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CITY CLERK



TERRE HAUTE

Flag Proposal

"City flags, the worst designed things you've never noticed."

—Roman Mars

vexillology

vex·il·lol·o·gy

noun

1. the study of flags

Some may say that they do not care about flags. In reality, everyone cares about flags, whether that is subconscious or not. There is just something about them that works on our emotions. Look no further than the flag of the United States of America, our American flag, the Stars and Stripes; the Red, White and Blue; Old Glory; the Star-Spangled Banner. If we did not have such a beautiful flag, and the symbolism behind said flag, do you think that Americans would have so much pride? We would not have a banner to rally under, nothing to represent the thing that is our great country. The symbolism of the U.S. flag is entrenched on us as Americans as a result of what it stands for. Our nation's pride and our flag cannot be separated.

Vexillology is not frivolous. Flags can sum up anything in their entirety if designed correctly. A flag is a way to touch the populous for a government. One of the biggest problems a government has, are the ways in which its people interact with their government are terrible pressure points; taxes, parking tickets, regulations, etc. A well-designed flag gives you a touch point that is something beautiful, that elicits pride, that makes citizens feel something. And that has great meaning beyond what the flag represents. It shows that the city cares how it views itself to its citizens and how its citizens should be reflected to the outside world.



As with the U.S. flag, country flags are on the world stage and have to heed the rules of vexillology. You rarely see an awful country flag. Sadly, city flags are another story. Every great city deserves a great flag, and I feel that Terre Haute is a great city. I lived in Terre Haute for the first 22 years of my life; I have tremendous pride in my hometown. I have since moved away and miss it daily. I was recently thinking about how could I have been born and raised in a city of which I cannot tell you what the flag of that city looks like. In short, I wanted to create something that not just me, but the great people of Terre Haute, Indiana can stand behind. I wanted to design a flag that represents Terre Haute's past, present and future as a great city and all of the attributes that make Terre Haute, Terre Haute.

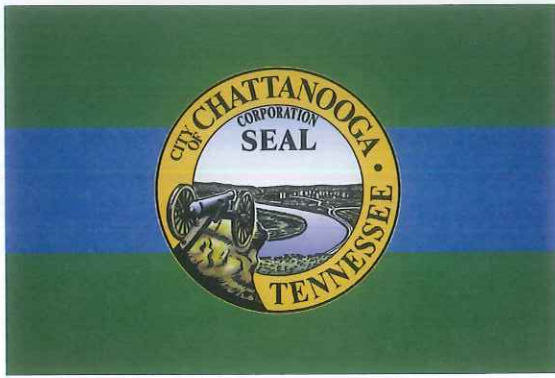


Terre Haute Flag (Vigo County's County Seat)

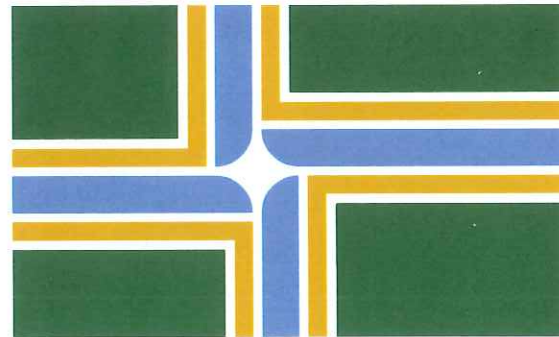
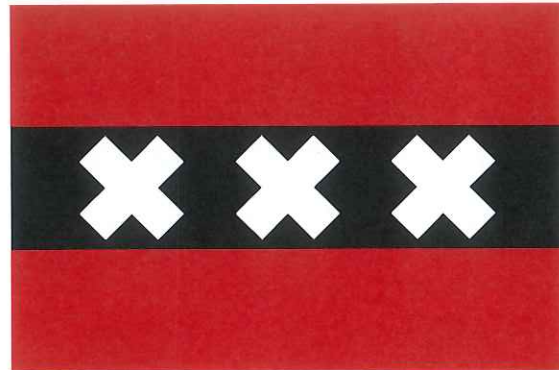
There are only 5 principles when it comes to creating a beautiful and memorable flag according to the North American Vexillological Association (NAVA):

- 1. Keep it Simple**
- 2. Use Meaningful Symbolism**
- 3. Use 2-3 Basic Colors**
- 4. No Lettering or Seals**
- 5. Be Distinctive (or be Related)**

