



**BLACKHAWK  
HILLS  
REGIONAL  
COUNCIL**

**2014 - 2015 ANNUAL REPORT**

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

\*PRESIDENT \*\*VICE PRESIDENT \*\*\*SECRETARY AND TREASURER

## CARROLL COUNTY

Darrell Stitzel, COUNTY BOARD  
Ed Juracek, SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
John Huggins, AREA REPRESENTATIVE

## JO DAVIESS COUNTY

Steve Rutz, COUNTY BOARD  
William Tonne, SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
Marvin Schultz, AREA REPRESENTATIVE \*\*

## LEE COUNTY

Tim Deem, COUNTY BOARD  
Aaron Wolf & Jeremy Zapf (co-representatives),  
SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
Marilyn Shippert, AREA REPRESENTATIVE

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Marcia Heuer, SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
Michael Reibel, AREA REPRESENTATIVE

## STEPHENSON COUNTY

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## WHITESIDE COUNTY

John Espinoza, COUNTY BOARD  
Vacant, SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
Glen Kuhlemier, AREA REPRESENTATIVE\*\*\*

### PROFESSIONAL STAFF

Theresa Wittenauer  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Julie Jacobs  
OFFICE MANAGER

Daniel Payette  
OUTREACH COORDINATOR

Andrew Shaw  
GIS SPECIALIST

### COMMUNITIES SERVED

Adeline	East Dubuque	Lyndon	Rochelle
Albany	Elizabeth	Menominee	Rock City
Amboy	Erie	Milledgeville	Rock Falls
Apple River	Forreston	Monroe Center	Savanna
Ashton	Franklin Grove	Morrison	Scales Mound
Byron	Freeport	Mt. Carroll	Shannon
Carroll County	Fulton	Mt. Morris	Stephenson County
Cedarville	Galena	Nelson	Sterling
Chadwick	German Valley	Nora	Steward
Coleta	Hanover	Ogle County	Stillman Valley
Compton	Harmon	Orangeville	Stockton
Creston	Hillcrest	Oregon	Sublette
Dakota	Jo Daviess County	Paw Paw	Tampico
Davis	Lanark	Pearl City	Thomson
Davis Junction	Leaf River	Polo	Warren
Deer Grove	Lee	Prophetstown	West Brooklyn
Dixon	Lee County	Ridott	Whiteside County
	Lena		Winslow

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*Note: All photographs from Blackhawk Hills Regional Council, Wikimedia Commons, or provided.*

*The Board of Directors typically meets every other month on the fourth Monday.*

# ABOUT US

## Overview and Mission

Blackhawk Hills Regional Council (BHRC) assists the people and agencies of northwest Illinois in developing and implementing a regional outlook - one that enhances economic growth, workforce development, natural resources conservation, and quality of life for communities. The council focuses on leadership, program and project development, planning, and actions that leverage local resources. Our region includes Jo Daviess, Stephenson, Carroll, Ogle, Whiteside, and Lee Counties and covers approximately 3,777 square miles of territory.

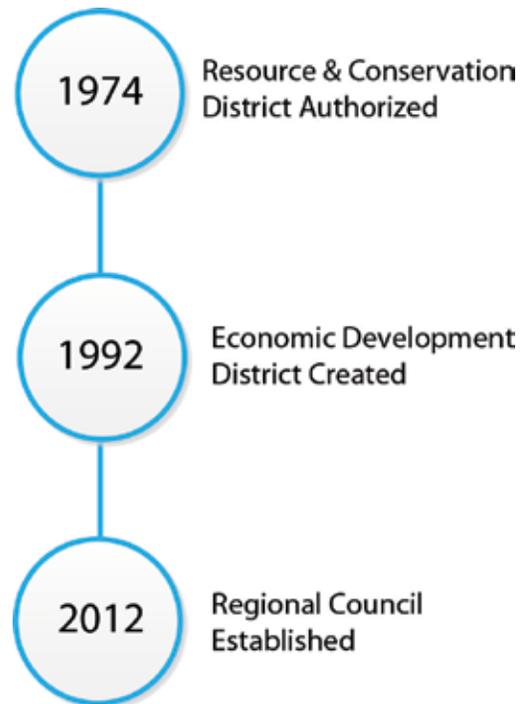


BHRC is sponsored by the area's county boards and soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs). Moreover, BHRC is overseen by an 18-member governing board, which includes one county board representative, one soil and water conservation district representative, and one area representative from each of our region's six counties.

## History

BHRC began as Blackhawk Hills Resource Conservation and Development District in 1974, when it was authorized by the United States Secretary of Agriculture.

Shortly thereafter, the district received 501(c)(3) status from the Internal Revenue Service. In 1992, the Economic Development Administration designated the territory as an Economic Development District, to be managed by BHRC. In 2012, with the support of county boards and soil and water conservation districts, Blackhawk Hills became a Regional Council, reflecting the organization's involvement in and commitment to regional planning projects and initiatives.



## Priorities

BHRC priorities include:

- \* Encouraging long term regional comprehensive planning.
- \* Assisting with infrastructure and capital improvement planning.
- \* Supporting economic, community, and workforce development.
- \* Supporting natural resources preservation and conservation.
- \* Supporting entrepreneurship, innovation, and collaboration.

The following pages highlight BHRC's efforts in each of its priority areas over the past year.

# ENCOURAGE LONG TERM REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

## Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Committee

To better guide planning initiatives, BHRC restructured its CEDS process and committee in 2014. The committee now has greater responsibility for refining the CEDS document and prioritizing regional infrastructure and capital improvement projects. Fifteen (15) members meet biannually, functioning as an ideas clearinghouse and peer review group. The group consists of two (2) representatives from each county and three (3) region-wide representatives. Individuals from the public and private sectors are included; they typically have expertise and experience in community and economic development.

In conjunction with committee members, BHRC staff submit 1-year and 5-year updates to the Economic Development Administration (EDA). An up-to-date document is a prerequisite for applying for EDA grants. Any updates must be approved by BHRC's board. The CEDS committee also informs the direction of BHRC's Spring Symposium in April/May and its Fall Development Summit in August/September.

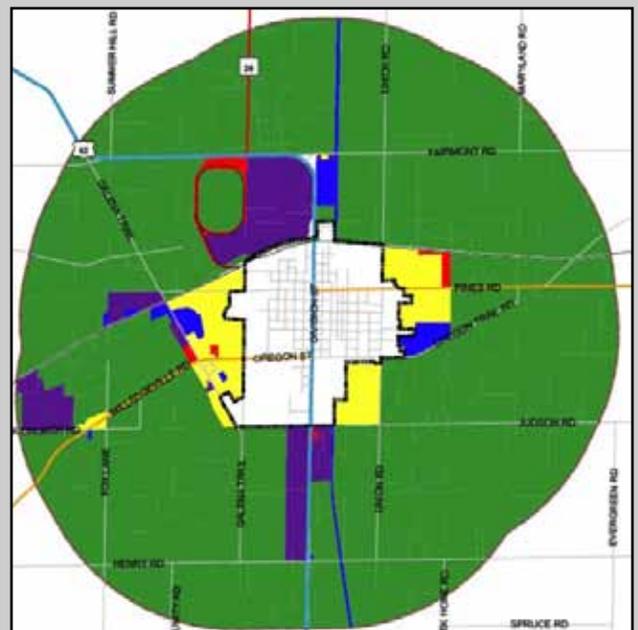
## Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) Planning Funds

In 2014, BHRC was awarded \$24,000 in Rural Transportation Planning Funds from IDOT to further the region's economic development and transportation planning efforts. Funds were intended to be used to study existing rail sites and spurs, with the goal of improving local rail/spur access and reducing business freight costs. As of January, however, IDOT Rural Transportation Planning Funds were frozen by the Illinois Governor's Office.

If the work proceeds, it should shed light on development opportunities and capital improvement priorities, especially along the Union Pacific (UP) and Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) rail corridors. A component of the study calls for assessing the need for a regional transloading center, one that would be accessible to any business or organization. Ideally, a transloading center would provide northern Illinois commerce and industry access to UP and BNSF Class I railroads and support the efficient movement of raw materials and finished goods. Savings related to shipping and environmental costs would also be addressed in the study.

