



Leading Economic Development in Northwest Kentucky

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## **LOCAL BUSINESSES COLLABORATE ON A NEW PROJECT**

Northwest, Ky. - It is no secret that most business communication takes place in a digital world. We also know that successful businesses collaborate with other businesses and partner in resources. How then can we as a region (Northwest Kentucky) grow economically and work hand in hand by using social networking tools? This question was raised by Patrick Reed, CEO of Hugh E. Sandefur Training Center, Inc., and was directed to Manager of Existing Business, Cj Maple of Northwest Kentucky Forward.

Over the course of a year, Reed and Maple met on a regular basis researching ways to connect Henderson, McLean, Union, and Webster counties to achieve a common purpose and to share responsibilities, resources, competencies, and benefits.

In the course of doing so, Maple surveyed a select number of existing businesses in the region on topics relating to the proposed online program. Pioneer Plastic's Controller, Ed Knapp, Jr., was one of those who responded to the survey and commented that online user groups such as Yahoo.com could be the key ingredient to what they may be looking

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for; the site is user friendly, with customized settings and it is inexpensive.

Thanks to Reed, Maple, and the helpful input from Knapp and others, the program **Neighbors4Neighbors** was formed. The social network is a regional online partnership of sharing information within the four counties. The strategic alliances will create sustainable competitive advantages for local businesses and will direct resources and capabilities for important projects.

Northwest Kentucky Forward launched the program the week of May 17<sup>th</sup>. As the leading economic development organization for the four counties, Northwest Kentucky Forward's mission is to create wealth and opportunity for people, businesses and governments of the region. A main focus of Northwest Kentucky Forward is business retention; focusing on direct needs, such as retaining, expanding and promoting existing manufactures, their employment, and product improvement. The Existing Business program targets such manufacturing, distribution and service providers.

“As of right now, existing businesses are signed up on a daily basis and there are 27 signed up so far. We see this as an excellent opportunity for the existing businesses to share their business needs, questions, etc. The online user group and most of our programs are developed from suggestions from existing businesses. We really appreciate

and welcome the suggestions so we can provide what they want and need,” said Maple.

In order to be a part of this group you have to be invited and an existing business with Northwest Kentucky Forward. Once you become a member of the user group you will have access to options such as polls and archives, member listing, calendars, etc. The user groups can send/receive group or individual messages and attachments instantly.

Reed adds, “Businesses in Northwest Kentucky can only benefit from an application that fosters more communication and collaboration within our region.”

Northwest Kentucky Forward is a public-private partnership. For more information about Northwest Kentucky Forward and the Existing Business program:[www.northwestky.com](http://www.northwestky.com)

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