If you ask any good designer, this list would apply to almost everything they would want to design. But again, sadly these rules are not invoked in most U.S. city flags. And unfortunately, regarding the 4th principle, we just cannot help ourselves but to put our names or seals on our flags. If you need to write the name of your city on the flag, your symbolism has failed. And in the same way, municipal seals were meant to be read on a piece of paper, not on a flag one hundred feet away, flapping in the breeze. Most vexillologists call these types of flags, S.O.B's (Seals On a Bed sheet). An easy way to see whether your flag communicates well is to view it at a relatively small size. A 3ft by 5ft flag from 100ft away is equal to viewing a 1 inch by 1.5 inch picture of the flag 15 inches from your eye.



Flags that do NOT follow rules of vexillology. Flags of Chattanooga, Pocatello (old), San Francisco, and Los Angeles



Flags that do follow rules of vexillology. Flags of Chicago, Amsterdam, Pocatello (new), and Portland

Can you tell the difference?

Terre Haute's name was derived from the French phrase *terre haute*, meaning "high land." It was presumably named by French explorers in the area in the early 18th century to describe the unique location above the Wabash River from French colonization of the Americas. At the time, the area was claimed by the French and British, these highlands were considered the border between Canada and Louisiana. With the construction of Fort



Harrison in 1811, this marked the known beginning of a permanent population of European-Americans. The Siege of Fort Harrison was an engagement that lasted from September 4 to 15, 1812. It was the first American land victory during the War of 1812, and was won by an outnumbered United States force garrisoned inside the fort against a combined Native American force near modern Terre Haute, Indiana.^[1]

The Siege of Fort Harrison is a fascinating and important part of our history in Terre Haute and Vigo County. And as for the seal of Terre Haute, one can understand its use and meaning for Terre Haute in terms of a seal, but it alone cannot describe *Terre haute* as a whole in terms of a flag. Things that are not designed to be flags, do not make good flags. Again, the 5 Principles of Vexillology are:



Seal of Terre Haute



Flag of Terre Haute

1. Keep it Simple

The flag should be so simple that a child can draw it from memory...

2. Use Meaningful Symbolism

The flag's images, colors, or patterns should relate to what it symbolizes...

3. Use 2-3 Basic Colors

Limit the number of colors on the flag to three, which contrast well and come from the standard color set...

4. No Lettering or Seals

Never use writing of any kind or an organization's seal...

