



**JACKSONVILLE**

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION



**2024** INVESTOR  
APPRECIATION EVENT &  
**2023** AWARDS CEREMONY

# CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE



The Jacksonville Regional Economic Development Corporation has a lot of positive momentum as we move forward in 2024-2025. This is the result of the enthusiastic energy of our staff, the passionate leadership provided by our board of directors and the long-term financial support of our many generous investors.

We are excited to build on our past efforts to promote our region, to enhance our relationships with local partners and to implement the strategies for success laid out in our plan of work.

Sincerely,  
Kai Schnitker, Chairman





## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Welcome to a night of appreciation and celebration! The Jacksonville Regional Economic Development Corporation is thankful for the investors that afford our organization the opportunity to boldly move forward with our efforts to strengthen the Morgan and Scott counties.

We also recognize the tremendous work being accomplished at Turner Scientific as they perform innovative hearing research and develop devices to expand research in the biomedical field. The impact of their work is being felt globally. Our newest Bob Chipman Champion Award honorees, Rabbi Rob and Lauren Thomas, are offering their time, talent and treasure to prepare Jacksonville as a home to the next generation of professional, entrepreneurs and leaders. Thank you for joining us in celebrating these worthy award recipients.

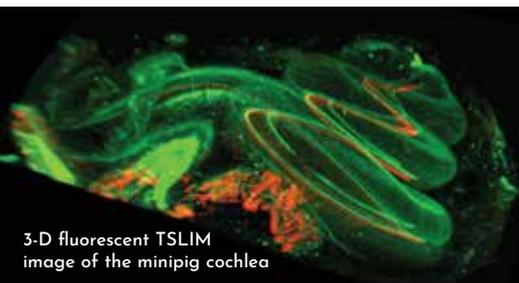
Sincerely,  
Kristin Jamison, President

# 2023 HAROLD COX INDUSTRY OF THE YEAR



Since 1990, the Jacksonville Regional Economic Development Corporation has presented the Harold Cox Industry of the Year Award to a company exhibiting outstanding business development and activity that enhances regional economic viability. Our Existing Industry Committee evaluates nominees for the award based upon criteria including technology, products and services offered; service to the community; teamwork and problem-solving; and workplace satisfaction. The committee has selected and is proud to recognize Turner Scientific as the newest recipient of JREDC's Industry of the Year Award.

Turner Scientific is a leading innovator in hearing research and ethical animal treatment serving biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies, contract research organizations and academia. Turner Scientific Environmental Monitoring Services tracks variables in animal environments to maintain the best possible conditions to improve animal welfare and produce more reliable and reproducible research results. A second division, Turner Scientific Preclinical Research, partners with biotech, pharma and academic sponsors to test the safety and efficacy of new drugs and devices to treat hearing and balance disorders.



3-D fluorescent TSLIM  
image of the minipig cochlea



mouse cochlear hair cells (receptor cells for  
hearing, green) and auditory nerve fibers (fuschia)  
conveying sound information to the brain





Since its founding in 2017, Turner Scientific has grown steadily and, over the last three years, has doubled in size. The company has developed a revolutionary new scientific device - Sensory Sentinel™ - that is having a significant impact on the biomedical research field and is the only United States-based firm specializing in contracted hearing research. Expanding their offerings into miniature pigs opened new avenues of research for the company and their customers around the world.

Turner Scientific started as a “mom-and-pop” shop that has ballooned to over 30 employees. Founders Jeremy Turner, Annette Turner and Brian Chumley are proud of the family-like atmosphere their business maintains with a superb team of experts from around the world, combined with dedicated staff from the region. They believe their staff works well together because of their shared mission and values.

Gaining accreditation through AAALAC International - a private, nonprofit organization that promotes the humane treatment of animals in science - proved to be a major industry steppingstone for Turner Scientific. The company also employs multiple high-level employees which solidifies their scientific expertise and recognition.

Turner Scientific is active in the community by supporting Illinois College’s Brain Day and Prairieland United Way. Several staff members also partnered with the Jacksonville Pilot Club to distribute complimentary bicycle helmets at the Morgan County Health Department as part of their children’s health fair.

While the COVID pandemic tested the young company, Turner Scientific grew during that era while improving remote connectivity and services for customers around the world. The company is better able to excel in its rural Illinois location while maintaining a global reach. The increased connectivity has also helped attract full-time, expert-level employees in Boston, Philadelphia, Florida, Atlanta and Houston. The Turner Scientific staff is committed to using their expertise to make a difference in the world which they feel makes it a great place to work.

It is the mission of the JREDC to create and expand job opportunities in Morgan and Scott counties. We are pleased to congratulate Turner Scientific as the 2023 Harold Cox Industry of the Year as we watch them grow in the region and partner in our mission.

