

NEWS from MCEDC

Marshall County Economic Development Corp.

Free, Confidential Business Counseling Now On Site Monthly from North Central Small Business Development Center at MCEDC

Meet Alan Steele, ISBDC Business Advisor May 10th at MCEDC

Countless Marshall County businesses have gotten off the ground utilizing the one-on-one directed assistance and data resources of the Indiana Small Business Development Center in South Bend. The valuable advice and free and low-cost entrepreneurship support offered has made it worth the short trip.

Now that service is delivered! Once monthly, Business Advisor Alan Steele is available to meet with individuals -- currently in business, or weighing a new venture -- at the Plymouth office of MCEDC. The cost of the SBDC's programs is largely underwritten by the U.S. Small Business Administration and the State of Indiana, but the benefit to aspiring business owners like Carolyn Hyde (owner of Windmill Market, Bremen) is enormous. Carolyn saw her dream realized through many meetings with SBDC advisors who guided her through every stage of planning, financing, and marketing.

A range of resources are offered that can help guide decision-making at critical junctures, whether a business is in the idea stage, new or relatively new to operations, or well advanced. Assistance with business plans, financial reviews, demographic data analysis, marketing strategies, process or energy assessments, and legal, management or human resource issues is available.

Advisement sessions with Alan Steele are offered on a first-served basis and are generally held on the first Tuesday of each month, though the May date will be Tuesday, May 10th. There is no cost, but reservations are required. Please call the North Central SBDC office at (866) 508-7232 toll free or (574) 282-4350 Ext. 0 to schedule an appointment, identifying yourself as a Marshall County participant.

Business Retention & Expansion Outreach Continues

Local businesses look to MCEDC for assistance with regional supply chain networks, expansion plans, workforce training needs

What does your business need? Contact MCEDC to participate

A coordinated Business Retention & Expansion Program was launched by MCEDC in 2010 to determine the opportunities for growth and understand the challenges faced by existing Marshall County businesses. Since that time, many Marshall County employers have taken advantage of the chance to speak with MCEDC about their business.

"Economic Gardening" is a impactful approach understood by Economic Development practitioners today -- it means working with existing businesses to stabilize them if they are vulnerable, to grow them from within if possible, and to launch spinoffs and patentable technologies in instances where new profitable companies might emerge. A successful BRE Program works to identify the strengths of the local business climate and can address barriers to growth. Often there are resources available that businesses may not know about. Contact Jennifer Laurent, MCEDC Executive Director, for an appointment today.



Jennifer Laurent,
MCEDC Executive
Director

Community Conversation on Economic Development Ignites Ongoing Discussion on Regionalism & Innovation in Marshall County

Richard Longworth, author of *Caught in the Middle: America's Heartland in the Age of Globalism*, challenged participants to think beyond local political, geographical boundaries

Approximately 125 participants gathered at Swan Lake Resort in November for the "Community Conversation on Economic Development," hosted by the Marshall County Economic Development Corporation, the Marshall County Community Foundation and the Bremen Chamber of Commerce, with support from the Ball State Bowen Center for Public Affairs, the Indiana Humanities Council, and NIPSCO. The goal of the event was to engage community leaders in a discussion on the outlook on



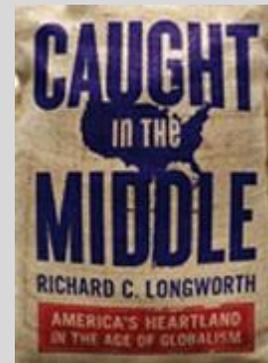
Richard Longworth

innovation in the economic future of our region, with an emphasis on prospects for Marshall County's success in the age of global competition.

Richard Longworth, Senior Fellow with the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, framed the day's discussion with challenging introductory remarks on what global competition has done historically to "places like Marshall County, all over the Midwest." He offered that areas like Marshall County will be left even further

behind economically if we can't, with some level of urgency, think "bigger" than local political jurisdictional battles, and if strategic alliances aren't formed to create differentiation and relevance in the changed world order.