5. Be Distinctive (or be Related)

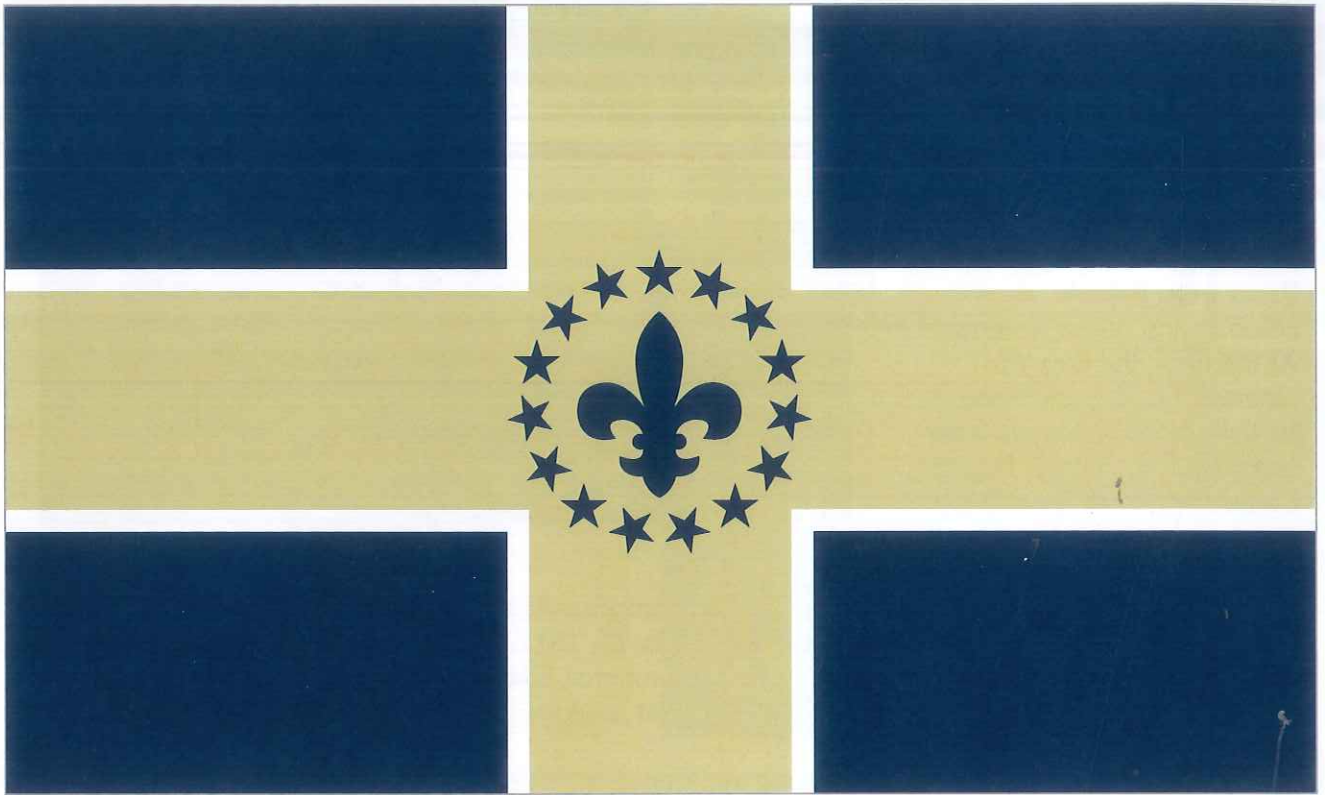
Avoid duplicating other flags, but use similarities to show connections...

Though, the 5 Principles of Vexillology are really only a pathway to a 6th principle:

6. Love your flag

Fly your flag, be proud of your flag...

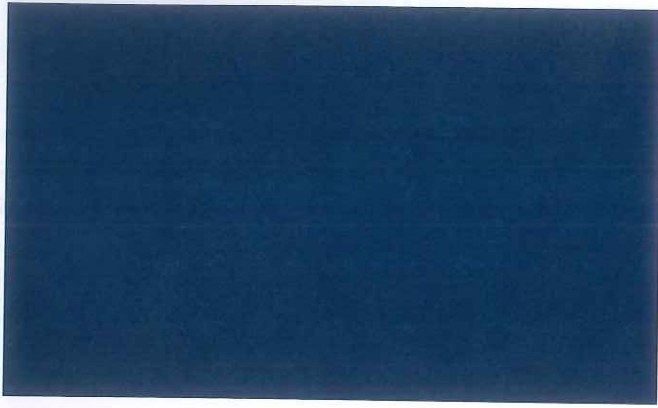
^[1] "United States History." *History of Terre Haute, Indiana*, www.u-s-history.com/pages/h2219.html.



This new design displays all of the accurate attributes needed in a flag for Terre Haute.

