



Blackford County

Community Input Session | November 14, 2024

Welcome

Who we are and
why we're here



Sara A. Peterson
Sara Peterson Consulting
strategy, governance, and effectiveness



Paige Sharp
Sharp Visionarts
community arts development consulting

Agenda



Welcome & Explore!

We'll answer your questions about the project, who's involved, and what it hopes to do. Then we'll take you on a quick tour of strategies used across the state to awaken everyone's imaginations.

- **Introductions & Overview**
- **Cultivating Community through Arts & Culture**

Assets & Opportunities for a Vibrant County

We'll share your county's cultural assets and opportunities that we see. You might be surprised! Next, you'll work with others in your community to develop a countywide vision for the future.

- **Our County**
- **Beginning to Envision What Could Be**

Next Steps

Tonight is the beginning...

Thank You!

Now go enjoy a beautiful fall evening!

**Tell us why
YOU are here**

Your name
&
who you
represent

Cultivating Community

Through
Arts & Culture



Why arts & culture matter

Contributes to **quality of life**

Improves Hoosiers' **health and wellbeing**

Generates **economic benefits**

Improves student learning outcomes
and career readiness

Creativity is a skill **sought-after by employers**



Celebrating Heritage



Columbus Star Quilters



Gathering of Great Lakes Nations
National Center for Great Lakes Native American Culture,
Portland

Civic Pride



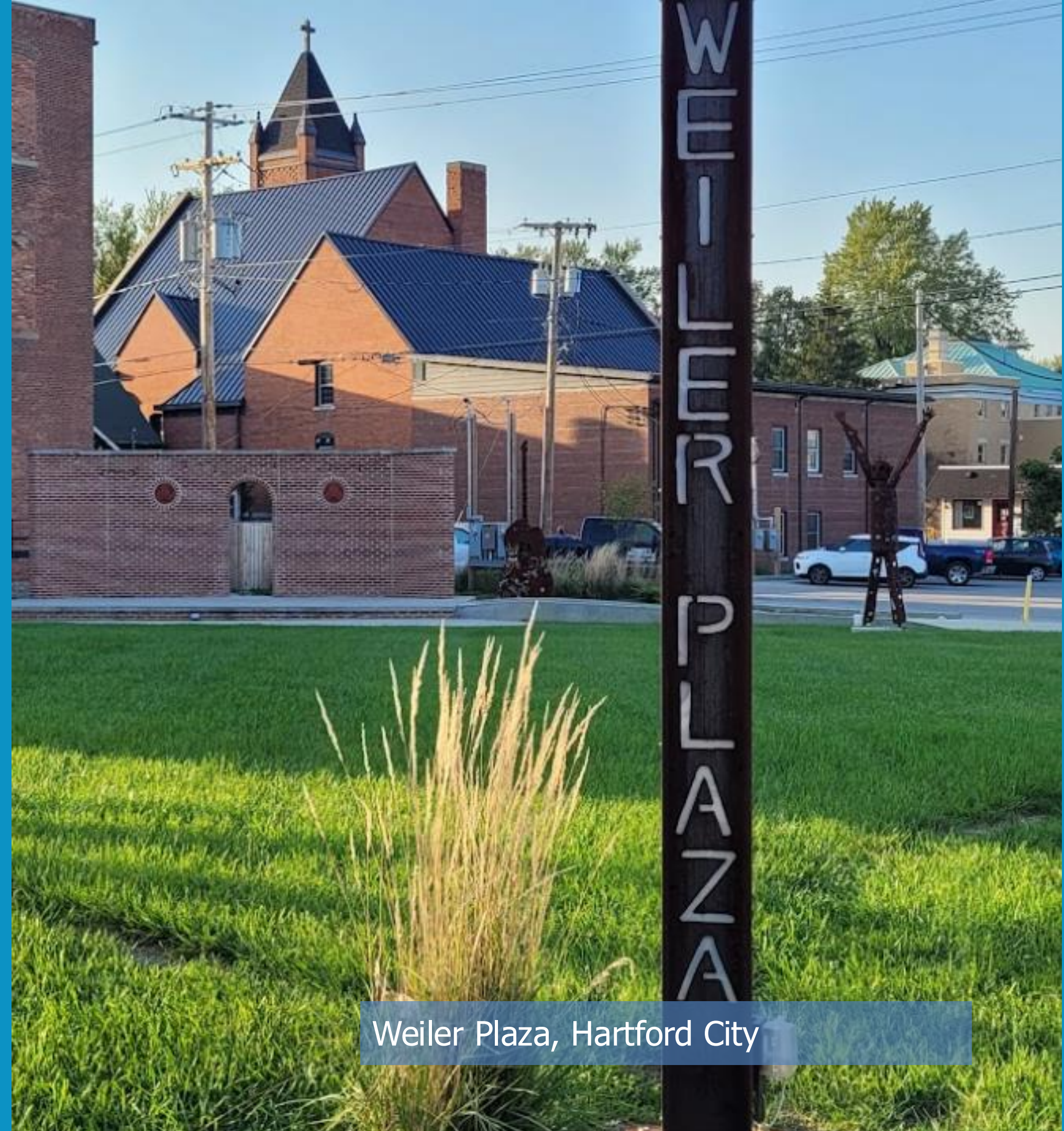
Rushville



Dunkirk Glass Days, Dunkirk

Revitalizing Places

through “placemaking”



