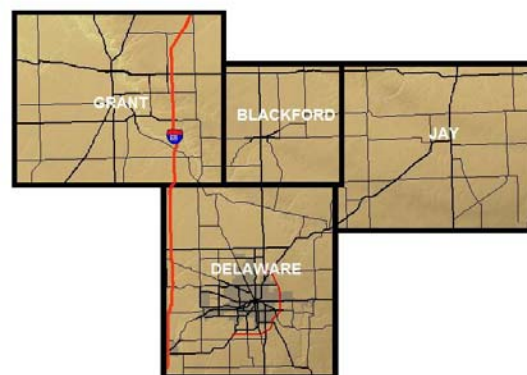


An Update

Of the East Central Indiana

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

April 3, 2009



Prepared by Strategic Development Group, Inc.

# Table of Contents

Introduction .....	1
Executive Summary .....	1
The Process for Updating the CEDS .....	2
Regional Profile .....	8
The Vision.....	22
The Goals .....	23
Action Strategies.....	24
Regional Program Strategies .....	30
Top Regional Development Priority Projects .....	31
Complementary Local Economic Development Project Priorities ....	32
Appendix.....	40

## Introduction

This document presents the updated Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the East Central Indiana region, which is comprised of four counties:

1. Blackford County
2. Delaware County
3. Grant County
4. Jay County

The region's CEDS was last updated in 2003.

This strategic update includes an economic and demographic overview of the region, a description of the updating process, a set of regional strategies, a list of the highest priority projects to carry out those strategies, and a more complete list of priority, economic development projects.

## Executive Summary

In the fall of 2008 regional leaders in East Central Indiana began a process to update its CEDS. The group held regional and local meetings throughout the remainder of 2008. The updated CEDS contains a new vision and goals, an expanded set of action strategies, and a new list of priority economic development projects.

The four top priority projects are:

1. Extend the Norfolk Southern rail line to service the Park One Business Park. (Delaware County)
2. Create two municipal tech centers in Hartford City and Montpelier, respectively. (Blackford County)
3. Improve the storm water system on the southeast corner of Upland. (Grant County)

4. Extend a rail spur that will enable Saint-Gobain to expand its Dunkirk operations. (Jay County)

East Central Indiana will begin implementing its updated CEDS in early 2009.

## The Process for Updating ECI's 2009 CEDS

### **Beginning the Process**

In August 2008, a core group of economic development professionals and local elected officials met to discuss updating the region's CEDS. It was noted that it had been approximately five years since the CEDS was last updated. The regional leaders decided to move forward with an update.

All of the economic development professionals, county commissioners and mayors in the four counties were invited to participate in the planning process. Delaware County Commissioners agreed to hire a planning consultant to help with the effort. The initial leadership group also encouraged participation from a broader segment of the community, including labor, utilities, social services, and education.

Initially, the steering committee had hoped to include Henry and Randolph counties in the regional CEDS. Representatives from those counties attended the November 7<sup>th</sup> steering committee meeting. However, after consulting with Robert Hickey, Indiana's EDA representative, it was determined that Henry and Randolph counties were ineligible to participate because they were part of other regional CEDS.

The Commissioners asked Strategic Development Group, Inc. (SDG) to assist with the updating. SDG's role in the project was to update the economic and demographic information for the region, to facilitate meetings, to prepare written reports during the planning process, and to assist in developing the final, updated CEDS document.

### **September 30, 2008 Meeting**

A group of leaders met on September 30, 2008 to finalize the planning process. At that meeting the group discussed key issues facing the region's economy in terms of the

2003 CEDS. Two follow-up regional meetings were scheduled: one for November 7, 2008 and one for December 2, 2008. In addition, there were follow-up meetings planned for each county to ensure that as many people as possible had input into the CEDS revision.

## The Steering Committee

The steering committee for the CEDS updating process had representatives from each of the four counties. A variety of community sectors were represented, including business, labor, social services, education, and workforce development. Following is a list of Steering Committee members.

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>County</b>
1	Mick Bates	Taylor University	Grant
2	Tom Bennington	Board of County Commissioners	Delaware
3	Chris Bennett	Taylor University	Grant
4	Bill Bradley	Jay County Development Corporation	Jay
5	John Brooke	Board of County Commissioners	Delaware
6	Laurie Byall	Omnicity Corporation	Blackford
7	Jeff Carson	Peerless Machine and Tool Corp.	Grant
8	Joe Certain	Kiley, Harker, & Certain	Grant
9	Holly Chaille	Energize ECI	Region
10	Gary Chenault	United Way	Delaware
11	Rob Cleveland	Economic Development Corporation	Blackford
12	Caleb Crandall	Crandall Engineering	Grant
13	Jacque Dodyk	Affordable Housing Corp.	Grant
14	Tim Eckerle	Grant County Economic Growth Council	Grant
15	Jim Gartland	Atlas Foundry	Grant
16	Susan Gerard	Economic Development Corporation	Blackford
17	Bill Hess	Economic Development Corporation	Blackford
17	Tracy Hartman	WorkOne	Delaware
19	Duane Hazelbaker	AT&T	Grant
20	Mayor Bruce Hosier	City of Portland	Jay
21	Ami Huffman	Jay County Development Corporation	Jay
22	Chuck Huffman	First Merchants Bank	Jay
23	Joe Johnston	Jay County Hospital	Jay

24	Ken Kline	Blackford County Schools	Blackford
25	Mayor Leach	Gas City	Grant
26	Tom Lehman	Indiana Wesleyan University	Grant
27	Daniel Maddox	Town financial Corporation	Blackford
28	Mayor Jim McPherson	City of Montpelier	Blackford
29	Mayor Sharon McShurley	City of Muncie	Delaware
30	Terry Murphy	Delaware Advancement Corporation	Delaware
31	Brad Neff	Neff Realty	Blackford
32	Mike Pickrell	Ivy Tech Community College	Region
33	Annette Phillips	Pathstone Corporation	Delaware
34	Jim Riggie	Indiana Michigan Power	Region
35	Mayor Wayne Seybold	City of Marion	Grant
36	Richard Shirey	City of Muncie	Delaware
37	Missy Shrock	WorkOne Center	Blackford
38	Troy Smith	IBEW Labor Union 855	Delaware
39	Marwyn Stone	Retired	Delaware
40	Barbara Street	East Central Regional Workforce Board	Region
41	Carl Walker	First Merchants Bank	Jay
42	Rob Weaver	John Jay Learning Center	Jay
43	Mayor Dennis Whitesell	Harford City	Blackford
44	Ruth Ann Wiedman	Jay Rural Development Services	Jay
45	Kate Yoder	Grant County EGC	Grant

### **November 7, 2008 Meeting**

At the November 7<sup>th</sup> meeting, SDG president Thayr Richey presented an overview of the regional economy and facilitated a discussion on a revised vision, strategies, and objectives. Here are some of the key issues that were discussed at this meeting:

#### The Regional Economy

The region faces significant problems in population growth, wealth, educational attainment, and employment. The number of residents since 2007 had remained stagnant or, in some counties, had declined. SDG suggested that this stagnation was in part due to the loss of manufacturing employment throughout the region over the past 10 years. Despite the fact that the region is home to Ball State University, the percentage of the region's adults without a B. A. degree is far behind the state average. Three significant trends have emerged in East Central Indiana:

1. The region's population has seen periods of decline; in other periods the population has been static. This is during a time (1990-2007) when the state of Indiana has seen significant growth.
2. Educational attainment in the region is lower than that of Indiana as a whole.
3. The region is among the most economically distressed in Indiana. Several counties have among the lowest median income levels and the highest poverty rates in the state. For example, Delaware County has the second highest poverty rate in the state; and Grant County has the third highest.

A more detailed economic and demographic analysis can be found later in this CEDS report.

### The Vision

The group reviewed the 2003 CEDS vision. There were concerns about the aging labor force and high schools' moving away from technical training. This vision – running from 2009 to 2019 – will be the basis for East Central Indiana's regional economic development efforts. There is a strong emphasis upon education and workforce development. The concept of quality places is a prominent feature that both helps develop an economy and is a product of successful economic growth. Finally, there is a prominence given to cooperation and collaboration on a regional basis.

