

E-REP

MAY 2024

BUSINESS |

POLICY |

COMMUNITY |

TALENT |

STRATEGY |

IMPACT

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



#riverofopportunities

INSIDE:

- TOYOTA INDIANA
- READI 2.0 = \$45M
- E-REP NEW HIRES
- EVANSVILLE REGIONAL SPORTS COMMISSION
- HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS DATA

NEW MEMBER PROFILES:

- WOODS & WOODS
- ENINE ARTS



**EVANSVILLE
REGIONAL
ECONOMIC
PARTNERSHIP**

PHOTO: EVV AMERICAN AIRLINE FLIGHTS TO CHICAGO ANNOUNCEMENT

Fly EVV...

TO CHICAGO!

EVV ANNOUNCES
DIRECT FLIGHTS FROM
EVANSVILLE TO CHICAGO

CEO LETTER | NEW MEMBERS
NEWSMAKERS | MILESTONES | & MORE

www.evansvilleregion.com

A Region on the Rise

The past several months have marked a significant era at Evansville Regional Airport (EVV) as it has achieved a record run of unprecedented growth. Thanks to the dedicated work of our airport staff, local business community, local and state partners, and our region's travelers who are choosing to fly local, EVV's passenger traffic and air service growth has soared, and the growth trajectory is quite remarkable.

Commencing with last November's announcement of one of our nation's top-sought and fastest growing air carriers, Breeze – which chose Evansville as their first Indiana city – EVV now offers affordable, nonstop service to one of our region's most popular destinations: Orlando International Airport, a world-renowned business conference and leisure hub.

Soon following, ultra low-cost carrier and EVV-vested Allegiant announced affordable nonstop service to our community's most-traveled beach destination, St. Petersburg, FL., launching in June.

And most recently, long-time partner American Airlines announced the return of nonstop service to Chicago O'Hare, one of the world's best-connected international airports and a global business hub that is vital to the economic health of our region. With the return of Chicago, American is soon set to achieve an astonishing 36 percent rise in the number of seats and flights offered through Evansville in comparison to their 2019 pre-pandemic flight options. We are coming back stronger, and I couldn't be prouder of this tremendous success story. The new Chicago flights begin in September, and I hope you'll join me in ensuring these flights, as well as all of EVV's air service, remains supported.

Larger aircraft, more business-class options, increased connectivity to both business hubs and leisure destinations alike, all happen when we support our local flight offerings. With the ongoing stabilization of the regional pilot and air carrier systems, we look forward to once again seeing our airport climb the ranks to being one of the best-connected

U.S. regional airports per capita. EVV is the conduit for thriving business partnerships and growth along with enhanced quality of place through affordable vacations, which allow our residents and our businesses' team members to retreat to sunny destinations and return to the greater Evansville Region refreshed, rejuvenated and ready to contribute to our community. And in return, EVV serves as a tremendous connector in bringing visitors to our great city.



LLOYD WINNECKE
CEO, E-REP

There are few assets more valuable to our region than our airport. Evansville Regional fuels our economy and helps create a quality of place that our people enjoy and have come to expect. Whether a necessity for our businesses or to our vacation plans, our local airport affects us all. Again, please join me in supporting EVV to ensure the long-term viability of both our local airport and region. ***Because when we fly local, our region soars.***

LLOYD WINNECKE
CEO, E-REP

#riverofopportunities

f l i n @ @evvregion



Impact Circle, Champion and Torchbearer Investors are the voice of business in the Evansville Region. This select group of Evansville Regional Economic Partnership (E-REP) Stakeholders guides E-REP's mission and priorities, its affiliates and its lines of work. It drives the Region's greatest opportunities for progress and addresses significant community challenges.

Above all, this leadership investment affords E-REP the capacity to employ and retain a high-quality staff to execute the work of the organization and to ensure that it has sufficient resources to provide leadership for the Region's greatest opportunities.

THANK YOU!



INVESTORS:



CHAMPION INVESTORS:



TORCHBEARER INVESTORS:



Gov. Holcomb announces direct flight service from Evansville to Chicago, increasing connectivity & quality of place



New American Airlines route set to advance vibrancy of southwest Indiana region, supporting continued economic development, talent retention and attraction.

Governor Eric J. Holcomb announced recently the reinstatement of the nonstop flight from Evansville to Chicago that will increase quality of place and critical connectivity for businesses, talent and travelers in southwest Indiana.

“This is a big win, not just for southwest Indiana, but for the entire state,” Gov. Holcomb said. “A direct flight from Evansville to the third largest city in the country will be a conduit for economic growth, business development and limitless opportunities for Hoosiers.”

Indiana Secretary of Commerce David Rosenberg joined executives of the Evansville Regional Airport (EVV), on April 12, 2024, to announce that American Airlines will relaunch its route between Evansville and Chicago this fall. “The new flight between Evansville and Chicago is a significant step forward in increasing connectivity to this major metro, as well as national and international hubs for Hoosier businesses, talent and residents,” said Sec. Rosenberg. “This will create more opportunities to attract new investment and residents, welcome even more visitors to our state and accelerate community assets that will advance quality of life in southwest Indiana.”

The flights, which will begin Sept. 4, will offer twice-daily service to Chicago O’Hare Airport (ORD), American Airlines’ Midwest hub, connecting travelers with one stop to more than 120 domestic and international destinations. Operating on a CRJ 200 aircraft, the flights will have 50 seats onboard. Flights to Chicago will depart Evansville in the morning and afternoon and return to Evansville in the afternoon and evening. Tickets are on sale at aa.com or through American’s mobile app.

