



EAST ALLEN'S RURAL REVIVAL

Seven Unique Communities, One Bold Vision


**NEWALLEN
ALLIANCE**
ALLEN COUNTY, INDIANA

IMPACT REPORT

INDIANA REGIONAL STELLAR COMMUNITIES DESIGNATION PERIOD 2019-2022

GRABILL

HARLAN

HOAGLAND

LEO-CEDARVILLE

MONROEVILLE

NEW HAVEN

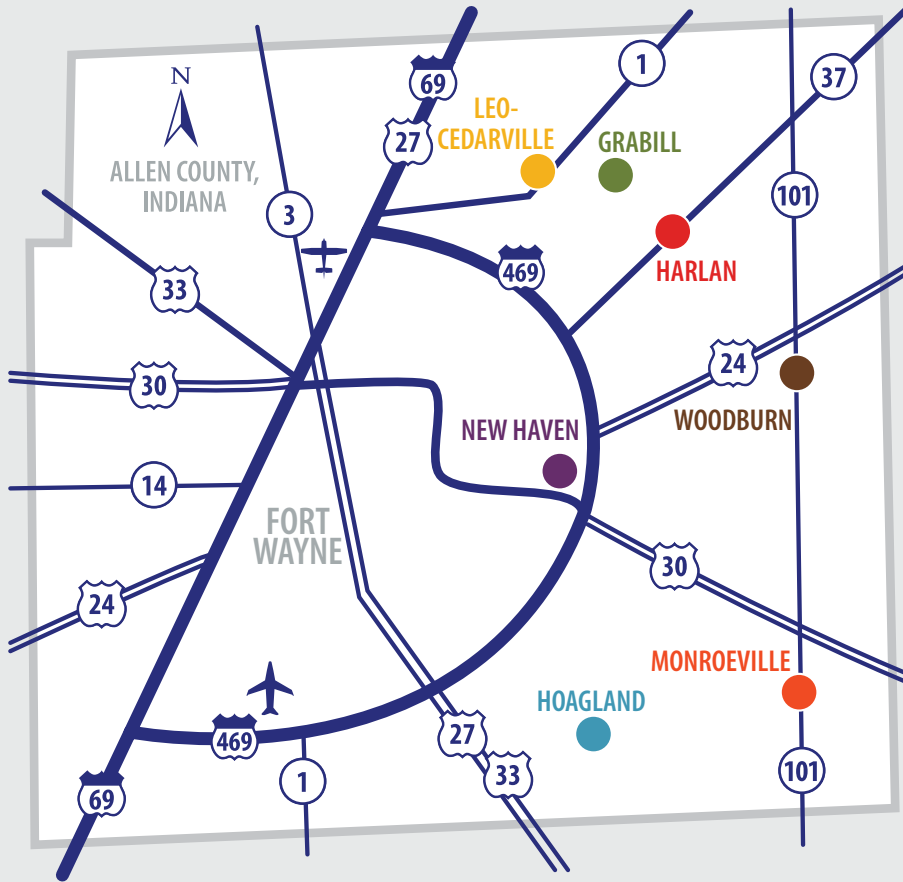
WOODBURN



- GRABILL
- HARLAN
- HOAGLAND
- LEO-CEDARVILLE
- MONROEVILLE
- NEW HAVEN
- WOODBURN

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EAST ALLEN'S RURAL REVIVAL



East Allen's Rural Revival is the collaborative effort of seven rural Allen County, Indiana, communities with a bold vision to improve quality of place through projects that help connect people and places in our rural areas (downtowns, parks, trails, and housing developments). As a result, our vision earned Indiana Regional Stellar Community recognition. This report highlights our progress toward achieving our goals of community cohesiveness.

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TIM ROY



KENT CASTLEMAN



KRISTI STURTZ

Message from NewAllen Alliance Current and Past Board Chairs

Enclosed in this Impact Report, you will find details on the tireless effort that NewAllen communities have put into the implementation of the East Allen Rural Revival Initiative. The fruits of this labor are being realized by residents and visitors who are now able to walk on new sidewalks, play in new playgrounds, enjoy public art, and shop in revitalized downtowns. New housing options as well as transportation and utility infrastructure within the existing built environment are also providing a foundation for sustainable growth.

As we conclude the Indiana Regional Stellar Communities designation, the NewAllen Alliance Board would like to thank all involved in this effort. From funding agencies to local elected officials, engineers, architects, grant administrators, attorneys, community staff members, contractors, park boards, Main Street organizations, chambers of commerce, civic organizations, regional community and economic development organizations, local businesses, residents, and more, this has truly been a team effort that we should all be proud of!

Tim Roy, Board President
NewAllen Alliance

Kent Castleman, Past Board President
NewAllen Alliance

Message from the NewAllen Rural Liaison

Through the compilation of this Impact Report for the East Allen Rural Revival Initiative, it has been rewarding to reflect on the past four years since the region received its Indiana Regional Stellar Communities Designation. Our seven rural communities have made great strides in improving the quality of place in East Allen County, along with building their internal capacities to continue to develop and implement projects.

Our work was conducted during an unprecedented time. Although the COVID-19 pandemic inflated project costs and caused some supply chain and regional engagement disruptions, we navigated these difficulties to the best of our abilities. If anything, the experience highlighted the importance of the many outdoor community spaces improved as part of our portfolio as well as how our collaborative efforts have built resilience within the region.

We invite you to read this Impact Report to gain a better understanding and appreciation of how this initiative has made a meaningful difference in our communities. We are proud of the work that has been accomplished these past four years and are humbled by the number of organizations that have stepped up to make East Allen's Rural Revival a reality. Thank you!

Kristi J. Sturtz, ALM, AICP
NewAllen Rural Liaison

NewAllen Alliance Board

- Tim Roy** *President* – Hoagland
- Lindsay Sharp**
Vice President – Leo-Cedarville
- Dan Reinhart** *Secretary* – Monroeville
- Kevin Roth** *Treasurer* – Grabill
- Sally Lake** – Harlan
- Tammy Taylor** – New Haven
- Herb Anderson** – Woodburn

Previous Board Members 2019-2022

- Kent Castleman** *Past President*
- Jon Niemeyer** – Hoagland
- Barb Smith** – Leo-Cedarville
- Terry McDonald** – New Haven
- Pone Vongphachanh** – New Haven
- Charlie Hatten** – New Haven
- Larry Oberley** – Monroeville
- Carol Martin** – Woodburn

Government CEOs & State Officials

- Wilmer DeLagrange**
Grabill Town Council President
- Greg Peck**
Leo-Cedarville Town Council President
- Steve McMichael**
City of New Haven Mayor
- Don Gerardot**
Monroeville Town Council President
- Joseph Kelsey**
City of Woodburn Mayor
- Nelson Peters**
Allen County Commissioner
- Therese Brown**
Allen County Commissioner
- Rich Beck**
Allen County Commissioner
- Denny Spinner**
Indiana Office of Community
& Rural Affairs
- Honorable Suzanne Crouch**
Indiana Lieutenant Governor

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

2019–2022
East Allen Rural Revival
Collaboration:

AH Public Art Consulting	East Allen County Career and Tech Center	John Klein, artist	Powerhouse Youth Center
API Construction Corporation	Eilbacher Fletcher, LLP	Jones Petrie Rafinski Engineering	Purdue Center for Regional Development
AWS Foundation	Engineering Resources, Inc.	Julie Wall, artist	Purdue Fort Wayne, Community Research Institute
Allen County Auditor	Financial Solutions Group, Inc.	Kady Gene Cove Affordable Housing Development	Ricco Diamonte, artist
Allen County Board of Commissioners	First Merchants Bank	Keller Development	St. Joseph Community Health Foundation
Allen County Council	Fleming Excavating, Inc.	Leo-Cedarville Community Foundation	Signature Web Creations
Allen County Department of Planning	Foellinger Foundation	Leo-Cedarville Park Board	Socially Seasoned, LLC
Allen County – Fort Wayne Capital Improvement Board	Fort Wayne Trails, Inc.	Mark Souder and Family	Springfield Township Trustee
Allen County Highway Department	Grabill Chamber of Commerce	Maumee Township Park Board	Sturtz Public Management Group, LLC
Allen County Public Library	Greater Fort Wayne, Inc.	Maumee Township Trustee	Summit City Entrepreneur and Enterprise District (SEED)
Allen County Redevelopment	Growing Grabill	Monroeville Chamber of Commerce	
Amy Buchs, artist	Harlan Area Revitalization Task Force	Monroeville Park Board	
Arts United of Greater Fort Wayne	Harlan Park Association	Mosaic Building Solutions	

Engagement and collaboration with 104 community partners.
Served a rural region of 68,000 people in seven communities.

