

*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!



# MORE TO EXPERIENCE



*Mark Thacker*  
*Executive Director*

We started the We Are Madison County newsletter collaboration over two years ago with the purpose of sharing positive stories in Madison County. It was apparent then that many of the residents were focused on the past and didn't share positive images of our current state or future opportunities. Many people, including a former coworker, had claimed there is nothing to do in this county. Yet, I see many people, now including the former coworker, enjoying the wonderful activities around the county.

Over the last twelve months, we've experienced the conclusion of the county's bicentennial efforts, the formation of Madison County Parks Board, the beginning of Taste of Madison County, the White River Food Truck Festival, Pride events, the Circle City Curling Club, and the growth of Artist Alleys, Farm Fest, the Anderson Gaslight Festival, LarryPalooza and ParkFest. Public art displays gained momentum with mural festivals in Elwood and Alexandria, while Pendleton updated one of their displays. Visions and efforts to

update and improve Athletic Park and the inclusion of both bicycle and pedestrian paths throughout Anderson are underway. All of this happened on top of all the traditionally held farmers markets, fairs, festivals and performances. There are ample activities for our residents to enjoy (and share) while we market these events to out-of-market visitors.

The Anderson Madison County Visitors Bureau is working toward solutions to better understand who is attending each event and how that impacts other parts of the communities. As we gain that information, we plan to share with each fair, festival, attraction and municipality, so we can be more educated on what is happening within our county and how best to communicate on all channels.

Step away from your traditional path and explore Madison County. While gaining new experiences, help share those with a friend and neighbor. Follow our events calendar at [www.VisitAndersonMadisonCounty.com](http://www.VisitAndersonMadisonCounty.com) to plan your next experience.



# A SEASON FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP

At the Madison County Chamber of Commerce, we continually strive to find new and creative ways to help businesses in our community thrive. With that in mind, we are excited for 2 partnerships that will bring much needed support for our home-grown businesses.

The first is a new program is a huge win for our community in helping budding entrepreneurs. Our partner, InerG Impact's Incubator for Entrepreneurs program just received a \$40,000 grant from the state of Indiana as part of a \$1.05M investment to boost entrepreneurship resources across the state. This funding will allow the incubator to provide even more opportunities for local entrepreneurs in Anderson and Madison County to access essential training, mentorship, and community support to turn their dreams into thriving businesses. This program is open to any level of entrepreneur allowing them to take their concept and turn it into a career.

We're thrilled to see the state recognizing the impactful work InerG Impact is doing to empower under-resourced entrepreneurs and accelerate economic growth in the region and we are excited to be playing a role in transforming lives and communities through entrepreneurship.

Our second opportunity is the next partnership with the Performance Group for the 2nd Annual Performance University, a day long crash course for entrepreneurs to improve their business acumen and give them a competitive advantage in the market. We want to provide an opportunity to allow entrepreneurs time to work on their business, not just in their business. The goal is to provide dedicated time for participants to step back from the daily grind and focus on big-picture goals and growth strategies. Topics for the day will be led by industry experts and provide practical insights and actionable strategies that entrepreneurs can apply directly to their businesses. These topics include: 10 Rules of Business, Entity Structure and Record-Keeping, Cashflow Planning and Management, Marketing Panel and Q&A, Business Financing, Tax Planning and Tax Efficiency, and Long-Term Business Planning and Succession Planning. Each participant will receive wrap around support from the Flagship Enterprise Center and Bankable, Indiana's largest micro mission lender.

With these and other programs, we are excited to see the future for all of these Madison County business owners!



*Clayton Whitson  
President & CEO*



# THE STATE OF AMERICAN GENEROSITY



*Ben Davis*  
*President*

A recently released report on the state of philanthropy in the United States has created a buzz across the nonprofit sector.

The Generosity Commission, a nonpartisan panel composed of 17 experts on charitable activity, revealed in summarizing its three-year study that the landscape of giving and volunteering in the U.S. is changing – and not necessarily for the better. But, all is not doom-and-gloom!

The factors are many and varied, for example:

- Expired tax incentives. The charitable benefits that donors used to receive for their generosity have largely been replaced by a higher standard deduction.
- Declining religious affiliation. Giving to churches, while still the largest slice of overall charitable giving, is lower than ever as “unaffiliated” is one of the most popular responses in religious polling.
- A generally slumping middle class. Statistics show that the average American started cutting back on donations during the Great Recession, and many have not restored their generosity since then.

On the bright side, it’s not just that people don’t want to give. Almost three quarters of Americans (74%) say they aspire to be generous. In a time when division and disunity are rampant, generosity can be a shared value that helps us all identify with each other across social and political segments. After all, the Commission concluded, what could be viewed as a symptom of a hurting society just may also be the antidote.

Philanthropic partners like the Madison County Community Foundation can provide the kinds of tools and counsel that inspire giving and make the process easy – helping turn generous intent into reality.

For the full Generosity Commission report, visit [www.thegenerositycommission.org/report/](http://www.thegenerositycommission.org/report/).



**MADISON COUNTY  
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION**

# ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE - NOT THE MOVIE

The summer has flown by, before we even had time to get our beach bodies ready! During the last several months, the economic landscape has seen a shift in activity. Whether it be the upcoming election or the pressure of higher interest rates, in general, business expansion and investment has slowed. There has been one notable exception: Data Center Projects.

This is an interesting sector that nearly runs against the norms of the present day. Data centers need utility support that is unmatched in development these days. It's forcing power companies to reverse their sustainability plans and pushing out 2030 goals to 2040 and beyond.

Unlike the electric vehicle business model that was pushed and subsidized by the government, this sector growth is coming from the private sector at a very rapid rate of investment. The reason, grabbing the AI market, is going to require 10 times the power than a simple online search.

How will this affect cashflow? That is yet to be seen. However, technological advancements seem to be everywhere, and we are embracing it with hopes to secure some new jobs and investment along the way. Our future looks bright in Madison County, and we are preparing for 2025! Incidentally, this article was not written using ChatGPT.



*Rob Sparks*  
*Executive Director*



# INTRODUCING THE LIBRARY OF NONPROFIT THINGS



*Chloe Goins*  
*Philanthropy Intern*

Inspired by the Pendleton Community Public Library's wildly creative idea of providing infrequently needed, yet useful, household items for patron checkout through the "Library of Things," the Foundation is happy to introduce a new community resource: a "Library of Nonprofit Things."

Small nonprofits commonly lack permanent storage for many items that are used for events, fundraisers, and other community activities. Often, items are lost due to misplacement, lack of record, or changes in leadership. Periodically, the Foundation receives grant requests for event materials that might be expected to be used just a few times each year. To address these issues, the Foundation is now offering a "Library of Nonprofit Things."

This fall, we will install storage space on our property for a new "Library of Nonprofit Things" to provide many items that will be available for "checkout" by other organizations. Starting with 2 canopy tents, 8 bistro tables (with black tablecloths), 6 rectangular white tables, 82 folding chairs, 8 A-frame signs, 3 easel stands, a 'pipe and drape' backdrop, a portable speaker, rolling carts, and a fun array of facilitation tools, this library is well on its way! Items will be available to nonprofit and civic organizations in the Pendleton, Lapel, Ingalls, and Markleville areas.

South Madison Community Foundation is actively seeking groups who can utilize these materials, and others still to come. If you represent an organization that could benefit from borrowing these items, please contact the South Madison Community Foundation at [tammy@southmadisonfoundation.org](mailto:tammy@southmadisonfoundation.org) to begin using this new community resource.



**SOUTH MADISON COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION**

Positive change. Lasting impact.

