



## The Economic Development Perspective

### Marshall County Economic Development Corporation

December 2014

#### *Message from Jerry:* Merry Christmas & Happy Holidays

We hope you enjoy reading the last edition of the Marshall County EDC newsletter for the calendar year. As fitting with the end of the year ... my comments are recapping in nature.

The communities in Marshall County have collectively embarked in a strategic approach to improving the economy for the region as well as their own local economy. As each community actively works on the steps, they believe are a priority, each community is contributing to make our region prosper. As an example to this contribution, the most recent acknowledgment from state officials is that the region experienced the most capital investment and jobs created....statewide.

North central Indiana's economic development is robust. So let's look at the numbers for Marshall County:

1. Unemployment is at about 4.8%, whereas around 7 months ago it was at 5.4%.
2. Capital investment is over \$50 MM, with an anticipated 585 new jobs to be created.

#### **Bremen**

Universal Bearings - \$39 MM, 80 jobs  
Southwire - \$2.1 MM, 105 jobs

#### **Culver**

Elkay Industries - \$1.5 MM, 100 jobs

#### **Plymouth**

AMI - \$4.4 MM, 225 jobs  
AK Industries - \$320K, 5 jobs  
CTA - \$1.2 MM, 60 jobs  
Pregis - \$2.3 MM, 10 jobs

Additionally, this past year saw the continuance of an economic development roundtable called "County Development for the Future". These quarterly meetings bring leadership in Marshall County together for the benefit of each community supporting one another, sharing experiences related to various projects, and providing updates on community priorities. Funding for "Project Lead the Way" has it's beginning from these meetings.

Community Initiatives that are noteworthy include:

**Argos**

Shovel Ready  
Certification  
Tax Abatement Guidelines Adopted

**LaPaz**

Repositioning Downtown

**Bremen**

Comprehensive Plan Adopted  
Industrial Property Secured

**Plymouth**

Shell Building Construction  
Complete  
Metronet Partnership  
EPA Brownfield Grant Partner  
High Speed Rail Project Partner

**Bourbon**

EPA Brownfield Grant Partner  
Industrial Property Secured

**Marshall County**

Metronet Partnership  
On-Line Permitting Implemented  
U.S. 31 Planning

**Culver**

Comprehensive Plan Adopted  
Capital Improvement Plan  
Developed  
Tax Abatement Guidelines Adopted  
Five Year Plan Developed

JJC



## *Shop Local:* Support the Local Economy

With the holiday season upon us, buying local is an important strategy for communities across Marshall County to embrace. National surveys indicate that the average U.S. shopper plans to spend more this year than last and is expected to be at the highest level since 2007. Increased spending will give local merchants the opportunity to capture more of these dollars.

Shopping local also has a greater impact on our economy as more dollars are circulated within the community. Area businesses employ residents, pay taxes, and contribute to the health and vitality of the local economy by capturing discretionary funds. It is through this cycle of spending local that more money is kept in the community before exiting.

Click [here](#) for more information on how spending local effects the economy.

## *Metronet Project:* Connecting Marshall County

Following the recent completion of the Metronet fiber network in Marshall County and the City of Plymouth, the first subscribers are coming online. Hoosier Racing Tire, which is one of the private investors in the project, has connected their corporate offices in Lakeville. Other initial subscribers include the Union-North United School Corporation connecting the Laville Schools north of LaPaz, and the St. Joseph Regional Medical Center in Plymouth.

According to Metronet representatives, there are several other subscribers that will be connected in the near future with another half dozen that have expressed interest in becoming a subscriber.

Stay tuned for more to come.....

Click [here](#) for a map showing the network location in Marshall County.

## *Focus on Regionalism:* IEDC Launches Regional Cities Initiative

Regional efforts to enhance the quality of place and attract new residents and business were discussed at a recent forum highlighting the Indiana Economic Development Corporation's (IEDC) Regional Cities Initiative. The forum was attended by over 200 business and government leaders from across the North Central Indiana region.

