



Five-Year Coles County Regional Strategic Economic Development Plan

August 1, 2024

Written by

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President & CEO

Coles Together Economic Development Organization (EDO)

## Overview

Coles Together is a 501c6 non-profit Economic Development Organization (EDO) representing a unified voice for Coles County, Illinois. The mission of Coles Together is to proactively market and develop communications activities to promote the competitive advantages and resources of Coles County, thus enabling a thriving, diverse, innovative, healthy, and growing ecosystem for all business sectors and enhancing community engagement, empowering citizens, and driving a high quality of life. By working together, employers bring sustainable job creation, business expansion, and longevity needed for a flourishing community. The Coles Together team assists with new business attraction, retention, and expansion of firm and industry sectors, while also working with the local community on workforce retention, recruitment, training, and skills advancement needed by area employers.

Coles County, Illinois, is a tertiary marketplace with two micro-cities, Charleston and Mattoon, and provides a perfect blend of rural agri-business communities, such as Oakland and Ashmore, consisting of approximately 46,185 residents with over 848,199 residents located within 60 miles. Coles County has multiple thriving economic power zones including:

- Healthcare Hub Network System (SBL Healthcare Complex, Carle, SIHF, HSHS St. Anthony's Medical, Regional Headquarters of Blue Cross Blue Shield, etc.)
- Educational Centers of Excellence (Eastern Illinois University, Lakeland College, Lift/Mattoon School System, Trojan A&M Center/Charleston School System, Oakland School System/Agri-Business Programs, etc.)
- Manufacturing, Business, Agri-Business, Food/Petcare, and Food Processing Industrial Sectors (Mars Petcare, John Deere Logistics Center, Justrite, Vesuvius, Hi-Cone, Grupo Bimbo, Kingspan, and many more)
- Thriving Retail Headquarters (Rural King 146 stores, logistics centers, 9,000 employees) and growing regional retail and food restaurants sector
- Regional Sports Complex (Emerald Acres Sports and Charleston Sports Complex) and EIU Collegiate and University-Level Competitive Sports D1 Level, etc.
- Multi-Modal Transportation Supply Chain Logistics (rail – CN, Eastern Illinois Railroad), road (I-57, Rt 16, Rt 130, & Rt 45), and Air – Coles County Airport (with through-the-fence business operations)
- Recreation, History, Entertainment, and Tourism Attractions (Lincoln Living History Sites, Mattoon/Charleston/Paradise Lakes, Family Friendly Parks, AMC Theaters, and so much more)

The above economic power zones draw thousands of residents to Coles County daily for healthcare, shopping, sustainable jobs, dining, family sports, recreation, attractions, and so many other activities. Coles County is quickly becoming the place for economic development at all levels, creating a strong and healthy ecosystem with a strong need for housing and childcare to sustain this system.

## History

The Coles County Economic Development Council was founded on August 30, 1988, by a group of prominent business, community, and governmental leaders who desire to build a stronger economy in Coles County, Illinois. This prominent group of business leaders was led by Richard Lumpkin, serving as its first president, Robert Moore, its first vice president, Max Cougill, its first treasurer, and Roy Carr, its first secretary; and other governmental, business, and community leaders. On February 6<sup>th</sup>, 1990, the group officially changed its name to Coles Together to bring everyone in Coles County together for a

common purpose to promote the improvement, diversification, and growth of the economic base of the Coles County regional area. This work was designed for existing and new commerce and industry in assisting and retaining existing businesses; preservation of employment opportunities; attracting new firms; and creating sustainable employment in the area.

Coles Together was designed as the county-wide marketing agency for Coles County with the following purpose:

- Bringing community leaders together to support the formation of a county-wide marketing agency in Coles County.
- Coles Together would have more “clout” with the Illinois agencies and other organizations as a unified voice.
- A county-wide marketing agency would create greater prospective interest.
- Enable Coles County communities to work together for projects and not compete head-to-head for projects; and
- A county-wide marketing agency allows for greater efficiency in the utilization of resources.

The desire was to proactively move Coles County forward, generating a stronger tax base, robust business climate, strong job creation, and enhanced quality of life for all residents, thus creating a wonderful community to raise children with values, morals, integrity, and leadership characteristics gained from a hard-working agriculturally based business community upbringing.

