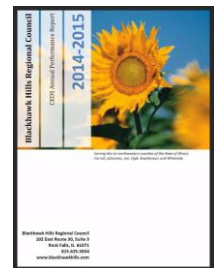
Thank you for your interest in Blackhawk Hills Regional Council. You are receiving this newsletter because we would like to keep you up-to-date on projects and initiatives in the six-county region of Blackhawk Hills. We serve Carroll, Jo Daviess, Lee, Ogle, Stephenson, and Whiteside Counties in northwestern Illinois.

If you have a project that you would like our assistance with, please contact our office at 815-625-3854 or submit a [Project Proposal Form](#) on our website.

If you have news or upcoming events that you would like us to share in our newsletter, on Facebook, or our website, please contact us at 815-625-3854 or by email at info@blackhawkhills.com.

CEDS Annual Performance Report

Blackhawk Hills Regional Council's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Committee completed and filed its 2014-2015 CEDS Annual Performance Report with the Economic Development Administration Chicago Regional Office. The annual performance report contains information pertaining to Blackhawk Hills' Economic Development District, including updated strategies for improving the region's counties and communities. It also incorporates updated project lists, originally from the 2014-2019 5-Year CEDS document, as well as data and statistics that depict the region's current demographic and economic state of affairs.



Annually, Blackhawk Hills explores regional demographic and economic trends, as well as the needs of the District's various constituencies. One of the focuses of Blackhawk Hills is to encourage local sponsors, through projects and plans developed by the regional council or other local entities, to pursue projects that maintain the region's overall vitality.

The information contained in the annual performance report underscores the need for ongoing community planning, economic development, resource conservation, and partnership strengthening. You can view the annual performance report at www.blackhawkhills.com.

CEO Year Two in the Books

As the second year of the Whiteside Area Career Center (WACC) Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities (CEO) class comes to a close, the students were busy with their final activities and responsibilities. The class hosted its CEO Trade Show on May 6th at the Northland Mall in Sterling, IL. The event showcased the individual businesses created by each of the students and highlighted the culmination of the many life and business lessons they acquired throughout the year. The trade show experienced a notable turnout and support from the region.

The CEO Recognition and Awards Night was held on May 11th at the Post House Ballroom in Dixon, IL. Attendees enjoyed dessert and an evening that recognized the parties involved with the successful CEO program. Students presented parents with notes of appreciation, spoke highly of their mentors, and shared key takeaways from the past year. Facilitators Norm Deets and Le Hartman recognized parents, investors, speakers, business tour hosts, CEO Board members, and the Sauk Valley Area Chamber of Commerce for their dedication to and support of the program. Deets and Hartman also highlighted students' exemplary character through stories.

The program concluded with awards. Regan Todhunter and Isaiah Celestino received the Respect and Communication Awards and Nick McGuire received the Vision Award. Aaron Frank, author of "Don't Sell Yourself Short," was named Entrepreneur of the Year. Bailey Russell (Bayr Necessities) and Margaret Smith (Eden Bath and Beauty), were chosen by their peers to display their business/booths and represent the WACC CEO program at the Network Trade Show. Ashley Stralow (Express Yourself) was chosen as alternate. The Network Trade Show is June 15th at the Keller Convention Center in Effingham, IL.



Margaret Smith, Eden Bath and Beauty, discusses her business with one of many Trade Show visitors.



Aaron Frank, author of "Don't Sell Yourself Short," was named Entrepreneur of the Year.

Save the Rain

What better way to save water for use in your garden, flower beds, or lawn than with a rain barrel. A rain barrel system collects and stores rainwater from your roof for later use. Rain barrels are an economical and environmentally safe way for property owners to conserve water and save money. Lawn and garden watering make up nearly 40% of total household water use during summer months. By using a rain barrel, demand for treated tap water is reduced, thus saving water and even money and energy. Local Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) typically have rain barrels available for purchase. To view SWCD contact information in the Blackhawk Hills region, click [here](#).

Illinois Enterprise News

Blackhawk Hills Regional Council's GIS Mapping Specialist Andy Shaw recently attended the Illinois Enterprise Zone Association Conference in Springfield. Blackhawk Hills continues to stay up to speed on the latest news in this changing area and is available to assist with data and other application work for our counties and cities. News from the event include state enterprise zone board appointments, an update on application numbers for the first round, and tips from those that applied for new zones.

Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) Director Jim Schultz reported that the enterprise zone board was recently appointed. This board, along with the directors of DCEO and Department of Revenue, will decide applications later this summer for the first round of zones awarded under the new system.

It was reported at the conference that 63 applications were submitted to the DCEO by December 31 for the first round. Forty nine zones are expected to be awarded, confirming what was expected to be a very competitive first round. About 2/3 of the zone applications were downstate, with the rest in the Chicago region. Our six county Blackhawk Hills region did not have any, but nearby Rockford, Dekalb, Bureau/Putnam, Ottawa/LaSalle, and Quad Cities submitted this round. Some of our zones are expected to apply in the next round.

In other news, DCEO Director Schultz reported that the governor's greater goal for the agency is its realignment as a public-private partnership under the model of neighboring states, and that bill 574 is the current vehicle for that reform.

Some tips were also shared by those who most recently went through the application process:

- Elected officials should be educated before the process starts to make sure they understand what this economic tool does and how it works.
- GIS and mapping can support your story in many ways, not just the ten tests. Good mastery of your data is critical.
- Uniform abatement and incentives should always be the goal for the zone.
- Submissions can total 600-4000 pages, and can see 200-500 hours of staff time, so it is highly recommended that cities and counties use a consultant or partner and get a lot of help to make your best effort and application.
- Further, it is recommended that everything be included, even if slightly under any particular standard, to always tell the complete story of your zone area and what you are trying to do.
- Applicants reported being on site in Springfield the entire last week of the year to address DCEO application issues in the days leading up to the December 31st deadline.

Funding Deadline Reminder

Visit www.blackhawkhills.com/grants or contact our office for more information on these and other funding opportunities.

[National PTA Healthy Lifestyles: Energy Balance 101 Grant Program](#) - June 19, 2015

Funding Opportunities

Visit blackhawkhills.com/grants or contact our office for more information on these and other funding opportunities.

[Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation](#) - The Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation invests in clean energy development and land preservation efforts by working with communities and citizens to improve environmental quality in Illinois. The Foundation supports projects in the following core program areas: improving energy efficiency, developing renewable energy resources, and preserving and enhancing natural areas and wildlife habitats throughout the state. Nonprofit organizations and government agencies are eligible to apply. The upcoming application deadline for most of the Foundation's grant programs is July 14, 2015. Click [here](#) for more information.

[Grants Promote K-5 Science and Math Education](#) - The Toshiba America Foundation provides grants of up to \$1,000 to teachers in public or private schools to help them bring innovative hands-on projects into their classrooms. The application deadline is October 1, annually. Click [here](#) for more information.

[Grants Program for 6-12 Science and Math Education](#) - The Toshiba America Foundation provides small grants of up to \$5,000 and large grants of over \$5,000 to teachers who are passionate about making science and mathematics more engaging for their students. Applications for small grants may be submitted throughout the year. The annual application deadlines for large grants are February 1 and August 1, annually. Click [here](#) for more information.

Northwest Illinois Community Foundations

Primarily through grants, community foundations in northwest Illinois support various organizations and program that benefit local communities and, often, the region as a whole. Please be aware of the following foundations and visit their websites regularly for announcements of grant opportunities and deadlines.

Freeport Community Foundation (based in Freeport, IL)

URL: www.freeportcommunityfoundation.org

Blackhawk Hills region served: Stephenson County, portions of Carroll and Jo Daviess Counties

Galena Foundation (based in Galena, IL)

URL: www.galenafoundation.org

Blackhawk Hills region served: Galena area

Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque (based in Dubuque, IA)

URL: www.dbqfoundation.org

Blackhawk Hills region served: Portions of Jo Daviess County

Community Foundation of the Great River Bend (based in Bettendorf, IA)

URL: www.cfgrb.org

Blackhawk Hills region served: Carroll and Whiteside Counties

Affiliates: Fulton Association for Community Enrichment, Morrison Area Community Foundation, Mount Carroll Community Foundation

Community Foundation of Northern Illinois (based in Rockford, IL)

URL: www.cfnil.org

Blackhawk Hills region served: Ogle and Stephenson Counties

Rochelle Area Community Foundation (based in Rochelle, IL)

URL: www.rochellefoundation.org

Blackhawk Hills region served: Rochelle area

Other Organizations

Alliance of Illinois Community Foundations

URL: www.allianceilcf.org

The AICF maintains a list of many community foundations operating in/impacting Illinois.