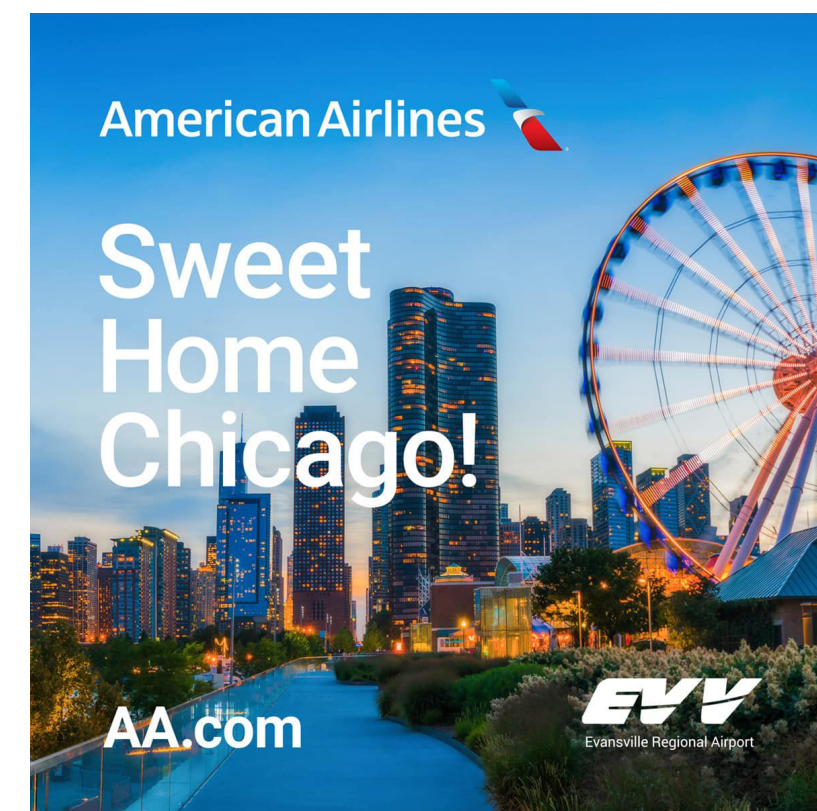
“American looks forward to beginning service between our Chicago hub and Evansville this September,” said Joe Sottile, American Airlines Director of Domestic Network Planning. “Complementing our existing flights to Dallas/Fort Worth and Charlotte, the addition of service to ORD will offer customers convenient one-stop access between Evansville and more than 200 cities across our global network.”

Connectivity is a major component of the state’s commitment to increase economic development and quality of place. The availability of nonstop air service is considered imperative for businesses when selecting locations for investment and is a key resource for businesses and talent located in Indiana. It is estimated that the reestablished route will further expand the more than \$120.9 million annual impact the airport already has on the greater Evansville Region, supporting the growth of global businesses currently located here or considering southwest Indiana for their home, and enhancing the overall quality of life for area residents.

“EVV’s new Chicago service is a testament to solid community support and more passengers choosing to Fly EVV First, coupled with strong partnerships at the state and airline level,” said Nate Hahn, EVV Executive Director. “We appreciate American Airlines’ continued commitment to the Evansville market, and we are grateful for the State of Indiana’s investments that have empowered airline growth at EVV.”

This flight will bolster overall community development investments being made throughout southwest Indiana through the Indiana Regional Economic Acceleration and Development Initiative (READI). Through this nationally recognized initiative to cultivate vibrant, modern and sustainable communities that attract and retain top talent, the state is investing \$95 million in the southwest Indiana region through READI and READI 2.0. This investment is being leveraged with additional local public, private and nonprofit dollars to accelerate community-focused investments in assets like housing, infrastructure, entrepreneurship and innovation, parks, trails and greenspaces, arts and culture, and health and wellness.

“The connectivity created by this new route is critical not only for future economic development in the Evansville Region, but also for many businesses already here today,” said Evansville Mayor Stephanie Terry. “I’m excited not only for the opportunities that this route provides for our business community, but also for the convenience it offers to our residents as they travel in their leisure time. This announcement is a win for Evansville on every level.”





Toyota Charges Up Investment and Jobs in U.S. Manufacturing

\$1.4 billion investment in Indiana plant brings production of an all-new BEV; Toyota adds up to 340 new, sustainable U.S. jobs

Toyota will prepare for assembly of an all-new, three-row battery electric SUV in the U.S. as part of a new \$1.4 billion investment in its Princeton facility, affirming Toyota's commitment to reinvesting profits in its U.S. operations and bringing total investment in Toyota Indiana to \$8 billion. This also brings the addition of up to 340 new, high-quality jobs with long-term stability.

This investment will not only provide plant infrastructure to build the all-new BEV, it will add a new battery pack assembly line using lithium-ion batteries supplied by Toyota Battery Manufacturing North Carolina, a \$13.9 billion facility slated to begin production in 2025.

"Our team members are the heart of Toyota," said Tim Hollander, president of Toyota Indiana. "We take great pride in producing quality products while providing long-term, stable employment no matter the changes in our industry. Our team is committed to delivering this new product with the same quality and performance that Toyota customers expect."

Toyota's Indiana facility is home to more than 7,500 team members who assemble the Toyota Sienna, Highlander, Grand Highlander and the Lexus TX.

"I feel fortunate for the years I've been with Toyota and am proud of the products we assemble," said Michael Baehl, a 26-year Toyota Indiana team member. "The company's

commitment to long-term job stability and high-quality work provides me with peace of mind. Additionally, the opportunities to enhance my skills and progress in my career have allowed me to achieve goals I never imagined."

Since 2021, Toyota has announced new investments totaling \$18.6 billion into its U.S. manufacturing operations to support electrification efforts. Increasing BEV production in the U.S. advances Toyota's portfolio approach to electrification.

"Indiana and Toyota share a nearly 30-year partnership that has cultivated job stability and economic opportunity in Princeton and the surrounding southwest Indiana region for decades," said Governor Eric J. Holcomb. "Toyota's investment in the state began with an \$800 million commitment and has grown to over \$8 billion. This incredible announcement shows yet again just how important our state's business-friendly environment, focus on long-term success and access to a skilled workforce are to companies seeking to expand and be profitable far into the future. Indiana proudly looks forward to continuing to being at the center of the future of mobility."

This announcement comes on the heels of a \$1.3 billion investment in Toyota Kentucky for the production of a separate all-new, three-row battery electric SUV.

<https://pressroom.toyota.com/toyota-charges-up-investment-and-jobs-in-u-s-manufacturing/>



Let's welcome Woods & Woods, LLC as a new member of the Evansville Regional Economic Partnership. Neil Woods, president, gives us insight about Woods & Woods, LLC. Woods & Woods, LLC is located in Evansville. Neil can be reached by calling 812-426-7200 or email nwoods@woodslawyers.com. Visit them online at www.woodslawyers.com.

Tell us about Woods & Woods, LLC and the services you offer.

Woods & Woods serves veterans around the globe who have wrongly been denied disability benefits by the Veterans Administration. Our law firm was founded in 1985 and currently employs nearly 120 people.

What inspired you to invest your time and resources in this business?

