

Economic Development Action Plan For Fort Wayne and Northeast Indiana

September 21, 2000

Introduction

In his first state of the city address earlier this year, Mayor Graham Richard emphasized that our community and region needed to create a new approach to economic development. The set of action plans outlined in this report launches a new comprehensive economic development strategy. The initial plans detailed here will be followed by other actions aimed at improving our local and regional economy.

Fort Wayne is a great place to live. Our goal in this initial set of economic development action plans is to provide the future economic base that will support our quality of life.

In the twenty-first century, quality of life will be a leading factor in a community's economic health. The cities and regions that are the most livable will be the ones that have the most vibrant economies. Cities that have a clean environment and a great quality of life will have an economic development advantage.

Fort Wayne has wonderful assets on which we can build. Our Children's Zoo, philharmonic orchestra and the Lincoln Museum are just a few among many cultural resources that few communities our size offer. We must maintain these resources and develop new ones.

Similarly, a clean environment is essential to both a livable city and a solid economic base. Fort Wayne has several challenges in this area. For example, we are now completing a strategy to end the combined sewer overflow problems that will enable us to separate storm sewers from sanitary sewers.

Fort Wayne also has some key economic development assets in place. Our airport is a tremendous economic resource. We have a plan in place now to continue to take advantage of this asset and to create new economic opportunities through improved passenger and freight service.

This set of action plans will help us take the next step in developing an economy for the first decade of the twenty-first century.

Vision: A Leading Economy in a Livable and Healthy Community

In 2015, Fort Wayne is one of the most livable cities in the United States. With a safe and healthy environment, the economy of Fort Wayne and Northeast Indiana has blossomed over the past 15 years. Our high quality of life, including our excellent schools, has attracted workers and their families who have technical skills and above average education. We have also been able to retain our graduates from local colleges.

The many high growth companies that have located and developed here in the past 15 years form the foundation of our regional economy. These companies pay wages above the national average. The high skill levels and educational attainment rates of our workforce continue to draw businesses to the region. Community leaders from across the United States see the Fort Wayne region as a model of quality, community-based economic development.

The Need for A New Approach: Fort Wayne, Northeast Indiana and the U. S. Economy

The Current Strategy

Over the past 20 years Fort Wayne's economic development strategy has been successful in achieving its main goal of job creation. We have been able to replace jobs that were lost in the severe recession of 1980-1983. The city and Northeast Indiana in general have unemployment rates that are lower than the U. S. rate.

As Tom Guthrie, professor of economics at IPFW, noted in a recent white paper on the regional economy, "The principal conclusion to be drawn is that Northeast Indiana has recovered fully from the debacle - at least in terms of number of jobs. In fact, Northeast Indiana's employment growth from 1979 to 1998 was slightly higher than that of the U. S."

Although it has taken time, we have also been able to create new economic assets such as Dalman Road, I-469 and the airport expansion.

Wage Rates that Have Not Kept Pace with the U. S. Average

However, in keeping our eyes focused on new job creation, we have missed opportunities in other areas. While we have surpassed the nation in employment levels, we have fallen far behind in wage levels.

Guthrie notes that "wage and salary earnings per job in Northeast Indiana declined dramatically relative to change in wage and salary earnings per job in the United States. In 1979 earnings per job in Northeast Indiana and the U. S. were the same - \$12,817 and \$12,814 respectively. By 1997 a \$3,200 gap had developed between the two - \$26,614 versus \$29,814." According to Guthrie, "on a percentage basis, wage and salary earnings per job in both Northeast Indiana and the entire state declined 11 percent between 1979 and 1997." Our community has seen a substantial fall in earnings per job in comparison with the U. S. average.

Over 50 percent of Indiana's jobs are in occupations with a median wage below \$10 per hour, or \$20,000 per year. The Indiana Economic Development Council notes that, "proportionately, managerial and professional jobs are in short supply, with only 23 percent of Indiana jobs in this

category compared to the U. S. average of 29 percent." In addition, "median wages for Indiana's managerial and professional jobs are lower than the U. S. average in practically all instances."

Indiana and Northeast Indiana have failed to keep pace with the U. S. economy. Both the state and regional incomes have failed to keep pace with the U. S. average. Our region contains fewer high growth businesses than many of the regions we compete with around the U. S. and around the world. Northeast Indiana workers have lower educational attainment rates than the U. S. average and are not as prepared for the new demands of rapidly changing technology.

These are the challenges that our region faces: create and recruit businesses that have high growth potential and ensure that every worker in our region has access to continuing education and training.

Economic Trends

The state's most recent economic development strategy, *Breaking Away*, lists some of the characteristics of the changing economy. These characteristics include:

- Fast paced, open world markets
- High rewards for entrepreneurial initiatives
- Rapid changes in technology
- The reality of multiple careers requiring continual learning
- Wealth generated by high growth companies and industries

Our region's economic development strategy should prepare us to prosper from these trends.

Key Principles

Seven principles serve as the foundation of this plan. The principles are:

1. Fort Wayne and Northeast Indiana will be a national leader in economic development.
2. We must cooperate locally in order to compete globally.
3. Improved workforce skills are critical for economic growth.
4. Closing the gap in wage rates between Northeast Indiana and the U. S. should be a criterion for economic development success.
5. Economic development and quality of life are tied together.
6. High growth companies are essential for significant economic development.
7. Smarter, more effective government creates a competitive edge in economic development.

The Planning Process

Since March, the mayor and his economic development staff have worked with over 125 community leaders to develop this set of action plans. Working with Strategic Development Group, Mayor

Richard organized an "ideas session." Approximately 30 community leaders discussed a wide range of issues for two days. The meeting was facilitated by Bix Benson, from Bank One. The group also heard from three outside professionals in economic development - Brian Bosworth, president of Future Growth, Graham Toft, president of the Indiana Economic Development Council and Thayr Richey, president of Strategic Development Group. From this discussion, a further planning process emerged: the group recommended that a set of task forces be established to create a set of action ideas that the city and region could undertake.

Following the two-day session, the mayor appointed a steering committee to oversee this intense planning effort. Joe Ruffolo and John Stafford served as co-chairs. Each steering committee member would chair or co-chair a task force.

