



## NEWS from MCEDC

### Marshall County Economic Development Corporation

January 2014

## MCEDC Convenes the Fourth "County Development for the Future" Event to Discuss Countywide Development Issues



On November 12th, the Marshall County Economic Development Corporation (MCEDC) held the fourth in an ongoing series of discussions titled "County Development for the Future" at the Swan Lake Resort & Conference Center. The purpose of this event, attended by 26 MCEDC stakeholders, was to report progress on prior action items established by our cities, towns, and county and discuss additional development opportunities or challenges that have arisen

since the last meeting in August.

The Town of Argos, with assistance from the MCEDC, is working toward obtaining Indiana Economic Development Corporation "shovel ready" certification for a 75 acre site. Additionally, the Town is in the process of rezoning the property from agricultural to industrial to accommodate the desired future development. The Town of Bourbon has had discussions on a potential 80 acre annexation, for new residential and industrial development. The Town of Bremen identified land and had appraisals completed for potential future development. The Town of Culver updated their comprehensive plan, and will incorporate the land use goals into their TIF redevelopment plans. Culver has also completed appraisals on several vacant industrial properties. Marshall County is continuing with the roll-out of an on-line permitting system. All municipalities will utilize this permitting system establishing a 24/7 countywide system. The City of Plymouth has completed sewer and water improvement projects near U.S. 30 and Pioneer Drive increasing the potential capacity for future users.



The event was facilitated by Shawn Peterson, CEO & President of the Corporate Partnership for Economic Growth (CPEG). In his initial remarks, Mr. Peterson addressed two regional efforts, one focusing on workforce development and the other on transportation infrastructure. The Northern Indiana region, including Marshall County, was named as a finalist for funding Project Lead the Way (PLTW). PLTW provides K-12 Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) curricula, which often leads students to pursue further education and careers in engineering and engineering technology. Secondly, Conexus Indiana, a statewide advanced manufacturing and



logistics initiative, recently formed the North Central Regional Logistics Council (NCRLC). Dan Brown, President of Phend & Brown, Inc., and Chairman of the Infrastructure Committee of the NCRLC, stated that the Council had identified two key regional transportation projects that would have a significant positive impact on Marshall County. These projects include the completion of upgrades to U.S. 31 and U.S.30 which would reduce travel times and increase freight movement through the county.

At the conclusion of the event, all the representatives in attendance decided to reconvene in March 2014 to continue the discussion and report back on continued progress.

## *Focus on Marshall County Industry:* Homegrown Company American Container Announces Expansion

In late November, [\*American Container, Inc.\*](#) announced that they will be expanding their Plymouth-based corporate headquarters and manufacturing facility.



The \$5.5 to \$6 million investment includes a 55,000 sq. ft. warehousing expansion and the acquisition of \$3 million in new manufacturing and printing equipment. American Containers occupies a 125,000 sq. ft. building located on Western Avenue on the north side of the City of Plymouth. The facility was acquired in 2006 following the closure of the Jeld-Wen door production plant. The expansion is expected to begin this spring, and will allow the company to capture additional customers and reorganize their production and warehousing space. Through this expansion, they plan to add up to 6 new employees to their current workforce of 47 associates.

At the request of the MCEDC, the City of Plymouth unanimously approved a 10 year personal property tax abatement supporting American Container's planned investment for the new manufacturing equipment. The company plans to request an additional real property tax abatement in early 2014 for their building expansion.

Established in Plymouth in 1965 by Leonard Isban, American Containers is a manufacturer of corrugated packaging for the door and window industries and plastic containers for rail shipping. Since their establishment, they have subsequently expanded operations throughout the U.S., and now operate two additional plants in Carrollton, Georgia, and Stockton, California. The company sell products domestically as well as internationally shipping to China, Ireland, Spain and England.

"The fact that American Containers is making this large investment shows the vitality of their company," said Plymouth Councilman Don Ecker when voting to support the abatement request. "I am also glad that they are making this investment in Plymouth." The Plymouth City Council voted 5-0 in favor of the request.