The new vision can be found later in this CEDS report.

### The Goals

While the vision was changed only slightly from the 2003 version, the goals received a number of changes. There was concern that the inter-county highway system was inadequate, from both a north-south and an east-west perspective. There was a great deal of discussion about how to improve educational attainment rates. And the group was committed to developing improved access to information technology – broadband telecommunications, and other media.

The new list of goals can be found later in this CEDS report

### Action Strategies

This area received the greatest change from the 2003 CEDS. The 2003 CEDS update had four action strategies with 13 initiatives. The CEDS committee recommended five strategies with 21 initiatives for the 2009 CEDS.

The participants discussed some of the accomplishments since 2003. Perhaps the highest accolades went to the creation of Energize ECI, which is a regional economic development group.

In addition, various issues received substantial discussion. These issues included:

- The need for greater collaboration with the regional workforce boards (East Central Indiana counties are served by two separate RWBs)
- The importance of excellent access to Indiana's interstate system
- The growing demand for mass public transit
- A closer working relationship between economic development and education – both K-12 and post secondary

The new list of action strategies can be found later in this CEDS report.

#### **December 2, 2008 Meeting**

At the December 7<sup>th</sup> meeting the regional participants focused on the region's priority projects. The group tentatively identified the top regional project for each county as well as listed other critical economic development projects for the region. Those projects are listed later in this CEDS report.

#### **County Level Meetings: December 10-16**

Following up on the two regional meetings, SDG facilitated one meeting in each of the four counties. These meetings helped ensure that a broader spectrum of community representatives would be able to participate in the CEDS planning process.



The county meetings all focused on three issues:

1. Vision and goals
2. Top regional priority projects
3. Complementary county-level priority projects

Each of the county meetings was well attended. Each meeting had approximately 10 to 15 participants. A list of complementary county-level priority projects is detailed later in this CEDS report.

### **Approval of the Final Plan**

The steering committee members will be sent a copy of the draft updated CEDS on January 9, 2009. Edits and other comments will be sent to SDG for inclusion in the final draft. If there are significant disagreements another steering committee meeting will be held to finalize the strategy

# Regional Profile

## Overview

Overall, the four counties of East Central Indiana (ECI) face significant economic development problems. The region has lost a large number of manufacturing jobs over the past two decades. The region's population has generally been stagnant over that same period of time. In terms of income, counties in the region confront severe economic distress, with low personal per capita income levels and correspondingly high poverty rates in the state.

## Methodology and Sources

This report uses public sources such as the U.S. Census and U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, but it also includes projections and estimates from STATS Indiana. STATS Indiana is a service of the Indiana Business Research Center at Indiana University's Kelley School of Business that receives major support from the Indiana Department of Workforce Development and from the Lilly Endowment, Inc.

While analyzing an economy can involve a wide array of statistical categories, SDG has found that four significant statistical areas provide a clear starting point. Those four areas are:

1. Population growth
2. Income
3. Employment by business sector
4. Educational attainment levels

Generally speaking, communities, counties, and states that have a high population growth, high income, a diverse employment base; and high educational attainment levels tend to have healthy economies.

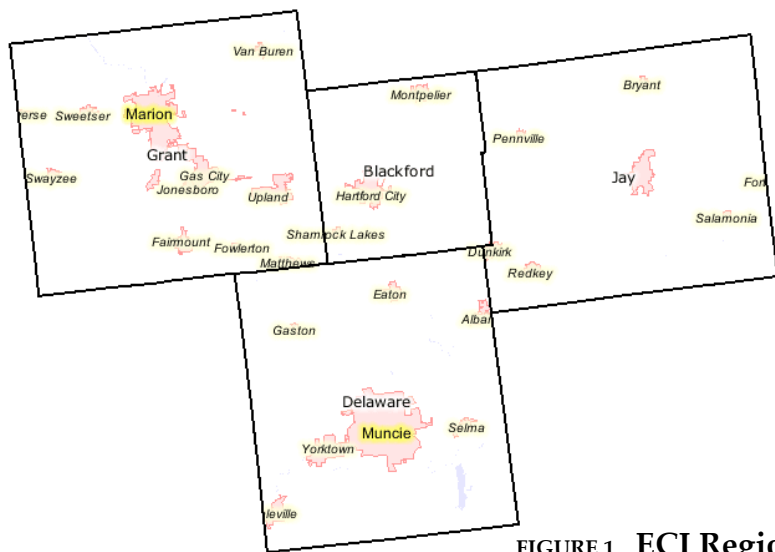


FIGURE 1. ECI Region

## Geography

The report includes data on a region that includes Blackford, Delaware, Grant, and Jay counties. **Figure 1** illustrates the East Central Indiana (ECI) region. The region is located in northeast Indiana between Indianapolis and Fort Wayne. The ECI region has a land area of 1,356.0 square miles and a population density of 161.5 people per square mile.

## Population

Communities with a dynamic economy and high quality of life are keeping their citizens and attracting new ones. Residents remain in and move to communities that offer excellence and opportunity for jobs, education, cultural enrichment, recreation, and for a safe and healthy lifestyle.

As **Table 1** shows, the ECI region experienced a slight decline in population (-0.6 percent) between 1990 and 2000. During that time the state's population grew nearly 10 percentage points. Projections for 2010 and 2015 indicate that the region's population is expected to continue to decline and would still lag its population levels in 1990. Muncie is the largest city in the ECI region with a population of 65,410 in 2007 – 29.9 percent of the region's total population.

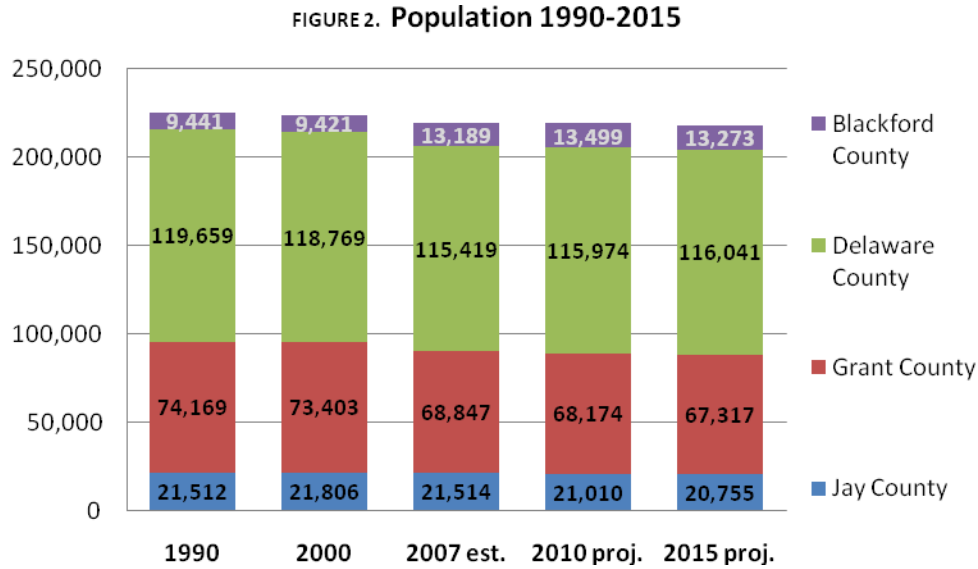
TABLE 1. ECI Region Population 1990-2015				
1990	2000	2007 est.*	2010 proj.**	2015 proj.**
224,781	223,399	218,969	218,657	217,386

Source: *STATS Indiana*

\* Based on county estimates prepared by the Indiana Business Research Center

\*\* Based on county projections prepared by the Indiana Business Research Center

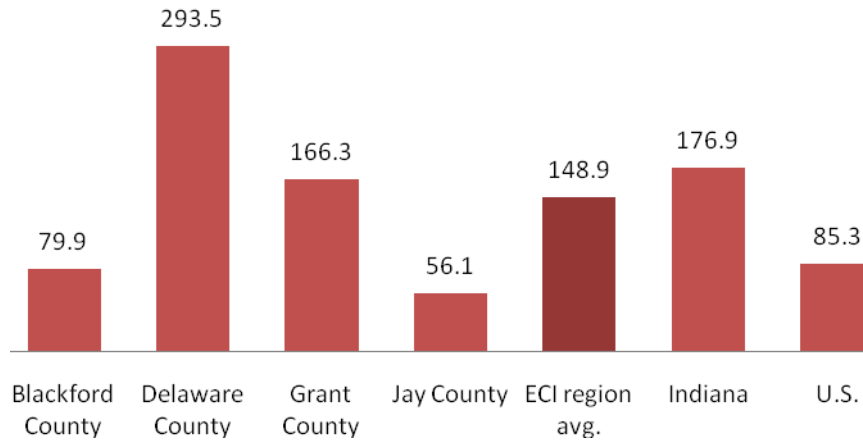
**Figure 2** illustrates the population trends of the ECI region by county. Only Blackford and Delaware counties are projected to have growth between 2007 and 2015.



