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NEWS-SENTINEL FILE PHOTO

President Jimmy Carter joins in a news conference in 1980 in Fort Wayne after civil rights leader Vernon Jordan was shot. Beside him is Mayor Win Moses. The former president was in hospice care as of press time.

# Jimmy Carter known for morality

## Visited Fort Wayne after Jordan shooting

BY LISA ESQUIVEL LONG  
 llong@kpcmedia.com

*Editor's note: With former President Jimmy Carter, 98, in hospice care, we talked to the former mayor who met the one-term 39th U.S. president.*

When then-President Jimmy Carter said he planned to visit Fort Wayne, then-Mayor Win Moses knew he couldn't say the city administration really didn't have time.

Moses, a Democrat, who recently turned 80,

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# \$1.5B investment in Terre Haute

## Bringing 642 new, high-wage jobs

**FROM STAFF REPORTS**

TERRE HAUTE — EENTEK, the only U.S.-owned and U.S.-based producer of "wet-process" lithium-ion battery separator materials, announced plans March 21 to establish operations in Indiana, investing \$1.5 billion in a new Terre Haute production facility. The project, which marks the company's largest investment thus far, will create up to 642 new, high-wage jobs by the end of 2027 and support the growing electric vehicle (EV) industry in Indiana and across the United States.

"This is a great day for Terre Haute and for the state of Indiana," Gov. Eric J. Holcomb said. "ENTEK's decision to locate a new, \$1.5 billion battery component manufacturing facility here will have a transformational impact on the West Central Indiana community and the Hoosier economy for generations to come."

This decision cements Indiana's leadership in the electric vehicle supply chain sector, and we are thrilled to partner with ENTEK to speed the commercialization of U.S.-built EVs."

ENTEK, a global company headquartered in Lebanon, Oregon, will invest \$1.5 billion to establish operations on a 350-acre greenfield site in the Vigo County Industrial Park II in Terre Haute. The company plans to initially construct four buildings covering 1.4 million square feet — equipped with equipment built at current ENTEK manufacturing facilities in Oregon and Nevada and including specialty biaxial stretching equipment supplied by Brueckner Group USA — to manufacture battery separators for lithium-ion battery manufacturers across the United States

ENTEK's site selection was focused on choosing both land and community. Larry Keith, ENTEK's CEO, said, "We chose Terre Haute for many reasons including the excellent workforce opportunity, the

■ See **NEW JOBS** on **PAGE 15**

# Berne PEO offers lawyers administrative services

BY LISA ESQUIVEL LONG  
 llong@kpcmedia.com

Sprunger Professional Employer Organization (PEO) is taking the administration burden off small-town attorneys so they can spend more time on billable hours.

Attorneys average 2.4 billable hours because they spend the rest of their time on administrative services, said Cory Sprunger, owner of the Berne business.



Sprunger

"They don't have to hire (more workers); we can give that same benefit" to clients, Sprunger, 34, said.

Using the Sprunger PEO services costs about 16% of a firm's payroll, he said. A two-person firm who's a client would likely pay for Sprunger PEO services half of what an assistant's salary might cost a month, he said.

Sprunger PEO provides its clients with support with employee benefits, payroll processing, HR services, IT support, accounting and bookkeeping, phone receptionists, mail processing, and more.

"We've made these attorneys double their time," said Sprunger, who graduated in 2007 from South Adams High School in Berne. He graduated from Pepperdine University School of Law in Malibu, California, with a Doctorate of Jurisprudence and certificates in Criminal Law and Alternative Dispute Resolution.

He and his wife, Allison, moved back to his hometown of Berne to open Sprunger & Sprunger, where he is managing partner and she's a partner.

Today, Sprunger & Sprunger operates five offices. It was their firm's growth that sparked the idea for Sprunger PEO, which started about a year ago.

"I realized that so much of my time, especially when I was a solo practitioner, was taken up with administrative work — invoicing, billing, filing, scheduling appointments," he said. "And while all of these things were important to keeping the business running, they were secondary to practicing law."

