

Steuben County Economic Development Plan

*“Where Work and Quality of Life are
Perfectly Balanced”*



Steuben County Economic Development
Corporation (SCEDC)
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VISION:

Steuben County will develop and sustain a diversified economy that promotes economic growth and innovation by embracing the ingenuity of employers, cultivating a highly-educated workforce, and maintaining a high quality of life valued by residents and visitors alike.

CORE PRINCIPLES:

- **Collaboration and Connectivity** – industry, educators, economic development, workforce development, community leaders, and elected officials work together to promote economic growth. A seamless process is in place to inform and engage partners in business attraction efforts. Current employers are connected and able to collaborate to address workforce training and infrastructure/facilities needs supporting business retention.
- **Culture of Innovation** – resources are available to support entrepreneurial development and the commercialization of ideas. Knowledge of current capabilities of companies and opportunities for capitalizing on new technologies and industry targets. Digital infrastructure in place to support technological capabilities demanded by business.
- **Work Ready Communities** – each community is committed to demonstrating the availability of a qualified workforce. Targeted indicators track the number of certified ‘work ready’ employees with the basic skills and work ethics that employers seek.
- **Sites Ready for Development** – business parks and greenfield land sites have infrastructure requirements (i.e. roads, electric, gas, sewer/wastewater, water, high speed communication/broadband access) necessary for immediate development. Redevelopment is coordinated at the county and community level to promote the reuse of sites, properties, and brownfields.
- **Work/ Life Balance** – quality of life is as important as the availability of high-wage employment opportunities. Recreational, entertainment, cultural, dining, and shopping amenities are diverse and abundant for use by residents and tourists. Lakes and parks are assets protected and maintained. Development projects must take into account sustainability and environmental considerations.



Introduction

The Steuben County Economic Development Corporation (SCEDC) was established in February of 2004 by area leaders for the purpose of assisting existing industries to remain stable and expand, and to market and attract new firms and investment to the county. To formalize a vision and strategic direction for economic development efforts in Steuben County, the SCEDC contracted with Thomas P. Miller and Associates, LLC to develop a Strategic Economic Development Plan. The planning process incorporated the following components:

- Data Analysis – review of best available demographic, labor market, economic, and industry data on Steuben County;
- Community Inputs – interviews with employers, economic development, education, government and community organization leadership to gather insights on county assets, current initiatives, challenges and opportunities for growth;
- SWOT Analysis – identification of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats during public input sessions;
- Strategy Development – working with SCEDC staff and board members to define economic development priorities and a strategy for implementation. This includes an action plan for county economic development and separate mini-plans for six communities;
- Community Mini-Plans – mini-plans for six communities in Steuben County (Angola, Ashley, Clear Lake, Fremont, Hamilton, and Orland) with community-level data analysis, key themes from interviews, and recommendations identified (see Appendix A); and
- Final Plan – recommendations with a rationale for selection, actions steps, partners for implementation, and timeline presented.

The resulting plan provides guidance and focus for economic development. It is presented with action in mind and not intended to serve as a glossy report for display on a bookshelf. Implementation will ultimately make this plan relevant and useful for promoting economic growth in Steuben County. Mark up text, highlight sections, dog-ear pages – it's there for the taking.



Data Highlights

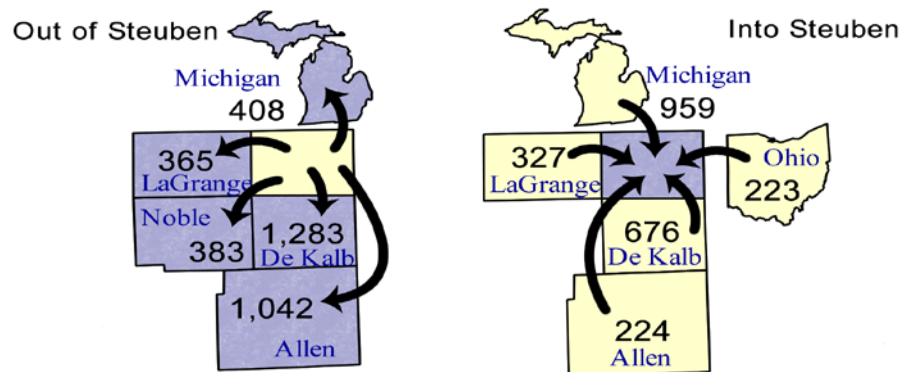


Source: Trine University

- Steuben County is located in the extreme northeast corner of Indiana bordered by Michigan to the north, Ohio to the east, LaGrange County, IN to the west, and DeKalb County, IN to the south.
- The north-south Interstate 69 and the east-west I-80/90 Indiana Toll Road provide interstate access to major metropolitan areas and major distribution centers including Fort Wayne (40 miles), South Bend (70 miles), Toledo, OH (75 miles), Detroit (125 miles), Indianapolis (155 miles), Chicago (160 miles), and Cleveland (180 miles). The county is within a day's drive from 75 percent of the United States Trade Market.
- Steuben County is home to 33,579 residents (2009). Since 1990, the county population has grown 22.3%. More recently, population growth has remained relatively flat with only 1.1% growth from 2000-09, compared with 5.6% for the State of Indiana during the same time period.