Also supporting the abatement request, Plymouth Mayor Mark Senter said, "I really want to thank the Isban's for all they do in the community and for making this investment in the City." Both Leonard Isban, CEO and Founder, and Michael Isban, President were present at the meeting.

*Source: MCEDC & Pilot News*

## *Focus on Infrastructure :* Metronet to Extend High Speed Broadband into County



A proposal to bring high speed broadband to Marshall County received overwhelming support from the Marshall County Council.

At their December 17th meeting, the council voted 5-1 in favor of a motion supporting extension of St. Joe Valley Metronet from St. Joseph County into Marshall County and Plymouth.

Metronet's dark fiber optic network extends more than 100 miles and serves more than 150 subscribers in South Bend, Mishawaka and St. Joseph County. The Marshall County/Plymouth extension will add 33 miles of underground conduit to carry fiber optic cable from the existing network near Ireland Road on the south side of South Bend. The extension will follow along the current U.S. 31 corridor into Marshall County, then along Michigan Road into and around Plymouth. Installation of conduit will begin with the start of the construction season in the spring. Work is to be completed in the fall of 2014.

Completion of the extension is expected to cost more than \$3 million. Metronet will pay more than \$900,000 to install the fiber optic cable. The City of Plymouth earlier this year committed \$1.3 million to pay for conduit that will extend through the city and reach key business and industrial areas, including the city's tech park. St. Joseph County appropriated \$250,000 to help pay for the conduit extension in that county. The Marshall County council's resolution that passed on December 17th will be followed with an appropriation of \$500,000 to be approved when the council meets in January.

St. Joe Valley Metronet was incorporated in 2004. Community leaders had determined that lack of access to high speed and high capacity broadband communications was limiting business growth and concluded that a vendor neutral, dark fiber network would be the most cost-effective solution. Construction of the network began in 2006 with more fiber and more subscribers added each year.

Faced with a similar broadband service deficit and after seeing the potential of Metronet's dark fiber network as a business development resource in St. Joseph County, a group of Marshall County business leaders and public officials began working at least six years ago to extend Metronet into their county.

Metronet is unique in two key areas: how it is built and how it is operated, according to executive director Mary Jan Hedman. The dark fiber network offers only infrastructure - access to fiber - not communications or technology services. The vendor-neutral network means subscribers choose from competing service providers or light the fiber with their own equipment. Subscribers determine how much speed and capacity they need and can add bandwidth by upgrading their equipment. Subscription fees are not based on bandwidth.

And Metronet's network is built as a public-private partnership. City and county governments grant Metronet access to municipal conduit, through which Metronet runs fiber optic cable, in exchange for free use of fiber. Metronet monitors and maintains the fiber network.

"This public-private partnership has facilitated Metronet's growth while allowing government users to save hundreds of thousands of dollars," Hedman said.

Construction of the Marshall County/Plymouth extension will follow this model. Plymouth Mayor Mark Senter said the city's free use of Metronet fiber will produce both immediate and long-term savings in telephone and other IT costs, while extension of the network into Plymouth will help support the city's economic development efforts.

Public funding of the conduit falls short of the anticipated cost. During the Marshall County council meeting, public officials and business leaders commented on the potential and importance of the expansion to their Marshall County operations. Loretta Schmidt, president of the St. Joseph Regional Medical Center's Plymouth Campus, said Metronet access is important to that facility's growth and they are working on securing funding for the remaining shortfall.

In early December, Ind. Gov. Mike Pence called for greater regional cooperation and increased private investment in economic development. Marshall County Commissioner Kevin Overmyer told the council Tuesday that in approving the Metronet extension, it serves as a model for how such cooperation can work.

Source: Metronet

## Focus on Business Attraction: City of Plymouth Establishes Partnership and Finalized Agreement to Construct Manufacturing Shell Building

On November 15, MCEDC announced the completion of agreement for the construction of a manufacturing shell building to be developed within the City of Plymouth.

