

We are
MADISON COUNTY
INDIANA



"We Are Madison County" is a celebration of meaningful, impactful groups and individuals who make up Madison County's unique and cherished culture.

We celebrate community partnerships.

We are human-focused.

We unite, not divide.

We promote, not advertise.

We advocate, not politicize.



Scan the code to sign up for our email list!



A PARTY WHEN THE LIGHTS GO OUT



Mark Thacker
Executive Director

The 2024 eclipse - what an experience! It was such a rare, natural phenomenon. With approximately 4 minutes of totality and near perfect weather, hushed crowds sat in awe as the moon completely cloaked the sun.

Madison County hosted over 16 official events that welcomed Madison County residents and guests from afar. All of our hotels were sold out for many months in advance, and the majority of the campsites were also sold out for the extended weekend. Many of our restaurants and shops have commented on the extra retail traffic over the weekend and their many conversations with out-of-town guests. After listening to and reading recaps from many of these event sites, we discovered we were hosts to approximately 10,000 viewers with representation from over 30 states and 4 countries.

The Anderson Madison County Visitors Bureau was honored to be one of the few locations offering free eclipse glasses, as well as a strong communication point and advertiser for all the official eclipse events across the county. We also had the wonderful experience of partnering with the Madison County Chamber of Commerce, the City of Anderson, and the Anderson Regional Airport to plan the Throwing Some Shade eclipse experience at the airport. Such a fun and dynamic team! Kudos also the Madison County EMA for their emergency planning, and the Madison County Health Department for supporting many of the eclipse events for on-site services.

Activities that bring visitors to our county increase our tax base from restaurants, shopping, lodging, gas, etc. These visits provide us an opportunity to showcase our overall quality of place. That visit may spark an interest for repeat trips, or even a potential move to our communities. A little Hoosier Hospitality goes a long way!



Anderson
Madison County
Visitors Bureau

A HISTORIC COLLABORATION IN MADISON COUNTY

Recently the Madison County Chamber hosted a first of its kind collaboration session with elected leaders from 10 of our individual municipalities. The purpose of this session is to debut the efforts being made for Madison County to pursue the Stellar Pathways Program designation by the State of Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs. This designation carries with it millions in state grant funds and would signal to the entire state that our region is committed to a prosperous future.

Among the many topics being discussed in these sessions is the formation of a strategic investment plan that allows our municipalities to set regional priorities and work together on projects in a way never seen before in our county. These projects will all have a similar theme of connecting our communities and will be focused on having clearly defined and measurable outcomes. Examples of these outcomes include population growth, increased educational attainment rates, increased per capita incomes and many more.

While the Madison County Chamber is the lead applicant on this project, this is the result of a full team effort within our municipal and nonprofit partner groups. Organizations like the Madison County and South Madison community foundations, Madison County Economic Development, and the Anderson Madison County Visitors Bureau are all playing integral roles in the formation of our strategic investment plan and pulling together many other community stakeholders for this historic Madison County venture!



*Clayton Whitson
President & CEO*



PLANNED GIVING WITH FREE WILL



Ben Davis
President

Making a will creates peace of mind for you and the people and charitable causes you love. Yet, 70% of Americans die without a will. This can create conflict and confusion later on, and delay the process of settling one's estate no matter what it consists of.

That's why your friends at the Madison County Community Foundation have made the process of completing your will easy and hassle-free with a new tool available to everyone.

MCCF has partnered with FreeWill, a secure, online will-maker, which will allow you to complete a free, legally valid will in less than 20 minutes. Just answer a few questions about yourself, your assets, and your wishes, and the will-making tool provides forms and instructions for how to make your will valid in the state where you live.

Why is creating a will vitally important? Because...

- It gives you peace of mind knowing that your loved ones and your priorities are taken care of.
- By putting your affairs in order, you can prevent additional stress and chaos during a time of grief.
- It's not just for the rich and famous. Passing on your money and property is only one of the many functions accomplished by creating a will.

Advance planning gives you the opportunity to ensure that beyond financial considerations, you can choose guardians for children (and even pets), write your funeral wishes, support charitable causes, and more.

For those who desire a relationship with an attorney or other estate planning professional, FreeWill can be a valuable first step to make the rest of the process seamless. Taking the time to articulate your wishes now, can be one of the kindest things you do for those left behind. Use this motivational reminder to finally sit down and create these important documents. And with the new FreeWill tool provided by the Madison County Community Foundation, it can be simpler and easier than you ever imagined: <https://madisonccf.mygiftlegacy.org/>.



**MADISON COUNTY
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION**

AI AND DATA

As we move so very quickly into the future, I'm struck at just how much computers are being integrated into every part of our daily lives. Reportedly, as many as 90% of adults in the US have a smart phone. From marketing and sales, education, retail, even healthcare, no sector of our lives will go untouched by these advancements.

It is also increasingly difficult to identify what is real and what is computer generated. My photo here had a Snapchat filter used on it to cut about 30 years off. No cost, just use the app.

So how does this impact economic development in Madison County? It has reduced the time to reply to a project lead from days to hours. More data on the community and workforce is collected in advance of any serious looks from a project. The need for our students to fully integrate these new technologies into their education is a requirement as they prepare for the workforce.

What hasn't changed? In recent interviews with area employers, soft skills such as arriving on time, dependability, and team collaboration are the characteristics for a successful workforce. Artificial Intelligence (AI) cannot teach these soft skills, however, we can continue to work in one voice to build that talent pipeline that will support economic growth for years to come.



Rob Sparks
Executive Director



VOLUNTEERS ARE PAID IN JOY



Tammy Bowman
Executive Director

Take a look around your community, observing the places and events you enjoy. Odds are, they can be traced to the individuals and groups whose volunteer efforts form Madison County's civic backbone.

On any given day in South Madison, Kiwanis Club volunteers grill burgers to fund youth programs, Community Association volunteers plan the go-to summer festival, and the "Quack Pack" deck out golf carts to promote the Lucky Duck Race. Other volunteers host markets, museums, and plant sales while still others blow whistles on the sports fields. At the Foundation, we put these volunteers on a pedestal. They make our towns the wonderful, warm, welcoming places they are.

In an ever-increasing loop of sustainability, it takes Foundation volunteers to make our external work -of supporting community

volunteers- possible! This season, our volunteers are buzzing with activity. Scholarship reviewers are reading and scoring. Grant reviewers are soliciting applications and making inquiries. Our finance committee is examining policies and projections. Our event planning committee is securing sponsors, vendors, and members for the Open Hearts, Open Purses benefit. More unusually, volunteers designed store windows to advertise Foundation projects. Some advised on preservation work. They've helped tidy the Foundation garden. One astutely reviews white papers on topics of importance to our community. Each one matters, and every one makes our work better.

We have a poster in our Board room reminding us, "Volunteers are paid in joy." If joy is a currency you value, let us help you get connected to start creating community.



**SOUTH MADISON COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION**

Positive change. Lasting impact.

