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## Johnson County, Indiana COMMUNITY GUIDE



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PHOTO BY JACOB MUSSELMAN

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PHOTO BY JACOB MUSSELMAN

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# TOP 10 REASONS TO CHOOSE JOHNSON COUNTY

## 10

### SHOPPING

People flock to Johnson County to shop. From Greenwood Park Mall to the vintage shops in Franklin to the Indiana Premium Outlets mall in Edinburgh, people from throughout Central Indiana come to shop the variety and convenience of Johnson County.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE CITY OF GREENWOOD

## 8

### VERSATILE LIFESTYLES

From the townhouses of Greenwood to the sprawling executive homes in Center Grove to the rural feel of Bargersville, the lifestyle you want for you and your family can be found in Johnson County. Are you looking for a quaint, community feel? Check out Franklin. Perhaps you want to get away from everything, yet still want easy access to modern amenities? Then come to southern Johnson County.

## 7

### RESTAURANTS

The variety of food establishments in Johnson County is simply amazing. There are local eateries and national chains. You can enjoy fancy dining and casual grills. From international to home-cooking, you can find it all in Johnson County.



PHOTO BY JACOB MUSSELMAN

## 6

### BUSINESS-FRIENDLY

Johnson is the third fastest growing county in the Indianapolis metro area. The current population is 160K and thousands in southern Indianapolis choose to shop and dine in Johnson County. From Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts for public financing to federally designated Opportunity Zones, Indiana has been ranked the fifth best state in the nation for business by Chief Executive magazine and first in the Midwest. Johnson County means business.

## 9

### ENTERTAINMENT

There is so much to see and do in the county. Catch a classic film at the Historic Artcraft Theatre in Franklin or a show at the Edinburg Pixy Theatre. For clean, family-friendly standup comedy, visit Gutty's Comedy Club at Greenwood Park Mall. Enjoy one of the numerous festivals in every community. Plus, you're only minutes away from all of the entertainment options in Indianapolis.



# 5

## AFFORDABLE LIVING

For every \$300 spent on living expenses in California, only \$100 is needed in Johnson County. Comparing housing values to the north side of the metro area, home buyers can get 500 to 2,000 more square feet for the same price. The median home price in Johnson County is \$245,125.



# 4

## EDUCATION

Johnson County has six public school districts, all with graduation rates above 90%, and there are four private school options. It is home to Franklin College, Indiana Tech, Indiana Wesleyan University, and Ivy Tech Community College, with Central Nine Career Center located nearby in Greenwood. The University of Indianapolis is less than 5 miles from northern Johnson County, and Indianapolis has five other universities and colleges available as well.

# 3

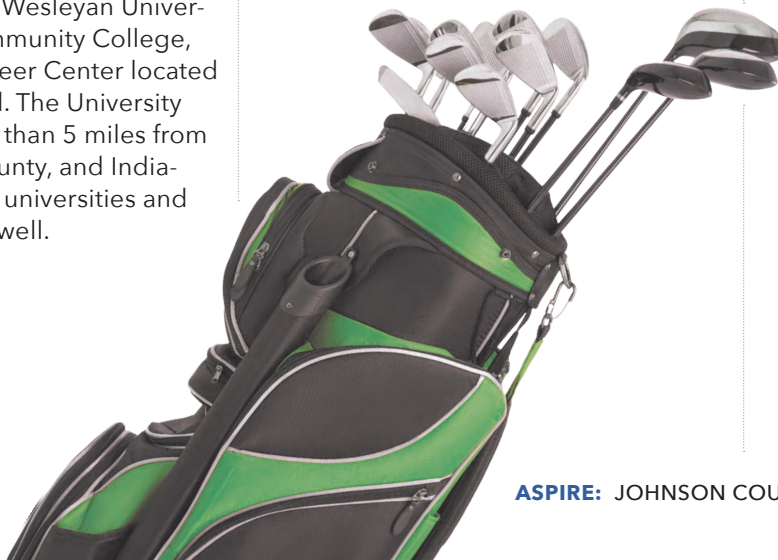
## TRANSPORTATION

Interstate 65 is the transportation backbone of Johnson County, with U.S. 31 and Ind. 135 handling much of the local traffic. The Indy South Greenwood Airport accommodates corporate and private aircraft and two train systems help move freight. Fully 80% of the U.S. population can be reached within 12 hours from Johnson County. The completion of I-69 through Johnson County by 2024 will cut travel time to Indianapolis, Bloomington, Evansville and other cities. Johnson County is just 25 minutes from Indianapolis attractions and Indianapolis International Airport with direct flights to many major cities. Need to get somewhere? We've got you covered.

# 2

## OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

There are nine golf courses in Johnson County, and Whiteland and Franklin have disc golf courses. There are numerous parks and an advanced trail system throughout the county. Check out Apple Works in Trafalgar or Kelsay Farms in Whiteland for a complete autumn experience. Nothing brings out community more than an old-fashioned festival. You can find many of those from spring through fall, and don't forget the Johnson County 4-H and Agricultural Fair in July.

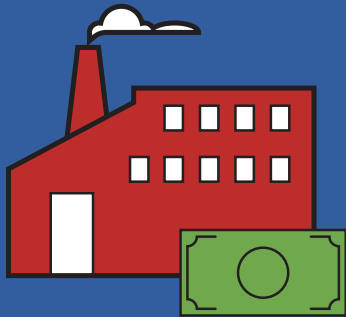


# 1

## LOCATION. LOCATION. LOCATION.

Johnson County shares a border with Indianapolis, the third largest city in the Midwest. Residents have access to several big-city features like the Indianapolis Colts and Indiana Pacers, the Indianapolis Zoo, the Children's Museum of Indianapolis, Indianapolis Motor Speedway and more. To the south is Brown County State Park, where you can get some awesome leaf peeping in the autumn, and the rustic scenery of southern Indiana hills. Louisville is only 90 miles away and Indiana Dunes is a short two hour drive. Whatever your destination, starting from here gets you there faster. There's so much more to enjoy in Johnson County!

