

Newsletter

November 2024

Coles Together

SUCCESSFUL ANNUAL MEETING:

Coles Together Team Holds First Annual Meeting



The Coles Together Board of Directors joined by its new leadership team, Dr. Ronda Sauget and William Hickey, hosted the 2024 Annual Meeting on Oct. 8th, 2024, at the Lumpkin Education Center at the Sarah Bush Lincoln Hospital. Prior to the meeting, new 2024/2025 Coles Together BOD Officers including Doug Abolt, Chairman, Amy Borntrager, Vice Chairman, Blake Pierce, Treasurer, Brooke Kiefer, Secretary, and Jason Tucker, Assistant Treasurer. We want to thank all of the officers for stepping forward to serve Coles Together in advancing the Coles County Forward. We also want to recognize Erica Stollard, SBL Executive, Mike Kirchoff, Ameren Illinois Key Account Executive, Kyle Burrow, Olmsted Brothers Insulation Principal, and Tina Held, Carle Representative, for being voted to the Coles Together Board of Directors. Congratulations to all who serve!

The meeting focused on the key economic power zones that drive revenue, people, and traffic to Coles County daily for sustainable employments and other activities. Steve Zuber, Principal at the BarberMurphy Industrial Real Estate and John Inyart, Former Charleston Mayor and Principal at TCI Realty provided key industry insights from Industrial and Commercial Real Estate local and domestic perspectives. The meeting also discussed the development utility needs at the 1000N I-57 interchange. Coles Together partnered with Ameren Illinois, Agracel Development, and the City of Mattoon to apply for a \$3M DCEO Site Readiness Grant to address this challenge that has held industrial development back for two decades. The grant announcement will be in January 2025. Regardless of the grant announcement, a new Coles Together Infrastructure Planning Committee has been created to address similar challenges in this and other development sites. Coles Together, in partnership with Coles County Regional Planning Committee is planning for its next annual meeting in April 2025 to get the group back on its normal spring cycle. We hope to see you all attend new year's event!

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The Compass Launch



The Compass guide and website has been a collaborative effort, working with many community partners, that has grown well beyond what we first imagined. The intention is for it to continue to grow and evolve, much like our communities, including more of the amazing benefits Coles County has to offer. According to Amy Shafter, RK Foundation Director, “over the years, we have witnessed remarkable progress and change in our communities thanks to the collective efforts of businesses, individuals, organizations, and leaders. We are blessed with many stakeholders who are passionate about enhancing the quality of life for our current and future residents.

Our hope is that The Compass becomes a resource that local communities and businesses can use as a tool to help draw more visitors and employees to the area. Together, we will build a legacy that lasts for generations to come”!



Industry Day



At Sarah Bush Lincoln Hospital, students toured the facility and learned about the diverse career paths in healthcare. Meanwhile, the Charleston Fire Department welcomed them to the fire station, offering a firsthand look at the daily responsibilities of firefighters. Mars Petcare provided an inside look at their plant operations, highlighting the significance of the pet care industry.



Coles-Moultrie Electric Cooperative demonstrated the vital work that linemen do, educating students on the importance of maintaining our electrical infrastructure.



After a morning filled with exploration, students gathered at the airport for lunch, where they heard inspiring presentations from Andrew Fearn, Director of the airport, and Jake Hanner, plant manager for the new Kingspan plant. The event also included opportunities for students to connect with representatives from Lake Land College and Eastern Illinois University, encouraging them to consider their educational paths.

Coles Together Industry Day: Inspiring Future Leaders

On October 29, 2024, Coles Together hosted a successful Industry Day, bringing together local students for a day of exploration and learning about career opportunities in our region. The event showcased a variety of industries that play a vital role in our community.

Students kicked off the day with a tour of the Rural King distribution center in Mattoon, where they gained insights into logistics and operations. The Mattoon Police Department also engaged students in discussions about community safety and the important work law enforcement does.

Coles Together's Industry Day was a wonderful opportunity to inspire the next generation and showcase the diverse career possibilities available right here in Coles County. We look forward to more events like this that strengthen our community and support our youth!

Industry Day