**Figure 2** above shows ECI’s counties that stagnant and in some cases declining population. The number of residents in Delaware, Grant, and Jay Counties declined between 2000 and 2007.

Population density measures total population within a geographic entity divided by the land area of that entity measured in square miles. **Figure 3** below shows population density of the ECI region and individual counties as they compare with the state and nation.

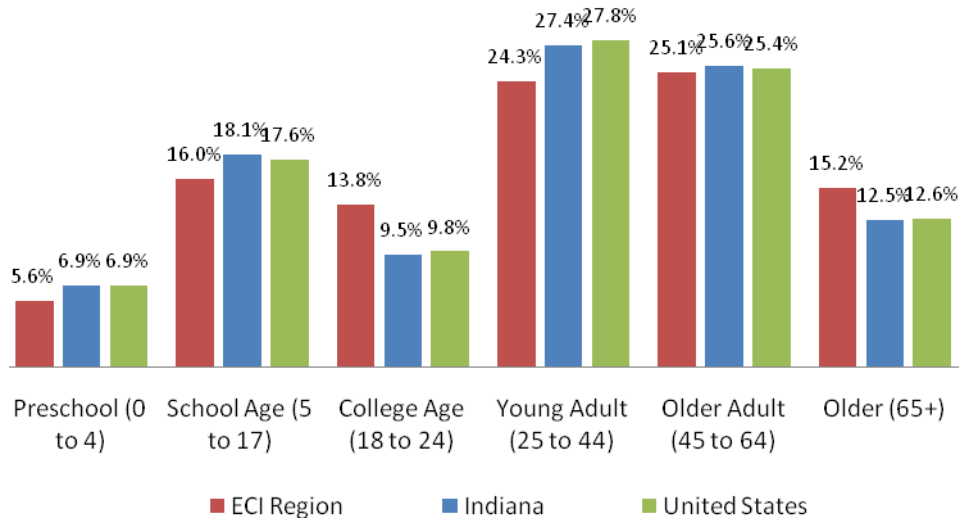
**FIGURE 3. Population Density Per Square Mile (2000)**



Delaware County, with the largest population in ECI, has the highest population density in the ECI region and a higher population density than either the state or the U. S. Overall, the ECI region has fewer people per square mile than does Indiana as a whole.

**Figure 4** illustrates that the ECI region and Indiana have similar age distributions by age group. The greatest gap exists among college age adults – those individuals that are between 18 and 24 years of age. The ECI region has a noticeably higher percent of college age adults due in part to the presence of colleges and university, Ball State University in particular. However, those educated young adults do not remain in the region. The second biggest gap is between young adults. The disparity between the region and state in this age group suggests that the ECI region has a smaller population of working adults.

FIGURE 4. Population Distribution by Age, 2007



## Education

Educational attainment and educational opportunities are keys to community success. Communities with higher average educational attainment levels have greater resources for leadership and community problem solving. It also contributes to the productivity and effectiveness of the workforce.

The quality of educational resources ensures that the intellectual capital to sustain the community and make it progress will remain in place. Strong local schools are also key factors in attracting new businesses and new residents.

The ECI region reported lower educational attainment levels than the state in 2000. The greatest disparity was among adults with bachelor's degrees or higher. While Delaware County's percent of adults with a B.A. or higher was greater than the state's, the ECI region average was far lower. **Table 2** shows the educational attainment levels in 2000 for individual counties, the regional average, and state.

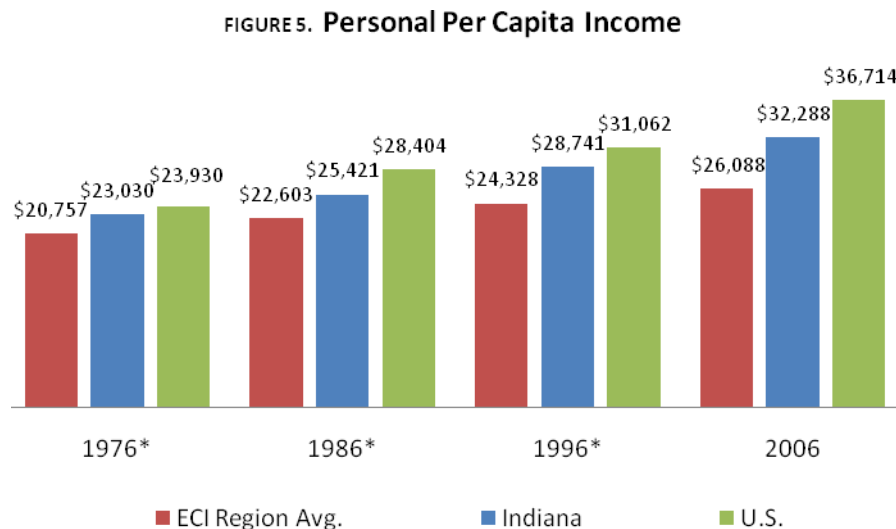
TABLE 2. Educational Attainment of Adults 25+, 2000		
	High School Diploma +	Bachelor's Degree +
Blackford County	81.3%	10.3%
Delaware County	81.6%	20.4%
Grant County	79.2%	14.1%
Jay County	78.5%	9.9%
<b>ECI Region Average</b>	<b>80.2%</b>	<b>13.7%</b>
<b>Indiana</b>	<b>82.1%</b>	<b>19.4%</b>

Source: STATS Indiana

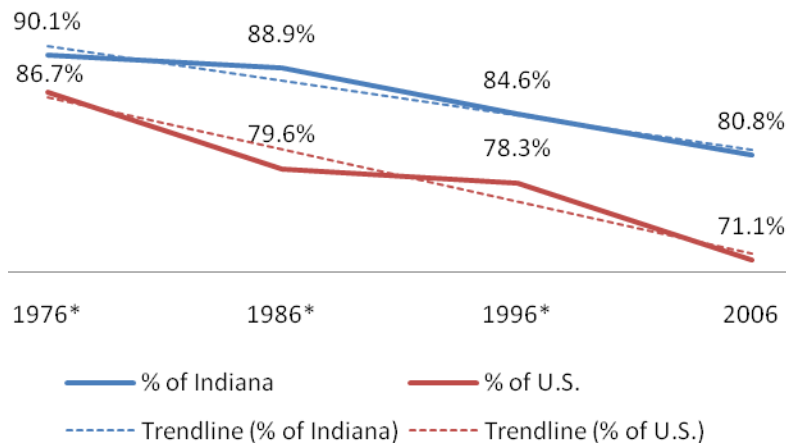
## Wealth

It's no stretch to call the ECI region among the most economically distressed in Indiana. Several counties have among the lowest personal per capita income levels and highest poverty rates in the state.

Personal Per Capita Income levels represent an average obtained by dividing aggregate income by total population of an area. **Figure 5** shows PPCI levels that are adjusted for inflation. Although the ECI region's Personal Per Capita Income (PPCI) has increased since 1976, the wealth disparity has consistently widened between the region and the state and nation. **Figure 6** illustrates the growing gap in PPCIs.