- The largest community in the county is the City of Angola with a population of 7,894. Other communities include the Town of Fremont (pop. 1,609), Town of Hamilton (pop. 1,234), Town of Ashley (pop. 992), Town of Hudson (pop. 563), Town of Orland (pop. 320) and the Town of Clear Lake (pop. 224).
- Due to the geographic distribution of the lakes, only 38% of the residents (12,836) live in the seven incorporated communities; the remaining 62% (20,743) of the residents live in unincorporated areas although most lake communities have homeowner associations that belong to the Steuben County Lakes Council.
- The median age is 37.6 (2008) compared to the state median of 36.7 and the national median of 36.8. Older Adults (44-64 years old) make up the largest segment of the population accounting for 27.4%, compared with 25.8% in the state and 25.7% nationally.
- There are more than 65 industries in Steuben County. The dominant industry in Steuben County is manufacturing, accounting for 30.4% of jobs held by the workforce. More than 80 manufacturers are located in the county involved in the production of a variety of different products including insulated glass (Cardinal IG Company), pressure sensitive labels (RR Donnelly), materials handling equipment (Vestil Manufacturing), copper ball anodes (Univertical Corporation), and muffins and buns (New Horizon Baking Corporation).
- Outside of manufacturing, major employers are Trine University, a private institution with an enrollment of 1,821 students (Fall 2009) and Cameron Memorial Community Hospital, a private non-profit community hospital located in Angola.
- The retail trade (15.1%) and accommodations and food services (10.5%) industries provide a large number of jobs in the county due in part to the local tourism industry. An estimated 750,000 visitors each year visit one of the county's lakes, shop and dine at local businesses, and participate in recreational activities.
- The average annual wage per job is \$28,691 (2008) compared with the state average of \$38,403. Highest wage jobs are in utilities (\$67,169 avg. wage), information (\$53,101 avg. wage), and finance (\$43,341 avg. wage). The average annual wage in manufacturing is \$37,146, lower than the state average of \$52,376.
- Per capita personal income in Steuben County was 73.1% of the US per capita personal income in 2008; in 1998, the percentage was 90.0%.
- County employment in manufacturing declined from 5,470 employees in 2004 to 4,243 in 2008, a decline of 22.4%.
- The unemployment rate in April 2010 was 11.7%, higher than the state (9.8%) and national (9.5%) during the same month (not seasonally adjusted).

- Commuting patterns show a significant number of workers entering into Steuben County for work. The State of Michigan is the largest contributor with close to 1,000 entering Steuben County for work. Conversely, a significant number of Steuben County residents leave the county for work in other counties. The main receiver is neighboring DeKalb County with significant numbers also commuting to Fort Wayne/Allen County.



Source: Stats Indiana

- Steuben County has a higher percentage of its population 25 years and older with a High School degree or higher (84.3%) compared to state (82.1%) and national (80.4%) percentages. However, only 15.5% of the population have a Bachelor's degree or higher which lag behind state and national figures.
- Public school districts in Steuben County have graduated a higher percentage of students in four years than the State of Indiana over the past three school years. Fremont Community Schools (89.0%), Hamilton Community Schools (88.9%), Metropolitan School District of Steuben County (83.4%), and Prairie Heights Community School Corporation (90.0%) all exceeded the state four-year graduation rate in 2008-09.
- Indiana State Testing for Educational Progress (ISTEP) occurs in the Fall and Spring of each year in Indiana to test math and reading skills of K-12 students. For the Spring 2009 testing period, the county's school districts (MSD – Steuben County, 60.1%, Hamilton Community Schools – 62.5%, Fremont Community Schools – 61.8%, and Prairie Heights Community School Corporation – 61.9%) performed slightly below the state average of 62.7% for percentage of students in all test-taking grades passing both the English and Math portions of the test.
- In 2008-09, 225 students graduated Trine University with bachelor's degrees. The most popular degree programs were business (64 graduates) and engineering (58 graduates).



County Assets

Chambers of Commerce

- **Angola Area Chamber of Commerce** – membership organization that serves the interest of businesses in Angola. The Chamber is promoting an Angola Area First effort that focuses on marketing local businesses as a first option for services and goods.
- **Ashley-Hudson Chamber of Commerce** – membership organization for businesses in the towns of Ashley and Hudson. They sponsor the annual Ashley-Hudson Festival in August each year.
- **Fremont Area Chamber of Commerce** - a voluntary, non-profit organization which brings together businesses, professionals, and concerned citizens to utilize their ideas and talents to aid in promoting a balanced community development.
- **Hamilton Area Chamber of Commerce** – organized for the purpose of advancing the commercial, industrial, civic and general interests of the town of Hamilton and its trade area.
- **Orland Chamber of Commerce** – membership organization for businesses in the Town of Orland that hosts events throughout the year.

Community Organizations

- **Steuben County Community Foundation** – work to preserve and enhance the lifestyle and assets of Steuben County for current and future generations by providing ongoing assessment and financial support of identified needs through philanthropic giving and endowment building.
- **Steuben County Economic Development Corporation (SCEDC)** - established in February of 2004 by area leaders for the purpose of assisting county-based existing industries to remain stable and expand, and to market and attract new firms and investment to the county.

