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## **Greater Kokomo Alliance celebrates 2021 with virtual awards**

Chamber members, local businesses and community leaders honored during virtual celebration

**KOKOMO, Ind. (Dec. 6, 2021)** – This year, the Greater Kokomo Economic Development Alliance recognized community leaders, businesses and volunteers with a virtual awards celebration.

The celebration, sponsored by Community First Bank of Indiana, was produced locally and broadcast online as a safety precaution due to the ongoing COVID pandemic.

The virtual celebration featured Alliance staff, including President and CEO Charlie Sparks, Chamber Manager Sandy Chapin, Downtown Association Manager Susan Alexander, and Visitors Bureau Manager Sherry Matlock.

This year's award winners were:

- **FIRSTS Award:** Kirk Daniels, chair of the Convention & Visitors Bureau board.
- **Downtown Champion Award:** Lori Warren, owner of PF Hendricks & Company.
- **Volunteer of the Year:** Sarah Pitzer with Community First Bank of Indiana.
- **Ambassador of the Year:** Jerry Smith with BMO Harris Bank.
- **Business Person of the Year:** Robb Blume, President & CEO of Community First Bank of Indiana.
- **Small Business of the Year:** Popcorn Café.
- **Large Business of the Year:** Stellantis.
- **Impact Award:** Ivy Tech Kokomo.

Charlie Sparks, president & CEO for the Greater Kokomo Economic Development Alliance, addressed attendees during the virtual event.

"Again this year, we've worked really closely with the City and the County to make sure our local businesses are supported and that we can emerge as a community with a thriving and healthy economy as we recover from this continuing pandemic," Sparks said.

Sparks's address included updates on the proposed hotel and conference center, the proposed industrial park, collaboration with the City and County to bring new grants and funding to the county, increased sports tourism and the work to support all of Howard County's businesses.

Sparks also recognized Mike McCool, who retired earlier this year as manager of economic development and the Inventrek Technology Park.

"I just want to take a minute to thank Mike for his service, not just to the Alliance, but to the community in general," Sparks said.

"It's been a great six years at Inventrek and working with the Alliance," McCool said. "I've enjoyed every minute of it."

In addition to Community First Bank of Indiana, other sponsors included Duke Energy and Community Howard Regional Health. The presentation was produced by 4411 Creative Agency, a local marketing company.

To view this year's celebration, visit <http://www.greaterkokomo.com/2021-awards>.

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#### **About the Greater Kokomo Chamber of Commerce**

Since 1914, the Greater Kokomo Chamber of Commerce has served Kokomo and Howard County businesses through advocacy initiatives, professional development, networking opportunities, and promotional programs implemented to grow the local business community. As a catalyst for economic development, the Chamber also assists community residents in finding reputable, established organizations and high quality services to utilize. Today, the Chamber serves over 620 diverse members and remains a trusted voice for local businesses. To learn more, visit [www.GreaterKokomo.com](http://www.GreaterKokomo.com).