### **Mission**

Coles Together provides economic development activities for new business attraction and existing business expansion/retention. Coles Together proactively promotes the area through marketing and communications efforts to build positive awareness of new investment and job creation activities. Coles Together administers Enterprise Zone benefits for Coles County, including property tax abatement (commercial projects 3-year declining abatements 100%-75%-50% and Industrial project abatement 100% for 10 years on-site improvements), building materials sales tax exemption certificates, and waive building permits for industrial projects; and also helps administer the Community Development Corporation (CDC) gap funding at a blended rate for specific qualified projects.

### **Vision**

Coles Together vision for the future is to build positive awareness and promote economic development opportunities to enhance a thriving and innovative business growth culture for current and new businesses generating sustainable job options, sustainable revenue stream, and a high quality of life for all Coles County and surrounding community residents to live, work, and raise their children.

### **Leadership**

For over 38 years, Coles Together has been a Coles County convener for governmental, agency, business, industry, and other prominent stakeholders to synergistically collaborate in shaping the future. From growing the existing economic power zones, attracting new businesses, and maintaining a supportive business-friendly environment; Coles Together unifies collective voices in creating a strong tomorrow for

everyone in the community. In 2024/2025, the following Coles Together Officers assist in leading the organization:

- Doug Abolt, Chairman, BOD – Retired Executive Consolidated Communications, Inc.
- Amy Borntrager, Vice Chairman, BOD – CEO Coles-Moultrie Electrical Coop
- Blake Pierce, Treasurer, BOD – President RK Real Estate and Development
- Jason Tucker, Assistant Treasurer, BOD – Mattoon Community Bank President
- Brooke Kieffer, Secretary, BOD – Executive Lester Building Systems

**Coles Together Executive Team**

- Dr. Ronda Sauget, MBA, President & CEO
- William Hickey, MBA, Executive Coordinator

**Five-Year Economic Development Initiatives**

The following five-year economic development initiatives are key areas of focus for Coles Together:

**1. Mattoon Enterprise Park (Agracel Development)/Surrounding Businesses and further development at 1000 North I-57 Interchange**

Project Status	Needs Assessment	1-3 years	4-5 years
<p><b>Existing Businesses</b>            Mattoon Enterprise Park and surrounding businesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Justrite</li> <li>➤ North American Lighting</li> <li>➤ Henry’s Metal Meister</li> <li>➤ Mars Petcare</li> <li>➤ John Deere 3PL Phoenix Group Warehouse/Distribution Center</li> <li>➤ Alton Trucking &amp; Warehouse Logistics Services</li> </ul>	<p>Utility Connectivity, especially electrical capacity is needed for current business expansion efforts</p>	<p>Business support and expansion a lack of utility infrastructure has been challenged, especially the electrical capacity needed for the continued expansion of existing companies. For some projects, this has caused projects to be located to other company facilities not in Coles County. Therefore, it is a key regional priority to exercise every opportunity to encourage/plan for increased infrastructure capacity and upgrades to serve existing business current and future expansion needs.</p>	<p>Continue to support business expansion needs for increased infrastructure capacity, work with the firms on workforce recruitment and incumbent worker upskilling training needs, address the need for affordable worker/leadership housing at all levels, and address shift childcare needs to enable production capabilities during all shift operations.</p>

<p><b>Business Attraction</b> Mattoon Enterprise Park &amp; New Business Attraction at 1000 N Location</p>	<p>The lack of electrical capacity at 1000N restricts the ability to attract new companies.</p>	<p>The City of Mattoon, Ameren IL, Agracel, and Coles Together have partnered to apply for the DCEO Site Readiness Grant for up to \$3M in infrastructure funding to address the electrical capacity needs at this site due on Oct 21, 2024. If this grant is awarded to this project, this funding could enable electrical improvements at this location.</p>	<p>The information gained from the DCEO Grant process will be used to apply for other grant/funding opportunities with EDA, Rural Development, DCEO future infrastructure grants, and other options to continue to enhance new business attraction efforts at this location.</p>
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**2. Charleston Business/Industrial Area and Eastern Illinois Railroad**