- **Steuben County Industry Guild** – represents the interest of manufacturers in Steuben County. Provides networking and educational opportunities for county employers.
- **Steuben County Lakes Council** – volunteer organization that represents owners of property on Steuben County’s lakes. The Council is focused on promoting education on water quality and environmental issues. They provide scholarships to students who study environmental engineering at Trine University.
- **Steuben County Tourism Bureau** – independent, nonprofit corporation dedicated to creating a positive economic impact on the area's economy by effectively marketing Steuben County as a destination for leisure travel, group tours, meetings, conventions and other group functions and to providing superior customer service to visitors and its members.

Educational Resources

- **Four County Area Vocational Cooperative** - provides vocational programs, administers adult education and coordinates communications with the Indiana Department of Education and other state agencies for 11 high schools including Angola High School, Fremont High School, Hamilton High School, and Prairie Heights High School.
- **Freedom Academy** – offers continuing adult education classes related to business and computer applications. On-site training is also available to meet the needs of employers in the county. Customized, on-site training is also available.
- **Indiana University – Purdue University Fort Wayne (IPFW)** - regional campus of both Indiana University and Purdue University that offers more than 200 degrees and certificates.
- **Ivy Tech Community College** – offers courses at various sites throughout Steuben County for professional development and toward a two-year degree.
- **Steuben County Literacy Coalition** – fosters lifelong learning and improved literacy through high quality and accessible educational opportunities for children and adults in Steuben County.
- **Trine University** – fast-growing private, non-denominational university that grants associate’s, bachelor’s, and master’s degrees in more than 30 programs. Enrollment grew 48.4% from 2005-09 and stood at 1,930 students in 2010. U.S. News and World Report and the Princeton Review rank Trine among the Midwest’s Best Colleges in 2008, 2009, and 2010. The cast metals program was ranked the best undergraduate cast metals program in the nation by the Foundry Education

Foundation. Trine works with employers to provide co-ops and internship opportunities for students.

Health Care

- **Cameron Memorial Community Hospital** – a 25-bed Critical Access general community hospital located in Angola serving Steuben County, its neighboring Indiana counties, as well as northwest Ohio and southern Michigan. The hospital has begun a detailed planning and design of a replacement hospital and medical office building, to be constructed at their current and expanded site on the eastside of downtown Angola.

Industrial/Business Parks

- **Angola Industrial Parks** – located north of downtown Angola, created as an economic development project for the City in the late 1970's and early 80's. The parks include Angola Wire Products, General Products Corporation, Metal Spinners, Tenneco Automotive, and Univertical. Location is three miles from I-69. Currently, there are several vacant buildings available for purchase.
- **Ashley Industrial Park** – 250 acre park with 106 acres in industrial park available for development in almost any size parcel. Easy access to I-69 (1.5 mi.) and I-80/90.
- **Crossroads Industrial Park (Fremont, Indiana)** – partially full Industrial Park with most roads and utilities in place, zoned I-2. Current companies include Cardinal IG Glass, Cold Heading I & II, and Alleghany Coatings.
- **Hudson Industrial Park** – 46 acres of prime land zoned for light industrial development located within the town limits of Hudson. There is an Indiana Northeastern Railroad spur with connection to Norfolk Southern. Easy access to I-69.
- **Orland Industrial Park** – only 10 miles to I-69 or 10 miles to I-80/90. There is a 94,000 sq. foot manufacturing facility in good condition available. The Orland Chamber of Commerce, which owns the park, is extending the access road so that it will have connection to S.R. 120 to complement the existing entry off of S.R. 327.

K-12 School Districts

- **Fremont Community Schools** – school system with an enrollment of 1,118 students served by three schools (elementary, middle school, and high school) serving the Town of Fremont and neighboring areas.

- **Hamilton Community Schools** – serves the Town of Hamilton and northeastern DeKalb County with an enrollment of 513 students at one elementary school and one middle school/high school.
- **Metropolitan School District of Steuben County** – serves the City of Angola and surrounding areas with four elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school with a total enrollment of 3,037 students. In partnership with Trine University, the school district started a Middle College program for high school students in 2004 that allows students to earn dual credits for both high school and college.
- **Prairie Heights School Corporation** – serves three townships in western Steuben County and two townships in eastern LaGrange County with two elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school with a total enrollment of 1,563 students.

Natural Resources

- **Land of 101 Lakes** - Steuben County is home to more than 101 lakes that attract vacation and year-round residents to enjoy scenic views and recreational activities.
- **Pokagon State Park** – the park consists of 1,260 acres with Lake James, hiking trails, picnic areas, camping facilities, and a full-service lodging facility, the Potawatomi Inn. The Park supports year-round activities with a quarter mile toboggan run in winter.

Regional Organizations

- **Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership** – investor-based organization that supports economic development in the ten-county Northeast Indiana region by partnering with local northeast Indiana economic development organizations to discover and develop opportunities for new business investment and growth.
- **OrthoWorx** - a Warsaw-based, industry, community and education initiative established to advance and support growth and innovation within the region's uniquely concentrated, globally significant orthopedics device sector. Founded in 2009, the initiative engages and enhances the broader community interests that both serve and depend upon the sector's continued growth by targeting an integrated set of educational, workforce, cultural, communication, branding, logistical and entrepreneurial efforts.
- **Region III-A** - regional unit of government in Northeast Indiana that serves Huntington, LaGrange, Noble, Steuben and Whitley counties operating under the Regional Planning Commission statute of the Indiana Code, as an economic development district through a continuing planning grant from the U.S. Department

of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA), and most recently as a rural planning organization (RPO) through an annual planning grant from the Indiana Department of Transportation. Region III-A focuses on four primary categories of activity: community development; economic development; housing programs; and transportation planning.

