

# BLACKHAWK HILLS

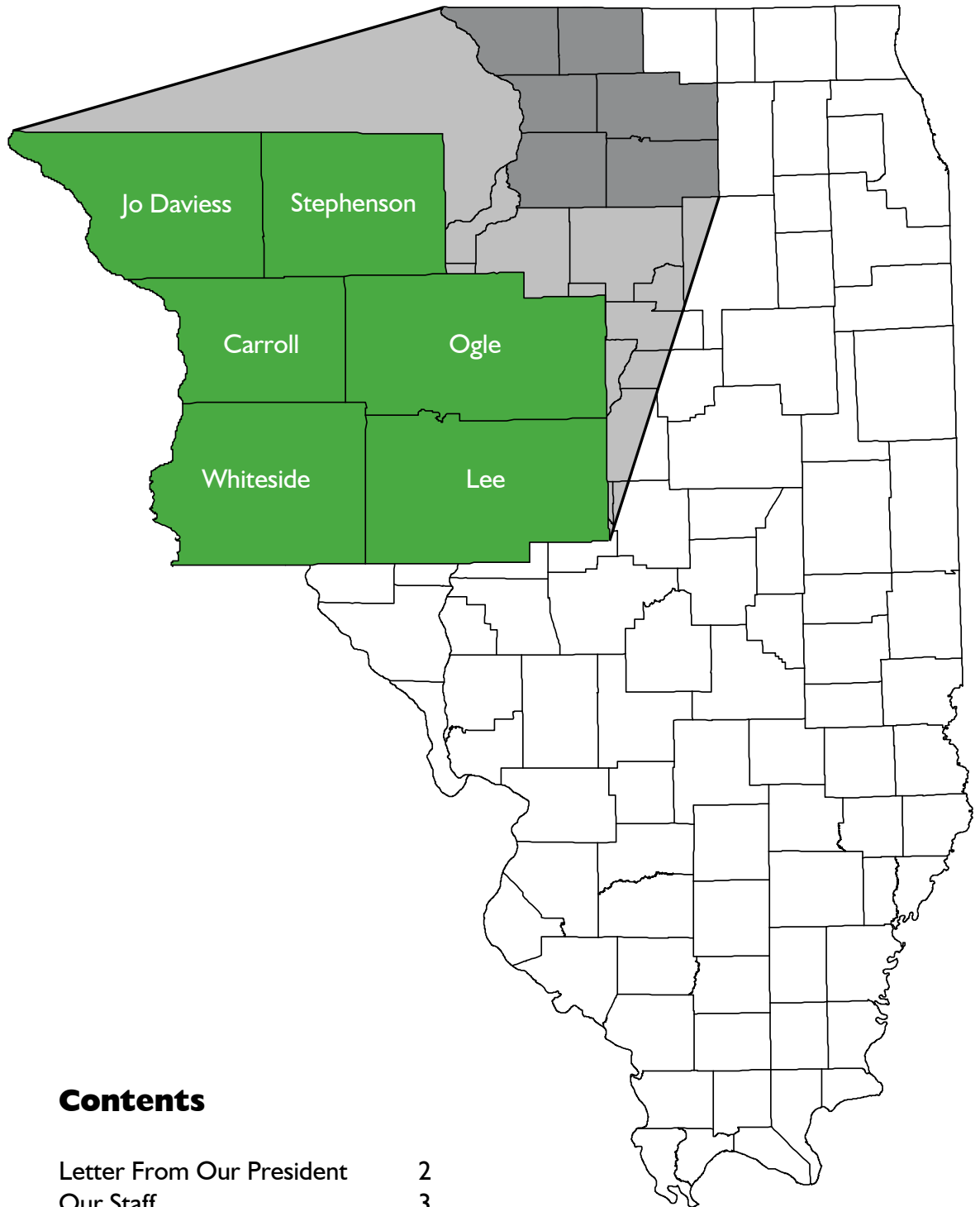
## Regional Council

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

### 2012 - 2013 Annual Report



# Strength Through Partnerships



## Contents

Letter From Our President	2
Our Staff	3
Our Council Members	4
Report Summary	5
Summary of Projects	6
Accomplishing Goals	7
Other News	19
Financial Information	21
County Profiles	23

Dear Community Stakeholders:

We are happy to present our 2012-2013 annual report. Over the past fiscal year, Blackhawk Hills Regional Council has worked on multiple projects including those connected to the region's economic development district as well as the State of Illinois-sponsored energy efficiency initiatives and youth entrepreneurship education. During the same period, considerable portions of the iFiber regional broadband network were constructed and other federally-backed infrastructure projects were funded.

Looking forward to the future, federal and state agencies have increasingly emphasized job creation and retention, while also promoting regional partnerships in grant applications. Our regional council is in a unique position to establish and maintain these essential partnerships, leverage multiple sources of funding, and support infrastructure and environmental initiatives throughout northwest Illinois.

We rely on your support in maintaining an economically robust and civically engaged region. On behalf of Blackhawk Hills Regional Council board members and staff, I offer my deepest gratitude and appreciation to the legislators, agencies, organizations, counties, municipalities, and individuals who make our work possible. We look forward to a productive 2013-2014.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in white ink on a green background, reading "Ron Colson".

Ron Colson  
President

The mission of Blackhawk Hills Regional Council is to assist the people and local agencies of northwest Illinois in developing and implementing a regional outlook that will enhance economic growth, workforce development, natural resource conservation, and quality of life for local communities through leadership, program and project development, planning, and leveraging of resources.

# Strength Through Regionalism



**Julie Jacobs**

Administrations Coordinator

Julie Jacobs joined Blackhawk Hills Regional Council in January 1987. Her primary responsibilities include human resource management, grant administration, not-for-profit management, serving as the office receptionist, and administrative support to the governing board including preparing meeting notices and minutes.



**Theresa Wittenauer**

Economic Development Coordinator

Theresa Wittenauer joined Blackhawk Hills Regional Council in December 2006. Her primary responsibilities include managing the Economic Development District, working directly with the regional and local Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) committees, updating and maintaining the CEDS document for the six-county region, and securing the annual planning grant.



**Daniel Payette**

Outreach Coordinator

Daniel Payette joined Blackhawk Hills Regional Council in March 2011. His primary responsibilities include support of the iFiber broadband project and maintaining the information technology systems for the office. His outreach efforts for iFiber include various governments, libraries, schools, colleges, healthcare facilities, and not-for-profits in the region.



**Melanie Flesch**

Assistant Outreach Coordinator

Melanie Flesch joined Blackhawk Hills Regional Council in March 2012. Her primary responsibilities include outreach for the iFiber broadband project, planning, development, and implementation of marketing strategies, communications, and public relations activities. Her marketing duties include general outreach, research, planning, reporting, development, and design.



Ron Colson  
President



William Tonne  
Vice President



Glen Kuhlemier  
Secretary/Treasurer



Darrell Stitzel

Carroll County

County Board  
Representative



Ed Juracek

Carroll County

Soil & Water  
Conservation  
District



Cathy Brunner

Carroll County

Area  
Representative



Steve Rutz

Jo Daviess County

County Board  
Representative



William Tonne

Jo Daviess County

Soil & Water  
Conservation  
District



Marvin Schultz

Jo Daviess County

Area  
Representative



Tim Deem

Lee County

County Board  
Representative

Photo  
Not  
Available

Vacant

Lee County

Soil & Water  
Conservation  
District



Marilyn Shippert

Lee County

Area  
Representative



Ron Colson

Ogle County

County Board  
Representative



Lynne Kilker

Ogle County

Soil & Water  
Conservation  
District



Marcia Heuer

Ogle County

Area  
Representative



Sam Newton

Stephenson County

County Board  
Representative



Charles Moen

Stephenson County

Soil & Water  
Conservation  
District



Della Moen

Stephenson County

Area  
Representative



Daniel Bitler

Whiteside County

County Board  
Representative

Photo  
Not  
Available

Vern Latwesen

Whiteside County

Soil & Water  
Conservation  
District



Glen Kuhlemier

Whiteside County

Area  
Representative



## Report Summary

Over the past year, Blackhawk Hills Regional Council's initiatives focused on the following region-wide goals:

- **Encourage Long Term Regional Comprehensive Planning**

Regional plans are essential to attracting growth and preserving resources.

Blackhawk Hills Regional Council works with federal and state agencies to promote and develop regional plans.

- **Assist with Infrastructure and Capital Improvement Planning**

Plans at the local level support community development and outline timelines for improving and replacing infrastructure. Blackhawk Hills Regional Council leverages funds for planning and ensures that suitable projects receive support.

- **Support Economic, Community, and Workforce Development**

Recognizing people and location-based elements of development is critical. The partnerships that Blackhawk Hills Regional Council establishes help the six counties invest in both human and community resources.

- **Support Natural Resources Preservation and Conservation**

Initiatives that both recognize the region's physical beauty and support the efficient use of resources ensure that future generations may maintain a certain quality of life. Blackhawk Hills Regional Council sponsored conferences and discussions address significant environmental and recreational concerns.

- **Support Entrepreneurship, Innovation, and Collaboration**

Working with public and private sector officials to plan and encourage collaboration helps the entire region share in the benefits of development and resource-pooling. Round tables, workshops, and meetings with officials maintain intergovernmental relationships and spread knowledge beyond local geographies.

# Summary of Projects

## **Encourage Long Term Regional Comprehensive Planning**

- Economic Development Administration (EDA) 3-Year District Evaluation
- Five-County Economic Study and Recovery Plan
- Illinois Department of Transportation Inventory and Assessment
- Management of and Planning for the Economic Development District
- Upper Mississippi River International Port District (UMRIPD)

## **Assist with Infrastructure and Capital Improvement Planning**

- City of Savanna Disaster Funding
- Illinois Broadband Opportunity Partnership - Northwest (iFiber)
- Illinois Energy Now Facility Visits
- Northwest Illinois Judicial Access Network (NIJAN)
- Rochelle Project E-Rail
- Turn Green Into Green: Illinois Energy Now Public Sector Workshop

## **Support Economic, Community, and Workforce Development**

- Local Foods Initiative
- Northwest Illinois Workforce Investment Board (WIB)
- Ogle County Website Redesign
- Prevailing Wage Workshop
- University of Illinois Extension
- Western Whiteside County Business Climate Analysis

## **Support Natural Resources Preservation and Conservation**

- Community Garden Workshop
- Conservation and Stewardship Days
- Driftless Area Initiative
- Envirothon
- Heritage Woods Community Garden
- Income Opportunities for Small Acreages Workshops
- Northwest Illinois Grazing Conference

## **Support Entrepreneurship, Innovation, and Collaboration**

- Chambers of Commerce
- County Board Chairs
- County Zoning Administrators
- Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities (CEO) Program
- Entrepreneurs and Inventors Club (E & I Club)
- Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Information Technology (IT)
- Local Tourism
- Northwest Illinois eTeam
- Tri-County Opportunities Council (TCOC)
- Website Assistance Program

### **Management of and Planning for the Economic Development District**

Blackhawk Hills Regional Council was designated as an Economic Development District (EDD) by the Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA) in March 1992.