Weiler Plaza, Hartford City



South Madison Community Foundation –
Pendleton Crosswalks



Putnam County Mural Festival, Greencastle

Revitalizing Places

through creative businesses and activities



Redkey Blacksmiths, Redkey



Peru Visual Arts Festival

Quantifiable
Impact

Quality of Life &
Place



Population Retention & Attraction

Quality of Life matters in people's decision to move or stay

Health & Wellbeing

Art making reduces stress and has shown to bring positive mental health outcomes folks struggling with mental health issues and addiction.

Creative aging programs (sustained group arts engagement) for older adults reduces falls, visits to Dr. office and feelings of isolation.

Arts & Youth

a substantial increase in arts educational experiences for youth reduces discipline issues, improves writing scores, increases empathy, academic engagement, and college aspirations.

Ongoing access means they're 2x likely to graduate college and 5x less likely to drop out.

Sources

*Americans for the Arts
Kisida and Bowen, 2019
American Art Therapy Association
Drexel University*

Blackford County

Rich in history and community pride

By the numbers

96% White with a slightly growing racially diverse population

12K Population is declining but rural areas stabilizing

Aging Population: 48% is age 45+

\$54,825 Median Household **Income** - **84th** in the state

17% Poverty Rate Higher than region and state (2020)

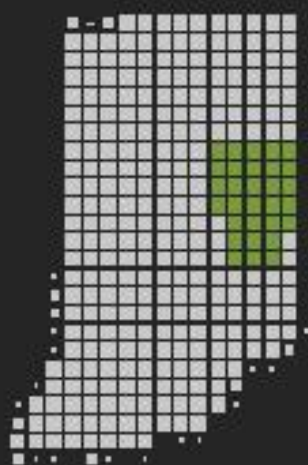
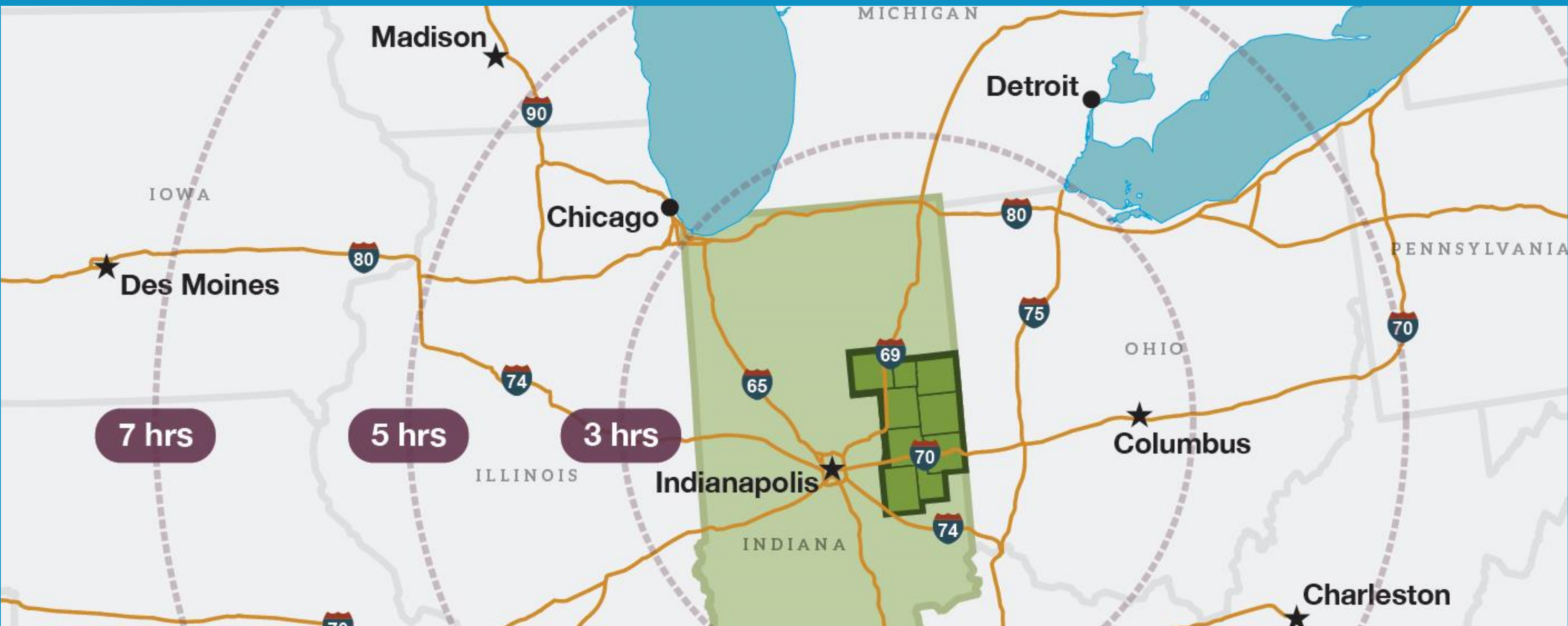
Industry is 28% **Manufacturing** followed by 10% Retail

