



# ANNUAL REPORT FY 2016-2017

## *Mission Statement*

*The Commission serves the Greater Wabash District by providing local, regional, and comprehensive planning, facilitating knowledge enhancement, securing and administering funds and promoting cooperative solutions to regional issues.*

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OLIVIA BAUMGARDNER,  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
COORDINATOR

DAVID SAVAGE,  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
COORDINATOR



## **About GWRPC**

The Greater Wabash Regional Planning Commission's Economic Development District consists of the following seven counties in Illinois: Crawford, Edwards, Lawrence, Richland, Wabash, Wayne, and White. The office of the Commission is located at 10 West Main Street, P.O. Box 209, Albion, IL 62806.

Regional Planning Commissions are voluntary multi-service entities formed under Illinois law by counties, municipalities and towns to serve local government planning needs. There are currently 14 multi-county regional councils and about the same number of single-county councils in Illinois having at least one full-time staff person. Regional Planning Commissions were established under Chapter 55 of the Illinois Compiled Statutes. Greater Wabash Regional Planning Commission (GWRPC) was officially established by the Edwards, Wabash and White County boards. Wayne County was annexed into the Commission in 1971, Lawrence County was added in October 1998, Richland County in December 1998, and Crawford County in 2001.

GWRPC has a 28-member board appointed by county elected officials. GWRPC has a staff of 3 who provide technical expertise, educational opportunities and support in the spirit of collaboration.

## **Affiliations**

Greater Wabash Regional Planning Commission is a federally designated Economic Development District by the United States Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration.

GWRPC is a member of the Illinois Association of Regional Councils, ILARC. ILARC serves as the recognized organization representing regional councils at the state level. ILARC is a non-profit, non-partisan association that promotes and defends the interests and activities of regional councils.

GWRPC serves as a Local Development District for the Delta Regional Authority. The Local Development District consists of White County. In the capacity of LDD, the planning commission prepares and distributes information on the Delta Regional Authority as well as prepares and submits DRA investments on a yearly basis.

GWRPC is a member of sALL, Southeastern Alliance of Illinois, a regional marketing group that includes the counties of: Crawford, Lawrence, Richland, Wabash and White.

## 2016-2017 Grant Summary

- GWRPC submitted grant applications in 2016-2017 totaling \$2,904,017 with a cumulative total project cost of \$3,81,900.
- \$86,638 grants were funded in 2016-2017.

County and Years	Total Grants Received
Crawford (2001-2017)	\$5,010,375
Edwards (1987-2017)	\$5,783,606
Lawrence (1998-2017)	\$7,002,358
Richland (1998-2017)	\$5,043,201
Wabash (1987-2017)	\$3,978,589
Wayne (1987-2017)	\$9,789,985
White (1987-2017)	\$12,557,474
Other (Regional)	\$620,000
<b>Total for all Counties 1987-2017</b>	<b>\$49,785,589</b>

### 2016 Grants Awarded

City of Robinson- Energy Now grant in the amount of \$7,700 for a new boiler at city hall.

Grayville CUSD #1- Energy Now grant in the amount of \$140 for new air conditioners.

Village of West Salem- Energy Now grant in the amount of \$1,691 for lights at the fire station.

City of Grayville- Delta Regional Authority Grant in the amount of \$59,807 for road infrastructure at the Grayville Industrial Park.

Village of Oblong- USDA/RD Community Facility Grant in the amount of \$17,300 for a new police car.

## 2016-2017 Grant Activities

### Richland County

**Noble- Administered** DCEO CDBG Public Facility grant in the amount of \$169,776 for a sewer line extension.

**Olney- Administered** DCEO CDBG Housing Rehabilitation grant in the amount of \$400,000 to rehabilitate 9 homes.

**Noble- Submitted** FEMA Assistance to Firefighter Grant in the amount of \$428,572 for a fire truck.

### Wabash County

**Bellmont- Submitted** FEMA Assistance to Firefighter Grant in the amount of \$201,751 for a new fire truck.

### Wayne County

**Wayne City- Administered** DCEO CDBG grant in the amount of \$150,000 for the design of a new water treatment plant.

**Cisne- Submitted** DCEO CDBG Public Facility Grant in the amount of \$349,890 for water treatment plant improvements.

### White County

**City of Grayville- Administered** Delta Regional Authority grant in the amount of \$263,861 for the construction of a new Industrial Park Road (Stephenson Street).

**Grayville CUSD#1- Submitted and Received** Energy Now grant in the amount of \$140.

**City of Grayville- Submitted and Received** Delta Regional Authority grant in the amount of \$59,807 for the construction of a new Industrial Park Road (Koehler Street).

