



## The Economic Development Perspective

### Marshall County Economic Development Corporation

February 2015

#### *Message from Jerry:* Region to Focus on Talent Attraction

Transforming the region to address population stagnation, a threat to future economic growth in Indiana, will be on people's minds and voices on March 4, 2015 (see invitation below). Counties across northern Indiana will be engaged in similar conversations, driven by coalitions that have come together with the goal of developing forward thinking plans for long term growth.

The Indiana Economic Development Corporation commissioned a study to research a number of well recognized regions that are known for population growth, and attracting talent and capital investment. This study contains benchmarks for us to consider as we discuss how we can transform our own region. More detailed information on the Regional Cities Initiative can be found [here](#).

By increasing our focus on talent attraction and the quality of place elements, our population and capital investment will continue to grow thus strengthening our regional economy.



**Wednesday, March 4, 2015**

**9:00 - 11:00am**

Swan Lake Resort and  
Conference Center

Ballroom 3

5203 Plymouth LaPorte Trail  
Plymouth, IN 46563

Please RSVP by  
February 27, 2015  
Pam Davis: 574-935-8499



Please join us at Swan Lake Resort..... your input will help to shape our region for years to come.

JJC



### *City of Plymouth Approves Subdivision: Paves the Way for a Proposed INDOT Facility*

January saw the Plymouth Plan Commission approve the secondary plat for the "PIDCO Pioneer North Industrial Subdivision" located north of U.S. 30 near the Commerce Building. The approval follows a favorable vote by the Board of Public Works & Safety allowing the project to move forward.

As the subdivision process is finalized and understanding that other nearby projects are currently going through development review, the area will soon be transformed by construction activity.

The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) is proposing to build an \$8-9 million state-of-the-art maintenance facility within the subdivision. The facility will be one of the newest and most modern sub-district facilities operated by INDOT.

Construction is expected to start in 2016.

A word of thanks goes out to everyone who has helped moved this project forward. So far so good PIDCO.... you're headed in the right direction!

### *Town of Bourbon: Plans for Its Future*

The Town of Bourbon has their eye on the future as leadership is in the process of developing a new comprehensive plan.

The purpose of an updated and current comprehensive plan is to provide a blueprint for the future growth of the Town as new development, redevelopment, and infrastructure improvements are considered. Town officials have finalized and approved a scope of work, and proposals are expected to be solicited in the near future.

The development of this plan will follow the Town's recent establishment of a Tax Increment Finance, or TIF, district, on approximately 80 acres of land located within the northeast part of town. The Town plans to use the funds captured by the TIF as an incentive to attract future business investment and create jobs for Bourbon and Marshall County residents.

The comprehensive planning process is expected to start this summer.

### *EPA Coalition: Steps Taken to Develop More Property*

A coalition of local governments is continuing with their efforts to increase the inventory of readily available buildings and sites throughout Marshall County.

The first public forum, held on January 15th, focused on identifying and assigning priority to properties that are perceived to have environmental concerns.

Last June, the coalition, which includes the City of Plymouth, Town of Bourbon, and Marshall County, was successful in securing a \$600,000 U.S. EPA Coalition Brownfield Assessment Grant to conduct environmental site assessments, develop an inventory list, and prioritize sites for future cleanup.

Only eight coalitions across Indiana were awarded funding under this highly competitive grant.

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

### *Update on Metronet: SJRMC Partnership Pays Dividends*

The St. Joseph Regional Medical Center (SJRMC) campus in Plymouth recently held a press conference to formally announce their connection to broadband services provided through the St. Joseph Valley Metronet.

SJRMC is now able to transmit data and communicate between their Plymouth and Mishawaka facilities and the outside world almost instantaneously. Specifically, the new broadband capabilities will be used to share 3D medical images in real time. Previously, images were sent at off peak hours when broadband demands were low. In addition to increasing efficiencies, businesses can have reduced liabilities thru system redundancies.

SJRMC, along with Hoosier Racing Tire, the City of Plymouth, Marshall County, and St. Joseph County, were capital contributors to the project.