Education Attainment similar to surrounding counties

Harford City · Montpelier
Shamrock Lakes · Dunkirk

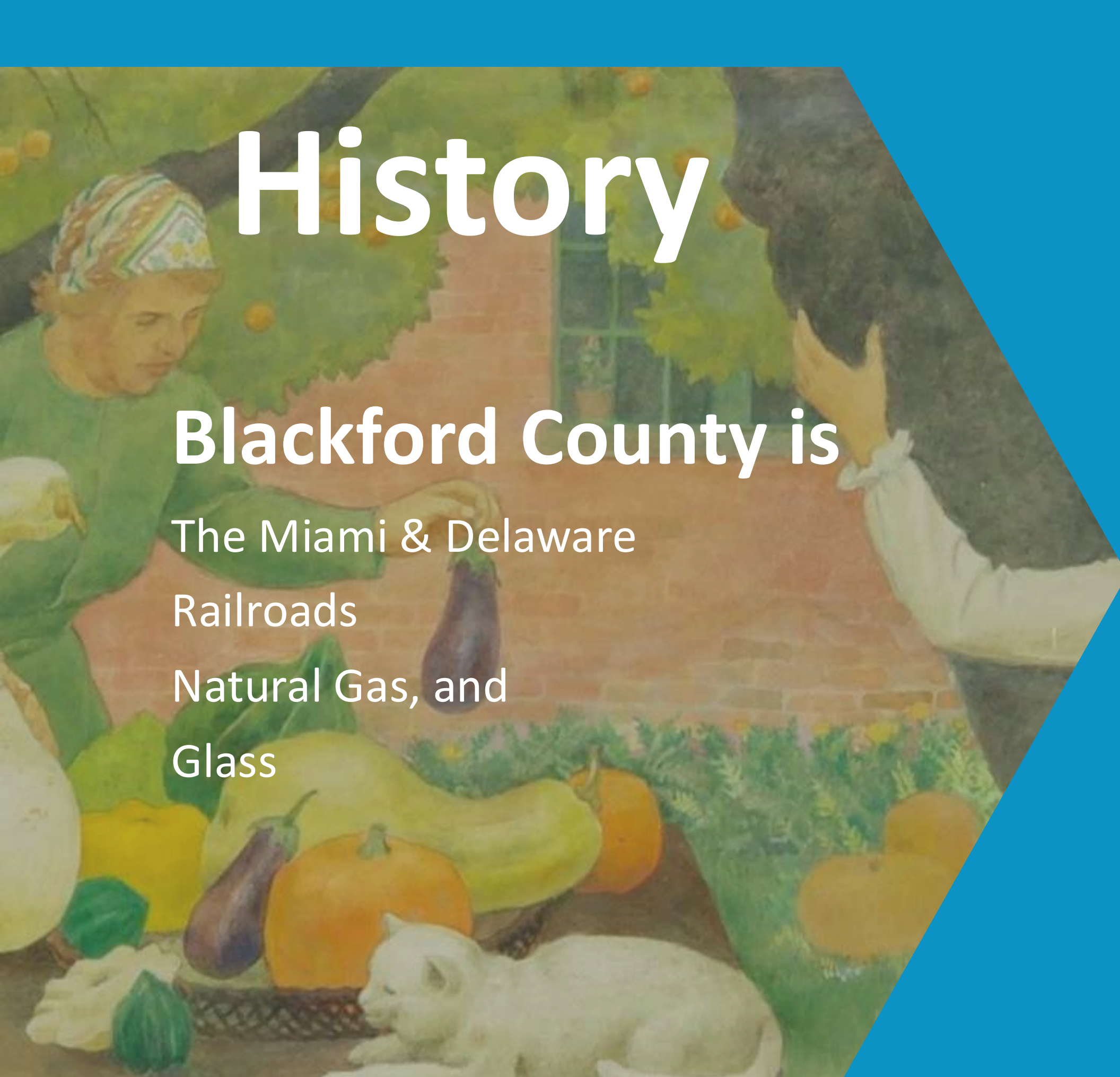


BRC Rubbers and Plastics,
Hartford City



EAST CENTRAL
Indiana
REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP

Drive Times



History

Blackford County is

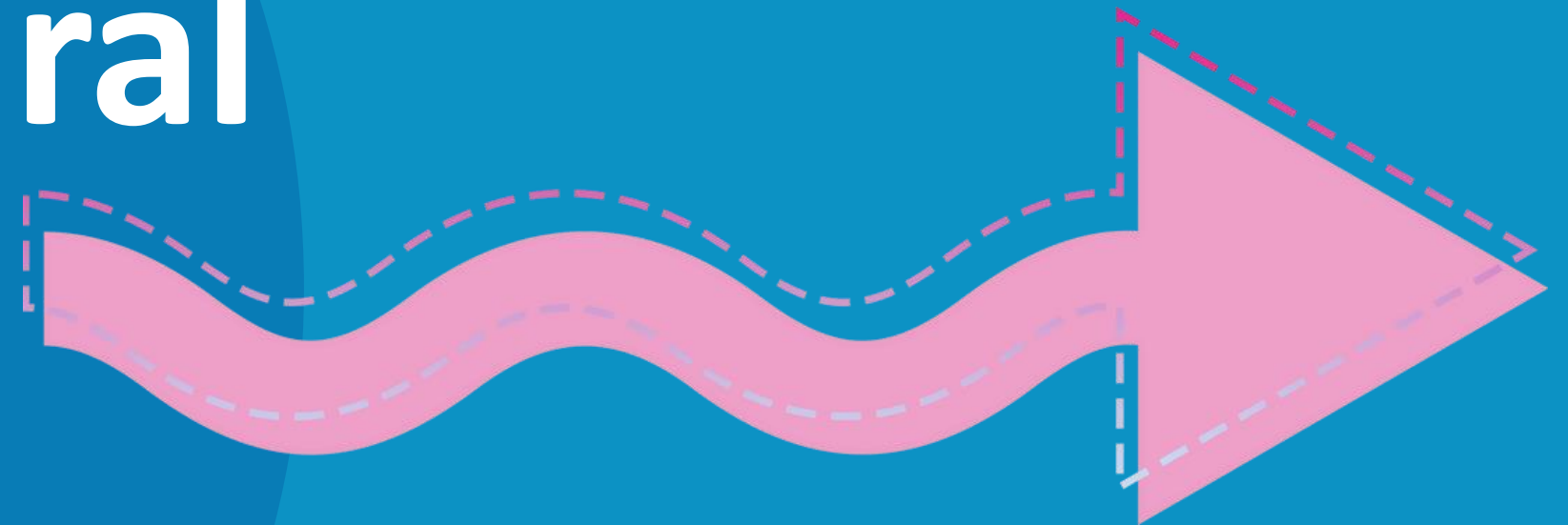
The Miami & Delaware

Railroads

Natural Gas, and
Glass

- 1836 Montpelier settled by Vermonters
- 1838 County created
- 1839 Hartford City named
- 1849 First railroad authorized
- 1867 Railroad finally realized
- 1876 Gas discovered in Indiana
- 1903 Horse track in Montpelier
Indiana Glass Co., Dunkirk
- 1907 Carnegie Library
- 1923 Overhead Door
- 1933 Dillinger at Montpelier Nat. Bank
- 1941 Last train
- 1945 First Montpelier Jamboree
- 1950 3M
- 1973 Shamrock Lakes incorporated

Arts & Cultural Assets





WARNING!

NOTICE

This presentation WILL be incomplete.
Someone – or several ones – will be MISSING.
Something may even be WRONG.

The goal is to illustrate opportunity *not* to inventory.
We appreciate your patience.

