

Note: These minutes are not official until approved by the Economic Development Committee at a subsequent meeting. Please refer to the meeting minutes when these minutes are approved to obtain any changes to these minutes.

DeKalb County Government
Sycamore, Illinois

**Economic Development Committee Minutes
September 6, 2016**

The DeKalb County Economic Development Committee met on Tuesday, September 6, 2016 @ 7:00p.m. in the DeKalb County Administration Building's Conference Room East. Vice-Chairman Whelan called the meeting to order. Members present were Mr. Faivre, Ms. Leifheit, Mr. Pietrowski, Jr., and Mr. Porterfield. Ms. Polanco and Mr. Brown were absent. A quorum was present. Others present were Gary Hanson, Deb Armstrong, and Alex Nerad.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

It was moved by Mr. Pietrowski, Jr., seconded by Ms. Leifheit, and it was carried unanimously to approve the minutes from August 2, 2016.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

It was moved by Mr. Faivre, seconded by Ms. Leifheit, and it was carried unanimously to approve the agenda as presented.

PUBLIC OR MEMBER COMMENTS

There were no comments

DEKALB COUNTY CONVENTION AND VISITOR'S BUREAU ANNUAL REPORT – MS. DEB ARMSTRONG, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Ms. Deb Armstrong, Executive Director of the DeKalb County Convention and Visitor's Bureau gave her annual report to the committee. She said that visitor spending in DeKalb County hit an all-time high of \$91.3 million and contributed \$7.47 million in state and local tax revenue in 2015. Tourism, she stated, continues to make a significant impact on our economic wealth in DeKalb County. Ninety one million dollars in visitor spending shows just how important investing in tourism marketing is to our local economy. 2015 marks the 7th consecutive year that visitor spending has increased. They are up 3.3% over 2014, she continued.

Ms. Armstrong stated that the Illinois Department of Commerce's Office of Tourism announced that the tourism industry in Illinois achieved continued growth in 2015, with expenditures, which is the total amount of money travelers spend during their time in Illinois, topping \$37 billion, a 2.6% increase from 2014. In addition, the industry created over 10,000 new jobs in 2015, which is a 3.5% increase from 2014. The jobs and revenues generated by Illinois tourism industry support local communities and the growth of Illinois' economy.

Ms. Armstrong also stated that her office has printed 20,000 copies of the Distillery Brochure. They needed more printed and all of the distilleries agreed to pay for the 2nd printing of the brochure.

Travel Illinois Magazine did an article on Whiskey Acres in DeKalb County. This article appears on pages 18 and 19 of their Fall/Winter edition for 2016. They also included a small article on Jonomac Orchards.

Ms. Armstrong said that one of the future goals of the Convention and Visitor's Bureau is to hire a new sales and marketing employee. They also need to receive more local matching funds.

DEKALB COUNTY AREA ARTS COUNCIL – MR. ALEX NERAD, PRESIDENT

Mr. Alex Nerad, President of the DeKalb Area Arts Council gave a brief update on the council. He said that their educational series workshops are doing very well. These workshops highlight a broad range of topics. They are very happy with the results that they are seeing so far.

Mr. Nerad said that everyone is invited to the Art Walk that they will be holding on October 6, 2016 from 5-8:00p.m. There will be 24 vendors present and it will be held in the newly created A.C.E. Corridor. The NIU Jazz and Steel band will be performing at 8:00p.m. at the Egyptian Theatre. The tickets are \$15 each.

The Public Sculpture Program is about exhibiting 10 to 15 sculptures in the A.C.E. Corridor over a 12 month time frame. The community will select their favorite sculpture to place permanently at a location in the Corridor.

Their new membership program for the Arts Council is growing very quickly and they are pleased with this, he said.

COORDINATOR'S REPORTS

Mary Supple, DeKalb County Economic Development Coordinator and Business Incubator Manager, gave an update to the committee about the Incubator. She said that the ribbon cutting ceremony was a great success with about 100 people or more in attendance. The Legislators that attended were U.S. Congressman Randy Hultgren, U.S. Congressman Kinzinger's representative John Walsh, Representative Robert Pritchard, Representative Tom Demmer and a representative from Senator Mark Kirk's office. Since the ribbon cutting ceremony there have been two new companies that have signed on as tenants at the Incubator. That makes a total of 6 companies in the Incubator.

Ms. Supple has met with the new Dean of the College of Performing Arts at NIU, Dean Kassel. Dean Kassel is willing to talk to certain students and faculty about the Incubator and see if there are any students who may be interested in the Incubator. She is also working with a professor, Billie Giese, on this project too.


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Ms. Supple also mentioned that she will be meeting with the new Dean of the College of Business at the end of September.

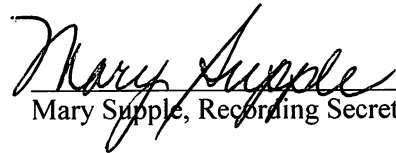
ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Mr. Porterfield, seconded by Mr. Pietrowski, Jr., and it was carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,



Vice-Chairman Jeff Whelan



Mary Supple, Recording Secretary