

# 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

PREPARED BY MICHAEL LAUTZENHEISER, JR.



## Introduction

From challenging ordinance amendments to uplifting community projects, this year is one for the memory books. This report will highlight the work completed throughout 2025 regarding permits, violations, APC petitions, BZA petitions, Plat Committee petitions, budget and collected fees, 2025 notes, 2025 projects, continuing education, and our multi-year comparisons.

## Permits

<b>Total</b>	<b>366</b>
<b>Urban Homes</b>	<b>52</b>
Bluffton	42
Ossian	9
Others	2
<b>Commercial Industrial</b>	<b>9</b>

<b>Rural Homes</b>	<b>29</b>
Norwell	19
Bluffton - Harrison	3
Southern Wells	7
<b>Total Estimated Permit Value</b>	<b>\$83,226,807</b>

## Violations

There are 13 active violation processes going on at this time.

- 2014—The RTT Investments property violation regarding construction without a permit in a floodplain is still ongoing, as the updated maps that will clarify the project's path are expected to be adopted at an unknown date in the future.
- 2019—The Rodger and Connie Watt junk accumulation violation is at the attorney's office for further action. The court has given them a completion timeline, with a fine and an accruing penalty until it is resolved.
- 2020 - The Ricky Lee Cook junk accumulation violation is at the attorney's office for further action. The court has given them a fine and an accruing penalty until it is resolved.
- 2022 - Anthony & Linda Kulb junk accumulation violation is at the attorney's office for further action. The court has given them a fine and an accruing penalty until it is resolved.

Violations Continued to Pg. 3

## **Violations Continued**

- 2023 - John Hofstetter junk accumulation violation. This violation is with our attorney. We have started court proceedings.
- 2023 - Gregory & Deborah Adams accessory building in the side yard setback and utility easement. This violation is with our attorney.
- 2023 - Gary & Geri Zickafoose junk accumulation violation. Violation is with our attorney. We have been told that the property is being cleaned up for auction.
- 2023 - Rodger Watson junk accumulation violation. Significant compliance work has been occurring. This is a multi-year active cleanup violation.
- 2023 - Charles Captain junk accumulation violation. Work has been slowly progressing.
- 2023 - Jeffery Newman's junk accumulation violation. Steady work has been occurring at the property to remove the junk vehicles.
- 2024— Lewis West junk accumulation violation. Very little progress has been made on this violation.
- 2 of the 38 violations in 2025 are still open. We also had 6 findings of no violation. This is the most violations we have issued in 1 year, and we have had excellent compliance results.

## **APC Petitions - 41**

- CFOs - 3
- Development Plans - 15
- Staff Approved Development Plans - 7
- Major Subdivision - 0
- Ordinance Amendments - 2
- Master Plan - 1
- TIF - 4
- Vacating Plats - 2
- PUDs - 0
- Rezoning - 7
- WECS - 0
- WECS Testing Facility or Community Tower - 0
- Large SES - 0

## **BZA Petitions - 15**

- Appeals - 0
- Special Exceptions - 1
- Variance - 14

## **Plat Committee Petitions - 141**

- Minor Subdivisions - 74
- Additions - 41
- Combines - 25
- Dividing a Minor Subdivision - 1

## **Budget and Collected Fees**

- Budget - \$238,216
  - APC - \$191,291.00
  - GIS - \$46,925.00
- Collected Fees - \$ ( % of Budget)
  - APC - \$
  - GIS - \$

## **APC Projects**

- Two Amendments to the Wells County Zoning Ordinance
- 1 Rural town clean-up day
- Assisting with downtown redevelopment
- Assisting with trail development
- Participating in the Poka-Bache Task Force
- Participating in the Community Master Plan steering committee
- Participating in the Drug Task Force
- Participating in the Community Rating System program
- Assisted in multiple pre-development and conceptual development meetings for upcoming projects
- Continued to participate in the Permitting Excellence Coalition
- Continued to work on document digitization.