Project Status	Needs Assessment	1-3 years	4-5 years
<p><b>Existing Businesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Vesuvius</li> <li>➤ Hi-Cone</li> <li>➤ Rural King Distribution Center</li> <li>➤ OX Paper Board</li> <li>➤ Dietzgen</li> <li>➤ NAC/Curry Construction Boring</li> <li>➤ Ne-Co Asphalt</li> <li>➤ Lester Buildings</li> <li>➤ Olmsted Brothers Insulation</li> <li>➤ Cobbie’s Welding</li> <li>➤ Excel Ecoclean</li> <li>➤ County Office Products</li> <li>➤ Kirchner Building Center</li> <li>➤ Charleston Farrier</li> </ul>	<p>Coles Together will establish a continuous check-in cycle with existing business owners to understand their business needs, such as workforce recruitment, business continuation or expansion needs/opportunities, and/or any other needs for the firms to be successful and thrive.</p>	<p>This will be completed by electronic surveys, in-person meetings/site visits, and setting up a list of regular meetings for the plant managers to discuss concerns, ideas, and needs specifically as a group. This information will be collected and evaluated for key areas of concern that can be addressed and other areas of need. Information gained through this process will be used to prioritize areas to be addressed, timelines for improvements,</p>	<p>Coles Together will continue to work with these businesses, to gather business intelligence information, and additional methods of solving challenges and seizing opportunities.</p> <p>Coles Together will continue to market the robust business activities of Coles County for business expansion, retention, and new business attraction efforts.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Thomson Collusion Parts Distribution</li> <li>➤ Safety Storage Container Manufacturing</li> <li>➤ Adams Memorials</li> <li>➤ Gordon Roofing</li> <li>➤ J. J. Collins Printing</li> <li>➤ ProTran Welding, Fabrication, Tank &amp; Truck Repair</li> <li>➤ Rexdon</li> <li>➤ Gavina Graphics</li> </ul>		<p>legislative outreach, etc.</p>	
<p><b>Business Attraction and Expansion Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ GBD International</li> </ul>	<p>GDB International purchased the property over 4 years ago, but has not secured buildings/property, cleared vegetation overgrowth, and/or maintained property or building on an ongoing basis. When this was discussed with GDB they indicated the need for a funding partner because they have no money to invest. Coles Together sent out GDB's promotional materials to SIOR industrial brokers. CT assisted two industrial brokers in visiting and walking around the site. The brokers provided their written assessment to GDB ownership to invest and/or sell the property to a new owner who can invest the proper funding to make the needed</p>	<p>Work with the City of Charleston to ensure the property owner understands the need to secure, clear overgrowth, and maintain facilities on an ongoing basis. If this is not agreed, further action to prevent the abandonment of this property will need to be addressed and ensure the property will not become a public safety issue for the community.</p>	<p>GDB's responsibility is to bring the building back to functioning standards to operate their recycling facility. If not, GDB will need to plan for property improvements and/or lease or sell to another business owner who can bring the property up to a suitable standard.</p>

	upgrades to the building and property.		
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### 3. Development at Coles Business Park

Project Status	Needs Assessment	1-3 years	4-5 years
<b>Existing Businesses</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Coca Cola</li> <li>➤ CTF Illinois</li> <li>➤ DaVita Dialysis</li> <li>➤ Dust &amp; Sons Auto Supplies</li> <li>➤ Gilbert, Metzger, &amp; Madigan Accounting Firm</li> <li>➤ SC3F Wealth Management</li> <li>➤ Wells Fargo</li> <li>➤ Advanced Digital</li> <li>➤ Eastern IL Special Education</li> <li>➤ Carle Sports Medicine</li> <li>➤ Aerinova Aerial/Vermeer Midwest</li> <li>➤ USDA/FSA</li> <li>➤ CTF Illinois</li> <li>➤ Prairie Cardiology Services</li> </ul>	<p>Coles Together will establish a continuous check-in cycle with existing business owners to understand their business needs, such as workforce recruitment, business continuation or expansion options, and/or any other needs or opportunities for the firms to be successful and thrive.</p>	<p>This will be completed by electronic surveys, in-person meetings/site visits, and setting up a list of regular meetings to discuss concerns, ideas, and needs specifically as a group. This information will be collected and evaluated for key areas of concern that can be addressed and other areas of need. Information gained through this process will be used to prioritize areas to be addressed, timelines for improvements, legislative outreach, etc.</p>	<p>Coles Together will continue to work with these businesses, gather business intelligence information, and additional methods of solving challenges.</p> <p>Coles Together will market the robust business activities of Coles County for business expansion, retention, and new business attraction efforts.</p>
<b>New Business Attraction and Expansion Opportunities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Scholes Trucking</li> </ul>	<p>Coles Business Park will implement a proactive, comprehensive awareness and marketing &amp; communications campaign to generate prospects and</p>	<p>The park pricing structure, relationship building with commercial real estate brokers/site selectors, and promoting the many</p>	<p>Market, Market, Market this high-opportunity property to prospects and commercial real</p>