# JOHNSON COUNTY BY THE NUMBERS



\$149m

2021 New Industrial  
Capital Investments thru Q3



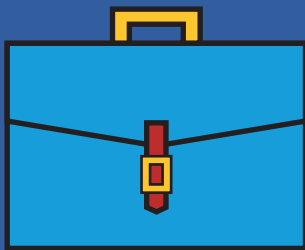
225

Miles of Trails in County  
Master Plan



\$16K

Annual Retail Sales  
per capita



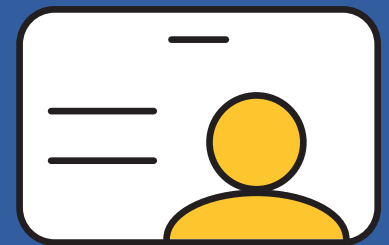
614

New Jobs



3m yards<sup>2</sup>

New Pavement which will be laid by  
the completion of the I-69 Expansion



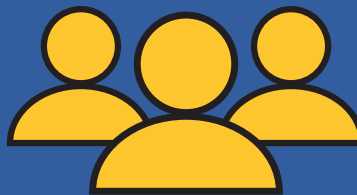
77.7K

Total Employment



\$164K

Median Owner-Occupied  
House Value



160K

Population Estimate



\$72K

Annual Median  
Household Income



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# LIFESTYLE & COMMUNITY

While the towns and cities in Johnson County have grown tremendously throughout recent decades, those responsible for developing these communities have undergone careful thought and planning to create and maintain an inviting, modern and energetic home for new and existing

residents as well as reasons for those living outside of the county to come and visit.

Johnson County offers a vibrant cultural experience with countless dining, music, art and other entertainment opportunities. Between the county and city parks, there

is nearly 600 acres of green-spaces. And while there isn't much you can't find within the county lines, Johnson County is in close proximity to other major metropolitan areas, offering ease of access to nearly anywhere residents may want to travel.

"Hoosier Hospitality is also alive and well in Johnson County," said Mike Duke, owner of Duke Homes in Bargersville. "There is just something about the people in this area that makes Johnson County a warm and welcoming community."

## BARGERSVILLE

Bargersville is one of the three fastest growing areas in Indiana. The town states that it is committed to progress and development, but not at the expense of its close-knit, small town atmosphere.

Dianna Porter said she decided to open her shop, Portal Unlimited, in Bargersville five years ago because she was inspired by the growth and the number of new homes being constructed. She thought a fine art studio would be a good addition to the community.

"Everyone seems pretty positive to the business," she said, acknowledging that the COVID-19 pandemic did slow retail traffic down. "Everyone is friendly and roots for each other. The merchants look out for each other. The greatest thing about Bargersville is the camaraderie between the merchants. We're all waiting for growth, for change and we see that happening, slowly."

Bargersville also typically offers family-friendly events throughout the year, such as the farmers market each summer, and is working on updating its parks department's master plan to benefit its residents further. Upcom-

ing projects include a paved trail starting at the intersection of State Road 155 and County Road 144 going west, eventually turning toward Main Street.

"Bargersville is in a great location, especially with I-69 being so close," said Blythe Potter, co-owner of Bargersville Wellness. "We have several really great parks here in town as well as parks in Franklin and Greenwood that are very accessible. Bargersville has a small town feel but we can get to the airport, downtown Indy, and Bloomington relatively quickly, and the cost of living is reasonable. We have nearly a blank canvas here that could be used for trails, parks, green spaces, apartments, etc. I feel excited to see what the future holds for Bargersville!"

Business is booming in Bargersville and with the extension of I-69 coming, the town anticipates the potential for even more development.

"Bargersville is so supportive of us and new businesses," Potter said. "They were so great helping us get zoned and we truly felt welcomed by the town council, our neighbors and everyone we have encountered both in the local government and citizens."



Middle David Artisan Candles & Gifts, Franklin. PHOTO BY JACOB MUSSELMAN

## FRANKLIN

The city of Franklin's motto is "discover a place where you can live, work and play for a lifetime." The city strives to offer diverse housing options, a focus on the growth of small businesses and a central location for many special events.

"We moved here 17 years ago due to my husband's job at the time," said Tauria Catlin, an owner of Middle Davids Artisan Candles. "We wanted our children to grow up in a community like this and they've had a wonderful experience in the Franklin Community Schools. We are also avid

cyclists and the country roads around town are perfect for getting in some riding. We have many friends/relatives comment on how Franklin resembles Stars Hollow from *Gilmore Girls* and we agree!"

Catlin said she and her husband enjoy being able to walk from their home to their business, where they make and sell soy candles, along with the works of more than 55 artists.

"We chose to open in Franklin because we live here and we love how Franklin has a walkable downtown," she said. "We can walk from our home to work and also to the many festivals and community activities."



Less cars, more pedestrians!”

With plenty of farmland and rural communities on its outskirts, downtown Franklin offers the opposite atmosphere with a mix of small shops, coffeehouses, restaurants and entertainment venues all within walking distance of one another. Historic houses line its downtown with trails that offer opportunities for a beautiful scenic drive.

“We chose Franklin for our second location because we love the small town, yet vibrant feel it has,” said Brian Peters, owner of Coffeehouse Five, which has two locations: in Greenwood and Franklin. “The energy in downtown Franklin really is incredible given its size.”

That energy even inspired the Peters family to relocate from the Center Grove area to Franklin.

“After our youngest son graduated from high school, we downsized and moved to Franklin because we love the atmosphere, the activities and the opportunities it presents,” he said.

