

2014 a busy year for development in DeKalb County

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DeKALB – Breakthrough moments were highlighted at the State of the County dinner Thursday, including those of local businesses, Northern Illinois University and global company Caterpillar.

The [DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation](#)'s annual State of the County held Thursday evening at Faranda's, 302 Grove St. The event highlighted local businesses, industrial development and other economic development for government, business and community leaders.

Paul Borek, DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation executive director, gave an overview of development and activities over the past year, like the addition of local businesses throughout Sandwich, Sycamore, DeKalb and Genoa, and the retention of industrial work.

“2014 has been a very busy year for economic development in DeKalb County,” Borek said. “Commercial development was particularly active during the past year.”

He also took time to highlight projects and partnerships, such as [Genoa's SOARing project](#), which is efforting economic development, the county's [enterprise zone application](#) and Shabbona's efforts for a pathway project and beach/swimming area.

The keynote speaker for the event was Jim Dugan, executive support manager for the office of the chairman and CEO of Caterpillar Inc.

Dugan, a Sycamore native and NIU alumnus, spoke about his experiences with the global company and the book “The Caterpillar Way: Lessons in Leadership, Growth, and Shareholder Value” by authors Craig Bouchard and James Koch.

Paul Callighan, DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation board president, said Dugan was a great representative of the county.

Callighan spoke on the accomplishments of the county in the past year, while also mentioning the future. He said the enterprise zone application will put the county on a level playing field with other areas for potential business if it is approved. He said taxing bodies and local governments have helped to push the project.

“You are going to make a big difference,” he said to the audience. “This is a breakthrough moment.”

He also thanked NIU, which he said is finding new ways to help with business outreach. He said NIU President Doug Baker’s efforts to reach out have been a breakthrough for the area.

“To our friends at NIU, I want you to know we’re going to do our best to get jobs for those graduates you’re producing,” Callighan said. “Bringing awareness of manufacturing jobs to our schools means we are going to have a pipeline for the future of quality workers and quality jobs in DeKalb County.”