I grew up in our family's law firm watching my father and his brothers fight for people with injuries and disabilities. I never even considered another career path. We do well by doing good. This line of work is so rewarding because we get to help people through some of the toughest times in their lives.

What career advice would you give the younger generation interested in this type of work?

Go for it! Law is a fantastic profession. You can make a living while making a positive impact on people's lives.

In your opinion, what are three ingredients for success?

The key to a successful business is unquestionably your employees. First, you must pay and treat your employees well. Second, listen to your staff and let them have input in daily decisions. Third, offer them flexibility.



NEIL WOODS
PRESIDENT, WOODS & WOODS, LLC

What has been one of your toughest challenges?

Our law firm was previously focused on personal injury and Social Security. We retooled our entire law firm to only serve veterans with disabilities. We went from just 25 staff members to over a hundred in just a couple of years. There were a lot of plates to keep spinning while we learned a new practice area, developed completely new internal processes, and hired and trained dozens of people.

Why is the Evansville Region a great place to operate a business?

Midwesterners know how to take care of each other. Our friendly and hospitable culture turns into excellent client service. Our nationwide clients are always impressed how friendly and welcoming our staff are. You can't teach someone to be warm and caring – that is just something you have, or you don't.

What do you like most about the community in which you live?

I've always said Evansville is small enough you'll run into people you know, but large enough you can always meet new people.



Evansville Region is READI 2.0

In a booming victory for the Evansville Region, the Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC) has announced a significant boost in funding through the Regional Economic Acceleration and Development Initiative (READI 2.0). At a special meeting held in Indianapolis, the board allocated a transformational \$500 million in the second round of READI 2.0 grants, with a remarkable \$45 million earmarked for the Evansville Region. This substantial investment aims to propel projects across Gibson, Posey, Vanderburgh and Warrick Counties, targeting pivotal Talent EVV goals of population growth, job creation, healthy living and poverty reduction.

Josh Armstrong, Chief Economic Development Officer of the Evansville Regional Economic Partnership (E-REP), expressed gratitude for the pivotal support, stating, “The Evansville Region’s compelling READI 2.0 plan enables our Talent EVV efforts through transformational capital projects including new housing, new jobs and new quality of life amenities.” Armstrong extended appreciation to Governor Eric Holcomb, the State Legislature and the IEDC for their unwavering confidence in the region’s endeavors to foster growth and prosperity.

On February 5, E-REP and the Southwest Indiana Regional Development Authority (SWIRDA) presented the region’s READI 2.0 plan, meticulously crafted to address Talent

EVV priorities including population growth, job creation, healthy living and poverty reduction.

Armstrong underscored the pivotal role of READI 2.0 grants in propelling strategic projects forward, noting, “These funds will generally match other funds already assembled for projects,” thereby expediting their realization. Developers, nonprofits, businesses, governmental entities and residents are encouraged to submit proposals for projects requiring support via evansvilleregion.com/readi.

Beth McFadin Higgins, Chair of the Southwest Indiana Regional Development Authority (SWIRDA), echoed the sentiment of collaboration and progress, expressing enthusiasm for the continued partnership in developing housing, supporting businesses, and fostering amenities crucial for sustaining and augmenting the region’s growth trajectory.

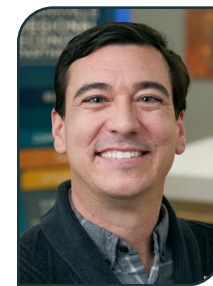
The READI 2.0 award represents a significant milestone in the journey towards fortifying the Evansville Region’s economic landscape, fostering resilience and nurturing vibrant communities. With a steadfast commitment to innovation, collaboration and inclusive growth, the region stands poised to harness the transformative potential of READI 2.0, propelling it toward a river of opportunities.

New Faces, Same Important Mission

E-REP & Southwest Indiana SBDC expand talented team with new hires

Change is in the air at the Evansville Regional Economic Partnership (E-REP), and we are excited to introduce the newest members of our growing team. Each person brings unique talents and experiences that will enhance our ability to serve the community and drive economic development in our region.

WE ARE EXCITED TO INTRODUCE:



ZACHARY CORLETT
Accounting Coordinator
 Zachary is our new Accounting Coordinator within the finance department. With a keen eye for detail and a strong foundation in financial management, Zachary will be the smooth operator behind our financial processes, supporting the organization’s fiscal health.



JALYN DAVIS
Membership Coordinator
 Jalyn joins us as the Membership Coordinator, bringing her fresh ideas to the team. As a recent UE grad, she is instrumental in overseeing Cowork Evansville and supporting our members through various activities such as ribbon cuttings, groundbreakings and our regular community events, Common Grounds and CNN.



LESLIE ORTEGA
Engagement Specialist
 Leslie steps into the role of Engagement Specialist, where she focuses on member engagement and retention. Her passion for building strong relationships and fostering collaboration plays a crucial role in strengthening our partnerships within the business community.



CHRISTY POWELL
Community Development Director
 Christy joins our economic development team as the Community Development Director, bringing a wealth of experience and strategic vision to our initiatives. Her leadership will be vital in advancing our community-focused development projects and enhancing the quality of life in our region.



KIM SPENCE
Business Advisor
 (Indiana SBDC)
 Kim is the newest addition to the Indiana Small Business Development Center (SBDC) team as a Business Advisor. Drawing from her extensive background in Human Resources and insurance, Kim will provide invaluable guidance and support to entrepreneurs and small business owners.

These new team members bring fresh perspectives and diverse expertise to E-REP, reinforcing our commitment to driving economic growth and fostering innovation in the Evansville Region. While we welcome these new faces, our mission remains unchanged – promote regional economic development and vitality through catalytic leadership, collaborative planning and coordinated investment.

We invite you to join us in welcoming Zachary, Jalyn, Leslie, Christy and Kim to the Evansville Regional Economic Partnership. Together, we look forward to achieving greater heights and making a positive impact on our community. Here’s to new beginnings and continued success! Check out the E-REP team at www.evansvilleregion.com/our-team

ERSC Enhances Image, Economy and Quality of Life for the Evansville Region

The Evansville Regional Sports Commission (ERSC) experienced a very hectic start to the spring season, with five major events over eight weeks, but we wouldn't want it any other way!