**FIGURE 6. ECI Region Personal Per Capita Income as Percent of State and Nation**



Source: STATS Indiana; U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

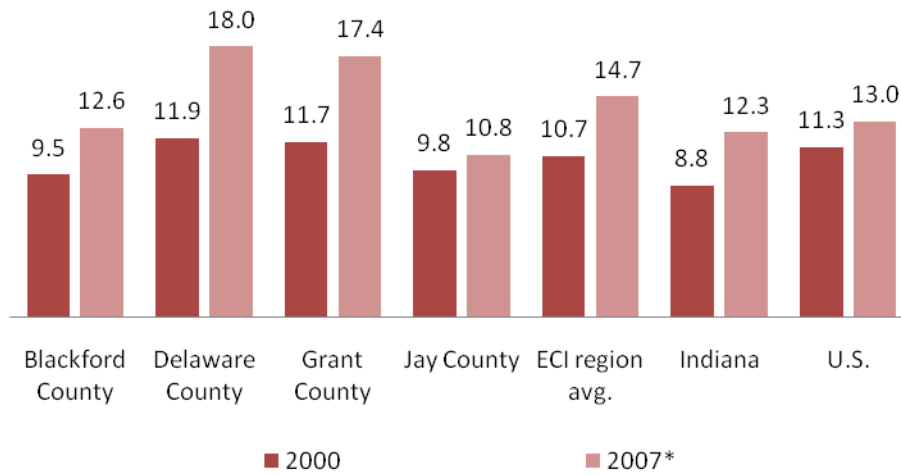
\* Adjusted for inflation

The poverty rate tracks the percentage of individuals who are below the poverty threshold. These thresholds are the dollar amounts used to determine poverty status, and vary according to the size and age of family members. The same thresholds are used throughout the United States and do not vary geographically.

Overall, the ECI region reports higher poverty rates than the state or nation. In 2007, the regional average was 14.7 – nearly two full points higher than Indiana’s and the U.S.’s poverty rates. **Figure 7** illustrates the poverty rates for the counties in the ECI region, Indiana and the U.S. in 2000 and 2007.



FIGURE 7. Poverty Rates



Source: STATS Indiana

\* U.S. Census Bureau Small Area Income & Poverty Estimates

Delaware County had the third highest poverty rate in the state in 2007, while Grant County had the fourth highest. Nearly 20 percent of the population in Delaware County was below the poverty threshold in 2007. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that 22.9 percent of Delaware County’s children, under age 18, lived below the poverty threshold in that year.<sup>1</sup>

While more recent poverty rates are not readily available, it is likely that the situation has worsened in the current economic crisis.

### Employment

The changes in the percentage of jobs by sector can be an indication of how communities are transitioning from old line manufacturing to the high tech, knowledge-based, service-oriented economy. As the higher paying manufacturing jobs decline, the quality of the service sector jobs replacing them becomes paramount.

The ECI region’s total employment consisted of 118,135 workers in 2006. 97.5 percent of those workers were engaged in work that is classified as nonfarm<sup>2</sup>. The manufacturing sector reported the highest average wage per job (\$62,343), while the arts, entertainment, and recreation had the lowest average wage (\$8,889).

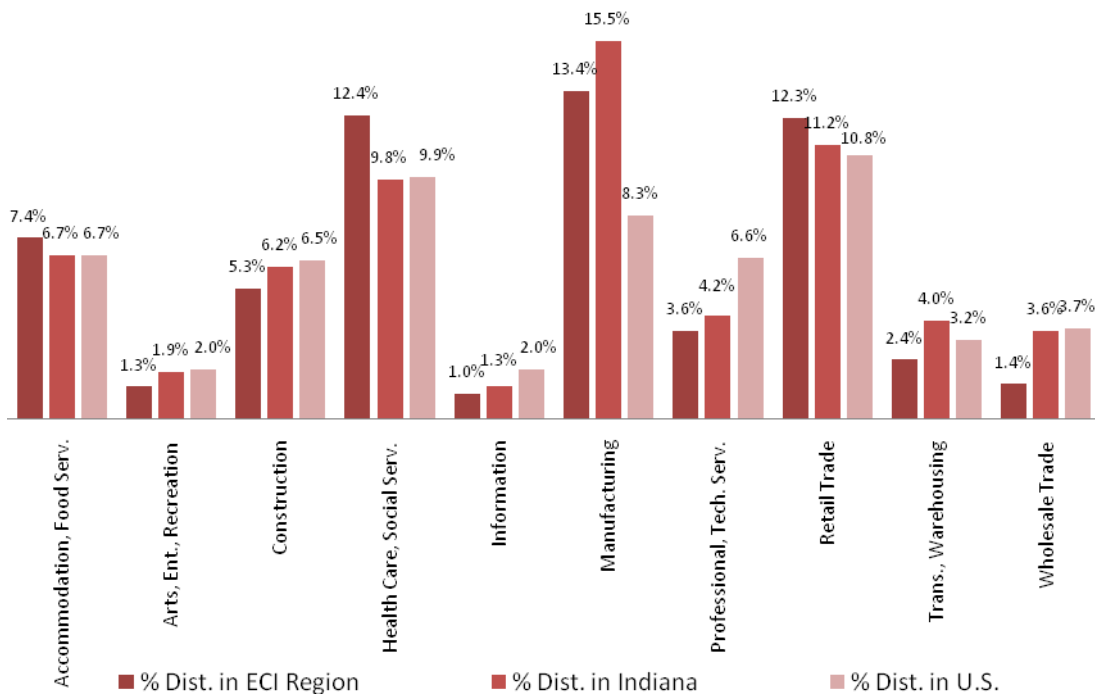
<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Income & Poverty Estimates (SAIPE).

<sup>2</sup> Based on the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS).

Manufacturing remains the dominant force in the ECI region economy. It comprised the largest employment sector in 2006 with 15,826 employees.

The ECI region had higher percentages than the state in accommodations and food service, retail trade, and healthcare and social services. However, the total employment counts for the ECI region do not include county data that are unavailable due to BEA non-disclosure requirements.<sup>3</sup>

FIGURE 8. % Distribution of Employment by Industry (NAICS), 2006



Source: STATS Indiana; U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

Employment earnings in the ECI region are well below the state average - particularly in the arts, entertainment, and recreation sectors where there is a gap of \$15,861 in average earnings. **Table 3** includes private sector average earnings data from 2006. Only Delaware County reports complete employment and earnings data; the other three counties in the ECI region are restricted by BEA non-disclosure requirements.

<sup>3</sup> The industry sectors that do not include county data that are unavailable due to BEA non-disclosure regulations include: Accommodation and Food Services, Arts and Entertainment and Recreation, Health Care and Social Services, Transportation and Warehousing, Wholesale Trade, and Other Private.

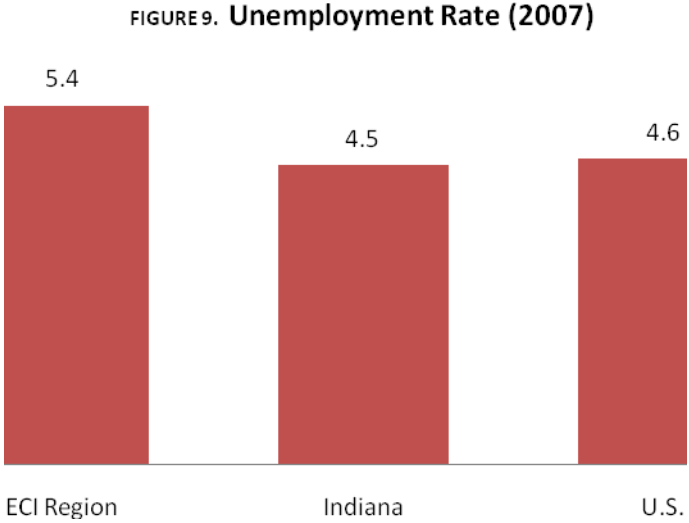
**TABLE 3. Average Earnings Per Job (2006)**

Employment	ECI Region	Indiana	U.S.
Total place by work	\$34,054	\$41,007	\$47,286
Accommodation, Food Serv.	\$13,552*	\$14,938	\$19,576
Arts, Ent., Recreation	\$8,889*	\$24,750	\$24,091
Construction	\$32,471	\$42,493	\$47,439
Health Care, Social Serv.	\$40,594*	\$42,635	\$44,604
Information	\$31,113	\$49,701	\$82,715
Manufacturing	\$62,343	\$69,725	\$70,956
Professional, Tech. Serv.	\$38,480	\$50,420	\$68,877
Retail Trade	\$19,627	\$23,149	\$24,715
Trans., Warehousing	\$37,013*	\$43,559	\$48,878
Wholesale Trade	\$44,694*	\$58,764	\$67,687
Other Private (not above)	\$22,231*	\$31,730	\$65,192

Source: STATS Indiana; U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

\* These totals do not include county data that are not available due to BEA non-disclosure requirements.