	<p>interest in this well-established park.</p> <p>No park signage exists currently, so it is difficult for prospects to know who to contact about available property.</p>	<p>benefits of this park will be a key focus of the campaign/efforts. A drip LinkedIn zip code social media campaign, park signage, and radio ads will aid in this process.</p> <p>Coles Together, now is recognized by Intersect Illinois, as a regional EDO and has issued EDO database capabilities to list the park property for site selectors/brokers and gather needed information. With Rt 16 developments, this business development park is prominently positioned for development.</p>	<p>estate brokers/site selectors.</p> <p>With Rt 16 developments, this business development park is prominently positioned for development.</p>
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**4. Other Partner Development Efforts**

<b>Project Status</b>	<b>Needs Assessment</b>	<b>1-3 years</b>	<b>4-5 years</b>
<p><b>Existing Businesses</b>            Coles Centre (Agracel Development)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Hilton Conversion Center and Hotel</li> <li>➤ Blue Cross Blue Shield Regional Headquarters</li> <li>➤ HSHS St. Anthony’s Hospital Multispecialty Clinic</li> <li>➤ SBL Medical Supply &amp; Equipment</li> </ul>	<p>Agracel is interested in joint marketing efforts to help build awareness of this park due to the recent development on Rt 16.</p>	<p>Coles Together plans to work with Agracel to build more marketing &amp; communications capacity to bring awareness and prospects to this development area, including joint presentations, ads, and other mutually beneficial efforts.</p>	<p>Coles Together plans to continue to work with Agracel to build more marketing &amp; communications capacity to bring awareness and prospects to this development area.</p>
<p><b>Existing Businesses</b>            Coles County Memorial Airport Authority</p>	<p>Bring awareness to business</p>	<p>Work with Coles County Airport Director to enable</p>	<p>TBD</p>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Aerinova Aerial</li> <li>➤ Rural King</li> <li>➤ Coles County Airport Authority FBO/MTO</li> </ul>	<p>opportunities at the airport.</p>	<p>more business options for building awareness, marketing, and communications efforts.</p>	
<p><b>Existing Businesses</b> South 14<sup>th</sup> Street Industrial Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Mattoon Precision Manufacturing, INC. (MPMI)</li> <li>➤ Other Surrounding Businesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Commercial Electric, Inc</li> <li>○ Consolidated Communications, Inc.</li> <li>○ Wesco HCI Construction</li> <li>○ Springfield Electric Supply Company</li> <li>○ Conner Pipe, Fire Equipment, and Services &amp; Sales</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>MPMI Electrical Capacity and Redundancy Needs for Continued Plant Operations and Expansion Activities. Concerns about increased electrical costs are a challenge to this OEM's bottom-line ability to compete for new contracts.</p> <p>Coles Together will establish a continuous check-in cycle with existing business owners to understand their business needs, such as workforce recruitment, business continuation or expansion options, and/or any other needs or opportunities for the firms to be successful and thrive.</p>	<p>Setup a meeting to understand MPMI's specific needs and options to address their challenges with electrical suppliers and DCEO state incentives to help them.</p> <p>Meeting with other plant managers and gathering information through completion of electronic surveys, in-person meetings/site visits, and setting up a list of regular meetings for the plant managers to discuss concerns, ideas, and needs specifically as a group. This information will be collected and evaluated for key areas of concern that can be addressed and other areas of need. Information gained through this process will be used to prioritize areas to be addressed, timelines for improvements, legislative outreach, etc.</p>	<p>Coles Together will continue to work with these businesses, gather business intelligence information, and additional methods of solving challenges. Coles Together will continue to market the robust business activities of Coles County for business expansion, retention, and new business attraction efforts.</p>