Following the keynote presentation, Mark Neidig II, Purchasing Manager with Indiana Tool & Manufacturing (ITAMCO, with locations in both Plymouth and Argos) shared some of the dynamic research, specialized applications and collaborations his family's company has embarked on successfully in order to remain industry leaders. Guest speakers from around the region presented information about ways they currently work with Marshall County, and the direction that may take in the future to best leverage the strengths of the region.



Two facilitated breakout sessions and written feedback affirmed several key Economic Development priorities that MCEDC is currently leading:

- ***building a strong, appealing message and complete communications platform for marketing Marshall County,***
- ***advocating for the prioritization of affordable, high-capacity broadband infrastructure, and***
- ***working with education and industry leaders to build workforce development and skills training connections within the existing school systems and secondary education providers.***

As of April, 2011, each of these three goals is in advanced stages of implementation, with valuable assistance from many community partners. Please contact MCEDC if you wish to become more involved in any of these important initiatives.

Whitley Products Expands in Plymouth Industrial Park

State and local incentives approved to create 20 new jobs

Whitley Moves into Flora Street Warehouse to ramp up production; Indiana Economic Development Corp., MCEDC and PIDCO collaborate to make competitive economic development project happen



Whitley Products, Inc., a leading supplier of fabricated tubular products serving the diesel engine, agricultural, off-highway equipment and HVAC

industries, has recently expanded its business to include an additional warehousing site and new equipment to increase production capacity in Plymouth.

The company has 76 employees in Plymouth and plans to hire 20 additional employees locally by 2012. In January, Whitley leased half of a 62,000 sq ft building on Flora Street in the Plymouth Industrial Park from Plymouth Industrial Development Corporation (PIDCO). The additional site will allow Whitley to restructure operations and improve efficiency at its existing location, a 40,000 sq ft facility located nearby on Stanley Drive.

Provisions to lease additional space in the building on an as-needed basis and a favorable option to purchase helped make the project work, combined with state and local incentives coordinated through the Marshall County Economic Development Corporation (MCEDC).

A total investment of \$1,080,000 is projected by Whitley to equip the new facility. The Plymouth City Council approved a five-year tax abatement to phase-in personal property taxes on new equipment and retooling associated with the project.

Indiana Economic Development Corporation offered performance-based Economic Development for a Growing Economy ("EDGE") tax credits valued at \$250,000 to encourage Whitley to invest in and bring the new jobs to its Indiana location.

The expansion is the result of a major contract award to Whitley by a premier international manufacturer of agricultural equipment.

Bates Corporation Growing in Bourbon

Refurbished I-H tractor parts supplier's niche is strong

New Warehouse Completed in Bourbon Industrial Park

In late 2010, the Bates Corporation of Bourbon celebrated its growth alongside MCEDC and Town of Bourbon officials with a dedication ceremony upon completion of a new 18,000 square-foot warehouse.

Bates Corporation is a family-owned and operated business begun in 1965 specializing in new, used and rebuilt tractor parts. The company started as a livestock trucking operation, and since 1980, has grown into the largest exclusive International Harvester used and rebuilt parts inventory in the U.S.

With the addition of the new warehouse building, Bates Corporation now comprises more than 38,000 sq ft on Elm Road in the Bourbon Industrial

Park. The venture was assisted by MCEDC and the Town of Bourbon, and three generations of the Bates family were on hand to express appreciation and mark a new direction of growth for the business, which includes plans to cultivate a growing international export market share.



Michiana Regional Partnership Begins Targeted Attraction Efforts

New organization will market region across state lines

Marshall County EDC is one of seven Economic Development organizations that make up the newly incorporated Michiana Regional Partnership, a unique collaboration organized to include four Indiana counties (Marshall, Kosciusko, St. Joseph and Elkhart, IN) and three Michigan counties (Berrien, Cass, and St. Joseph, MI). The strategic positioning effort identifies the commonalities of the region as a shared labor force and media market, advantageous proximity to Chicago, and opportunity strength across industries that depend highly upon logistics and transportation. The Michiana Partnership will coordinate branding and recruitment for our area on a larger scale than any one member organization could direct alone.