The COVID-19 pandemic which caused businesses to shut down in-person sales for a few months in 2020 especially took its toll on small, local shops. Franklin’s government officials not only took steps to ensure its residents had food and other necessities, but checked in on its businesses to understand their wellbeing and see where they could be of assistance.



Coffeehouse 5, Franklin. PHOTO BY JACOB MUSSELMAN

“Franklin does a wonderful job supporting its small businesses,” Catlin said. “They contacted us and asked what we needed and they did their best to spread the word about supporting us as well as find-

ing many business resources we didn’t know were available. It feels like Franklin and its citizens are invested in having us continue our business here and that feels quite nice.”



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# LIFESTYLE & COMMUNITY CONT'D

## GREENWOOD

While the downtown area has already undergone much revitalization in recent years, such as many businesses in historic area of Main Street upgrading their facades with the help of Restore Old Town Greenwood, the improvements won't stop any time soon.

The city of Greenwood is in the midst of an \$83 million investment which will create additional mixed-use, open space and streetscape development to the downtown area. The project which began this year will take 2.5 years to complete and add \$1 million in additional annual tax revenue to the city.

"We feel like Greenwood is doing a great job supporting small businesses and we are super excited about all the efforts to revitalize Madison Ave and Main Street—and the whole Old Town Greenwood area," said Alison Giebler, an

owner of Bayberry Spa which relocated to a historic home business space on Main Street in August of 2021. "It's great to see all the new small businesses popping up offering fun places for people to shop, eat and hang out with friends and family."

Between the mix of large corporations and franchises and small businesses to shop and dine at, visitors and residents of Johnson County have plenty of choices. Ashley and Kelly McLaughlin, homeowners in Old Town Greenwood, opened their Main Street business, Brick and Mortar, in May 2021 and say they have been blown away by the support.

"The neighboring businesses that are coming in are all such lovely people with a high commitment to cultivating community and supporting one another, so you couldn't ask for a better

place to start a shop," Ashley and Kelly both said. "The people in Greenwood want small businesses to do well and show up to make that happen. I think the government and community sees the value in supporting business owners with new and exciting ideas. The little community of small business owners are excited about what Greenwood is offering for business- and we love



Bayberry Spa, Greenwood.  
PHOTO BY JACOB MUSSELMAN

being able to bring some charm and whimsy to the neighborhood."

Walkability has also been a major focus of the city, which has built a network of more than 50 miles of multi-use trails and walkways, with more in the works. These trailways lead to many of Greenwood's 17 parks. The city's newest re-designed park, Old City Park, opened in 2021 and features a 20-foot cube tower center piece, a new pedestrian bridge, porch swings, bocce ball courts and more.

"Greenwood has quickly become very family friendly with lots of parks and walking paths that have been added to encourage outdoor activities," said Ashley and Kelly. "With the recent addition of several new restaurants, shops, and event venues there seems to be something for everyone. We love the small-town feel, all while being close to everything."

## WHITELAND

Whiteland is gearing up for growth, planning for infrastructure improvements and coordinating incentives for incoming businesses and residents.

The town is situated in a good location, with I-65, U.S. 31 and Whiteland Road serving as major roads running through it, and making the town easily accessible. With space for new industrial, commercial and residential construction, the potential for the town's progress is limitless.

"Johnson County as a whole is moving in the right direction in many facets," said Mike Wood, founder and manager of Bailey & Wood

Mortgage Lender, who is working with the town of Whiteland on some prospective projects. "There are some exciting things on the horizon for sure."

And while the town is growing, it remains a small, quiet community which appeals to current and incoming residents and businesses. Kevin Sheik, assistant parts manager of Dreyer South Powersports said that he enjoys the quietness of Whiteland compared nearby Indianapolis or another larger city.

"In my 26 years of living here, it's been a good experience," Sheik said. "There are lower property taxes, it's good for shopping, there are nice

people and as for living, it's a good, safe community."

Stacy Russell, owner of PHD Carpet Cleaning, said since she bought PHD Carpet Cleaning three years ago, she has noticed a loyalty that Whiteland residents have to its own businesses.

"It's a nice community," Russell said. "It seems like we get quite a bit of business from within Johnson County because they like to support businesses in their community. We have more clientele from this area in Johnson County than we did before (we moved here)."

Wood said that the town government is supportive of its business as well. Bailey

& Wood opened in 2007, relocating to its current 5,700 square-foot building in 2011. The business has grown to have 14 offices across Indiana and Michigan. With tremendous growth through the past couple of years, the owners were contemplating relocating its Whiteland headquarters. Instead, with support from the town, they are adding 17,000 square feet to the existing building.

"This is the community that helped us establish our footprint, helped establish our business," Wood said. "The community feedback is so supportive. Whether it's events we're hosting or giving us business, they really get behind us, always."



# CONNECTIVITY



Indiana Dunes. PHOTO COURTESY OF INDIANA DUNES NATIONAL PARK

## INDIANA DUNES NATIONAL PARK

Located in Chesterton, Ind., approximately a three-hour drive from Johnson County, Indiana Dunes National Park, a 15,000-acre park, runs along 15 miles of the southern shore of Lake Michigan. Hikers can enjoy 50 miles of trails over rugged dunes, mysterious wetlands, sunny prairies, meandering rivers and peaceful forests. Visitors often enjoy scouting for rare species of birds or flying kites on the sandy beach.

## NASHVILLE, IND.

Nashville, Ind. is less than an hour's commute south from Johnson County. With hiking, entertainment, shopping and dining opportunities, Brown County is a beautiful place to visit in any season. Brown County State Park offers 16,000 acres of rugged hills, ridges and ravines that are perfect for sightseers or beginner to advanced hikers. Shop small at Nashville's many craft and niche shops or enjoy

a meal and dessert from the many locally owned restaurant. Those who want a long weekend getaway can find diverse lodging from camping to quaint bed-and-breakfasts.