# 2023 BOB CHIPMAN CHAMPION AWARD



The Jacksonville Regional Economic Development Corporation established the Champion Award to celebrate outstanding contributions to economic development in Morgan and Scott counties. This accolade is designed to recognize an individual, agency or organization whose primary mission is not economic development but has demonstrated exceptional dedication, volunteerism and leadership in the community. In honor of the late Robert "Bob" Chipman, whose unwavering commitment and exemplary service set the gold standard for community support, the JREDC is proud to rename this award the Bob Chipman Champion Award. The JREDC presents the Champion Award in Bob's name for the first time to honor his remarkable legacy and the enduring impact of his contributions to the Jacksonville region.

To ensure a diverse and resilient economy, Rabbi Rob and Lauren Thomas are intent to encourage entrepreneurs to come to Jacksonville to develop businesses. The couple stress the importance of building foundations so young business owners can forge a life and a career all while remaining in the region.

Rabbi Rob, a native of Jacksonville, and Lauren Thomas, originally from the western suburbs of Chicago, decided to purchase a home and spend more time in Jacksonville after a family health scare brought the couple to town. After witnessing Lauren's love with his hometown, Rabbi Rob was eager to begin work to move his hometown forward. During initial conversations with business leaders, they learned it was difficult to attract young professionals to the area, with a lack of housing being a major stumbling block. At the same time, Rabbi Rob and Lauren noticed that the upper floors of many buildings on and near downtown Jacksonville were unoccupied. They recognized that if these buildings were renovated into apartments for young professionals, the new living spaces could energize the economy. In addition, they surmised the young professionals living downtown will need services within walking distance that will generate both demand and supply if the buildings were renovated.

Fast forward a little more than a year, and these projects are now underway due to the business acumen of Rabbi Rob and Lauren. They are creating restaurant, retail and entertainment space on the ground floor of newly acquired downtown buildings, while creating quality apartments on the upper floors. The first building nearing completion is the Kresge building at 59 E. Central Park with its ground floor being utilized as both retail and entertainment space thanks to Pizza Records owners Heather and Devin Smock.

Rabbi Rob and Lauren believe a vibrant setting is the first step in establishing a place to live. They are dedicated to ensuring young professionals form “connective tissue” to the community. To that end they are committed to working with the JREDC to introduce these new community members to all Jacksonville has to offer, including the many service clubs and community organizations that benefit the region. They feel this is a great way to give back to the community while introducing new residents to the warm and welcoming people that make Jacksonville unique.

The couple recognize that young professionals may one day have families and will want to move out of their apartments and into their own homes. To address another need in the community, they are working on two projects to renovate existing structures or begin new construction to provide family homes in Jacksonville.

Anticipating young professionals new to the community will see gaps in the market, Rabbi Rob and Lauren know these newcomers will have ideas regarding how to address those needs and want to start businesses. Identifying two ingredients needed for success: capital and advice, the couple will provide both through a venture capital fund initiated for the purpose of fostering startups in Jacksonville. Most importantly, they will help guide these new business owners through the process of starting and scaling a business, thereby contributing to the continued growth and diversity of Jacksonville’s regional economy.

The JREDC is inspired by the investment Rabbi Rob and Lauren Thomas have made in the Jacksonville community. We are thankful for their thoughtful and strategic work to develop downtown Jacksonville and beyond for the benefit of all.



# 2024 BOARD & OFFICERS

## OFFICERS

**Chairman - Kai Schnitker,**

First National Bank of Arezville

**Vice Chairman - Rob Lyman,** Peoples Bank & Trust

**Secretary - Darin Gehrke,** SomerCor

**Assistant Secretary - Dan Beard,** Bellatti Law Office

**Treasurer - Chris Gordon,** Community State Bank

**Immediate Past Chairman -**

**Commissioner Ginny Fanning,** Morgan County

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mike Anderson, Jacksonville Country Club