**LWFPD- Submitted** FEMA Assistance to Firefighter Grant in the amount of \$15,006 for turn out gear.

**City of Carmi- Submitted** FEMA Assistance to Firefighter Grant in the amount of \$61,029 for turn out gear.

### Crawford County

**Robinson- Submitted** DCEO Housing Rehabilitation Grant for the rehab of 8 homes in the amount of \$400,000.

**Oblong- Submitted and Received** USDA/RD Community Facility Grant in the amount of \$17,300 for a new police patrol vehicle.

**Crawford County- Submitted** COPS Hiring Grant in the amount of \$120,450.

**Robinson- Submitted and Received** Energy Now grant in the amount of \$7,700.

**Crawford County Airport- Submitted** Energy Now grant in the amount of \$1,149 for new lighting.

### Edwards County

**West Salem- Submitted** DCEO CDBG Public Facility grant in the amount of \$398,842 for sewer treatment facility improvements.

**West Salem- Submitted and Received** Energy Now grant in the amount of 1,691 for fire station lights.

**EC CUSD #1- Submitted** Energy Now grant in the amount of \$3,814 for new parking lot lights.

### Lawrence County

**Lawrenceville- Submitted** DCEO CDBG Public Facility grant in the amount of \$395,820 for replacement of water lines.

**Petrolia Water District- Submitted** CDBG Public Facility Grant in the amount of \$441,014 for water system upgrades.



## United States EPA BROWNFIELD PROGRAM

In 2013, The United States Environmental Protection Agency selected the *Greater Wabash Regional Planning Commission* for two brownfields assessment grants totaling \$400,000. A brownfield is a property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. The EPA Community-wide hazardous substances and petroleum grant funds will be used to conduct Phase I and Phase II environmental site assessments throughout the GWRPC seven county region. In the United States, an environmental site assessment is a report prepared for a real estate holding that identifies potential or existing environmental contamination liabilities. The analysis, often called an ESA, typically addresses both the underlying land as well as physical improvements to the property. These grant funds allow communities within the region to get sites ready for economic development or other redevelopment uses. Grants funds also will be used to develop cleanup plans and support community outreach activities. In 2016, GWRPC and Terracon held an outreach activity at the Briggs Pottery Site in Robinson, IL. Those in attendance observed the process of a Phase II environmental study.

So far, GWRPC has facilitated the completion of the following Phase I environmental review reports:

West Salem- Krumm Building 101 W. North St. West Salem, IL

Grayville Industrial Plaza- S. Court St. Grayville, IL

Hutsonville Old School- 300 S. Pleasant St. Hutsonville, IL

City of Olney CIPS Site- SW Corner of Miller Dr. Olney, IL

City of Olney East Industrial Park- 4344 N. Holly Rd. Olney, IL

City of Olney Benton Site- Shipley Rd. & Rt. 50

City of Robinson Briggs Pottery Site East – 1000 W. Pine St. Robinson, IL

City of Robinson Briggs Pottery Site West - 1000 - 1060 W. Pine St. Robinson, IL

City of Mt. Carmel (Quality Cleaners)- 417 N. Market St. Mt. Carmel, IL

City of Olney (Garment Factory)- 901 W. John St. Olney, IL

Olney Herman Dr.- Rt. 130 & Herman Dr. Olney, IL

**CURRENTLY WORKING ON: City of Olney Gas Station Site- 203 W. Main St.**

**CURRENTLY WORKING ON: City of Olney- Whittle Ave Industrial Park- Route 130& Rt. 50**

**CURRENTLY WORKING ON: Village of Norris City- 213 E. Main (Former Gas Station Site)**

**CURRENTLY WORKING ON: Phase II- Briggs Pottery Site East and West**

## REVOLVING LOAN FUND

GWRPC has an U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA) funded Revolving Loan Fund available to businesses within the seven-county district. Over the life of the loan program, GWRPC has made 54 loans totaling over \$3 million that has led to the creation and retention of 728 jobs in the region. The GWRPC RLF has a current capital base of \$912,000. GWRPC is currently providing Revolving Loan Fund services to 9 businesses in the district and has money available to lend.

# of Loans made in each County:

Crawford County- 2

Edwards County- 9

Lawrence County- 2

Richland County- 11

Wabash County- 14

Wayne County- 3

White County- 13

**Total Loans- 54**

## Successful Loan Borrowers



Plum Street Pharmacy is a locally owned startup business in White County.



Dillmans is a locally owned White County based oil industry supplier.



