



**Contact:**

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**EMBARGOED UNTIL 5:00 A.M., THURSDAY, JULY 16, 2015**

## **CEREMONIAL PLAQUE UNVEILING**

**STARKE COUNTY** – On Thursday, July 23, 2015 at 11 a.m. (CDT), at 2-4 North Main Street in Knox, the former home of the Starke County Economic Development Foundation (SCEDF), there will be a ceremonial plaque unveiling to recognize this historical location. The plaque is required by the Indiana State Historic Preservation Office due to the funding source of the demolition project. The plaque was funded by the SCEDF, and will educate citizens on the previous history of the site.

The premises were the site of the old Koffel building used for more than a century. The Koffel building was first constructed in 1891 by H.R. Koffel to house Koffel's Drug Store, also known as Modern Drugs, and Farmer's State Bank. The location of the building was part of the Courthouse Historic District on Main Street in downtown Knox. The two stores were separated by a brick partition wall down the middle of the building, which allowed the two upper floor units to share a common staircase. This style of construction was commonly known as the "Two-Part Commercial Block" and was used for small and medium sized commercial buildings during that time period; seven other buildings in downtown Knox were also built in that fashion. A year after the building's construction, brick streets were laid and wooden sidewalks were replaced with concrete, and in 1908 city water became available.

The Koffel Drug Store was closed in the late 1960's after the retirement of Luther Everett, who had been a long-term employee of the Koffel's and bought the Drug Store after Charles Koffel's retirement. 2 North Main Street then became the home for the Eagles Lodge, but it was damaged by a fire in the late 1970's. In the 1990's there was an attempt to turn the space into a movie theater but that failed when the building's structure began to deteriorate. The Farmer's State Bank that occupied 4 North Main Street relocated and then came into possession of SCEDF in the late 1980's. SCEDF occupied the building for almost 20 years before moving to their current location in Knox.

In 2013 the entire building was demolished leaving a vacant lot where the century old building once stood. The lot is now in the process of becoming Serenity Gardens to help beautify the downtown area. Serenity Gardens was the idea of students at the Knox Community High School, who were looking for a way to give back to the community. The site has seven benches, various plants to help beautify the area, and a gazebo. The funding for this project was raised in part by the students selling bricks, various donations from the community, the City of Knox, and the Starke County Economic Development Foundation.

The Starke County Historical Society has been invited to attend this ceremony because of the great deal of work that they did in helping establish the historical significance of this area of Knox. Also expected to attend are members of the SCEDF Board and City of Knox officials, who were instrumental in securing the grant that allowed the building to be demolished and the new park to be established on the site. Members of public are also invited to attend this short ceremony.

#### **ABOUT SCEDF**

The Starke County Development Foundation is a not-for-profit local economic development organization (LEDO) providing economic development opportunities on behalf of Starke County, Indiana, the City of Knox, and the Towns of North Judson and Hamlet through the development of industrial parks, rail spurs, greenfield sites, shovel-ready sites, infrastructure and workforce development. For more information regarding Starke County Development Foundation, visit [www.starkecounty.com](http://www.starkecounty.com).

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