The ERSC – an arm of the Evansville-Regional Economic Partnership – works at enhancing the image, economy and quality of life for the Evansville Region through attracting, creating and promoting high-profile sporting events. Throughout February and March, Evansville restaurants, stores and hotels were lively with out-of-town visitors who came to our area to attend one (or more) of the following events:

- NCAA Division II Elite Eight men's tournament
- Ohio Valley Conference men's basketball tournament
- Ohio Valley Conference women's basketball tournament
- Great Lakes Valley Conference men's and women's swimming and diving championships
- Indiana High School Athletic Association state wrestling finals

By all indications each event was a big success for those involved, as well as for our community. For example, the state wrestling finals were well attended, both OVC tournaments had exciting matchups, and the Elite Eight had another amazing championship game. After conversations with organizers, athletic directors, coaches and attendees, most were extremely pleased with how the Evansville area provided not only a great event experience but a pleasant visit overall.

However, there is never a down time at ERSC! As these events were happening, work was being done on securing more for the future of Evansville Region sports tourism. Three of the bigger events are the return of the DII Elite Eight men's tournament in 2025, as well as the return of the OVC men's and women's tournaments, along with the recent announcement that the Missouri Valley Conference women's basketball tournament will make its inaugural appearance at the Ford Center when the downtown Evansville facility hosts the event in 2025. The women's tournament will then move

to Xstream Arena in Coralville, IA in 2026 and then to Vibrant Arena at The MARK in Moline, IL for 2027.

"We are thrilled to continue to provide our women's basketball student-athletes with the opportunity to be showcased in a neutral-site, stand-alone tournament," said Valparaiso President José D. Padilla, Chair of the Board of Directors of the Missouri Valley Conference. "The next three years will give us the opportunity to grow the Missouri Valley Conference's national brand through visibility in new communities while affording our student-athletes the chance to experience new conference tournament venues. I know the conference office staff, member institutions and our championship site hosts will work diligently to continue to provide a first-rate student-athlete and fan experience during our women's basketball tournament."

All 12 MVC women's basketball teams will compete in the four-day tournament, with four opening-round games on Thursday, four quarterfinal games on Friday, two semifinal games on Saturday, culminating in a Sunday championship game in each of the next three seasons. The league tournament champion earns an automatic berth in the NCAA Tournament. "We're excited about developing new relationships and growing the sport of women's basketball in the region," says MVC Commissioner Jeff Jackson. "The championship rotation model includes three great venues and three great communities who share the conference's goal of prioritizing women's basketball."

The 2025 MVC Women's Championship at Ford Center in Evansville will be the 18th straight year the conference will conduct a neutral-site championship for women's basketball. The last three MVC women's basketball title games have aired nationally on either ESPNU (2022 and 2023) and ESPN2 (2024), and all 11 games from the tournament have been available on ESPN+. Last year's championship set an all-time high for unique viewers and total minutes watched.

The Ford Center isn't the only Evansville facility that is a busy host for sporting events. The new Deaconess Aquatic

con't. on page 17

Let's welcome Enine Arts LLC as a new member of the Evansville Regional Economic Partnership. Vageesha Anudeepan, founder, gives us insight about Enine Arts LLC. Vageesha can be reached by calling 812-414-5999 and email vageesha@eninearts.com or visit them online at www.eninearts.com.

Tell us about Enine Arts LLC and the services you offer.

Enine Arts LLC is your go-to destination for comprehensive brand design solutions. We specialize in serving marketing agencies, startups and small businesses by offering a diverse array of services, including branding and rebranding, web design and development, graphic design, and print & sign services. Our integrated approach ensures that clients receive top-notch design solutions tailored to their unique needs, all under one roof. With a focus on quality, creativity and client satisfaction, Enine Arts LLC is committed to delivering exceptional results that elevate brands and drive success.

What inspired you to invest your time and resources in this business?

The inspiration behind investing time and resources into Enine Arts LLC stems from recognizing the significant demand for comprehensive brand design solutions in the market. Observing the challenges faced by marketing agencies, startups and small businesses in managing their branding and design needs across multiple service providers, we saw an opportunity to offer a one-stop solution. By providing diverse services, including branding, web design, graphic design and print and sign services, we aim to simplify the process for clients and deliver exceptional results that help them stand out in their respective industries. Our passion for creativity and commitment to client satisfaction drives us to continually innovate and refine our offerings, ensuring that Enine Arts LLC remains a trusted partner for businesses seeking impactful design solutions.

What career advice would you give the younger generation interested in this type of work?

To succeed in the dynamic field of brand design and creative services, it's crucial to build a diverse portfolio that showcases your skills across branding, web design and graphic design. Keep refining your abilities and stay updated with the latest trends and tools. Gain practical experience through internships, freelancing or projects to develop real-world skills and insights. Network with professionals in the industry, collaborate on projects and expand your knowledge base. Understand basic business principles to effectively communicate with clients and deliver solutions that meet their needs. Above all, maintain a passionate and persistent attitude toward your craft, continuously striving for improvement and growth as a designer.

In your opinion, what are three ingredients for success?

In my opinion, three key ingredients for success are passion, perseverance and adaptability. Passion fuels motivation and creativity, driving individuals to pursue their goals with enthusiasm and dedication. Perseverance enables individuals

to overcome challenges and setbacks, maintaining focus and resilience in the face of obstacles. Adaptability allows individuals to thrive in a constantly changing environment by embracing new opportunities, learning from experiences and adjusting their approach as needed. Together, these ingredients form a powerful combination that empowers individuals to achieve their aspirations and navigate the path to success.

What has been one of your toughest challenges?

Enine Arts LLC faced its toughest challenge when launching just before the onset of the pandemic. Surviving through this period required resilience and adaptability. We successfully navigated this challenge by leveraging local support services such as Small Business Development (SBD) and Evansville Regional Economic Partnership (EREP). These resources, coupled with the unwavering support of our clients who have been with us since the beginning, provided invaluable assistance. Their loyalty and trust bolstered our determination to persevere, enabling us to weather the storm and emerge stronger on the other side. Our ability to adapt to changing circumstances, coupled with the steadfast support of our clients and local resources, played a vital role in overcoming this obstacle and positioning Enine Arts LLC for continued success.

Why is the Evansville Region a great place to operate a business?