As **Figure 9** illustrates, the unemployment rate was higher in the ECI region than the state or nation in 2007. More recent figures show that the ECI region’s unemployment rate jumped to 7.5 in November of 2008.



Source: STATS Indiana; Indiana Department of Workforce Development

## County Economic Profiles

### Blackford County

The smallest county in the ECI region in terms of land area, Blackford County consists of 165.1 square miles. The county includes four incorporated communities; Hartford City is the largest with 6,347 people in 2007.

The county has among the lowest indicators in the state; Blackford County ranked 80<sup>th</sup> or lower in terms of population, population growth, number of households, labor force, and income levels.

Manufacturing is the driving force of Blackford County's economy. In 2006, Manufacturing accounted for 26.3 percent of the county's total employment. With an average wage of \$46,467, Manufacturing jobs remain the highest paying in Blackford County.

Overview of Blackford County		
Indicator (by Place of Residence)	Value	Rank in State (of 92 counties)
Population (2007)	13,189	84
% Growth since 1990	-6.2%	89
Households (2000)	5,690	82
Labor Force (2007)	6,584	84
Unemployment Rate (2007)	5.8%	7
Per Capita Personal Income (2006)	\$25,027	82
Median Household Income (2005)	\$37,671	80
Poverty Rate (2005)	11.7%	38
H.S. Diploma or Higher - % of Adults 25+ (2000)	81.3	39
Bachelor's Degree or Higher - % of Adults 25+ (2000)	10.3	69

Source: STATS Indiana

## Delaware County

Delaware County has a land area of 393.3 square miles. There are seven incorporated areas in the county. Muncie is the largest with 65,410 people in 2007.

Delaware County has among the lowest population growth and median household income levels in the state. However, the county reported the 14<sup>th</sup> largest population in the state in 2007.

Health care and social assistance comprises the largest private employment sector in Delaware County. It accounted for 15.5 percent of the county's total employment in 2006 and had an average wage of \$40,669. Retail trade was the county's second largest employment sector for that year with 8,498 employees.

Overview of Delaware County		
Indicator (by Place of Residence)	Value	Rank in State (of 92 counties)
Population (2007)	115,419	14
% Growth since 1990	-3.5%	82
Households (2000)	47,131	11
Labor Force (2007)	55,746	14
Unemployment Rate (2007)	5.2%	21
Per Capita Personal Income (2006)	\$27,735	53
Median Household Income (2005)	\$35,163	89
Poverty Rate (2005)	18.3%	2
H.S. Diploma or Higher - % of Adults 25+ (2000)	81.6	36
Bachelor's Degree or Higher - % of Adults 25+ (2000)	20.4	15

Source: STATS Indiana

Delaware County has recently experienced a substantial loss of jobs due to the closure of two major employers. Dyn America's closing ended 125 jobs. Borg Warner had a greater economic impact with the loss of 796 jobs. Both of these operations were auto parts manufacturers. Borg Warner was a Tier One supplier to the automotive industry.

## Grant County

Grant County is the largest county in the ECI region in terms of size and has a land area of 414.0 square miles. There are no less than eleven incorporated areas in the county. Marion is the largest with 30,363 people in 2007. The second largest community is Gas City, which had a population of 5,689 in 2007.

Of Indiana's 92 counties, Grant County had the slowest growing population between 1990 and 2007; the county lost 7.2 percent of its population during that time. Poverty and unemployment rates are among the highest in the state.

In 2006, manufacturing was the county's largest private employment sector and had the highest average wage (\$76,899).

Overview of Grant County		
Indicator (by Place of Residence)	Value	Rank in State (of 92 counties)
Population (2007)	68,847	23
% Growth since 1990	-7.2%	92
Households (2000)	28,319	20
Labor Force (2007)	31,906	25
Unemployment Rate (2007)	6.1%	4
Per Capita Personal Income (2006)	\$26,476	72
Median Household Income (2005)	\$36,733	84
Poverty Rate (2005)	17.9%	3
H.S. Diploma or Higher - % of Adults 25+ (2000)	79.2	67
Bachelor's Degree or Higher - % of Adults 25+ (2000)	14.1	35

Source: STATS Indiana

## Jay County

Jay County is the only county in the ECI region that borders Ohio. It has a land area of 383.6 square miles. With a population of 6,190 in 2007, Portland is the largest of six incorporated areas in the county.

Jay County's total employment is among the smallest in the ECI region with only 11,521 in 2006. Manufacturing accounted for more than a quarter of the county's total private employment.

Overview of Jay County		
Indicator (by Place of Residence)	Value	Rank in State (of 92 counties)
Population (2007)	21,514	69
% Growth since 1990	0.0%	74
Households (2000)	8,405	67
Labor Force (2007)	11,652	65
Unemployment Rate (2007)	4.3%	60
Per Capita Personal Income (2006)	\$25,112	81
Median Household Income (2005)	\$33,813	91
Poverty Rate (2005)	12.3%	30
H.S. Diploma or Higher - % of Adults 25+ (2000)	78.5	72
Bachelor's Degree or Higher - % of Adults 25+ (2000)	9.9	77

Source: STATS Indiana

## The Vision

The vision explains an ideal future for the region. This particular vision for East Central Indiana covers a 10-year period. It will serve as the touchstone for the region's plans and projects.

### The East Central Indiana Economic Development Vision

Ten years from now the civic leaders and residents of East Central Indiana will have fully embraced the competitive realities of the new economy, characterized by high performance, innovation, and pursuit of quality in business, government, and education. Growth doesn't mean bigger, it means better – more competitive, technologically advanced, and agile in an ever-changing economy.

The Region will be known for:

- Excellence in education and training at all levels.
- Scholastic and vocational excellence in education and training at all levels.
- Efficient and accessible transportation.
- Quality communities in which to raise a family.
- A pleasant living environment, well planned, and attractive.
- A productive workforce teamed with management to advance mutual goals.
- A high technology business and industrial base.
- High degrees of collaboration and cooperation among units of government, labor, education, faith-based and civic organizations.
- An entrepreneurial climate.



## The Goals

A region's goals should be based upon its vision and should be structured in such a way that the vision can be achieved. The goals are the fundamental targets on which an organization should focus as it articulates its activities. The activity in turn should support one or more of our goals.

### East Central Indiana Goals

East Central Indiana has eight basic goals that will guide all of our regional activity. They are:

1. Skill levels of incumbent and future workers at or above the U.S. and Midwest averages.
2. 100 percent high school graduation rates.
3. The region's educational attainment level should be at or above the state average by 2018.
4. Improved access and efficiency of transportation throughout the region.
5. Average wages per worker at or above the U.S. average by 2015.
6. Access to information technology equal to or superior to anywhere in the world.
7. Highly coordinated and collaborative regional planning, action, and financing.
8. Tax, regulatory, and information policies that enable the region's firms to compete nationally and globally on a level playing field.

## Action Strategies

The five action strategies detail how East Central Indiana will reach its goals. The strategies are based upon the region's goals. Each of the following five strategies has one or more supporting initiatives. There are a total of 21 initiatives.

**Action Strategy One:** Improve and sustain regional planning and coordination with a particular focus on bringing together workforce and economic development agencies with a shared vision.

*Initiative One:* Create an EDA-approved Economic Development District (EDD). Since 2003, the region has formed Energize ECI, which focuses on regional economic development. A logical next step might be to move Energize ECI toward an Economic Development District.