## Planning for Polo

For just over a year, BHRC worked with the City of Polo to update its comprehensive plan. In support of the process, BHRC facilitated planning sessions, provided technical assistance, and created GIS-based maps and illustrations. The community now has access to a future land use map, an updated municipal zoning map, and newly redrawn city water, stormwater, and wastewater maps. Additional research - including an inventory and analysis of existing housing structure age - was made possible through cooperation between City of Polo staff, Ogle County GIS, Buffalo Township, and the twenty-two member citizen steering committee assembled for the project. The map to the right illustrates Polo's future land use plans within the city's 1.5 mile extraterritorial jurisdiction.



# ASSIST WITH INFRASTRUCTURE AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

## Rochelle Lift Station and Grand Rail Expansion

City of Rochelle officials held two “banner busting” events in October 2014 to celebrate the completion of two major EDA-funded infrastructure expansion projects. The first highlighted the Caron Road Lift Station, which provides Rochelle the capacity to serve 2,500 additional acres of industrial development. The second - the Grand Rail Expansion - commemorated City of Rochelle Railroad (CIR) rail expansion projects, including a 1,500 feet rail extension in the Union Pacific/CIR Interchange Yard, replacement of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe/CIR crossing on Caron Road, and a 2,200 feet extension of the CIR Unit Train Rail Yard. Total investment in all projects amounted to over \$2.4 million.

## Illinois Fiber Resources Group (iFiber)

With the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program grant closed and construction on the fiber optic network complete, iFiber’s focus has shifted to operations, maintenance, follow-up outreach, and additional end-user recruitment. BHRC provides iFiber - the non-profit organization that oversees the regional broadband network - support by reaching out to existing customers and end-users. Staff also provide information to individuals and organizations in public and private sectors with interest in robust, low latency bandwidth. Governmental agencies are now able to reduce certain infrastructure costs related to the state’s Law Enforcement Agency Data System; all end-users have the means to share data and IT resources more securely and effectively across nine (9) counties at gigabit speeds.

## Blackhawk Hills Hosts the Economic Development Administration (EDA)

In January 2015, BHRC met with US EDA’s Darrin Fleener, Economic Development Representative to Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio. On a tour with Executive Director Theresa Wittenauer, Fleener visited with Local Redevelopment Authority (LRA) Board President Steve Keefer and the LRA Executive Director Mara Roche at the former Savanna Army Depot. The group discussed issues the LRA faces and potential partnerships with EDA. The meeting included representatives from US Senator Durbin and US Representative Bustos’ offices. Fleener also toured the proposed Lee-Ogle Industrial Park located between the Village of Steward and the City of Rochelle.



# SUPPORT ECONOMIC, COMMUNITY, AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

## Priority Manufacturing Community

An additional opportunity emerged through the US Department of Commerce, one which allowed tri-state partners (including BHRC) to seek designation as a “priority manufacturing community” under the Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership (IMCP) program. Such designation would increase opportunities for investment in local manufacturing.

Although not initially designated a “priority manufacturing community” in the first round of applications, the group has completed an updated business plan and submitted an application for the second round of designations. In addition, the decision was made to change the name of the partnership’s project to the Upper Mississippi Manufacturing Innovation Center to better define its location and scope. Each of the partners will continue to work together to obtain the priority manufacturing community designation under the IMCP program.

## Food Enterprise Center and Pretzel City Kitchens

BHRC is working with the University of Illinois Extension (Counties of Jo Daviess, Stephenson, and Winnebago), CareerTEC, the City of Freeport, and Madison, Wisconsin, based Vandewalle and Associates to support a food enterprise center/kitchen incubator, officially known as Pretzel City Kitchens (PCK) in Freeport, Illinois. PCK would serve food growers and processors near the northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin border. In particular, PCK will support expanded production of local foods and value-added food products by providing affordable kitchen space to local processors. Partners also plan for the facility to provide a variety of



commercial equipment, business development resources, education, and networking opportunities. BHRC will serve as the fiscal agent and provide organizational support, as well as assistance with grant writing and administration. Two community meetings were held in Freeport this winter/spring to provide project updates and build support. Staff are currently working with partners to structure and assign responsibilities.

## A Hut for Our History

The Byron Museum of History was awarded a \$351,400 Public Museum Capital Grant (PMCG), administered by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Forty-seven museums state-wide were awarded funds through the grant program (note: Byron’s PMCG funds are currently frozen by the Governor’s office). The “A Hut for Our History” project calls for the museum to renovate recently acquired museum space, fund new and expanded exhibits, and restore a vintage Quonset hut and building marquee. BHRC, in coordination with the museum’s executive director, completed the application.

# SUPPORT NATURAL RESOURCES PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION



## Energy Efficiency Programs

Through the Illinois Association of Regional Councils, BHRC has conducted outreach and application assistance in support of the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity’s Public Sector Energy Efficiency/Illinois Energy Now program. In the past year (2014-2015), nine (9) applications were submitted for HVAC, lighting, and related incentives. BHRC also sought funding from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation and worked with the Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance on the installation of energy saving equipment, such as room occupancy sensors and LED exit signs.

## Spring Branch Sub-Watershed Project and Plan

Originally organized by the Yellow Creek Watershed Partnership, the Spring Branch Sub-Watershed project includes participation from area volunteers and BHRC. Funded by an EPA Section 319 grant, the project is focused on improving the greater Yellow Creek watershed; one of the goals includes greater adoption of best management practices for nutrient and soil conservation. Work in 2014 included the preliminary GIS assessment assembled by BHRC (GIS elements included/incorporated the alignment of stream layers with recent aerial photography, dividing the watershed sub-basins, length and area calculations, and soil survey mapping). BHRC also consulted with scientists to determine baseline land cover and water quality relationships. Project stakeholders have established a farmer and landowner-oriented watershed planning committee, and BHRC will continue to provide technical, planning, and facilitation services.

## Envirothon

The BHRC-area Soil and Water Conservation Districts hosted the annual Envirothon Competition in March 2015 at Highland Community College. The Envirothon, supported by BHRC, is a year-long learning process that provides an opportunity for high school students to learn more about the environment and natural resources. Twenty-two teams from fourteen schools competed. River Bend High School placed 1st, followed by Pearl City and Orangeville high schools, respectively. Each member of the 1st place team received a \$500 college scholarship and advanced to the state competition.

# SUPPORT ENTREPRENEURSHIP, INNOVATION, AND COLLABORATION

## Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities (CEO)

Fifteen (15) students from eight (8) area high schools were accepted into this year's CEO program, hosted by Whiteside Area Career Center. Currently, Le Hartman serves as program facilitator and Norm Deets acts as business liaison. BHRC functions as the treasurer and fiscal agent. To date, over forty investors from the Sauk Valley area have chosen to support the program financially. Each year, students develop a class business as a group, and each student is responsible for creating his or her own business, which is then presented at the annual CEO Trade Show in May. Alumni have already found success beyond the program, with one student using Etsy as an online platform for marketing and selling her personalized products.



Investing in CEO - and the area's youth - is simple.

Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities (CEO) is seeking new investors for the upcoming school year. Call us at (815) 625-3854 and arrange to support the entrepreneurs of tomorrow, today. Contributions are tax deductible. Individuals, businesses, and government/non-profit organizations are encouraged to invest.

## Fall Regional Development Summit

Hosted by BHRC, the Fall Regional Development Summit was held in August 2014 at Lake Carroll, IL. The event featured a range of issues, including transportation, tax increment financing, energy efficiency, and tourism. Outside groups participating included Transportation for America, with speaker John Robert Smith, former Mayor of Meridian, Mississippi.