The mayor's Steering Committee on Economic Development included:

- A. V. Fleming
- Mike Gouloff
- Kirk Kemmish
- Bob Kniskern
- Phil Laux
- Cindy Materna
- Mick McCollum
- C. T. Miller
- Shep Moyle
- Mac Parker
- Bettye Poignard
- Ted Rhinehart
- Ola Schechter
- Chuck Schrimper
- Lincoln Schrock
- Ruth Stanat
- Marilyn Moran Townsend
- Jim Vann
- Tony Wolf

Each of the task forces focused on a specific topic. The topics were:

1. Business Park/Site Development - Mick McCollum and Jim Vann, co-chairs
2. Business Technology - Bob Kniskern and Shep Moyle, co-chairs
3. Center City - Mike Gouloff, chair
4. Environment - Ted Rhinehart, Chair
5. International Trade - Ruth Stanat and Tony Wolf, co-chairs
6. Regional Cooperation - Cindy Materna, Mac Parker and Lincoln Schrock, co-chairs
7. Business Retention, Expansion and Attraction - Kirk Kemmish and Phil Laux, co-chairs
8. Small Business/Entrepreneurial Development - A. V. Fleming and Marilyn Moran Townsend, co-chairs
9. Workforce Development - Bettye Poignard and Chuck Schrimper, co-chairs

The task forces were made up of community leaders who had experience in some of the issues that each task force would examine. The number of members of the task forces ranged from 10 to 20. In addition, a staff person was assigned from the mayor's office to handle logistics and regional information for each task force. Further, an economic development professional from Strategic

Development Group facilitated each task force meeting, wrote summaries of task force meetings and researched topics requested by the task forces.

The task forces met over a two-month period. The mayor held two public input sessions to get additional ideas on both problems and solutions.

Economic Development Goal

According to the Indiana Economic Development Council, “Quality economic growth in the twenty-first century is less about counting jobs and more about creating wealth for a greater number of people – a higher standard of living and a higher quality of life.”

Our most important economic development goal will be to increase the wages and salaries per job in Northeast Indiana to above the national average.

Strategies

The task forces developed approximately 40 separate action plans. Twelve have been chosen for immediate focus.

1. Fort Wayne has an environment that supports a great quality of life.
2. Fort Wayne revitalizes its downtown.
3. Fort Wayne and Allen County have outstanding business sites to support business expansion and new business location.
4. Fort Wayne has a more user friendly, pro business environment.
5. Leaders in our ten counties work together to make Northeast Indiana competitive with the most successful regional economies in the world.
6. Many more of the region's manufacturers transform their companies into high performance, advanced manufacturing enterprises.
7. Northeast Indiana generates a rapid increase in quality jobs in high growth business sectors.
8. We continue to develop the Fort Wayne International Airport into an essential economic development asset.
9. Northeast Indiana becomes an entrepreneurial center for companies with high growth potential.
10. Northeast Indiana businesses and residents have competitive access to broadband and state-of-the-art communications technology.
11. The number of Northeast Indiana companies engaged in international trade rapidly increases.
12. The number of regional workers engaged in skill development and educational programs significantly expands.

Of the twelve action plans, the first four action plans begin with a focus upon Fort Wayne. As the second largest city in the state, Fort Wayne plays a number of important roles in the regional economy. Having a healthy city environment, a vibrant downtown that serves the region, outstanding business sites and a pro business climate are important both for the residents of Fort Wayne and the region.

The last eight action plans are regional in nature. Northeast Indiana already has an interactive regional economy. This is in keeping with the principle that we must cooperate locally in order to compete globally. These action plans are numbered only for convenience of reference; they are not listed in order of importance.

Implementation

The first four action plans focus upon the City of Fort Wayne. Improving Fort Wayne's environment, revitalizing its downtown, developing outstanding business sites and creating a more user friendly, pro business environment are projects that can be overseen by City government. Implementation of these action plans will begin immediately. In at least one case, environmental improvement, the implementation began earlier this summer and continues.

Because the final eight plans require a regional approach, the first step for these actions is to have leaders and organizations throughout Northeast Indiana review the ideas and begin to develop more detailed strategies to be implemented by the region. The mayor and the steering committee will take the lead in convening regional leaders and presenting these plans. The goal is to have each of these regional plans presented to Northeast Indiana leaders by November 15.

Action Plan One: Fort Wayne has an environment that supports a great quality of life.

In the new economy of the twenty-first century, a healthy and sustainable environment is essential to the establishment and maintenance of a healthy economy. Encouraging environmental stewardship by integrating environmental considerations into the economic development process is an important element of this strategy. This approach will create mutual benefits for the regional economy and the environment.

Fort Wayne will facilitate community and regional economic development in a way that provides for a sustainable use of resources and minimizes the impacts on air, water and land resources to protect human health and to preserve natural habitats.

The City of Fort Wayne, as an environmentally conscious community, will seek out, encourage and reward environmentally concerned businesses and industries. This action plan will impact the environment and economic development in five areas.

Air quality. Economic development activity will protect appropriate air quality by limiting the effects of ground-level ozone and particulates.

If new federal standards for ground level ozone are implemented, it is likely that all of Allen County will be designated as a 'non-attainment' area under the new ground level ozone standard. Further, if new particulate standards are applied to Allen County, it is also likely that portions of the County will be designated as a non-attainment area for particulates in the future.

Surface water quality. Economic Development activity will protect appropriate surface water quality in the Maumee River regional watershed by limiting the effects of discharges or runoff. At the present time, the city is engaged in the development of a plan, known as the Long Term Control Plan, to cost effectively reduce the volume and frequency of discharges from the combined sewer overflows. That plan will require extensive renovations and take place over a number of years. The City will seek a balance between the goal of retaining competitive utility rates and making significant reductions in combined sewer overflows.

Ground water quality. Economic Development activity will protect the quantity of ground water. Ground water can serve as a drinking water source for residents on private wells or serve as a source of process water for industries. Economic development planners should be advised of the general behavior, sources and uses of ground water, as well as areas that are susceptible to ground water contamination such as wellhead areas, wetlands and bogs. Planners should review activities above and under the ground for their potential impact on ground water.

Brownfields. Economic Development activity will promote appropriate use of areas where environmental quality has already been impacted. The real or perceived contamination can deter redevelopment efforts and instead encourage the development of existing greenspace. This

deterrence is harmful to neighborhoods because brownfields are a blight that diminishes their social, cultural and economic value. Redevelopment of a brownfield can provide an amenity to the neighborhood, provide jobs, increase property values and make effective use of already existing infrastructure. The Urban Enterprise Association (UEA) and Redevelopment Commission have undertaken redevelopment projects and will continue to do so in the future.