- **WorkOne Northeast** - public-private organization that operates WorkOne Centers in Northeast Indiana that offer state employment services to individuals and businesses. There is a WorkOne Express Center located in the Steuben Community Center in Angola.

Small Business/Entrepreneurial Resources

- **Indiana Metropolitan Area Network (iMAN)** – a Steuben County-based fiber optic broadband project that benefits local businesses by offering high speed data transfers and secure access for very large data users through direct point-to-point high speed data/voice/video connections, at an affordable price.
- **Purdue Extension – Steuben County** – provides agriculture and natural resources educational assistance, food and nutrition programs, and sponsors 4-H youth development programs. Informational resources are available to help with community development and economic development activities.
- **Northeast Indiana Small Business Development Center** – provides assistance to entrepreneurs and small business owners in the ten-county Northeast Indiana region. Main office is located on the campus of IPFW in Fort Wayne. Consultants are available to help with business planning and provide informational seminars on a variety of topics related to business development.
- **Northeast Indiana Innovation Center** – a non-profit, community-based resource center based in Fort Wayne that catalyzes the growth and development of technology-based companies in Northeast Indiana, thereby diversifying, improving, and growing the region's economy.

Prominent Industry Clusters

- **Plastics and Rubber Products Manufacturing (NAICS 326)** – Industries in the Plastics and Rubber Products Manufacturing subsector make goods by processing plastics materials and raw rubber. The core technology employed by establishments in this subsector is that of plastics or rubber product production. Plastics and rubber are combined in the same subsector because plastics are increasingly being used as a substitute for rubber; however the subsector is generally restricted to the production of products made of just one material, either solely plastics or rubber.

Steuben County Companies: Ashley Industrial Molding, Diversapack, Fremont Plastics, Grantco Manufacturing, Letica Corporation, Plastic Processors, Inc., WCT: Western Consolidated

- **Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing (NAICS 332)** – industries in the Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing subsector transform metal into intermediate or end products, other than machinery, computers and electronics, and metal furniture or treating metals and metal formed products fabricated elsewhere. Important fabricated metal processes are forging, stamping, bending, forming, and machining, used to shape individual pieces of metal; and other processes, such as welding and assembling, used to join separate parts together.

Steuben County Companies: AZZ Galvanizing of Hamilton, Inc., Air-Way Manufacturing, Angola Wire Products Inc, Brooks Trans-Guard, Cold Heading-Fremont Heading, General Products Corporation, LaGrange Products, Inc., Metal Spinners Inc., Professional Fabricators Inc., Superior Canopy Corporation, Titan Metal Spinning, TydenBrammall, Vestil Manufacturing, Sur-Loc Inc., Wenzel Metal Spinning

Machinery manufacturing (NAICS 333) – industries in the Machinery Manufacturing subsector create end products that apply mechanical force, for example, the application of gears and levers, to perform work. Some important processes for the manufacture of machinery are forging, stamping, bending, forming, and machining that are used to shape individual pieces of metal. Processes, such as welding and assembling are used to join separate parts together. Although these processes are similar to those used in metal fabricating establishments, machinery manufacturing is different because it typically employs multiple metal forming processes in manufacturing the various parts of the machine. Moreover, complex assembly operations are an inherent part of the production process.

Steuben County Companies: Autoform Tool & Mfg Inc., Dresser Wayne, Pittsfield Products, Special Cutting Tools

- **Electrical Equipment, Appliance, and Component Manufacturing (NAICS 335)** – industries in the Electrical Equipment, Appliance, and Component Manufacturing subsector manufacture products that generate, distribute and use electrical power. Electric Lighting Equipment Manufacturing establishments produce electric lamp bulbs, lighting fixtures, and parts. Household Appliance Manufacturing establishments make both small and major electrical appliances and parts. Electrical Equipment Manufacturing establishments make goods, such as electric motors, generators, transformers, and switchgear apparatus. Other Electrical Equipment and Component Manufacturing establishments make devices for storing electrical power (e.g., batteries), for transmitting electricity (e.g., insulated wire), and wiring devices (e.g., electrical outlets, fuse boxes, and light switches).

Steuben County Companies: EMF Corporation, Halex Company, Koester Metals, Rees Inc., UCOM Inc.

- **Transportation Equipment Manufacturing (NAICS 336)** – industries in the Transportation Equipment Manufacturing subsector produce equipment for transporting people and goods. Establishments in this subsector utilize production processes similar to those of other machinery manufacturing establishments - bending, forming, welding, machining, and assembling metal or plastic parts into components and finished products.

Steuben County Companies: Dexter Axle, Indiana Marine Products (IMP) Quadra Cycle, Tenneco Automotive, Ventra Angola

Sources: US Census Bureau – North American Industry Classification System; Decision Data Resources

Workforce Assets

- Reliable, dedicated workforce with opportunity to acquire new skills and move into higher skill positions.
- Competent workforce with skills related to manufacturing – wages are lower than the state average (\$37,323 average wage in Steuben County vs. \$52,387 in Indiana).
- Trine University produces new talent annually – there is the potential to translate research & development projects into business opportunities located within Steuben County.
- There are some experiential learning programs (ex. internships, job shadowing) in place that link students with county-based companies. Additional emphasis, particularly at the K-12 level could increase exposure to available career opportunities in communities.
- Balance of work and quality of life is apparent – lakes and recreational opportunities are valued and seen as a driver for retaining and attracting individuals to the county.