## LOUISVILLE, KY

Kentucky's largest city is less than a two-hour south drive from Johnson County. The "Bourbon City," as its nickname entails, is home to many well-renowned distilleries. Louisville is also well known for the Churchill Downs which hosts the Kentucky Derby. Love architecture? See the Big Four Bridge, a former railroad bridge converted into a pedestrian pathway connecting Indiana and Kentucky. Want to visit a museum? There is more than one person can see in a day with the Kentucky Derby Museum, Louisville Slugger Museum & Factory, Muhammad Ali Center, Conrad-Caldwell House Museum and more. Need something more exciting for the whole family? Spend the day at Kentucky Kingdom or Louisville Zoo.

Johnson County is all about connectivity. Within 12 hours, you can reach 80 percent of the U.S. population from Johnson County. While being home to the Indy South Greenwood Airport and its proximity to the Indianapolis International Airport is beneficial, there is plenty to do and see in a reasonable amount of time by car.

I-65 comes through Franklin and Greenwood in Johnson County. It connects the Gulf of Mexico to the Great Lakes

through Birmingham, Alabama; Nashville, Tennessee; Louisville, Kentucky to Chicago.

Within four years, I-69 will be completed through Johnson County and all of Indiana. It will connect Johnson County to the U.S.-Canada border in Port Huron, Michigan, and eventually will connect to Mexico.

Need some ideas for a day trip or long weekend getaway? Consider some of these easy-to-get-to locations:

## CINCINNATI, OH

Johnson County residents can reach Cincinnati within a two-hour drive southeast. Well-known for the Cincinnati Zoo and Great American Ball Park, this city has much to offer visitors. Tour the Cincinnati Art Museum, established in 1886. Take a stroll through Smale Riverfront Park, a new 45-acre park on Cincinnati's downtown riverfront, or the Riverwalk, a suspension bridge which served as the prototype for the Brooklyn Bridge and includes pedestrian pathways. Explore the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center and learn about the history of the slave trade from its inception to abolition.

## CHICAGO, IL

Chicago is located just a little more than a three-hour drive northwest from Johnson County and offers a variety of entertainment to suit all interests. Take a tour of the Chicago River and experience the city's architecture with one of many companies offering tours. Get

a 360 view on the 360 Chicago Observation Deck, soaring 1,000 feet over North Michigan Avenue. Interested in exploring Chicago from the perspective of its infamous gangsters? Buy a ticket to the Gangsters and Ghosts Tour. Love art? Tour the Art Institute of Chicago, said to have the greatest Impressionist collection outside of Paris.

## ST. LOUIS, MO

Four hours southwest from Johnson County, St. Louis is most known for the Gateway Arch that allows visitors to have a birds-eye view of the city. A visit to this kid-friendly city can also include a trip to the St. Louis Zoo, City Museum, St. Louis Six Flags and more. Experience the St. Louis Station, which at one time was one of the largest and busiest passenger rail terminals in the world but is now home to more than 13,000 animals at the St. Louis Aquarium, a 200-foot carousel and 18-hole mini-golf course. The entertainment district features opportunities for dinner, drinks and a show for a night out on the town.

# HOUSING

For people looking to rent or own a home in Johnson County, a wide variety of real estate is available to fit any need and price range.

"Johnson County is still an affordable place to reside when compared to other areas of Indiana and the country as a whole when looking at key indicators including the cost of housing, median home cost, groceries etc.," stated Mike Duke, owner of Duke Homes, a custom home builder based out of Bargersville. "There are many options for housing, as well, including apartments, 55+ communities, condominiums, and homes available in a wide range of price points."

Even mixed-used development is coming to Johnson County. Greenwood is investing \$83 million in the redevelopment of the former middle school property. This new construction includes more than 40 condos and 15 townhomes combined with 18,000 sq. ft. of commercial space. Residents will soon be able to experience downtown, city living with easy access to shopping, dining, parks and other amenities.

"Johnson County is growing, and new housing options are flourishing," said Sandra Lowe, sales and marketing representative for Ryan Homes at Briar Creek, a new home development in Whiteland. "The resale market is tight, and options are

scarce. New build homes are on the rise. More low-maintenance housing options are needed in the county for the continuing aging population and for younger folks who want single family homes without all of the yard work and snow removal requirements."

There is an ever-growing demand for outdoor living spaces, community green spaces and other indoor/outdoor amenities. Duke said that trend is expected to continue as individuals and families continue to seek more opportunities for an active lifestyle. Developers of all types of housing communities are responding to these demands.

The current housing market is unprecedented, with homes selling quickly and over asking price nationwide. However, Duke said, the market has been underproducing homes at a dangerous rate during the past 20 years.

"It is good for Johnson County to be catching up and providing an adequate number of homes at all price points, to support continued economic development and grant opportunities for growing families or new families to participate in home-ownership and build a life in Johnson County," Duke said. "In addition to this, the construction and housing industry affects a significant portion of the labor force

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A Duke Homes house. PHOTO COURTESY OF DUKE HOMES

directly through employment within the trades or supply chain or indirectly through related supporting businesses.”

With low interest rates expected to remain steady around the three percent mark for the remainder of 2021 and 2022, this should help prospective residents purchase homes in Johnson County.

“Johnson County provides a stable and reasonably low cost of living for residents,” Lowe said. “It’s a great place to live, work, shop, and enjoy entertainment, dining, and worship. In addition, property taxes are lower than Marion County making it a desirable location to live.”