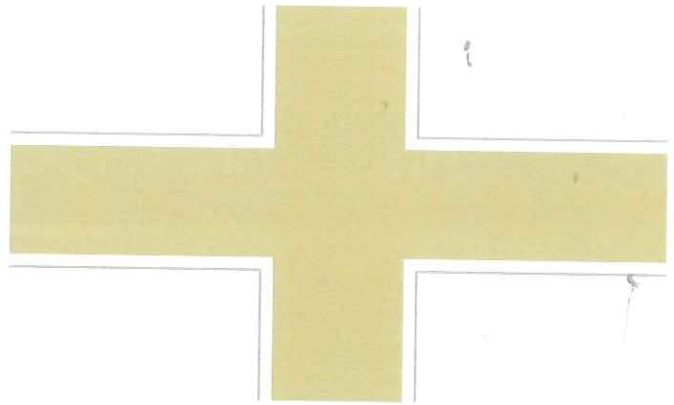


Terre Haute flag next to the American flag and Indiana state flag

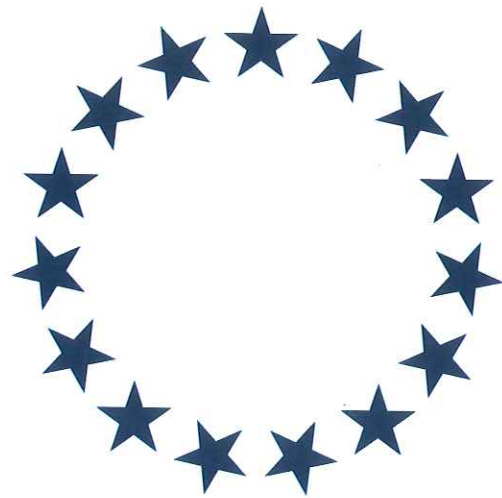


The navy blue as a base color for the flag is a sovereign representation of honesty, loyalty, and perseverance; all characteristics that are a part of Terre Haute and its fighting spirit. The color is also to pay homage to the Wabash River and all that the river has done for the city of Terre Haute in terms of travel and water trade. The deepness of the flag's base color epitomizes the deep history of the city it represents.

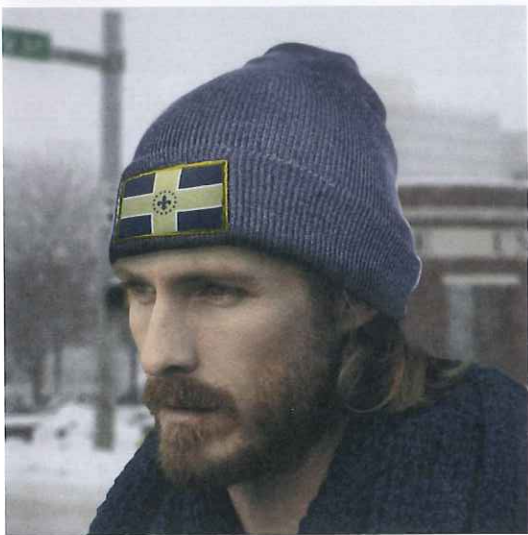
The golden cross is a wonderful representation of a bright future and prosperity in Terre Haute. The gold mirrors the beautiful dome and peak on the Vigo County Courthouse which is a visible symbol of Terre Haute. The white encompassing the golden cross is a sign of peace and equality in the community. The cross shape itself is a representation of the "Crossroads of America" that is Terre Haute (a common nickname), while also signifying the virtue that one can find on any given city block.



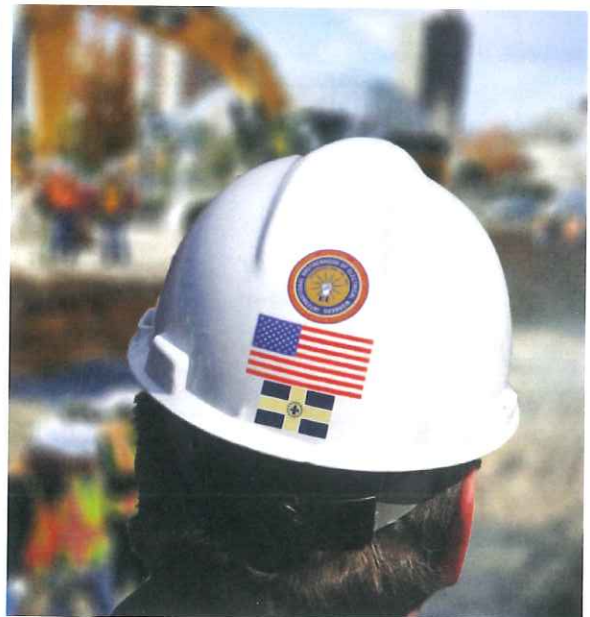
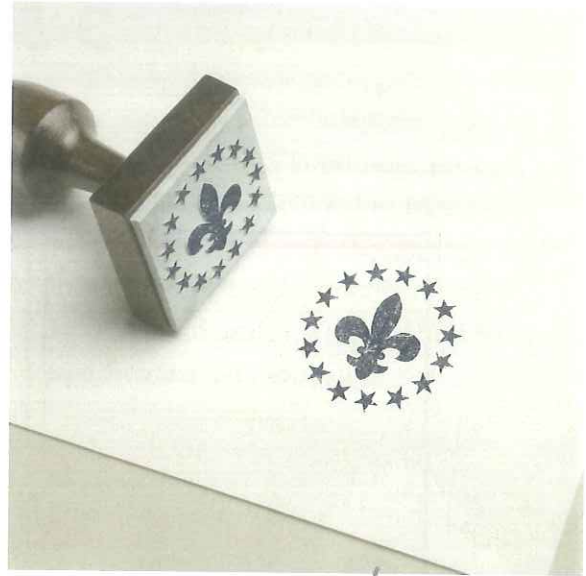
The Fleur-de-lis (flur-da-lee) is synonymous with French history and heritage. Other than the French flag, the fleur-de-lis is perhaps the most well-known symbol of France. With the original French colonization of Terre Haute and the French naming of the city, it would make more than enough sense to incorporate the fleur-de-lis into the design of the flag.