## County Insurance Data Collection

To assist the area's county board chairs, BHRC gathered employee insurance information from each county to begin a comparison analysis of the region. The plan is to find commonalities and explore pooling options in an effort to lower insurance costs for county governments region-wide. At the November 2014 meeting, the chairs had a chance to discuss such pooling options and ask questions of representatives from the Insurance Program Managers Group. The January 2015 meeting provided an opportunity for further discussion with TRICOR Insurance.

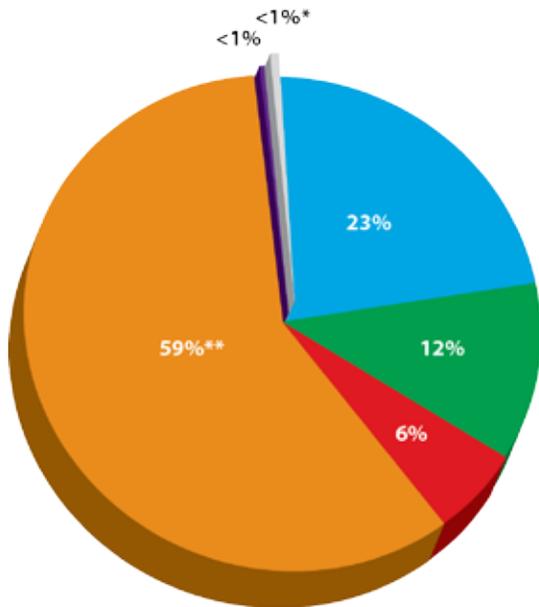
## Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Roundtable

The annual roundtable for this year's municipal and county GIS staff featured Ogle County's Kris Gilbert, who spoke on GIS point data collection and recording. Her presentation was followed by a roundtable discussion. Attendees' time together permitted networking opportunities and a chance to discuss challenges related to mapping. BHRC staff also presented on the projects undertaken by BHRC GIS Specialist Andrew Shaw.

# FY 2014-2015 FINANCIALS AND FUNDING DISTRIBUTIONS

## Unaudited Statement of Financial Position as of March 31, 2015

Fiscal Year April 1, 2014 - March 31, 2015. Copies of complete audited financial statements may be obtained by writing to Blackhawk Hills Regional Council, 102 E Rte 30, Ste 3, Rock Falls, IL 61071.

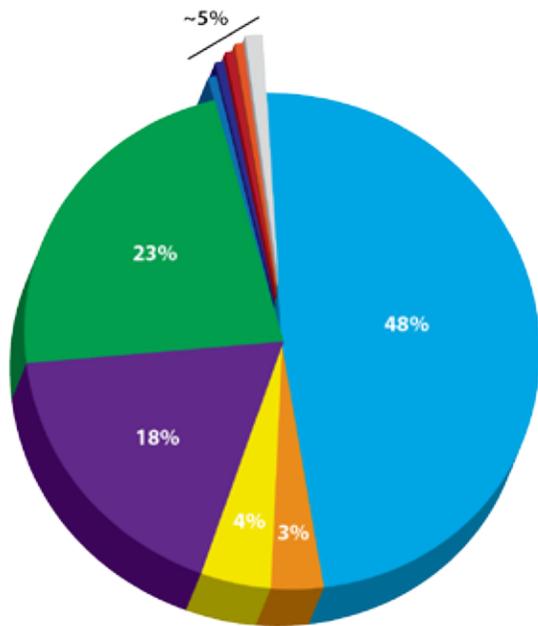


### REVENUE

Other*	\$1,480.47	(<1%)
Donations	\$1,500.00	(<1%)
Local**	\$262,500.63	(59%)
State	\$26,591.99	(6%)
Federal	\$52,587.25	(12%)
'13-'14 Carryover	\$101,847.66	(23%)

**TOTAL REVENUE \$446,508.00**

\*The "other" category includes interest and miscellaneous revenue.  
 \*\*Includes consulting and contractual work, as well as private investments.



### EXPENSES

Travel	\$11,949.16	(3%)
Rent & Utilities	\$15,553.37	(4%)
Projects - Earmarked	\$64,023.82	(18%)
Projects - Past	\$81,493.09	(23%)
Meetings, Conferences, & Trainings	\$2,536.75	(<1%)
Insurance	\$1,561.85	(<1%)
Equipment & Supplies	\$2,315.95	(<1%)
Dues & Subscriptions	\$2,200.00	(<1%)
Other***	\$3,018.58	(<1%)
Salaries, Wages, & Benefits	\$173,702.66	(48%)

**TOTAL EXPENSES \$358,355.23**  
**CARRYOVER TO '15-'16 \$88,152.77**

\*\*\*The "other" category includes advertisement, consultants & professional fees, postage, and miscellaneous expenses.

## A federally recognized Economic Development District

Blackhawk Hills Regional Council works with federal officials and local entities to seek out, apply for, and secure funding for public infrastructure. Road, water, and sewer projects (with emphasis on job creation and retention) typically qualify. Telecommunications, disaster resiliency, feasibility studies, and technical assistance projects may also be eligible.

Whether a community or organization receives funding depends on an entity's ability to develop a competitive project proposal, the availability of local match, and whether a project meets guidelines established by federal/state governments or other funding organizations.



