

TENA WOENKER, CPM, CMO

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CORE COMPETENCIES

Economic & Community Development | Stakeholder Engagement | Team Leadership & Mentorship
Public Relations & Marketing | Budget Management | Event Planning & Fundraising
Grant Writing & Management | Strategic Planning | Public Speaking | Board & Committee Leadership

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mission-driven leader with 30+ years of experience guiding community and nonprofit initiatives and delivering transformative projects that strengthen local economies and enrich quality of life. Proven track record in strategic planning, partnership building. Adept at inspiring teams, managing complex budgets, and navigating diverse stakeholder interests.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

CANDIDATE For Whitley County Commissioner Columbia City, IN 2026

CONSULTANT Projects with a Purpose LLC, Columbia City, IN 2013-present

Projects with a Purpose was started for managing the Taste of the Arts festival for Arts United in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Since then, the LLC has been utilized to help non-profits and municipalities plan and implement economic or community development projects, as well as grant writing/management, planning major public events or fundraisers.

GARDENER/RETAIL ASSOCIATE Blue River Nursery, Columbia City, IN April 2026-present

Utilizing my gardening hobby (and 26 years of Purdue Master Gardener experience) by maintaining client's gardens, installing perennials and trees or assisting in retail sales at Blue River Nursery.

TOWN MANAGER

Town of Waterloo 2014-2019; Albion 2019-2021 (2-year contract); Avilla 2021-2023; Leo 2023-2024

- Directed the day-to-day operations and spearheaded economic development for small towns in greater Fort Wayne
- Reported directly to Town Council, served as the staff for Redevelopment Commission, Plan Commission and BZA
- processed all building permits and served as sole employee of the planning & zoning department
- Managed town budget and supervised department directors and their budgets, assisted in creating TIF, Capital Improvement Plans, and other financial reporting documents, coached department heads on employee issues
- Represented the Town on regional economic development initiatives and many town or regional boards
- Served as Zoning Administrator, ADA Coordinator and more roles, handled marketing of town news & social media

Key Achievements:

- Finished a new Avilla industrial park; facilitated subdivision developments; assisted Redevelopment Commissions with downtown building acquisition and renovation, led Tax Increment Financing district expansions & annexation project
- Served as project manager for numerous utility plant upgrades, from bidding to execution
- Assisted Bosch in Albion with 102,000sf expansion and HMC in Avilla in doubling their factory
- Catalyst for new business development, created new community partnerships, 3 new public parks, trail extension and started a new event-the Waterloo Holiday Train Block Party; issued RFP to redevelop an entire downtown block
- Managed projects and/or obtained over \$4.5 million in grant funds, including: a READI grant for \$759,000 in 2023, federal TIGER II, INDOT Community Crossing and a federal/INDOT intersection projects, OCRA stormwater separation and wastewater master plan grants, IHCD Blight Elimination Program, CreatING Places crowd-funding, DNR trail funds
- Accomplished Amtrak station relocation project, hired depot employees, initiated the daily train station operation
- Nominated for an Allen Graber Citizenship Award by the DeKalb Chamber Partnership

DIRECTOR OF MARKETING AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT 2008-2011 **FESTIVAL COORDINATOR** 2008-2016

Arts United of Greater Fort Wayne, Fort Wayne, IN

- Achieved over \$1 million fundraising goal during recession while reducing budget and adding programs
- Implemented workplace campaigns with presentations and activities, prepared grant requests, direct mailing solicitations and organized administrative processes for greater efficiency, Budget planning and oversight.
- Collaborated with numerous arts organizations and corporations for fundraising projects and placemaking events

Key Achievements:

- Taste of the Arts Coordinator and a founder of the festival attracting 25,000+ visitors, led a large, energized volunteer committee, now in its 16th year at the downtown Fort Wayne arts campus.

DIRECTOR OF MARKETING & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Downtown Improvement District, Fort Wayne, IN 2011- 2013 (jointly employed with Arts United)

- Managed and created major city events, promoted downtown Fort Wayne, had fundraisers with record-breaking results

Key Achievements:

- Coordinated video series, Discover Downtown, a Merit Award winner - International Downtown Association, 2012
- Facilitated large, multi-location projects to support downtown revitalization initiatives, generating jumps in retail sales

CORPORATE SUPPORT MANAGER

Purdue University Development Office, West Lafayette IN 2005-2008

- Consistently exceeded fundraising goals for WBAA, public radio, expanded community engagement

MAIN STREET MANAGER, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

Downtown Business Center (now part of Greater Lafayette Commerce), Lafayette IN 2003-2005

- Short-term, grant-funded management for establishing the downtown development organization, serving both Lafayette & West Lafayette; reported to a large board of directors to set and implement a new organization vision
- Doubled organization membership; obtained State grants; added member services; developed fundraising strategies
- Recruited new businesses and strengthened existing small business development by planning networking, seminars, and co-operative advertising ventures; wrote monthly newsletters to business owners; collaborated to create activities
- Served as “voice of downtown;” advocated for business interests such as riverfront liquor licenses, trolley system

Key Achievements:

- Worked closely with public transit and city officials to implement a new tax, and launch a free downtown trolley system
- Helped plan and hosted the Indiana Main Street/Indiana Landmarks state conference and award ceremony
- Obtained National Main Street Program certification, awards from Indiana Main Street for redevelopment efforts

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, NEWSPAPER REPORTER

The Lafayette Leader, Lafayette, IN 1998-2003

- Started as a freelance reporter, managed staff and operations, edited content, and helped with strategy for growth

Key Achievements:

- Expanded business focus doubling publication size; added more freelance reporters, features, photos, an editorial page, color, increased advertising and circulation with distribution boxes, raised subscriptions by 30% over three years
- Awards: Hoosier State Press Association-1st place, Best Short Feature Story; Best Business Section; non-daily 2002

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Arts in Psychology; Minor – Communications/Mass Media, Purdue University, West Lafayette IN

Credentials:

Certified Municipal Official, AIM Municipal Management Institute, November 2022

Certified CDBG Grant Writer, OCRA, October 2022

Certified Public Manager, Bowen Center for Public Affairs at Ball State University, 2016

Notary Public since 2001

Principals and Techniques on Fundraising certificate, The Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University, 2006

Indiana Economic Development Academy, Ball State University, 1997-1998

PROFESSIONAL & VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTIONS

Greater Fort Wayne, Inc., business and Women’s Network member, 2024-present

Tri Lakes Property Owners Association board of directors, 2025-present; Lake Water Quality testing volunteer, 2024-present

Airbnb Superhost, for a quaint fishing cabin, Columbia City, Indiana, August 2024-present

Data collector for Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow Network (used by National Weather Service), 2023-present

Master Gardener, Whitley County, IN, 2000-present

WBOI radio station Community Advisory Board, Fort Wayne, 2019-present

AIM Utility advisory committee and Community & Economic Development policy advisory committee, 2015-2024

Indiana Municipal Manager Association, Board member 2014-2023, President 2019-2020

Noble County Economic Development board member, 2019-2023

Region 3-A coordinating council board, 2019-2021

National Veterans Memorial & Shrine, grant writer for construction of Vietnam Veterans Wall, 2019-2020

DeKalb County Economic Development Partnership, board member 2014-2019, President 2016-2019

Junior Achievement Consultant, Personal Economics and Business Ethics instructor, 1998-2007; My City, 2017-2019

Fort Wayne Cultural District Advisory Board, member of the first board, 2009-2013

Fort Wayne Chamber of Commerce Ambassador and Event Committees, 2008-2013