As such, Blackhawk Hills Regional Council is responsible for the management and planning of the EDD, which includes updating and maintaining the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Plan. The EDA CEDS 5-Year Plan has been adopted by our council and submitted for the time period of 2008-2013. Blackhawk Hills Regional Council has begun the process of updating the 5-Year Plan which is to be submitted in 2014. An update is also submitted annually.

The Regional CEDS Committee meets every quarter with an average of 20 to 25 participants from the region. These meetings are used to give updates on the broadband initiative, on funding from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and other sources, and on regional projects and issues. This past year, we have offered presentations from Northern Illinois University, iFiber, University of Illinois Extension, and Midwest Intellectual Property Management Institute.

Staff regularly attends the county CEDS committee meetings that are held at the local level in the individual counties. Participants at the county CEDS meetings help share information at a local level and give updates on projects and initiatives our office is undertaking. Meetings are held monthly or bi-monthly, depending on the county administering the meeting.

### **Economic Development Administration District 3-Year Evaluation**

Blackhawk Hills Regional Council was given the three year evaluation conducted by the Economic Development Administration (EDA) on June 18, 2012. A representative from the EDA, the director of East Central Intergovernmental Association, two local economic development professionals from our region, and three members of Blackhawk Hills Regional Council participated in the evaluation. Initial feedback was very positive and the group came away with some new ideas to help become more self-sustaining.

### **Five-County Economic Study and Recovery Plan**

The Economic Development Administration (EDA) funded a study in September 2011 to conduct an analysis which included a labor shed and cluster analysis, as well as a study of wages, and underemployment levels for the counties of Carroll, Lee, Ogle, Stephenson and Whiteside. The study is being managed by the Northern Illinois University Center for Governmental Studies. The goal of the study is to obtain information on what types of businesses the region should be attempting to attract based on what resources and labor base available to support those businesses. The study is in reaction to layoffs and industrial closings that have occurred throughout the region. The EDA has funded the project and an advisory committee consisting of at least one economic development representative from each of the counties involved are steering the parameters of the survey. Blackhawk Hills Regional Council's staff is participating on this advisory committee. The project is scheduled to conclude in 2013.



## **IDOT Transportation Inventory and Assessment**

In November, Blackhawk Hills Regional Council was awarded the opportunity to utilize Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) Rural Planning funds to provide rural transportation planning assessments for Carroll, Jo Daviess, Lee, Ogle, Stephenson, and Whiteside Counties with a special emphasis on those located within the Upper Mississippi River International Port District (UMRIPD) area. The scope of work will guide the coordination of the region's efforts to conduct an initial inventory and produce a plan to assess the water, rail, highway, and airport transportation networks that impact the economic vitality of the area.

The plan will include documentation from public meetings, existing plans, established goals and objectives, as well as alternative solutions as they relate to rural planning initiatives. Blackhawk Hills Regional Council will update the rural transportation plan on an annual basis as a component of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the region as required by the Economic Development Administration.



### **Upper Mississippi River International Port District**

Blackhawk Hills Regional Council assisted with the organization and planning for the Upper Mississippi River International Port District (UMRIPD). The UMRIPD is a newly recognized district charged with promoting development along the Upper Mississippi River region. This District spreads through Carroll and Jo Daviess Counties in our region. Blackhawk Hills Regional Council will provide a rural transportation planning assessment document to the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) for those counties as well as Lee, Ogle, Stephenson, and Whiteside. By utilizing a coordinated approach, a more comprehensive analysis will be produced through the engagement of local elected and economic development officials.

Blackhawk Hills Regional Council is also assisting the UMRIPD in developing a map analysis of the four critical transportation networks in comparison to the current industrial cluster map for the six-county region. Integrating these two maps will allow for an improved study of the gaps and impacts of the current transportation networks in comparison to the longevity needs of existing industrial establishments. This depiction will also allow for the development of a detailed analysis of economic development opportunities and incentives currently available. A comprehensive inventory of assets could be used to identify development options and create an action plan for the entire region.

### **Turn Green Into Green: Illinois Energy Now Public Sector Workshop**

Consultants for the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunities (DCEO) spoke at the Turn Green Into Green: Illinois Energy Now Public Sector Workshop hosted by Blackhawk Hills Regional Council on December 12, 2012.

Information was presented regarding financial incentives that are currently being offered through Illinois Energy Now. These incentives cover a portion of facility upgrades to electric and natural gas systems including HVAC equipment, motors and drives, water heaters, boilers, lighting equipment, gas furnaces and refrigeration equipment. The workshop was designed to help local government officials and other public facility managers identify specific ways to cut energy costs and access millions of dollars in funding available through the DCEO Office of Energy.

DCEO staff was on site to schedule free energy audits for public facilities and provide application assistance. The workshop was for any representative of public sector facilities located in Carroll, Lee, Jo Daviess, Ogle, Stephenson, and Whiteside Counties. Approximately 40 participants attended the workshop and a number of potential projects were brought forward.

### **Illinois Energy Now Facility Visits**

As a component of the Illinois Energy Now Public Sector Program, Blackhawk Hills Regional Council staff has been assisting consultants for the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunities (DCEO) promote the energy efficiency rebate program. Staff is helping to educate and encourage entities to apply for the incentive funds and plan annual facility upgrades in accordance with the rebate program in order to help maximize returns. The program is reoccurring from year-to-year based upon System Benefits Charges on customer's monthly electric and natural gas utility bills.

Staff has been coordinating and accompanying DCEO consultants with on-site project visits and energy reviews for public facilities throughout the region. These visits will prepare staff to provide application assistance to communities, counties, and school districts in the coming year. As of this spring, site visits have been completed with ten public institutions. Those institutions that have participated in the program include: Amboy Depot Museum, Lee County Highway Department, Amboy Fire Department, City of Oregon Village Hall, City of Oregon Maintenance Building, Lanark Village Hall, Whiteside County Highway Department, Village Hall in Sublette, Sublette Community Center, and Merrill School in Rock Falls.

### **City of Savanna Disaster Funding**

Blackhawk Hills Regional Council provided technical assistance to the City of Savanna which will be the main recipient of an Economic Development Administration (EDA) investment as a result of the county receiving a Presidential disaster declaration during fiscal year 2011. The funds will be used for the construction, design, and engineering of a new wastewater treatment facility to make the city's wastewater services more resilient against future natural disasters and to support long-term economic development. The project entails the construction of a sequential aeration wastewater treatment facility, a lab, and sewer building, along with a sewage lift station at the existing wastewater treatment facility. The construction of a new wastewater treatment facility is needed in order to address a plant that is located in a floodway and has incurred continual damage from the natural rain and snow storm disasters that have occurred over the last two years.

## **Northwest Illinois Judicial Access Network**

In 2012, Broadband Illinois offered organizations the chance to apply for Broadband Innovation grants of up to \$100,000. Awards could be used to pay for broadband-related initiatives. In response, Blackhawk Hills Regional Council submitted a proposal to construct the Northwest Illinois Judicial Access Network (NIJAN), a regional telepresence network that would connect the courtrooms of the Illinois Fifteenth Judicial Circuit.

With the proposed network, hearings could be conducted with an out-of-county judge remaining in his or her usual courtroom, while the attorneys, litigants, and interested public remain in the in-county courtroom. This project would eliminate most delays and save expense to the State of Illinois, which otherwise pays for judicial travel.

The NIJAN proposal placed among the top 15 of the 113 statewide proposals received. However, the project's implementation schedule was not sufficiently "shovel-ready" to merit an award. Blackhawk Hills Regional Council will continue to explore funding opportunities and promote the project.



### **Rochelle Project E-Rail**

An application was submitted and approved by the Economic Development Administration (EDA) for the City of Rochelle in the amount of \$2.4 million. This project consists of improving the municipal water, sanitary sewer, communications and electric utilities, as well as expanding the Rochelle Dual Access Railroad.

Upgrades will impact future development opportunities, as well as the current businesses of Nippon Sharyo and Coated Sand Solutions which are located within the area. According to grantee estimates, the new facilities will service the growing industrial area in Rochelle and is expected to help create 290 jobs and generate \$58 million in private investment.

Blackhawk Hills Regional Council staff attended the ground-breaking ceremony on July 19, 2012, at the site of the new rail construction.

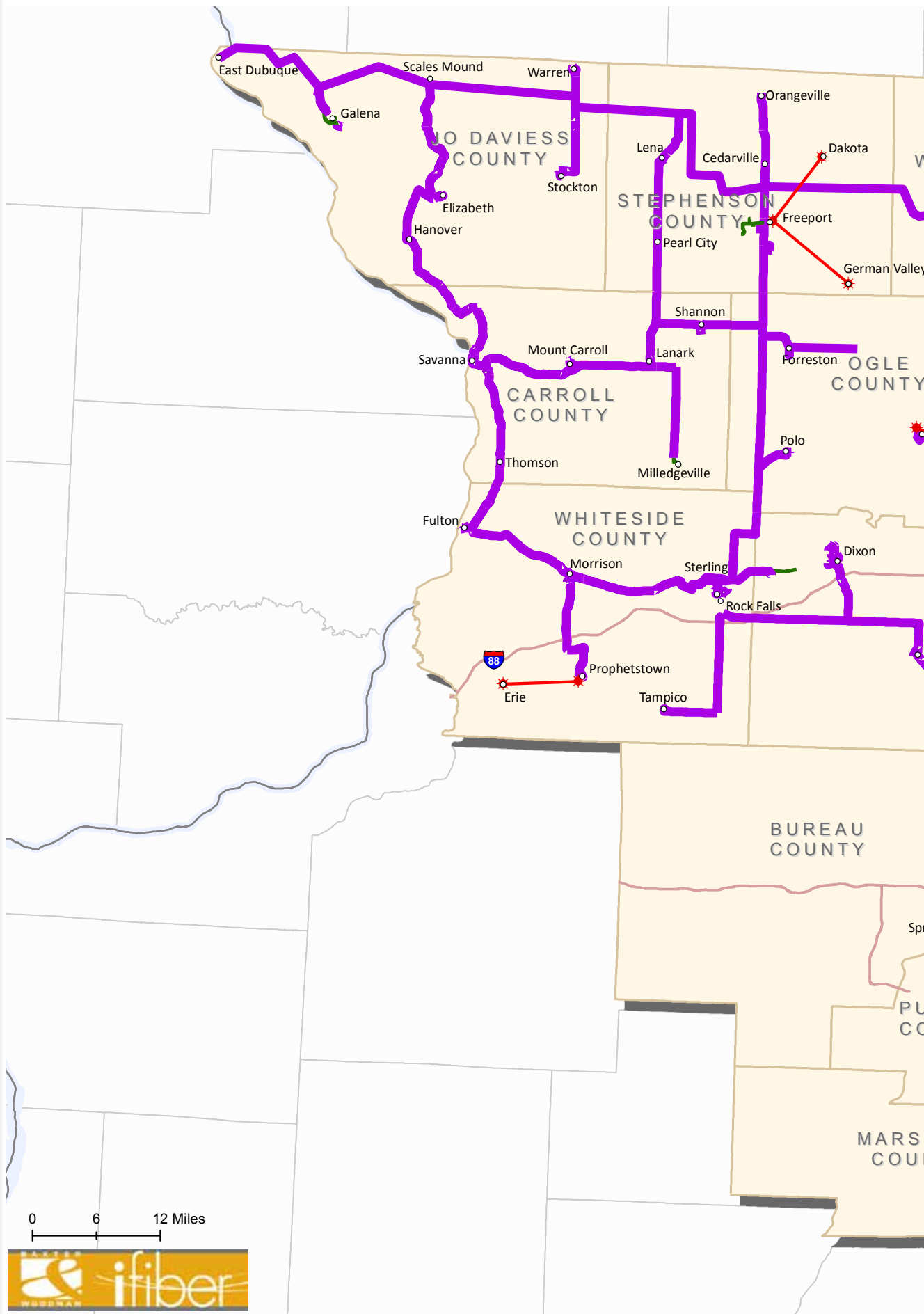
## **Illinois Broadband Opportunity Partnership - Northwest (iFiber)**