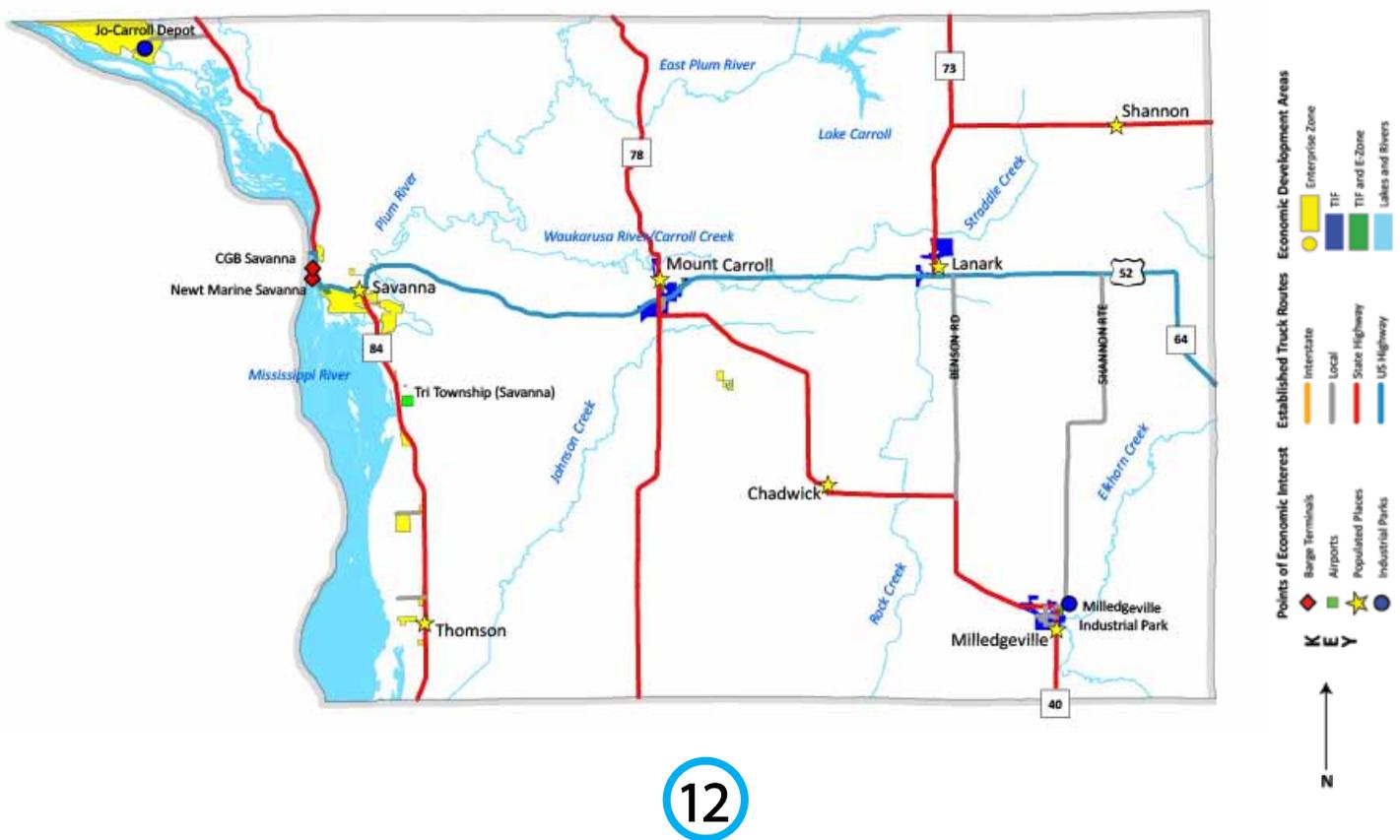
# OVERVIEW BY COUNTY - CARROLL COUNTY

## SELECT PROJECTS & INITIATIVES

- \*CEDS Committee Restructuring
- \*CEO
- \*County Insurance Data Collection
- \*EDA Visit
- \*Envirothon
- \*Fall Regional Development Summit
- \*iFiber Outreach
- \*Illinois Energy Now
- \*Local Stewardship Day
- \*Rural Transportation Planning Study
- \*Water Supply Plan



## TRANSPORTATION, E-ZONE, AND TIF IN CARROLL COUNTY



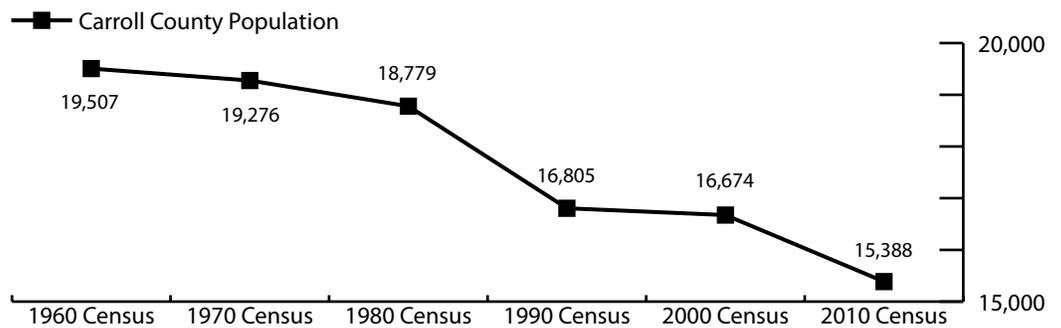


Population

14,715

2014 Annual Pop Est

Population Over Time

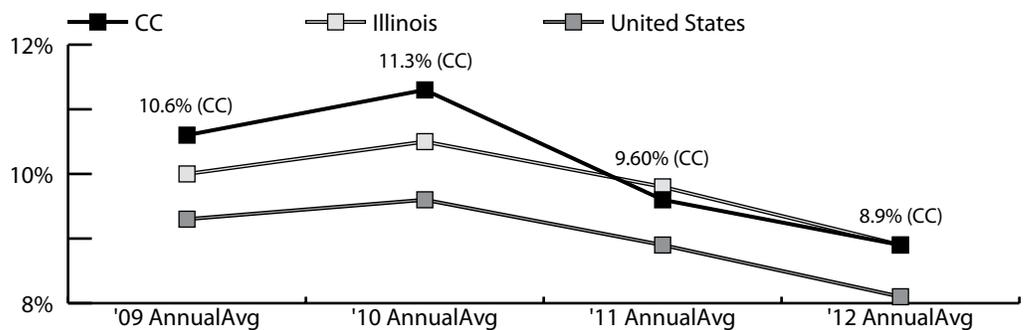


Unemployment Rate<sup>1</sup>

6.5%

Annual Average 2014  
(8.9% in 2013)

Unemployment Rate Over Time



Top Industries<sup>2</sup>



Ed./health/social services

1,407 ppl (1,503 prev.)  
20.0% (20.7% prev.)



Manufacturing

1,397 ppl (1,327 prev.)  
19.8% (18.3% prev.)



Retail trade

769 ppl (841 prev.)  
10.9% (11.6% prev.)



Construction

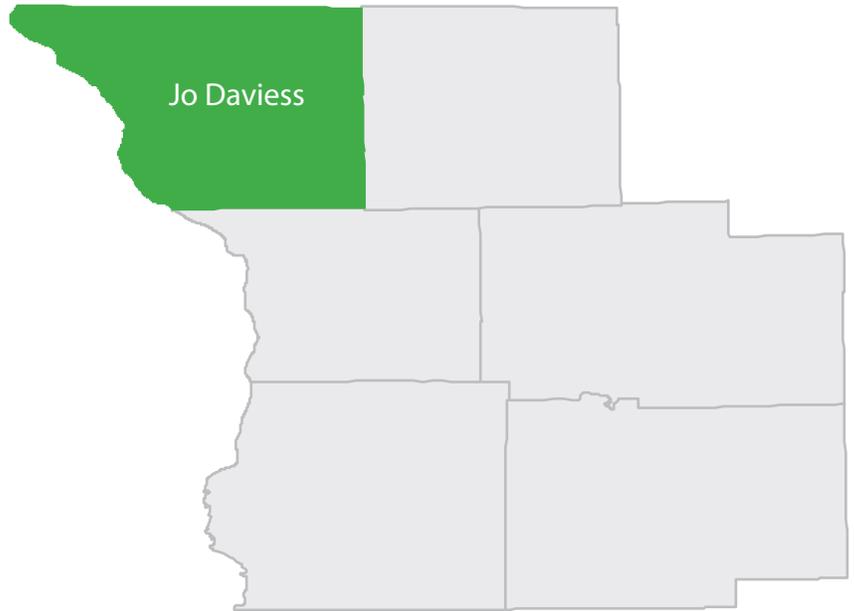
526 ppl (600 prev.)  
7.5% (8.3% prev.)

SOURCES: <sup>1</sup>ides.illinois.gov/data.bls.gov, <sup>2</sup>2009-2013 American Community Survey

# OVERVIEW BY COUNTY - JO DAVIESS COUNTY

## SELECT PROJECTS & INITIATIVES

- \*CEDS Committee Restructuring
- \*County Insurance Data Collection
- \*E-Zone Technical Support
- \*Envirothon
- \*Fall Regional Development Summit
- \*iFiber Outreach
- \*Local Stewardship Day
- \*Priority Manufacturing Community
- \*Rural Transportation Planning Study
- \*Water Supply Plan



## TRANSPORTATION, E-ZONE, AND TIF IN JO DAVIESS COUNTY



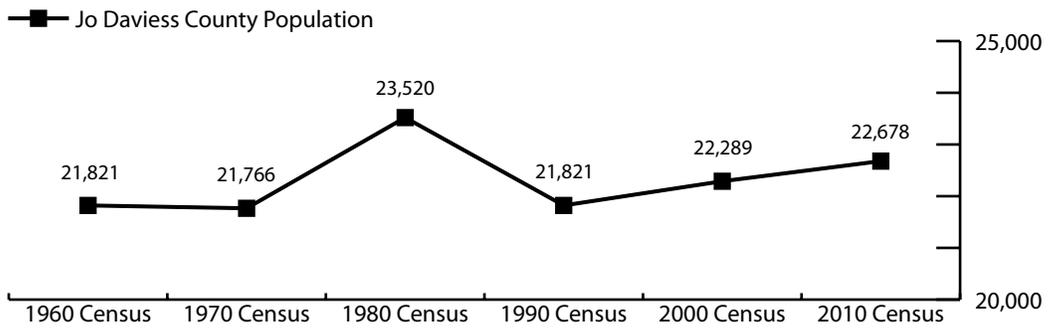


**Population**

**22,254**

2014 Census Annual  
Pop Est

**Population Over Time**

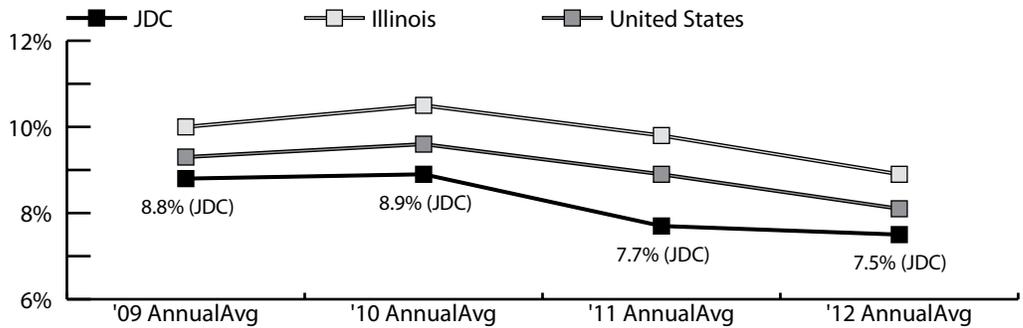


**Unemployment Rate<sup>1</sup>**

**6.2%**

Annual Average 2014  
(7.6% in 2013)