A&Z Engineering	Hoagland Area Advancement Association	New Haven Chamber of Commerce	Taft Law
B. Smith Office Services	Hoagland Chamber	New Haven Community Foundation	Tim Parsley, artist
Ball State University, Indiana Communities Institute	Indiana Arts Commission	New Haven-Adams Township Parks Board	Town of Grabill
Barnes and Thornburg, LLP	Indiana Community Housing Development Authority	New Haven Print	Town of Leo-Cedarville
Beers Mallers, LLP	Indiana Department of Health	Niemeyer Builders	Town of Monroeville
Brightpoint	Indiana Department of Transportation	NIPSCO	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Burt Blee	Indiana Lt. Governor Suzanne Crouch	Nonfiction Productions	U.S. Housing and Urban Development Department
City of New Haven	Indiana Michigan Power	Northeastern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council	U.S. Federal Transportation Administration
City of Woodburn	Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs	Northeast Indiana Regional Development Authority	Upstate Alliance of Realtors
Community Foundation of Greater Fort Wayne	Indiana State Senator Dennis Kruse	Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership	William & Wagner Advertising
Congressman Jim Banks' Office	Indiana State Representative David Heine	Parkview Health	Woodburn Association
Cornerstone Youth Center	Indiana State Representative Matt Lehman	Paulding Putnam Electric Cooperative	Woodburn Chamber of Commerce
Country Shoppes of Grabill	Ivy Tech Community College	Phoenix Manor Senior Housing Development	Woodburn Main Street
DLZ Engineering			
East Allen County Schools			

Aligned by Shared Values and Priorities

NewAllen first organized in 1991 by chamber of commerce representatives of the seven rural communities of East Allen County, Indiana including Grabill, Harlan, Hoagland, Leo-Cedarville, Monroeville, New Haven, and Woodburn.

The mission of NewAllen is to create a unified voice for the communities in East Allen County to foster a coordinated effort in community and economic development, resulting in new investment, job creation, and improved quality of life.

The core values and shared priorities of the region were further established as part of the *NewAllen Strategic Investment Plan, 2016*. The core values help support the mission of the organization, shape culture, form identify, guide decision making, and form the rules of engagement while the shared priorities align the efforts of the communities within East Allen County Region. These values and priorities have been central to the success of East Allen's *Rural Revival Plan!*

Core Values



Collaboration: Cooperation based on relationships among communities in areas that go beyond set jurisdictional boundaries, recognizing both local and regional perspectives.

Economic Diversity: Support of a wide variety of business and industry.

Empowerment: Enabling communities to take action to achieve their goals.

Individualism: Each community is unique and provides value.

Leadership: Cultivated individuals and groups that have the tools and resources in addition to the authority or influence to make good decisions and positive action for a community



Cultivate an environment for sustainable economic growth

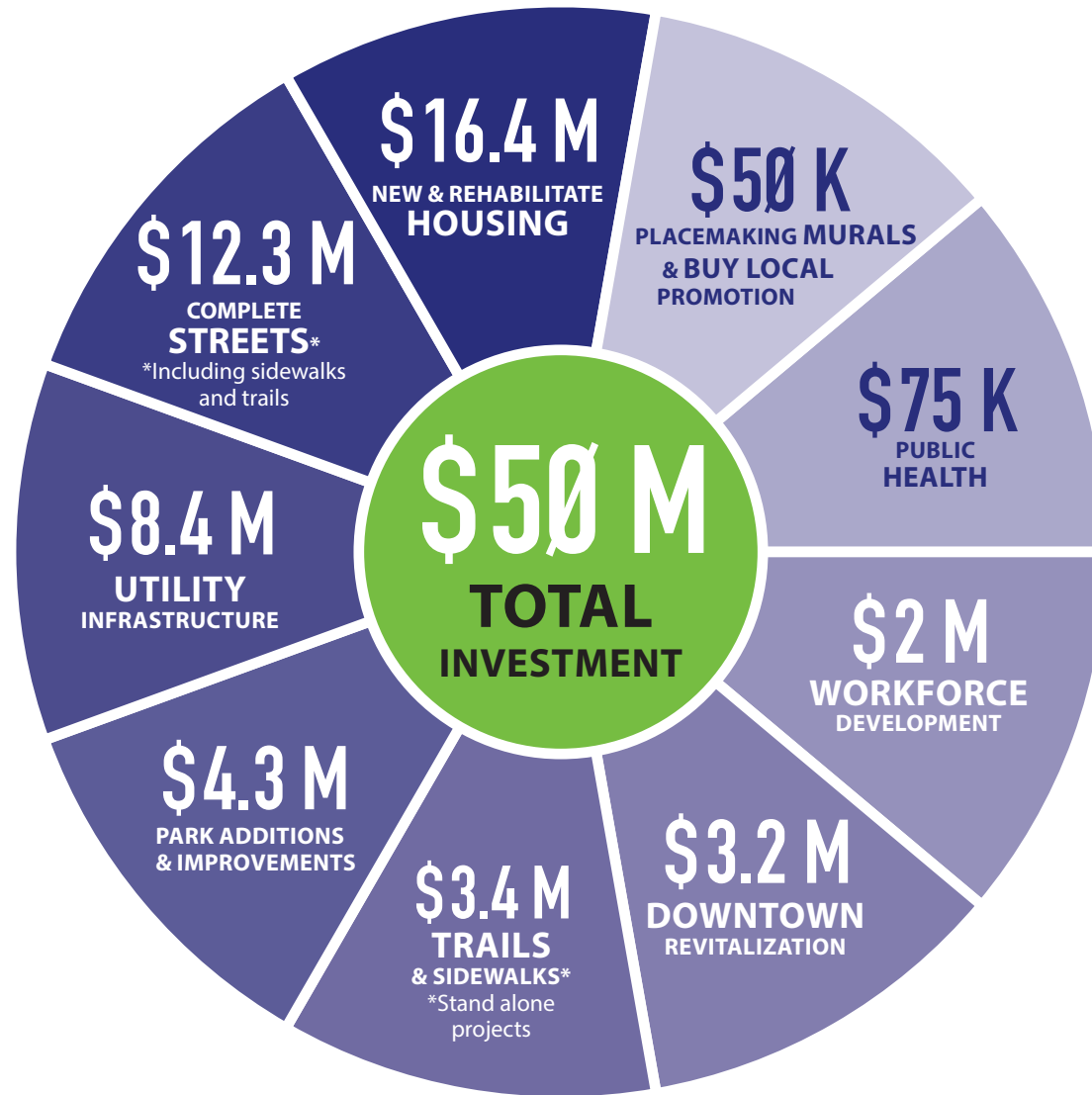
Foster community vitality through quality of place investment

Build a strong foundation to support livability

Shared Priorities

INVESTMENT SUMMARY

East Allen's Rural Revival Initiative Project Investment Summary (2019 – 2022):

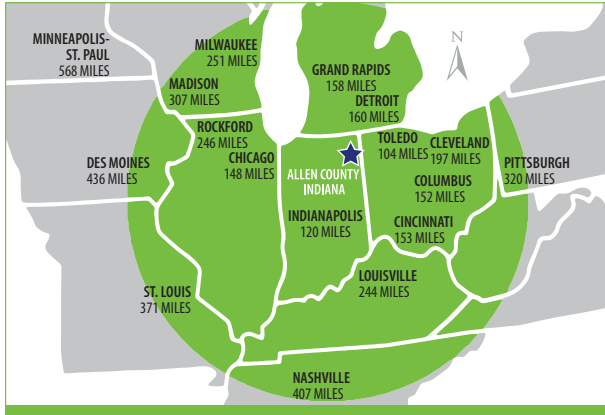


* An additional \$7M in trails and \$6.8M in Complete Streets projects (totaling \$13.7M) will be implemented in 2023-2024.

Economic Sustainability Metrics

As explained in the *East Allen Rural Revival Regional Development Plan (2018)*, a primary imperative in regard to economic sustainability is to offset the impact of demographic population shifts on retirement and labor force participation. With unemployment rates at record lows, employers are having difficulty finding workers with the skills needed to fill jobs. Therefore, population growth has become a primary economic strategy.

In addition, the nature of our economy is changing from industrial to knowledge-based. Advanced educational attainment has been determined to be needed to provide a local workforce with the appropriate skills to meet the needs of local employers and the local economy. Below are several indices that demonstrate how the East Allen Region is doing its part in terms of attracting and retaining a viable workforce with improved knowledge and skills.



- **Population growth:**
61,459 (2010) to 68,158 (2020) 11% Increase
- **Labor force growth:**
32,277 (2010) to 33,718 (2020) 5% Increase
- **Housing unit growth:**
23,410 (2010) to 25,382 (2020) 8% Increase
- **Educational Attainment:**
 - » 25+ with Some College or Associate Degree
29% (2010) to 33% (2020) 4% Increase
 - » 25+ with Bachelor's Degree or Above
24% (2010) to 25% (2020) 1% Increase

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Regional Vitality Metrics

A cornerstone of the East Allen Rural Revival Initiative focuses on the collective investment by East Allen's communities in quality-of-place projects concentrated in target areas of revitalization within each community. Collective engagement and investment by the NewAllen communities is creating an attractive environment within the region for businesses and individuals to live, work, and play. Below are a few indicators of how the regional vitality improved over the last four years.

