

Episode: Decatur, IL: Redefining Its Brand for the Future

Featuring:

- Host: Chris Harrison
- Guest: Nicole Bateman

Overview:

In this episode of *The Main Points Podcast*, host Chris Harrison sits down with Nicole Bateman, President of the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) of Decatur and Macon County. They discuss Nicole's journey to Decatur, her background in community marketing, and the EDC's strategic efforts to reshape Decatur's reputation and economic landscape. From overcoming past challenges to fostering an environment where local businesses and industries thrive, Nicole shares insights into the importance of visioning, strategic partnerships, and community engagement.

Key Takeaways:

- Nicole Bateman's Journey: Moved to Decatur after meeting her husband and fell in love with the community through involvement in nonprofit organizations and local initiatives.
- Changing Perceptions: Addressing outdated narratives about Decatur and fostering a positive community image.
- Strategic Growth & Visioning: Decatur is moving forward with intentional efforts to connect businesses, infrastructure, and quality of life.
- Community Marketing & Branding: A brand is a feeling; words and perception play a critical role in how people see and experience Decatur.
- Industrial & Entrepreneurial Growth: Decatur is excelling in industrial expansion, but fostering local entrepreneurship is crucial for continued success.
- Collaboration & Leadership: Siloed efforts are diminishing as communication and partnerships strengthen across different sectors.
- Future Vision: Development of key areas like downtown, Lake Decatur, and mixed-use spaces to create a more vibrant and walkable community.

Resources & References:

- Economic Development Corporation of Decatur & Macon County: DecaturEDC.com
- City of Decatur Planning & Development: Decaturil.gov
- Decatur Park District: Decatur-parks.org
- Decatur Chamber of Commerce: DecaturChamber.com

- **Entrepreneurial Support:** Reach out to local business incubators and economic support organizations for assistance with starting or expanding a business.

Next Steps:

- **Community Engagement:** Participate in local town halls, city planning meetings, or economic development initiatives.
- **Business Development:** Entrepreneurs should explore available resources to strategically position their businesses for success.
- **Advocacy & Awareness:** Be a positive voice for Decatur by sharing success stories and helping reshape its public perception.
- **Collaboration:** Organizations and individuals should continue working together to ensure Decatur's growth aligns with its long-term vision.
- **Support Local:** Strengthen Decatur's economy by supporting local businesses, restaurants, and startups.