



Frank Haney
County Board Chairman
Winnebago County



Good News!

It is important to acknowledge the progress we are making as a community. Yes, we have challenges and we are working through those challenges together. However, failing to celebrate progress can lead to a loss of perspective and focus. So, let's celebrate some good news in Winnebago County and our Region. Here is a recap of some of the good news I shared at the recent Rockford Chamber State of the County address on Wednesday, March 21, 2018.

1. Property values are increasing: 1.29% - 2016, 2.23% - 2017, and projected 3.25% - 2018
2. Unemployment is down to 5%, the lowest it has been in a decade.
3. Manufacturing jobs have grown by 28.8% (+7,200) from Jan. 2010 - Dec. 2017. Average 900 / yr.
4. From 2010-14, 24.7% of all newly created manufacturing jobs in Illinois came from our community, even though our region accounts for just 2.7% of the state's overall population and 5.5% of its manufacturing jobs.
5. Employers at the Chicago Rockford International Airport added 1,000 jobs in the last 12 months.
6. Industry Week said the following about our community: "There aren't many places in the country where a student can earn a four-year mechanical engineering degree at a cost of less than \$40,000. But in Rockford, it's possible.
7. Our community has 1.3 times the US average of engineers.
8. More than 250 aerospace suppliers are based within 90-mile radius of your home or place of business.
9. Since 2009, tourism in Winnebago County has grown 39%.
10. That is more than all major metro counties in Illinois, except one.
 - a. Cook County has grown 40%.
11. Winnebago County generated \$353 million in tourism in 2016.
 - a. Highest on record. It is expected that 2017 #'s will exceed this number.
 - b. This supported 2,882 jobs with associated income of \$86 million and generated \$25.3 million in taxes.
12. Public entities inside Winnebago County are working together and on multiple fronts.
13. Winnebago County government is reforming and professionalizing.
14. Private sector investment is occurring (\$2 billion since 2016).
15. Regional planning and development discussions are occurring via the Regional Planning Council.
16. Alignment of multiple agencies around workforce development is occurring. That is critical to our success long-term in economic development of our Region.
17. Property and violent crime stats are trending in the right direction.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you! Thank you to all the people in our community who are working hard to make the above-mentioned items possible. There are good things ahead!

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It is our mission to provide high quality services and promote a safe community for all people in Winnebago County.