The 15 stars that circle the fleur-de-lis symbolize the 15 stars that were on the American flag during the War of 1812. Those 15 stars reigned during the Siege of Fort Harrison. The stars do not just symbolize the flag but also the courage and valor displayed at the blockade. The spirit of Fort Harrison and the founding of Terre Haute can endure.

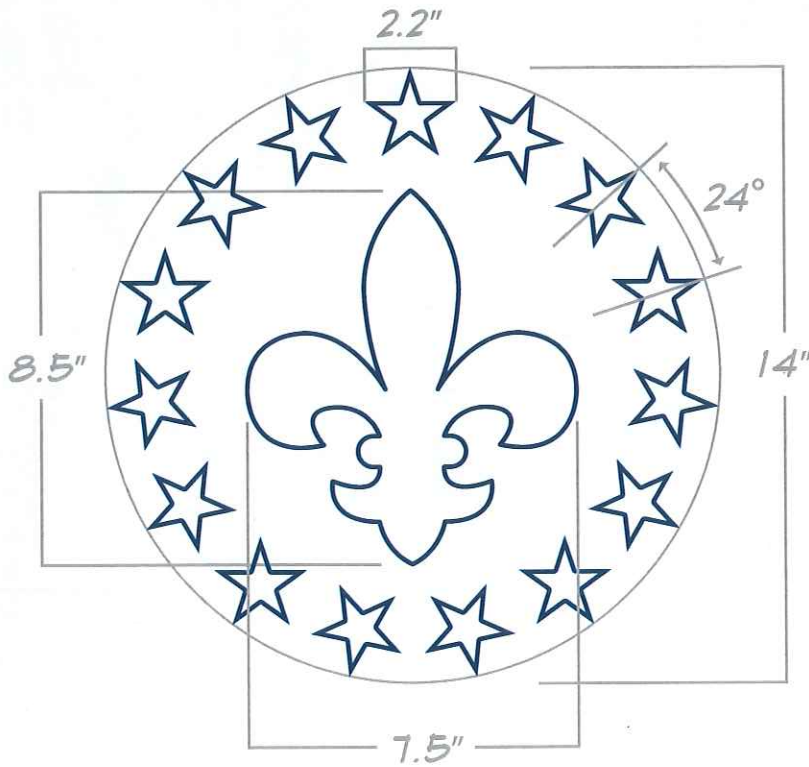
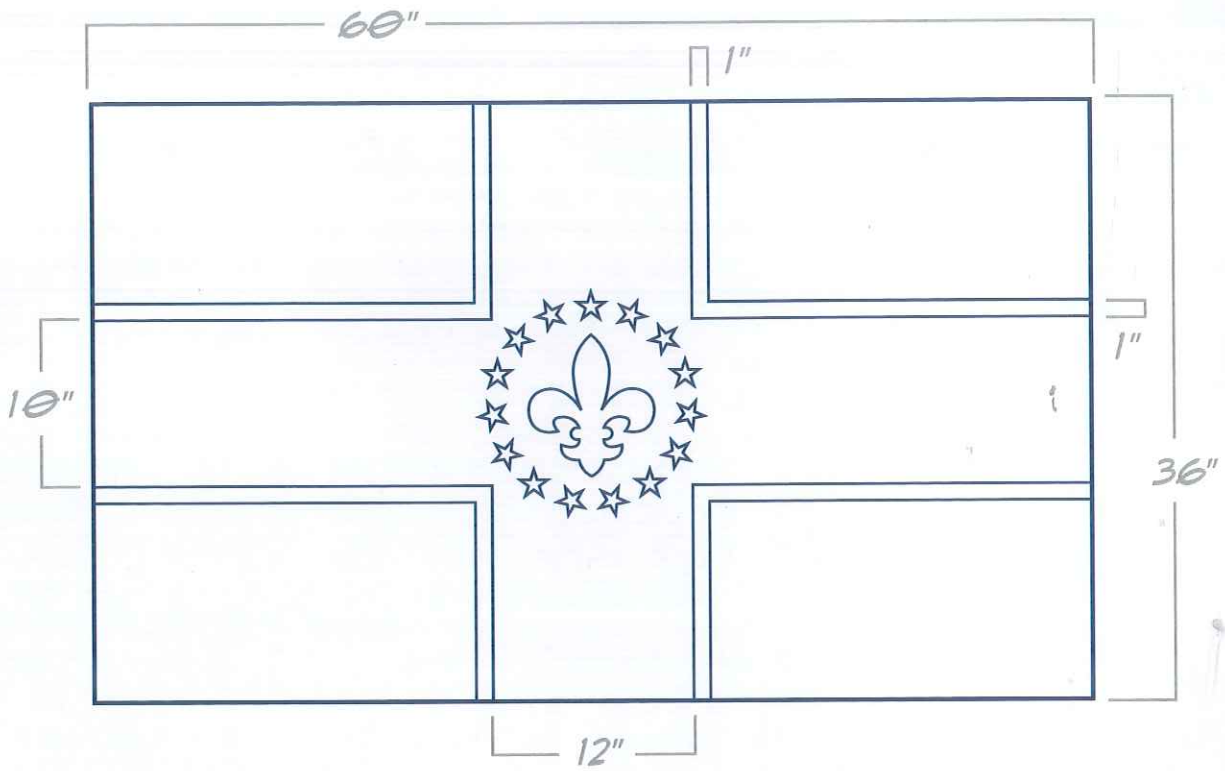