- **Strategic Investment into East Allen Rural Revival Target Areas from 2019 – 2022:** \$50 Million
- **Strategic Investment Transportation Projects Under Development to be completed in 2023-2024:** \$13.7 Million
- **Number of Entities Collaboratively Engaged in the Region:** 104

Livable Communities Metrics

East Allen County has improved the quality of life for those who live there. Park and recreation opportunities have been enhanced and are more accessible, quality and access to goods and services have increased, pedestrian accessibility to central community assets and neighborhoods have been improved, and opportunities for physical activity and healthy eating education have increased.

- **Total Lineal Feet of Sidewalks Completed and Designed:** 78,000 l ft. (15 miles)
- **Festival Attendance in East Allen Rural Revival Target Areas:** 60,075 (2019) to 81,350 (2022)
- **Total New Housing Building Permits (2019-2022):** 354 permits valued at \$83M
- **Total Individuals & Households receiving Healthy Eating Education:** 158 individuals; 77 households

IMPACTS

This section includes highlights of the impacts created and/or influenced by our East Allen Rural Revival partners. It has been our position that each community's small wins build off each other creating flywheel momentum that will benefit the region for generations to come.

AWARDS & HONORS

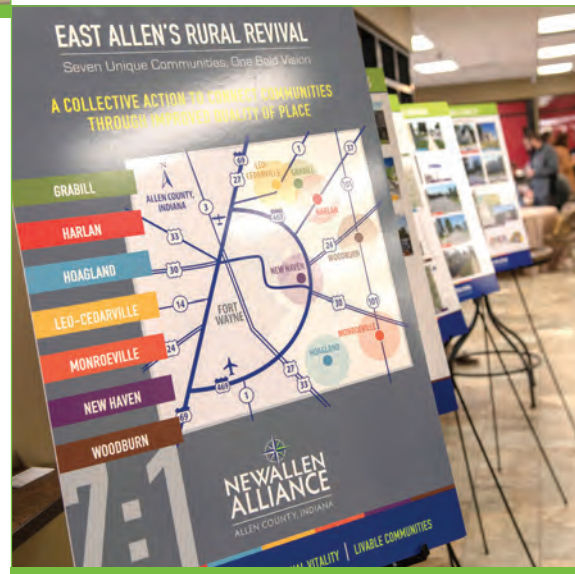
Throughout the implementation of the *East Allen Rural Revival Regional Development Plan*, the region and several individual communities were grateful to receive recognition for their work. The Indiana Regional Stellar Communities Designation led these honors. With the designation, the State of Indiana set-aside funding to implement several projects within the Plan portfolio.

Indiana Regional Stellar Communities Designation

In September 2018, the *East Allen Rural Revival Regional Development Plan* was submitted to the State of Indiana for **Indiana Regional Stellar Communities Designation** consideration. This plan outlined a bold vision to improve quality of place in all seven of East Allen's communities. Projects were proposed to help connect people to places within the rural areas such as downtowns, parks, trails, and housing developments. The region's vision is to grow population by enhancing the livability of rural areas, which will attract and retain a talented workforce that benefits all of Allen County and Northeast Indiana. The proposed portfolio outlined a total of \$64 Million in projects to be implemented from 2019 – 2022/23. Over \$17 million in projects were proposed for support through the Indiana Regional Stellar Communities program. Amounts set aside by the state for the region includes: \$4.5M in Community Development Block Grants, \$2M in Federal Transportation funds, \$75,000 in Rural Health funds, and up to \$800,000 in affordable housing tax credits which can typically finance a \$8 - \$10M project, and \$15,000 in funds for placemaking activities. The remaining \$47 Million in projects were considered complementary to the Stellar request and were funded by the communities, county, other state and federal funding, as well as through private investment.



"We were thrilled with their project. They were much more advanced than other areas in the state because they had been working together for years. They are all about generational change and improving livability and making it more attractive." — Indiana Lt. Governor Suzanne Crouch



New Ruralism Case Study

The American Planning Association (APA), Small Town and Rural Planning Division, APA Northern New England Chapter, and APA Divisions Council have developed a collection of New Ruralism case studies from communities across the United States. The NewAllen Alliance was highlighted as a case study in their report, **Lessons in New Ruralism (2020)**. According to the report,

“New Ruralism articulates that rural communities, to prosper, need a synchronized sustainability focus in three areas: economic, environmental, and social. To thrive, rural planning, policy, and grassroots efforts must embrace new methods of economic sustainability, like cooperatives and the creative economy. They must uphold environmental sustainability, both protecting the land while stewarding working landscapes. And, they must invest in social sustainability, fostering community, strengthening their safety net, and nurturing active democracy. The weaving of these ideas together contributes to strong rural communities. We believe these courageous efforts shouldn’t happen in isolation. New Ruralism seeks to learn from rural communities, understand their barriers and opportunities, share their success stories, and connect thinkers and doers with each other.”

The report and case study can be found at: dropbox.com/s/9xbico04knvsogr/LESSONS%20IN%20NEW%20RURALISM%20Fall%202020.pdf?dl=0

NIPSCO Luminary Award for Economic Development

The NewAllen Alliance was selected to receive **NIPSCO’s 2019 Luminary Award for Economic Development**. This award was based on the collaborative efforts of the East Allen County region. NewAllen community representatives, elected officials from East Allen and Allen County, Greater Fort Wayne, Inc. economic development leadership, and Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs representatives participated in an event to celebrate the award on September 12th, 2019 at the NiSource Corporate Headquarters in Merrillville, Indiana.



HEALing Seeds

The National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health (NOSORH) published the article, **Sowing the Seeds of Healthy Eating in Rural Indiana** in 2019 and touted the initiative as a promising practice. This article highlight’s the HEALing Seeds program being implemented in East Allen County as part of the *East Allen Rural Revival Regional Development Plan* and Indiana Regional Stellar Communities Designation.

St. Joseph Community Health Foundation and Parkview Health are the administrators of HEALing Seeds. These two organizations began their work on an urban version of the program in Fort Wayne in 2015 labeled Our HEALing Kitchen (OHK).

“We knew food deserts were a really big problem in urban areas, but rural areas have the same low-access pockets. Some of our areas are 15-20 miles from a grocery store. Because it’s rural and their needs are different, we’ve adjusted the curriculum and rebranded it as HEALing Seeds. HEAL stands for Healthy Eating and Active Living.”

— Laura Dwire, Community Programs Manager for the St. Joseph Community Health Foundation

This report can be found at: nosorh.org/promising-practice-sowing-the-seeds-of-healthy-eating-in-rural-indiana/

AWARDS & HONORS



American Planning Association

Creating Great Communities for All

AWARDS & HONORS

Indiana Housing Innovation Awards

Phoenix Manor (*below left*), a project that involved the adaptive reuse of a vacant elementary school into 33 senior housing units in Woodburn, Indiana, received an **Excellence in Rural Housing Award** from Indiana Lt. Governor Suzanne Crouch at the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority (IHCD) 2019 Housing Conference. The project was completed by Keller Development with the use of low-income housing tax credits. Woodburn is an East Allen community that has led the way in terms of their community development efforts over the last decade.

Then again, in September of 2021, East Allen was honored to receive recognition when Keller Development received the **Lt. Governor's Award for Excellence in Senior Affordable Housing** for the Kady Gene Cove Project (*below right*) in New Haven. Kady Gene Cove was an anchor project in NewAllen's *East Allen Rural Revival Regional Development Plan*. It was an infill project of 50 units that provides affordable and maintenance-free living for seniors and keeps them close to loved ones across the East Allen Region. NewAllen was also honored to have late board member, Barb Smith, represent the board at this event.



New Haven Community Center Awards

The New Haven Community Center Project was completed in 2017, shortly before the development of the *East Allen Rural Revival Regional Development Plan* (2018). This community center was 25 years in the making and the New Haven-Adams Township Parks and Recreation Department received the **2017 Indiana Park and Recreation Association Award Exceptional Facility Design Award** for this project. The project involved rehabilitation of an existing 16,735 square foot building on 12.74 acres that had previously been an outdoor drive-in theater and an auction site. This welcome addition to the New Haven community included park offices, a 3,000 square foot gathering area that can be rented out for parties, weddings and other events, a kitchen with an 800 square foot dining area that is available for rent and has been popular for baby showers, family gatherings and other smaller parties. Other amenities include a classroom, conference room, and a 480 square foot senior room. There is a 3,000 square foot fitness area which residents and non-residents can purchase memberships for and a 2,000 square foot aerobics room that can be divided into two 1,000 square foot spaces. A ½ mile paved trail connects to the adjoining Meadowbrook neighborhood.