*Initiative Two:* Continue to work together as a regional marketing group through Energize ECI.

The creation of Energize ECI is seen by regional leaders as a step in the process of moving toward an EDD. ECI has been successful in carrying out its regional marketing mission.

### Suggested Action Steps

1. Discuss the process of creating an EDD with the leaders of existing Indiana EDDs.
2. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of moving toward an EDD with the leadership of Energize ECI.
3. Work closely with EDA.
4. Explore the possibility of merging with an existing Indiana EDD.

## **Immediate Priorities**

1. Present updated CEDS to each Board of County Commissioners in the region.
2. Begin implementation of each action step.

## **2009-2010 Priorities**

1. Continue to support Energize ECI in maintaining site data and implementing regional marketing.
2. Begin the process of exploring the creation of an EDD.
3. Meet with other EDDs to discuss the merits.
4. Begin biannual update of the CEDS.

**Action Strategy Two:** Work in partnership with the Regional Workforce Boards (RWB) to improve productivity and enhance existing and new products and services by focusing on ways whereby worker skills match business investment in new equipment and technology.

*Initiative Three:* Continue the regional Health Care Skills Alliance.

*Initiative Four:* Develop an advanced manufacturing skills-based alliance as a means of articulating skill needs of firms and delivering training services that meet the needs of the marketplace (local industries and agriculture).

*Initiative Five:* Using the organizational structure and broad leadership representation (from business, education, and economic development) of the RWBs, create a council to implement the WorkKeys skills assessment and job profiling system into the region's schools and businesses.

*Initiative Six:* Organize and conduct an annual Workforce Development Summit to share and discuss progress and new challenges in the workforce development arena.

*Initiative Seven:* Assure continuation of a workforce development infrastructure for the provision of value-added workforce development services in the region.

### **Suggested Action Steps**

1. Meet with the leadership of the Northeast and East Central Regional Workforce Boards to discuss joint projects in the region.
2. Support the two regional workforce boards as they seek new funding for ECI projects.

### **2009-2010 Priorities**

1. Create a work team for a workforce summit in late 2009.
2. Assist the regional workforce boards in reviewing the status of the WorkOne Centers in ECI.
3. Develop a team to move the WorkKeys initiative forward.
4. Hold the first ECI workforce summit.
5. Begin implementing WorkKeys in a broader set of schools and businesses.

**Action Strategy Three:** support the diversification of the regional economy into those sectors that use advanced technology and generate higher paying jobs.

*Initiative Eight:* Secure funding to develop a Regional Technology and Innovation Plan (RTIP) that will identify and create the overall business climate, infrastructure, and physical environment for new business development.

*Initiative Nine:* Use the new RTIP in supporting entrepreneurs and other growth businesses. This support includes the attraction of alternative energy generating businesses in areas such as wind and solar power.

*Initiative Ten:* Use the new RTIP to attract and retain members of the creative class, which is commonly recognized as the core workforce for knowledge-based business.

*Initiative Eleven:* Work with the Indiana Department of Workforce Development and East Central Indiana's Regional Workforce Boards on a variety of new programs such as "Dream It, Do It."

*Initiative Twelve:* Identify current and emerging regional growth industries and clusters. Use the Center for Automotive Research's Automotive Community Program as a template to develop retention and attraction strategies for the identified sectors.

*Initiative Thirteen:* Evaluate the region's agricultural economy and explore opportunities and funding resources for value-added food products, fuels, and pharmaceuticals.

*Initiative Fourteen:* Recognize and promote post-secondary education (vocational and academic opportunities) as a critical element of the region's economy, both as a way to improve our workforce and quality of life, and as an important means of creating wealth.

*Initiative Fifteen:* Support the creation of new infrastructure for business and industrial development throughout the region. This support would include business parks and speculative buildings in areas where facilities do not exist.

*Initiative Sixteen:* Support the rehabilitation and reuse of vacant industrial facilities and promote infill opportunities.

### **Suggested Action Steps**

1. Form an ECI economic development team to target growth industries.
2. Support K-12 schools that will promote post-secondary training and education.

### **2009-2010 Priorities**

1. Find funding for infrastructure projects that are critical to employment growth.
2. Begin work on the Regional Technology and Innovation Plan.

**Action Strategy Four:** Recognizing that this region has a high level of commuting into and out of the four counties, ensure that our quality of life and mobility is improved through excellent transportation, telecommunications, and basic infrastructure.

*Initiative Seventeen:* Explore regional and state options for public transportation. Identify key transportation issues and seek to influence transportation policy decisions that impact the region's development. Look for opportunities to encourage multi-model transportation operations.

*Initiative Eighteen:* As a component of the RTIP, prepare an analysis of the current and potential use of advanced telecommunications by regional businesses and manufacturers. Create strategies for closing the gap between the actual and the optimum situation.

*Initiative Nineteen:* Ensure that all of the region's citizens and employers have excellent transportation access to near-by metro areas such Fort Wayne and Indianapolis.

### **Suggested Action Steps**

1. Begin working with appropriate state agencies on transportation and communication projects.
2. Develop survey instruments for the region's employers on telecommunications needs.

### **2009-2010 Priorities**

1. Develop a regional transportation task force.
2. Develop a regional telecommunications task force.
3. Work with faculty and staff at Ball State University on telecommunications options.
4. Obtain funding for and complete a study of the costs of building and operating a light rail system between Muncie and Indianapolis.

**Action Strategy Five:** Collaborate on creating proposals to prospective employers.

*Initiative Twenty:* Use Energize ECI as a vehicle for collaboration.

*Initiative Twenty-one:* Support state legislation for multi-county tax revenue sharing; this would enable multiple counties to directly benefit from the tax revenue from new basic employers.

### **Suggested Action Steps**

1. Review the current marketing plan of each county and Energize ECI to promote collaboration where possible.
2. Work with Energize ECI to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of county-level marketing plans through joint operations.
3. Research other states' experience with multiple county tax revenue-sharing.

### **2009-2010 Priorities**

1. Work with other Indiana regions on Initiative 21.
2. Explore Energize ECI's ability to foster collaboration in all areas of economic development.

## Regional Program Strategies

The East Central Indiana region has chosen five program strategies. These program strategies are based on the general principles of effective economic development. In one sense, these five statements articulate a statement of values for the region's approach to reaching its long-term vision.

The significance of terms and phrases such as regional planning, working in partnership, diversification, quality of life, and collaboration helps both regional leadership and the general public to understand the underlying themes that have been used to develop the CEDS.

### East Central Indiana Program Strategies

1. Improve and sustain regional planning and coordination with a particular focus on bringing together workforce and economic development agencies with a shared vision.
2. Work in partnership with the Regional Workforce Boards (RWB) to improve productivity and enhance existing and new products and services by focusing on ways whereby worker skills match business investment in new equipment and technology.
3. Support the diversification of the regional economy into those sectors that use advanced technology and generate higher paying jobs.
4. Recognizing that this region has a high level of commuting into and out of the four counties, ensure that our quality of life and mobility is improved through excellent transportation, telecommunications, and basic infrastructure.
5. Collaborate, where appropriate, on creating proposals to prospective employers, particularly when requested by the prospect.



## Top Regional Economic Development Project Priorities

Although the region has a relatively long list of potential projects that will enhance economic development, the steering committee identified one priority project for each county. The following list of four top projects describes the project and (in parentheses) identifies the county.

### Top Regional Economic Development Project Priorities

1. Extension of the Norfolk Southern rail line to service the Park One Business Park. (Delaware County)
2. Improve a street by paving that will connect the Petoskey Plastics facility to the Hartford Industrial Park. Currently, all semi traffic has to access Petoskey Plastics through the residential streets of Hartford City. This is causing damages to the infrastructure and, in some cases, property damage. The project will help retain an important employer. The engineering on this project has already been completed. The estimated cost is \$395,000. (Blackford County)
3. Improve the storm water system on the southeast corner of Upland. (Grant County)
4. Extend a rail spur that will enable Saint-Gobain to expand its Dunkirk operations. (Jay County)

## Complementary Local Economic Development Project Priorities

An important part of the process for updating the CEDS was to enable regional and local leaders to identify important economic development projects. The following projects are organized by county (by alphabetical order). At the beginning of each county's list the highest priority project is listed. Then the other projects are listed in numbered order, although the numbers do not represent any priority.