Monitor progress. Progress in improving the environment should be a criterion for evaluating the success of the overall economic development strategy.

Milestones include maintaining attainment status for ozone and particulate standards, reducing combined sewer overflow, development of a regional transportation plan that reduces ozone, redevelopment of several brownfield sites including completion of the Bowser site project and progress toward redeveloping the Falstaff property and others, and development of local environmental quality indicators for air, water and land resources.

Initial Implementation Steps for Action Plan One: Maintain an environment that supports a great quality of life

Target Date	Task	Responsible Party
12/31/00	Monitor and participate in the State Implementation Plan for meeting NAAQS	Mayor, Chamber
3/31/01	Encourage incentives by federal, state and local entities for employers that reduce air emissions and assist the region in meeting appropriate air standards.	Mayor, Chamber
6/30/01	Improve public awareness regionally about the contributions of small source and mobile sources of air pollutants	Mayor, Chamber, UTAB
Ongoing	Detain storm water runoff on developed sites at pre-development levels to minimize the impact on rivers and streams	City, County
Ongoing	Provide regional incentives for sites that enhance water quality through construction methods that control of storm water quality	City, County
6/30/01	Cooperate regionally in a Watershed Approach	Mayor, County, Maumee River Basin Commission
Ongoing	Develop and support erosion control programs and provide incentives to minimize sediments in surface water.	City, County
Ongoing	Inventory the important areas of groundwater protection	City, County
Ongoing	Educate businesses and residents on the importance of ground water protection	City, County
Ongoing	Inventory brownfield areas	City, County
Ongoing	Support redevelopment efforts to reuse these sites	City, County
10/1/00	Establish an Environmental Quality Advisory Group to monitor progress	Mayor
6/30/01	Develop and implement local environmental quality indicators for air, water and land resources	EQAG

Action Plan Two: Fort Wayne revitalizes its downtown.

Having a vibrant and flourishing downtown Fort Wayne is important for the region. The center city is one of the critical factors for both a livable city and a dynamic regional economy. We must develop downtown Fort Wayne as part of an overall economic development strategy.

Our community's downtown serves as the central image of the city. Downtown is the city's front door to the rest of the world. With the many assets that are already in place in the center city, there is no reason that downtown Fort Wayne could not become a model of how communities redefine and revitalize their former central business districts.

A downtown revitalization strategy must be based on economic sustainability. Public and private investment will be an essential element of this action plan. As part of that strategy, we will create new economic assets in the downtown area and expand existing resources. This might include a new hotel, an expansion of the Grand Wayne Center, a parking garage, an expanded library and a new, family-oriented sports facility. The Mayor and Redevelopment Commission have formed a Downtown Development Team which will look at different development projects currently under consideration by various entities such as the Allen County Public Library and the Grand Wayne Center. The Team will examine how these projects can best be coordinated and financed.

The City of Fort Wayne has verbally committed to provide a revenue stream from its Light Lease Fund adequate to secure bond or loan proceeds of \$5 million toward the anticipated \$35 million expansion of the Grand Wayne Center.

A new strategy for downtown must include the West Jefferson corridor. This is a critical link for the center city. For the foreseeable future this is the prime link between the downtown and I-69. We must do all we can to ensure 1) that this link moves traffic between these two nodes as effectively as possible, 2) that those from outside the community clearly understand that this is a direct route to the downtown, and 3) that the corridor retain as much of its attractiveness as possible. Ideally a new plan would incorporate a range of corridor projects such as beautification efforts, improved signage from the interstate and reduction of potential bottlenecks. The city anticipates spending approximately \$1,000,000 in CEDIT revenues for pavement rehabilitation on the Jefferson Corridor during 2001.

The proposed expansion of the Allen County Public Library is another key element for improving downtown. The main library at 900 Webster Street is running out of room and needs to grow. Components that have been proposed for the expanded library include a parking garage, a courtyard, an exhibit area, a reading room and small group study areas. It is important that the library's growth take place downtown, and that the expanded library facility help serve as a stimulus for downtown revitalization.

Milestones that will enable us to evaluate our progress in this action plan include the creation of a masterplan, improved parking and traffic flow, investment of new private capital downtown and an increased use of current downtown by both residents and visitors.

Initial Implementation Steps for Action Plan Two: Improve Fort Wayne's downtown

Target Date	Task	Responsible Party
10-1-00	City appoints downtown advisory board to work with planning downtown revitalization	Mayor
11-30-00	City hires revitalization consultant	Mayor
1-15-01	Advisory board meets with consultant	Advisory Board
2-1-01	Revitalization plan presented	Consultants
3-1-01	Implementation of revitalization plan begins	Mayor

Action Plan Three: Fort Wayne and Allen County have outstanding business sites to support business expansion and new business location.

Every county in Northeast Indiana should have available excellent sites for job-creating companies. Fort Wayne and Allen County must continue to have city and county government work aggressively to support private developers in acquisition and development of these sites. Fort Wayne will share what it learns in this new development process with all of Northeast Indiana. One of the objectives of this action plan will be to create a new model of public-private partnership that can be used by the entire region.

In Fort Wayne and Allen County, the Fort Wayne/Allen County Economic Development Alliance will take the lead in this effort.

A wide variety of sites will be necessary to meet the needs of basic employers. This could include a distribution/logistics park or an airport trade center business park. An airport trade center would serve as an economic asset for the region.

Government must partner with the private sector. City and county government may use CEDIT and TIF funding to help leverage private development funds. Part of this plan includes continued support of the long-term funding stream from CEDIT to assist in continued site development.

We are nearing completion of Summit Industrial Park Phase II. This is a significant step toward improving this community's inventory of industrial sites. But it is only a start.

The way in which this park has been funded can also serve as a model for business site development. A portion of funding for Summit II's construction has been provided by several local foundations and banks. Profits from the sale of the lots will be shared among the funders. Tax increment financing dollars provided by the Fort Wayne Redevelopment Commission could be recycled through the use of net proceeds from the sale of real estate in Summit Park II and also directed to a second venture.

We should explore the adoption of a Northwest Area Memorandum of Understanding, paralleling the one adopted for the Southwest Area.