The greenspace behind the building was subsequently identified as a priority project in the *East Allen Rural Revival Plan* to add an outdoor recreation component to this community hub. The New Haven Community Center Park Project was completed in the summer of 2022 with the assistance of Indiana Regional Stellar Community Development Block Grant funds through the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs. New Haven – Adams Township Parks and Recreation plans to apply for an award through the Indiana Park and Recreation Association for this project as well.

Priority 1: Cultivating an Environment for Sustainable Economic Growth

As part of East Allen's Rural Revival, communities focused on managing growth and development throughout the region. As a result, **zoning ordinances** were updated within each of the seven communities. A special thanks should be given to Allen County's Department of Planning Services for leading this effort in several of the communities. In complement to these efforts, Allen County's **All In Allen Comprehensive Plan** and Greater Fort Wayne, Inc.'s **Allen County Together Economic Plan** have been developed, providing a solid foundation for future growth management.

Capacity building was also part of the initiative. Each community had development teams comprised of engineers, architects, grant administrators, attorneys, financial managers, and community members that honed their collective abilities of how to plan and implement complex federal construction projects. Financing, engineering design, environmental assessments, permitting, site control, procurement, labor standards, and construction management were all project components. In addition, civic organizations were formed and fostered. For example, Growing Grabill was established as an Indiana Main Street affiliate member to support Grabill's downtown revitalization efforts. In addition, the New Haven Community Foundation and the Leo-Cedarville Foundation grew their presence, resources, and reach within their communities.

East Allen County Schools (EACS) has also worked to advance **workforce readiness** throughout the region with the completion of the \$2 million East Allen Career & Tech Center in 2020. According to their website,

"The Career Center has seven distinct career programs. These programs have been selected and designed specifically to prepare students for the jobs available in Northeast Indiana. Students get hands-on experience in a variety of fields including health care, manufacturing, technology, construction trades, criminal justice and education. All of the programs will lead to industry certifications and dual college credits, preparing student for immediate workforce entry or continuing education. The East Allen Career Center has industry and higher education partners to assist in the transition from high school to work and/or college. East Allen County Schools' 11th and 12th graders are eligible to attend the Career Center."



SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH



Small businesses development occurred through collaboration with the Summit City Entrepreneur and Enterprise District's Build Institute Training program held at the New Haven Community Center in 2019 and 2020. In addition, the NewAllen Alliance ran a **Be Local Buy Local** campaign in 2020 and 2021 which included press, window decals, signs, and bags with regional branding. Several local businesses were also highlighted on the NewAllen website.

Small Business Spotlight:

Local developer and entrepreneur, Elmer Lengacher, has been working hard over the last few years to help establish the Town of Grabill as a draw for backyard Amish tourism and exciting things are happening! In March of 2020, Mr. Lengacher purchased the historic Grabill Bank Block building located in downtown Grabill and has been converting it from a flea market into a workable mall called **Grabill Country Shoppes**. This downtown structure, most notably known as Souder's Furniture Store, is a collection of structures that have been connected and wrapped with a boardwalk and awning. In 2020, exterior improvements have been made at the rear of the structure including new siding, awning, and patio space. Interior improvements have included a restroom remodel, installation of a new heating and air conditioning system, and working with the Shoppe's 130 vendors to better organize the space. Several other offerings have been added including: a miniature train station exhibit, popcorn, fudge, hand-dipped ice cream, and saltwater taffy. Portions of the property have also recently been rented out to other new, small businesses including Common Grounds Coffeehouse.

A scanning system was also implemented to keep better track of vendor sales. In 2022, façade improvements including new siding, windows, and a new awning that wraps two sides of the building were completed at the same time that the Town completed adjacent streetscape improvements as part of the NewAllen Indiana Regional Stellar Community Designation. Lengacher also led the construction of apartments across from the Shoppes, leading to a total of approximately \$3M in private investment in the downtown area. Lengacher believes the redevelopment will be completed over a five-year plan timeframe.



Priority 2: Fostering Community Vitality Through Quality of Place Investment

A downtown is the heart of a community. It is where people gather for commerce, essential services, and community events. It is often the historic center of the original town plat. Vibrant downtowns represent healthy communities and local economies and are important to attracting new investment and talent. East Allen's downtowns were generally developed in the early-mid 1900s. The *East Allen Rural Revival Plan* identified the need for communities to redevelop these areas by replacing and improving sidewalks, roadway, water, sewer and stormwater infrastructure as well as improving the functionality and aesthetics of the place with streetlighting, decorative pavers, landscaping, and street furniture. Throughout the 2019 – 2022 Indiana Regional Stellar Communities Designation, \$3.2 million in funding went into the region's downtown areas.

Grabill's Downtown Revitalization (below left and middle) efforts focused along a two-block segment of Grabill Road/State Street and Main Street to 1st Street which wraps around the corner block of the Country Shoppes of Grabill, and other downtown Grabill businesses including Grabill Hardware, H. Souder and Son's General Store, and First Merchants Bank. Streetscape improvements enhance downtown Grabill with new sidewalks and lighting to improve pedestrian safety and accessibility. This was a \$1,241,637 project, \$750,000 of which came from Stellar-OCRA funds. The project also included upgrades to the storm sewer and water system to improve utility service and safeguard surface-level improvements.

At the same time of the streetscape improvements, the Country Shoppes of Grabill has also completed façade improvements which include the replacement of the awning that wraps around the building, as well as new exterior windows, doors, and siding and a new six-unit apartment building was constructed in the project area totaling over \$3,000,000 in private investment. Additional projects in the target area included a mural installation coordinated by Growing Grabill and roadway/sidewalk improvements along Main Street, north of Grabill Road with INDOT Community Crossings funds. These projects culminated in a Ribbon Cutting event just prior to Grabill Days on September 1, 2022.

"I am so pleased with how these projects have come together to revitalize Grabill's downtown and am excited about the future for our community to draw additional residents and visitors". — Wilmer DeLagrange, Grabill Town Council President.



The **Leo-Cedarville Downtown Revitalization Project** (above right) is located in the heart of the old "Leo" downtown area and includes two-blocks of Center Street from Hosler Road to Walnut Street. These improvements have provided the community with a pedestrian friendly streetscape environment, increasing public awareness, safety and interest in adjoining businesses. Project elements included: ADA compliant ramps and complete sidewalks, repaved streets with crosswalks and regulatory signage, new thematic lighting to improve visibility and warmth, planter boxes with greenery to offer beautification and uninterrupted sightlines, drainage upgrades to prevent flooding and erosion of streets and walkways and a downtown gathering place. The total project cost was \$1,247,985 which includes \$750,000 of OCRA funds and \$497,985 in local match funding. Additional downtown investment includes street and sidewalk improvements along Wayne and Main Streets with INDOT Community Crossing funding, a mural installation coordinated by the Leo-Cedarville Foundation and \$300,000 in the private remodeling of the current candle shop at the northwest corner of Main and Center Streets.

QUALITY OF PLACE INVESTMENT

DOWNTOWNS



“As a result of receiving funds through the Indiana Regional Stellar Community Designation, and because of the unanimous support of Council, a portion of Leo-Cedarville’s accumulated CEDIT funds were put to work to make this revitalization project more than a dream, and I want to thank everyone whose generosity, creativity and hard work made the project a reality.”

— John Eastes, Leo-Cedarville Town Council Past President.

Grabill and Leo-Cedarville’s downtowns are approximately three miles from one another along the northern part of the East Allen region. Streetscape improvements have been coordinated to complement one another with connectivity to the Cedar Creek Parks Trail.

In Woodburn, the community has been working for several years to preserve the vitality of the existing downtown as growth on the outskirts occurs due to completion of US 24, “Fort to Port” just north of the city. A Main Street organization was formed, and in 2014 an OCRA-funded *Downtown Revitalization Plan* was completed. Phase 1 improvements occurred in 2015 along Main Street and Bull Rapids Road, also assisted through Office of Community and Rural Affairs funds. This project served as a catalyst for a new meat market and town square improvements. As part of the East Allen’s Rural Revival, **Woodburn’s Downtown Revitalization Phase 2 Project** focused on completing planned streetscape improvements throughout the rest of its downtown. Phase 2 improvements were made along Main Street from Becker Road to Carl Street and included ADA compliant ramps and complete sidewalks with the addition of pavers to add to the sidewalk experience, new lighting, plant openings along the sidewalks for tree plantings to provide shade and to soften the hardscape experience, and drainage upgrades to prevent flooding and erosion of streets and walkways. Other downtown area improvements include a mural installation coordinated by Woodburn Main Street. This was a \$731,739 project which received \$500,000 from OCRA.

New Haven’s downtown investment centered around northern gateway improvements connecting to the downtown along Landin Road at a cost of approximately \$8M which included local and Indiana Department of Transportation funds. This complete street project also included non-mountable curbs, improved ADA curb ramps and crosswalks, traffic signal improvements with new pedestrian push buttons, erosion and sediment control, improved pavement markings and signage, and street lighting.

“These downtown revitalization projects are a great example of what the Stellar Communities program is designed to achieve. These improvements will help welcome residents and tourists into town, and further incentivize community and economic development. Congratulations to everyone who made each of these projects possible.”

— Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs Executive Director, Denny Spinner



Priority 2: Fostering Community Vitality Through Quality of Place Investment

As explained in the *East Allen Rural Revival Plan*, “There are many economic benefits to quality park and recreation investment within rural communities, including business attraction, tourism and events that contribute to local economies, increases in property values of the surrounding areas, and tax revenue on adjacent land. Parks also have social benefits of providing places for people to gather and enjoy physical activity. Open spaces also provide for stormwater retention. Unfortunately, though, parks are often seen as non-essential and do not receive the needed funding.” In fact, according to the *Indiana Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan*, the total amount of publicly accessible recreational land provided to Allen County residents by municipal, township, and county governments, and land privately owned but open for public use is 4,822.12 acres, or 13.6 acres/1,000 which represents a significant shortfall in comparison to the total recommended county standard of 55 acres/1,000. The East Allen Rural Revival portfolio therefore included the addition of one new park and a total of four parks improved. Park investment totaled \$4.3 million.

The **New Haven Community Center Park Project** involved the development of a regional park on the grounds of the New Haven Community Center within the Meadowbrook Rural Revival Target area. In 2017, construction was completed on the Community Center, which now provides a variety of amenities and programming. The park project provides complementary outdoor recreation amenities. This \$2,086,032 project received \$1,718,935 from the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs through their U.S. HUD, Community Development Block Grant set-aside. The project includes: an outdoor plaza with overhead shade structures, seating walls and security lighting to provide a space to relax and connect; a concession/restroom/utility building to provide for refreshment and park functionality; a splash pad to provide an aquatic recreation experience as well as cooling opportunities in the summer months; ADA compliant playgrounds to provide opportunities for physical exercise and socialization for children; pickleball and basketball courts to provide physical exercise for all ages; an open activity lawn to be used for a variety of social and physical activities; ADA accessible sidewalks and lighting to connect amenities to each other and the park to adjacent neighborhoods; overflow parking to accommodate increased use of the property for park use; utility improvements to support function of the park. The overall goal of the project addresses the lack of recreational amenities in the Meadowbrook Target area by developing a safe and accessible recreational environment that will improve community health and wellbeing.

“The new Community Center Park will be a great addition to New Haven, it will be a new hub that will bring families together and add vibrancy to the community.”

— Mayor Steve McMichael

“The New Haven Community Center Park is exactly the type of project that exemplifies the spirit of the Stellar Communities Program. Creating a vibrant location that is open and accessible to all adds to the quality of place not only in New Haven, but in the NewAllen region and is a key element in leading the East Allen Rural Revival.”

— Denny Spinner, Executive Director of Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs.



QUALITY OF PLACE INVESTMENT

PARKS

QUALITY OF PLACE INVESTMENT

PARKS

The **Monroeville Park Improvement Project** was the first to be completed in East Allen's Rural Revival Portfolio in the fall of 2019. Park improvements included a one-half mile ADA compliant asphalt bike-ped trail, an ADA compliant splash pad/spray park, two (2) ADA compliant playgrounds with accessible surfacing, a new support facility with ADA compliant restrooms and concession space, an ADA compliant fishing pier, a concrete bean bag toss game, and upgrades to parking and drainage. In addition to funding from the Town of Monroeville, the \$925,000 project utilized a Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Grant from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, an AWS Foundation Grant to assist with the accessible surfacing at the playgrounds, and funding support from the Allen County Board of Commissioners.

"The end result of these park improvements will be a tremendous asset to the residents of Monroeville and southeastern Allen County. It will improve both the quality of life and the accessibility within our community."

— Don Gerardot, Monroeville Town Council President.

"As a result of this LWCF project, residents of all abilities from Monroeville and the surrounding area will be able to enjoy several new outdoor recreation opportunities as well as several more that have been renovated. We applaud Monroeville for improving the quality of life and the green infrastructure of their community." — Bob Bronson, DNR SCORP Section Chief

"We are excited to have been able to partner with the Town of Monroeville to get to this point in improving the park. It is these very partnerships that help to grow the Allen County community. These quality of life projects are so important to the health and future of our communities." — Commissioner Nelson Peters, Allen County Board of Commissioners.



The unincorporated communities of **Harlan** and **Hoagland** have prioritized improving their parks at part of the *East Allen Rural Revival Plan*. In 2021 and 2022, each community received approximately \$600,000 in funding through the Allen County Commissioners to improve their park sites including roadways, storm drainage, and sidewalks. Harlan Park also received new bleachers. Both communities are also installing new playground equipment. Hoagland's playground was installed and they are planning on adding new turf. Harlan's playground will be installed in April of 2023.



Priority 2: Fostering Community Vitality Through Quality of Place Investment

Original plats developed in the late nineteenth – twentieth centuries are generally compact and walkable with a mixture of residential, commercial and public spaces. As suburban development occurred in the 1950s with the increased use of automobiles and separate use zoning was established, the walkability of communities has diminished. The *East Allen Rural Revival Plan* focuses on re-establishing community connectedness through walkable attributes such as sidewalks, bike lanes, trails, street trees, streetlights, and bike racks. Increased walkability also provides increased access to places such as parks, downtowns, schools and libraries where people can connect with one another. Sidewalk connectivity and ADA accessibility were identified as a priority. In fact, a total of 78,000 lineal feet of new and improved sidewalks have been constructed as part of the Rural Revival portfolio from 2019 – 2022.

A variety of the East Allen Rural Revival Portfolio Projects had some component of sidewalk improvements including each of the downtown, park, road, and housing development projects. There are also a few projects with a primary focus on walkway connectivity. The **New Haven Meadowbrook Sidewalk and Trail Project** was completed in the fall of 2022. The project totaled \$675,450 with \$385,762 provided by the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs with U.S. HUD Community Development Block Grant Stellar set-aside funds. This project provides a safe, accessible pedestrian environment by adding new sidewalk and trail infrastructure that connect surrounding neighborhoods to the New Haven Community Center and Park. The project consisted of constructing a new concrete sidewalk along the south side of Brookdale Dr, from 150-ft West of the Brookdale Dr and W. Circle Dr intersection to Brookwood Dr; a new curb-faced concrete sidewalk along the east side of Brookwood Dr, from Brookdale Dr to the end of the Stellar-supported Kady Gene Cove Senior Housing Development property. The project also consists of ADA compliant concrete curb ramps, concrete drive approaches, minor drainage improvements and site restoration. The total project length is 0.52 miles.

“Through the shared endeavor to make quality of life improvements within rural revival target areas as part of East Allen’s Rural Revival Regional Development Plan and our Indiana Regional Stellar Communities Designation, the Meadowbrook area easily rose to the top as a location to focus our efforts which is largely comprised of working-class families and senior citizens...This project will provide connectivity for residents in and between the Meadowbrook neighborhood, Kady Gene Cove, and the New Haven Community Center, and will provide a safe and accessible recreational environment that will improve their community health and wellbeing.”

— Mayor Steve McMichael, City of New Haven

Both the **Woodburn Sidewalk and Trail Project** and the **Monroeville Sidewalk and Trail Project** are identified for Stellar set-aside funding administered by Indiana Department of Transportation. Each of these projects have been bid and are scheduled to complete construction in 2023. The Woodburn project will include: (1) Reconstruction of sidewalk on both the east and west sides of Center Street from Main Street to Front Road; (2) Reconstruction of sidewalk on the west side of SR 101 from Main Street to Overmeyer Street; (3) Construction of new sidewalk on the south side of Maple Lane from Bull Rapids Road to Center Street; (4) Construction of new sidewalk on the east side of Becker Road from Rupp Street to Main Street; (5) Reconstruction of sidewalk on both the east and west side of Park Street from Main Street to Front Road; and (6) Reconstruction of sidewalk on both the east and west side of Carl Street from Rupp Street to Main Street. The project will include 5,036 lineal feet of sidewalk. The project will also include a new 10-foot HMA Trail on the north side of Woodburn Road from 1365 feet west of Becker Road to 22031 Main Street (Willie’s II Restaurant). The project will include 1,212 lineal feet of trail. The total cost of both projects is \$1,274,889 with INDOT providing \$900,000 and Woodburn providing \$374,889.