## NEW & AVAILABLE HOUSING PROJECTS

### ABERDEEN

**PRICE RANGE:**

\$650,000 - \$3,000,000

**DETAILS:** Aberdeen is Duke Homes’ newest custom-home neighborhood in the Bargersville and Center Grove area. Aberdeen is the first wellness lifestyle community in central Indiana and features a neighborhood farm, community gardens, nature trails, ponds, woods and programmed activities for residents. Once completed, the neighborhood will feature a community building for events and gathering with neighbors, sports courts and the opportunity for residents to participate and share in the

annual harvests from the community farm and gardens.

**INFO:** dukehomes.com

### BRIAR CREEK VILLAS

**PRICE RANGE:** Start in the mid-\$200,000s

**DETAILS:** Live a maintenance free lifestyle with lawn care and snow removal in an active community in charming Whiteland.

**INFO:** ryanhomes.com

### BLUFFS AT YOUNG’S CREEK

**PRICE RANGE:** Starting at \$220,000s

**DETAILS:** Bluffs at Young’s Creek is a quaint community tucked quietly into Franklin, Indiana connected to the previous community, Windstar. Although Franklin’s favorite dining and shopping spots are conveniently located in its backyard, Bluffs at Young’s Creek is off of the beaten path and feels like country living.

**INFO:** yourarborhome.com

### KENSINGTON GROVE

**PRICE RANGE:**

\$500,000 - \$1,000,000

**DETAILS:** Kensington Grove is an established custom home neighborhood located across from Center Grove High School that has a limited number of homesites remaining. These sites are selling quickly. This neighborhood features four lakes, a five-acre grassy park, a picturesque roundabout, centrally located fountain and breathtaking views.

**INFO:** dukehomes.com

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# HEALTHCARE

Johnson County residents have ample access to health care primarily through these three hospital systems:



Community Hospital South. PHOTO COURTESY OF COMMUNITY HEALTH NETWORK

## COMMUNITY HEALTH NETWORK

Community Health Network serves Johnson and surrounding counties as well as the south side of Indianapolis with primary care, specialty care, imaging services and inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation services.

Community's South campus is home to Community Hospital South, Community Cancer Center South, Community Surgery Center South, and Community Heart and Vascular. Exceptional care,

simply delivered, is what sets Community apart and what makes it a leading not-for-profit healthcare destination in central Indiana.

Headquartered in Indianapolis, Community has been deeply committed to the communities it serves since opening its first hospital, Community Hospital East, in 1956. Now with more than 13,000 caregivers and 200 sites of care, Community puts patients first while offering a full continuum of healthcare services, world-class innovations and a new focus on population health management.

## FRANCISCAN HEALTH

Franciscan Health Indianapolis is conveniently located adjacent to Greenwood and Johnson County. It has 453 beds and is served by a staff of highly qualified employed and affiliated physicians as well as clinical and support employees.

Franciscan is home to many nationally recognized programs in areas such as cardiovascular care, cancer services, women and children's services, orthopedic care, joint replacement surgery and sports medicine. It provides the only Level 3

neonatal intensive care unit in south-central Indiana.

Additionally, the organization offers urgent-care services at Franciscan ExpressCare centers at two locations in Greenwood. One of the sites, Franciscan Health at Stones Crossing, provides a full range of primary and specialty care physician services, physical therapy, imaging, mammography, bone density, X-ray and a variety of spa services. Franciscan WorkingWell also serves Johnson County employers and employees with a variety of occupational medicine and travel medicine services.



Franciscan Health Indianapolis. PHOTO COURTESY OF FRANCISCAN HEALTH





Johnson Memorial Hospital, Franklin. PHOTO COURTESY OF JOHNSON MEMORIAL HEALTH

## JOHNSON MEMORIAL HEALTH

Johnson Memorial Health is a nationally recognized network of physicians, services and health care resources based in Johnson County. The centerpiece is Johnson Memorial Hospital, located in Franklin, which has been serving patients as the county's only hospital since 1947.

Johnson Memorial provides award-winning services including cancer and cardiovascular care, maternity, orthopedics and sports medicine, weight loss and general surgery, wound healing, wellness services and more. The hospital is also home to one of the top

100 home-care services in the country and complete occupational, physical and speech therapy services.

In addition to the main campus in Franklin, Johnson Memorial has expanded to include primary care centers in Greenwood, Whiteland and Franklin. In 2013, Johnson Memorial partnered with Community Health Network and opened the Stones Crossing Health Pavilion to serve residents of the Center Grove area. Johnson Memorial Health has received numerous accolades, including a recent "A" safety grade from the Leapfrog Group, a nonprofit watchdog organization serving healthcare consumers.

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# EDUCATION & TRAINING

Whether parents are looking for a public or private school to send their children to for their education, Johnson County has plenty to offer. The six public school districts within the county have a 90 percent graduation rate, averaging a 10/10 ranking which puts them in the top 10 percent of Indiana public schools. There are also four private schools and no less than eight colleges and universities in the region.

## THE FREEDOM TO TEACH

When Michael Gillespie started teaching math at Whiteland Community High School in 1997, there were approximately 700 students in the high school. Now, there's nearly 2,000. While it's evident things have changed throughout those years, one thing remains the same: every decision the staff of Clark-Pleasant Community School Corporation makes is completely student-centered.

Gillespie fondly remembers a motto by John Schilawski, now assistant superintendent of Clark Pleasant Community School District: "If you're going to fail, fail magnificently."

"Which is saying don't be afraid to try new things," Gillespie said. "I think that's acceptable at our school. They say if it's in the best interest of the kids, go ahead and go for it. They

give us freedom to just teach. If there is something that I need, I can just go to the department chair, assistant principal, any of those people. We have all sorts of resources available to us. The money is not limitless, but in terms of support, there's quite a bit of support, not just at the high school, but the Clark-Pleasant Community."