The Evansville Region offers a multitude of advantages for operating a business. Firstly, its strategic location provides access to major transportation routes, making it convenient for logistics and distribution. Additionally, the region boasts a diverse economy with strengths in industries such as manufacturing, health care, education and technology, offering ample opportunities for collaboration and growth. Moreover, Evansville fosters a supportive business environment, with local government initiatives, business development organizations, and networking opportunities available to entrepreneurs. The region's affordable cost of living and favorable tax environment further enhance its appeal, allowing businesses to maximize profitability while maintaining a high quality of life for employees. Overall, the Evansville Region's combination of strategic location, diverse economy, supportive business environment and affordability makes it an excellent choice for operating a business.

What do you like most about the community in which you live?

What I appreciate most about the community where I live is its strong sense of camaraderie and friendliness. It's heartening to see neighbors come together to support one another in times of need and celebrate each other's successes. Whether it's through local events, community initiatives or simply lending a helping hand, there's a genuine spirit of solidarity that makes living here truly special. Knowing that you're part of a tight-knit community where people look out for each other fosters a sense of belonging and makes everyday life more enjoyable.

Is there anything else you would like to share?

Evansville's supportive environment and thriving business community have been instrumental in Enine Arts LLC's success. Leveraging local networking events, supportive services like SBD and EREP, and the city's diverse economy, we've thrived. The genuine camaraderie here fosters partnerships and growth, making Evansville an ideal place to flourish in business.



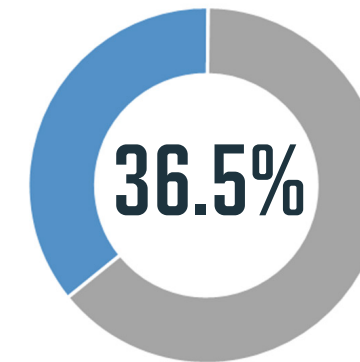
Why is Healthy Food Access Data Important?

As winter makes its exit, gardeners have started nurturing tiny tomato and pepper seedlings, dreaming of summertime harvests. But not everyone has the luxury of a garden or even easy access to fresh produce. Food insecurity is one of our region’s challenges – having food to eat is a critical need. But healthy food access goes one step beyond filling plates – it’s about ensuring quality, nutrient-packed, fresh food is within reach for everyone. In our region, many miss out on the health benefits of a vibrant diet

rich in fruits and vegetables. According to the 2021 Greater Evansville Health Survey, nearly 1 in 4 residents, 23% of the region, wants to but is unable to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables. With 6% of households without vehicles, 24% burdened by their housing costs alone, 12% living below the poverty line, and another 37% of ALICE households (Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed) grappling to make ends meet, healthy food for all can feel like a distant dream.

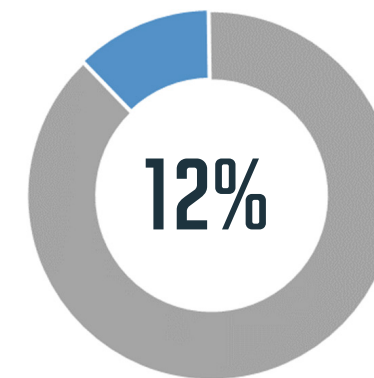
The cost of nutritious foods and how far you live from stores where healthy foods are likely to be offered can be significant barriers. “Low food access” and “food desert” data helps communities begin to understand these barriers.

More than 1 in 3 residents live in areas with “low food access.”



Over 110,000 residents in the region have “low food access,” or live a significant distance from a grocery. In populated areas, this is more than 1 mile but rural residents may live 10 miles or more from a grocery.

More than 1 in 10 households is in a “food desert.”



“Food deserts” are areas where households have high poverty rates AND they are a significant distance from a grocery.

*See SAVI: Healthy Food Access data profile for Vanderburgh, Warrick, Gibson, and Posey IN (Henderson not available).

There are pockets of inner-city Evansville and rural areas where up to 100% of the population lives in a food desert. Welborn Baptist Foundation, along with nonprofits, collaborations and community partners, are working to better understand the barriers and opportunities. Innovative solutions for reducing transportation barriers, empowering local growers and implementing bulk-buying programs, pop-up markets and other strategies, can help our region cultivate a future where healthy food isn’t a privilege but a right for all.

Use the QR Code to find more data.



Let’s sow seeds of change together! Share your data insights with colleagues, community partners and on social media.

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7 out-of-the-box employee benefit ideas

By BBB Serving Evansville and the Tri-State

Statistics show that the “great resignation” is over and job quits have returned to pre-Covid levels. A little under 3.5 million workers in the U.S. voluntarily left their positions in 2023, showing that businesses are finding new ways to attract and retain talent. A common challenge for many companies is finding the budget to offer competitive compensation packages that reflect their employees’ value. As a result, many companies are exploring alternate ways of rewarding their employees.

7 unique ideas to enhance your employee benefits package

Providing unique employee benefits is a great way to stand out from the competition in order to attract and retain the best employees. Offering substantial benefits packages builds employee loyalty, which is especially important during the nation’s current labor shortage.

Not sure where to begin? **Here are 7 out-of-the-box ideas to offer for employee benefits:**

1. Flexible work options

According to a Deloitte survey, approximately 94% of employees want their company to offer flexible work options permanently. These options can include flexible work hours, working from home or even working in the office on weekends in exchange for a couple of weekdays off. This way, employees can balance their work and personal lives and increase productivity, which will make them more likely to stay with your company. Allowing this type of flexibility shows your employees that you care about their well-being and are willing to help them achieve a work-life balance. It can also be more accommodating for employees who are dealing with personal or family issues. Overall, flexibility helps prevent employee burnout and improves morale.

2. Mental health resources

In a time of so much uncertainty for millions of people globally, it’s easy for employees to feel overwhelmed, stressed and anxious. Adding more mental health resources to your employee benefits package can help support your staff during these stressful times. Mental health resources may include psychological counseling or even access to

meditation apps, which can help your employees reduce their stress levels and improve their overall productivity. These benefits also show your employees that you care about their quality of life, which can reduce turnover and improve optimism within the workplace.

3. Additional training programs or a professional development fund

Training and professional development are great ways for your workforce to improve their skills so they can thrive in their careers. However, many employees don’t have the resources to invest in their own professional development. Offering training programs or a professional development fund to your employees is a great way to help them reach their goals. It can also help you attract and retain top talent, as employees who are given opportunities to improve their skills and pursue their career goals are often more satisfied in their jobs.