## **GIS Projects**

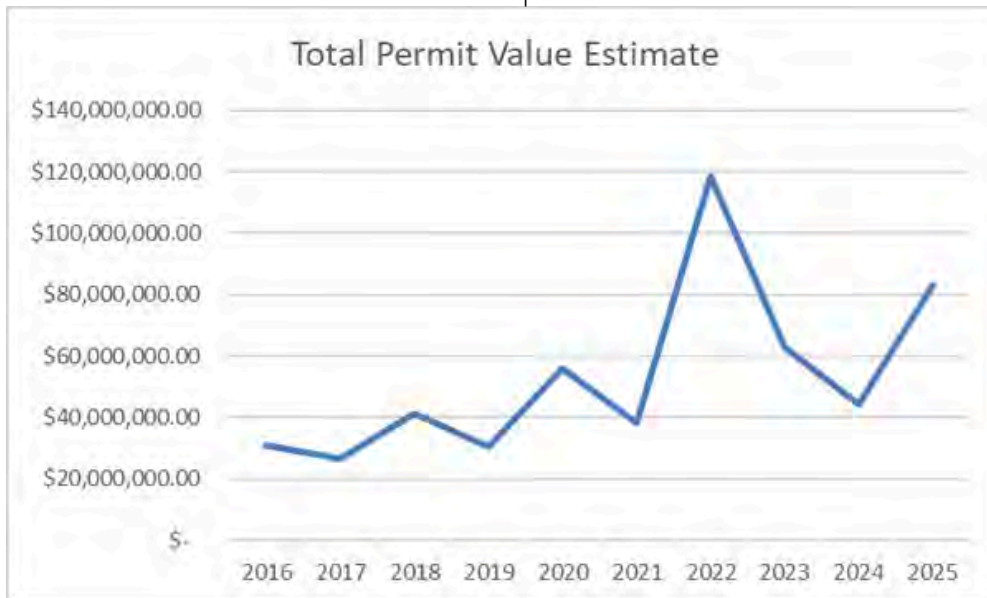
- Continuing to maintain existing layers
- Improve new parcel accuracy
- Applying for the Indiana SEED Grant to help us get ready for next-gen 911 requirements
- Preparing for ArcGIS Pro software changeover
- Creating TIF district mapping
- Updating Road Information and Road Right-of-Way
- Working on updating flood maps and providing more flood resources
- Working on compliance with the new Community Rating System standards for flood insurance
- Providing support to the Assessor, Surveyor, and Highway Dept.
- Continued to participate in NIGIC

## Continuing Education

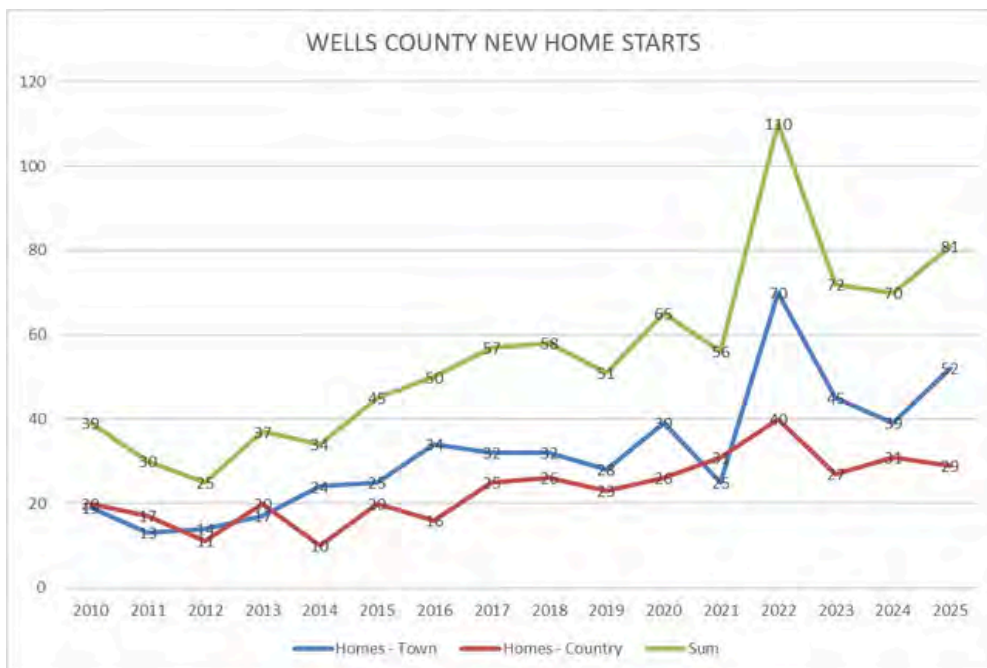
- CFM - Continued to attend the INASFM conference to maintain the required credit hours.
- AICP - Continued to attend APA-IN conferences and online seminars to maintain required credit hours.
- GIS - Continued to attend regional NIGIC trainings and various online trainings.