Garmong Development Company and Garmong Construction Services have executed a public/private joint venture

Project Agreement with the City of Plymouth Redevelopment Commission, the MCEDC, and the Plymouth Industrial Development Corporation (PIDCO). The project's purpose is to facilitate the attraction of advanced manufacturing companies to Plymouth and Marshall County.



The Project Agreement calls for Garmong to provide the project financing and single source design-build delivery of a 45,000 square foot industrial shell building, expandable to 135,000 square feet, to be located at the PIDCO Industrial Park, within immediate proximity to the intersection of US 30 and US 31.

The new facility will be constructed of precast concrete to a clear height of 32'. The expansion wall will be constructed of state-of-the-art metal sandwich panels. Column bays will have a minimum spacing of 50' x 50'. Site asphalt, sidewalks, drainage, and landscaping will be 100% complete. All utilities will be stubbed up inside the shell facility to facilitate immediate access.

All site and shell facility improvements are scheduled to be complete fall of 2014.

Source: Garmong Construction

## Marshall County Seeking Funding for Project Lead The Way to Offer STEM Curriculum



Project Lead The Way (PLTW), the nation's leading provider of in-school Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) curriculum for grades K-12, recently announced plans to expand access to its world class STEM curriculum for schools

through a regional initiative. Marshall County is one of five counties in the Northern Indiana region selected as a finalist for a \$2.5 million matching grant.

When matched on a one-to-one basis, the funding has the potential to provide access to PLTW programs for every elementary, middle, and high school, public or private, in the Northern Indiana region (Elkhart, Fulton, Kosciusko, Marshall, and St. Joseph Counties). This initiative could expand PLTW's programming from 27 to over 450 programs and make our region the densest in the country for STEM education.

PTLW's industry partnerships have the potential to generate new economic development benefits for the region. PTLW was named as one of the top four STEM organizations in the nation and the only provider of in-school curriculum by Change the Equation, a national CEO led group focusing on philanthropic support to scalable STEM programs that work.

The value of a STEM education is only expected to become more valuable for our future workforce. The United States Department of Commerce reports that by 2018, STEM-related jobs in the United States will grow by 17 percent, nearly double the rate of jobs in non-STEM fields. The same report estimates 1.2 million unfilled STEM jobs by 2018, due to a lack of qualified, trained workers.

Northern Indiana faces similar challenges. A recent "Talent Roadmap" study conducted by Thomas P. Miller & Associates evidenced over 300 vacant STEM jobs and a projected growth of an additional 1,100 new STEM jobs in the region by 2022. Further occupational data suggests that despite having strong economic clusters, Northern Indiana has not kept pace with the national average in engineers and architects (75%), information technology positions (44%) and biomedical occupations (34%). These are all jobs that typically produce incomes that pay and grow above the national average.

Nationally, companies such as Toyota and Chevron are providing funding for PTLW programs in their existing facilities. Being a model region for PTLW has the potential to not only meet the area's existing industry needs, but also to differentiate northern Indiana for new investment opportunities.

A group of education and community leaders from each county visited PTLW's headquarters in early November. PTLW's leadership visited the region shortly afterwards to meet with education, philanthropic and business leaders in each county.

Local efforts continue in each county to organize a coordinated response. For more information on this regional initiative, contact Dan Tyree, Superintendent, Plymouth School Corporation, at (574)936-3115, or Linda Yoder, Executive Director, Marshall County Community Foundation, at (574) 935-5159.

*Source: Pilot News and PLTW*

## *Workforce Development Training:*

### **Purdue's Manufacturing Extension Partnership to Offer Sigma Six and Energy Efficiency Training & Ivy Tech to Offer CNC Training**

The Purdue Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) is offering a series of workshops focusing on Sigma Six, and NIPSCO (through Purdue's MEP program) is offering Energy Efficiency training to their customers.



These courses will be held in South Bend and Westville providing a great opportunity to sharpen your employees' skills for a relatively low cost. The Energy Efficiency Program is only offered at no cost to current NIPSCO commercial and industrial accounts.