There is need to ensure a reasonable inventory of basic industrial sites is always in the pipeline. However, we should concentrate public efforts in Allen County on three specialty areas: the Air Trade Center; a distribution/logistics park near the airport, rail, I-69 and I-469; and on business parks with a quality environment and I-69 accessibility.

The community needs to leverage the public investment made by city and county government in the area surrounding the Fort Wayne International Airport, by attracting private industrial park developers which would complement the regionally-unique assets that the airport area offers. The airport serves as a unique resource. As Indiana's strategic plan for economic development, *Break Away Growth*, notes:

Since Indiana's manufacturing economy is now fully globalized, superior transportation and logistics systems are critical. Indiana can position itself as a "global gateway" and continue its record of growth in exports.

The Airport area already contains the primary components necessary to implement such a strategy. The combination of air; rail; highway; vacant, industrially zoned land; public utility; and telecommunications infrastructure located here is a unique regional asset.

Another concern is the importance of new technology. There has been interest expressed by several local technology-related businesses in creating a high quality business park within Allen County. This would be a park which included amenities not normally found in industrial parks in our community and would have relatively strict parameters on the types of businesses within the park and on the design of the buildings. One of the goals of the interested parties is to create an environment conducive to attracting and retaining computer technology professionals. Such a park could be developed with the use of tax increment financing as one source for paying for on and off site infrastructure.

Milestones that will enable us to evaluate our progress in this action plan include identification of initial sites, development of site plans by potential developers, creating a new plan for the use of County Economic Development Income Tax (CEDIT) revenues to assist in site development and ensuring that new sites are properly zoned. By next summer, new business site construction should be underway.

Initial Implementation Steps for Action Plan Three: Create outstanding business parks

Target Date	Task	Responsible Party
10-15-00	Ensure that CEDIT funding stream from the City and County that is currently available for Industrial Park Development partnerships continues at least at current levels	The Mayor, City Council, County Commissioners and County Council
11-15-00	Identify potential sites for land banking	City and County Economic Development Departments, Fort Wayne/Allen County Economic Development Alliance, Chamber
11-15-00	Identify and develop potential funding sources to be used in leveraging private sector development of the property; explore the use of CEDIT and TIF	City and County government
12-15-00	Develop a clear plan for public/private partnerships, including the level of public funding support available, and communicate the plan to the economic development community	The Mayor and County Commissioners
2-15-01	Work with private developers to acquire and develop sites	Fort Wayne/Allen County Economic Development Alliance
5-15-01	Change zoning to appropriate designation to ensure the land can be properly developed	Plan Commission
6-15-00	Have at least one new business site under development	Private developer and Fort Wayne/Allen County Economic Development Alliance
7-15-01	Address the infrastructure issues to ensure the land can be made available to a potential developer or industry quickly at a fair and reasonable price	Redevelopment Commission and Alliance
9-15-01	Develop revolving fund for continued assistance for site development	Redevelopment Commission and Alliance

Action Plan Four: Fort Wayne has a more user friendly, pro-business environment.

Regions that have effective, smart government have an economic development advantage. We need to adopt and enforce consistent standards across units of local government and to address both structural and procedural problems that arise. A fundamental criterion will be "cycle time," the amount of time it takes for an agency to complete a procedure for an applicant.

Having an "action team" that can mobilize when needed could be an effective tool in achieving this goal. This effort will begin with the City of Fort Wayne, but it could be expanded regionally.

The mayor's office will lead the initial action. However, the common council will also play an important role.

The City of Fort Wayne has already begun a process to improve cycle times for businesses who need city approvals. Possible programs might include a new computer system for tracking projects through our site plan review process, government advocates for client projects, clear procedures and regulations and a quicker response time by government officials.

In addition to the current efforts by city government to improve its ability to serve Fort Wayne residents and businesses, we need to consider other issues and approaches. Two examples of these issues are planning and regulatory standards.

Good, long-range planning is an important method for reducing the land use conflicts that frequently lead to additional layers of regulation. Similarly, clear, understandable standards for development, such as stormwater runoff specifications, can simplify the process of working with government.

However, local government is limited in its ability to improve the system by itself. We should consider efforts to work with the Indiana General Assembly for modifications to the state tax structure which would be pro-business. These changes might include issues such as the reduction or elimination of the Inventory Tax, the Insurance Premium Tax reduction, and the removal of the Research and Development Tax Credit apportionment limit.

Milestones that will enable us to evaluate our progress in this action plan include completion of the city's internal procedural analysis, an improvement in turnaround time on applications and projects, a clarification of procedures and potentially the appointment of a single point of contact. By January 2001, the City of Fort Wayne will have streamlined its procedures and will have made it easier for residents and businesses to access services and secure permits.

Initial Implementation Steps for Action Plan Four: Develop a more user friendly government

Target Date	Task	Responsible Party
9-30-00	The City of Fort Wayne's BEST Team for red-tape cutting will complete its review of the approval process and begin to cut cycle times	The Mayor
10-15-00	The mayor will create an <i>action team</i> which can be mobilized when needed to assist with specific projects	The Mayor
11-1-00	The BEST Team will submit a report to the Mayor and City Council	BEST Team
11-15-00	The Mayor will empower economic development staff to expedite economic development projects that qualify for public incentives	The Mayor
12-15-00	The BEST Team will perform a cost-benefit analysis of creating a single point of contact for a client project	Best Team
1-15-01	The City of Fort Wayne will begin to adopt and enforce consistent standards across units of local government	The Mayor
5-15-01	The Mayor will present city's improvement plan	The Mayor

Action Plan Five: Leaders in our 10 counties work together to make Northeast Indiana competitive with the most successful regional economies in the world.

We need to recognize that we are not in competition with each other; rather, the real competition is with other regional economies.

Today, regions are the basic unit for economic development. In the global economy, competition takes place among regions, not among cities or counties within a single region. In the global economy, Allen County does not compete with Kosciusko County. Rather Northeast Indiana competes with the San Diego-Tijuana region, the Essen-Dusseldorf region and the Xian region.

As stated in *Break Away Growth*:

Sub-state areas are now becoming the locus of competitive advantage. Indiana needs to be prepared to cope with multi-jurisdictional challenges and to seize the opportunities that cut across political boundaries. Multi-jurisdictional approaches to solving problems related to infrastructure, transportation corridors, environmental quality, workforce challenges and a myriad of other issues will be required to achieve economies of scale, efficient financing and coordinated responses.

