

ICEA will accept nominations for the Annual Excellence Awards through May 10th.

This is a great opportunity for your chamber to garner statewide recognition for the hard work that staff accomplished on specific new projects throughout the past year.

Chambers are divided into the following categories for judging:

0—400 members

401—700 members

701+ members

Upon reviewing, all applicants scoring above 90% will receive an Excellence Award.

Chambers may enter multiple entries.

Deadline —May 10th.

E-mail entry link with this completed form to info@iceaonline.com.

Mail a non-refundable check payable to ICEA for \$25 per entry to:
ICEA, P.O. Box 377, Hanover IN 47243.

Questions? Please call the ICEA office at 812-871-3000.



Excellence in Innovation Awards

About the award: The Annual Excellence Awards will recognize innovative new projects from your chamber this past year.

Chambers may submit multiple nominations for various projects, however each nomination must showcase something new offered by your chamber during this past year. This award recognizes excellence in innovative new ideas. Complete a separate form for each entry.

E-mail your entry with this completed form to info@iceaonline.com prior to May 10th. Each entry submitted for review will be charged a \$25 non-refundable fee. Please mail this review payment payable to ICEA to: P.O. Box 377 Hanover IN 47243. An invoice will also be sent for you to pay with debit/credit card.

Chamber of Commerce LaGrange Co. Chamber

What are you submitting for? Field of Dreams Career Exp

Contact: Sara Patrick

Telephone: 260-463-2443

E-Mail: sara@lagrangechamber.org

Complete a duplicate entry for more than one entry. Please circle below the size of your chamber:

- 0—400 members
- 401—700 members
- 701 + members

Forward e-mail with your submission attached to info@iceaonline.com no later than May 10th.

2023 ICEA Chamber Excellence in Innovation Awards

LaGrange County Chamber of Commerce

Sara Patrick, *Executive Director*

(260) 463-2443

sara@lagrangechamber.org

Mission Statement: *Fostering hometown culture. Driving exponential success.*

Vision Statement: *To be a champion of generational prosperity in LaGrange County.*

Submission for: [Field of Dreams Career Expo](#)

On April 18, 2023, the LaGrange County Chamber of Commerce partnered with the Northern Indiana Educational Service Center to host the first-ever Field of Dreams Career Expo. A diminishing workforce is an ever-increasing issue that is, at times, debilitating to our LaGrange County employers and prevents them from being exponentially successful. Because of that, we believe that the future of LaGrange County workforce is being built today. The Field of Dreams Career Expo was born out of that very belief.

Designed to be a space for LaGrange County students to dream about career opportunities available within the boundaries of the county, the “Field of Dreams” was built so that “they will come.” Aimed at youth and workforce development, the “Field of Dreams” Career Expo was a success because county organizations of all industries committed to empowering students on a local level. Over 30 vendor booths were set up for over 1,400 LaGrange County students, grades 7 through 12, to visit, talk with, and experience.

The expo was an opportunity for employers in all industries to feature the best of their day-to-day work. Companies and organizations were encouraged to provide booths that engage and connect students with the reality of their career. Included at the expo were John Deere agricultural equipment, a Forest River travel trailer with hands-on demonstrations in plumbing and electrical work, county highway department and emergency management trucks, sheriff department vehicles, county parks department recreational equipment, photography demonstrations, vehicle graphic application demonstrations, kayaks, banks and financial professionals, professional musicians providing guitars for students to play, healthcare with CPR training equipment, and more.

In order to create organic, but necessary conversations between students and employers, students were given Bingo cards with objectives that fit the goals of the event—to provide real-life recognition for students of career opportunities within LaGrange County. On the Bingo cards included targets like: Shake the hand of a business rep; Find a job within the _____ career cluster; Find a company that contributes money to a retirement account/provides health insurance; Find someone who loves their job; Find a job that requires a high school diploma/a college degree; Ask someone what three factors help them to be successful in their job; Find someone who has to be at work by 8:00 AM; Ask someone what they look for in an employee; Find a person who believes communication is important in their job; and, the like.

Results from the event included:

- In their conversations with employers, students found internship pairings for the summer, as well as the 2023-2024 school year.
- Mock interviews were held with seniors and employers, and seniors distributed resumes to booths of their choosing within their career dreams.

- One student was asked about their career dreams, to which he said, “I want to be an actor.” When a Chamber staff asked if he knew that he could do that in LaGrange County at the Blue Gate Theater, his eyes opened wide, and he headed straight for their booth to learn more. (This, of course, is just one example of many students recognizing that they can fulfill their career dreams within LaGrange County—they don’t have to leave the county to feel fulfilled after high school. This event “filled the pipeline” for future workforce.)
- One employer mandated that a group of his managers attend the event. One such manager within the graphic detailing department was less-than-excited to attend, noting how behind he was in his work already. Regardless, the manager attended, and after the event, his employer noted how thankful the manager was for attending. The recognition in the manager of future workforce development happening as he provided hands-on demonstration to students was invaluable.