Action Plan

Steuben County has multiple assets that can be leveraged to promote economic development. However, there are challenges that need to be addressed to better organize and implement growth strategies. As the recognized point of contact and advocate for economic development, the Steuben County Economic Development Corporation (SCEDC) is tasked with attracting, retaining, and growing business. This action plan serves as guidance for strengthening these activities and charting a targeted path for growing the county economy.

Based upon key themes heard in interviews, conversations, and meetings held throughout the county, a vision statement with core principles was created to provide guidance and inspiration for implementation of the plan.

Vision:

“Steuben County will develop and sustain a diversified economy that promotes economic growth and innovation by embracing the ingenuity of employers, cultivating a highly-educated workforce, and maintaining a high quality of life valued by residents and visitors alike.”

Core Principles:

- **Collaboration and Connectivity** – industry, educators, economic development, workforce development, community leaders, and elected officials work together to promote economic growth. A seamless process is in place to inform and engage partners in business attraction efforts. Current employers are connected and able to collaborate to address workforce training and infrastructure/facilities needs supporting business retention.
- **Culture of Innovation** – resources are available to support entrepreneurial development and the commercialization of ideas. Knowledge of current capabilities of companies and opportunities for capitalizing on new technologies and industry targets. Digital infrastructure in place to support technological capabilities demanded by business.

- **Work Ready Communities** – each community is committed to demonstrating the availability of a qualified workforce. Targeted indicators track the number of certified ‘work ready’ employees with the basic skills and work ethics that employers seek.
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- **Work/Life Balance** – quality of life is as important as the availability of high-wage employment opportunities. Recreational, entertainment, cultural, dining, and shopping amenities are diverse and abundant for use by residents and tourists. Lakes and parks are assets protected and maintained. Development projects must take into account sustainability and environmental considerations.

Inputs from over 100 community leaders including elected officials, business owners, organization directors, and educational leaders were gathered to identify priority opportunities and areas for improvement. Best practices were examined to provide insights on how similar communities addressed challenges and capitalized on innovative strategies. Through this process, a series of recommendations emerged for implementation by the SCEDC and its partners. Each recommendation includes a rationale for selection, action steps, identified partners for implementation, and immediate timeline.

1. Develop Steuben County as a Center of Excellence in Biomedical Engineering.

Rationale: Trine University has secured federal and private funding to launch a new master of biomedical engineering degree. An existing campus building will be renamed the Bock Center for Biomedical Engineering and remodeled to create a barrier-free lab equipped with state-of-the-art equipment specific to the biomedical engineering field. Curriculum is under development and expected to be offered beginning the Fall Semester of 2010.

The program is being developed to meet the needs of orthopedics businesses and suppliers located in Northern Indiana. Warsaw, Indiana is recognized as the orthopedics capital of the world, home to the headquarters of three leading orthopedic device manufacturers – Biomet, DePuy Orthopedics, and Zimmer. Currently, the region lacks the presence of comprehensive university-based research activities and degree programs to support the unique needs of the industry. Trine is taking the initiative to become a regional, state, and national leader in preparing students for the biomedical and orthopedic industry.

In addition to the development of the master degree program, Trine is working with Grace College in Winona Lake and Ivy Tech Community College in Warsaw to establish a School of Professional Studies branch campus in Warsaw to support the OrthoWorx Talent and Workforce Development Initiative. OrthoWorx is a Warsaw-based industry, community and education initiative to advance and support growth and innovation in Northern Indiana.

To support further economic development in the City of Angola and Steuben County, Trine has developed the concept for a Biomechanics and Movement Sciences Center. The concept for the Center is a combination of research & development activities and a new outpatient physical therapy facility focused upon orthopedic rehabilitation centrally located within the 6-block area of downtown Angola between the main campus of Trine University and Cameron Memorial Community Hospital, accessible in minutes from I-69 and the Indiana Toll Road. The estimated cost to create the facility is \$15 million.

Action Steps:

- I. SCEDC meet with new Executive Director of OrthoWorx to discuss linkage and leveraging opportunities to build upon Trine's recently announced School of Professional Studies branch campus in Warsaw.
- II. Send SCEDC and Trine University representatives to the Fifth Annual Orthopedic Design & Technology (ODT) Conference & Exhibition in Fort Wayne (September 22-23, 2010) to begin to dialog and market the concept to companies.
- III. Develop marketing materials that promote Steuben County and Trine University as the center for the development of new talent for the orthopedics industry.
- IV. Engage the SCEDC and Trine University to develop a joint strategy to attract and grow emerging businesses related to biomedical engineering, orthopedics, and medical devices. Work with county-based companies interested in or currently working with the orthopedics industry to identify and define capabilities.
- V. Accelerate and fast-track development plans for the Center for Biomechanics and Movement Sciences Center convening previously identified partners (Trine University, Cameron Memorial Hospital, Parkview Hospital, and Ferno Washington) to discuss business attraction and growth strategy and develop tech transfer and commercialization component.
- VI. Utilize Redevelopment Commission as mechanism for partner investment of funding for development of a public-private Biomechanics and Movement Sciences Center with stipulations identified that will benefit Steuben County.