4. Dependent care options

As more people return to working in an office, parents are forced to find childcare options for their young kids, which can be difficult and cost-prohibitive. In fact, the lack of dependent care options is often a significant barrier for parents who want to return to work. Adding dependent care to your benefits package is a great way to help your employees overcome this issue. Options can include on-site childcare or even a subsidy for high-quality care, which can reduce the financial burden. As a result, more parents will be willing to return to work, which will improve your workforce productivity and retention rates.

5. Wellness reimbursements

Wellness is an umbrella term used to describe a variety of programs, activities and initiatives designed to improve your employees’ health and well-being.

One type of wellness program that is particularly beneficial for employee benefit plans is wellness reimbursement. A wellness reimbursement is a paid benefit that your employees can use to pay for health-related expenses such as gym memberships, personal training sessions, health screenings, medications and more.

This is a great way to help your employees lead healthier lives, reduce their health-related expenses and reduce their overall stress levels.

6. Employee reward programs

Employee reward programs are designed to recognize employees for their hard work and dedication. Rewards offered through these programs can include anything from cash bonuses, paid time off, gift cards and more. This can be a great way to make your employees feel appreciated, boost their morale and improve their overall job satisfaction.

7. Tuition reimbursement

Another effective way to improve retention is by helping your employees pay off their student loans or by covering their tuition if they are pursuing an advanced degree. This can make a big difference for employees who are struggling to repay their debt or who are looking to further their education and advance their career.

Build a strong, employee-centric brand with help from the BBB

Your employees are the backbone of your organization. They keep your company running and play a big role in your success. The best way to keep your employees happy and engaged is by offering them a wide range of benefits. This not only shows them that you value their hard work but also that you understand their unique needs and aspirations.

Build a business that your employees are proud to be a part of by following the BBB business news feed today!

To review this article and hyperlinked references in full, visit: <https://www.bbb.org/article/business/26543-bbb-business-tip-7-out-of-the-box-employee-benefit-ideas> Starting a new business? BBB can help!

Contact your Tri-State BBB at 812-473-0202 to learn more about BBB Accreditation.

BBB of Southern Piedmont and Western N.C. contributed this article.

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MARCH 2024

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- Vincennes University
- WillowTree of Posey County
- Woodspring Suites /Extended Stay
- Yoshis Industrial Packaging Supply

Sports, con't. from page 10

Center will see the return of both the MVC women's swim and dive competition and the GLVC men's and women's swim and dive championships in 2025.

Other future sporting events that the ERSC is working to bring to the Evansville Region include the NCAA Division II women's Elite Eight; a Division I First Four play-in tournament for the NCAA men's basketball tournament; other swim and dive competitions; and a one-of-a-kind volleyball event. And after attending Sports ETA in Portland, OR recently, ERSC Executive Director Brandon McClish is also focusing on BMX, USA swim/dive, USA hockey and other specialized sporting events that are looking for hosts.

The ERSC's busy calendar reinforces that the Evansville Region is becoming one of the Midwest's preferred locations to host sporting events, large or small, offering state-of-the-art facilities, dedicated officials committed to producing professionally run events, a wonderful selection of dining and shopping options, ease of traffic and parking, and a friendly, welcoming community.

Learn more about ERSC at
www.evansvilleregion.com/sports/.



“Being in the heart of downtown with the freedom to go outside for a break or meet someone for lunch, is priceless.”

- JESSICA HOPKINS

COWORK EVANSVILLE

Cowork Evansville Spotlight: Jessica Hopkins

Meet Jessica Hopkins, Special Assistant to the Chief Impact Officer at YWCA USA in Washington, D.C. and the talented owner of Buttercream Wishes by Jess. Here's why she chose Cowork Evansville and why you should too!

Community Connection: "It's a community, not just an office."

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Explore Cowork Evansville and unlock a world of possibilities.
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TOUR OUR SPACE

MILESTONES

Milestone celebrations are a benefit of Evansville Regional Economic Partnership membership. To request a milestone ribbon-cutting, click or scan the QR code.



ENINE ARTS LLC

Enine Arts LLC celebrated the grand opening of a new location with a ribbon-cutting at 318 Main St., Suite 224 in Evansville. Enine Arts is a one-stop-shop brand design studio that offers affordable and state-of-the-art branding services, web design and development services, graphic design services, and print and sign services. Contact them at 812-434-1283, vageesha@eninearts.com or online at www.eninearts.com.



EMERALD DESIGN

Emerald Design celebrated the grand opening of a new location with a ribbon-cutting at 427 Main St. in Evansville. Emerald Design is a full-service florist specializing in sustainable floristry, locally grown flowers, houseplants and gifts. Contact them at 812-568-4460, emeraldevv@gmail.com or online at www.emeraldevv.com.



GRAINGER

Grainger celebrated 55-year anniversary with a ribbon-cutting at 837 N. Congress Ave. in Evansville. Grainger is America's trusted source for MRO supplies and industrial products. Grainger backs this up with 24/7 customer service and technical support from experts with deep knowledge of MRO tools and products. Contact them at 812-893-7292, jeremy.eades@grainger.com or online at www.Grainger.com.



SIXTH AND ZERO

Sixth and Zero celebrated an expansion with a ribbon-cutting at 425 Main St., Suite 10 in Evansville. Sixth and Zero is the only low waste lifestyle shop with Refillery in Evansville and offers a wide variety of bulk goods for kitchen and bath, as well as hand-crafted bath and body products. Contact them at 812-431-3835, hello@sixthandzero.com or online at sixthandzero.com.



POSH ON MAIN

Posh on Main celebrated a 5-year anniversary with a ribbon-cutting at 330 B Main St. in Evansville. Posh on Main offers boutique clothing and gift items. Contact them at 812-401-0075, poshonmainboutique@gmail.com or online at www.posh-onmain.com.



1-800 HANSONS

1-800 HANSONS celebrated a grand opening of a new location with a ribbon-cutting at 6149 Wedeking Ave., Suite A1 in Evansville. 1-800 HANSONS offers home improvements that includes roofing, siding, guttering, gutter protection, windows and baths. Contact them at 812-449-8374, atanner@hansons.com or online at www.hansons.com.



GRANTED

Granted celebrated a grand opening with a ribbon-cutting at 2200 Oak Hill Rd. in Evansville. Granted will have increased capacity to address the complex needs of Wish Children and their families and help them navigate the challenges they face on a daily basis. Contact them at 812-455-1406, tbarnes@smithbutterfield.com or online at www.grantedtristate.org.