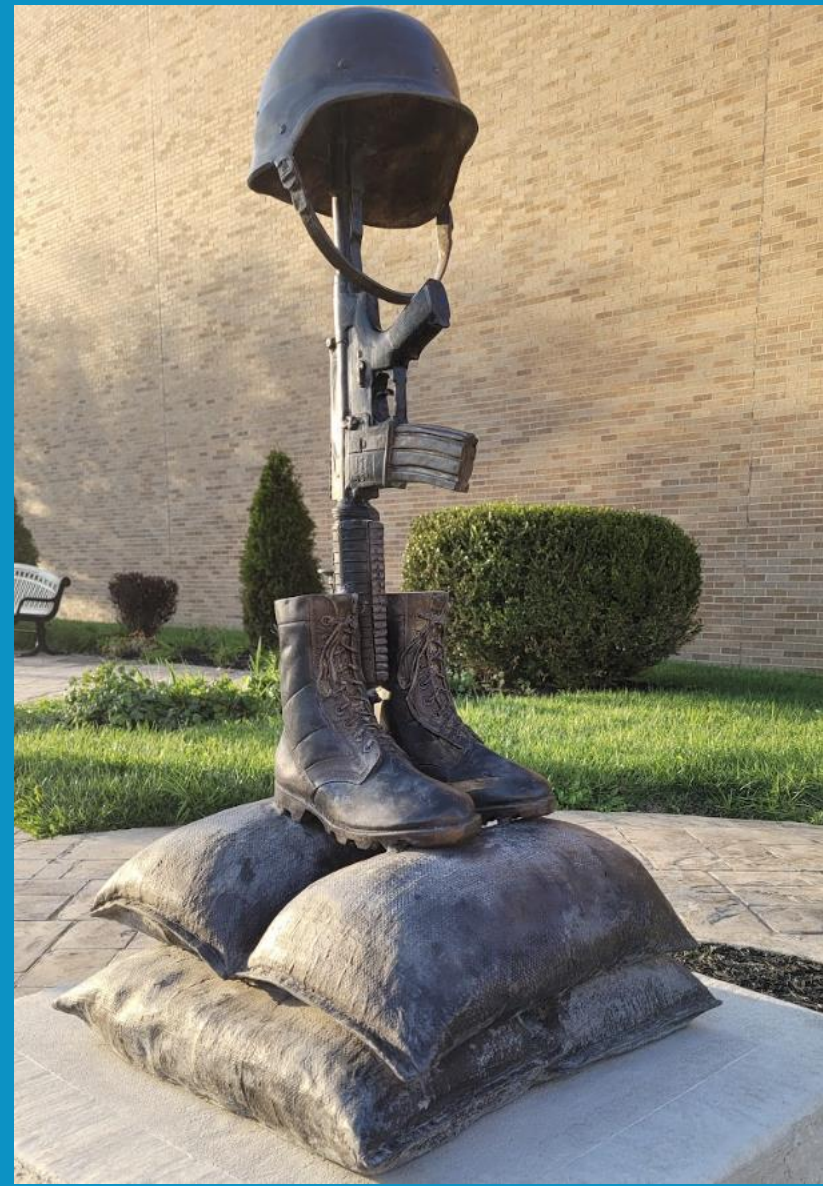
The Management

Public Art

Celebrate Local Artists & History

Engage Community, Attract Talent

Imagined Businesses Mural, *Multiple Blocks Downtown*
Bison-Tennial Bison Sculpture, *Blackford High School Students*
Fallen Soldier Sculpture, *Veterans Garden*
The Spirit of the American Doughboy, *Viquesney (1920)*
Gingerbread Men Sculpture, *in front of Indian*
**Miami Indian Sculpture (1960)
Soldier Statue, *W.A. Hoover, American Legion (1945)***



Festivals & Fairs



Celebrate History, Engage Community &
Attract Visitors

Holiday Bazaar

Santa's Depot Craft Show

Hometown Christmas Show (4H)

Hartford City Civil War Days

Heritage Days of Hartford City

Cornuelle Veterans Tree Lighting Festival

Rendezvous on the Reserve

Arts in the Parks, Hartford City

Arts in the Parks, Montpelier

Fourth Fridays at the Fairgrounds

Arts & Culture Organizations

The anchors we expect
when we think about this work
but are unique to Blackford

Council

Hartford City Art Council

Indiana Blacksmithing Assoc.

Arts Nonprofits

Blackford County Art Center

Mississinewa Valley Band

Montpelier Harrison Township
Public Library

Libraries

Hartford City Public Library

Civil War Reenactment Club

Historic

County Historical Society

Community Culture

The ones we don't always think of first when we think about this work

Our partners, community arts providers, and links to larger strategy

Centers

Montpelier Civic Center

Blackford County Economic Development

Civic

Montpelier Improvement Corp.

Blackford Development Corp.

Montpelier Chamber of Commerce

Funders

Blackford Co. Community Foundation

Helpers

Purdue Extension Blackford County

Schools

Blackford County Schools

Volunteers

Rotary

Local Businesses

Most call this small business

Artists, "Creative" owned, and serving

We call it creative industry

Makerspace

Main Street Micro Studios

MJ Creations

ADM Custom Creations

Sincerely Naiya

Whitesell Gallery

Mont's Wood Shed

Bad Penny Designs

DLS Jewelry Designs

Sister Pâtisserie

Art, Craft, Jewelry & More

Bakeries & Coffee

JJ's Divine Creations

Common Grounds Coffee Shop

Hagios

Film & Photography

Don Rogers Photography

Naiya Dudleston Photography

Granny's Bloomers Flowers & Gifts

Northside Greenhouse

Florists

Thrifty Sounds Thrift & Record Shop

Music

Hunt Guitars LLC

Wellness

Alternative Wellness Spa

Community Connections

... all tied to art and culture

... to quality of life and of place



Clubs & Groups

Montpelier History Club

Blackford Co. Radio Club

Blue Felt Jazz Band

Bruin Pride Marching Band

Depot Bar & Grill

Gathering – movies, music...