Partners: Trine University, OrthoWorx, SCEDC, Cameron Memorial Hospital, Steuben County Redevelopment Commission, Parkview, Ferno Washington

Timeline:

- Begin marketing and outreach by November 1, 2010.
- Finalize business plan and strategy by November 30, 2010.

Best Practice:**Andrews Center for Orthopaedics & Sports Medicine (Pensacola, Florida)**

In 2007, Baptist Health Care in Pensacola opened a world class institute for orthopaedics and sports medicine in Northwest Florida, with the leadership and reputation of nationally and internationally renowned orthopedic surgeon James Andrews, MD. The creation of the Andrews Institute has secured Northwest Florida as a cradle for musculoskeletal treatments and research.

The Institute is comprised of several divisions including: Multi-specialty Ambulatory Surgery Center, Outpatient Rehabilitation, Diagnostic Imaging Center, Athletic Performance Center, a Research and Education Institute, and a multispecialty office park for physicians.

The Institute is located on property contiguous to the Gulf Breeze Hospital in Gulf Breeze, Santa Rosa County. Gulf Breeze Hospital has the distinction of leading the nation in patient satisfaction for more than nine consecutive years. The Andrews Institute has attracted national and international attention to the area for its superior medical care in orthopaedics and research, while significantly contributing to the local economy.

The Institute has created 150 new jobs, with nearly \$10 million in wages, in the highly educated and technical fields of musculoskeletal research and health care. The combined impact of the patient clientele and employment opportunities related to the Institute further enhances Northwest Florida's ability to create and maintain an environment for positive growth while creating a reputation for world class medical care.

See <http://www.theandrewsinstitute.com/> for more information.

2. Accelerate and Support Entrepreneurship.

Rationale: Steuben County has assistance available to entrepreneurs provided by the regional Small Business Development Center (SBDC) based in Fort Wayne, the Northeast Indiana Innovation Center in Fort Wayne, and through select courses offered at Trine University. Strengthening services helps grow new businesses focused on emerging opportunities.

Trine University continues to grow in enrollment and it is beneficial to begin to explore the concept of technology-based economic development, leveraging university resources and talent to support job creation. The Ketner School of Business currently offers a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration in Entrepreneurship, a potential base for talent interested in starting new businesses locally. An increased focus on R&D capabilities at the university including the creation of the biomedical engineering graduate program encourages better resources and assistance available to commercialize technologies and innovative ideas that emerge from research projects.

The county's lakes and outdoor recreation resources are attracting more year-round residents who enjoy the outstanding quality of life. Many are entrepreneurs or business owners near their primary residences or have recently moved to the lake full-time. There are opportunities to establish entrepreneur networks to assist in the formation of new and emerging businesses. A "Played Here, Made Here" initiative would leverage the success of outdoor and recreational related businesses such as Three Rivers Archery in Ashley. The initiative would use the context of the lakes and other natural areas to encourage the development of new recreation-related businesses or relocation of existing businesses to the region, especially equipment manufacturing and distribution. Dedicated county-based assistance and available space to accelerate entrepreneurial opportunities provides talent exiting Trine University and individuals looking to capitalize on the county's work-life balance with the resources to start and expand businesses.

Action Steps:

- I. Meet with Trine University, Ivy Tech, SBDC, Region III-A, the Northeast Indiana Innovation Center and entrepreneurs to explore the concept of a Business Incubator and potential services that could be provided.
- II. Coordinate planning efforts with those related to the biomedical engineering efforts and other key economic initiatives.
- III. Formalize an Accelerating Entrepreneurship Steering Committee - work with the Angola Chamber of Commerce to discuss the Angola SCORE Chapter, its current status and membership. Work with Steuben County Lakes Council and town Chambers to recruit countywide membership.
- IV. Develop a business plan for the Business Incubator - identify services, resources, and appropriate presence for Steuben County. Determine if dedicated space and/or staffing is needed to support business incubator efforts.
- V. If deemed necessary, investigate available locations for retrofitting and/or collaborative sites, e.g. Cameron Memorial Hospital and Trine University Biomechanics facility, for new construction in Steuben County.
- VI. Work with to-be-formed County Redevelopment Commission to secure funding for the incubator in partnership with Trine University and Region III-A.
- VII. Explore and pursue opportunities to attract and develop recreation-related businesses to the area by focusing on a "Played Here, Made Here" concept in partnership with the Steuben County Tourism Bureau.

Partners: SCEDC, Trine University, SBDC, Angola Chamber of Commerce, Ivy Tech, Region III-A, Northeast Indiana Innovation Center, Steuben County Tourism Bureau, Steuben County Lakes Council, Chambers of Commerce, IPFW, Steuben County Redevelopment Commission

Timeline:

- Establish Steering Committee by September 1, 2010.
- Business Plan by October 31, 2010.
- Secure funding by November 30, 2010.