Northeast Indiana now has an interactive economy. Regional cooperation in economic development has many advantages. It is an approach that is already successful in other parts of the country. Northeast Indiana has successful examples of regional cooperation in the organization, Indiana Northeast Development and Northeast Indiana TQM Network. Working together is the best way to improve the economy.

An early step in furthering this regional collaboration is to document the growing extent to which the local economies of the respective counties in Northeast Indiana have become interdependent. Indiana Northeast Development (IND) should contract with the Community Research Institute at IPFW to undertake this study. A grant to IND from the City of Fort Wayne, in partnership with one or more local foundations with regional interest, would finance this study. Preliminary cost estimates for the study would range between \$10,000 and \$25,000.

We must bring financial certainty to Indiana Northeast Development. Additional public sector funds should be directed to the ongoing support of this organization in order that it may concentrate more efforts on regional marketing and fewer efforts on raising annual financial support. The City of Fort Wayne should increase its financial commitment to this organization by \$30,000 annually for a period of not less than three years. The IND Board of Directors should have the flexibility to allocate these additional resources as it deems appropriate. The Fort Wayne-Allen County Economic Development Alliance, in recognition of the interdependence between its countywide marketing/prospecting efforts and the regional marketing/prospecting efforts of IND, should further support IND with an annual contribution of approximately \$10,000.

We need to support the ongoing efforts of our Northeast Indiana State legislators to work collaboratively on issues directly impacting this region. A significant goal for our region should be to recapture a proportional amount of state tax revenues originating from local communities within the region. It is of particular importance that our legislators continue to give strong support toward efforts to finance infrastructure initiatives of regional significance – as they did for the Airport Expressway (Dalman Road) project. Local elected officials and chambers of Commerce from throughout Northeast Indiana must compliment the efforts of our legislators by establishing forums for mutual discussion of pending state issues of regional consequence.

We must foster a climate of regional cooperation that allows us to share information, assets and resources. On the largest of economic development projects it may be necessary to pool financial resources such as County Economic Development Income Tax (CEDIT) revenues, even across county boundaries.

As a region, we should explore opportunities to implement *Break Away Growth* Initiative Number 20:

Facilitate the simplification of regional boards and commissions to encourage regional development strategies that drive local projects and requests for state agency funding.

Such a regional approach will increase our international economic competitiveness.

Another asset that is promoting regionalism is U. S. 30. That corridor from Fort Wayne to Chicago is gaining in economic importance. There is growing economic interdependence among the communities of Warsaw, Columbia City, Fort Wayne and New Haven. Efforts should be made, wherever possible, to include Kosciusko County as part of the Northeast Indiana economic and political region. Its inclusion in Northeast Indiana Development and on the Northeast Indiana Workforce Investment Board would be significant steps in that direction.

In a similar fashion, other important regional economic development programs such as the Small Business Development Center should be supported to improve their effectiveness throughout Northeast Indiana.

The current Regional Cooperation task force will work with the steering committee to initiate this action plan. Indiana Northeast Development is a likely leader for the effort in the long term.

Initial milestones that will enable us to evaluate our progress in this action plan include adding Kosciusko County to the regional group and developing a comprehensive regional economic development strategy that all partners support. In the next several years the region should see improved critical infrastructure assets and regional support for individual community projects.

Initial Implementation Steps for Action Plan Five: Working together as a region

Target Date	Task	Responsible Party
On-going	Indiana Northeast Development (IND) leads the effort to build a regional comprehensive economic development strategy	Steering committee and task force members
11-15-00	Ask Kosciusko County to join the regional effort	Steering committee and task force members, IND
1-01-01	Hire regional resource staff professional at IND	IND
1-01-01	Budget for staff professional resources	IND
1-15-01	Survey opinion leaders	Regional resource staff professional
2-15-01	Document interdependent economy	Staff professional and consultants
2-15-01	Begin developing a regional identity	Staff professional and IND
3-15-01	Meet regularly with groups of local elected officials, labor and business	Staff professional
5-15-01	Develop internal and external marketing programs	Staff professional and consultants
6-15-01	Work collectively to improve influence of the region in state government	IND

Action Plan Six: Many more of the region's manufacturers transform their companies into high performance, advanced manufacturing enterprises.

Building on our current manufacturing strength, we can develop the region as an advanced manufacturing center. This evolution is already occurring in many manufacturers throughout the region. The goal of this action plan is to provide the information and tools that employers need to make this transition as efficiently as possible.

To accomplish this goal, we must listen to the needs of our regional manufacturers. Access to advanced technology, the development of intelligent manufacturing systems, technical assistance in developing appropriate models for advanced manufacturing, use of lean production models and availability of financing for new capital investment are likely to be important components in this action plan.

Indiana Northeast Development (IND) and the region's workforce investment board (WIB) should be the organizations that lead this action plan.

Workforce development is a key to the region's future. Training our current and future workers in advanced manufacturing skills will give the region a competitive advantage. The workforce component of this strategy will start with current plans throughout the region, such as the Dekko Foundation's workforce development programs. We will also consider such activities as institutionalizing and supporting apprenticeship programs throughout the region.

Management and labor will need to work closely together in creating this new advanced manufacturing base. IND and the WIB will convene labor and management representatives to discuss how the region can most effectively provide assistance.

Milestones that will enable us to evaluate our progress in this action plan include determining company needs, creating resources such as a technical assistance team, increasing the number of companies engaged in advanced manufacturing plans and increasing the number of workers with advanced manufacturing skills.

Initial Implementation Steps for Action Plan Six: Becoming an advanced manufacturing center

Target Date	Task	Responsible Party
11-01-00	Engage Indiana Northeast Development (IND) and the regional Workforce Investment Board (WIB)	Steering Committee
11-15-00	IND and WIB approve concept and begin joint efforts	IND and WIB
12-15-00	Determine needs of manufacturers so that they can become world-class	IND and WIB
1-15-01	IND/WIB develop strategy	IND and WIB
2-15-01	Draft strategy approved	IND and WIB
4-15-01	Implementation budget developed	IND and WIB
4-30-01	Plan implemented	IND and WIB

Action Plan Seven: Northeast Indiana generates a rapid increase in quality jobs in high growth business sectors.

A focus on high growth potential companies is critical to reaching our initial economic development goal of increasing wages and salaries per job. We will target such business sectors for particular economic development attention. The action plan includes both established basic employers within the region and prospects for recruitment.