Gillespie attended Franklin College and came to Whiteland to do his student teaching. He chose to remain at Whiteland, having taught math and coached tennis for the past 24 years. He lives in Whiteland with his wife and three children, who attend Clark-Pleasant schools.

Gillespie was awarded 2021 WCHS Teacher of the Year as well as 2020 Indiana Boys Tennis Coach of the Year.

He describes his teaching style as organized chaos. His students are often seen talking with one another, interacting with each other but there's a lot of learning going on. While social distancing due to the COVID-19 pandemic put a damper on those social interactions throughout the past year, Gillespie feels optimistic and energetic that he can return to his normal, up-and-active way of teaching in the coming school year.

"No doubt that the last year was interesting," Gillespie said. "I had some kids in the classroom and some

kids at home. I had to adjust to that and how to best accommodate those people. I have always been a teacher that gets up and moves around a lot, but with the kids in the classroom and at home, I was relegated to my desk. I put up a giant whiteboard on my desk and propped my document camera pretty high so that the kids at home could see what I was writing."

Other than having to remain at his desk more, Gillespie felt prepared for all the changes that were taking place.

"The previous year, maybe even two years ago, I got to the point that some student absences really started to effect their schooling," he said. "One student suggested I record my lessons. So, two, three years ago I started to record my lessons and put it on Google Classroom. So, I was a little

ahead of the game. I had already started changing my assignments and assessments to make them more virtual. So, I was really ready for what happened with the pandemic by chance."

Gillespie said the teachers at Clark-Pleasant have always found collaboration with one another to be in the best interest of their students. If they discover something that works well, they're eager to share with one another and through the struggles of virtual learning, that was no different.

"If the teacher is doing well, why would they keep it to themselves?" he said.

Gillespie said he works with a lot of good people, which is why he was surprised and honored with the Teacher of the Year nomination.

"We have some tremendous teachers in the math department," he said. "It was nice to represent the math department."



Michael Gillespie, teacher, Whiteland Community High School.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MICHAEL GILLESPIE





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# ADULT EDUCATION

Adults of all ages have plenty of opportunities to further their career and hone their skills in Johnson County. Indiana Tech, Ivy Tech, Franklin College and Central Nine Career Center offer adults several programs to level up their skills, while increasing the trained workforce.

Franklin College, a liberal arts school in Franklin, offers 50 majors. Students can study everything from accounting and finance or French and Spanish to graphic design and public relations. Franklin College offers many pre-professional programs such as pre-medical and pre-dental. Its graduate programs include Master of Science in Athletic Training

and Master of Science in Physician Assistant studies.

Indiana Tech opened its Greenwood campus in 2002. This university which serves working professionals offers both undergraduate and graduate programs. Its College of Professional Studies is aimed at students who are only missing a couple of courses to complete their degree. Undergraduate and graduate-level classes, which combine education with real-world experience, start every six weeks.

Ivy Tech Community College offers degrees and short-term certificates at more than 40 campuses across Indiana. At its Franklin campus, Ivy Tech offers

programs such as business administration, education, liberal arts, criminal justice, nursing, and elementary education. Ivy Tech is no stranger to meeting the needs of working adults and offers courses for individual professional development and certification.

While Central Nine Career Center, or C9, may be best known for its hands-on training programs for high school students, it offers a plethora of courses for adults. Here, adults can take their High School Equivalency exam and ESL (English as a Second Language) classes. C9's continuing education programs include CNA, EMT, and welding courses. While C9 does not

offer college-credit courses, it does have several certificate and state-license programs.

## IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO ADVANCE YOUR CAREER

Betsy Wisner, a resident of Trafalgar, dreamt of becoming a nurse for more than 20 years before she finally took the leap and enrolled at Ivy Tech.

She earned her bachelor's degree in social work from University of Indianapolis, graduating in 1990. She did social work for six years, then worked 22 years for a disability insurance company. For the first five years she served as a

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claims adjuster, then the last 17 as a fraud investigator.

For most of that time, she talked about wanting to go back to school and become a nurse. But she was afraid of failure and never acted on her career ambitions - until 2012 when Wisner was diagnosed with breast cancer.



"That was the life event that said, 'you need to go to school to be a nurse,'" Wisner said. "It's ok if you fail but you will regret it someday if you don't try."

She gave herself a year for her mind and body to heal from the cancer, then enrolled at Ivy Tech.

"One of the reasons I chose Ivy Tech over any other school is their pass rate was phenomenal," she said. "I was a full-time working adult who couldn't quit my job to go to a bachelor program full time. Most four-year colleges, once you get in the nursing program, it's full time. Ivy Tech was similar, but I was able to maintain full-time employment while in their program because of the way they schedule their classes and clinicals. They really do cater to the working adult."

Betsy Wisner, Ivy Tech graduate.  
PHOTO COURTESY OF BETSY WISNER

Her worries of failure were unwarranted as she graduated cum laude in 2018 at the age of 50. She has been president of the National Society of Leadership and Success and was in the Honors Society. She was also given an Outstanding Graduate award from the nursing professors and dean of the nursing school.

"I'm so proud of it," she said. "It's amazing to be a nurse and to have the knowledge that I have now. It's like I was meant to always do this and without Ivy Tech, I wouldn't be in this position. I'm so proud to be a nurse. The fear of failure was just lack of self-confidence. Just succeeding in classes, the praise I got from instructors, has completely changed how I feel about myself. It's amazing how much more confidence I have. I should have done it a long time ago."

Upon graduation, Wisner

worked with Community Health for two years as an oncology nurse. After those two years, she was persuaded to return to the disability insurance field as a clinical consultant RN.

While she's enjoying life in her new job, Wisner is already contemplating returning to school for a Master's degree in nursing education. She said with the associate's degree she earned from Ivy Tech, she can easily go into several local schools. She would encourage anyone who is not quite happy with where they are in their career, to look into the many education opportunities afforded to adults.