### Blackford County Priorities

The highest priority project in Blackford County is the improvement of a street by paving that will connect the Petoskey Plastics facility to the Hartford Industrial Park. Currently, all semi traffic has to access Petoskey Plastics through the residential streets of Hartford City. This is causing damages to the infrastructure and, in some cases, property damage. The project will help retain an important employer. The engineering on this project has already been completed. The estimated cost is \$395,000. (Blackford County)

Following is a list of other priority economic development projects for Blackford County. The list is not in prioritized order.

1. Creation of two municipal technology centers in Hartford City and Montpelier respectively.
2. Continue promotion of the Montpelier Industrial Park in an attempt to grow Blackford County's tax base and to reduce its unemployment figures.
3. Discover the best option of ensuring that Blackford County has broadband services accessible to each and every resident and business in the county.
4. Develop programs focusing on workforce development among Blackford County high school students and residents. One possibility could be using IVY Tech programs.
5. Entice new businesses into the vacated buildings in Blackford County.

6. Expand SR 26 and SR 18 from the Hartford City Industrial Park and from Montpelier, respectively, to Interstate 69.
7. Acquire property and extend infrastructure to increase shovel-ready employer sites throughout the county.
8. Redevelop the sidewalks on State Road 3 in Hartford City.
9. Construct sidewalks to all schools in Blackford County to provide safe passage for students.
10. Attract younger, higher-educated residents to Blackford County by promoting the county's economical advantages and low crime rate.
11. Bring a new arm of the Norfolk Southern Railway nearer to the Montpelier Industrial Park.
12. Revitalize the Hartford City downtown area.
13. Work with a developer interested in utilizing the former hospital facility in Hartford City.
14. Improve the appearance and overall feel of Blackford County by working closely with the Demolition Coalition to pinpoint and improve areas in need of redevelopment.
15. Search for funding to develop internet-based college courses at Blackford High School.
16. Develop Blackford County greenways trails and bike paths with the high school as one terminus.
17. Develop the Godfrey Indiana Reserve into an Indiana State Park.
18. Correct the Montpelier and Hartford City combined sewer overflow situation.
19. Develop a spec building for new employers.

## Delaware County Projects

The extension of the Norfolk Southern rail line to service the Park One Business Park is the county's highest economic development project priority.

Following is a list of Delaware County's other priority economic development projects. The list is not in prioritized order.

1. Water and sewer line extension to SR 28, Exit 45.
2. Expand the water and sewer system in Park One Business Park.
3. Extend water and sewer lines to the Ag Bio Vision and Industrial Park.
4. Reuse and retrofit existing vacant industrial facilities such as Borg-Warner and ABB; this process could include investigation, remediation, planning, and redevelopment activities.
5. Continue to market available facilities.
6. Correct the Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) problems in Muncie.
7. Improve Muncie roads and sidewalks.
8. Develop business parks in smaller communities.
9. Develop new business parks in Muncie.
10. Create a land bank for future business sites.
11. Develop speculative facilities that could include technology, data, and industrial shell buildings.
12. Develop a regional light rail system.
13. Emphasize a livable-cities approach to economic development:
  - a. Continue the revitalization of Muncie's downtown.
  - b. Begin aesthetic redevelopment of Muncie assets such as parks and playgrounds.

- c. Create and fund a plan to revitalize existing housing and promote infill of new housing.
  - d. Redevelop neighborhoods in Muncie.
  - e. Develop local facilities in Muncie and Delaware County to assist young adults with education and employment.
14. Work with Ball State University's Digital Media Project to retain and grow more digital technology-based employers.
  15. Develop a regional inter-modal logistics facility.
  16. Build a new Ivy Tech campus in Delaware County.
  17. Promote a unified vision in Muncie and Delaware County.
  18. Continue to reach out to residents to see what they want in their community's economy.
  19. Continue to build the Muncie Revolving Loan Fund.
  20. Create a Delaware County Revolving Loan Fund.
  21. Develop a planning study to determine the potential of a new and/or expanded technology park and an accompanying working business plan.
  22. Secure approximately \$20 million in federal funding for alternative energy employer projects.

## Grant County Projects

The highest priority project in Grant County is the Town of Upland's storm water project, which has an estimated cost of \$264,108. An environmental assessment has been performed for this project with a finding of no significant impact.

Following is a list of other priority economic development projects for Grant County. The list is not in prioritized order.

1. Build a water tower at State Road 18 and I-69. The "Water Storage Needs Analysis," recently completed by an outside consulting firm, determined that this location requires a 1.0 million gallon tank to in order to provide adequate water supply and pressure to existing and potential employers in the State Road 18 corridor. (County)
2. First Street in Gas City is a main route to Marion and is heavily traveled by trucks. As a result, there is a great need for a total rebuild of street, curbing and sidewalks from the high school on the north end to South "H" Street, which is a total of 1.5 miles. (Gas City)
3. On the east end of the city, near the interstate, there is a need for street repairs and new streets need to be added to aid in economic development. (Gas City)
4. North Sloan Drive, approximately 1350 feet long, is in need of repairs and installation of curbs. (Gas City)
5. Wheelteck Drive, which extends approximately 1225 feet from Sloan Drive to the rear of an industrial building and also borders on the north side of many acres of shovel ready land, is in dire need of rebuild, including the base and curbing. (Gas City)
6. A new water plant with 3- million gallons per day with 4-wells and enough expansion for the quality and quantity is in the planning stage. (Gas City)
7. Upgrade meters to radio-read meters. (Gas City)
8. The town's projects will include looping of 5100 feet of six and eight inch water mains on the east and west side of town at a estimated cost of \$264,108.00.

Environmental Assessment has been completed with no significant impact found. (Gas City)

9. The town's engineers have been approved by the council to proceed with a storm water project on the southeast corner of town. There is currently no estimated dollar figure for the project. (Town of Upland)
9. Butler Ave. extension (Factory to Braewick Ave. and New Signal at Braewick and the St. Rd. 9) 44th St. Enhancement (From St. Rd. 9 to Washington St.) for new entrance into Indiana Wesleyan University St. Rd. 18 Corridor enhancement Park Ave. Widening for Truck traffic from St. Rd. 18 west to Factory Ave. (City of Marion)
10. Extension of Corridor Drive West to 500 East for access to Traffic Signal from the New Ivy Tech College. (City of Marion)
11. Marion combined sewer overflow project. (City of Marion)
12. Acquiring or building a 30,000 s. f. facility to serve as a small business incubator. Estimated costs are \$3,000,000 to \$4,000,000. The preferred location is proximate to the I-69/State Road 18 intersection. (City of Marion)
13. Airport infrastructure improvements. (Grant County)

## Jay County Projects and Priorities

The highest economic development priority project in Jay County is the extension of a rail spur that will enable Saint-Gobain to expand its Dunkirk operations.

Following is a list of other priority economic development projects for Jay County. The list is not in prioritized order.

1. Continued infrastructure development in Bryant, Dunkirk, Pennville, Portland, Redkey, and Salamonia.
2. Create a plan for Downtown Revitalization Plan for Dunkirk.
3. Fund historic renovation projects in Portland.
4. Update or create plans for Downtown Revitalization in Bryant, Dunkirk, Pennville, Portland, Redkey, and Salamonia.
5. Development of new industrial sites in each community: Bryant, Dunkirk, Pennville, Portland, Redkey, and Salamonia.
6. Continue to build community partnerships that foster growth in Jay County.
7. Work with the Renewable Energy Task Force to create opportunities in Jay County.
8. Develop a county-wide vision plan.
9. Target value-added agricultures based industry for growth in Jay County.
10. Develop new stock in all categories of housing opportunities for future growth in Jay County.
11. Develop spec industrial buildings.
12. Enforce current zoning regulations.
13. Fund key infrastructure improvements:



- a. Bryant: storm water
  - b. Dunkirk: water
  - c. Pennville: water
  - d. Portland: combined sewer overflow
  - e. Redkey: water and combined sewer overflow
  - f. Salamonica: upgrade water/sewer
14. Develop an incubator facility for small business development.
  15. Improve regional highway transportation with 4-lane state roads to Muncie and Ft. Wayne.
  16. Explore the possibility of a regional multi-modal transportation facility for the region.
  17. Create a new help center for community and family services to improve ease of access.
  18. Develop a county-wide broadband telecommunications system that would enable Jay County employers to reach wider markets.
  19. Develop the Hudson Family Park in order to attract more New Economy workers and their families to Portland and Jay County.