#### ***Six Sigma White, Green & Black Belt Certificate Training - South Bend***

- ***White Belt Training*** - January 27
- ***Green Belt Training***- January 27, 29 & February 3, 5, 10 and 12
- ***Black Belt Training*** - January 27, 29 & February 3, 5, 10, 12, 17, 19, 24, 26 & March 3 and 5

Click [here](#) for more details & registration for the Six Sigma White Belt Training or [here](#) for the Six Sigma Green & White Belt Training.

#### ***Energy Efficiency Workshop - Westville***

- ***Energy Savings 101***- January 24

This program provides real-world case studies and the tools necessary for industrial facility personnel to incorporate energy efficiency into financial decision making. This workshop is appropriate for everyone with

responsibilities related to energy expenses: accounting, engineering, finance, management, maintenance and production. Through interactive demonstrations, case studies and story problems, attendees will learn:

- An overview of energy sources, uses and measurements
- How to analyze an electric utility bill
- How to identify the major components of a mechanical system
- How to develop long-term energy savings strategies using a "systems" approach to minimizing energy costs
- When first cost is less important than life-cycle cost
- How a good, properly funded maintenance program can save costs
- How to save money by optimizing existing systems such as HVAC, air compressors, pumps and boilers
- How to use proposed requisition templates and job aids

*For more information on this workshop, contact Laura Cardona at [lcordona@nisource.com](mailto:lcordona@nisource.com). RSVP no later than January 10th.*

For information regarding other upcoming Purdue MEP courses to be held throughout Indiana, please visit <http://www.mep.purdue.edu/>.

### ***CNC Training - Plymouth***

- ***NIMS CNC Machine Operator Program*** - February 4- May 13, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays

This program is being offered through the recently established Ivy Tech, ITAMCO, and Plymouth School Corporation partnership organized to offer precision tool training to both young and adult learners.

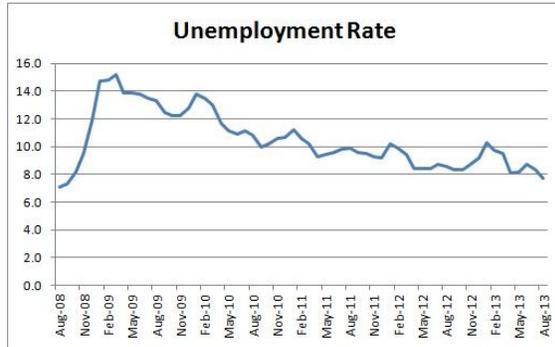
For more information on this educational opportunity, contact Genie Feldleyfer at (574) 289-7001 ext. 6862.

*Source: Purdue MEP, NIPSCO & Ivy Tech*

## County Continues Economic Recovery: Latest Preliminary Data Reveals Continuing Decline in County Unemployment Rate

The latest unemployment data provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics reveals that the unemployment rate continues to remain below 8.0 percent as it has since August of this year.

The preliminary November 2013 unemployment rate stands at 7.6 percent and is nearly 3 percent lower than the first of the year.



The number of those in the labor force has increased over 400 since January 2013 and now stands at 22,212. This increase together with more than 1,000 persons being employed has caused the continuing decline in the unemployment rate. The labor force is comprised of those who have jobs or are seeking a job, are at least 16 years old, are not serving in the military and are not institutionalized.

*Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS)*

## Featured Industrial Property: 1817 Copperfield Way, Bremen - Bremen Industrial Park

### For Sale or Lease - Immediately Available

Located along State Road 331 and just south of U.S. 6 on the north side of Bremen, this 48,000 sq. ft. building sits on a 4.5 acre lot in the Bremen Industrial Park area.



The building was originally constructed in 1994, and was occupied by Southwire (formerly Cooperfield and Coleman Cable), a leading national wire and cable manufacturer.



Building highlights include a split floor plan with the potential to be divided into a multi-tenant building, 22-24' ceiling heights, 4 loading docks, 1 overhead door, and 800 sq. ft. of office space. Electric, sanitary sewer and water are provided by the Town of Bremen.