Shawn Artis, Morgan County GIS

Jim Burke, Hutchison Engineering Company

Tyler Devlin, Illinois Electric Cooperative

Dusty Douglas, Morgan County Regional Planning

Mayor Andy Ezard, City of Jacksonville

President Barbara Farley, Illinois College

Brad Floreth, ILMO Products Company

Jamie Headen, Benton & Associates

Eric Hobbie, Prairie Power

Kristan Becker-Hoffman, The Farmers State Bank

& Trust Company

Beth Hopkins, City of Jacksonville

Trevor Huffman, Jacksonville Memorial Hospital

Meri Jones, US Bank

Pam Martin, Jacksonville Memorial Hospital

Keri Mason, Lincoln Land Community College

Nicole Meyer, Jacksonville Area Chamber of Commerce

Lisa Musch, Jacksonville Area Chamber of Commerce

Jodee Nell, CNB Bank & Trust

Brian Nyberg, City of Jacksonville

Community Development

Jake Price, Heartland Bank and Trust Company

Amy Quigg, Reynolds Consumer Products

Shawn Rennecker, Illinois Electric Cooperative

J.J. Richardson, CCK Automations, Inc

Caryl Sanders, Nestlé

Rabbi Rob & Lauren Thomas

Pat VanDeVelde, Scott County

Development Corporation

Commissioner Mike Wankel, Morgan County

Cheryl Welge, Ameren

Chad Winters, Cass Communications

Janell Woolard, i3 Broadband

Allan Worrell, Worrell Land Services, LLC



# SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS

## RETIRING BOARD MEMBERS



### **Commissioner Ginny Fanning**

Ginny has been a member of the board for over 23 years. She first represented the Jacksonville Area Chamber of Commerce as its president and since 2014 has represented Morgan County. During her tenure at JREDC, she has served on multiple committees, most recently completing a two-year term as Chairman of the Board.

Ginny's leadership led to the completion of a successful five-year investment campaign, and a new branding effort to help unify the efforts of Jacksonville Regional Economic Development Corporation, the City of Jacksonville, the Chamber, Jacksonville Main Street and Jacksonville Area Convention and Visitors Bureau in promotion and marketing endeavors. She also supported efforts for broadband connectivity made increasingly more important during the pandemic. Ginny encouraged the planning and implementation of a new talent attraction campaign which has already proven successful in recruiting workforce to the area.

A strong and successful leader, we appreciate Ginny's dedication and service over the years in furthering the mission of the JREDC. We wish her all the best as she begins a new chapter in her life.



### **Jim Oliver, The Farmers State Bank & Trust Company**

We extend our thanks to Jim Oliver for his dedication on the Board of Directors representing The Farmers State Bank & Trust Company. Jim has been an active board member and served on the finance committee for over seven years. The JREDC greatly appreciates his service and dedication to making the Jacksonville region stronger. We wish him a fulfilling retirement.



### **Mike Halsne, Jacksonville Area Chamber of Commerce**

The JREDC thanks Mike for his commitment to the board this past year as a representative of the Jacksonville Area Chamber of Commerce.

# OUR INVESTORS



## DIAMOND INVESTORS

(Annual Investment of \$25,000 or more)

City of Jacksonville  
Morgan County  
Rabbi Rob & Lauren Thomas



## PLATINUM INVESTORS

(Annual Investment of \$10,000 - \$24,999)

Illinois Electric Cooperative  
Jacksonville Area Chamber of Commerce  
Jacksonville Memorial Hospital  
Reynolds Consumer Products



## GOLD INVESTORS

(Annual Investment of \$5,000 - \$9,999)

CNB Bank & Trust  
The Farmers State Bank & Trust Company  
Heartland Bank and Trust Company  
i3 Broadband  
Illinois College  
Jacksonville Country Club  
Nestlé  
Prairie Power  
Scott County Development Corporation  
US Bank



## SILVER INVESTORS

(Annual Investment of \$1,000 - \$4,999)

Ameren  
Beard Implement  
Benton & Associates  
Bound to Stay Bound Books  
Cass Communications  
CCK Automations, Inc.  
City of Winchester  
Community State Bank  
Don's Place

Elm City Center  
EnviroVac  
First National Bank of Arentzville  
First National Bank of Winchester  
GFL Environmental  
Hutchison Engineering Company  
Illinois Road Contractors  
Lincoln Land Community College  
Marx Properties, Inc.  
Mike Griffiths Properties  
O'Shea Builders  
Peak Insurance Agency  
People's Bank & Trust  
Rammelkamp Bradney Law Office  
Tri County Community Development Corporation  
Ware Brands, Inc.  
West State Title  
Westermeyer Industries  
Worrell Land Services, LLC  
Zumbahlen Eyth Surratt Foote & Flynn



## BRONZE INVESTORS

(Annual Investment of \$100 - \$999)

AgriSompo  
Bank of Bluffs  
Bellatti Law Office  
Burrus Seed Farms  
Cass-Morgan Farm Bureau  
CCK Automations, Inc.  
Denney Jewelers  
Dimond Bros. Insurance Agency  
Duncan Management, Inc.  
Freeman Seed Company  
Golden Eagle Distributing  
Hamilton's Catering  
ILMO Products Company  
Linda Standley  
Pathway Services Unlimited, Inc.  
Somercor  
The Source  
WLDS/WEAI Radio





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