<p><b>Existing Businesses</b> Dewitt Avenue/Mattoon Developments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Group Bimbo</li> <li>➤ Justrite</li> <li>➤ Hydro-Gear</li> <li>➤ Rural King HQ and Warehouse &amp; Logistics Center</li> <li>➤ Kingspan Insulated Panels</li> </ul>	<p>Coles Together will establish a continuous check-in cycle with existing business owners to understand their business needs, such as workforce recruitment, business continuation or expansion options, and/or any other needs or opportunities for the firms to be successful and thrive.</p>	<p>This will be completed by electronic surveys, in-person meetings/site visits, and setting up a list of regular meetings for the plant managers to discuss concerns, ideas, and needs specifically as a group. This information will be collected and evaluated for key areas of concern that can be addressed and other areas of need. Information gained through this process will be used to prioritize areas to be addressed, timelines for improvements, legislative outreach, etc.</p>	<p>Coles Together will continue to work with these businesses, gather business intelligence information, and additional methods of solving challenges. Coles Together will continue to market the robust business activities of Coles County for business expansion, retention, and new business attraction efforts.</p>
<p><b>Existing Businesses</b> Lerna Road Developments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ CCI Redi Mix</li> <li>➤ Howell Asphalt &amp; Paving</li> </ul>	<p>Coles Together will establish a continuous check-in cycle with existing business owners to understand their business needs, such as workforce recruitment, business continuation or expansion options, and/or any other needs or opportunities for the firms to be successful and thrive.</p>	<p>Meetings with plant managers and gathering information through completion of electronic surveys, in-person meetings/site visits, and setting up a list of regular meetings for the plant managers to discuss concerns, ideas, and needs specifically as a group. This information will be collected and evaluated for key areas of concern that can be addressed and other areas of need. Information gained through this process will be used to prioritize areas to be addressed, timelines for improvements,</p>	<p>Coles Together will continue to work with these businesses, gather business intelligence information, and additional methods of solving challenges. Coles Together will continue to market the robust business activities of Coles County for business expansion, retention, and new business attraction efforts.</p>

		legislative outreach, etc.	
<b>New Project</b> Cooks Mill Solar Project ➤ Alberici Construction/Adapture Solar	Understand this new project and any needs the firm may need	TBD	TBD
<b>Existing Businesses</b> Oakland Development • Birkey's Farm Equipment Expansion • New Dollar General with Fresh Produce Market • Other projects	Understand the new expansion and new store development needs	Setup a meeting with each business to gather information and understand the next steps for expansion and development opportunities.	TBD
Other Development Properties	TBD	TBD	TBD

#### 5. Development at Coles Energy Center & CN Rail Served Certified Site

Project Status	Needs Assessment	1-3 years	4-5 years
<b>Available Opportunity</b> CCS Coles Energy Site	Bring awareness to the benefits of this rail-served site and surrounding properties	Build in this site to overall Coles Together Marketing Communications Campaigns.	Market, Market, Market,

#### 6. Development at Mattoon/CN Transload Rail Facility

Project Status	Needs Assessment	1-3 years	4-5 years
<b>Available Opportunity</b> Former General Electric Plant Facility	Evaluation of site and needs assessment to understand this property	Work with current broker the Pheonix Realty Group.	Work with property owners as appropriate
<b>Available Opportunity</b> Developable Industrial & Rail Served Properties	Continued evaluation of CN rail-served and rail yard capabilities and opportunities	Work with CN Business Development Representatives to continue to understand development options	Work with CN Railroad as appropriate for Supply Chain Logistics Options

**Continue to build on regional infrastructure assets and resources to maximize utilization:**

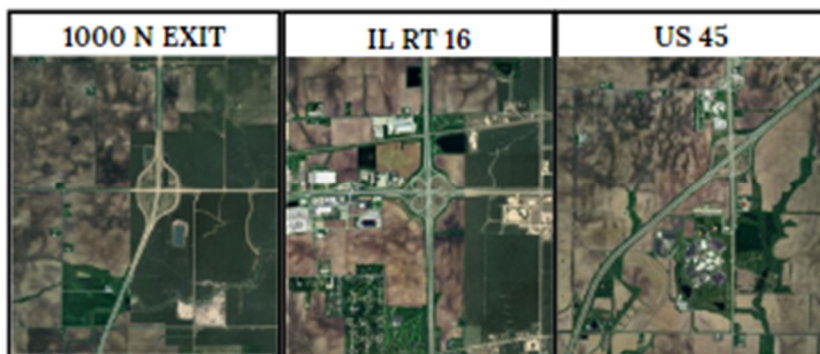
#### Multi-Modal Transportation Infrastructure Resources

Coles County's economic developments listed above benefit from a substantial multi-modal transportation system that enables a prime site location for manufacturing, production, and supply-chain logistics, distribution, and warehouse facilities. This is justified by the long-standing successful firms listed above currently operating profitable and growing businesses for decades.

- Rail – CN, Eastern Illinois Railroad, and Connection to other Class One Railroad networks (UP, CSX, BNSF, etc.). CN Railroad alone connects over 20,000 route miles of rail through North America.