Click [here](#) or [here](#) for more information on this available property!

## MCEDC Board Member Editorial: If it Ain't Burr Oak, Don't Fix It!

My friend Eric Freeman used to say that when he stepped down as Culver Chamber President, he would take on Burr Oak. The title of this article was to be his motto for Burr Oak's renaissance. He thought "If it ain't Burr Oak, don't fix it!" would catch on. Unfortunately for Burr Oak, Eric changed jobs and moved to Indy before he could lead them to greatness.



I drive through Burr Oak daily without giving it much thought unless I'm stopped by a train. The recent hub-bub about new **NIPSCO line routes** and the expansion of the NIPSCO substation adjacent to Burr Oak have had me thinking about it more lately. This is partially due to the county-wide discussions promoted

by MCEDC, and how to make our communities more conducive to development (See the first article in this newsletter.) MCEDC is constantly working on a dialogue with Marshall

County communities about how to make themselves more conducive to positive development and economic growth. There is a lengthy checklist of what industry looks for, but if you apply some of the big ones to Burr Oak, there is potential.

- *Rail Access* - Check! Burr Oak not only has rail access, but has an existing rail side track - something difficult to obtain and expensive to build these days. Plus getting a new one approved that crosses an existing state highway would be nearly impossible in today's regulatory environment. Norfolk Southern runs as many as **35 trains a day** through Burr Oak on this track.



- *Electric Service Capacity* - Check! Just hit the above NIPSCO link to see the amount of power that will be passing through the new substation. (All routes lead through Burr Oak. There is a map showing the routes considered [here](#).)
- *Available Workforce* - Check! Marshall County as a whole draws much of its workforce from adjacent Starke and Pulaski counties. Burr Oak's location towards the southwest corner of Marshall County and its close proximity to State Road 8 make access to the labor force convenient.
- *Good Schools* - Check! Burr Oak sits between Culver and Plymouth. Plymouth is becoming known throughout the state as one of the better and most progressive public school systems in the State of Indiana. Culver is home to one of the preeminent internationally known private schools in the nation.

- *Quality of Life* - Check! As MCEDC often promotes, Marshall County in general is a nice place to live. Burr Oak is close to Culver for recreation, restaurants, golf courses, etc. Rural living around Burr Oak is available and economical. Lake shore residences are available in nearby Culver and the Chain of Lakes area including the Lake Latonka development just minutes away.



- *Highway Access* - Semi-Check... Burr Oak suffers from the same perceived negative as the rest of Marshall County - No Interstate access. But look at what they do have... They are on a State highway, within a few miles of two other state highways and within 10 miles of two four-lane state highways. There are 12 million people within 100 miles!

So, what makes a community thrive or die? As I've listed here, Burr Oak has a lot of positives. Personally I think it is the drive of community leaders. Burr Oak needs an Eric Freeman with a vision for the community! Every community talks about wanting a strong economy, but few are doing something about it. Communities often rise and fall as community leaders appear and disappear. Many times these leaders are shooting stars. They come on to the scene out of nowhere and burn brightly. To continue the analogy, some of them disappear on the horizon as they are recognized and drawn to bigger challenges, while others fizzle out when their passion or support disappears. It is unfortunate that communities often don't recognize these forces until they've lost them.



One of MCEDC's goals is to foster and gain support for economic development initiatives through engaging our community leadership. As is often said, economic development is a team sport. The County Development for the Future meetings that MCEDC has sponsored quarterly is an attempt to foster new stars in each Marshall County community. The biggest success story so far is the Town of Argos and their purchase of 75 acres for future development. They are well on their way to making this a Shovel Ready Site certified site with the IEDC (Indiana Economic Development Corporation). Following their example, Bourbon is in the process of annexing additional property for development.

Who will be the next community to step up to the challenge?

*Written by: Kevin Berger, Culver Representative, MCEDC Board*

#### Contact Information

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