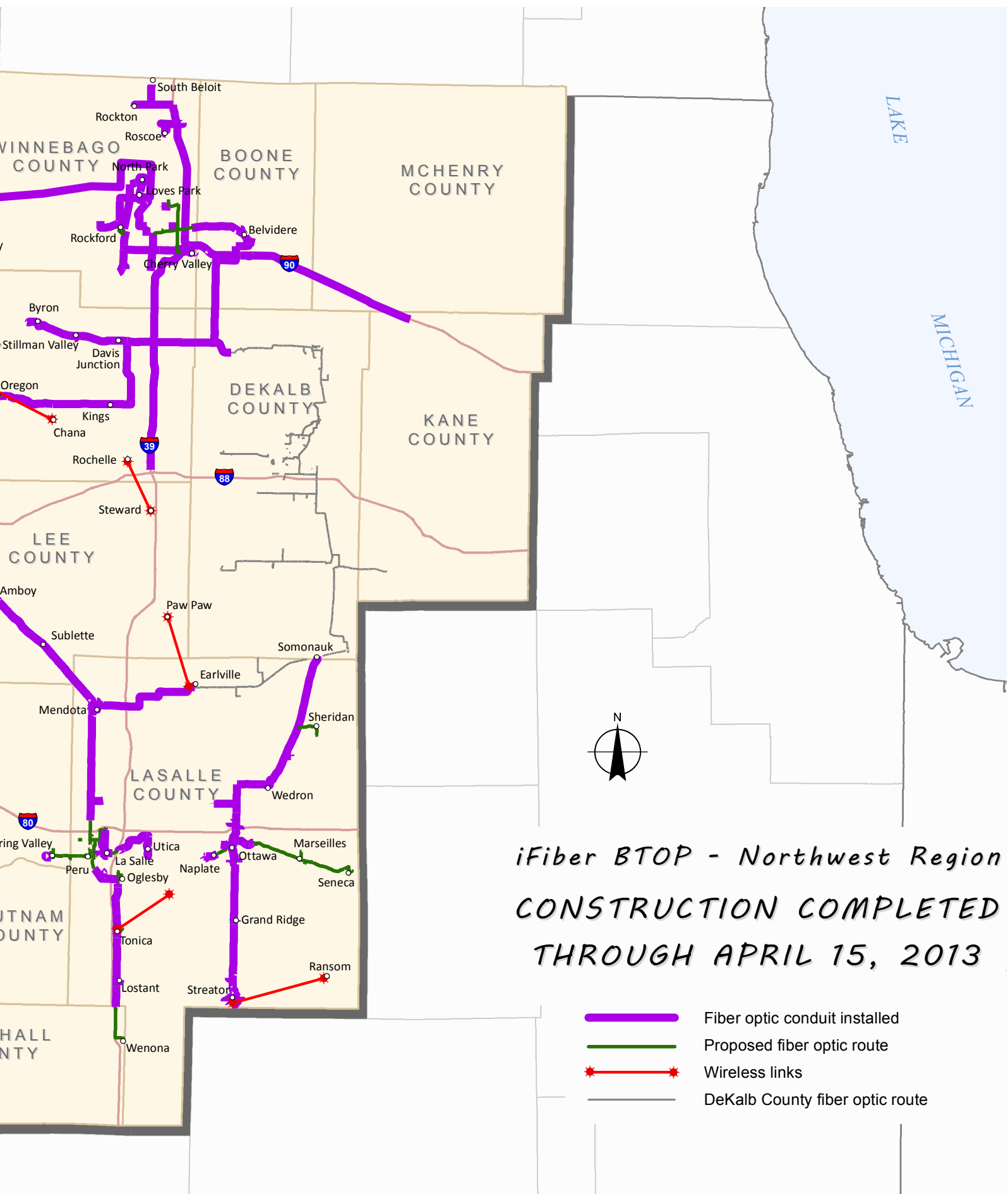
iFiber construction continues into 2013, with organizers focused on the remaining build-out, National Telecommunications and Information Administration reporting requirements, and core equipment deployment. Nearly 82% of the network is complete (a percentage that includes new and leased fiber/conduit) and almost 100% of construction permits have been acquired. Please visit [www.ifiber.org](http://www.ifiber.org) for updated information.

Over the past year, iFiber has conducted site visits to community anchor institutions and secured locations for most of its core and distribution sites. Participating community anchor institutions now number in the several hundreds; they represent a geographically dispersed area that covers the entire 9-county Illinois Broadband Opportunity Partnership -Northwest. Staff at Northern Illinois University/iFiber continue to work with potential partners, including the Illinois Century Network, the IlliniCloud, and other representatives of fiber optic networks and consortiums in the region.

Contract negotiations with providers of Internet bandwidth, VoIP, and cloud services are ongoing and will continue throughout the next year. Blackhawk Hills Regional Council has encouraged communities and businesses interested in using iFiber's fiber optics and wireless to contact the council's office. While the focus is on connecting community anchor institutions, we continue to gather information about communities that have expressed a desire to use fiber optics or wireless for economic and community development.

# Strength Through Planning





### **Northwest Illinois Workforce Investment Board**

The Northwest Illinois Workforce Investment Board (WIB) meets on a bi-monthly basis throughout the year. Staff has served on this board for the past five years and continues to remain actively involved. Blackhawk Hills Regional Council has helped bridge the gap between workforce development and economic development. Staff also serves on the Business and Economic Development Partnership Committee, which has been exploring ways to merge partnerships between business, workforce development, and economic development.

On February 4th, Governor Quinn approved the merger of Local Workforce Investment Area (LWIA) 12 with Carroll, Jo Daviess, Ogle and Whiteside Counties. Stephenson County will be merging with Boone, Winnebago and the City of Rockford. The transition plan will be completed over the next four months and the newly consolidated LWIA 4 will be referred to as the Northwest Central Illinois Works or NCI Works. The merger transition will begin with a new Chief Elected Officers Agreement and an Acknowledgement Form signed by the eight county board chairs from Bureau, Carroll, Jo Daviess, La Salle, Lee, Ogle, Putnam and Whiteside Counties. The new Workforce Investment Board will then assist staff in completing a new five year plan.

### **Western Whiteside County Business Climate Analysis**

The cities of Fulton, Morrison, and Prophetstown collaborated on an economic development assessment to help strengthen the potential of western Whiteside County. As part of these efforts, businesses in Fulton, Morrison and Prophetstown were surveyed to determine strengths in the region,

obstacles to expanding production, future plans, and actions that could be taken to improve the local business climate. The group came up with recommended actions to help with short-term economic stabilization and longer-term economic growth. The analysis outlined a set of objectives, strategies and action steps that can provide the project partners with a framework for improving and expanding business opportunities within the communities. Area leaders and economic development professionals came together and began collaboration with the Clinton area on how to better implement and revitalize existing programs to better serve small business in the region. The project was part of a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development Grant which ended in September 2012.



### **Prevailing Wage Workshop**

Blackhawk Hills Regional Council, in conjunction with the Carroll County Soil and Water Conservation District, sponsored a Prevailing Wage Workshop held on October 16, 2012. Tom Whalen, Conciliation and Mediation Manager at the Illinois Department of Labor, presented on the Illinois Prevailing Wage Act. The workshop helped explain how the state law impacts local communities and organizations. Approximately 35 participants attended the workshop.



## Ogle County Website Redesign

Blackhawk Hills Regional Council was asked by members of the Ogle County Board to help facilitate the process of redesigning the county's website. The county's previous website included several different domain names for various departments. Each domain name and hosting required additional costs for the county. Blackhawk Hills Regional Council staff assisted the Ad Hoc Committee in determining how to streamline the process and help the county's website to become a true resource of information.

Blackhawk Hills Regional Council staff met with all county departments to determine the information needed for each department's section of the website. Staff also assisted the Ad Hoc Committee in determining the general layout. Staff dedicated a substantial amount of time to this project and saved the county several thousand dollars by helping facilitate the process. A Request for Proposal was sent out by the county to area website designers in January and the Ad Hoc Committee selected a local designer from Lena, IL to build the website. The project is moving forward and should be completed in the spring of 2013.

## Local Foods Initiative

The Southwestern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission recently received a Rural Business Opportunity Grant from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to support local food initiatives. They asked to partner with Blackhawk Hills Regional Council and focus on our two northern counties of Jo Daviess and Stephenson. A number of meetings have been held in the region concerning a push to promote local foods.

Blackhawk Hills Regional Council, along with the University of Illinois Extension, began looking for opportunities to help coordinate all efforts to make one strong push for local foods in our region. It continues to be a goal to increase awareness of the MarketMaker Program to local farmers and producers. This program, developed by the University of Illinois, is a web-based resource that connects farmers, fishers, processors, distributors, food retailers, and consumers.

Blackhawk Hills Regional Council sees this as an economic generator for our area, as agri-tourism continues to soar in northwestern Illinois. These meetings have opened up the doors to the possibility of working closer with the county Farm Bureaus and we continue to collaborate on many other projects concerning the economic area of local farming and community gardening.

## University of Illinois Extension

The University of Illinois Extension Unit 4 and Blackhawk Hills Regional Council have established a close working relationship to address community and economic development issues in Carroll, Whiteside, and Lee Counties. In particular, staff worked with Extension Unit 4's governing board to set community and economic development priorities based on Extension's existing strengths. Priorities discussed include a focus on supporting Thomson Federal Prison mobilization efforts and providing education on social media as it relates to government's interactions with the public.

Additionally, in considering Extension's access to experts and facilitators statewide, staff at Blackhawk Hills Regional Council have explored the use of University and Extension personnel to engage municipalities and counties that desire specific types of community education. These localities often do not have the time, staff, or financial ability to coordinate training sessions.

Both entities are also assisting the Upper Mississippi River International Port District in its visioning and strategic planning sessions. The first of these sessions will allow port district board members to better address internal and external planning issues, as well as brainstorm programming and policy actions related to community and economic development.

### Envirothon

The Soil and Water Conservation Districts in the Blackhawk Hills Regional Council area hosted the annual Envirothon Competition on April 9, 2013, at Highland Community College. The Envirothon is a year-long learning process that provides an opportunity for high school students to learn more about the environment.

