Indiana Vision 2025 – OUTLINE OF KEY DRIVERS AND GOALS

DRIVER 1: OUTSTANDING TALENT
- Increase the proficiency of Indiana students in math, science and reading to “Top 5” status internationally.
- Increase to 90% the proportion of Indiana students who graduate from high school ready for college and/or career training.
- Eliminate the educational achievement gaps at all levels, from pre-school through college, for disadvantaged populations.
- Increase to 60% the proportion of Indiana residents with high quality postsecondary credentials.
- Increase the proportion of Indiana residents with bachelor’s degrees or higher to “Top 10” status internationally.
- Increase the proportion of Indiana residents with postsecondary credentials in STEM-related fields to “Top 5” status internationally.
- Develop, implement and fully fund a comprehensive plan for addressing the skills shortages of adult and incumbent workers who lack minimum basic skills. Indiana Career Council in place/progress taking place

DRIVER 2: ATTRACTIVE BUSINESS CLIMATE
- Adopt a right-to-work statute. Passed February 2012
- Enact comprehensive government reform at the state and local levels to increase efficiency and effectiveness in delivery of services.
- Reform public pension systems to achieve fairness and cost-containment.
- Preserve and enhance a “Top 5” ranking among all states for Indiana’s legal environment. Achieved in 2013 Report Card
- Eliminate the business personal property tax. Passed 2012/2013
- Promote the enactment of a federal solution to the Internet sales/use tax dilemma.
- Streamline and make consistent the administration of the state’s tax code.
- Establish government funding mechanisms to more closely approximate “user fee” model.
- Contain health care costs through patient-directed access and outcomes-based incentives.
- Reduce smoking levels to less than 15% of the population. Coalition progress and Wellness Council of Indiana’s QUIT NOW tool; first statewide smoking ban passed in 2012
- Return obesity levels to less than 20% of the population. Coalition progress, including new Wellness Council grant for 2014

DRIVER 3: SUPERIOR INFRASTRUCTURE
- Create and implement a plan to position Indiana as a net exporter of energy.
- Diversify Indiana’s energy mix with an emphasis on clean coal, nuclear power and renewables.
- Identify and implement workable energy conservation strategies.
- Develop and implement a strategic water resource plan that ensures adequate fresh water for citizens and business. Indiana Chamber Foundation study in progress
- Develop and implement new fiscal systems to support the array of infrastructure projects critical to economic growth. More user pay systems and dedicated funding for future needs passed in 2013
- Aggressively build out the state’s advanced telecommunications networks.

DRIVER 4: DYNAMIC & CREATIVE CULTURE
- Develop entrepreneurship and aggressively promote business start-ups through education, networking, investment and financial support. Creation of Office of Small Business & Entrepreneurship (reduce silos)
- Increase the amount of technology transfer from higher education institutions and attain “Top 5” ranking per capita among all states. Creation of Indiana Biosciences Research Institute
- Achieve “Top 12” ranking among all states in number of utility patents per worker.
- Achieve “Top 12” ranking among all states in venture capital invested per capita.
- Strategically recruit foreign direct investment (FDI) and achieve “Top 12” ranking among all states in FDI as a percent of gross state product.
- Increase Indiana exports to achieve “Top 5” ranking per capita among all states.
- Promote a culture that further values diversity and civility, attracting and retaining talented individuals.
Introduction

During 2010-11, a 24-person taskforce of business and community leaders throughout Indiana developed Indiana Vision 2025 (IV 2025), identifying four key drivers: Outstanding Talent, Attractive Business Climate, Superior Infrastructure, and Dynamic and Creative Culture. Under those four drivers, 33 goals were determined to be advanced. In June 2012, the Indiana Chamber of Commerce, along with its regional partners, hosted a series of forums consisting of thought leaders from throughout the state. These events were followed by a statewide summit in December 2012.

The Indiana Chamber remains committed to informing stakeholders about promising initiatives and tangible results related to the plan, and encouraging aggressive collaboration to ensure that regions are sharing their best practices. Additionally, the Chamber believes we must continually validate our top priorities, map our assets and strategically engage with business, community and philanthropic leaders and their organizations to keep Indiana Vision 2025 top of mind.

