

The Greenville Town Council passed an ordinance naming a roadway after John Baptiste Ford, one of Greenville's most prominent historic figures.

The motion was made by Councilman Andy Lemon to pass an ordinance that he and town attorney Heather Peters worked together on. The motion passed 5-0. The roadway which runs between Clark St. and Highway 150 is now officially named John Baptiste Ford Drive.

Councilman Lemon said, "The naming is not only to highlight John Baptiste Ford's contributions to industrialism and Greenville in the 1800's but also helps us work toward our goal of listing all roadways maintained by the Town as an asset with INDOT. Currently, the Town paves and maintains what is now John Baptiste Ford Drive; however, we do not receive state funding for the roadway because it was unnamed. Assigning it a name allows us to increase our state distributions for road maintenance."

The correlation with John Baptiste Ford Drive is that it adjoins the backside of The Station Building. The original Station Building was first built by Mr. Ford in 1840. Ford operated a flour mill, saddle shop, and grocery out of The Station Building. Additionally, he began making tin pie safes out of The Station Building that were sold throughout the country. The Station Building was used as a stop along the Stagecoach which ran from Louisville to Vincennes and later used as a stop for the Pony Express, Greenville's Post Office, served as a lodge for the Free Masons and the International Order of Oddfellows.

Ford lived in Greenville for 30 years before moving to New Albany in 1854 where he pursued business interests in steamboat production and the founding of New Albany Glass Works. The glass works company produced bottles and jars. It is said that Ford invented plated glass while living in Greenville and tinkering with the sand pits located around town.

In 1880, Ford would take his business interests out east founding the New York City Plate Glass Company which would be reorganized as Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company in 1883. Today, the company is known as PPG Industries and is a multibillion dollar Fortune 500 corporation with

150 manufacturing locations around the world. The company now produces coatings, fiberglass, and chemicals in addition to glass.

Another company Ford founded in 1893 was the Wyandotte Chemical Company in Michigan. Ford created the company because it was vital in supplying soda ash for glass production. The company would undergo a couple of name changes before eventually become a part of BASF, the largest chemical producer in the world employing more than 122,000 people.