Twenty-four teams from eighteen schools competed. Members of the winning team received a \$500 college scholarship and advanced to the State Envirothon Competition to be held on May 1 and 2, 2013, at Allerton 4-H Memorial Camp in Monticello, Illinois. Julie Jacobs, Blackhawk Hills's Administrations Coordinator, served as the emcee and a group leader at the competition. Blackhawk Hills Regional Council is one of the funding sources for the scholarships.

First Place - Dakota High School  
Second Place - Dixon High School  
Third Place - Amboy High School



### Income Opportunities for Small Acreages Workshop

Blackhawk Hills Regional Council along the Illinois Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils (IARCDC) held a state-wide workshop at the University of Illinois Extension Center in Lincoln, Illinois on September 4, 2012. There were twenty-six participants at the workshop. The workshop focused on several important topics including programs and services of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service and Farm Service Agency, and the second being organic and transition to organic farming. The IARCDC had received a grant from the National Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils to host the workshop.

### Driftless Area Initiative

Blackhawk Hills continues to participate in the Driftless Area Initiative (DAI). DAI is a multi-state partnership whose goal is to develop a unified voice for natural resource issues in the Driftless Area. The mission of DAI is to unite organizations and individuals within the driftless area of the upper Mississippi River basin for collaborative action to enhance and restore this region's ecology, economy, and cultural resources in a balanced, integrated fashion. Ed Juracek serves on the DAI Board of Directors representing Blackhawk Hills Regional Council. Della Moen, Blackhawk Hills Council Member, serves as the Secretary for the DAI Board.

### Northwest Illinois Grazing Conference

The Northwest Illinois Grazing Conference, Getting More from Pasture Forages, was held on February 6, 2013, in Stockton, IL. Fifty-five attendees heard presentations on rotational grazing basics, establishing pastures and hay, pasture forage quality, portable irrigation systems, and grazing cover. The conference also included an exhibitor section with commercial and agency representatives sharing information about programs, products, and services targeted to livestock graziers in northwest Illinois. Blackhawk Hills Regional Council was pleased to serve as a sponsor for this event for the fifth consecutive year.

## Conservation and Stewardship Days



Tri-County Conservation Day

Staff of Blackhawk Hills Regional Council volunteered for the Tri-County Conservation Day which was held on September 27, 2012, at Palisades State Park in Savanna, IL. The event is hosted by the Soil and Water Conservation Districts from Carroll, Jo Daviess, and Whiteside. Twenty-seven schools sent fourth grade students to participate in the event. The students visited various stations where they learned about conservation topics. The event is part of a local initiative to get children outside where they can explore and learn about nature. Staff volunteered for the “wood cookie” station.



Lee-Ogle County Outdoor Stewardship Days

Third grade students from Lee and Ogle Counties attended the Lee-Ogle County Outdoor Stewardship Days at Dixon's Lowell Park. The two day event was hosted by the Lee and Ogle County Soil and Water Conservation Districts. A variety of agencies, organizations, and volunteers came together with a goal of caring for the environment and maintaining natural resources while having fun in the great outdoors. Students visit various stations where they learn about conservation topics. Blackhawk Hills Regional Council staff volunteered for the activity tent. The activities included identifying animal tracks and decorating a “wood cookie.”

## Community and School Garden Workshops

Community gardens are thriving nationwide as part of a growing trend in self-sufficiency and the desire to eat locally grown produce. The University of Illinois Extension and Blackhawk Hills Regional Council hosted a workshop on “Creating and Maintaining Sustainable Community Gardens” on July 27, 2012. The event covered topics such as the basics of creating a community garden, choosing the proper cultivation site, composting management, and what to grow for the remainder of this planting season. Blackhawk Hills Regional Council also co-hosted a workshop for schools who were interested in starting or maintaining a garden on-site for students. Six schools were in attendance to learn about the steps they need to take to implement successful school garden plots maintained by students.

## Heritage Woods Community Garden

Blackhawk Hills Regional Council along with the University of Illinois Extension created a community garden at Heritage Woods in Sterling. The Heritage Woods Community Garden was established to provide garden space for those who do not have suitable space of their own and wish to grow produce. Ten 8' by 8' plots were established. Blackhawk Hills Regional Council staff and volunteers helped maintain a number of plots that were used for local food pantries and churches.

### **Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities Program**

Blackhawk Hills Regional Council, in conjunction with the Whiteside Area Career Center, is launching the Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities (CEO) Program. Set to begin during the fall 2013 academic year, the CEO program is an extraordinary educational endeavor. Rather than a textbook course, the CEO program immerses students in real life learning experiences with the opportunity to take risks, manage results, and learn from the outcomes. Entrepreneurship is not just about teaching someone to run a business, it is also about encouraging creative thinking and promoting a strong sense of self-worth and accountability. The CEO program is funded primarily by a large group of business investors, who also participate actively in the structure of the class. Staff has actively participated in getting business to support the program and currently serves on the advisory board for the program.

### **Geographic Information Systems and Information Technology**

Blackhawk Hills Regional Council continues to sponsor roundtable discussions with Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Information Technology (IT) officials. At the bi-annual meetings, technology issues are highlighted and experts are invited to present. This past year, the group welcomed a representative from the United States Geological Survey for a presentation on Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR) and a representative from the Illinois State Archives for a presentation on electronic records retention. Besides core GIS/IT personnel, meetings have included attendees from county assessor offices and related county departments.

### **County Board Chairs**

Blackhawk Hills Regional Council facilitates bi-monthly meetings of the county board chairs from the six counties. These meetings help officials share information and discuss current issues the region may be facing. These meetings also help Blackhawk Hills Regional Council to determine current needs and what type of assistance may be required at local and regional levels.

### **County Zoning Administrators**

Blackhawk Hills Regional Council hosts quarterly meetings of the County Zoning Administrators from the six counties. These meetings help officials share information and discuss current issues the region may be facing. These meetings also help Blackhawk Hills Regional Council to determine current needs and what type of assistance may be required at local and regional levels.

### **Tri-County Opportunities Council**

Blackhawk Hills Regional Council staff has served on the governing board of the Tri-County Opportunities Council (TCOC) for the past nine years. TCOC is a Community Action Agency serving the nine Illinois counties of Bureau, Carroll, LaSalle, Lee, Marshall, Ogle, Putnam, Stark and Whiteside. TCOC works to better focus available local, state, private, and federal resources to assist low-income individuals and families to acquire useful skills and knowledge to gain access to new opportunities and achieve economic self-sufficiency. TCOC oversees the following programs: Community Services Block Grant, Foster Grandparents, Head Start/Early Head Start, Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program and Weatherization and Housing Program.

## Website Assistance Program

Blackhawk Hills Regional Council received another additional \$10,000 from the Economic Development Administration (EDA) in planning funds this year which was earmarked to assist communities and counties within our administrative boundaries in the development of websites or updating of current websites. These funds were matched by local investments totaling of over \$20,000.

Program participants were invited to attend a series of two workshops. The first workshop was held on October 4, 2012, with Melanie Flesch of Blackhawk Hills Regional Council presenting. Approximately 30 participants attended the event which was designed to assist with the basic construction and development of a website. The second workshop was held on March 7, 2013, with Flesch once again presenting. Approximately 30 participants learned about search engines, how they work, and how they affect your website. Topics also included how to get your website noticed through keywords, free Google programs such as Analytics, Insights for Search, and Webmaster, and maintaining a proper updating schedule. The participants of the 2012 Website Assistance Program are Fulton, Galena, Rochelle, Warren, and Ogle County.

## Entrepreneur and Inventors Club

Blackhawk Hills Regional Council continues to provide technical and financial assistance to the Entrepreneur and Inventors (E & I) Club. The club was founded in 2005 as a way to advance economic development and growth among the six counties. The E & I Club is a place where individuals can meet to share knowledge, experience, and ideas. The club and its members help start, maintain, and grow businesses through the sharing of knowledge, leadership, and mentoring. The E & I Club serves Carroll, Jo Daviess, Lee, Ogle, Stephenson, and Whiteside Counties in northwest Illinois but is also open to individuals in surrounding counties. Each meeting offers networking opportunities for current and future members to connect and share ideas. This past year, to stay better connected with members, the club created a new website ([www.eandiclub.org](http://www.eandiclub.org)) and an e-newsletter.



## Local Tourism

Staff of Blackhawk Hills Regional Council actively serve on the Lee County Tourism Council (LCTC). The LCTC meets on a monthly basis and has focused on electronic marketing this past year. LCTC and Blackhawk Hills Regional Council work closely with the regional tourism agency called Blackhawk Waterways Convention and Visitors Bureau.

## Northwest Illinois eTeam

As part of its broadband outreach, Blackhawk Hills Regional Council continues to participate as a member of Broadband Illinois' Northwest Illinois eTeam. The eTeams bring together public and private stakeholders to advance broadband initiatives across Illinois by developing technology growth plans. Meetings are held quarterly and move from community to community. The Northwest Illinois eTeam consists of representation from Bureau, Carroll, Henry, Jo Daviess, LaSalle, Lee, Mercer, Putnam, Rock Island, and Whiteside Counties.

## Chambers of Commerce

Blackhawk Hills Regional Council staff works with local Chambers of Commerce to stay up-to-date on economic trends in the business marketplace. Currently, Blackhawk Hills Regional Council staff serves on the board of the Rock Falls Chamber of Commerce and on several committees of the Sauk Valley Area Chamber of Commerce.



### Website Redesign

[www.blackhawkhills.com](http://www.blackhawkhills.com)



Blackhawk Hills Regional Council launched a redesigned website on October 6, 2012. The site was redesigned to better serve those in our six-county region with additional information that was not contained on the old site.

The new site has easier navigation and more information, such as projects, initiatives, funding opportunities and a central calendar with upcoming schedules.

Blackhawk Hills Regional Council also has a Facebook page where meeting notices and funding opportunities are posted. Visit Blackhawk Hills Regional Council's website, [www.blackhawkhills.com](http://www.blackhawkhills.com), for a link to visit the Facebook page.

### Blackhawk Hills Regional Council Board Changes

**Former Board Members** - Blackhawk Hills Regional Council and staff would like to thank several individuals who are transitioning off our board for their years of service to the organization:

- Cathy Brunner, Carroll County Area Representative, joined the council in November 2001.
- Kevin Reibel, Carroll County Board, joined the council in January 2011.
- Kim Monk, Jo Daviess County Board, joined the council in January 2009.
- Isaac Mercer, Lee County Board, joined the council in January 1997.
- Kenneth Roeder, Whiteside County Board, joined the council in January 2011.

**New Board Members** - The staff and fellow council members of Blackhawk Hills would also like to welcome several new members to the board:

- Darrell Stitzel is the new representative from the Carroll County Board.
- Steve Rutz is the new representative from the Jo Daviess County Board.
- Tim Deem is the new representative from the Lee County Board.
- Daniel Bitler is the new representative from the Whiteside County Board.



## Monthly E-Newsletter

Blackhawk Hills Regional Council launched a monthly e-newsletter in October 2012. This newsletter is designed to keep entities such as municipalities, counties, not-for-profits, schools, libraries, chambers of commerce, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, businesses, and other partners up-to-date on information in the six-county region. Included in the newsletter are notices of upcoming meetings, workshops, funding opportunities, programs, initiatives, and other happenings.