Tyler & Nick's Lounge

Weiler Plaza

Kids

Blackford County 4-H

More...

Visit Blackford County
Tourism Bureau

Places & Spaces

... to see and engage in art

... to appreciate community and nature

... to draw in visitors



Dunkirk City Park

Hartford City Wilderness Park

Veterans Garden & War Memorial

Baldwin Park (Airplane Park)

Bicentennial Garden Downtown

Blackford Greenway

Webster Depot Park

Firemans Park

Wildwood Outdoor Escape

Montpelier Motor Speedway

... and history



Dunkirk Oddfellows Cemetery

Hartford City Courthouse Square
Historic District

Blackford County Courthouse

First Presbyterian Church

Sigma Phi Gamma Sorority
Founders Park

Godfroy Reserve

People

With more to discover...

Jewelers

Painters

Ceramicists

Musicians

Actors

Fiber artists

Muralists

Designers

Teachers

Opportunities

embedded in plans



Promote economic growth



Quality of Life

Blackford County Comprehensive Plan

Adopted 2024 (10 – 20-year plan)

Goals

Fostering a superior quality of life for local residents

Balanced growth of residential, commercial, and industrial development

Preserving agricultural land and industries



We will be a county that...

Placemaking	Improves the lives and prosperity of our residents by providing spaces, programs, and facilities that reinforce our history, culture, and sense of place. County Brand, Marketing & Promotion Youth Center Feasibility Public arts programming
Economic Development	Supports local business owners and entrepreneurs as they test, create, develop new and expanded services, and products.
Historical & Archaeological	Protects local cultural and historical resources while finding innovative ways to advance local development and tourism practices Activate Little Lick Creek through public launch point and dedicated blueways route.
Parks & Recreation	Establishes a park and recreation system that includes high-quality facilities, diverse recreation destinations, and well-connected trail segments Master Plan 1st Public Park Update Trails Plan Coordinate Regionally Rec Programs for All

Relevant Priorities and Outcomes

Montpelier

- Baldwin Park Remodel - **Aerospace themed outdoor park / museum** (outdoor educational panels and large-scale outdoor pavilion)
- Build **kayak launch** at **Fireman’s Park**
- Remodel **Horseshoe Park**
- Create **Youth Programs**
- Expand **Wayfinding and Identity**

2023 Montpelier Comprehensive Plan

Dunkirk

- Glass Capitol Crossing: **Gateway** into Downtown Dunkirk, civic enhancements **boost quality of life** and **support community events**
- Catalyst Projects: **Revitalize historic Main Street** buildings to increase downtown living and business activity.
- **Streetscape: Upgrade** residential streets with sidewalks, curbs, and greenery, and promote Dunkirk as Indiana's Glass Capital.

2019 Downtown Revitalization Plan Update

The Vision

A welcoming region, backed by community resources, where all are empowered to be their authentic selves, create a life that matters, and forge a path to success.

Keys Elements

⁽¹⁾ Mosaic of Communities ⁽²⁾ Innovative Eds/Meds ⁽³⁾ Amenities Enable Residents to Thrive

Investment Strategy

Quality of Life

Stabilize the region's population and encourage growth through *investments that directly benefit the health and well-being* of residents, *promote tourism*, and *support vibrant downtowns*.