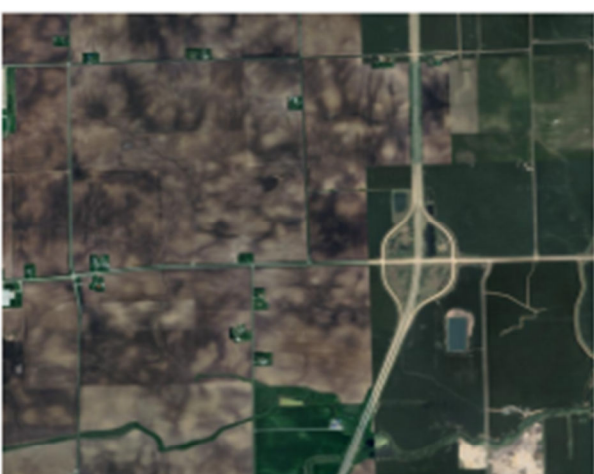
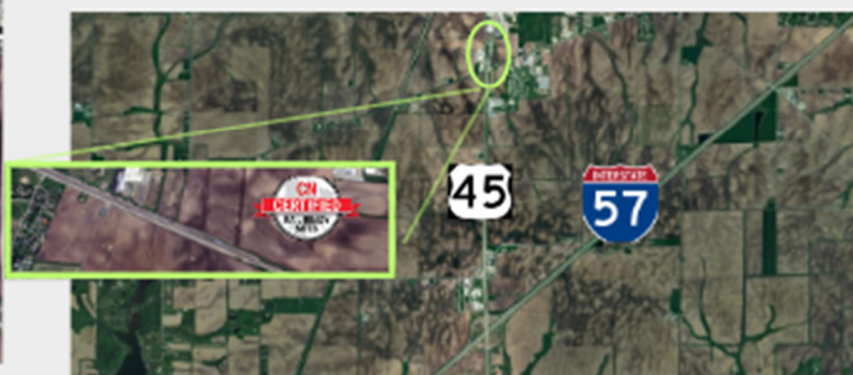
## Three interchanges for I-57!

With I-57 so accessible through our micropolitan area, we are a prime candidate for new economic growth that starts with needed infrastructure development planning.



### CN Rail Served Sites

Our micropolitan area is also served by a Canadian National Class I railroad. With over 20,000 route miles of rail through North America, our area is nestled in a prime location for supply chain and logistical operations.



### Utility Needs

Our county needs strong strategic planning to achieve success! For example, in many areas you will see communities have parts of the infrastructure, such as the three interchanges, but lacking the overall comprehensive planning, funding, and timelines for other necessary component activities, such as economic development (marketing/communications/etc.), utilities infrastructure (electricity, water/sewer, fiber, etc.), and other transportation requirements; to make the development opportunities really happen. Competitive intelligence information gathering and setting county priorities can help to identify and address the needed infrastructure for business attraction, expansion, and retention to be successful.

We are pleased to inform you that this process is already underway! Partnering with local utility providers, such as Ameren Illinois, Coles-Moultrie Electrical Coop, Consolidated Communications, and the municipalities for water/sewer; we are evaluating the current and future needs for existing and new business opportunities. Additionally, we are working with DCEO and other state/federal agencies to review potential funding opportunities for needed resources to overcome challenges that have held back some these areas for decades.

## Utility Infrastructure

- Water & Sewer provided by municipalities with available capacity
- Natural Gas/Propane provided by Ameren Illinois, AmeriGas, Ferrell gas
- Electricity provided by Ameren Illinois and Coles-Moultrie Electrical Coop
- High-Speed Fiber provided by Consolidated Communications, Inc.

## Educational and Workforce Training and Resources are considerable in Coles County

According to Intersect Illinois, the population within a 60-mile radius of Coles County is a healthy 848,199 overall residents with 46,185 total population for Coles County. Multiple universities (EIU and U of I) and community colleges (Lakeland, Richland, Kaskaskia, Danville, and Parkland Community Colleges) provide a steady stream of college students of all age categories who are advancing their educational, technical, and vocational skills for current and future job opportunities in the East Central Illinois Region. Coles County alone contains the following educational partners, workforce resources, and business planning and funding providers:

- Eastern Illinois University
- Lakeland College
- SBDC
- WIOA

## Coles County Workforce by the Numbers

Coles County contains a higher younger workforce population with 5390 aged 10-19 years old, 8746 aged 20-29, 5806 aged 30-39, 5229 aged 40-49, 5456 aged 50-59, and 3190 aged 60-64 with a median age of 37.1 years old. Over the past several years, the population has fluctuated and has become more stable in the last three years with the population consisting of 52% males and 48% females in the workforce. Due to the prevalence of educational opportunities and workforce training programs, Coles County has a more educated workforce than observed in other areas with 45.63% of the population achieving an associate's degree or higher, and 93.48% having a high school degree or higher.