According to the IEDC and local economic development organizations, attracting a workforce from outside the state will become increasingly imperative as population stagnation is expected to be a top issue going forward.

This initiative gives the north central Indiana region a great opportunity to develop and coalesce around a common vision and regional plan that is visionary and multifaceted. A focus on regionalism also allows us to be bigger in the marketplace by leveraging assets in addition to promoting the advantages of living in and investing in each of our individual counties.

Click [here](#) or [here](#) for more information on the Regional Cities Initiative.

### *Focus on Education:* **Triton School Corporation Approved Bond Restructuring**

The Triton School Board recently approved the restructuring of a \$1.5 million bond issue ensuring that taxes will not be raised for those residents living within the Bourbon-based district.

The leadership of the Board is commended as the bond restructuring will readjust the corporations finances enabling them to make capital improvements and provide modern facilities for educating the future workforce of Marshall County.

### *Town of Bourbon:* **Council Proceeds with Strategy to Attract Business**

In an effort to attract business to the Town of Bourbon, leadership is moving forward in establishing a Tax Increment Finance district, or TIF. The new TIF, which is the first such district in Bourbon, will include over 80 acres of land located east of S.R. 331 and south of U.S. 30. The area was recently annexed and rezoned for business uses.

The next step is the formulation of a Redevelopment Commission which acts as the fiscal body for the allocation of the TIF funds once they become available for various projects. The taxes captured by a TIF are those realized from additional development and the increase in assessed value in the district. TIF funds can be used on infrastructure investments and other creative ways to attract future investment in the district.

MCEDC supports the Town on their proactive approach to attract jobs to the community.

## *Southwire Announces Expansion: North America's Largest Wire Manufacturer Expands*

MCEDC applauds the Town of Bremen in their support and role in Southwire's recent expansion announcement. The Georgia-based wire and cable manufacturer, which acquired Coleman Cable in February, plans to invest \$2.1 million to purchase and equip a new 48,000 square-foot facility. The expansion is expected to create up to 105 new jobs by 2016.

This expansion is a direct outcome of the positive relationship established between Bremen, the State of Indiana, and Southwire on past expansion projects.

As Bremen continues to solidify and strengthen relations with the business community, they will create an environment poised for future economic growth.

For more information regarding this expansion, please click [here](#).

## *Manufacturing Day Celebrated..... Part I: Bremen High School Explores Future Opportunities*

In October, Bremen High School celebrated national Manufacturing Day by touring many of the major employers in the town's well-established and growing industrial areas.

Promoting and expanding on this event falls within a workforce development strategy as it gives manufacturers the opportunity to highlight their work and workers and to energize a future pipeline of skilled workers. Ideally, these tours will pique student interest in considering careers in manufacturing and lead them to future studies in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics.

The program was expanded to six companies this year as the entire senior class visited NISCO, Precision Painting, Digger Specialties, Bremen Castings, Southwire, and Universal Bearings. Bremen High School also participated in this event last year when they visited three local manufacturers.

We thank the businesses and appreciate the Bremen School Corporation for allowing MCEDC to be involved in this event.

## *Manufacturing Day Celebrated..... Part II: Plymouth High School Explores Future Opportunities*

Plymouth High School also participated in the National Manufacturing Day event over several days in October.

As mentioned in the previous article, this event will also be expanded upon in future years as part of a workforce development strategy by MCEDC.

Students visited Hoosier Racing Tire, DuPont Pioneer, and Kessler Crane to learn about each of the companies and potential careers in these industries.

MCEDC thanks the businesses and appreciates the Plymouth School Corporation for allowing MCEDC to participate in this event.

### *Business Attraction:* **Implementation of Brownfield Assessment Grant Continues**

The Marshall County coalition implementing the U.S. EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant retained Bruce Carter Associates, LLC (BCA) to act as the consultant for the project. BCA is currently assisting the coalition on identifying properties for inclusion in the grant.