Housing & Infrastructure

Childcare & Support for Families

Education & Opportunity



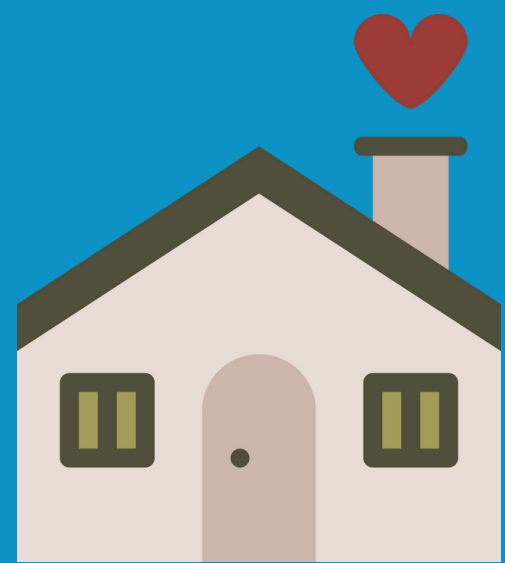
Finding Our Horizon

dreaming together



Planning

here to there
from start to vision



Start



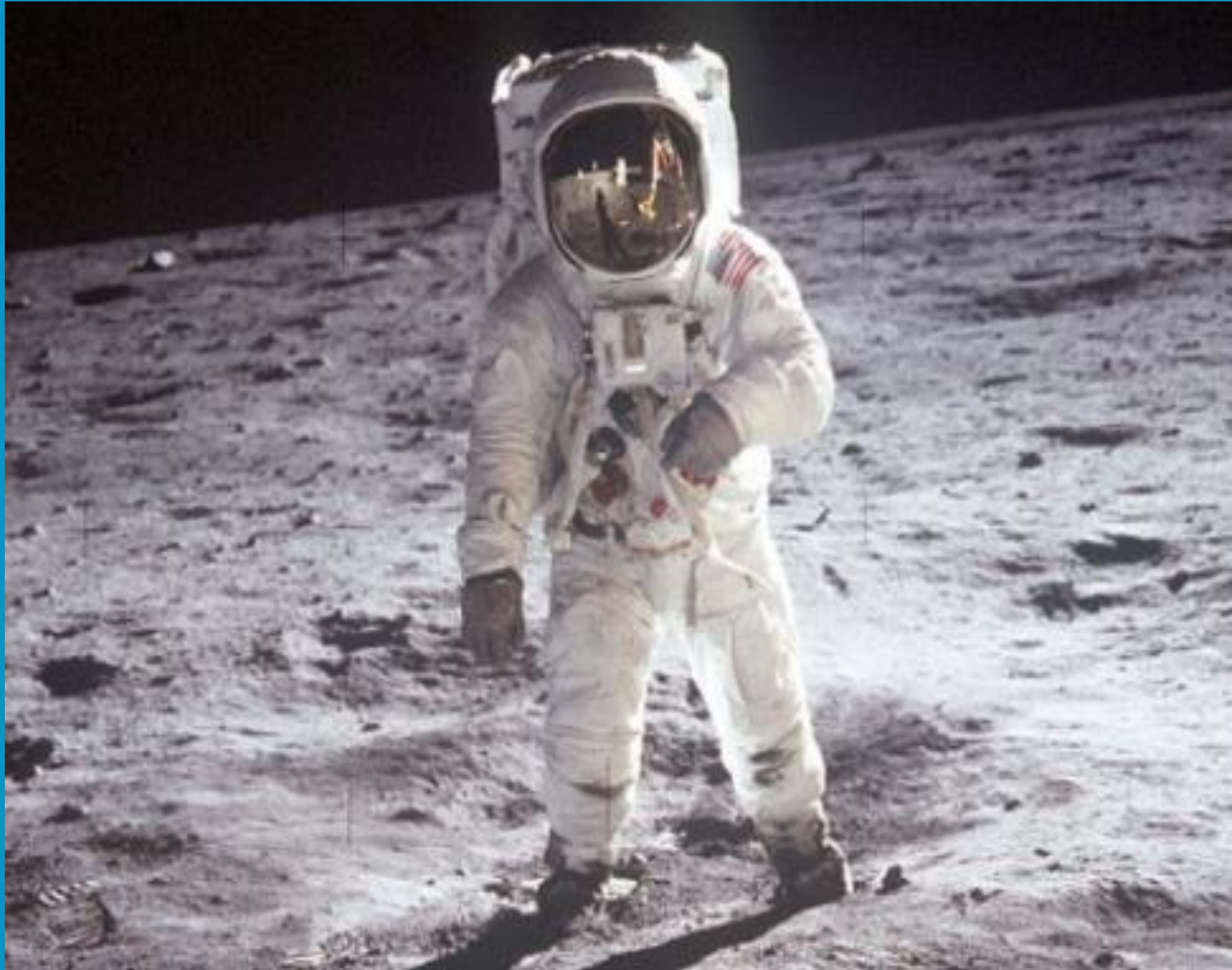
Vision
Horizon

Planned Goals

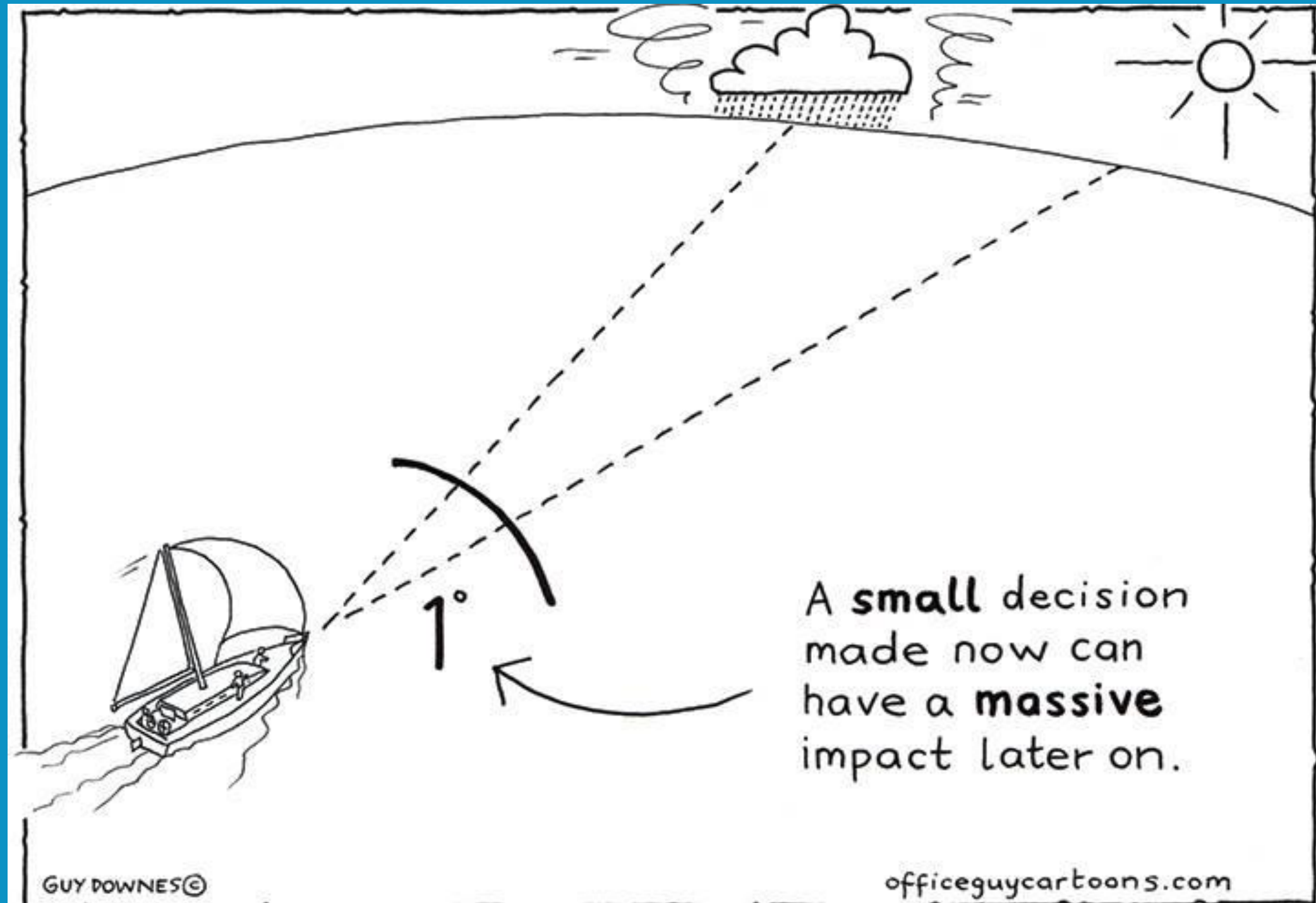
To reach our goals and our horizon
What do we need?
What do we need to do?
What do we need to change?

Think Big!

But within nature...



Oh, how things change...



15 years ago (2009)...

Cpt. Sully lands Miracle on the Hudson
Slumdog Millionaire won Oscar
Netbooks were a thing
iPhones started GPS navigation

20 years ago (2004)...

Bush defeated Kerry
Lord of the Rings won Oscar
Facebook and skype started
Flip phones, iPods NOT smart

Discussion Questions

A little
daydreaming

Lots of ideas lead
to revelations

Collect ALL the
ideas...

Envisioning 2035

Describe a vibrant, vital Blackford County Arts
Landscape –

*one in which we have all changed, as artists,
organizations, educators/schools, leaders,
communities*

Discussion Questions

A little
daydreaming

Lots of ideas lead
to revelations

Collect ALL the
ideas...

Envisioning 2035

1. Describe a vibrant, vital Blackford County Arts Landscape
2. When we step back, what themes emerge?
3. What are our priorities (framed as goals and strategies)?

Facilitating Change

- 4a. What partners or influences might HELP progress?
- 4b. What barriers or influences might HURT progress?

Next Steps

Tonight is the beginning...

Other Counties in the Project
Focus Groups
Surveys
Finalizing the Plan
Making it Happen
Regional Work



Thank You



Sara A. Peterson

peterson@SaraPetersonConsulting.com



Paige Sharp

paige@sharpvisionarts.com

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THANK
YOU

Thank you to the community leaders supporting this work.

The Board of Commissioners of Auglaize County

The Board of Commissioners of Blackford County

The Board of Commissioners of Jay County

City of Montpelier

Patrick J. McGowan, Mayor, City of St Marys

John Boggs, Mayor, City of Portland

Travis C. Richards, Executive Director, Jay County Development Corporation

Jeremy W. Gully, Superintendent, Jay School Corporation

Cheri Brown, Director, Purdue Extension Blackford County

The Portland Foundation

St. Marys Community Foundation

Arts Place Corporate Board

**NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT** for the **ARTS**
arts.gov