**Unemployment Rate Over Time**

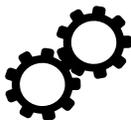


**Top Industries<sup>2</sup>**



**Ed./health/social services**

2,285 ppl (2,333 prev.)  
20.4% (20.4% prev.)



**Manufacturing**

1,453 ppl (1,455 prev.)  
13.0% (12.7% prev.)



**Retail trade**

1,339 ppl (1,287 prev.)  
12.0% (11.2% prev.)



**Arts/enter./rec./accom./food ser.**

1,023 ppl (1,324 prev.)  
9.2% (11.6% prev.)

SOURCES: <sup>1</sup>ides.illinois.gov/data.bls.gov, <sup>2</sup>2009-2013 American Community Survey

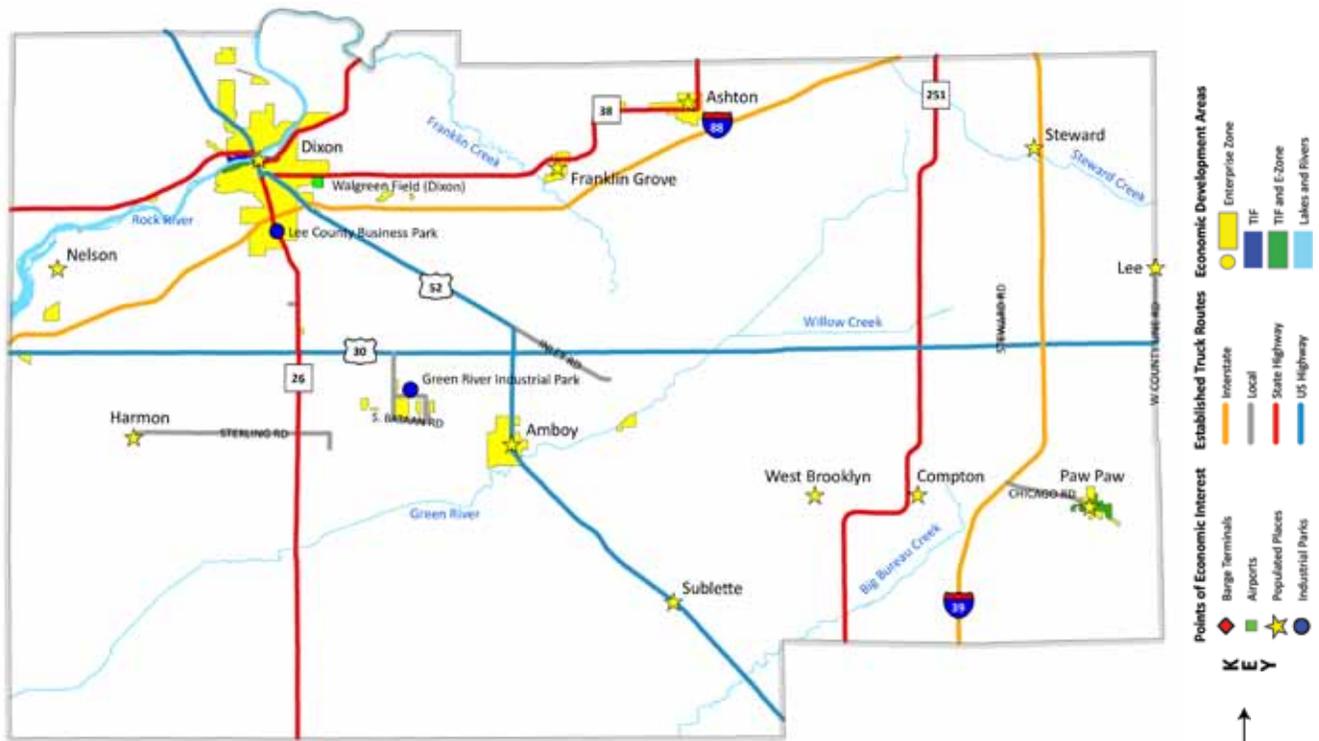
# OVERVIEW BY COUNTY - LEE COUNTY

## SELECT PROJECTS & INITIATIVES

- \*CEDS Committee Restructuring
- \*CEO
- \*County Insurance Data Collection
- \*EDA Visit
- \*Envirothon
- \*Fall Regional Development Summit
- \*iFiber Outreach
- \*Illinois Energy Now
- \*Local Stewardship Day
- \*Rural Transportation Planning Study
- \*Water Supply Plan



## TRANSPORTATION, E-ZONE, AND TIF IN LEE COUNTY



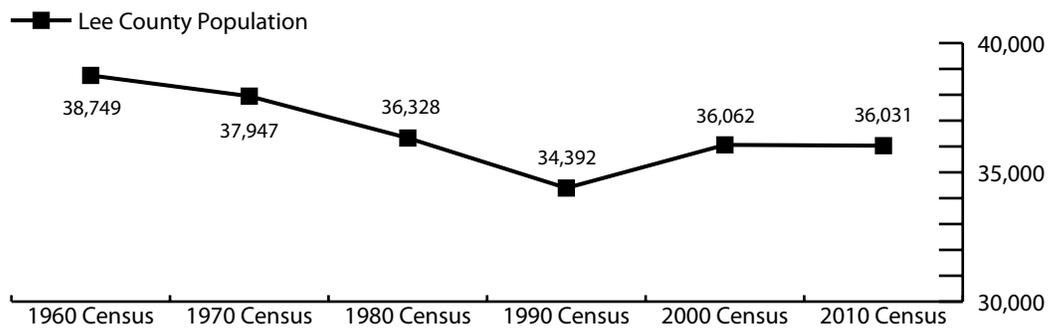


**Population**

**34,735**

2014 Census Annual  
Pop Est

**Population Over Time**

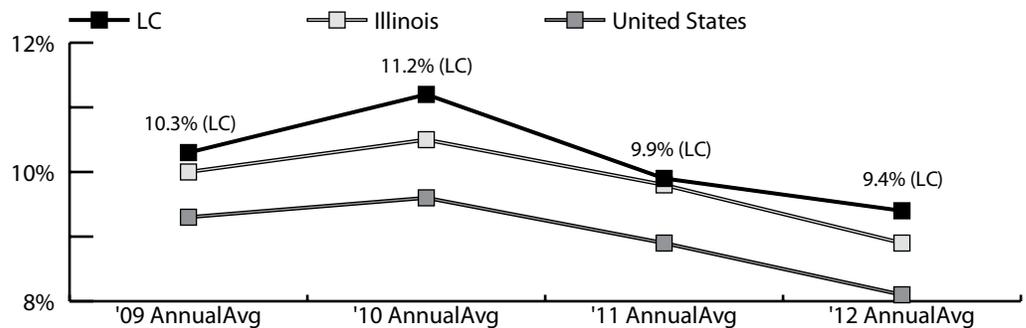


**Unemployment Rate<sup>1</sup>**

**6.5%**

Annual Average 2014  
(9.2% in 2013)

**Unemployment Rate Over Time**



**Top Industries<sup>2</sup>**



**Ed./health/social services**

4,100 ppl (3,975 prev.)  
25.6% (24.5% prev.)



