

A BRIEF BACKGROUND OF CLAY CITY, INDIANA

Clay City is a 138 year-old town (Est. 1873, current pop. ~ 861) in Clay County, located in south central Indiana. It began as a railroad town supported by farming, sawmills, mining, brick and flour factories, several schools and a pottery. Before World War I, it appeared that Clay City might even become a college town. At the time, the town had a renowned baseball team, a literary society, many college graduates, numerous inventors, and was considered so progressive it was dubbed "the Athens of the Wabash Valley."

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**Today the town's** largest employers are the K through 12 schools, medical center, pottery, sawmills and car dealerships, with farming still very prominent. Census and State - National research reveal Clay City is unique for its size. Despite having under 1000 people, the town has a newspaper, schools, a large medical center, three sawmills, a nationally known pottery, two banks, two new car dealerships, an auction house, senior housing, pharmacy, granaries, grocery store, photography studios, flower shop, an A & W franchise and other restaurants among its 55 businesses. The only important services not currently available in Clay City are clothing and furniture stores, an optometrist, dentist, or hotel. Residents are equally proud of their town's religious heritage, as demonstrated by the six churches inside the city limits and a dozen more within three miles. Additionally, the town has a Free Methodist campground, the ten-acre Goshorn Park and even a funeral home. (The latter is a business we hope you don't have to use on your visit here).

Clay City sports programs have been in the headlines several times over the years. Beginning with the Eel's 1926 Wabash Valley Basketball Championship, athletic excellence continued, peaking when the Eel basketball squad won five sectionals in the 1970's, capped by a regional championship in 1974. The Eel high school baseball team continued the winning tradition with a 1997 and 2009 sectional title. Repeated honors were also awarded to the town's adult teams, the Clay City Comets. From 1960-1990, those Comet basketball and fast-pitch softball teams won over 2500 games, 350 tourney-league trophies and six state championships. Additionally, over the last decade, the Clay City band has won five state division championships, played at the presidential inauguration in Washington DC and received many other honors.

Most recently, Clay City's "Mayberry of the Midwest" sign, slogan and the image that represents, captured America's interest and attention. The Today Show (audience of 16 million viewers) broadcast the "Mayberry of the Midwest" story live on February 4, 2000 with locals Daryl Andrews and Jo Beth Haviland being interviewed. In this publicity aftermath, more than two hundred newspapers nationwide continued the coverage, while numerous magazines and other media outlets stated they will be doing follow-ups, articles and interviews throughout the year. The media attention continues as an additional two-dozen local and national television and radio stations have aired interviews and segments comparing the fictional Mayberry to the real life town and citizens of Clay City. Public response (to date) has generated over four hundred and fifty calls, E-mails, faxes and letters of support for the Mayberry slogan, as well as requests for the town's tourism schedule of events.

Because of overwhelming local and national response to the Clay City "Mayberry of the Midwest" association, the Town Council, Town Planners, and Clay City USA have exciting plans for promoting and improving our town. To date the town has built a new fire station, completed water line upgrades, restored an old gas station into our Welcome Center and renovated three downtown buildings.

Clay City has major events throughout the year. The Pottery Festival is in June, the Clay City Fair in July, and Hometown Holidays in December. These events are always well attended, drawing thousands of area and out-of-state visitors to our community.

Clay City is located on State Highway 59 intersected by highways 157 and 246. It is twelve miles south of Interstate 70, 35 miles from both Terre Haute and Bloomington, 70 miles from Indianapolis and ten miles from both Shakamak State Park and Dietz Lake Campground. Eighteen miles north of Clay City is the Brazil industrial park anchored by Great Dane Trailers, while eighteen miles to the southwest is the Terre Haute Industrial Park anchored by Heartland Steel. Even the Cory golf course is a mere ten miles away, for any golfing enthusiasts.

Visitor's letters have described Clay City as "a town in a time capsule" and "a throwback to the days when people waved to friends, knew neighbors on a first name basis and took time to enjoy visitors." Visit Daryl at the A & W, Cheryl at the Pottery, Danielle at the Pizza Gallery, Kim at The News or Sue at Town Hall for some local examples of "Clay City Hoosier Hospitality."

Clay City's slogan is "Mayberry of the Midwest", and we hope we continue to be regarded as "the friendliest town in Indiana." Though people come here as visitors, we hope they'll feel so welcomed, they'll return as old friends.