The coalition, which includes Marshall County, the City of Plymouth, and the Town of Bourbon, has been awarded \$600,000 for conducting Phase I Environmental Site Assessments (ESA) on perceived contaminated sites in Marshall County.

The grant funding is only available for Phase I ESAs and not for any remediation if environmental contaminants are discovered. Conducting these assessments is the first step in reclaiming and preparing sites for future redevelopment.

### *Positioning Marshall County for Future Growth:* **Argos Site Receives Shovel Ready Designation**

A 75 acre greenfield site, located south of 17th Road and east of U.S. 31 in the Town of Argos, was recently designated Shovel Ready by the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs. A shovel ready site positions a community by removing risk and reducing unknowns for potential developers and expanding companies looking to build a new facility.

The announcement, which took place at the Argos Town Hall, was attended by over 25 officials representing Marshall County, many of its cities and towns, and the Indiana Economic Development Corporation. The Town recognized the Indiana Municipal Power Agency (IMPA) for their financial support, and the Marshall County EDC for their assistance in administering the application process.

MCEDC appreciates the regional support and congratulates the Town of Argos in achieving this designation.

## *Economic Development Incentives:* Town of Argos Revamps Tax Abatement Policies

The Town of Argos approved a new phase-in tax abatement policy to clarify and streamline the process for obtaining a deduction for real or personal property taxes. The purpose of a tax phase-in, which is commonly used throughout Indiana, is to attract new and promote the expansion of existing businesses.

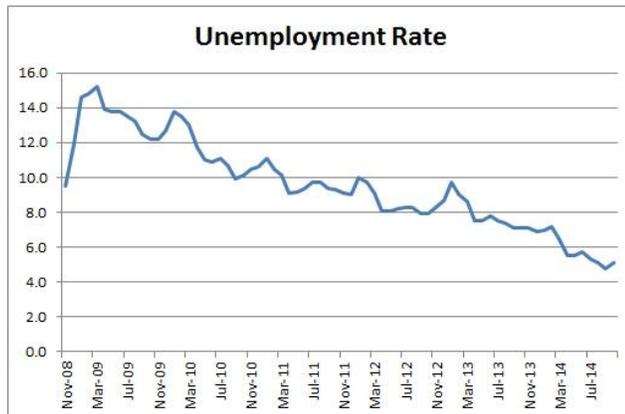
Phase-ins are approved for a specific number of years where a declining or fixed percentage of an increase in assessed value is deducted until 100% of the taxes are paid. For real property, new buildings and significant improvements to existing buildings are eligible for the deduction. New manufacturing, research and development, and other types of equipment are eligible for a personal property deduction.

Argos's approval follows a similar process that the Town of Culver went through earlier this year to update their tax abatement policy.

MCEDC staff is assisting all communities in Marshall County in updating their policies.

## *Economic Recovery Continues:* Marshall County Unemployment Lowest Since 2007

The Marshall County unemployment rate, as revealed by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, continues to remain low dropping to 4.8% in September. This is first time since December 2007 that the rate has been below 5%. Unemployment has decreased throughout 2014 peaking at 7.2% in February.



On a local level, many manufacturers in Marshall County and across the region plan to expand and hire additional workers due to the increased demand for their products. As such, we anticipate growth in our regional economy and expect to see the unemployment rate remain low.

On a national level, the U.S. economy posted strong growth in the third quarter with the gross domestic product expanding at an annual rate of 3.9%. Together with a 4.6% increase in the spring, the U.S. has recorded the largest six month growth in over a decade.

*Source: Labor Force & Unemployment Statistics - Bureau of Labor Statistics*

## Welcome to the New Plymouth Pilot Managing Editor

The Marshall County EDC congratulates Diona Eskew on her recent promotion to Managing Editor of the Pilot News Group.

