

# *DeKalb County: An Entrepreneurial Legacy*

## *DeKalb County: An Entrepreneurial Legacy*

DeKalb County has a long and storied tradition of entrepreneurial success, public and private sector cooperation, and philanthropy. In fact, if it were not for this particular history the entire landscape of the County, and even the nation, would be vastly different.

In 1842 a Charleston, New Hampshire man lacked funding to purchase his own farm. Having a dream of someday being a property owner, he traveled westward with two rickety threshing machines while doing odd farm jobs. After earning enough to buy 600 acres of farmland within two years, the farmer settled in the town of DeKalb.

A wily opportunist, the man later witnessed a demonstration of a new type of wire fencing at a local fair. Taking the opportunity, he adapted it to a practical use, and survived an ensuing battle for patent rights. He went on to become a millionaire, and one of the wealthiest men in America.

However, it doesn't end there. Joseph Glidden, the inventor of barbed wire served the DeKalb community as a County Board member and sheriff. His donations became the backbone of DeKalb County, and he was the original founder of the Normal School, which went on to become Northern Illinois University. His legacy lives on in NIU, which boasts nationally ranked departments in business, public administration, and education.

Today, the entrepreneurial spirit embodied by Glidden has extended in the DeKalb community, at NIU, small business, and agriculture. As the next generation of social entrepreneurs prepares to offer its services to the world, DeKalb County remains an ideal place to grow your dreams in the tradition the community began in over 150 years ago.

The following publication is designed to serve as an aide to the aspiring entrepreneur, specifically tailored to those interested in building your legacy in the resource abundant and rising economic center that is DeKalb County. As developing your own business can be an initially challenging experience, we want you to know that the community is behind you in the endeavor of your choice.