**Manufacturing**

2,867 ppl (3,127 prev.)  
17.9% (19.3% prev.)



**Retail trade**

1,637 ppl (1,731 prev.)  
10.2% (10.7% prev.)



**Arts/enter./rec./accom./food ser.**

1,365 ppl (1,143 prev.)  
8.5% (7.1% prev.)

SOURCES: <sup>1</sup>ides.illinois.gov/data.bls.gov, <sup>2</sup>2009-2013 American Community Survey

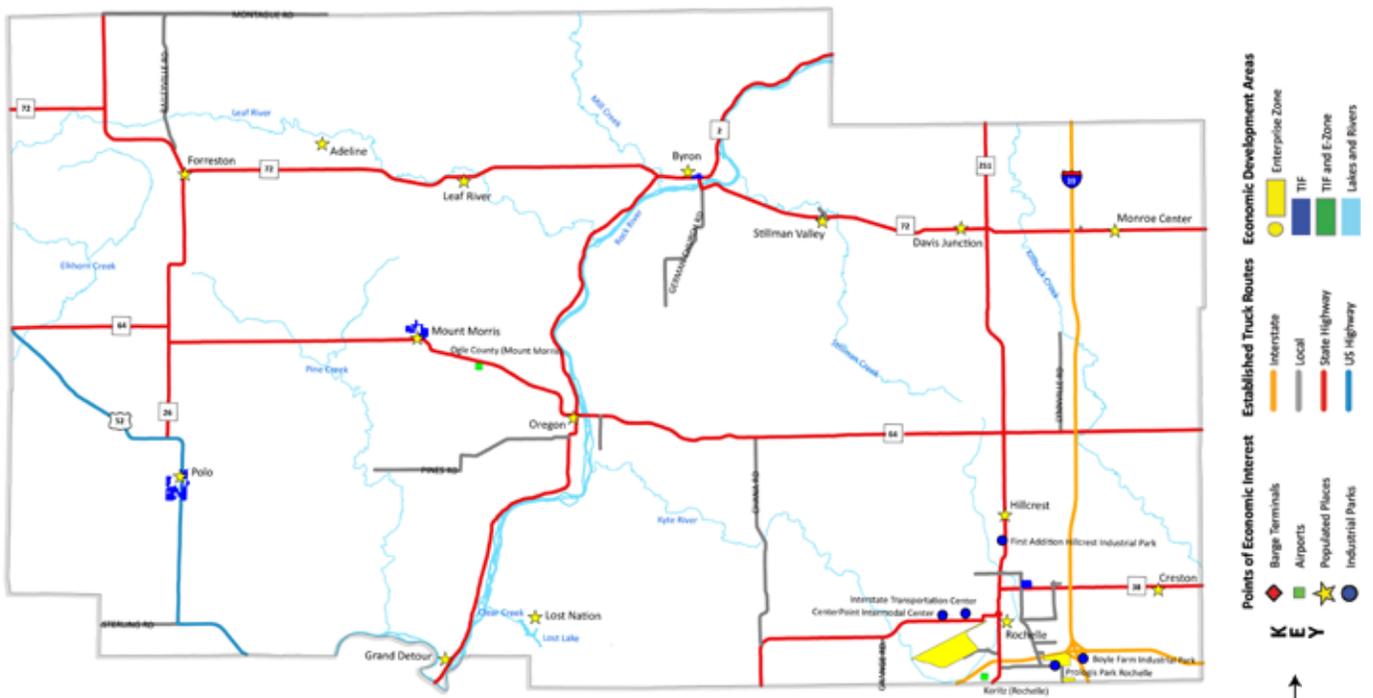
# OVERVIEW BY COUNTY - OGLE COUNTY

## SELECT PROJECTS & INITIATIVES

- \*A Hut for Our History
- \*CEDS Committee Restructuring
- \*CEO
- \*County Insurance Data Collection
- \*EDA Visit
- \*Envirothon
- \*Fall Regional Development Summit
- \*iFiber Outreach
- \*Illinois Energy Now
- \*Local Stewardship Day
- \*Planning for Polo
- \*Rochelle Lift Station and Grand Rail Expansion
- \*Rural Transportation Planning Study
- \*Water Supply Plan



## TRANSPORTATION, E-ZONE, AND TIF IN OGLE COUNTY



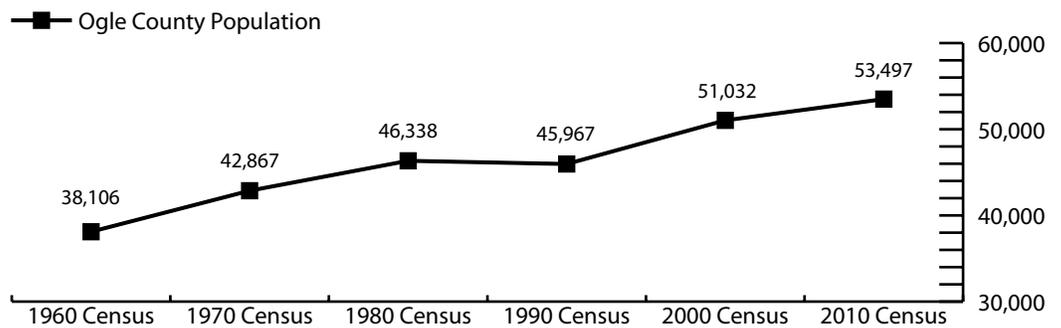


**Population**

**52,085**

2014 Census Annual  
Pop Est

**Population Over Time**

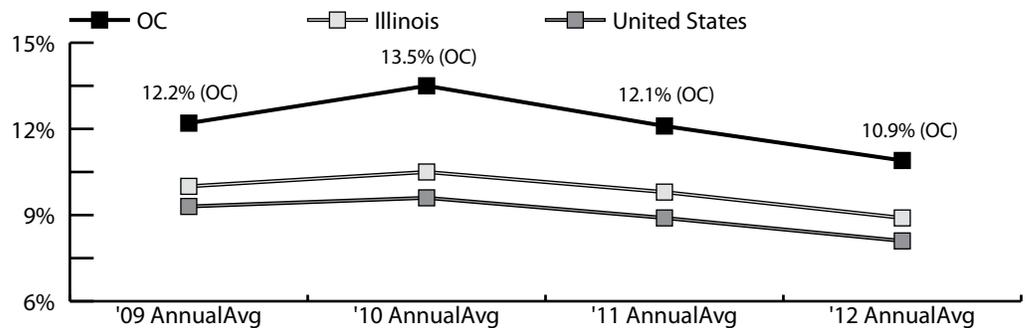


**Unemployment Rate<sup>1</sup>**

**7.6%**

Annual Average 2014  
(10.7% in 2013)

**Unemployment Rate Over Time**

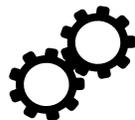


**Top Industries<sup>2</sup>**



**Ed./health/social services**

5,366 ppl (5,014 prev.)  
21.2% (19.4% prev.)



**Manufacturing**

4,427 ppl (4,360 prev.)  
17.5% (16.9% prev.)



**Retail trade**

3,092 ppl (3,087 prev.)  
12.2% (12.0% prev.)



**Transport/warehousing/utilities**

2,406 ppl (2,420 prev.)  
9.5% (9.4% prev.)