## Appendix

Excerpts from the 2003 East Central Indiana CEDS  
Meeting Agendas

## **Vision Goals & Strategies from the 2003 CEDS**

### **Vision**

Ten years from now the civic leaders and residents of East Central Indiana will have fully embraced the competitive realities of the new economy, characterized by high performance, innovation, and pursuit of quality in business, government, and education. Growth doesn't mean bigger, it means better – more competitive, technologically advanced, and agile in an ever-changing economy.

The Region will be known for:

- Excellence in education and training at all levels.
- Efficient and accessible transportation.
- Quality communities in which to raise a family.
- A pleasant living environment, well planned and attractive.
- A productive workforce, teamed with management to advance mutual goals.
- A high technology business and industrial base.
- High degrees of collaboration and cooperation among units of government, labor, education, faith-based and civic organizations.
- An entrepreneurial climate.

### **Goals**

- Skill levels of incumbent workers at or above the U. S. and Midwest averages.
- Improved access and efficiency of transportation for east-west travel.
- Average wages per worker at or above the U. S. average by 2015.
- Internet and broad-based telecommunications equal to or superior to anywhere in the world.
- Highly coordinated and collaborative regional planning, action, and financing.
- Tax, regulatory, and information policies that enable the region's firms to compete nationally and globally on a level playing field.

**Action Strategy One:** Improve and sustain regional planning and coordination with a particular focus on bringing together workforce and economic development agencies with a shared vision.

Initiative One: Create an EDA approved Economic Development District.

Initiative Two: Continue to work together as a regional marketing group through the East Central Indiana Development Council.

**Action Strategy Two:** Work in Partnership with the regional Workforce Investment Boards to improve productivity and enhance existing products and services by focusing on ways whereby worker skills match business investment in new equipment and technology.

Initiative Three: Build on the success of the regional healthcare skills alliance by working collaboratively with the appropriate constituencies to develop an advanced manufacturing skills-based alliance as a means of articulating skill needs of firms and delivering training services that meet the needs of the marketplace.

Initiative Four: Utilizing the organizational structure and broad business, education, and economic development representation of the regional RWBs, create a council to implement the WorkKeys® skills assessment and job profiling system into the region's schools and businesses.

Initiative Five: Organize and conduct an annual Workforce Development Summit to share and discuss progress and new challenges in the workforce development arena.

Initiative Six: Assure continuation of a Workforce Development Infrastructure for the provision of value-added workforce development services in the region.

**Action Strategy Three:** Create an environment conducive to the retention, expansion, attraction, and creation of businesses that build upon the existing economic base

through value-added initiatives and support the diversification of the regional economy into those industry sectors that utilize advanced technology and generate higher paying jobs.

Initiative Seven: Secure funding to develop a Regional Technology and Innovation Plan to identify and create the overall business climate, overall infrastructure, and physical environment that supports the local entrepreneur and attracts and retains the creative class commonly recognized as the core workforce for technology based business and industry.

Initiative Eight: Identify regional growth industries and clusters, both current and emerging. Using the Center for Automotive Research's Automotive Community Program as a template, develop attraction and retention strategies for the selected industries and clusters.

Initiative Nine: Quantify the region's agricultural economy and explore opportunities and funding resources available to help add value through food products, fuels, and pharmaceuticals.

Initiative Ten: Recognize the post secondary education is a critical component of the East Central Indiana economy, not only as a part of the region's effort to improve quality of life and the quality of the workforce, but as an important means of creating wealth within the region.

Initiative Eleven: Support the development of infrastructure for business and industrial development in the region, including industrial parks and speculative buildings in areas where facilities do not exist for the purpose of supporting the location of new and expanding businesses and industries.

**Action Strategy Four:** Recognizing that this region is a very open region involving considerable commuting to and from the region, ensure that quality of life and mobility is enhanced through excellent transportation, telecommunications, and basic infrastructure.

Initiative Twelve: Identify key transportation issues and seek to influence transportation development decisions that impact the region's overall growth and development.

Initiative Thirteen: As a component of a Regional Innovation and Technology Plan, prepare an analysis of the current and potential use of advanced telecommunications by regional businesses and manufacturers. Develop strategies for closing the gap between the actual and optimum situation.

East Central Indiana Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy  
(Blackford, Delaware, Grant, Henry, Jay, and Randolph Counties)  
First Regional Planning Session  
November 7, 2008

## AGENDA

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Why we are meeting and what we hope to accomplish
  - a. Why update the CEDS?
  - b. What counties should be part of the East Central Indiana CEDS?
  - c. Overview of the CEDS process
  - d. Requirements for updating the CEDS
3. The 2003 CEDS Update (Blackford, Delaware, Grant, and Jay counties)
  - a. Vision:
  - b. Goals
  - c. Action Strategies & Initiatives
  - d. Local Economic Development Priorities
4. Brief report on the regional economy
5. Updating the regional vision
6. Updating the goals
7. Revising the action strategies & initiatives
8. Listing local economic development priorities
9. Other issues
10. Getting broader input from each county
11. Scheduling the final meeting
12. Meeting adjourns.

East Central Indiana Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy  
Second Regional Planning Session  
December 5, 2008

AGENDA

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Why we are meeting and what we hope to accomplish
  - a. Why update the CEDS?
  - b. What counties should be part of the East Central Indiana CEDS?
  - c. Overview of the CEDS process
  - d. Requirements for updating the CEDS
3. News from EDA
  - a. CEDS region restricted to counties without a CEDS
  - b. Any county can participate in the CEDS planning
  - c. Revising the regional data and analysis
4. The New CEDS Document (for Blackford, Delaware, Grant, and Jay counties)
  - a. Vision
  - b. Goals
  - c. Action Strategies & Initiatives
5. Local Economic Development Priorities
6. Getting Multiple Sector Representation
7. Revising the action strategies & initiatives
8. Listing local economic development priorities
9. Getting broader input from each county
10. Scheduling the final meeting
11. Meeting adjourns.



# The East Central Indiana CEDS Planning Process

## Local Leadership Meetings

December 10-16, 2008

### Introduction

For certain grants from the Economic Development Administration (U.S. Department of Commerce) applying communities must have a current Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The CEDS must be the result of a continuing economic development planning process, developed with broad based and diverse community participation. The EDA recommends that the planning process be ongoing and participatory.

The CEDS Strategy Committee should adopt a work program that describes each task to be performed, identifies the individual, organization, or work group responsible for completing each task, and establishes timetables.

Establishing project priorities is a critical step toward formulating the CEDS. The implementation schedule identifies the most important program activities and proposes a time frame and an implementation schedule for each, in multiple phases if needed. The level of detail of the implementation schedule will be determined by the level of sophistication of the professional staff of the organization, and the resources the area has available to implement the actions.

### Program Strategies

1. Improve and sustain regional planning and coordination with a particular focus on bringing together workforce and economic development agencies with a shared vision.
2. Work in partnership with the Regional Workforce Boards (RWB) to improve productivity and enhance existing and new products and services by focusing on ways whereby worker skills match business investment in new equipment and technology.
3. Support the diversification of the regional economy into those sectors that use advanced technology and generate higher paying jobs.
4. Recognizing that this region has a high level of commuting into and out of the six counties, ensure that our quality of life and mobility is improved through excellent transportation, telecommunications, and basic infrastructure.
5. Collaborate on creating proposals to prospective employers at the direction of the prospect.

## Agenda

1. Introductions
2. Overview of Project
3. Purpose of Today's Meeting
4. Reviewing County Projects
5. Identifying the Most Important Regional Projects
6. Other Issues
7. Meeting Adjourns