Best Practice:**Rose-Hulman Ventures (Terre Haute, Indiana)**

Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology's Rose-Hulman Ventures is a premier one-of-a-kind engineering educational experience that puts theory into action, developing cutting edge medical devices, providing technical support to innovation-based businesses, and making technical and business support available to technology-based companies and entrepreneurs. Established through an initial \$29 million grant from Lilly Endowment Inc., Rose-Hulman Ventures (RHV) operations fill a 35,000 square foot facility on Rose-Hulman's 180-acre South Campus, along Indiana 46, five miles south from the main campus. The site is a Certified Technology Park.

RHV meets real and urgent product development needs of companies mainly on a fee-for-service basis. While a segment of companies associated with Ventures are start-up companies, well-established companies and nationally known corporations also provide more opportunities for student involvement. During the past decade, 749 students have worked as interns for 117 companies. This real-life, project-based program offers students professional practice experience and the forward-thinking necessary to set them apart from their peers in a competitive engineering market. An independent economic impact analysis completed several years ago revealed the average wage of jobs created by businesses incubated at RHV was almost double the Indiana average wage.

Some of the most recent real-world projects with real world results for real companies include developing cutting edge medical devices for Indianapolis-based Suros Surgical Systems (now known as Hologic Inc.) and NICO Corporation, helping bring tissue, neuro and spinal tumor excision devices into the hands of surgeons throughout America; helping cultivate a rapid, bedside assessment of kidney function for FAST Diagnostics of Indianapolis; creating software solutions for Terre Haute's Infracore, Inc. which has helped drive 30 percent month-over-month sales increases throughout 2007; helping startup Griffin Analytical (now ICX Technologies) develop a Minotaur Mass Spec product; and developing laboratory instrumentation that enabled Terre Haute's Glas-Col to launch five new products

Source: <http://www.rose-hulman.edu/news/articles/2009tenthventures.htm>

3. Diversify Manufacturing by Supporting Emerging Industry Sectors.

Rationale: Current manufacturers as well as leaders on the SCEDC Board of Directors indicate the need to shift from sole reliance on automobile-related contracts to new areas including but not limited to:

- supplying products and components for defense industry-related technologies,
- specialized electronic components for the medical and telecommunications markets,
- parts and components for orthopedics and medical devices, and
- components for advanced energy systems such as electric hybrid motors and wind turbines.

Manufacturers in Steuben County consist of agile manufacturing operations that are working to adapt to and diversify into emerging markets. For example, C&K Tool shifted from being a contract manufacturer for the automobile industry to focusing on machined components in the medical and aerospace industries.

SCEDC is an excellent resource for employers and has assisted employers with expansion efforts (ex. Vestil Manufacturing, Univertical Corporation) Their continued work with a specific, clearly defined focus on the value of current employers ensures the retention and expansion of industry and jobs. Additionally, it shows businesses interested in locating in the county that a supportive and responsive local economic development organization is present and a resource to assist with business development.

Action Steps:

- I. Define and allocate resources for a Business Retention Specialist position at the SCEDC focused on identifying current capabilities of county-based businesses and working to support efforts to identify new markets for products. The Business Retention Specialist will build rapport with employers providing assistance with challenges and support in identifying opportunities.
- II. Utilize Purdue University's Manufacturing Extension Program (MEP) office in Fort Wayne for assistance.
- III. Work with the Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) regional representative at the Northeast Indiana Small Business Development Center to better understand the defense and government contracting process (i.e. registrations, certifications, etc.), assist with market research, and monitor solicitations applicable to Steuben County employers.
- IV. Work with OrthoWorx to market Steuben County manufacturers to orthopedic companies and suppliers in the Warsaw, IN – area.
- V. Work with Conexus Indiana to explore new market opportunities and build on research and supplier networks in Indiana.
- VI. Develop a collaborative arrangement between the SCEDC, Steuben County Tourism Bureau, the Lakes Council, and Trine University to develop a premier marketing event focused on the "Played Here, Made Here" concept.
- VII. Work with agricultural leaders to ensure that local issues of farmers, suppliers, and end-users are being addressed by the county, e.g. planning and zoning, resource management, and infrastructure.

Partners: SCEDC, Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership, OrthoWorx, Northeast Indiana Innovation Center, Conexus Indiana, Trine University, local Chambers of Commerce, IPFW, Steuben County Tourism Bureau, Region III-A

Timeline:

- Create job description for Business Retention Specialist by September 30, 2010.
- Hire new staff person by November 15, 2010.

Best Practice:**Pennsylvania Business Retention and Expansion Program (BREP)**

Pennsylvania is home to the nation's most aggressive job retention program: the Pennsylvania Business Retention and Expansion Program (BREP). It was established in 1997 to forge better working relationships and stronger collaboration among various public, private, state and local economic development organizations, with the goal of enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of efforts to retain and grow existing Pennsylvania businesses. Since its inception, representatives of the BREP have completed over 73,400 visits to Pennsylvania businesses.

The BREP is funded directly by state dollars. Each region is required to identify an in-kind match of a minimum of 30% of the base administration grant funds.

The purpose of the face-to-face visit is to identify issues and problems facing businesses and provide solutions from an extensive network of service providers, when appropriate.