SOURCES: <sup>1</sup>ides.illinois.gov/data.bls.gov, <sup>2</sup>2009-2013 American Community Survey

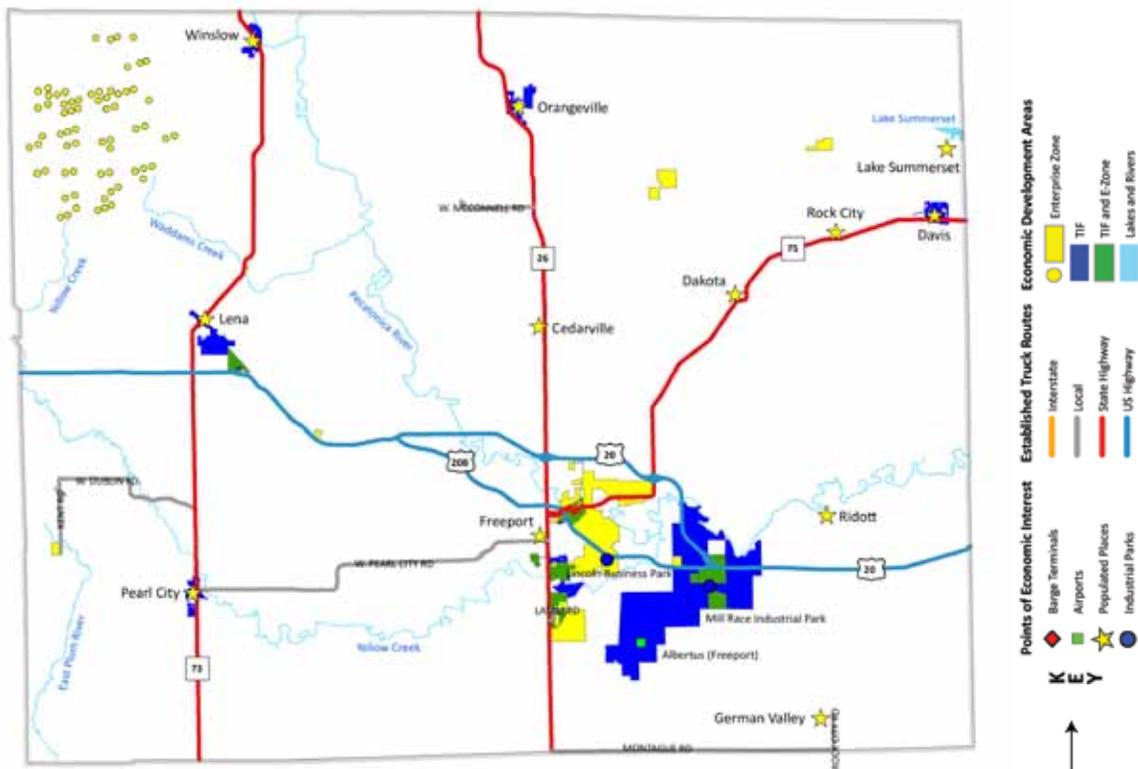
# OVERVIEW BY COUNTY - STEPHENSON COUNTY

## SELECT PROJECTS & INITIATIVES

- \*CEDS Committee Restructuring
- \*County Insurance Data Collection
- \*Envirothon
- \*Fall Regional Development Summit
- \*iFiber Outreach
- \*Illinois Energy Now
- \*Pretzel City Kitchens
- \*Rural Transportation Planning Study
- \*Spring Branch Watershed
- \*Water Supply Plan



## TRANSPORTATION, E-ZONE, AND TIF IN STEPHENSON COUNTY



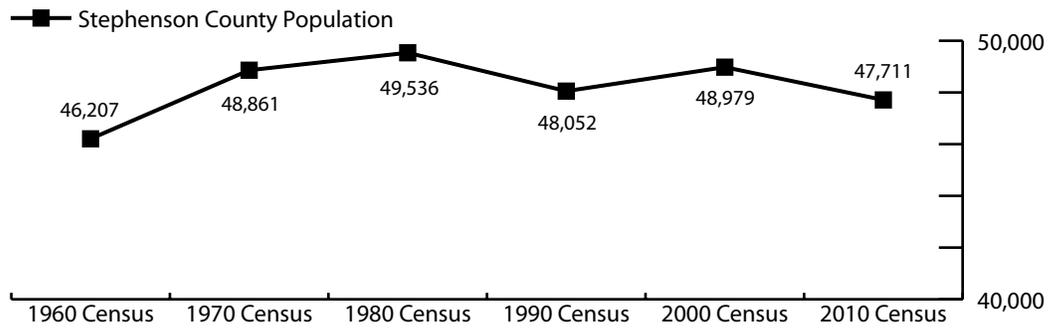


**Population**

**46,435**

2014 Census Annual  
Pop Est

**Population Over Time**

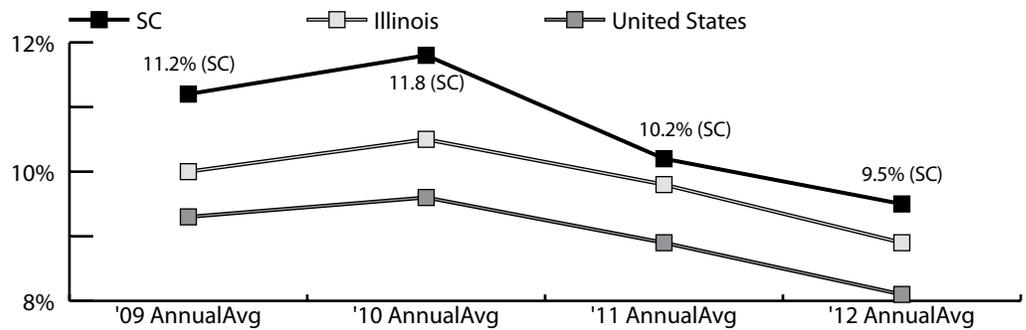


**Unemployment Rate<sup>1</sup>**

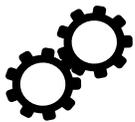
**7.5%**

Annual Average 2014  
(10.1% in 2013)

**Unemployment Rate Over Time**



**Top Industries<sup>2</sup>**



**Ed./health/social services**

5,008 ppl (5,018 prev.)  
23.6% (23.3% prev.)



**Manufacturing**

4,206 ppl (4,340 prev.)  
19.9% (20.1% prev.)



**Retail trade**

2,312 ppl (2,274 prev.)  
10.9% (10.5% prev.)



**Arts/enter./rec./accom./food ser.**

1,428 ppl (1,599 prev.)  
6.7% (7.4% prev.)

SOURCES: <sup>1</sup>ides.illinois.gov/data.bls.gov, <sup>2</sup>2009-2013 American Community Survey