To sign-up for the monthly e-newsletter, please visit Blackhawk Hills Regional Council's website for a link or call 815-625-3854 for more information.

[www.blackhawkhills.com](http://www.blackhawkhills.com)

## 2011-2012 Annual Meeting

Blackhawk Hills Regional Council held its annual meeting on May 24, 2012, at the Freeport Country Club. The meeting was open to the public and featured Lynn Feaver, of Prospering Together, as the keynote speaker.

Prospering Together is the result of a county-wide planning effort by the citizens and leaders of Stephenson County. The strategic plan is based on community involvement and includes elements that address economic health, community vitality, and caring about people. Underscoring the plan is the importance of citizens and governmental officials working together for an improved future.

At the meeting, Ron Colson was elected as President. He previously served as the Vice President for the past three years. William Tonne accepted the position of Vice President. He most recently served as President for the past three years.

Two awards were presented at the meeting:

The 2012 Volunteer of the Year Award was presented to Ron Colson, Sam Newton, and William Tonne for the hard work and dedication to the Illinois Broadband Opportunity Program - Northwest.

The 2012 Carson DeJarnatt Economic Development Award was presented to Prospering Together and was accepted by Lynn Feaver, Chuck Moen, Della Moen, and Sam Newton, all of Stephenson County.



## Financial Information

### Funding Distributions

Providing grants and funding assistance to organizations remains an integral part of Blackhawk Hills Regional Council's efforts. Whether a community or organization receives funding is dependent on an organization's ability to engage in the project proposal process, the availability of local match dollars/in-kind contributions, and whether a project meets guidelines established by federal/state governments and other organizations that provide funding.

### Statement of Financial Position as of March 31, 2013 (unaudited) Fiscal Year April 1, 2012 - March 31, 2013

#### Revenue

Carryover from 2011-2012	\$179,400.02
Federal	\$278,310.53
State	\$ 0
Local	\$ 74,822.95
Donations	\$ 4,473.74
Miscellaneous	\$ 3,441.39
Interest	\$ 121.18
	<b><u>\$540,569.81</u></b>

#### Expenses

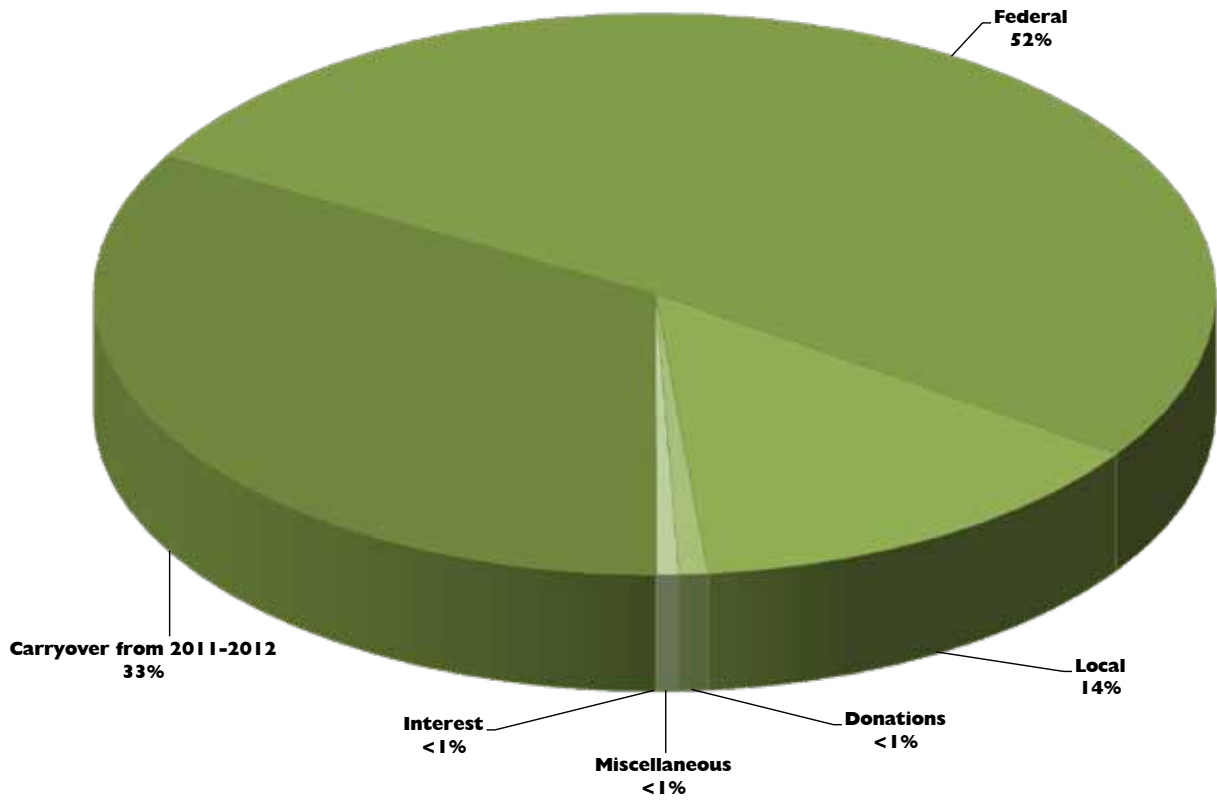
Salaries, Wages, and Benefits	\$196,573.33
Advertisement	\$ 3,867.35
Consultants and Professional Fees	\$ 430.00
Dues and Subscriptions	\$ 1,960.00
Equipment and Supplies	\$ 6,440.23
Insurance	\$ 1,020.69
Meetings, Conferences, and Training	\$ 4,383.30
Miscellaneous	\$ 701.89
Postage	\$ 433.92
Projects (Past)	\$ 57,139.86
Projects (Earmarked)	\$ 60,731.91
Rent and Utilities	\$ 12,450.31
Travel	\$ 12,217.88
	<b><u>\$358,350.67</u></b>

**Carryover to 2012-2013** **\$182,219.14**

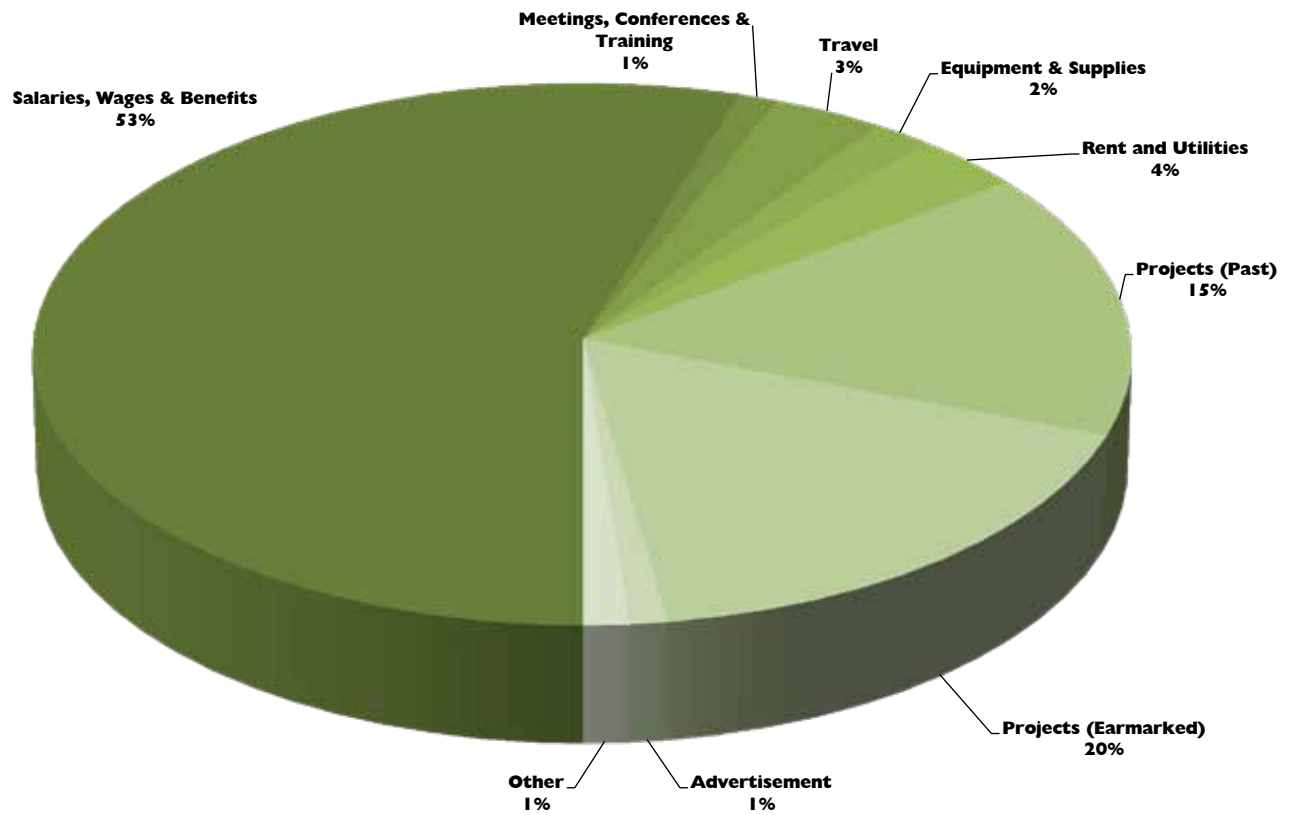
Copies of Blackhawk Hills Regional Council's complete audited financial statements may be obtained by writing to:

Blackhawk Hills Regional Council, 102 East Route 30, Suite 3, Rock Falls, IL 61071