## **DELTA REGIONAL AUTHORITY**

The Delta Regional Authority works to improve regional economic opportunity by helping to create jobs, build communities, and improve the lives of the 10 million people who reside in the 252 counties and parishes of the eight-state Delta region. Led by the Delta Regional Authority Board-comprised of the Federal Co-Chairman, appointed by the President and confirmed by the U.S. Senate, and the governors of the eight states-the Delta Regional Authority fosters local and regional partnerships that address economic and social challenges to ultimately strengthen the Delta economy and the quality of life for Delta residents.

GWRPC is a Local Development District for the Delta Regional Authority. The Local Development District consists of White County. (The DRA region was set by Congress and includes 15 southern Illinois Counties.) In the capacity of LDD, the planning commission prepares and distributes information on the Delta Regional Authority as well as prepares and submits DRA investments on a yearly basis.

In 2013, the Executive Director was appointed by Delta Regional Authority Federal Co-Chairman Chris Masingill to represent the State of Illinois in the Federal Delta Leadership Institute (DLI). The Delta Leadership Institute organizes the Delta Leadership Institute Executive Academy, a year-long leadership development program for regional leaders that prepares them to collaborate and address the most-pressing issues of the Delta region. Director Mann graduated and will remain an alumnus of the Delta Leadership Network and represent the State of Illinois and the GWRPC region. The Delta Leadership Network has over 500 members and comprises all alumni of the Executive Academy and is tasked in maintaining these relationships between regional leaders to foster collaboration and coalition building in addressing the Delta's most pressing issues.

### **Delta Regional Authority investments made in White County:**

2005 - City of Carmi- Sewer Rehabilitation \$146,700

2008- White County- GIS Printer \$14,250

2010- Village of Norris City- Industrial Park Bucyrus Road \$127,379

2012- City of Carmi- Industrial Park Road \$100,000

2014- City of Grayville- I64 Plaza Road- \$100,000

2015- City of Grayville- I64 Plaza Road- \$263,861

2016- City of Grayville- I64 Plaza Road- \$59,807

**Total DRA investments in White County \$811,997**





## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION**

In addition to grant writing and administrative services, GWRPC has provided the seven- county region with many non-monetary services. The most important service that GWRPC offers the district is the fact that they continue to represent the seven-county district with the United States Department of Commerce: Economic Development Administration as the official Economic Development District. GWRPC is responsible for writing and maintaining the District's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). As the District Organization, we appoint and facilitate a CEDS Committee that will help to develop this document.

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## **FEMA HAZARD MITIGATION PLANNING**

GWRPC, in partnership with Southern Illinois University, assisted all seven counties with the creation and updating of the FEMA required Hazard Mitigation Plan. The purpose of the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) is to help communities implement hazard mitigation measures following a Presidential major disaster declaration. Hazard mitigation is any action taken to reduce or eliminate long term risk to people and property from natural hazards. Mitigation planning is a key process used to breaking the cycle of disaster damage, reconstruction, and repeated damage. To be eligible for Hazard Mitigation Grant funds, a jurisdiction must have a FEMA approved Hazard Mitigation Plan. Plans must be updated and FEMA approved every 5 years.

### **FEMA Plans 2017-2022**

Edwards  
Crawford  
White  
Wayne  
Wabash  
Lawrence

### **FEMA Plans 2012-2017**

Richland

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## **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES**

GWRPC has been working with all communities to upgrade residential community infrastructure as well as strategies to increase quality of life. GWRPC works closely with the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and provides grant writing and administration for the US HUD- Community Development Block Grant which is administered through the State of Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity. Currently GWRPC is working with Dundas West Liberty on a CDBG Public Infrastructure grant for residential sewer. GWRPC is also administering a CDBG Housing Rehabilitation Grant in the City of Olney that will rehabilitate 9 homes in a target area at no cost to the homeowner.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES**

GWRPC has been working with all communities to create infrastructure needed for economic development within the region. GWRPC works closely with the Economic Development Directors in each County on projects. In 2017, all Economic Development Directors will partner with GWRPC to create a regional Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) Program. Through this effort GWRPC will purchase a Synchronist Software license for the Greater Wabash Region through a grant from the SET program. Synchronist Suite, hosted by Blane, Canada, Ltd is the platform for the State of Illinois CORE (Creating Opportunities for Retention and Expansion) statewide business retention program.

The program provides a strategic survey that focuses on company and industry intelligence as well as problem identification; to be used when performing business retention and expansion visits. Once interviews have been completed, the economic development organizations will input data into the Synchronist software. Analytical reports can be generated to from software to assist in identifying expansion opportunities, companies at risk, and company and community problems. The software will provide insight and documentation to impact decision-making and resource allocation within the organization, partner organizations, and communities.