Sprunger PEO has already begun serving firms throughout Indiana, but it has broadened its focus. Sprunger has learned that even in large cities, small firms face the same challenges. He also wants to see attorneys set up in small towns. Without services like Sprunger

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**Funds flow in**

Auburn to receive \$9.8M for Wayne Street project.

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**BW's Top List**

Largest landscaping firms.

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**Question of the week**

Do you have the NCAA on at work?

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## CARTER: 'A real moral gentleman'

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had been in office about six months in May 1980 when Carter visited the city. Fort Wayne had ignobly made national news when visiting civil rights leader and civil rights activist and National Urban League President Vernon Jordan was shot outside what was then the Marriott Inn on the far north side of the city.

Moses had sat beside Jordan earlier that night at a dinner hosted by the local Urban League chapter. "Delightful dinner guest," Moses said. "We had a fun time talking."

The two parted ways after the dinner with Moses headed home and Jordan presumably went back to his hotel.

"At about 1:30 in the morning all of a sudden the red phone goes off," Moses said.

The red phone meant a crisis had occurred. Moses learned that Jordan had been shot and might die.

"Keep in mind this was a time of civil unrest" across the country, Moses said.

Media from across the country soon were calling for information. Jordan had gone out for coffee with a woman from the board of a regional civil rights group and was shot by a rifle. Though no one has ever been charged in the crime, serial killer

Joseph Paul Franklin, who was executed in 2013, allegedly confessed to the crime because he didn't like to see Black men and white women together. Jordan was Black, and the woman, who drove him to his hotel, was white.

Moses began calling the Black mayors around the country and one, from Marion who was friends with Jordan, said he wanted to see him and would bring a friend. The friend was Jesse Jackson, a witness to the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination.

"I didn't know who Jesse Jackson was," Moses said.

With so much going on, Moses got word that the president wanted to come to town.

"I didn't have the courage to tell the president we don't have time for you," Moses said, "but that's how it felt."

Carter's visit met high security to bring him out of the White House while he was running for reelection at the time.

Moses was holding news conferences twice a day for the first three days after Jordan's shooting. The president talked to Moses and the police chief for some time about the incident. "We had a

news conference condemning violence, condemning civil unrest," Moses said.

Moses asked that the president not mention Fort Wayne so it wasn't seen as a home of such troubles. Moses watched as Carter leaned over and spoke to Jordan, who was intubated and unable to talk, though he doesn't know what the president said.

After Carter left, Moses and the president stayed on friendly terms as the mayor kept him informed of Jordan's condition. After a few days, Jordan returned to his home and recovered.

Several months later the president invited Moses with other mayors to talk about economic conditions. "We had a good talk. I thought highly of him."

After Carter lost the election to Ronald Reagan, first lady Rosalynn Carter called Moses on the red phone. "She said, 'Hi, Win, I wanted to thank you. Jimmy and I appreciate what help you gave us.'"

That Christmas he got an invitation to dinner at the White House. The Carters spoke to everyone at the tables.

"He's just a proud gentleman and a real moral gentleman," Moses said.

As a person, Carter's actions after he left office showed how moral he was, Moses said. "He believed in helping people and doing things right and honest."

He is well-known for his work with Habitat for Humanity.

"He's probably in my mind the best former president I've ever heard of," Moses said. No other president has done such charitable work after leaving office.

Moses believes Carter got a bad wrap as president during the oil crisis that caused gasoline shortages. "He very carefully kept us out of war. I'm not sure there's another president anywhere that can say they fully avoided war. He had been a nuclear sub commander. He knew what war was and he wasn't willing to put boys in danger."

Carter also helped Fort Wayne with a number of federal programs including for public housing.

Moses also recognized Carter's failed attempt to rescue the American hostages held in the U.S. Embassy in Iran.

"But he was a very solid president. Did well. I think as the historians look at his term in office, it's somewhat low now, I think it will go up considerably."

## PEOPLE: Centier Bank promotes bank officer

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Originally from Dallas, Texas, Clark has previous management experience while working in the service industry. She received both her bachelor's and master's degrees at Texas A&M University-Commerce in Social Studies and Secondary Education, respectively.