Building on the 2012 momentum, the Chamber and its regional partners chose to reconvene a forum series for thought leaders to review the progress of IV 2025 and explore ways of advancing regional prioritized goals. Forum participants heard from a variety of speakers and once again were afforded an opportunity to build upon the goals, comment on the plan’s progress and offer their recommendations on how to advance the initiatives in their region.

On December 6, 2013, Indiana Chamber and its Northwest regional partners, United States Steel and Northwest Indiana Forum, hosted a half-day forum at Gamba Ristorante in Merrillville. Forty-three thought leaders attended and participated in a lively combination of presentations, discussions and collaboration.

Forum Structure

The regional forums in and statewide summit in 2012 focused on introducing the drivers and goals that make up IV 2025 and giving participants the opportunity to provide input and identify regional priorities and assets. The emphasis for these most recent forums was placed on sharing updates and progress pertinent to the drivers and goals, as well as planning strategically to prioritize areas of needed emphasis.

At the Northwest Indiana Forum (made possible by title sponsor Chase), after a welcome by regional partner and forum coordinator Jill Ritchie, director of public policy & governmental affairs for United States Steel and chair of the Northwest Indiana Forum, Indiana Chamber of Commerce president and CEO Kevin Brinegar launched the event with a brief review on the history and focus of IV 2025. Brinegar shared an update on the progress made toward achieving the goals. The forum was then facilitated by representatives from CHORUS®, Inc., an Indiana-based management consulting firm that had also facilitated the 2012 forum series and statewide summit.

Following each speaker, forum participants were given the opportunity in small groups to discuss the speaker comments, address their applicability to the Northwest region, and record additional information that might further advance the goals and priorities.

Speakers addressing goals under each driver included:

**DRIVER 1: Outstanding Talent**
- Don Babcock, Director of Economic Development, NIPSCO
- Dr. Peggy Buffington, Superintendent, School City of Hobart

**DRIVER 2: Attractive Business Climate**
- Rex Richards, President, Valparaiso Chamber of Commerce

**DRIVER 3: Superior Infrastructure**
- Carl Lisek, Executive Director, South Shore Clean Cities, Inc.

**DRIVER 4: Dynamic and Creative Culture**
- Kelly Schwedland, Entrepreneur-in-Residence, Elevate Ventures
Northwest Region Participants

Forty-three regional leaders attended the Indiana Vision 2025 forum on December 6, 2013, in Merrillville.

Don Babcock
Director of Economic Development
NIPSCO

Michael Baird
Interim Director
Boys & Girls Club of Northwest Indiana

Lee Botts
Executive Producer
Green Heron Productions

Dr. Peggy Buffington
Superintendent
School City of Hobart

Mark Chamberlain
Chairman & CEO
Lakeside Wealth Management Group

Sen. Dan Coats
State of Indiana
United States Congress

Jack Cole
Director, Member & External Relations
Indiana Grantmakers Alliance

Dr. Jim Dworkin
Chancellor
Purdue North Central

Jim Dyer
Sr. Vice President
Berglund Construction

Heather Ennis
Executive Director
Duneland Chamber of Commerce

Jim Jorgensen
Partner
Hoepner, Wagner & Evans, LLP

Hon. Karen Freeman-Wilson
Mayor
City of Gary

Denarie Kane
Staff Advisor
City of Hobart

Carl Lisek
Executive Director
South Shore Clean Cities, Inc.

Russ Marchinek
Dean of Students
Crown Point High School

David Malik
Vice Chancellor
Indiana University Northwest

Robert McDermott
Assistant Principal
Crown Point High School

Regina Moody
Vice President
Chase Bank

Leigh Morris
Interim President & CEO
Legacy Foundation

James Muhammad
President & CEO
Lakeshore Public Media

Joy Nelson
Director of Environmental Affairs
Northwest Indiana Forum

Tim Nelson
Vice President
Chase Bank

Chip Pettit
Principal
Crown Point High School

Craig Pratt
Senior Vice President
Fifth Third Bank

Rex Richards
President
Valparaiso Chamber of Commerce

Jill Ritchie*
Director of Public Policy & Governmental Affairs
United States Steel Corp.

