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**SCEDF, City of Knox Host Groundbreaking for New Precision Machine Shop**

Knox, Ind. – The Knox Industrial Park will soon have a new tenant. The Starke County Economic Development Foundation (SCEDF) and the City of Knox hosted a groundbreaking ceremony this afternoon for Wakal Machining, LLC.

The machine shop, located at 205 Kloeckner Drive, will have equipment and supplies for machining and will be able to cut, fabricate, and finish products to prepare them for use. They will create new parts and repair existing equipment and parts for many local and regional clients, including the manufacturing, aerospace, automotive, farming, and construction industries.

“Our client base is farmers and any business that has a maintenance department,” owner Bill Wakal said. “We hope to be able to serve Valparaiso, LaPorte, Walkerton, Plymouth, Culver, Winamac, and surrounding areas initially and branch out further into Northern Indiana and beyond as we grow. The nearest machining shop that can provide the service we will offer is an hour and a half away.”

Wakal has worked as a tool and die maker for more than 25 years. His wife, Sherry, has a business background, and their son plans to join the family business after he graduates from college. Wakal Machining, LLC will have two employees to start when it opens in September and hopes to double its workforce by next year. Future expansion plans include working with the North Central Careers and Technical Education Cooperative through the vocational program offered at local schools and hiring graduates who go on to complete the precision machine program at Ivy Tech.

“We chose to start our business in Knox because we saw a need for a machine shop in Starke County,” Bill Wakal said. “The Knox Industrial Park is an ideal location because of the proximity to many of our clients, which will help us to better serve their needs.”

“We hope this opens the door for other small businesses to consider locating in Starke County,” Wakal added. “The City of Knox and the Starke County Economic Development Foundation have been a positive force behind the success of us starting this business.”

The Wakals approached the Starke County Economic Development Foundation in 2022. At that time, they were looking for an existing building in which to open their business.

“We looked at many possibilities in the Knox area, which is where they wanted to locate” SCEDF Executive Director Lisa Dan said. “They felt the Knox Industrial Park was the best location, and we were happy to sell them some land so they could build. They indicated some of their customers would be local industries and this would be an ideal spot for their startup business.”

“Their long-term plans will also create career opportunities for local students and encourage them to remain in Starke County after they graduate,” Dan added. “That is so important to our county as we continue to strengthen our niche as a best-of-both worlds destination in proximity to Chicago, South Bend and Indianapolis with an affordable cost of living, unmatched natural resources, and friendly and welcoming communities.”

SCEDF still owns 51 acres in the Knox Industrial Park. The City of Knox extended water and sewer service to the site, which will also accommodate future industry expansions.

“This is a locally owned business, and it could encourage others to build or expand in Knox,” Mayor Dennis Estok said. “We are pleased to welcome the Wakals to our city.”

**ABOUT SCEDF**

The Starke County Economic 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 the Starke County Economic Development Foundation, visit [www.scedf.biz](http://www.scedf.biz).

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