WOODWARD DEVELOPMENT AND CONSTRUCTION, INC.
 Woodward Development and Construction, Inc. celebrated a ground-breaking with a ribbon-cutting at 6016 E. Columbia St., in Evansville. Commonwealth Pain and Spine and Woodward Development and Construction announce ground-breaking of new surgery center. Contact them at 812-430-5341, aburkett@woodwardrealty.com or online at www.woodwardrealty.com.



ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANING SOLUTIONS, LLC
 Environmental Cleaning Solutions, LLC celebrated an expansion of a new location with a ribbon-cutting at 816 Maxwell Ave. in Evansville. Environmental Cleaning Solutions has expanded its services from water and fire restoration, industrial cleaning and mold remediation to include asbestos abatement, lead-base paint abatement and animal/bird waste cleanup. Contact them at 812-205-7423, kenny@ecsevv.com or online at www.ecsevv.com.



TAYLORMADE GOLF
 TaylorMade Golf celebrated the announcement of a new product line, Sun Day Red, with a ribbon-cutting at 4400 Garrison Ave. in Evansville. Sun Day Red is a new subsidiary of TaylorMade Holdings that will have a dedicated operating space within the TaylorMade Golf North American Distribution Center. Sun Day Red is Tiger Woods' new apparel brand that promises to bring a new and elevated standard to performance wear and luxury lifestyle fashion. Contact them at 586-530-9782, austin.rhodes@taylormadegolf.com or online at www.sundayred.com.



OUTSTANDING EDUCATORS
 The University of Evansville honored four outstanding educators in Vanderburgh County with surprise announcements within their schools, celebrating their remarkable contributions to education. Specific to Vanderburgh County, this competition recognizes exemplary classroom teachers and building principals in grades K-12, each possessing a minimum of three years of experience. These esteemed awards are made possible through the generous sponsorship of UE, Liberty Federal Credit Union and the Evansville Courier & Press.



OUTSTANDING BUILDING PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR: ANGIE OLIVER
 With more than three decades of experience in education, Angie Oliver has demonstrated exceptional leadership as the principal of Glenwood Leadership Academy. Under her guidance, Glenwood has evolved into a supportive learning environment dedicated to the holistic growth of its diverse student body. At Glenwood, Oliver has implemented initiatives such as the REACH Academy and partnerships with community organizations to provide tailored support to students. Her dedication to teacher well-being and professional development has led to a positive working culture and improved student outcomes.

OUTSTANDING HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER OF THE YEAR: SALLY STERNBERG
 With 23 years of teaching experience, Sally Sternberg has been instrumental in fostering academic excellence and college readiness among high school students for over a decade. As the AVID Elective Teacher and Site Coordinator at Harrison High School, she spearheads initiatives to bridge the opportunity gap and prepare all students for success in a global society. Within the AVID program, Sternberg implements strategies that promote peer collaboration, student advocacy and academic rigor, fostering a sense of belonging and empowerment among her students. Through weekly tutorials and college visits, she equips students with the skills and confidence needed to navigate postsecondary education and beyond.



OUTSTANDING MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER OF THE YEAR: LINDSEY O'BRIAN
 With a decade of teaching experience, Lindsey O'Brian has spent seven years as a 6th-grade English/Language Arts teacher, dedicating herself to nurturing students' literacy skills and holistic development. Despite facing the challenges of a new curriculum at Helfrich Park STEM Academy this year, she has demonstrated resilience and adaptability, ensuring her students receive the best education possible. O'Brian's teaching philosophy centers on creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment where every student feels valued and capable of growth. She emphasizes the importance of building strong relationships with her students, fostering a sense of belonging and confidence in their abilities.

E-REP AMBASSADORS OF THE MONTH MARCH 2024



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#looksgoodonyou



OUTSTANDING ELEMENTARY TEACHER OF THE YEAR: LINDSEY STINE
 With 12 years of teaching experience, Lindsey Stine has dedicated eight years to West Terrace School, where she currently serves as a fourth-grade classroom teacher. She imparts knowledge across various subjects including Math, Science, Social Studies, Reading and Writing. Stine's commitment extends beyond traditional teaching, as she sponsors the Battle of the Books Team and the Student Leadership Committee, fostering student engagement and leadership development within the school community.

JACOB STILWELL
 Jacob Stilwell joined the local Edward Jones office of financial advisor Roger Nurrenbern as an associate financial advisor. Stilwell will help tailor and personalize clients' experiences. Nurrenbern's office is located at 1923 W. Franklin Street.

FIT TIGHT COVERS

Fit Tight Covers made two new hires:



JACOB ADLER

Jacob Adler joined Fit Tight Covers as a Design Intern. He currently attends SICTC's Engineering Design Technology program and plans to pursue a degree in Mechanical Engineering at the University of Southern Indiana after graduation.



JENNIFER ELFREICH

Jennifer Elfreich joined Fit Tight Covers as a Project Administrator. She attends Indiana Wesleyan University and plans to earn her degree in Accounting in 2025.

LENSING BUILDING SPECIALTIES AND ARCHITECTURAL SALES

Lensing Building Specialties and Architectural Sales, an Evansville-headquartered building materials distributor, announced the addition of two new team members.



CAMDEN GILLES

Camden Gilles, Overhead Door Technician



BRYAN WINTERS

Bryan Winters, Purchasing Manager



CHAD ZIRKELBACH

Chad Zirkelbach joined AstraZeneca as a Senior Validation Engineer. He had spent the past eight years with BWX Technologies (BWXT), working a variety of roles. He began his career at BWXT as a dimensional and visual (weld) inspector, transitioned to a Manufacturing Engineer responsible for machining and fabrication of missile tubes to be used within Columbia Class Navy Submarines, eventually becoming the site's first Non-Destructive Evaluation (NDE) Engineer. As NDE Engineer, he was responsible for creation and approval of inspection procedures, along with ensuring manufacturing process and inspections techniques achieved contractual compliance on naval nuclear reactor and steam generator programs. Zirkelbach holds a Master of Science in Industrial Management degree from the University of Southern Indiana and a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering Technology degree from Purdue University.