"Anybody that gets an inkling or says they're unhappy with their job, I immediately say 'hey look at me, I graduated school at 50. Anybody can do it,'" she said. "You just have to put your mind to it. And, it's ok to fail as long as you try. Don't regret not trying."

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# COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS

## BARGERSVILLE

Bargersville is a community of 8,000 intersected by Ind. 135 and Ind. 144. It will be the closest community to the I-69 corridor when it is completed in 2024. Activities include the Harvest Moon Fall Festival, the Summer Concert Series and Indiana Railroad Company's annual Santa Train in downtown Bargersville. It is also home to Mallow Run Winery.

## EDINBURGH

Edinburgh was the first settlement in Johnson County and is best known for the Edinburgh Premium Outlets mall and Camp Atterbury military

base. The community of 4,600 is easily accessible from I-65 and U.S. 31 in southeastern Johnson County. There are three parks and a sports complex. Edinburgh has several community events including the Firecracker Festival on the Fourth of July, the Edinburgh

Fall Festival and the Community Christmas Bazaar.

## FRANKLIN

The county seat, Franklin is a hub of activity but retains a small-town feeling of commu-

nity. Attractions include the Historic Artcraft Theatre and the lovely courthouse square. It boasts an annual farmer's market, a skate park and a family aquatic center. It is also home to Franklin College with its numerous entertainment options. Victorian mansions are being restored in the heart of the city. Franklin is home to 25,000 residents.



Main Street, Greenwood. FILE PHOTO

## GREENWOOD

The largest city in Johnson County, Greenwood is home to nearly 65,000 residents. There is so much to do in the city. The Greenwood Parks Department offers several programs, events and Free-

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dom Springs Aquatics Park. Major events include the Freedom Festival in June, WAMMfest in August, and a summer concert series at the Greenwood Amphitheater, all at Craig Park. There are also events at the Indy South Greenwood Airport.

## NEW WHITELAND

New Whiteland was incorporated in 1954 when U.S. 31 was rerouted. It is one of the most affordable towns in Indiana for retirees. Residents enjoy five parks and the highly ranked Grassy Creek Disc Golf Course. New Whiteland has 6,153 residents by U.S. Census estimates and is one of the fastest-growing areas of Johnson County.

## NINEVEH

Nineveh is a unique location in Johnson County with an unusual history. This unincorporated community is named for a nearby creek. Scenes from the 1986 movie "Hoosiers" were shot in the Nineveh Elementary School which was lost to a fire a few years later.

## PRINCE'S LAKES

In southern Johnson County, just west of Camp Atterbury Fish and Wildlife Area, is the hidden gem of Johnson County. It's called Prince's

Lakes with 14 lakes and several others nearby. East Lake is the largest in the area covering 67 acres and offering water skiing and other activities. The town has just over 1,400 residents. Many houses are on lake-front property.

## TRAFALGAR

Located at the intersection of Ind. 135 and Ind. 252, Trafalgar is the definition of a small community with slightly more than 1,200 residents. Even though it is small, Trafalgar offers concerts, special events and even a bamboo maze at the Apple Works orchard. Allendale Christian Camp and Retreat Center offers an eight-person zip line, a ropes course and a climbing tower for groups.

## WHITELAND

Whiteland is a small community of almost over 4,500 residents between New Whiteland and Franklin on the U.S. 31 corridor. It is a desired quality community moving forward with 56% residential growth approved and advancing. For a small community there is much to do, including kart racing at Whiteland Raceway Park and live music at Whit's Inn. Whiteland's premier event is The Greater Whiteland Community Day.



Whiteland Raceway Park. **FILE PHOTO**

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# AIRPORT

## INDY SOUTH GREENWOOD AIRPORT GROWING BUSINESS TRAFFIC, ADDING NEW EDUCATION CENTER

Johnson County is flanked by interstate highways to the east and soon to the west, and between them lies Indy South Greenwood Airport, an artery providing ease of travel while creating economic development opportunities for the area. Local business leaders should get to know this valuable resource and how it can help their business.

"The airport is an asset many communities do not have," explained Aspire President

and CEO Christian Maslowski. "We are often asked about distance to airports when companies are looking for a new site. Not only can we discuss our proximity to the Indianapolis International Airport, but we can boast the convenience of an executive airport within the county." He added that the airport is located near I-65 on County Line Road where Johnson County joins southern Indianapolis, the areas served by Aspire.

Companies can use this airport to visit their Johnson County location and shave hours off travel time, Maslowski noted, or they can base their aircraft at the airport for more frequent use. "The airport

is also the quickest route to downtown Indianapolis and its numerous sporting and political events, entertainment and corporate meetings. This makes it a popular landing spot for companies not based in Johnson County."

Maintaining infrastructure and implementing transportation plans are among the tactics in Aspire's Economic Development Strategic Plan to boost site development for catalyst projects, he added.

Airport manager Rick Ferrill said the airport sees a fair amount of traffic. "A lot of the corporate visits at the airport are related to industries located in Greenwood and in

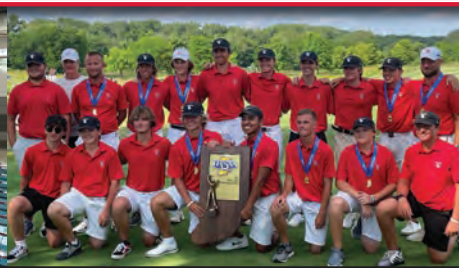
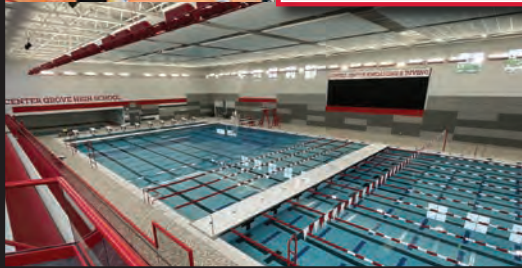
Marion County." He added that the airport's proximity to I-65 is a plus for the airport, enabling busy executives to get to downtown Indy or elsewhere quickly.

