

Compendium:

NORTHEAST
INDIANA
WORKS



Board Newsletter, April 2024

Dear Board Members:

Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) programs in northeast Indiana are expanding as part of a statewide effort to double the number of Indiana JAG programs by 2025.

Economic Growth Region 3 has 14 JAG programs at 13 locations across the region. Presently, at least four more programs are set to be added in the fall. The proposed locations are the Allen County Learning Academy (Allen County Juvenile Corrections), Angola High School, ACE Academy (Angola Alternative Education), and a second program at DeKalb High School.

Expansion of JAG
Programs Underway
In Northeast Indiana

All 12 economic growth regions, through a directive issued by Indiana **Gov. Eric Holcomb**, are expected to collectively grow from 125 JAG programs to 250. The goal of northeast Indiana is to add 10 programs by 2025, equaling 24 total programs.

"JAG has been in northeast Indiana for nearly 20 years," said **Edmond O'Neal**, president and CEO of Northeast Indiana Works. "It has been vital in educational development and creating a career pipeline. Our region has seen success at local and state competitions, and we look forward to not only this expansion, but future expansion in years to come."

JAG is a program for students facing barriers to graduation. The program teaches high school juniors and seniors in-demand employment skills, provides tools needed to complete their high school diplomas, and offers career exploration and coaching experiences. Northeast Indiana's JAG program is overseen by Northeast Indiana Works and administered by Brightpoint. **SEE JAG WINNERS, PAGE 3**

Northeast Indiana Works Campaign Nets Awards: Twelve videos produced as part of Northeast Indiana Works' Manufacturing Begins with Me career awareness campaign won six Addy Awards at a recent ceremony hosted by the American Advertising Federation of Fort Wayne.

The 30-second videos won the six awards in the film, video and sound category. The videos took gold for internet commercial, branded content and entertainment, and animation, special effects or motion graphics. They took silver for internet commercial, public online film and public service campaign. The videos were created by Fort Wayne Marketing and made possible through a grant from the Don Wood Foundation.

The videos feature young actors posing as students who move through their young lives from interests to education/training to careers. Each video mentions one of the 11 counties in Economic Growth Region 3, as well as a company where the student might ultimately work.

The videos, targeting mostly middle-schoolers, have achieved remarkable social media saturation on several platforms, garnering more than 2.5 million impressions. They are part of a larger campaign that includes other social media content, as well as Manufacturing Experience day camps for young students.

Indiana Governor Honors O’Neal: Northeast Indiana Works’ president and CEO received a certificate of appreciation from Indiana Gov. Holcomb during a meeting with the governor in early March in Indianapolis.

Also signing the certificate was **Whitney Ertl**, executive director of the Governor’s Workforce Cabinet.

The certificate reads: “In recognition of your leadership and commitment to workforce development in Indiana and for helping Hoosiers gain valuable skills and jobs that enhance quality of life. We are grateful for your contributions and service to grow our state.”



Northeast Indiana Works President and CEO Edmond O’Neal is greeted by Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb .

In late February, O’Neal participated in a legislative breakfast meet-and-greet at the Indiana Statehouse hosted by the Indiana Workforce Board Alliance. The alliance is comprised of Indiana’s 12 regional workforce boards.

Healthcare Initiative Highlighted: **Rick Farrant**, director of communications for Northeast Indiana Works, gave a presentation March 13 on the organization’s healthcare awareness initiative during a virtual roundtable hosted by the U.S. Department of Labor—Employment and Training Division and the Indiana Department of Workforce Development.

Economic Growth Region 3 was one of four Indiana workforce regions selected to give presentations on initiatives that involve sector partnerships. The three other presentations were given by Region 4 (West Central Indiana), Region 5 (Central Indiana), and Region 8 (South Central Indiana).

Among the healthcare initiative’s partners with Northeast Indiana Works: the Northeast Indiana Healthcare Consortium, Region 8 Education Service Center, and Junior Achievement of Northern Indiana.

Governor’s Workforce Cabinet Meets in Fort Wayne: Economic Growth Region 3 hosted a Governor’s Workforce Cabinet meeting February 16 at Electric Works in Fort Wayne.

Rebecca Schroeder, a Northeast Indiana Works board member and a member of the cabinet, gave a presentation about the importance of supporting the needs of the agriculture industry. O’Neal thanked the cabinet for its work and recognized attending Northeast Indiana Works board members and elected officials.

In addition to Schroeder, board members attending included **Jordi Disler**, **LeRoy Jackson** and **Corey Schoon**.

Opportunity Knocks Moves to INsight: Opportunity Knocks, a 10-year partnership with WPTA-TV, has moved from the noon news Mondays to the station’s INsight, which airs from 3-4 p.m. Thursdays.

Opportunity Knocks, a roughly three- to five-minute taped segment focusing on workforce and economic development topics, debuted in May 2014. Northeast Indiana Works chooses the topics and schedules the guests.

“We provide the station with news content and in return benefit from brand identity,” said **Farrant**. “The segments also help position us as a leader in various workforce development-related arenas.”

Manchester High Shines at Regional, State JAG Conferences: Manchester High School topped the list of winners, taking home 13 awards at the regional Jobs for America’s Graduates (JAG) Career Development Conference on January 26 in Marion.

There are 14 JAG programs at 13 locations in northeast Indiana. Northeast Indiana Works oversees JAG regionally and Brightpoint administers the program.

The regional conference is a yearly event that allows students to compete in several skills-based competitions, including public speaking, critical thinking and entrepreneurship.

Students who won first place advanced to the Indiana state competition at the Ivy Tech campus in Indianapolis.

Regional first-place winners were:

- **Josh Steely**, Manchester High School;
- **Issac Tuttle**, Sarah Williams and Austin Bryant, DeKalb High School;
- **Samantha Slavin**, DeKalb High School;
- **Aliyah Nichols**, Manchester High School;
- **Braylon Judy**, Manchester High School;
- **Olivia Davis**, Manchester High School;
- **Carolyn Hoffmeyer**, Manchester High School;
- **Payton Hamby**, Manchester High School;
- **Alexis Green**, Manchester High School;
- **Carleigh Blevins**, Manchester High School.

Other schools with top-three finishers: New Haven High School, Columbia City High School, Southside High School, Huntington High School, and West Noble High School.

At the State Career Development Conference in March, Manchester High School students won six awards, including three first place honors. DeKalb High School won two awards.

Among the winners at the state conference: **Slavin, Nichols, Judy, Davis, Hoffmeyer** and **Blevins**.

O’Neal Speaks to Rotary Members: Northeast Indiana Works’ president and CEO spoke February 19 to members of the Fort Wayne Downtown Rotary Club during a meeting a Parkview Field.

He took a peek into the future at what the local workforce might look like 10 years from now, including offering projections about job openings across multiple industries. He also detailed the kind of work done by Northeast Indiana Works and WorkOne Northeast.

(The next board meeting will be from 9 to 10:30 a.m. April 12, 2024. It will be in person and virtual.)