The largest job counts by occupation in Coles County are as follows:

- 12.55% (3,079) Office and Administrative Support
- 11.32% (2777) Executive, Managers, and Administrators
- 10.37% (2543) Sales
- 8.82% (2163) Production Workers
- 8.3% (2035) Education, Training/Library

The workforce distribution of total employees in Coles County is 34% Blue Collar and 65% White Collar positions with an overall 24, 419 total employees in the labor force currently. According to Intersect Illinois, Coles County has a total of 1659 active businesses. In 2023, the leading industries in Coles County were Education (4015 jobs), Manufacturing (3691 jobs), Healthcare (3070 jobs) and Retail (2713 jobs). With many sustainable, higher-paying positions, households in Coles County earn a median yearly income of \$63,049. Specifically, 29% of the households earn more than the national average each year. In terms of housing, 60.2% are homeowners with 39.8% renting indicating that there are 20% more households who own their homes than rent in Coles County. As seen in many other areas of the country, Coles County

needs more housing options at all income levels to meet the current and future workforce growth needs of the community.

According to the Intersect Illinois Unemployment number is 4.8% with a total workforce of 26,378 in Coles County alone. In comparison to the U.S. National unemployment rate of 4.2%, Coles County unemployment is only slightly higher than the national average. The Illinois Office of Employment Security Illinois unemployment rate was 5.2% in July 2024, so both local and state unemployment rates trend slightly higher than the national average. This factor along with a strong youth trend in the Coles County population tends to indicate some excess capacity in the labor market exists for additional job growth now and in the future.



## People

The total population of Coles County is 46,185. The median age is 37.1

**46,185**

Total Population



51.87%

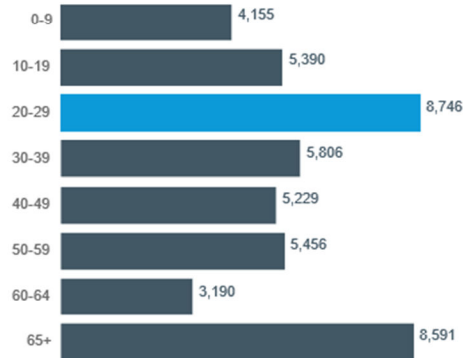
Male

48.13%

Female

### Age Distribution

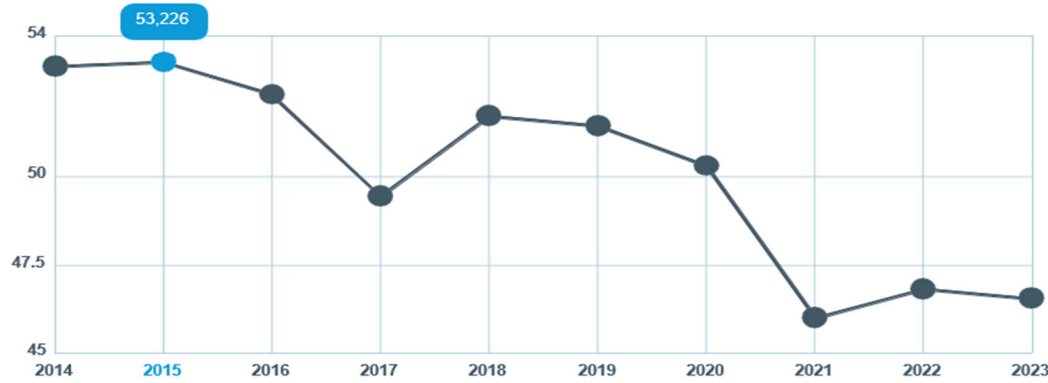
2023



### Median Age

**37**

Population Growth (in thousands)



## Educational Attainment

45.63% of the population in Coles County have an associate's degree or higher. 93.48% have a high school degree or higher.



< Grade 9  
2.09%



Grade 9-12  
4.42%



High School  
26.74%



Some College  
21.11%



Assoc Degree  
9.74%



Bach Degree  
20.35%



Grad Degree  
15.54%



offer associate's degree or Certificate



offer Bachelor's Degree or Higher

26,378

Labor Force

4.8%

Unemployment Rate

0.5%

Unemployment Rate  
Change (1 year)

Total Employees

24,419

Total Establishments

1,659

## Talent

What are the largest job counts by occupation?