GRIBBINS INSULATION & SCAFFOLDING

Gribbins Insulation & Scaffolding added four new employees and made a promotion:



JACKSON WENDEL

Jackson Wendel joined full-time as an Estimator/Project Manager after graduating from the University of Southern Indiana with a degree in Manufacturing Engineering Technology. He started in the warehouse then began his Construction Management internship in May 2023. Before Gribbins, Wendel worked at CED Evansville Supply in sales, where he learned the ropes of effective communication and understanding customers.



ENNO ROSE

Enno Rose joined Gribbins as the Area Manager for the Northern Ohio Scaffolding Division. With 30 years of experience as a union carpenter in the scaffold industry, he brings a wealth of expertise to his role.



JAMIE WALDRUP

Jamie Waldroup was promoted to Senior Estimator/Project Manager. He joined Gribbins in 2010 after successfully coordinating the insulation and scaffolding for the Abengoa Ethanol Plant project. Waldroup started working at Duke Energy Edwardsport then was transferred to the Terre Haute office once the project was complete. He has been involved in managing many out-of-town projects for Gribbins and has shown a high level of ownership and effectiveness while managing these projects. He also spends a good amount of his time estimating various new projects and oversees some high-profile maintenance accounts.



NATHAN WALDRUP

Nathan Waldroup has rejoined Gribbins in the role of Estimator/Project Manager. He earned his Bachelor's Degree in Accounting from Ashford University in 2012 then started his career in mechanical insulation in 2018. Nathan knows the Gribbins way and brings extensive experience with him, and we are so excited to have him back at our Terre Haute location.



ERICA HUTCHISON

Erica Hutchison joined Gribbins as the Scaffolding Billing Specialist. Before Gribbins, Hutchison gained valuable experience working at a plumbing company in Evansville, where she handled billing, union reporting, and payroll tasks. Her favorite part of the job is being able to problem solve, create easy solutions to help make the workflow better, and contribute in a fast-paced environment.



ANDREA GENTRY

Andrea Gentry was named Vice President for Development at the University of Southern Indiana, effective July 1. Gentry will report to Dr. Ronald S. Rochon, USI President, and join the President's Cabinet. As Vice President for Development, Gentry will provide leadership for the Development team in planning, implementation and administration of the University's comprehensive fundraising efforts. The role also oversees Alumni Engagement and Volunteer USI and serves as President of the University of Southern Indiana Foundation. For the past seven years, Gentry has served as the Director of Development for the University of Southern Indiana. In that role, she was responsible for securing leadership, major and planned gifts, while conducting administrative duties for the Development Office and USI Foundation. Gentry works closely with the USI Foundation Board of Directors and its Executive Committee. In addition to her time as Director, she has been devoted to USI for 19 years in the Development Office, including the positions of Associate Director of Development; Assistant Director of Development, Major Gifts; Assistant Director of Development, Annual Giving; and Senior Administrative Assistant. Gentry graduated cum laude from USI in 2005, where she majored in public relations. She earned the designation of Certified Fund Raising Executive (CFRE) from CFRE International in 2013, and the Certificate in Fund Raising Management from the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy in 2012. She completed the Indiana University O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs Nonprofit Leadership Academy in 2017 and is a member of Leadership Everyone's class of 2011. She served as campaign manager for Campaign USI: Elevating Excellence, which exceeded its \$50 million goal. She has served three terms on the University's Administrative Senate. Communication and collaboration are key factors in the work Gentry does to serve her alma mater. Gentry also provides leadership to the Evansville Area Fundraising Council through its board of directors. She is a board member of Keep Evansville Beautiful and mentors local high school students with the YWCA. She is a past board member of the Koch Family Children's Museum of Evansville and was named to the Evansville Business Journal's 20 under 40 Emerging Leaders in 2011.



ALCOA WARRICK OPERATIONS

Alcoa Warrick Operations made two key hires:



DON "BILLY" HUGHES

Don "Billy" Hughes joined Alcoa Warrick Operations as Anode Assembly and Services Manager. Hughes has extensive experience in manufacturing, having previously worked in multiple roles at Century Aluminum since 2015, most recently as Potline Manager and Business Improvement Manager. Prior to that, he worked at Alcoa Warrick Operations in Potroom and Anode Assembly positions from 2007 to 2015. He began his manufacturing career at Waupaca Foundry as a Line Lead Supervisor, and he has served in the Indiana Army National Guard. He currently is working toward his Associate in Applied Science degree in Business Administration and Management from Owensboro Community & Technical College.



JEFFERY SUTTON

Jeffery Sutton, Power Plant Mechanical Maintenance Planner, rejoined Alcoa. Sutton previously worked for Alcoa in maintenance roles, including Maintenance Supervisor, Finishing Maintenance Planner, and Maintenance Technical Advisor, starting in 1999. He was the Lead Maintenance Scheduler at Kaiser Aluminum prior to rejoining Alcoa. Before working at Alcoa, he was a Millwright at Whirlpool Corporation for 10 years.



SHELBY L. CLARK

Shelby L. Clark, who will graduate summa cum laude with a bachelor's degree in marketing and minors in management, public relations and advertising, was named the recipient of the President's Medal, the highest honor bestowed to an undergraduate in the University of Southern Indiana Class of 2024. A committed member of the USI Honors Program and Beta Gamma Sigma, Clark played a crucial role at The Shield, the student-run newspaper. Joining as a Staff Writer in October 2020 during the challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic, when the newspaper faced a significant decline in leadership and staff, Clark persevered and assumed the role of Editor-in-Chief in May 2021. In this capacity, she led a team of over 40 students, fostering growth in their writing, editing, journalism, social media, business, sales and marketing skills. She oversaw the publication of 400 stories, 72 weekly newsletters and 12 monthly print editions, including the first-ever print edition dedicated to the USI Black community. Notably, Clark and her student team produced a 56-page special edition magazine, "Unmasked," to tell the stories of how COVID-19 affected the USI community.

LUNCH WITH THE GOVERNOR

JUNE 20, 2024 | 11:30 AM - 1 PM
FORD CENTER - EVANSVILLE

The Evansville Regional Economic Partnership (E-REP) is excited to welcome the Governor of Indiana, Eric Holcomb, to the regional business community for its annual "Lunch with the Governor" signature event.

Join the Evansville Region's business and community leaders in a discussion with Governor Holcomb as he takes his last lap in office. Hear about his 2024 ideas, plans, projects, and priorities for Hoosiers; and how to make Indiana the best place to live, work, study, play and stay.

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