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Blackhawk Hills Regional Council

2018-2019 Annual Report

BHRC Board of Directors & Staff

Carroll County Reps

- Darrell Stitzel, County Board
- Ed Juracek, SWCD*
- Dennis Bowman, Area Representative

Lee County Reps

- Tim Deem, County Board
- Emily Zimmerman, SWCD
- Janice McCoy, Area Representative

Stephenson County Reps

- Sam Newton, County Board
- Seth Wenzel, SWCD
- Dennis Groezinger, Area Representative

Jo Daviess County Reps

- Ron Smith, County Board
- Nicole Haas, SWCD
- Marvin Schultz, Area Representative**

Ogle County Reps

- Marcia Heuer, County Board
- Kayse Rushford, SWCD
- Michael Reibel, Area Representative

Whiteside County Reps

- John Espinoza, County Board
- Eric Epps, SWCD
- Glen Kuhlemier, Area Representative***

Full-Time Staff

- Daniel J. Payette, Executive Director
- Julie M. Jacobs, Office Manager
- Andrew Shaw, GIS Mapping & EZ Specialist

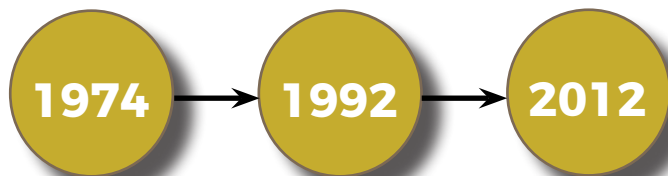


* President

** Vice President

*** Secretary/Treasurer

Our History



BHRC began as Blackhawk Hills Resource Conservation and Development District in 1974. In 1992, the federal Economic Development Administration designated BHRC as an Economic Development District. Then in 2012, with the support of the region's county boards and soil and water conservation districts, Blackhawk Hills, a 501(c)(3), was recognized as Northwest Illinois' regional planning organization.

Focus Areas

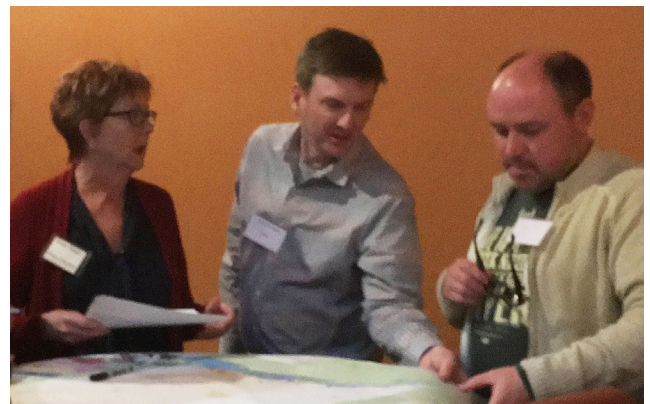
Community & Economic Development

Natural Resources Conservation

Planning - Local & Regional

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

BHRC creates, maintains, and helps to implement the six-county region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and the work of the Economic Development District (EDD). Since the district's inception, the Economic Development Administration (EDA) has awarded around \$15 million in funding to local initiatives. In 2019, after working with the Regional CEDS Committee, BHRC Board, and other stakeholders, we submitted the latest CEDS to EDA for approval. The planning document, which reaches out to 2024, covers key issues, such as declining population, an aging workforce, cluster diversification, and quality of life.



Asset mapping at the County-Level CEDS Forum in Carroll County

Trail Use & Wayfinding

BHRC has completed an initial study of the region's trails, including the Galena River (Jo Daviess County), Great River (Carroll and Whiteside counties), Jane Addams (Stephenson County), Joe Stengel (Ogle and Lee counties), Lowell Parkway (Lee County), Sterling Multi-Activity Recreational (Whiteside County), and Hennepin Feeder Canal (Whiteside County) trails. During the study, we counted users and launched nwiltrails.org, a repository of information about our region's trails that features data, photos, videos, and interactive maps. IDOT continued to support us in 2019 in two additional (and still ongoing) efforts - an expansion of the trail user study and the development of a common wayfinding guidebook for the trails of Northwest Illinois.



From our trails and amenities locating trek across Northwest Illinois

Development & Technical Assistance

BHRC administers the enterprise zone program in Lee and Ogle counties, offering mapping and technical assistance services and business retention and expansion support. In 2018, we helped economic development organizations nominate local Census tracts to be selected as opportunity zones. Additionally, we continue to support iFiber, the not-for-profit 1Gbps fiber network, which serves many communities in the region (ifiber.org/interactive-map). BHRC's broadband work includes helping connect private and public sector organizations to iFiber through its ISP partners.

Freight & Transportation

Two notable projects resulting from the Bi-State/Eight-County Freight Study relate to road safety and port/intermodal facilities. First, in 2018, following a request from BHRC and the East Central Intergovernmental Association (ECIA) to the Illinois Secretary of Transportation, IDOT District 2 conducted a road safety assessment (RSA) of the US 20 corridor between East Dubuque and Freeport. The RSA identified a number of corridor issues, as well as approaches to address each safety item identified. Additionally, in early 2019, BHRC began to work with ECIA, Northwest Illinois Economic Development, businesses, and other partners to pick a consultant to start a Mississippi River port planning project. Proponents are focused on roll-on/roll-off, break bulk, and project cargo. The feasibility study will include a benefit-cost analysis, which will reveal whether investment is warranted, and a market study, which will identify interested shippers and forecast use of an upgraded facility.