The Monroeville Sidewalk and Trail Project includes a new 6-foot wide concrete sidewalk that will be constructed along the south side of Barnhart Street, between Main Street (SR 101) and Ohio Street and a 5-foot wide curb walk that will be constructed along the east side of Ohio Street, from Barnhart Street to 160 feet South of Barnhart Street, and then crosses to the west side where it will connect to the Trail Project at 206 Ohio St. The project will include 688 lineal feet of sidewalk. The project also includes a new 10-ft HMA trail that will connect the old Conservation Club (206 Ohio

QUALITY OF PLACE INVESTMENT

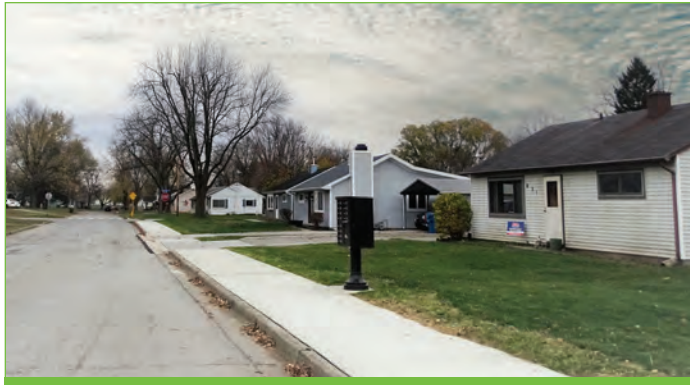
SIDEWALKS & TRAILS



Street) along Ohio Street to Monroeville Road at the American Mitsuba Corporation Facility (21600 Monroeville Road) and a pedestrian bridge that will span over Flat Rock Creek. The project will include 4,063 lineal feet of trail. The total cost of both projects is \$1,440,542 with INDOT providing \$1,100,000 and Monroeville providing \$340,542.

The **Cedar Creek Parks Trail** is a planned 8-mile trail that connects five parks in Cedar Creek Township including: the Metea County Park, Riverside Park, Jack Harris Park, iAB Baseball Complex, and the Hurshtown Reservoir Park as well as the newly revitalized downtowns of Leo-Cedarville and Grabill. This trail will serve as a regional connector improving pedestrian safety, provide opportunities for recreation and physical activity, and serve as a tourism draw for the region. The trail will eventually connect into the Allen County/Fort Wayne Trails area network through a 3.5-mile extension from Metea Park to the Parkview Regional Medical Center to the west along Union Chapel Road and the United Trails of Northeast Indiana via the Poka-Bache Connector under development in Northeast Indiana. Six million dollars has been committed to the project from the Allen County Commissioners, Allen County Council, Allen County Capital Improvement Board, Leo-Cedarville, and Grabill. The first phase of the project is anticipated to go to bid in 2023.

Sidewalks have been integrated into complete street projects including the NIRCC (INDOT Urban) funded **Landin Road/Broadway Improvement Project** in and near downtown New Haven, and the NIRCC (INDOT Urban) funded **Amstutz Road Project** along Leo Elementary and High Schools in Leo-Cedarville as well as several other small Indiana Community Crossings Projects in communities across the region. The Landin/Broadway Project is near completion and Amstutz Road Improvements are under design and scheduled for construction in 2024.



Priority 2: Fostering Community Vitality Through Quality of Place Investment

In 2021, the **NewAllen Mural Initiative** was conducted throughout East Allen County as part of the *East Allen Rural Revival Regional Development Plan*. Projects were conducted by regional artists and the initiative was coordinated by AH Public Art Consulting. Five communities participated in the initiative. Each community formed a working group that participated in site selection, property owner agreements, artist selection, design input, funding, and project implementation. These murals add to the quality of place of our rural areas by bringing color into public spaces, celebrating the unique cultural heritage of each community, and fostering community pride. They can be used as a local economic draw for backyard tourism by inviting residents throughout Allen County and Northeast Indiana to visit the murals and the nearby downtown businesses where they are located. The initiative was supported by a Stellar set-aside placemaking grant from the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs, the Indiana Arts Commission, and other local sources.

QUALITY OF PLACE INVESTMENT

MURALS

THE SEED OF LIFE | Artist: Ricco Diamante

13505 Main St, Grabill, IN 46741, USA

"Preserving our past. Focusing on our community. Sparking movement for our future." References listed in brief and incorporated into the design include: Amish Community, Farming/Crops, Craftsmanship, Horses, Plow, Draft Horse, Grabill Country Fair, Produce/Flowers, Street Market Feel.

Special Thanks to:

- Growing Grabill
- Indiana Arts Commission
- Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs
- Town of Grabill
- Property Owner: First Merchants Bank

About the Artist — Ricardo Diamante Guerrero was raised in Defiance, OH, and Fort Wayne, IN. Ricardo is known as Ricco Diamante. He is a graduate of the University of Saint Francis and CEO of Diamante Studios. He primarily creates art on skin, canvas, and paper. Ricco specializes in life-like detail in his art and tattoos. Being a great husband and father to two sons is a huge part of his life, and he is always excited to create mural art for a community.



HOAGLAND HARDWARE | Artist: John Klein

11117 English St, Hoagland, IN 46745, USA

This mural is a re-creation of the Hoagland Hardware and Implement Store and the Larabee Flour Mill historic mural advertising. The mural is a celebration of the days of old in Hoagland's downtown.

Special Thanks to:

- Hoagland Chamber of Commerce
- Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs
- Property Owner, Dan F. Saur

About the Artist — A lifelong artist, John enjoys the outdoors, painting and design. He uses his creative talent and project leadership skills to create both hand-painted and commercial signage. John is a Fort Wayne native and graduate of both Bishop Dwenger High School and the University of Evansville.



QUALITY OF PLACE INVESTMENT

MURALS



THE PRIDE OF LEO | Artist: Tim Parsley

15004 IN-1, Leo, IN 46765, USA

Leo-Cedarville is known for its excellent school systems. The mascot for the local schools is a lion. There are numerous churches, and the city was named for Pope Leo; Leo is the Latin word for lion.

Special Thanks to:

- Indiana Arts Commission
- Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs
- Leo Cedarville Foundation
- Town of Leo-Cedarville
- Property Owner, Troy Wieland (Wieland Real Estate)

About the Artist — Tim Parsley is the Program Director for Studio Art and an Associate Professor of Studio Art, Painting & Drawing at the University of Saint Francis - Fort Wayne, IN, Creative Arts. *"My work navigates American history and the complicated effect of its constructive ambition. With a focus on the originating stories of America, I appropriate and piece together scraps of historic imagery and collective memory, reconstructing the American narrative of progress to reveal and reinterpret nostalgic anxiety about the past."*



GLORIFYING THE ORANGE WORKHORSE OF YESTERYEAR

Artist: Amy Buchs

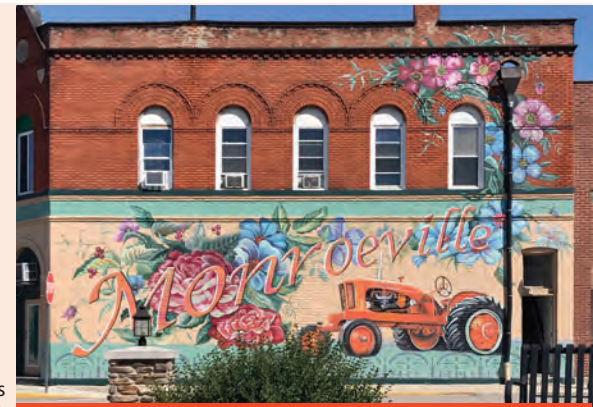
100 Main St, Monroeville, IN 46773, USA

Allis-Chalmers was a tractor manufacturer with a history going back to 1847. There was an Allis-Chalmers dealership in Monroeville for decades. The tractor embodies Monroeville's agricultural heritage. The town's name announces to visitors that they are in 'Monroeville'!

Special Thanks to:

- Indiana Arts Commission
- Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs
- Town of Monroeville
- Property Owner, Anista and Mason Kozel

About the Artist — Amy Buchs is a retired art teacher who specializes in painting. Her art classes have painted six murals throughout DeKalb county, entered several group *Art On the Square* projects for Auburn, and completed projects for the DeKalb County parks. Since retirement, Amy has painted eight wall murals for three DeKalb County Schools, a community mural in a new soup kitchen, four outdoor murals in Auburn, and participated in the 2020 *Make It Your Own Mural Fest*, creating a mural in LaGrange, IN.



HEARTLAND | Artist: Julie Wall

4409 Bull Rapids Road, Woodburn, IN 46797, USA

A large buffalo bull was slain by the rapids on the Maumee River north of Woodburn, thereafter the place has been known as Bull Rapids. At that time, there was a small settlement but now only a Church going by that name still stands. The Bull Rapids site is located near Blue Cast Springs, the original site of Blue Cast Sanitarium selling mineral water sold world-wide which is now an ACRES Land Trust site that offers walking trails. The mural is located on Bull Rapids Road. Along with agriculture, Woodburn residents have many flower gardens. The mural committee was very much in favor of including flowers in the mural.

Special Thanks to:

- City of Woodburn
- Indiana Arts Commission
- Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs
- Woodburn Main Street
- Property Owner: Bork Enterprises

About the Artist — Julie Wall was born, raised, and continues to call Northeast Indiana home for her studio and business, The HEDGE. With a background in printmaking and metals, she assembles pieces while layering imagery and texture. She is continually inspired by our environment, insects, women, and pattern.