### Centier Bank promotes Hunter

Centier Bank has promoted Alexandra Hunter to bank officer. Hunter is the branch manager of the bank's Elkhart North branch, located at 2809 Emerson Road.

Hunter joined Centier over five years ago, after working in community banking for five years. She began as a universal banker at Centier Bank's Elkhart East Branch, and was promoted to assistant branch manager in 2018.

Hunter was then promoted to branch manager at the Elkhart North Branch in 2021.

Hunter serves as secretary on the Junior Achievement of Elkhart County Board of Directors, treasurer for the Eastwood Elementary School PTA, and is an ambassador for the Greater Elkhart Chamber of Commerce.

### Lucas joins Summit Financial Group

Summit Financial Group, a leading wealth management firm associated with Northwestern Mutual, welcomes Nicholas T. Lucas to its team where he will serve as financial planning analyst. In his new role, he will assist with customizing financial plans and modifying them due to life events that necessitate change.

Lucas attended the University of Saint Francis where he played football and graduated with a bachelor's degree in risk management and insurance in May 2021. He also acquired his real estate license and brings with him knowledge and experience working in property and casual insurance. He holds licensures in both life and health. He joined Northwestern Mutual in December of 2022 as a financial planning analyst.

### Ferguson names chief technology officer

Ferguson announced the addition of experienced software and technology executive Brad Wilson. Wilson was hired as vice president and chief

technology officer.

With over 24 years of experience in software engineering, Wilson has led teams of developers at several technology firms headquartered in San Francisco, New York, and Indianapolis. He will lead Ferguson's growing development team — comprised of 17 software engineers, web developers, and support managers — all focused on digital asset development, custom software, mobile apps, e-commerce, and web design.

Longtime Ferguson leader Ryan Holt will shift focus from digital asset development to digital services, heading up a team working on business intelligence and analytics, search engine optimization, and web health services. Holt and Wilson will oversee the formalization of Ferguson's digital offerings.

## PEO: Helps cut attorneys' work

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Professional Employer Organization (PEO) provides, attorneys don't see working in small towns as profitable, he

said.

To learn more about Sprunger PEO, visit SprungerPEO.com.

## NEW JOBS: To build millions of EVs

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

incredible support provided by Steve Witt and the Economic Development Corporation, a nearly shovel ready construction site with available utilities located in an industrial park, excellent vocational education, and the business-friendly incentives from both the state and local governments."

The campus, which is fueled in part by a \$200 million grant from the U.S. Department of Energy as part of the recent Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, will enable ENTEK to scale its U.S. production, capable of supplying approximately 1.4 to 1.6 million EVs annually by 2027. The new giga-scale lithium-ion battery separator operations will leverage ENTEK's pioneering sustainable, state-of-the-art solvent extraction and recovery systems and processing techniques, and the company will work to utilize available renewable energy with a focus on a reduced carbon footprint. The company plans to break ground on the campus as soon as engineering and permitting is completed and launch its Indiana operations 2025-27.

This project is the first phase of ENTEK's planned expansion to produce about 1.4 billion square meters of ceramic coated lithium separators across its operations. Phase 2 of the project will add up to an additional 1.8 billion square

meters of battery separator produced annually for a total of 3.2 billion square meters which will provide enough separators for about 3.5 million electric vehicles.

ENTEK, which employs more than 1,000 globally, plans to create more than 640 new jobs in Terre Haute during this Phase 1 expansion with average wages well above the Vigo County average. The company expects to begin hiring for key leadership positions in 2024.

Pending approval from the Indiana Economic Development Corporation board of directors, the IEDC will commit an investment in ENTEK of up to \$8 million in the form of incentive-based tax credits and up to \$300,000 in training grants, based on the company's job creation plans. The IEDC also committed an investment of up to \$200,000 in innovation grants; up to \$200,000 in Manufacturing Readiness Grants, which help companies invest in smart manufacturing and new technologies; and up to \$5 million in conditional structured performance payments. These investments are performance-based, meaning the company is eligible to claim incentives once Hoosiers are hired. Vigo County is considering additional incentives to support the project; Duke Energy also offered additional incentives to offset a portion of the energy costs.

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