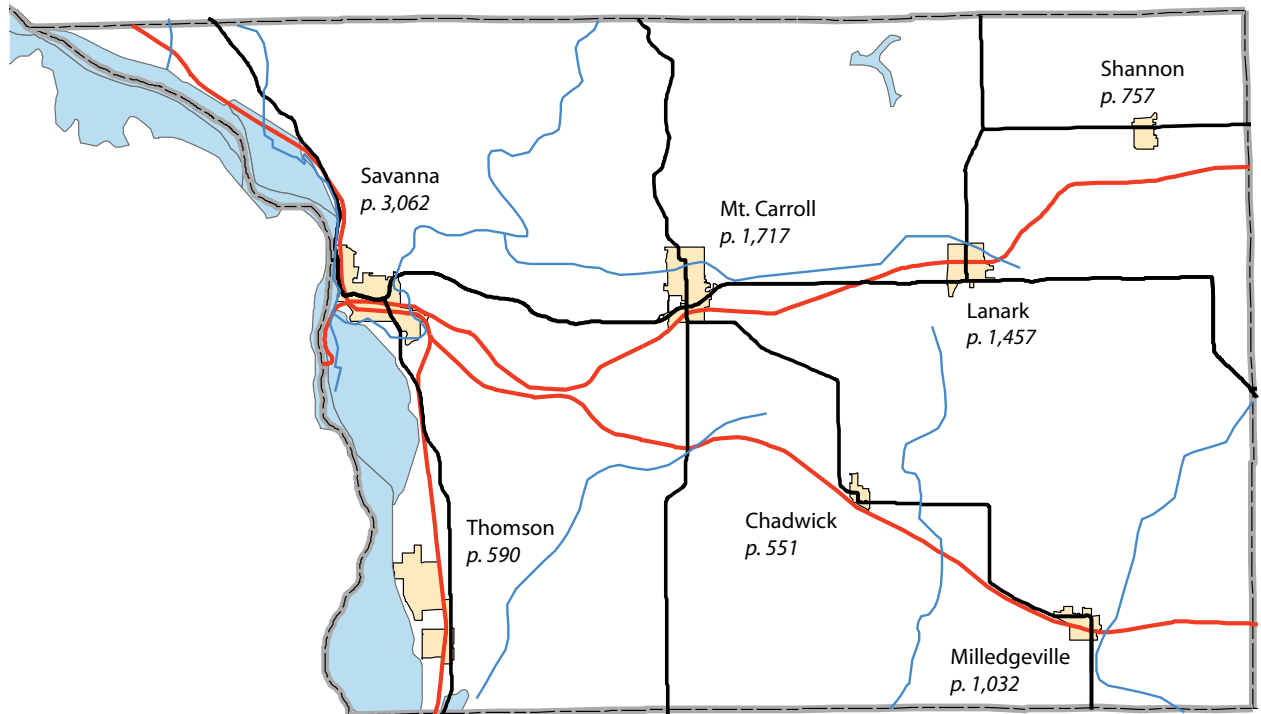
## Revenue



## Expenses



## Carroll County



### LEGEND

	Major River/ Stream
	Major Railroad
	Major State/ Federal Roadway
	Census Place/ Census Designated Place
	Major Waterbody
	2010 Census Population

Population	1990	2000	2010
Carroll County	16,805	16,674	15,387
Blackhawk Hills Region	227,213	235,689	233,802
State of Illinois	11,430,602	12,419,293	12,830,632

### Projects in Carroll County

- Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Plan
- Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities Program
- Envirothon
- Five-County Economic Study and Recovery Plan
- Illinois Broadband Opportunity Partnership - Northwest (iFiber)
- Illinois Department of Transportation Inventory and Assessment
- Illinois Energy Now Energy Efficiency Visits
  - Lanark Village Hall
- Savanna Disaster Funding
- Tri-County Conservation Day
- Upper Mississippi River International Port District

<b>Subject</b>	<b>2010</b>
Median Age (years)	46.5
Total Labor Force	7,987
Percent Unemployment	8.50%
Mean Travel Work (minutes)	24.4
Total Number of Companies	1669
Total Family Households	4,343
Median Household Income (dollars)	\$45,433
Average Household Size (people)	2.29
Percent of Families Below Poverty Level	13.10%

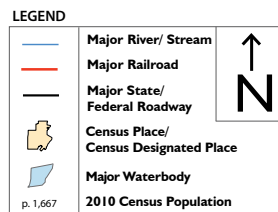
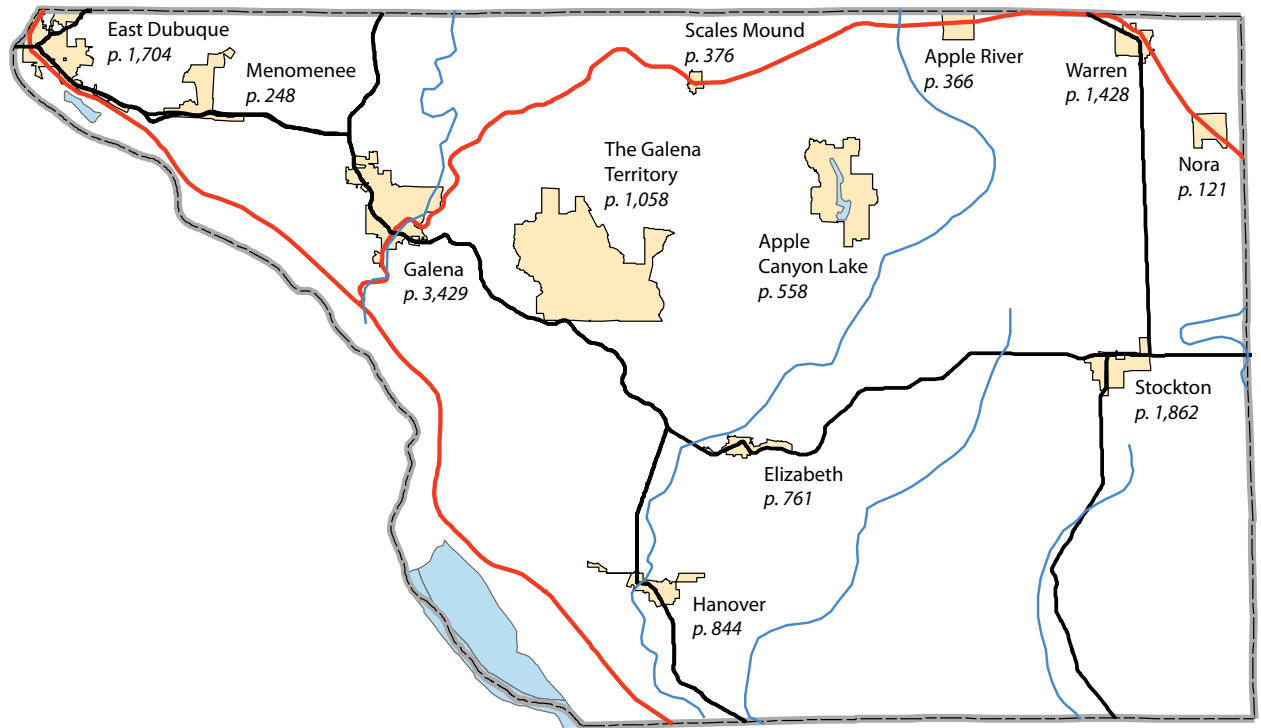
<b>Housing</b>	<b>2010</b>
Total Housing Units	8,437
Occupied Units	6,622
Vacant Units	1,815
Owner-Occupied	5,163
Renter-Occupied	1,459
Homeowner Vacancy Rate	2.70%
Homes for Sale	145
Rental Vacancy Rate	11.00%
Available for Rent	182

<b>Educational Attainment</b>	<b>2010</b>
Less than 9th Grade	3.70%
9th to 12th Grade, No Diploma	7.20%
High School Graduate (includes equivalency)	42.10%
Some College, No Degree	23.90%
Associate's Degree	6.90%
Bachelor's Degree	10.40%
Graduate or Professional Degree	5.80%

<b>Employment by Industry Classification</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Civilian Employed Population 16 Years and Over	7,308	
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, and Mining	343	4.70%
Construction	637	8.70%
Manufacturing	1,368	18.70%
Wholesale Trade	215	2.90%
Retail Trade	831	11.40%
Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	523	7.20%
Information	137	1.90%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, and Rental and Leasing	339	4.60%
Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative, and Waste Management	463	6.30%
Educational Services, Health Care, and Social Assistance	1,404	19.20%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation, and Food Services	512	7.00%
Other Services, Except Public Administration	296	4.10%
Public Administration	240	3.30%

Statistical data obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Fact Finder at [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov).

## Jo Daviess County



Population	1990	2000	2010
Jo Daviess County	21,821	22,289	22,678
Blackhawk Hills Region	227,213	235,689	233,802
State of Illinois	11,430,602	12,419,293	12,830,632

### Projects in Jo Daviess County

- Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Plan
- Envirothon
- Illinois Broadband Opportunity Partnership - Northwest (iFiber)
- Illinois Department of Transportation Inventory and Assessment
- Local Foods Initiative
- Tri-County Conservation Day
- Upper Mississippi River International Port District
- Website Assistance Program
  - Galena
  - Warren



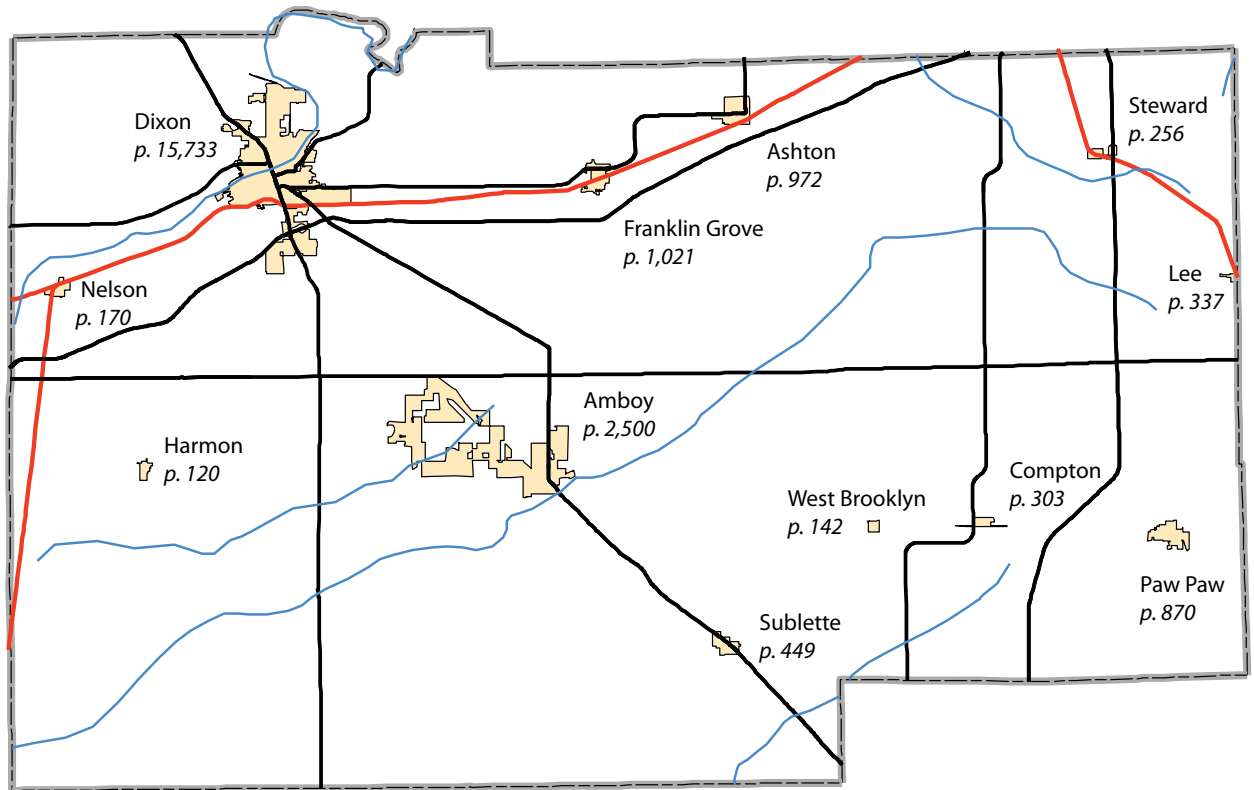
<b>Subject</b>	<b>2010</b>
Median Age (years)	47.1
Total Labor Force	12,255
Percent Unemployment	5.30%
Mean Travel Work (minutes)	21.5
Total Number of Companies	2,655
Total Family Households	6,514
Median Household Income (dollars)	\$52,487
Average Household Size (people)	2.31
Percent of Families Below Poverty Level	8.50%

<b>Housing</b>	<b>2010</b>
Total Housing Units	13,574
Occupied Units	9,753
Vacant Units	3,821
Owner-Occupied	7,740
Renter-Occupied	2,013
Homeowner Vacancy Rate	2.50%
Homes for Sale	199
Rental Vacancy Rate	14.00%
Available for Rent	339

<b>Educational Attainment</b>	<b>2010</b>
Less than 9th Grade	3.50%
9th to 12th Grade, No Diploma	6.60%
High School Graduate (includes equivalency)	38.20%
Some College, No Degree	21.10%
Associate's Degree	7.20%
Bachelor's Degree	14.30%
Graduate or Professional Degree	9.00%

<b>Employment by Industry Classification</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Civilian Employed Population 16 Years and Over	11,602	
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, and Mining	653	5.60%
Construction	840	7.20%
Manufacturing	1,525	13.10%
Wholesale Trade	351	3.00%
Retail Trade	1,305	11.20%
Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	607	5.20%
Information	180	1.60%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, and Rental and Leasing	626	5.40%
Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative, and Waste Management	727	6.30%
Educational Services, Health Care, and Social Assistance	2,212	19.10%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation, and Food Services	1,551	13.40%
Other Services, Except Public Administration	614	5.30%
Public Administration	411	3.50%

Statistical data obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Fact Finder at [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov).