Office and  
Administrative  
support



12.55%  
3,079

Executive,  
Managers, and  
Administrators



11.32%  
2,777

Sales



10.37%  
2,543

Production  
Workers



8.82%  
2,163

Education,  
Training/Library



8.3%  
2,035



34%

Blue Collar



65%

White Collar

1

Education



4,015

Jobs

46

Establishments

2

Manufacturing



3,691

Jobs

50

Establishments

3

Health Care and Social Services



3,070

Jobs

179

Establishments

4

Retail



2,713

Jobs

222

Establishments





# \$63,049

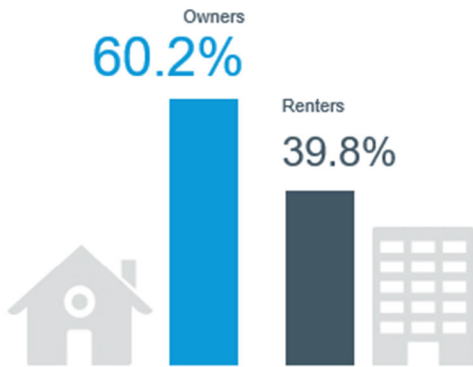
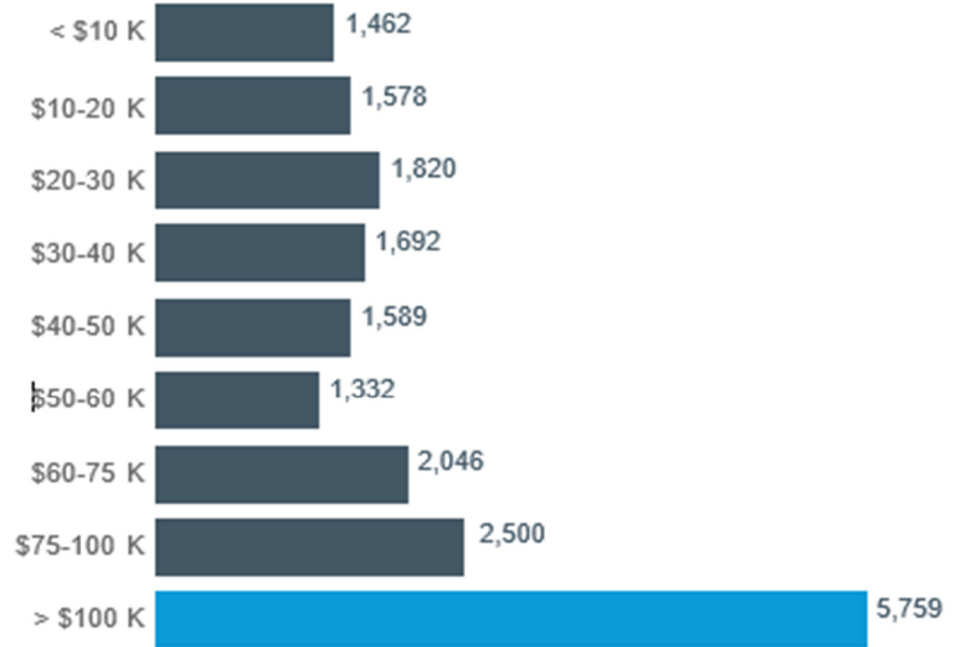
## Income Distribution

Median Household Income

0% more than the county

23% less than the state

21% less than the nation



## \$67,388

Median Household Expenditure

## Taxes

Top State Corporate Income Tax  
9.5%

Top State Personal Capital Gains Tax  
3.8%

Top State Corporate Capital Gains Tax  
7.8%

State Sales Tax  
6.25%

Top State Personal Income Tax  
3.75%



### 17 min

Commute Travel Time



### 1 + 24 (+50 miles)

Airports in Community



### Interstate

In Community



### Freight Rail

In Community

## **Funding**

Coles Together continues to evaluate funding, grants, bonding, and other financial options needed to continue to advance business retention & expansion and new business recruitment to Coles County.

## **Conclusion and Next Steps**

Coles Together looks forward to working with all who would like to advance economic development in Coles County, Illinois. This will be done through strong strategic planning, establishing key regional priorities, and timelines for progress, proactively addressing key regional issues, legislative advocacy, outreach to key development professionals & building long-term relationships, developing networking development teams to get the work done, and overall working together! Coles Together now is recognized by Intersect Illinois as a regional EDO and has issued EDO database capabilities to list the park properties for site selectors/brokers and gather the needed information. The new database capabilities will provide competitive information for Coles County to be seen as a strong regional force for economic development activities.

**“Unifying Voices, Together We Will Shape the Future!”**