### **Partnering Agencies:**

Greater Wabash Regional Planning Commission

Richland County Development Corporation

Lawrence County IDC

Crawford County Development Association

Fairfield Wayne County Area Development

City of Carmi

City of Grayville

Mount Carmel Area Economic Alliance

### **How the project supports the plan:**

A Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) program allows the community to learn about the company, their industry and relationship to the community. It also provides an opportunity to identify issues and concerns that pertain to the local economy and correct those that negatively impact the business climate. A regional approach is essential to the viability of the business climate and aggregated data from a regional BR&E program will assist in highlighting competitive strengths, opportunities for improvements, and barriers to growth and/or expansion. Many companies share the same concerns; aggregated data enables the region to identify these common issues and work toward solutions.

# USDA/RD STRONGER ECONOMIES TOGETHER



Stronger Economies Together (SET) is an initiative launched in 2009 by USDA Rural Development in collaboration with the four Regional Rural Development Centers (RRDCs) and their land-grant university partners, including the Purdue Center for Regional Development. The purpose of SET is to strengthen the capacity of communities/counties in rural America to work together in developing and implementing an economic development blueprint that strategically builds on the current and emerging economic strengths of their region. Essentially, we are focusing on working with neighboring counties to capitalize on available assets and work together to decrease economic obstacles. The SET process has occurred or is occurring in 28 states.

The Greater Wabash Region counties (Crawford, Edwards, Lawrence, Richland, Wabash, Wayne and White) were selected in 2015 to participate in a USDA Rural Development Program that provides training and technical assistance to counties engaged in economic development planning. The SET program is provided through a partnership between USDA Rural Development, the nation's four Regional Rural Development Centers, and University of Illinois Extension.

Staff from GWRPC, USDA Rural Development and University of Illinois Extension started the journey with a "Kick Off" civic engagement event on October 6, 2015. There were over 50 people in attendance at the first meeting. Throughout 2016, follow-up meetings were held in Olney, Albion, Fairfield and Bridgeport.



Left: Colleen Callahan, Director of USDA/RD Illinois speaking at the first SET meeting held on October 6, 2015 at Wabash Valley College in Mt. Carmel, IL

\*The Greater Wabash SET plan was finished and approved in early 2017. A copy can be found at [www.gwrpc.com](http://www.gwrpc.com).

SET Goal #1 - Employability- *Create a pipeline of employable workers within the region.* The region is facing many issues but the main issue is workforce. However, workforce is not just a regional issue but a nationwide issue. As part of the SET program, we are proposing a different mindset to the region's workforce issue.

**GOALS:**

**Stop population decline**

**Keep Youth in the Region**

**Fill employment positions in the region with quality employees**



Greater Wabash did a survey of local businesses in the region and from the survey almost every business believed that lack of soft skills was their #1 issue. Soft skills can be defined as: attendance, appearance, attitude, teamwork, initiative, integrity, commitment & loyalty, dependability, productivity, and communication. A skilled workforce is a core part of a community's economic competitiveness and soft skills is a basic component of a skilled workforce. As a part of the SET program, we are also proposing to implement a soft skills training program within the region's education system.

A consortium of K-12, economic development, community colleges and businesses has been developed within the region to make our youth more employable, stop the population decline and to provide a competitive workforce in the region. This consortium is titled the PIE Group (Partners in Employability).

In August 2016, GWRPC hosted a Regional Business Education Symposium inviting all members of the PIE Groups. Over 75 education, economic development, and community leaders attended the 1<sup>st</sup> annual symposium in which Delta Regional Authority Chairman Chris Masingill was the keynote speaker. The Symposium centered around the need for a quality workforce, the education needs of our youth and the prevention of population decline.



Left: Delta Regional Authority Federal Co-Chairman, Chris Masingill speaking at the Business/Education Symposium on August 9, 2016 held at Carmi White County High School

## COOPERATIVE SOLUTIONS

SET goals 2 and 3 relate to business in the region. In November 2016, GWRPC hosted a COOP Event at Wabash Valley College. The purpose of the forum was to provide information on current trends and opportunities in cooperative development, expand understanding of the role of cooperatives in community economic development, generate new and support existing interest and provide follow up direction to help move opportunities forward toward reality. A Cooperative is a farm, business, or other organization that is owned and run jointly by its members, who share the profits or benefits. The key note speaker was Margaret Bau, who has been a cooperative Development specialist with USDA Rural Development since 1998.



LEFT: Meeting at Wabash Valley College November 2016 on Cooperative Solutions



LEFT: Speaker Margaret Bau speaking with local high school FFA students about Cooperatives