There are a number of possible growth sectors already in place. This includes health/medicine, information technology and software development that supports advanced manufacturing. We will build on such activities as the regional Workforce Investment Board's current analysis of three regional growth sectors.

Local cooperation for global competitiveness will be critical in this plan. We will expand the skill alliances and quality networks that are now in place. One of the objectives of this plan will be to regain the region's former position as a top 100 DMA community.

Indiana Northeast Development and the Fort Wayne/Allen County Economic Development Alliance will lead this action plan. The workforce investment board will also play a role in assessing the gaps in work force skills for high growth sectors.

The City of Fort Wayne can use its Investment Incentive Fund to leverage private investment in high growth companies. Job quality and the potential for high growth should be included among criteria for all economic development incentives such as tax abatement.

The region should also take greater advantage of state incentives for promoting high growth sectors. *Break Away Growth* calls for increased funding for Indiana's Strategic Development Fund, which encourages businesses to work together. Northeast Indiana should use this program for such sectors as medical equipment or defense communications.

We need to insure that local businesses and researchers have the fullest possible access to the 21st Century Technology Fund. The City of Fort Wayne can assist the Greater Fort Wayne Chamber of Commerce and the Northeast Innovation Center Board of Directors efforts to "get the word out" by jointly sponsoring application workshops. A \$5,000 City grant to the NIIC for this purpose would be one way of tangibly providing such support.

The City of Fort Wayne has made a commitment to support the construction of the Northeast Indiana Innovation Center by providing a revenue stream from the Light Lease Fund. The funding is adequate to secure bond or loan proceeds of up to \$1.5 million. This commitment still requires the concurrence of the Fort Wayne City Council. In addition, the City of Fort Wayne has been working with the NIIC Board, IPFW, the Greater Fort Wayne Chamber of Commerce and several state elected and appointed officials to transfer approximately 40 acres from state government to the City Redevelopment Commission as a site for this facility.

The Innovation Center will provide a significant opportunity for Northeast Indiana to nurture start-up and emerging technology related businesses. Efforts to bring this facility into reality should be given a high priority by the city and by state officials. During the 1999 state legislative session, a bill was introduced to provide state grants in support of the construction of such technology-related incubators. Local elected officials from Northeast Indiana, in coordination with the lobbying efforts of the Greater Fort Wayne Chamber of Commerce, should call upon our delegation to support such assistance from the State of Indiana.

The City of Fort Wayne, Allen County and the Greater Fort Wayne Chamber of Commerce, in a cooperative venture, have made a significant commitment to the Fort Wayne-Allen County Economic Development Alliance to market this community to opportunities for new business development.

On the state level, we should encourage our state legislators to increase funding for programs such as the Strategic Development Fund and the 21st Century Research and Technology Fund.

Initial milestones that will enable us to evaluate our progress in this action plan include completing the WIB's growth cluster skill analysis and developing a targeted marketing plan for high growth prospects. Within the next three years the region should see a significant increase in high growth company locations.

Initial Implementation Steps for Action Plan Seven: Generating quality jobs in high growth businesses

Target Date	Task	Responsible Party
10-30-00	Identify sectors for targeting	Indiana Northeast Development (IND) and Fort Wayne/Allen County ED Alliance
10-30-00	Analyze current skills alliances	IND and Fort Wayne/Allen County ED Alliance
11-15-00	Employ focused leadership in each of the sectors to market Fort Wayne region	IND and Fort Wayne/Allen County ED Alliance
12-15-00	Create media consortium to develop a strategy to regain top 100 DMA status	Consortium led by media professionals
1-1-01	Support the development of the Innovation Center with a focus on targeted sectors	City and Greater Fort Wayne Chamber
1-1-01	Establish a formal business support group to expand advanced skills in targeted sectors	Greater Fort Wayne Chamber

Action Plan Eight: Northeast Indiana continues to develop the Fort Wayne International Airport into an essential economic development asset.

In today's global economy excellent air service for both people and freight is critical. The growth of the Fort Wayne International Airport in the past few years has been one of the region's most important successes. Working jointly, the Greater Fort Wayne Chamber of Commerce and the Fort Wayne-Allen County Airport Authority have increased the number of flights and destinations available and are developing the Air Trade Center. However, we must continue to improve the airport's effectiveness.

This action plan calls for three areas of improvement: passenger service, freight service and air port-related facilities.

The regional airport now provides approximately 100 direct flights each day, which enables Northeast Indiana travelers to reach main airline hubs such as Atlanta, Chicago, Cincinnati, , Dallas, Detroit, St. Louis and Toronto. This action plan focuses on increasing that passenger service to additional cities such as Denver and Washington, D.C.

Kitty Hawk, UPS and FEDEX currently provide airfreight service. Adding new facilities and resources to the airport, such as a chiller operation will increase freight volume. Another possible resource would be a logistics/distribution business park adjacent to the airport. In addition, we must continue to bring other airport-related businesses to the airport, such as additional maintenance facilities.

A current goal is for the airport to become a regional and international air cargo hub, linking the United States with international air cargo carriers. The Air Trade Center should be positioned as the best aviation-linked business site in the Midwest. The Greater Fort Wayne Chamber of Commerce provides an office for the Air Trade Center's marketing efforts.

Initial milestones that will enable us to evaluate our progress in this action plan include increased business use of the airport's freight service and new destinations added to the airport's direct flight service.

Initial Implementation Steps for Action Plan Eight: Continue to develop the Fort Wayne International Airport as an economic development asset

Target Date	Task	Responsible Party
On-going	Attend IACC and other trade shows	Trade Show Team
On-going	Meet with Greater Fort Wayne Chamber of Commerce Board	Director of Airport Marketing
On-going	Market the airport at the IND Annual Conference	Director of Airport Marketing
5-02	Host the IACC trade show in Fort Wayne	Trade Show Team

Action Plan Nine: Northeast Indiana becomes an entrepreneurial center for companies with high growth potential.

A new approach to entrepreneurial development can help the region gain the high growth companies that it needs. We will focus on both existing small companies, as well as companies that might be prospects for recruitment. In order to be successful in this arena, the region must develop a business climate that is conducive to entrepreneurial development.

This will require developing new tools and resources such as private vehicles for financing.

A potential new resource could be the Northeast Center for Entrepreneurial Excellence. A first step for the center will be to develop a business plan that outlines how the organization can promote high growth small business development throughout the region. An important established resource is the Small Business Development Center. It will require additional financial support in order to provide the fullest range of services throughout Northeast Indiana.