2018 Annual Meeting

BHRC held its 2018 Annual Meeting & Spring Summit at Livengood's Barn in Chadwick. Aaron Kennedy, founder of Noodles & Company and Mount Carroll native, spoke on the process of entrepreneurship and the characteristics of a successful entrepreneur. The **I ♥ Northwest Illinois Award** was presented to the League of Women Voters of Jo Daviess County, while the **Carson DeJarnatt Excellence in Community & Economic Development Award** was presented to the Making Opportunities Real for Everyone (MORE) initiative.



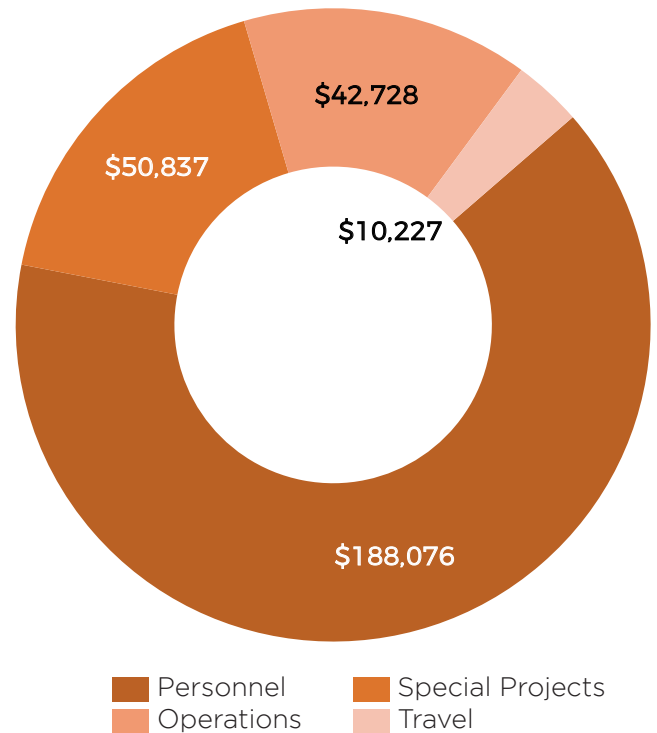
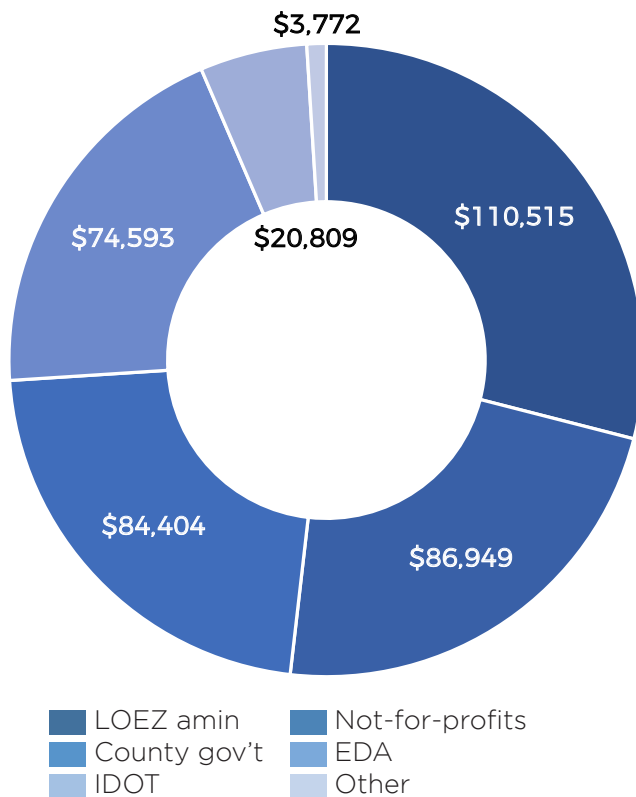
MORE team members Kris Noble, Gail Wright, & Darryl Hogue, as well as BHRC President Ed Juracek

18/19 Financials

April 1, 2018 - March 31, 2019 Unaudited Statement of Financials

REVENUES - \$381,042

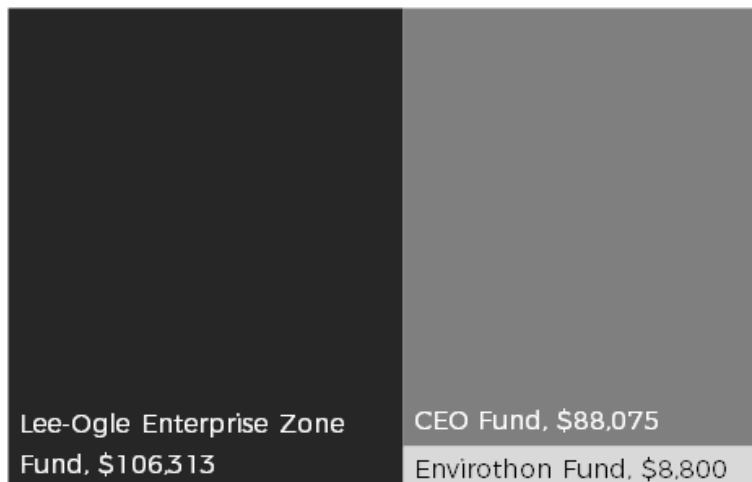
EXPENDITURES - \$291,867



18/19 Fiscal Sponsorship Funds

BHRC sponsors three programs related to our organization's mission: Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities, the Lee-Ogle Enterprise Zone, and the Envirothon.

**3/31/19 FISCAL SPONSORSHIP
BALANCES** - \$203,188



Implementing the CEDS & Proposing Projects to BHRC

Want to help us implement the latest Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy? Let us know. Or, have a new project, program, or policy in mind? Check out the following resources:

- Grants Database - blackhawkhills.com/grants
- Project Proposal Form - blackhawkhills.com/proposalform