Priority 3: Build a Strong Foundation to Support Livability

The need for additional housing goes hand in hand with population growth. Part of East Allen’s sustainable housing strategy is to promote infill development and focus on providing housing for senior citizens in their communities. This strategy provides affordable and accessible options for the senior population to remain where they have community ties and frees up larger housing stock for families to move into. **Kady Gene Cove, Phase 1** is a \$8,000,000 senior housing development that was constructed in 2021 by Keller Development with the help of Low Income Housing Tax Credits set aside for Stellar designees by the Indiana Housing and Community and Development Authority. This project provided 50 two-bedroom duplex units unlike any other in the City. The infill development is within the Meadowbrook Rural Revival Target Area and connects to the New Haven Community Center Park via the Meadowbrook Sidewalk and Trail Project, each which also received Stellar set-aside funds. As a complementary project in the East Allen Rural Revival Portfolio, Keller Development also constructed an additional 50 units of market-rate housing at the site. Kady Gene Cove, Phase 2 was completed in 2022 with an additional \$8,000,000 in private investment.

“This is an exciting project for the community of New Haven, by offering seniors affordable housing for them to stay in the community they love. To me, this is truly what the Stellar project is about. This diversifies our housing stock, providing opportunities to grow our community. It has been great working with Keller Development and we look forward to future collaboration.”

— Mayor Steve McMichael, City of New Haven

“A key element to our economic development strategy in East Allen is to attract private investment into our communities. With the Kady Gene Cove development, we not only get that private investment, but we also meet the housing needs of the New Haven community. This project was a key piece of our Regional Stellar application in partnership with the City of New Haven and the State of Indiana. It represents what planning and collaboration can bring.”

— Kent Castleman, NewAllen Board Chair

Within the areas targeted for revitalization, homes are largely in original plats and are 60 to 120 years old. Many property owners, often senior citizens, were identified in each of East Allen’s communities who struggle with maintaining their homes. The **East Allen Region Owner Occupied Housing Rehabilitation Project** assisted six homeowners with Stellar set-aside funding from the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority as well as Weatherization dollars provided through Brightpoint. Project improvements include accessibility, weatherization and functionality such as HVAC, roofing, electrical, and plumbing upgrades.



Priority 3: Build a Strong Foundation to Support Livability

East Allen communities have been investing in the rehabilitation and expansion of water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure as part of *East Allen's Rural Revival Plan*. This investment has often been included as part of other projects such as streetscapes and roadways in order to prevent the need to tear up the project in the future in order to maintain aging underground infrastructure.

Several projects have also been implemented to help provide additional capacity and a healthier environment for community livability. The Town of Monroeville has made extensive investment in this area over the last four years, including \$3,500,000 in the **Monroeville Water System Improvement Project** enabled by funding through the United States Department of Agriculture. The **Monroeville Wastewater Improvement Project** was also completed in 2022. This \$656,763 project received funding through the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs CDBG Stellar set-aside. This project added the capacity needed for the town to pursue the development of a new industrial park.

The City of Woodburn has also been focused on completing a \$3,800,000 investment into the construction of a the new **Woodburn Wastewater Mechanical Plant** and decommissioning of their lagoon system through the use of State Revolving Loan funds through the Indiana Finance Authority. This improvement will provide the city with the added capacity needed for residential growth in addition to commercial and industrial development near the new U.S. 24/S.R. 101 Interchange.

The **Town of Grabill Water Study** was conducted in 2020/21 to determine the best approach to upgrade their water system. In 2022, the Town Council determined that the best option was to sign a contract with the City of Fort Wayne to provide the water supply needed by the community.



Priority 3: Build a Strong Foundation to Support Livability

The *East Allen Rural Revival Plan* identified obesity as a key health issue to be addressed in the region. In 2019-2021, the St. Joseph Community Health Foundation and Parkview Health assisted the region by developing the **HEALing Seeds Initiative** which provided access to nutrition education and healthy food. A total of \$75,000 was provided by the Indiana State Department of Health in set-aside funds for the initiative. Below is an excerpt from the St. Joseph Community Health Foundation January 2022 Newsletter that sums up the effort.

The work began in 2019 with a Stellar Communities grant from the Indiana Department of Health's Office of Community & Rural Affairs. Cooking and nutrition classes were planned for rural residents, but the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic provided the opportunity to develop creative ways to share the information. The St. Joe Foundation and Parkview quickly went to work developing online videos providing information about nutrition and basic cooking techniques, as well as offering a variety of tasty and healthy recipes.

Four non-profit partners then customized the information and developed programming to meet the needs of their clients.

Phoenix Manor, an affordable housing center for seniors in Woodburn, offered the program to 14 of its residents who watched the videos and then prepared recipes using ingredients that were provided to them. The housing center's management also started a food pantry, which helped low-income seniors work healthy foods into their diets despite having limited resources.

The Power House Youth Center in New Haven was able to offer Healing Seeds nutrition and cooking classes as part of their after-school programming, teaching 19 teens how to lead healthier lives. "It was awesome to see the students learning so much through these classes," says Bonnie Roth, executive director.

"They were very open to trying new foods and learning healthy ways to eat. They made one full meal while they were here so that they could try it, and then they also did all the prep work here to take the same dish home to finish preparing and share with their family."

The New Haven/Adams Township Community Center offered summer and after-school classes for both seniors and youth. More than 125 participants met at the Center during 11 different classes. They watched the videos, tried their hand at creating some of the recipes, and then left each class with a bag of food and recipes for cooking several healthy dishes.

Cornerstone Youth Center in Monroeville was the final partner to take part in Healing Seeds. Through the program, staff and volunteers created healthy food kits; 77 households each received 20 kits over the course of several months. The kits included four healthy meals, fresh fruit, pantry staples, healthy recipes, and nutrition handouts. When surveyed, all the participants said their health had improved because of the access to healthy food and nutrition information."



A Region of Resilience

Little did we know in 2018 when we received the Indiana Regional Stellar Communities Designation that we would be implementing this significant initiative in the middle of a pandemic! The first year of the designation focused on the development of projects. Then in March of 2020, the COVID 19 Pandemic came to the forefront of life, presenting unprecedented challenges to communities across the U.S.

Within East Allen, many projects were well underway so public input was not severely impacted. The world became virtual for a time, and our communities were forced to learn how to navigate project and public meetings online. As projects began to go to construction, workforce shortages and supply chain issues increased time and costs, but we endured. The conservative rural culture within East Allen brought forth an attitude of resilience in which the region should be proud.

Early on in the pandemic during the Easter holiday when many families were unable to gather together, NewAllen organized a **Ring the Bells** event. At noon on Easter, all of the churches across the region rang their bells as a sign of solidarity and community throughout the region. Churches in Fort Wayne even followed suit.

One thing that was negatively impacted as a result of the pandemic was the loss of regional leadership sustainability training as part of the Indiana Regional Stellar Communities Designation. Leadership support was an initial component of the designation that was removed in March of 2020 due to capacity issues during the pandemic. Greater Fort Wayne, Inc. filled in this gap to some extent through the extension of scholarships to 4 individuals in the East Allen region to participate in the Leadership Fort Wayne program.

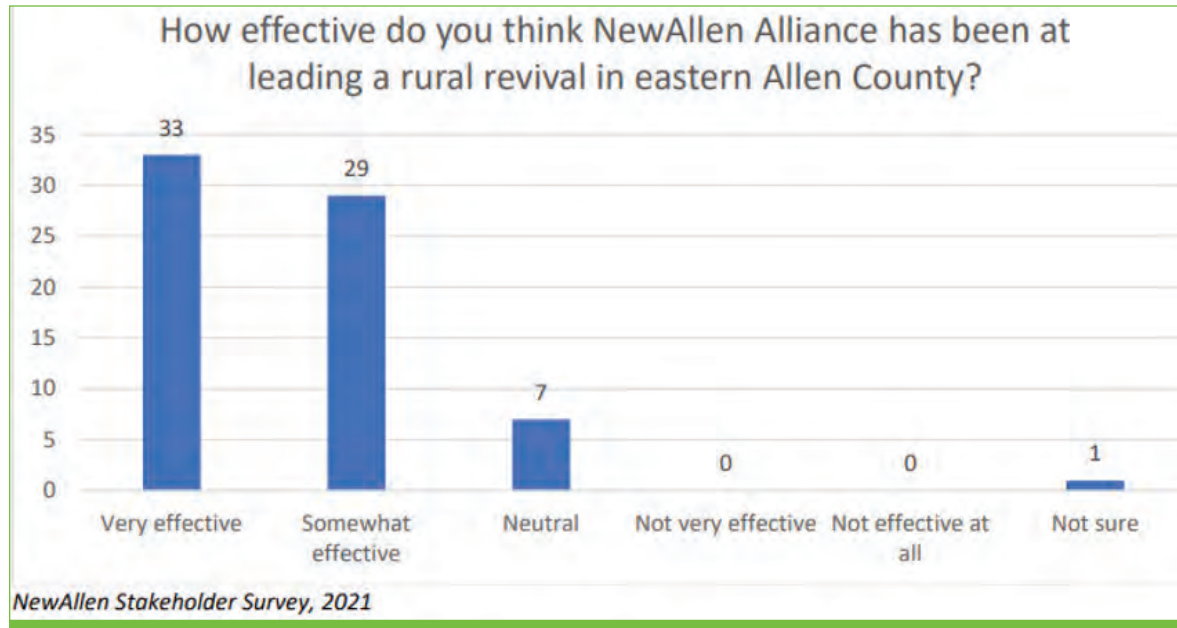


Onward

As the Stellar designation comes to an end, NewAllen is faced with determining what's next in terms of organizational structure, service, funding, and who will be leading the work. From 2017 to 2022, Sturtz Public Management has provided liaison services under a consulting contract. Otherwise, the organization relied on board member's volunteer leadership.