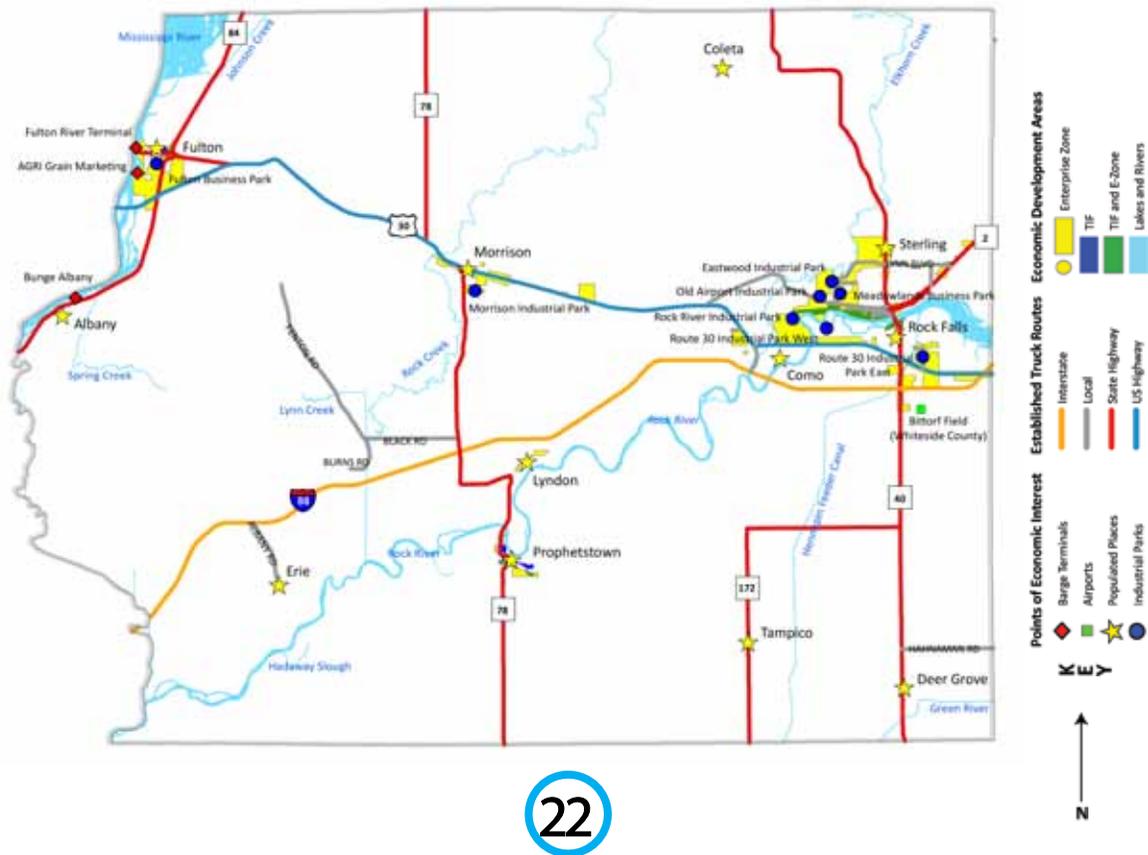
# OVERVIEW BY COUNTY - WHITESIDE COUNTY

## SELECT PROJECTS & INITIATIVES

- \*CEDS Committee Restructuring
- \*CEO
- \*County Insurance Data Collection
- \*Envirothon
- \*Fall Regional Development Summit
- \*iFiber Outreach
- \*Illinois Energy Now
- \*Local Stewardship Day
- \*Rural Transportation Planning Study
- \*Water Supply Plan



## TRANSPORTATION, E-ZONE, AND TIF IN WHITESIDE COUNTY





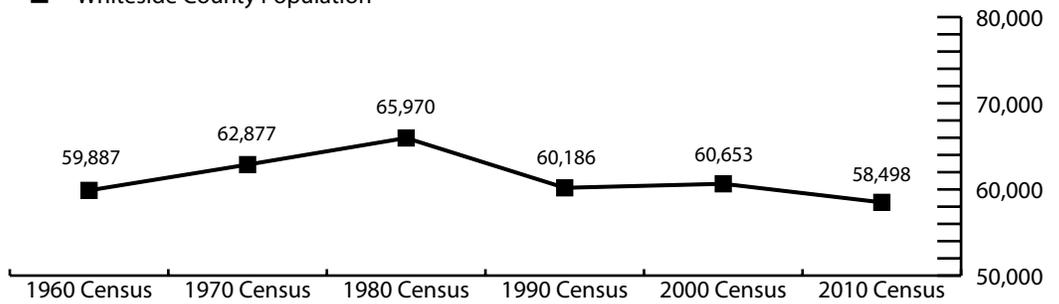
**Population**

**57,557**

2014 Census Annual  
Pop Est

**Population Over Time**

Whiteside County Population

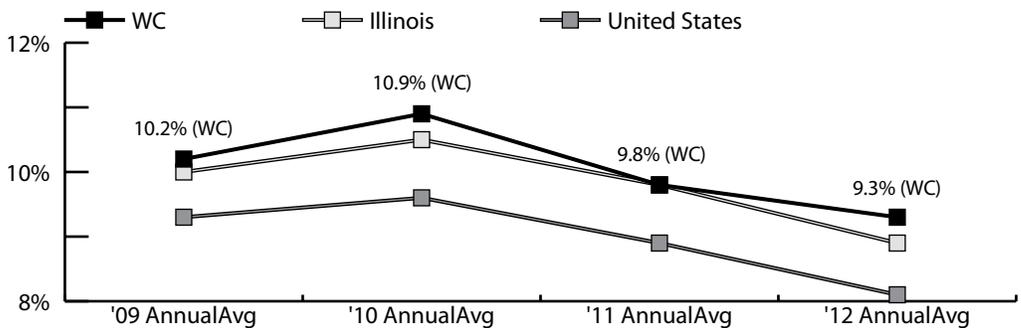


**Unemployment Rate<sup>1</sup>**

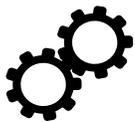
**7.1%**

Annual Average 2014  
(9.5% in 2013)

**Unemployment Rate Over Time**



**Top Industries<sup>2</sup>**



**Ed./health/social services**

6,180 ppl (5,893 prev.)  
23.3% (22.2% prev.)



**Manufacturing**

5,315 ppl (5,255 prev.)  
20.0% (19.8% prev.)



**Retail trade**

3,773 ppl (3,714 prev.)  
14.2% (14.0% prev.)



**Arts/enter./rec./accom./food ser.**

1,678 ppl (1,614 prev.)  
6.3% (6.1% prev.)

SOURCES: <sup>1</sup>ides.illinois.gov/data.bls.gov, <sup>2</sup>2009-2013 American Community Survey



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

[facebook.com/blackhawkhills](https://facebook.com/blackhawkhills)

**Both updated regularly.**

Staff members update BHRC's grants page and keep you informed about the latest opportunities for municipalities, counties, and non-profit organizations. From time to time, staff also post opportunities for individuals and businesses.

Information is usually posted under the following categories:

**Communities | Emergency Services and Criminal Justice | Energy Efficiency  
Libraries and Schools | Natural Resource Conservation**

We encourage you to subscribe to our monthly newsletter and like our Facebook page, which is kept fresh and relevant. And if you need assistance with the application process, BHRC can help.



# 2014 ANNUAL MEETING

Our 2014 Annual Meeting was held in Mt. Carroll, IL, on May 15 at Henry's Double K. Cory Harrison, Director of YMCA Camp Benson, provided the evening's featured remarks. Harrison spoke to board members and guests about organizational leadership and development.

As it has done in the past, BHRC presented two awards during the evening: the Carson DeJarnatt Award for Economic Development and the Volunteer of the Year Award. The decision to award particular individuals, organizations, or programs is made by the Blackhawk Hills Regional Council Board of Directors.

The Carson DeJarnatt Award - named after Sterling local Carson DeJarnatt - was presented to Sharon Pepin, founder of Community Funding and Planning Services in Stockton, IL. Pepin was recognized for her work and success in helping local communities improve planning and obtain funding.

This year's winner of the Volunteer of the Year Award was Eric Haan. Haan was recognized for his efforts to assist local public entities in their efforts to transition to iFiber and supply information technology and networking advice.



L-R: Ron Colson, Sharon Pepin



L-R: Mark Hansen (Eastland Schools), Eric Haan, Ron Colson



## IN MEMORIAM

Della Moen died on March 15, 2015. She was the longest serving council member on our board at 25 years, joining in April 1989 as the Stephenson County Area Representative and retiring in May 2014. Additionally, she served on the Stephenson County SWCD Board, Yellow Creek Watershed Partnership, and the Conservation Agricultural Partnership. She was also a Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Earth Team volunteer, Envirothon Competition volunteer, and recording secretary of the Driftless Area Initiative. For 19 years, she wrote a weekly conservation column for the Journal Standard, and these articles were published throughout the State of Illinois. Della will be missed.

# OUR 2014-2015 SPONSORS AND PARTNERS

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Carroll County Soil and Water Conservation District

Jo Daviess County Board  
Jo Daviess County Soil and Water Conservation District

Lee County Board  
Lee County Soil and Water Conservation District

Ogle County Board  
Ogle County Soil and Water Conservation District

Stephenson County Board  
Stephenson County Soil and Water Conservation District

Whiteside County Board

## STATE OF ILLINOIS

Illinois Association of Regional Councils  
Illinois Department of Transportation  
Illinois Environmental Protection Agency

## FEDERAL

Economic Development Administration

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102 E Rte 30, Ste 3  
Rock Falls, IL 61071

Phone: 815-625-3854  
Fax: 815-625-4072  
info@blackhawkhills.com  
facebook.com/blackhawkhills