Access to capital is critical for fast-growth small businesses. One tool that must be expanded is local venture capital. This plan calls for a new venture capital fund to be developed. Such a call is echoed by the Economic Development plan of the Invent Tomorrow community planning process.

The Greater Fort Wayne Chamber of Commerce will continue to plan an important role in promoting entrepreneurial development in Allen County and the region. The chamber should serve as the lead organizations to carry out the initial steps of this action plan. The Invent Tomorrow report also encourages fostering an entrepreneurial spirit in the community.

There has been considerable discussion of the creation of an Entrepreneurial Center, possibly by IPFW and/or at the Innovation Center. This would be a center focusing on high-growth, potentially high-wage types of businesses. It is recommended that a business plan be created for this proposal so that funders may determine its feasibility.

The follow-up steps will probably require professionals, who might be in either the chamber or the Entrepreneurial Center. In addition, an action team, from organizations such as Indiana Northeast Development, the Fort Wayne/Allen County Economic Development Alliance and the Small Business Development Center, will handle some of the later activities.

Milestones that will enable us to evaluate our progress in this action plan include forming the action team, creating a new professional position, developing new financing vehicles and collocating entrepreneurial resource organizations. In the next few years the region should see a significant growth in the number of high growth potential business startups and the location of small, high growth companies from outside of the region.

Initial Implementation Steps for Action Plan Nine: Become a regional entrepreneurial center

Target Date	Task	Responsible Party
11-01-00	Mayor appoints a task force to identify entrepreneurial tools and existing financing vehicles; information will be provided to consultant who will write Entrepreneurial Center business plan.	Mayor
11-01-00	Mayor issues request for proposals to write business plan for Entrepreneurial Center.	Mayor
12-15-00	Task force completes its report	Task force members including SBDC, Women's Enterprise & entrepreneurs
12-15-00	Vendor chosen to write business plan.	Mayor
1-30-01	Business plan presented to City and other potential funders.	Consultant
1-01-01	Create volunteer mentoring program for current entrepreneurs	Task force (or the lead organization assigned by task force)
1-01-01	Create and maintain a web site to serve as clearinghouse for accessing information on the region's services for entrepreneurs	Task force (or the lead organization assigned by task force)
2-01-01 and on-going	Implement a marketing campaign, building on the "Find it in Fort Wayne" initiative and including testimonials and highlights of previous entrepreneurial success stories	Task force (or the lead organization assigned by task force)
3-01-01	Begin developing additional small business financing vehicles, such as venture capital within the region	Task force (or the lead organization assigned by task force)
3-30-01	Solicit new funding vehicles to fill the gaps	Task force (or the lead organization assigned by task force)
4-15-01	Begin to promote Northeast Indiana as an entrepreneurial location	IND and the Fort Wayne/Allen County Economic Development Alliance
6-15-01	Offer two programs: a human resources cooperative and a training cooperative for small businesses	Task force (or the lead organization assigned by task force)

Action Plan Ten: Northeast Indiana businesses and residents have competitive access to broadband and state of the art communications technology.

Telecommunications has become a critical factor for economic development today. It is likely to be even more critical in the next few years. Telecommunications in Fort Wayne and Northeast Indiana is somewhat competitive now. However, there are still shortcomings. Neither the region nor Fort Wayne has uniform service. As one moves away from Fort Wayne, telecommunications options decrease. There are a number of complex issues that must be addressed in a regional strategy for business technology.

The first step to improving business access and use of telecommunications technology is to assess the region's technology assets. Once we have a better understanding of the region's current telecommunications capacity, we can create a comprehensive technology development strategy. This activity will be performed by a new organization, which will also lead in the implementation of that strategy.

In order to be competitive with most successful regional economies in the world, Northeast Indiana should be aggressive in insisting upon access to telecommunications technology at a reasonable cost.

Milestones that will be established include a measuring and mapping of broad-band capacity, schools connected to broadband service and increasing telecommunications service at a competitive cost throughout the region. Within two years, all of Allen County should have uniform telecommunications service, with improved service continuing to extend throughout the region.

Initial Implementation Steps for Action Plan Ten: Ensure competitive access to state of the art telecommunications technology

Target Date	Task	Responsible Party
10-15-00	Local elected officials from the region create initial technology partnership task force	Local elected officials
11-15-00	Task force begins to review current state of telecommunications technology	Business Technology Advisory Group
1-15-01	Task force issues report	Business Technology Advisory Group
2-15-01	Full-time professional hired to support task force	Regional officials, business executives and Mayor
2-15-01	Task force meets with telecommunication service providers to develop expansion of services	
4-15-01	Task force issues recommendations	
5-15-01	Organization begins to promote telecommunication success stories	
6-15-01	Organization unveils new Web site	

Action Plan Eleven: The number of Northeast Indiana companies engaged in international trade rapidly increases.

One of the major trends that Northeast Indiana faces is an economy that is increasingly global. The more opportunities the region's businesses have to participate in that global economy, the better off our regional economy will be. A regional manufacturing sector that is driven by exporting, for example, will be more likely to provide quality jobs that offer wages above the national average.

This action plan proposes an aggressive effort to promote international trade. We will meet regularly with trade officials in Chicago, Detroit and Toronto. The plan includes a single point of contact on international trade for the region. This experienced professional will maintain a clearinghouse that will provide the region with updated information.

In addition, this international trade professional will serve as a focal point for both promotion and education. Dissemination of timely information and trade promotional programs will assist regional businesses as they engage in trade activities. A volunteer, international trade advisory group will oversee this project.

In addition, the plan calls for a further analysis of the costs and benefits of developing a significant international trade asset. This might be a chiller facility at the airport or a new logistics business park for international trade. The Airport Authority and Greater Fort Wayne Chamber of Commerce will take the lead in this effort.

Milestones that will enable us to evaluate our progress in this action plan include organizing an international trade oversight group, staffing an international trade professional position, surveying small firms and creating a trade database. One objective is to help 100 regional companies new to international trade begin exporting or importing within the next two years.