Dr. Dennis Rittenmeyer
Executive Director
One Region, One Vision

Dave Ryan
Executive Director
Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce

Tim Sanders
Assoc. VP, Federal Relations & Advocacy
Purdue University

Kelly Schwedland
Entrepreneur-in-Residence
Elevate Ventures

Steve Strains
Deputy Director/Director of Planning
Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission

Charlie Weaver
Executive Director
Starke County Economic Development Foundation

Chris White
Publisher
The Times Media Company

Linda Woloshansky
President & CEO
The Center for Workforce Innovations

Beth Wrobel
CEO
HealthLinc

Barbara Young
President
Porter County Community Foundation

Mike Seitz
President
LaPorte Chamber of Commerce

* Denotes Regional Partner
Northwest Region Challenges & Opportunities

Through survey results and forum discussions, the challenges, opportunities and assets characterizing the economic environment in Northwest Indiana were identified. Though there was considerable alignment between the challenges and opportunities identified during the 2012 and 2013 forums, there were areas that showed meaningful progress and others where the needs have become more acute.

PRIMARY CHALLENGES

1. Educational Excellence: As it shares with other regions of the state, a high priority in Northwest Indiana is ensuring that citizens have exceptional preparation for productive, relevant careers and vocations. Forum participants noted a number of critical issues currently affecting education attainment, particularly inadequate funding. The challenge impacts all age groups. Participants also noted the importance of listening to the recommendations of the educational community and connecting educators and employers.

2. Transportation Infrastructure: The Northwest region is noted for its excellent pathways for moving people, products and ideas. The network must continue to grow. Participants noted that improved passenger rail, highways and public transportation are all points of emphasis. Increased access to ports and air service could greatly impact future economic prosperity.

3. Community/Political Leadership: Forum participants regarded attracting exceptionally talented people to public and private service as a challenge. Recent elections and appointments in the region have provided reason for hope that gifted, visionary individuals are being drawn to serve.

4. Regional Identity: Perhaps more than any other area of the state, Northwest Indiana possesses a regional identity that is not historically positive. Linger ing images of old steel mills remain the perception of many. Changing the preconceived notions will require marketing Northwest Indiana as a dynamic brand in touch with the needs of a high-tech economy.

5. Training/Job Creation: Workforce development and job creation are closely tied to both educational achievement and regional identity. The region must continue to address the broad need of providing a technically competent labor force necessary for attracting and retaining technically-focused industries.

6. Racial Diversity and Renewal: The region is a diverse mix of race and culture. While the cooperation and collaboration across cultural boundaries has improved significantly over the years, forum participants acknowledge that gaps still exist.

7. Cohesive Planning: Good forward planning has been evident over the past decade or longer. Often, though, the planning occurs within the boundaries of counties or municipalities and without the broader vision of the region in mind.

OVERARCHING OPPORTUNITIES TO LEVERAGE

1. Location: Northwest Indiana is a geographical sweet spot for growth-minded people, businesses and organizations. With its proximity to Chicago and its access to interstates, rail and ports, the region boasts a transportation diversity that few areas in the Midwest could rival.

2. Natural Resources: Northwest Indiana has elements of both nature and nurture working in its favor. Lake Michigan, the lakefront, state parks and regional attractions are helping build a quality of life vital to the growth of the region. As cultural and recreational opportunities increase, so do the opportunities to attract and retain new businesses.

3. Commuter/Freight Rail Transportation: Forum participants identified extensive rail infrastructure as a distinct strategic advantage. There are significant opportunities to expand rail’s impact to move people and products. When combined with other modes of transportation, rail line access can play a crucial role in the growth of the regional economy.

4. Gary Airport: A resource with exceptional potential (though currently underutilized) is the Gary airport. With runways long enough to handle increased passenger and freight flights, Gary is a convenient, efficient and logical alternative to Chicago’s airports.

5. Trend Towards Regional Cooperation: Although regional cooperation has historically been viewed as a challenge, there are strong initiatives such as NWI Regional Development Authority and One Region, One Vision that are turning the tide on collaboration.
Northwest Region Prioritized Goals

In 2012 and again in 2013, Northwest forum participants were surveyed regarding how they would prioritize the 33 goals listed under the four drivers. There was a great deal of alignment in the two surveys with only minor movement in the priorities between the two years. Below are the four drivers with the top prioritized goals in each.

