

# Former hotelier takes plea agreement

A plea agreement for unpaid County Innkeeper's Tax (CIT) could boost tourism in Noble County. Ketankumar R. Patel, the former owner of the now defunct Holiday Inn Express in Kendallville, in December 2022 in a case regarding unpaid CIT to the tune of over \$80,000.



If Patel upholds the agreement, the Noble County Convention and Visitors Bureau (aka Visit Noble County) stands to recover the funds. He has until April 3, 2023, to do so, or face jail time. According to Indiana Code 6-9-29-2, “an individual who knowingly fails to collect or remit the innkeeper’s taxes to the state or political subdivision commits a Level 6 felony.”

Noble County Superior Court 1 Judge Steven Clouse called the offense a "serious crime" noting that there are agencies in Noble County that rely on the funding to operate. A significant portion of Visit Noble County's operating budget is funded by CIT and the non-payment took a significant toll on the ability to promote assets over a multi-year period.

Visit Noble Country's Mission Statement is to promote tourism by connecting partners and events, developing unique assets, and enriching visitors' experiences in a way that contributes to economic growth. It sees its primary responsibility as promoting the county, and engaging with travelers, increasing overnight stays and day trips, increasing the number of travelers, and growing the economy through increased commerce.

"With the potential additional funding from the CIT, we will meet our mission, promote tourism, improve quality of life, and positively impact the economy," explained Grace Caswell, executive director at Visit Noble County.

Caswell provided the following links to learn more about this unfolding opportunity. As new information is available, it will be added here.

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## **Local Tourism Partner Resources**

<https://dlgagen.wixsite.com/visit-noble-county/resources>

## **CIT Ordinance**

[www.library.municode.com/in/noble\\_county/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances?nodeId=COOR\\_CH32TA](http://www.library.municode.com/in/noble_county/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=COOR_CH32TA)

## **CIT Reporting Form**

[www.visitnoblecounty.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Innkeepers-Tax-Return-Form-2018.pdf](http://www.visitnoblecounty.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Innkeepers-Tax-Return-Form-2018.pdf)