Initial Implementation Steps for Action Plan Eleven: Rapidly increase the number of companies engaged in international trade

Target Date	Task	Responsible Party
11-15-00	Hire professional international trade director's position to City of Fort Wayne Economic Development Department	Mayor
12-15-00	Develop promotional programs	International trade director in cooperation with the Alliance
1-15-01	Contact regional universities to develop student international mentor programs	International trade director in cooperation with the Alliance
1-15-01	Survey small firms	International trade director in cooperation with the Alliance
2-1-00	Develop relationships with Trade Consuls in Chicago , Detroit and Toronto	International trade director in cooperation with the Alliance
2-15-00	Develop and maintain web site	International trade director in cooperation with the Alliance
3-30-01	Implement promotional programs and information dissemination – including regional success stories	International trade director in cooperation with the Alliance
4-30-01	Develop cost-benefits study for chiller facility and international logistics park	Fort Wayne-Allen County Airport Authority
5-1-01	Develop resource library	International trade director in cooperation with the Alliance

Action Plan Twelve: The number of regional workers engaged in skill development and educational programs significantly expands.

Everyone agrees that workforce development is critical to the region's economic future. Workforce development pervades many other aspects of economic development. Many of the other action plans in this report have programs that focus on workforce issues.

However, workforce development is changing. The new imperative of continuous learning requires a new approach. Employers and employees will need to buy into a process of life-long-learning. People will come to expect that life-long-learning is part of the culture of this community.

To promote this change, this action plan will focus on three groups of stakeholders: employers, post-high school college and technical schools, and learners. In initiatives for each group, this action plan's initial objective is to get more people involved in post high school skill development and educational programs throughout the region. The plan's main goal is to create a Northeastern Indiana workforce that has advanced skills and an increased education. The regional workforce investment board (WIB), with significant leadership support from organizations such as the Greater Fort Wayne Chamber of Commerce, will head up this initiative.

Employers: We must learn the needs and goals of both employers and workers. We will promote work-based training and learning. Further, we will work with local employers to assist them in developing incentive programs for increased skills and education. We will help employers develop new regional skill alliances.

Colleges and Technical Schools: Another component will be to work with educators. We will convene the leaders of the region's colleges and trainers to develop specific ways to bring additional educational resources to post-high school learning and skill development. In education we must cooperate locally in order to compete globally.

Learners: This initiative will help underwrite part of the costs of learning and skill development for high school graduates and people who have earned GEDs. This will involve a new "Lifelong Learning Card" that adults can use to help finance skill development and education.

Milestones that will enable us to evaluate our progress in this action plan include completing a survey of employer and worker needs, convening educational institutions to develop a strategy and increase by 10 percent in the number of workers engaged in training programs in 12 months.

Initial Implementation Steps for Action Plan Twelve: Significantly expand the number of workers engaged in skill development programs

Target Date	Task	Responsible Party
10-15-00	Mayor asks WIB to lead life-long-learning efforts	Mayor
10-15-00	Team appointed to review funding for post-secondary education program	Mayor and WIB
10-30-00	Mayor meets with regional employers and state and federal government officials to pursue funding for post-secondary education	Mayor
10-30-00	Mayor asks Incumbent Worker Council to review new approaches to skill development	Mayor
11-15-00	Mayor convenes meeting of regional post-secondary educators	Mayor
11-15-00	WIB creates oversight group to develop new strategy	WIB
11-15-00	WIB begins regional worker survey	WIB
1-01-01	New Regional Skill Alliance begins	Chamber of Commerce
2-15-01	Team begins to develop skill development funding program	Skill Development Team
3-15-01	Team submits its plan to the WIB	Skill Development Team
8-01-01	Life-Long Learning Card program unveiled	Mayor

Draft Budget Recommendations

Mayor Richard has proposed that \$750,000 in 2001 CEDIT funds be allocated in the following manner:

Action Plan #1: Fort Wayne has an environment that supports a great quality of life.

Budget Proposal: Because other funds will be used to support this action plan, none of the \$750,000 is requested for this initiative.

Action Plan #2 Fort Wayne revitalizes its downtown.

Budget Proposal: \$75,000 is recommended to pay for the downtown masterplan.

Action Plan #3: Fort Wayne and Allen County have outstanding business sites to support business expansion and new business location.

Budget Proposal: Of the \$750,000, \$100,000 is requested to be used by the City and the Fort Wayne-Allen County Economic Development Alliance for industrial site development.

Action Plan #4: Fort Wayne has a more user friendly, pro business environment.

Budget Proposal: \$90,000 is requested to be used for the development of a computer database and tracking system and for establishing a "Business Advocate" position.

Action Plan #5: Leaders in our 10 counties work together to make Northeast Indiana competitive with the most successful regional economies in the world.

Budget Proposal: \$75,000 is requested to be available for regional economic development initiatives. These funds would be matched by funding from other communities. The specific use of this money would be determined after regional leaders convene.

Action Plan #6: Many more of the region's manufacturers transform their companies into high performance, advanced manufacturing enterprises.

Budget Proposal: \$15,000 is requested to be used as matching funds to support Regional Skills Alliance workforce development efforts.

Action Plan #7: Northeast Indiana generates a rapid increase in quality jobs in high growth business sectors.

No 2001 funds are requested specifically for this action plan, because the activities associated with other action plans complement this one.

Action Plan #8: We continue to develop the Fort Wayne International Airport into an essential economic development asset.

Budget Proposal: \$70,000 is requested to be used as matching funds for the development of an airline maintenance training facility located at or near Fort Wayne International Airport.

Action Plan #9: Northeast Indiana becomes an entrepreneurial center for companies with high growth potential.

Budget Proposal: \$150,000 is requested to be used as matching funds for entrepreneurial support activities associated with the Innovation Center.

Action Plan #10: Northeast Indiana businesses and residents have competitive access to broadband and state of the art communications technology.

Budget Proposal: \$50,000 is requested to be used to determine the fiber broadband capabilities of the community.

Action Plan #11: The number of Northeast Indiana companies engaged in international trade triples.

Budget proposal: \$50,000 is requested to increase the international trade of Fort Wayne area companies. Specifically, funds would be used to develop services that assist local companies in entering into or expanding their foreign trade.

Action Plan #12: The number of regional workers engaged in skill development and educational programs triples.

Budget Proposal: \$75,000 is requested to develop the Lifelong Learning initiative. This program would provide information and financial aid to adults who wish to upgrade their skills. Funds would be used to develop an internet -based infrastructure that would help adults identify training opportunities. Funds would also be used as matching funds for what is anticipated to be a multi-million dollar financial aid pool.