We have noticed several changes in the content and how the news is being reported conforming to Ms. Eskew's stated goals. There is a focus on the many positive events occurring across Marshall County. Such focus will assist readers that may be researching Marshall County for a new business location to understand the many positives, including our uniqueness and economic opportunities.

As a 20 year resident of Marshall County, Ms. Eskew has lived in many towns throughout the county. This history gives her the advantageous position of understanding what issues are important to the local communities and their residents.

Keep your eye on the bright spots!

## PHS's James Condon Named Principal of the Year

The Marshall County EDC congratulates James Condon, Principal at Plymouth High School, on being named the 2014 District 2 Principal of the Year by the Indiana Association of School Principals (IASP).

Principal Condon has led PHS for the last seven years providing a collaborative and focused leadership style leading to several achievements for PHS. These achievements include being rated the 12th best high school in Indiana by the U.S. News and World Report, earning an "A" rating by the Indiana Department of Education the past two years, achieving one of the highest passing rates in the state for Advanced Placement courses, and establishing over 35 dual credit courses.

As a member of the MCEDC Board of Directors, Principal Condon has been instrumental in furthering our economic development strategies in education. He understands the importance of educating today's youth for the demanding and growing careers in industry and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) related professions.

This understanding led PHS to partner with Ivy Tech and ITAMCO in establishing IMESSC (ITAMCO Manufacturing Education School Service Center), an advanced manufacturing and CNC training facility open to both students and adults. Additionally, PHS has begun to implement additional STEM curriculum this year with funding received through Project Lead the Way.

## Two Projects in the Development Pipeline

Two new development projects planned near the Pioneer Drive and U.S. 30 intersection were recently considered by the Plymouth Plan Commission.

A Love's Travel Stop and Country Store are proposed at the northwest corner of Pioneer Drive and U.S. 30. The \$8-9 million project includes a fast food restaurant in addition to a truck stop and convenience store. The project will positively impact the local economy as 60 to 70 new jobs will be created. A majority of the construction is expected to be awarded to local contractors.

The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) is proposing a new sub-district maintenance facility on the east side of Pioneer Drive north of U.S. 30. The \$8-9 million project will relocate INDOT's current facility along old U.S. 31. The decision to expand here strengthens their long term commitment to operate a facility in Marshall County. In addition, it further demonstrates our ease of access as Marshall County is traversed by three U.S. highways and six State highways.

Seeing a concentration of construction activity on the city's northwest side is expected to spur additional interest in the area. Activity often begets additional activity.

### *Focus on Education:*

## Riverside Intermediate Earns National Distinction

Riverside Intermediate School in Plymouth was recently named a New Tech Network School and selected as a "National Demonstration Site". This prestigious honor was bestowed upon the school only one year after opening the Innovation Academy as a New Tech school in the fall of 2013.

Upon its selection, the New Tech Network stated that, "Innovation Academy epitomized the best example of the New Tech mission, to help students gain the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in life, college and the careers of tomorrow."

The courses that are taught at Innovation Academy are modeled after the Project Based Learning (PBL) model where students learn by using technology and working collaboratively on real world-based projects.

The PBL model promotes critical thinking and the ability to be a team player, which we have learned through our Business Expansion and Retention (BEAR) program, are skills desired by employers in Marshall County.

Click [here](#) for more information on Innovation Academy.

### *Focus on Transportation:* **Plymouth Airport Awarded \$2.5 Million Improvement Grant**

In October, the City of Plymouth was awarded a \$2.5 million grant from the Federal Aviation Administration. The grant is earmarked for refurbishing and widening the runway and continues a capital improvements plan that began over six years ago.

Prior improvements include major facility renovations such as new roofing on a majority of the buildings, heating and cooling systems, and a pilot's quarters and lobby. Aesthetic improvements have included new signage, landscaping, and sidewalks. Without these improvements, the City would likely have not been awarded the grant.

Having access to a modern and improved municipal airport is a positive community asset for corporate executives who do not want to use the major commercial airports in nearby South Bend, Chicago, or Indianapolis.

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