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Northwest Regional Forum Observations & Recommendations

**Key Driver #1: Outstanding Talent**

**CHORUS Observations:**
Forum participants placed specific emphasis on the need for early education of students and family involvement in education. The lack of funding resources for early childhood instruction (and for K-12 education) in the region is of great concern. The region offers significant opportunities in vocational areas and skilled trades, and participants noted a number of outstanding assets advancing job creation and workforce development. Skilled trades are an excellent career path for many young people in the region, but encouraging students to pursue a career in trades must be encouraged more often.

**Participant Statements and Themes:**
- Fund preschool for all children. Educational process must start earlier.
- Ensure STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) training throughout educational experience.
- Promote two-year degree path and certification attainment as well as four-year degree credentials.
- Work on strengthening the regional college campuses which, in many cases, have reportedly better results in talent retention.
Key Driver #2: Attractive Business Climate

CHORUS Observations:
Forum participants placed their focus squarely in two areas: tax reform and consolidation of government services. They also expressed the need for collaboration across city and county lines so that the region as a whole can impact economic development in ways that advance all regional communities.

Participant Statements and Themes:
- Need tax reform conversation for both schools and municipalities.
- Funding for local government is a must.
- Encourage consolidation of services in local and county government.
- If business personal property tax is eliminated, we must find a way to replace the revenue.
- Create more products through collaborative efforts within the region.

Key Driver #3: Superior Infrastructure

CHORUS Observations:
Participants identified a number of infrastructure initiatives deserving of attention. Long-term planning is needed to build upon and maintain an already strong highway infrastructure. Telecommunications infrastructure needs expansion and upgrades to help the region maintain competitiveness, as does an aging water resource system.

Participant Statements and Themes:
- Need plan to support the current and future highway infrastructure.
- Need regional public transportation that connects communities.
- Push for distribution-type businesses due to good logistical location.
- Must improve our information technology infrastructure.
- We must build and maintain our water infrastructure.

Key Driver #4: Dynamic & Creative Culture

CHORUS Observations:
Participants believe that entrepreneurial energy and innovation will prove to be a key element to the economic growth of the region. Again, collaboration to identify, support and grow entrepreneurial ventures must be a primary focus for leaders. Additionally, the region must continually work to present the area as a good place to live, work and play.

Participant Statements and Themes:
- Create a culture of entrepreneurship among lenders, regulators and the community.
- Coalesce the efforts of resources (e.g. Elevate Venture angel fund, incubators, SBDC). Give entrepreneurs a sense of where and how they can start.
- Build greater cooperation between universities, financial institutions and businesses to create an environment for entrepreneurs.
- Need more access to capital for start-ups and growth.
- Look for spin-off opportunities from existing successful companies.

MOVING FORWARD

As the region’s economy recovers, capitalizing on new opportunities will be crucial to growth. With a much friendlier business environment than neighboring Illinois, the region will need to work collaboratively, pooling resources and influence to attract opportunities. Participants were very clear that they must also work together to ensure students and workers alike are prepared to function in a 21st century economy. Participants were passionate in their support for the region’s good quality of life and the advantages it offers. Working side-by-side and across county and community borders to sell the features and benefits of Northwest Indiana will be absolutely critical to continuing to grow the region.

Just as cooperation within the region is emphasized here (as well as in several other areas of the state in which forums took place), it is important for regions to share best practices and learn from each other. While the challenges in each region are somewhat unique, solutions often revolve around effective communication and collaboration. Strategies and initiatives that prove successful in one location could provide valuable lessons for others in different regions. For true statewide progress toward the goals of Indiana Vision 2025, each region must be as strong as possible. The best way to help make that happen is by working together.
Since 1981, the Indiana Chamber Foundation has provided leadership through practical policy research to improve Indiana’s economic climate. The Foundation is coordinating the funding of Indiana Vision 2025. Contact Mark Lawrance at (317) 264-6893 to learn about sponsorship opportunities in your community.