To date, 19 subscribers within Marshall County are connected. Congratulations goes out SJRMC as they enter the 21st century with their new broadband services!

## *Workforce Development: Needed for Future Successes*

The first meeting of the Marshall County Career Success Coalition took place on January 21st launching an initiative to advance workforce development and skill set opportunities for students and adults.

The group discussion focused on strategies to increase the educational attainment levels of area residents by providing resources and information to increase college access and completion. At future meetings, the coalition seeks to identify target areas for the first year of the initiative and how to overcome barriers to higher education.

Higher levels of educational attainment will lead to a better quality of life and increased wages for our area workforce, while ensuring local businesses have access to a future educated workforce.

Marshall County is off to a good start in this initiative as over 50 individuals representing industry, education, economic development, government, and various not-for-profit organizations have attended these meetings.

For more information on the Marshall County Career Success Coalition, please click [here](#).

***Register [here](#) to join..... next meeting on March 19, 2015!***

## *Marshall County EDC: Stakeholders Briefed on Strategic Plan*

The Marshall County EDC began the new year by presenting the strategic plan to the county commissioners, and the city and town councils.

The development of the plan and the specific programs identified within it were based upon input from our business community and the MCEDC Board of Directors.

The four programs outlined in the plan include:

- Business Expansion and Retention (BEAR) - Using best practices and a structured interview process, MCEDC will uncover expansion opportunities, assist in these expansions and will work to improve the business climate.

- Business Attraction - MCEDC will market the county and municipalities while developing business assets to attract specific industries to expand a well-established industrial corridor.
- Entrepreneurial Hub - MCEDC will act as the catalyst to develop and cultivate regional innovation and entrepreneurial activity.
- Workforce Development - MCEDC, with area partners, will develop an immediate plan to address the availability of workers and will partner with others to ensure that our future workforce has the skills that our employers require.

The MCEDC Board of Directors views the plan as a 5-10 year blueprint designed to grow, strengthen, and diversify the economy by addressing the needs of our area businesses and expanding the resources available for business growth. The plan is the first formal plan for the corporation and Marshall County as a whole.

More information on the strategic plan can be found [here](#).

## *County Development for the Future: A Sharing of Ideas & Developing Solutions*

The presentations to the commissioners and councils in the new year included updates on the quarterly "County Development for the Future" roundtable discussions which began in early 2013. These discussions continued on February 18th with over 30 participants in attendance.

The purpose of these meetings, attended by local leadership, is to discuss community and economic development priorities and share experiences and solutions to move our communities forward.

Some of the successful outcomes from these discussions include:

- Development of the Commerce "Shell" Building
- Certification of Shovel Ready sites in Plymouth and Argos
- Updates of comprehensive plans in Plymouth, LaPaz, Culver, and Bremen, and one being considered in Bourbon
- Development of common tax abatement guidelines
- Procurement of funding for the Metronet
- Identification of land for industrial development
- Implementation of a countywide online permitting system
- Procurement of funding for Project Lead the Way

## Recap of Economic Development in 2014

The U.S. economy remains in the grips of a slow recovery, as many regions have seen little to no growth. However, the north central Indiana region, Marshall County and its communities are continuing to experience growth and the benefits of a deeply rooted and diverse manufacturing base as greater demand has caused a rise in the production of goods.

Indications of growth in our local economy are reflected in several expansion projects that MCEDC staff had a direct role in assisting.

- 7 Expansions
- \$50.5 million in capital investment
- 585 jobs created
- \$20 million estimated direct payroll

The annual average employment in Marshall County has grown to over 21,400 in 2014, rising from a low of 19,500 during the depths of the recession in 2009. As both the labor force and employment has increased, the unemployment rate has dropped from an average of 13.6% in 2009 to a low point of 4.8% in September 2014. This was the first time the monthly rate dropped below 5% since late 2007.

A productive year was also realized in attraction and marketing sites to build new facilities, buildings that are vacant, or the many business advantages our communities offer.

- Responses sent for 21 leads
- 5 site tours

For more information on the 2014 year in review, please contact Jerry Chavez, Executive Director at (574) 935-8499.

### Contact Information

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