## Multi-Year Comparisons

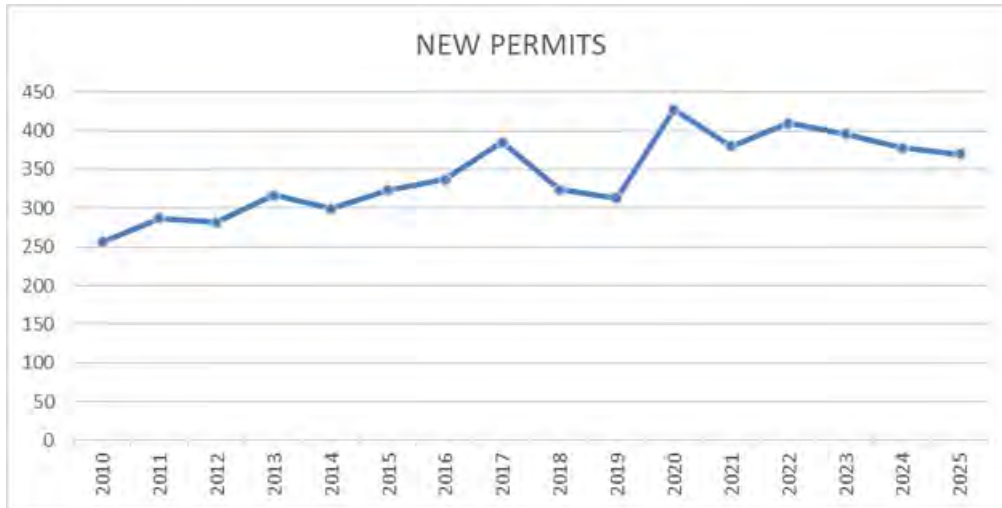
- Total Permit Value Estimated - Up 47%



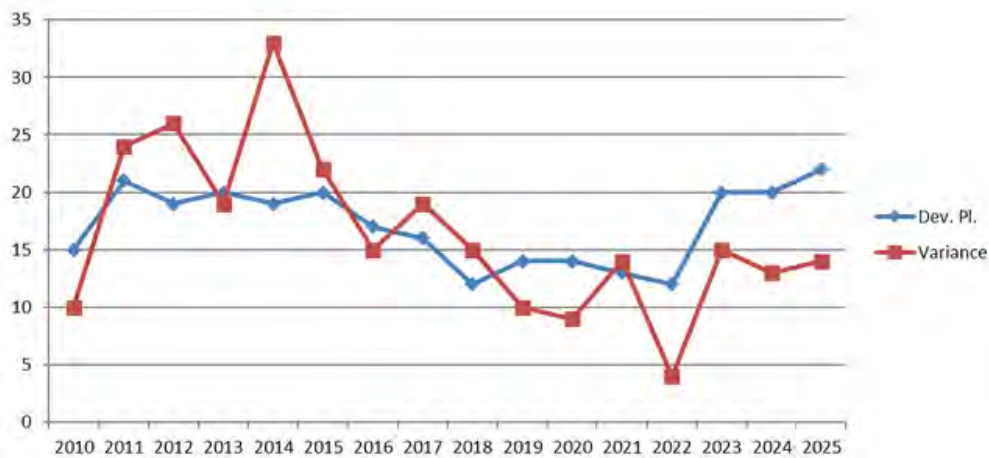
- New Homes - Total Up 14% (Urban Up 25% / Rural Down 7%)



- New Permits - Down 2%



- Development Plans & Variances - Development Plans Up 9% / Variance Up 7%



## Conclusion

In 2025, there was a significant rebound in estimated permit values. Strong home starts were also part of the mix. We continue to struggle to find a second partner for the Rural Town Clean Ups, even though the event is highly successful and has a fundraising aspect. Our community is sitting in a good place with all the right signals for a strong 2026. Working to finish our community Master Plan and jumping into its implementation will be key to making this happen. Looking forward to seeing what opportunities arise in 2026.