The Indiana Economic Development Corp. (IEDC) supports the effort and separately recognizes the four Indiana counties of Michiana as a defined region for state Economic Development marketing campaigns. The group is planning to host summer and fall engagement events with realtors and site selectors both locally and in Chicago to promote the assets of Michiana.

Following recent hefty corporate and personal income property tax hikes imposed on business by the State of Illinois, this partnership will work to leverage IEDC's \$250,000 "Illinoyed?" advertising push to entice Illinois businesses to Indiana by touting our area's financial stability, low cost of doing business, uncongested transportation networks and quality-of-life advantages.

Energy Efficiency Planning Grants Available for Communities

Indiana DOE Will Accept Funding Applications Through May 27

Lt. Governor Becky Skillman and the Indiana Office of Energy Development have announced a new program allowing small cities and towns to create energy efficiency plans. The Community Energy Plan program will provide cities and towns an energy audit and energy plan development free of charge.

The CEP program is available to incorporated cities and towns below 35,000 in population, or counties below 200,000 in population. The funds for this program come from the U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) program.

The CEP program will provide a comprehensive inventory of all the local government's energy usage. This includes but is not limited to buildings, fleets, streetlights and wastewater treatment facilities. The audit will identify potential energy savings and potential measures to attain those savings. The plan developed for communities will offer suggestions on how the energy efficiency efforts can be incorporated in all levels of the community's decision-making process.

Applications for this competitive grant program will be accepted through May 27, 2011. Please contact MCEDC at (574) 935-8499 if your Marshall County community is interested in assistance with an application or for more information on the grant opportunity.

2011 Wage & Benefits Survey Now Underway

Your input is needed! Respond and Receive Report valued at \$100 Free

Data gathering is underway for the annual Michiana Wage & Benefit Survey. There was more participation from Marshall County in 2010 than ever, and it is important that trend continue for the report to accurately reflect our area.

Each year, wage data is collected for more than 100 job classifications. A benefits section looks at the availability and costs of different types of health plans, time off policies, training, retirement and other incentives. Last year's report, more than 100 pages long, included seven sections: an aggregate wage and benefit report of all participants, an aggregate of manufacturing, an aggregate of nonmanufacturing, and then large and small manufacturing and nonmanufacturing. Information is also included about union penetration, commuting in- and out-flow between regional counties, staffing and wage increase forecasts and other workplace issues.

The information gathered is valuable to MCEDC and is the only up-to-date and in-depth wage and benefit data for our region. Existing and prospective businesses and organizations use the data to assess the competitiveness of their wage and benefits packages.

The survey web site will remain open through Friday, May 27. The report will be published in July. A free report is distributed to any company or organization that completes the survey; otherwise, copies are made available for \$100.

Participant information is confidential and reports are aggregated so a specific wage or benefit isn't traceable to a particular company.

The survey web site is www.wagesbenefitssurvey.com. Participants first must enter the user code CJEMSxx9 (it is case sensitive). You will be directed to complete identifying information and log-in information to open the survey.

Many thanks for your help with this endeavor!

Michiana Lean Network Offers Training, Networking Opportunities

Lean/Six Sigma Process Advancement Programs Organized in Michiana

After an absence of 7 years, the Michiana Lean Network is back up and running. This is a regional resource open to membership from any company or business with operations within 50-75 miles of the host organization, the North Central Indiana Business Assistance at the Elkhart Chamber. Annual membership is \$500, which will be discounted to \$250 for any company holding an active membership in a Chamber of Commerce (NOT State or national chambers).

The goal of this network is continual support and advancement of global excellence in our regional manufacturing and service industries. The primary purpose of the new group will be to network businesses engaged in Lean/Six Sigma Continuous Improvement efforts in order to learn and benchmark from each other.

Registration is also being accepted for participation in the September 7th Lean 101 Workshop which will be held at the Goshen Chamber. Discounts also apply to any area Chamber members. For additional information about either of these programs, contact Jennifer Laurent at MCEDC at (574) 935-8499 or Jim Walsh at NCI at (574) 293-1531 ext 121.

Contact Information

phone: (574) 935-8499

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