The flag would have the ability to brand the city.



The flag would give its citizens a sense of pride and ownership of their city.

3:5 RATIO



Pantone PMS

282 C

C: 100 M: 87 Y: 42 K: 52
R: 4 G: 30 B: 65



Pantone PMS

616 C

C: 20 M: 15 Y: 61 K: 0
R: 203 G: 182 B: 78



White

C: 0 M: 0 Y: 0 K: 0
R: 255 G: 255 B: 255

A flag is not just a symbol of a certain place and its people, but it can also become a beacon for good design systems (transit systems, parks, city signage, etc...). Flags are an open source, publicly owned design language of a community. When they are done well, they are re-mixable, adaptable, and powerful. You can control the branding and graphical imagery of a city with a good flag. Instead, we tend to cede that territory to sports teams, companies, and anything else people want to represent their city. Give them something to represent their city with instead. The American flag and the pride felt by its citizens cannot be separated; this is a positive feedback loop of great symbolism and national pride. The same can happen with a city flag (good design=civic pride). The symbolism is reflected in good design and good design reflects the city's significance symbolically.



Citizens displaying Civic Pride in Terre Haute

Democracy and good design usually do not go together. Flags should not be designed by a committee. Instead, individuals should design flags, and then be selected by a committee. If not, everybody starts to come out of the woodwork if you are not careful. When there are too many hands in the pot, the result can be a catastrophe. The committee process in design can end up watering down the



A flag designed by committee, seriously

symbolism and even weaken meaning. But with that, if you do not convince all the stakeholders that the old flag needs to change or that the city needs a flag in general, it's a futile exercise. A new flag is definitely feasible to get adopted. And it is certainly worth being a part of. Even if you get all officials to buy in, questions will always still arise. Some common concerns you might have may be, "We have more important problems than a new flag," or "Why does this matter?" or even "I don't want a new flag." My answer to that would be, "You would have a banner to rally

under to face those more important problems. You would be helping to create a legacy for not just the city itself but also for the citizens that go out into the world representing Terre Haute." What could be more important than civic pride and the willingness to do anything to help your town? A new city flag is not frivolous. It could be the catalyst that inspires a greater Terre Haute, the beacon for a community, the motivation to its citizens to help make Terre Haute...a level above.

I hope that even if you do not appreciate my design, that you would still consider a new flag design for the great city of Terre Haute, Indiana.

Thank You!

Please do not hesitate to contact me.



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