**LEGEND**

	Major River/ Stream
	Major Railroad
	Major State/ Federal Roadway
	Census Place/ Census Designated Place
	Major Waterbody
	2010 Census Population

p. 1,667

Population	1990	2000	2010
Lee County	34,392	36,062	36,031
Blackhawk Hills Region	227,213	235,689	233,802
State of Illinois	11,430,602	12,419,293	12,830,632

### Projects in Lee County

- Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Plan
- Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities Program
- Envirothon
- Five-County Economic Study and Recovery Plan
- Illinois Broadband Opportunity Partnership - Northwest (iFiber)
- Illinois Department of Transportation Inventory and Assessment
- Illinois Energy Now Energy Efficiency Visits
  - Amboy Depot Museum
  - Amboy Fire Protection District
  - Lee County Highway Department
  - Sublette Village Hall/Community Center
- Lee-Ogle County Outdoor Stewardship Days

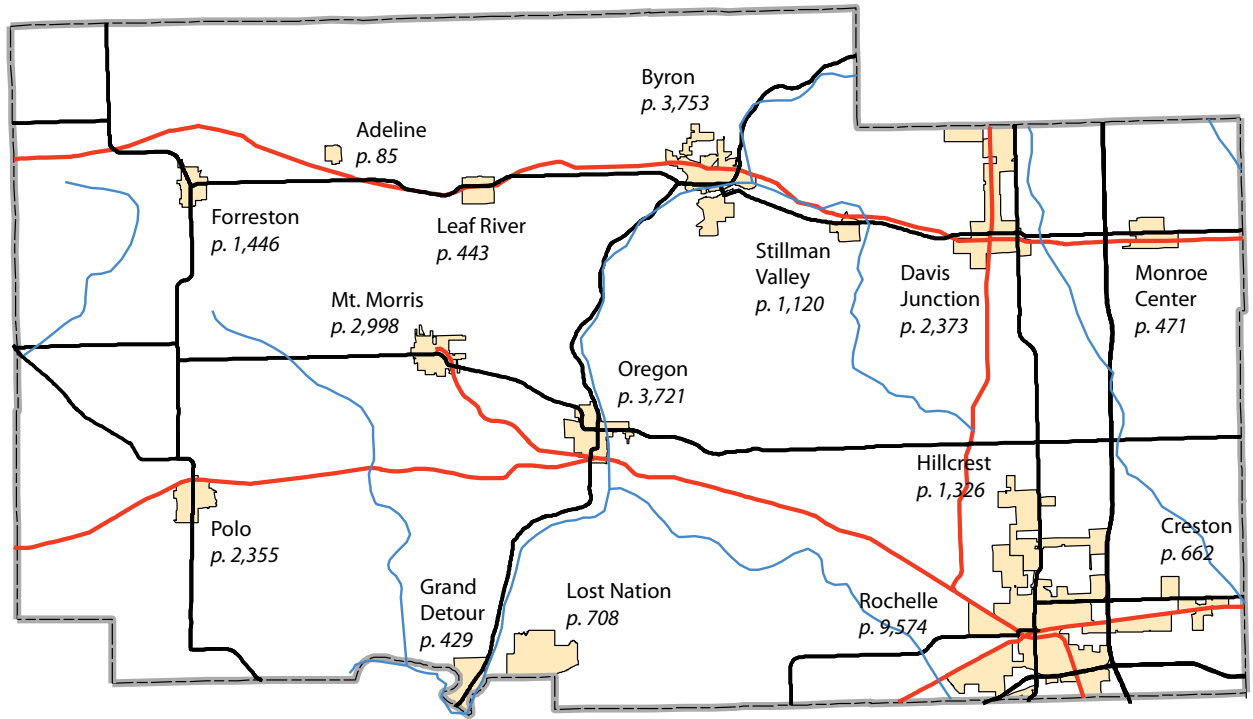
<b>Subject</b>	<b>2010</b>
Median Age (years)	42.0
Total Labor Force	18,369
Percent Unemployment	5.70%
Mean Travel Work (minutes)	22.6
Total Number of Companies	2,448
Total Family Households	9,064
Median Household Income (dollars)	\$49,451
Average Household Size (people)	2.41
Percent of Families Below Poverty Level	9.50%

<b>Housing</b>	<b>2010</b>
Total Housing Units	15,049
Occupied Units	13,758
Vacant Units	1,291
Owner-Occupied	10,213
Renter-Occupied	3,545
Homeowner Vacancy Rate	2.40%
Homes for Sale	256
Rental Vacancy Rate	7.50%
Available for Rent	288

<b>Educational Attainment</b>	<b>2010</b>
Less than 9th Grade	4.30%
9th to 12th Grade, No Diploma	9.70%
High School Graduate (includes equivalency)	36.70%
Some College, No Degree	24.40%
Associate's Degree	9.60%
Bachelor's Degree	11.10%
Graduate or Professional Degree	4.20%

<b>Employment by Industry Classification</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Civilian Employed Population 16 Years and Over	16,709	
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, and Mining	504	3.00%
Construction	834	5.00%
Manufacturing	3,396	20.30%
Wholesale Trade	648	3.90%
Retail Trade	1,819	10.90%
Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	1,100	6.60%
Information	184	1.10%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, and Rental and Leasing	644	3.90%
Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative, and Waste Management	972	5.80%
Educational Services, Health Care, and Social Assistance	4,195	25.10%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation, and Food Services	1,069	6.40%
Other Services, Except Public Administration	657	3.90%
Public Administration	687	4.10%

Statistical data obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Fact Finder at [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov).



### LEGEND

	Major River/ Stream
	Major Railroad
	Major State/ Federal Roadway
	Census Place/ Census Designated Place
	Major Waterbody
	2010 Census Population

Population	1990	2000	2010
Ogle County	45,957	51,032	53,497
Blackhawk Hills Region	227,213	235,689	233,802
State of Illinois	11,430,602	12,419,293	12,830,632

### Projects in Ogle County

- Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Plan
- Envirothon
- Five-County Economic Study and Recovery Plan
- Illinois Broadband Opportunity Partnership - Northwest (iFiber)
- Illinois Department of Transportation Inventory and Assessment
- Illinois Energy Now Energy Efficiency Visits
  - Oregon Village Hall
  - Oregon Maintenance Building
- Lee-Ogle County Outdoor Stewardship Days
- Rochelle Project E-Rail
- Website Assistance Program
  - Rochelle
  - Ogle County

<b>Subject</b>	<b>2010</b>
Median Age (years)	40.7
Total Labor Force	28,539
Percent Unemployment	10.40%
Mean Travel Work (minutes)	24.4
Total Number of Companies	4,622
Total Family Households	14,711
Median Household Income (dollars)	\$57,094
Average Household Size (people)	2.54
Percent of Families Below Poverty Level	10.30%

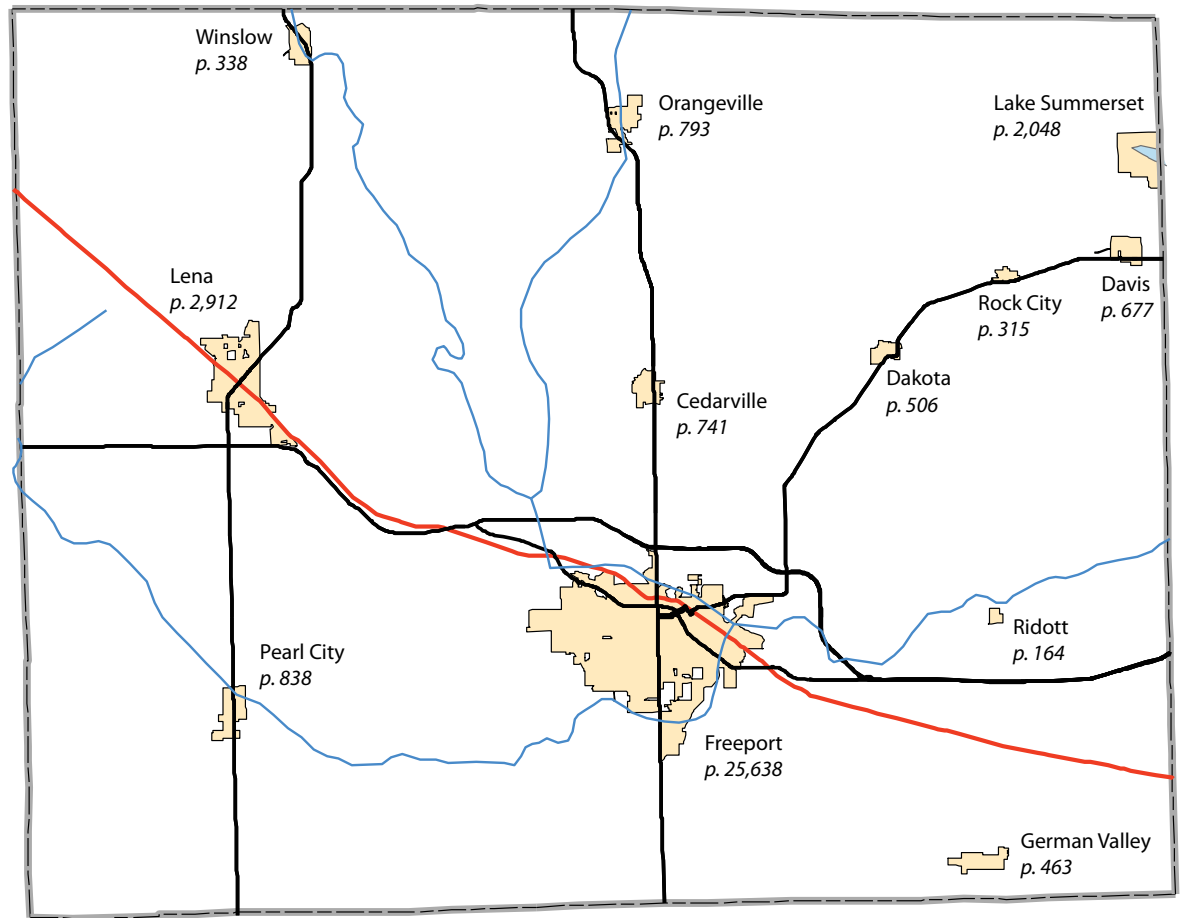
<b>Housing</b>	<b>2010</b>
Total Housing Units	22,561
Occupied Units	20,663
Vacant Units	1,839
Owner-Occupied	15,922
Renter-Occupied	4,934
Homeowner Vacancy Rate	2.30%
Homes for Sale	382
Rental Vacancy Rate	7.10%
Available for Rent	378