NewAllen received a grant from the Community Foundation of Greater Fort Wayne in the fall of 2021 to engage with Purdue University's Community Research Institute (CRI) and Make No Small Plans, LLC to conduct an organizational assessment to identify next step options for the organization. The *NewAllen Organizational Assessment (2021)* included a survey of 70 regional stakeholders that provided baseline information about the organization and potential priorities, interviews with 40 stakeholders to provide additional clarity and direction, a review of NewAllen bylaws to identify what may need to change in terms of leadership structure, four budget options based on four different operational scenarios, recommendations, and the identification of five areas for NewAllen to address – vision, staffing, funding, board leadership and volunteer engagement, and stakeholder engagement to help guide the continued momentum of the NewAllen Alliance.

One of the survey questions focused on the effectiveness of the NewAllen Alliance in leading East Allen's Rural Revival; the response was largely positive as shown in the graph below.



NEXT STEPS

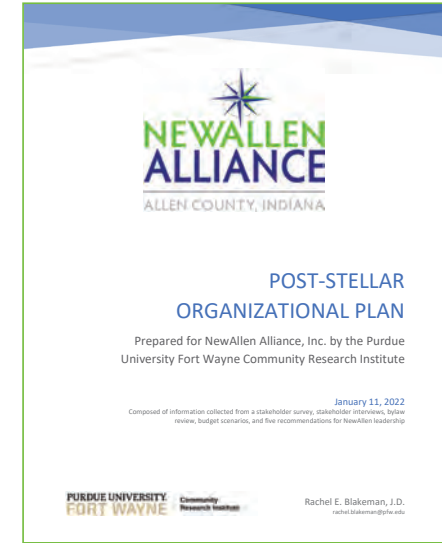
NEXT STEPS

Summaries of the recommendations are as follows:

- 1. Vision:** The Organizational Assessment identified the following as potential priorities to incorporate into a future vision for the organization:
 - Community development
 - Planning
 - Marketing
 - Leadership development
- 2. Staffing:** The Organizational Assessment identified that it is time for the NewAllen Alliance to add paid staff to advance the work of the organization. This at a minimum would be an Executive Director with additional funding to be used to hire supplementary services as needed.
- 3. Funding:** Funding options were identified which included: allocations from local government, donations from private sector businesses, donations from private organizations or foundations, and new state or federal grant opportunities.
- 4. Board Leadership and Volunteer Engagement:** It was recommended that the bylaws include term limits, clarity on who makes board appointments, and who approves the board slate. Clearer pathways also should be established for those looking to volunteer through the establishment of subcommittees or other volunteer opportunities.
- 5. Continued Engagement with Stakeholders:** NewAllen should have a continued commitment to collaboration. As new board members and staff assume roles where established relationships may or may not exist, engagement should be both strategic and intentional.

In 2022, the NewAllen Board acted on these recommendations by updating their bylaws, keeping in place the one voting board position per community, adding term limits, and giving each community the opportunity to decide their appropriate appointing entity. In addition, the work of the organization from 2023 to 2027 will focus on: Quality of Place, Community Development Planning, Marketing and Promotion.

In addition, NewAllen is offering a fee for service for communities that choose to participate with the desire to hire a full time Executive Director to lead the advocacy, community development, marketing, funding opportunity identification, placemaking, leadership development, stakeholder engagement, and strategic investment plan implementation efforts of the organization. A Strategic Investment Fund is also being proposed to contract with professionals to help with the advancement of collaborative initiatives as defined by an annual needs assessment with each community by the executive director. Funding commitments are currently being negotiated.



GRABILL



POPULATION:

1,278

by Age:

- Under 18 28.3%
- 18-64 58.7%
- 65+ 13.0%



HOUSEHOLDS:

539



HOUSING UNITS:

549



INCOME:

Median HH Income:

Grabill: \$50,074.
Allen Co.: \$57,104.
Indiana: \$58,235.

Per Capita:

Grabill: \$37,907.
Allen Co.: \$29,951.
Indiana: \$30,639.



ADVANCED EDUCATION:

2-year degree or higher:

Grabill: 59.9%
Allen Co.: 51.9%
Indiana: 46.3%

HARLAN



POPULATION:

1,715

by Age:

- Under 18 24.0%
- 18-64 54.6%
- 65+ 21.4%



HOUSEHOLDS:

655



HOUSING UNITS:

677



INCOME:

Median HH Income:

Harlan: \$65,156.
Allen Co.: \$57,104.
Indiana: \$58,235.

Per Capita:

Harlan: \$29,717.
Allen Co.: \$29,951.
Indiana: \$30,639.



ADVANCED EDUCATION:

2-year degree or higher:

Harlan: 52.5%
Allen Co.: 51.9%
Indiana: 46.3%

APPENDIX

Source:
2020 American
Community Survey,
5-year estimates

HOAGLAND



POPULATION:
908

by Age:

- Under 18 25.2%
- 18-64 57.5%
- 65+ 17.3%



HOUSEHOLDS:
351



HOUSING UNITS:
367



INCOME:

Median HH Income:

Hoagland: \$54,779.
Allen Co.: \$57,104.
Indiana: \$58,235.

Per Capita:

Hoagland: \$28,654.
Allen Co.: \$29,951.
Indiana: \$30,639.



ADVANCED EDUCATION:

2-year degree or higher:

Hoagland: 49.8%
Allen Co.: 51.9%
Indiana: 46.3%

LEO-CEDARVILLE



POPULATION:
3,814

by Age:

- Under 18 29.2%
- 18-64 56.8%
- 65+ 14.0%



HOUSEHOLDS:
1,312



HOUSING UNITS:
1,405



INCOME:

Median HH Income:

Leo-Cedarville: \$79,767.
Allen Co.: \$57,104.
Indiana: \$58,235.

Per Capita:

Leo-Cedarville: \$36,185.
Allen Co.: \$29,951.
Indiana: \$30,639.



ADVANCED EDUCATION:

2-year degree or higher:

Leo-Cedarville: 64.8%
Allen Co.: 51.9%
Indiana: 46.3%

MONROEVILLE



POPULATION:

1,315

by Age:

- Under 18 16.2%
- 18-64 66.5%
- 65+ 17.3%



HOUSEHOLDS:

513



HOUSING UNITS:

565



INCOME:

Median HH Income:

- Monroeville: \$45,434.
- Allen Co.: \$57,104.
- Indiana: \$58,235.

Per Capita:

- Monroeville: \$24,858.
- Allen Co.: \$29,951.
- Indiana: \$30,639.



ADVANCED EDUCATION:

2-year degree or higher:

- Monroeville: 31.4%
- Allen Co.: 51.9%
- Indiana: 46.3%

NEW HAVEN



POPULATION:

15,934

by Age:

- Under 18 25.9%
- 18-64 56.0%
- 65+ 18.1%



HOUSEHOLDS:

6,362



HOUSING UNITS:

6,762



INCOME:

Median HH Income:

- New Haven: \$52,827.
- Allen Co.: \$57,104.
- Indiana: \$58,235.

Per Capita:

- New Haven: \$25,403.
- Allen Co.: \$29,951.
- Indiana: \$30,639.



ADVANCED EDUCATION:

2-year degree or higher:

- New Haven: 53.5%
- Allen Co.: 51.9%
- Indiana: 46.3%

WOODBURN



POPULATION:

1,554

by Age:

- Under 18 35.3%
- 18-64 53.9%
- 65+ 10.8%



HOUSEHOLDS:

472



HOUSING UNITS:

511



INCOME:

Median HH Income:

Woodburn: \$66,833.

Allen Co.: \$57,104.

Indiana: \$58,235.

Per Capita:

Woodburn: \$23,323.

Allen Co.: \$29,951.

Indiana: \$30,639.



ADVANCED EDUCATION:

2-year degree or higher:

Woodburn: 31.4%

Allen Co.: 51.9%

Indiana: 46.3%





**NEWALLEN
ALLIANCE**

ALLEN COUNTY, INDIANA

EAST ALLEN'S RURAL REVIVAL

Seven Unique Communities, One Bold Vision

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GRABILL

HARLAN

HOAGLAND

LEO-CEDARVILLE

MONROEVILLE

NEW HAVEN

WOODBURN