Jet fuel sales and hangar rentals are among the major indicators of how busy the facility is, Ferrill explained. For example, jet fuel sales in 2020 were up 21.5% over 2019. And this trend is continuing. So far in 2021, jet fuel sales are up 13% over the same period last year. Since the pandemic began, corporations increased their use of the airport "since airline use was not conducive to travel."

Ferrill agreed that the airport is

# CENTER GROVE

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Indy South Greenwood Airport. PHOTO BY CITY OF GREENWOOD

an important economic development tool: "Corporate jets can fly in, conduct their business, then fly back, or spend the evening." He added that Greenwood's executive airport is unique in that it is owned by the city and not an airport authority. "We are self-supporting; we don't have to use tax money for our day-to-day operations," Ferrill explained. "The Greenwood Redevelopment Commission has helped fund hangar construction, the Indiana State Police hangar and office, and the exterior of the new Aeronautical Center

of Technology."

A new Aeronautical Center of Technology is set to open this autumn at the airport, according to manager Roger Tomey. The center will offer STEM education opportunities through aviation, which Tomey terms a "great tool" for teaching these subjects. The center will accommodate 60 students per semester drawn from Johnson, Marion, Shelby, Bartholomew and Jennings counties. See below for a video about the program.

"This type of experience can

inspire students to pursue a rewarding career in aviation and other related STEM fields," explained Tomey, a licensed private pilot and certified advanced ground school instructor. "This program will be the only one in Indiana guaranteeing the student a pilot's license upon completion of the curriculum."

"This program will teach high school students how science and mathematics impact their daily lives," Tomey added. "As a result, companies which choose to locate in Johnson County will have access to a workforce

skilled in these areas and ready to provide practical applications in the business world."

Local companies can land their corporate aircraft here more conveniently and economically than at Indianapolis International Airport, Maslowski noted, and they can schedule flights for their business through private pilots. "Having such a high-quality local airport can give Johnson County a differentiator when competing for company location projects, and the wages from those new jobs are spent at local businesses," Maslowski observed.



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# ASPIRE VOLUNTEERS



## ASPIRE AMBASSADOR TEAM

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## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TEAM

The mission of the Aspire Community Engagement Team is to capitalize on our pride of place, assets, and potential to promote health, happiness and well-being while connecting and representing all voices of the community. Open to all interested individuals regardless of Aspire investment.



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The mission of the Aspire Talent Attraction + Retention Team is to understand the current needs of our employers and community and to be a convening resource to build a workforce for the present and the future. We see a variety of pathways for education, successful careers and desire to build a county-wide network that will develop, train, recruit and retain talent that is excellent. Open to all interested individuals regardless of Aspire investment.

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Blythe Potter, Co-Owner of Bargersville Wellness.

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Jon Wright, CEO of IT Indianapolis. PHOTO BY JACOB MUSSELMAN





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Aspire Economic Development + Chamber Alliance’s mission is to drive economic development and business success in Johnson County and southern Indianapolis. As a chamber of commerce, Aspire leads the area’s business community by advancing pro-growth policy, and providing comprehensive member services to entrepreneurs, small businesses, and large corporations. As the local economic development organization for Johnson County, Aspire leverages community development opportunities to attract, retain, and expand businesses in the county.

## So, where are we going?

That’s the overarching question Aspire Economic Development + Chamber Alliance sought to answer as we began formulating our economic development strategic plan. We knew Johnson County, Indiana, had an already thriving business environment. But, we wanted to use that as a catalyst to accomplish more. With a skilled workforce, shovel-ready infrastructure, and outstanding quality of life, we believe Johnson County is poised for powerhouse business growth and development. Our new strategic plan will help us realize that potential.

We started with two ambitious but, we believe, wholly obtainable five-year strategic goals:

- Attract/develop 50% more jobs in advanced industries
- Grow the average annual wage by 15% for all workers

Advanced industries are the dynamic future of our world. The collective business segments of aerospace, computing, communications, robotics – and everything else under the umbrella of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) – have grown exponentially in the last 40 years. Communities embracing those industries and their employers frequently experience a rapid rise in jobs, average salary, and standard of living. By attracting advanced industries, Johnson County will position itself for years of unprecedented growth.

Pursuit of higher annual wages is the rising tide that lifts all boats. When Johnson County works to attract higher-paying jobs, dollars from those increased salaries frequently remain in the county. They pay for college tuition and larger homes, and they contribute to a growing tax base, which improves government services and infrastructure. Increasing our average annual wage will have an immediate positive impact on all Johnson County residents and businesses.

Simply reaching these key measures of success will tremendously kick-start further growth in Johnson County. But we also created five vital sub-goals to help us achieve our objectives:



**Drive innovation to boost business and industry development.**



**Boost site development for catalyst projects.**



**Nurture community collaboration and engagement.**



**Embrace and pursue opportunities for enhanced livability and quality of place.**



**Magnify and deliver robust education and workforce endeavors.**

We couldn’t be better positioned for success. That’s why we’re so excited to share this plan with you. Through its careful and diligent implementation, Johnson County will continue to grow and thrive. It will be an exhilarating and rewarding journey. *We’re so glad you’ll be taking the trip with us.*



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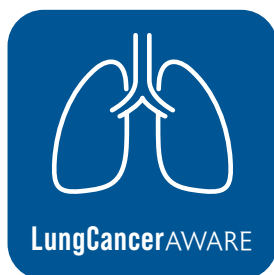
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