<b>Educational Attainment</b>	<b>2010</b>
Less than 9th Grade	4.00%
9th to 12th Grade, No Diploma	8.10%
High School Graduate (includes equivalency)	36.20%
Some College, No Degree	24.50%
Associate's Degree	8.30%
Bachelor's Degree	12.20%
Graduate or Professional Degree	6.80%

<b>Employment by Industry Classification</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Civilian Employed Population 16 Years and Over	25,569	
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, and Mining	681	2.70%
Construction	1,781	7.00%
Manufacturing	4,529	17.70%
Wholesale Trade	881	3.40%
Retail Trade	2,731	10.70%
Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	2,273	8.90%
Information	511	2.00%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, and Rental and Leasing	1,323	5.20%
Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative, and Waste Management	1,959	7.70%
Educational Services, Health Care, and Social Assistance	5,122	20.00%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation, and Food Services	1,749	6.80%
Other Services, Except Public Administration	1,163	4.50%
Public Administration	866	3.40%

Statistical data obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Fact Finder at [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov).

## Stephenson County



### LEGEND

	Major River/ Stream
	Major Railroad
	Major State/ Federal Roadway
	Census Place/ Census Designated Place
	Major Waterbody
	2010 Census Population

Population	1990	2000	2010
Stephenson County	48,052	48,979	47,711
Blackhawk Hills Region	227,213	235,689	233,802
State of Illinois	11,430,602	12,419,293	12,830,632

### Projects in Stephenson County

- Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Plan
- Envirothon
- Five-County Economic Study and Recovery Plan
- Illinois Broadband Opportunity Partnership - Northwest (iFiber)
- Illinois Department of Transportation Inventory and Assessment
- Local Foods Initiative



<b>Subject</b>	<b>2010</b>
Median Age (years)	43.1
Total Labor Force	24,549
Percent Unemployment	10.40%
Mean Travel Work (minutes)	20.2
Total Number of Companies	3,662
Total Family Households	13,015
Median Household Income (dollars)	\$43,410
Average Household Size (people)	2.36
Percent of Families Below Poverty Level	14.70%

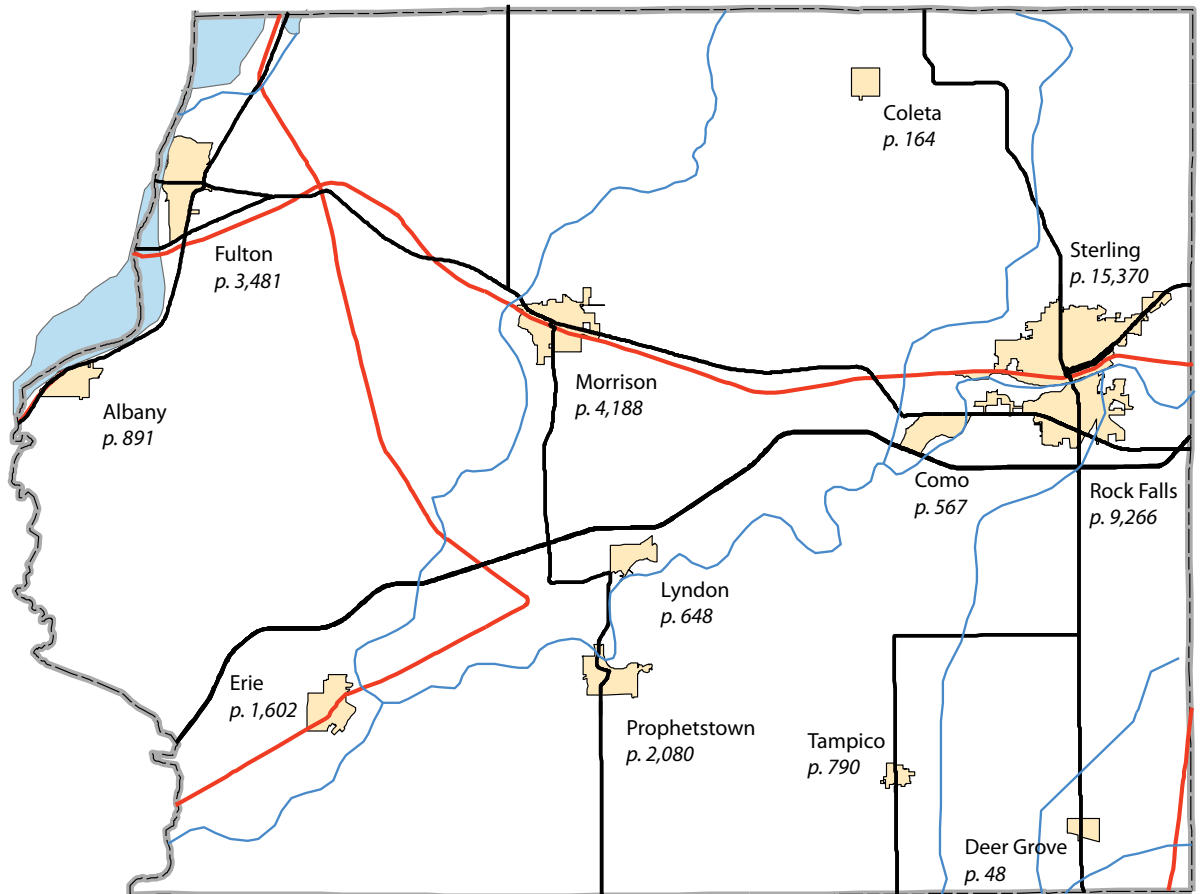
<b>Housing</b>	<b>2010</b>
Total Housing Units	22,081
Occupied Units	19,845
Vacant Units	2,236
Owner-Occupied	14,272
Renter-Occupied	5,573
Homeowner Vacancy Rate	2.40%
Homes for Sale	353
Rental Vacancy Rate	10.30%
Available for Rent	647

<b>Educational Attainment</b>	<b>2010</b>
Less than 9th Grade	3.30%
9th to 12th Grade, No Diploma	8.00%
High School Graduate (includes equivalency)	36.70%
Some College, No Degree	25.50%
Associate's Degree	8.60%
Bachelor's Degree	11.30%
Graduate or Professional Degree	6.40%

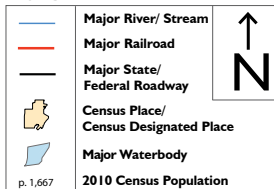
<b>Employment by Industry Classification</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Civilian Employed Population 16 Years and Over	21,981	
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, and Mining	977	4.40%
Construction	1,383	6.30%
Manufacturing	4,410	20.10%
Wholesale Trade	490	2.20%
Retail Trade	2,257	10.30%
Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	901	4.10%
Information	263	1.20%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, and Rental and Leasing	1,282	5.80%
Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative, and Waste Management	1,462	6.70%
Educational Services, Health Care, and Social Assistance	5,210	23.70%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation, and Food Services	1,583	7.20%
Other Services, Except Public Administration	1,236	5.60%
Public Administration	527	2.40%

Statistical data obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Fact Finder at [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov).

## Whiteside County



### LEGEND



Population	1990	2000	2010
Whiteside County	60,186	60,653	58,498
Blackhawk Hills Region	227,213	235,689	233,802
State of Illinois	11,430,602	12,419,293	12,830,632

### Projects in Whiteside County

- Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Plan
- Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities Program
- Envirothon
- Five-County Economic Study and Recovery Plan
- Heritage Woods Community Garden
- Illinois Broadband Opportunity Partnership - Northwest (iFiber)
- Illinois Department of Transportation Inventory and Assessment
- Illinois Energy Now Energy Efficiency Visits
  - Merrill School in Rock Falls
  - Whiteside County Highway Department
- Tri-County Conservation Day
- Website Assistance Program
  - Fulton
- Western Whiteside Business Climate Analysis

<b>Subject</b>	<b>2010</b>
Median Age (years)	41.8
Total Labor Force	24,549
Percent Unemployment	10.40%
Mean Travel Work (minutes)	20.2
Total Number of Companies	4,063
Total Family Households	16,005
Median Household Income (dollars)	\$46,444
Average Household Size (people)	2.42
Percent of Families Below Poverty Level	11.70%

<b>Housing</b>	<b>2010</b>
Total Housing Units	25,770
Occupied Units	23,740
Vacant Units	2,030
Owner-Occupied	17,692
Renter-Occupied	6,048
Homeowner Vacancy Rate	1.90%
Homes for Sale	338
Rental Vacancy Rate	9.20%
Available for Rent	616

<b>Educational Attainment</b>	<b>2010</b>
Less than 9th Grade	3.30%
9th to 12th Grade, No Diploma	8.00%
High School Graduate (includes equivalency)	36.70%
Some College, No Degree	25.50%
Associate's Degree	8.60%
Bachelor's Degree	11.30%
Graduate or Professional Degree	6.40%

<b>Employment by Industry Classification</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Civilian Employed Population 16 Years and Over	21,981	
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, and Mining	977	4.40%
Construction	1,383	6.30%
Manufacturing	4,410	20.10%
Wholesale Trade	490	2.20%
Retail Trade	2,257	10.30%
Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	901	4.10%
Information	263	1.20%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, and Rental and Leasing	1,282	5.80%
Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative, and Waste Management	1,462	6.70%
Educational Services, Health Care, and Social Assistance	5,210	23.70%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation, and Food Services	1,583	7.20%
Other Services, Except Public Administration	1,236	5.60%
Public Administration	527	2.40%

Statistical data obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Fact Finder at [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov).

## Blackhawk Hills Regional Council would like to thank our financial supporters:



Carroll County, Illinois



Jo Daviess County, Illinois



Lee County, Illinois



Ogle County, Illinois



Carroll County SWCD



Soil and Water Conservation District



Whiteside County SWCD



**If you would like Blackhawk Hills Regional Council to be involved in a program or project, or if you would like to invest in Blackhawk Hills Regional Council, please contact us.**

Blackhawk Hills Regional Council  
102 East Route 30, Suite 3  
Rock Falls, IL 61071  
815-625-3854  
815-625-4072 fax  
[www.blackhawkhills.com](http://www.blackhawkhills.com)  
[info@blackhawkhills.com](mailto:info@blackhawkhills.com)