Business Liaisons utilize an in-depth survey instrument to gather required information. The Business Liaison then enters the visit results into the BREP database. When a business requests assistance, the Business Liaison sends an immediate request to a service provider through the BREP electronic referral process. Response from each service provider is tracked to assure customer service remains a priority. In addition, quantifiable metrics are also tracked to indicate program impact over time (ex. capital investment (public and private), companies visited/referrals for assistance generated, jobs created, jobs retained (counted as current site employment), increase in sales, employees trained, training dollars invested).

Through state of the art technology, Pennsylvania's Business Liaisons provide exceptional response to business concerns through electronic links with over 750 service providers – response that is tracked, measured and evaluated for ongoing continuous program improvement.

Source: <http://www.newpa.com/build-your-business/expand/expert-assistance/brep/index.aspx>

4. Establish a Redevelopment Commission for Steuben County.

Rationale: Steuben County needs a county Redevelopment Commission to develop plans that will address blighted conditions and underutilized economic areas. With a county-level redevelopment plan and tax incremental financing (TIF) districts, opportunities for effectively reusing properties and sites could be improved and a funding stream for enhancing public infrastructure and improvements could be made available. For example, properties such as the Steuben County 4-H Fairgrounds and the Co. Highway Department land at 200 West could be used in more productive ways.

Action Steps:

- I. Obtain legal assistance to support the formation of the Redevelopment Commission.
- II. Work with Steuben County Commissioners to pass by resolution the creation of the Redevelopment Commission and appoint five members with expertise in key areas (ex. finance, real estate, construction, industry, and government).

- III. Create a redevelopment plan that defines the geographical area, describes the economic or redevelopment activities, and provides any other information required by local or state law. Identify a financial advisor to study the available tax increment and structure of bond issue.
- IV. Redevelopment Commission makes a declaratory resolution regarding allocated area for first county TIF.
- V. Investigate reuses of Steuben County 4-H Fairgrounds and Co. Highway Department land at 200 West.

Partners: Steuben County Commissioners, SCEDC, Angola Redevelopment Commission, Fremont Redevelopment Commission

Timeline:

- Establish Steuben County Redevelopment Commission by September 30, 2010.

Best Practice:

Monroe County Redevelopment Commission (Indiana)

The Monroe County Redevelopment Commission is a five-member board appointed annually by the County Commissioners to oversee projects in the County's Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts. The Redevelopment Commission meets on an as-needed basis.

Monroe County currently has three TIF districts. The first district and most successful, Westside TIF, was founded in the mid-1990s, located west of Highway 37 and north of Highway 48. It is home to some of Monroe County's largest employers; Cook Incorporated's world headquarters is located in the Westside TIF. The Indiana Center for the Life Sciences is currently being planned to assist Monroe County citizens receive the training necessary for successful careers with area life science companies. Since 1995, the Westside TIF has invested over \$6.1 million on infrastructure crucial to the attraction and retention of the city's largest private employers.

Source: <http://www.co.monroe.in.us/commissioners/RDC.html>

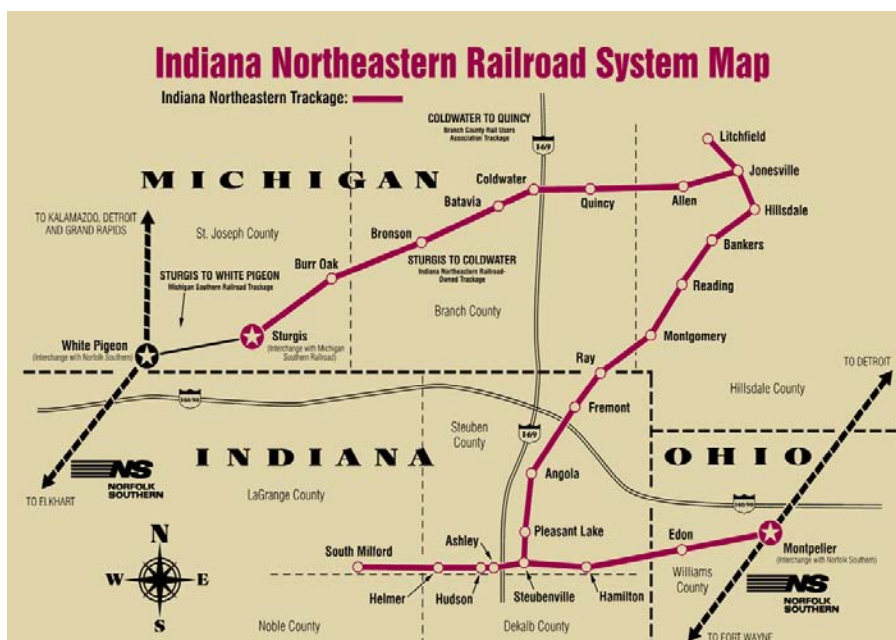
5. Utilize the Steuben County Port Authority to make improvements to rail lines.

Rationale: The Indiana Northeastern Railroad operates nearly 130 miles of track across northeastern Indiana, northwest Ohio and southern Michigan including a north-south and east-west in Steuben County. The majority of the railroad's traffic interchanges with the Norfolk Southern at Montpelier, OH. There is also a connection in Sturgis, MI with the Michigan Southern Railroad (see graphic below). The East-West link from Montpelier, OH to South Milford in LaGrange County, Indiana is a heavy-duty line capable of carrying larger loads of commodities and finished products. The North-South line from Ray, IN through Fremont, Angola, and down to Steubenville is a light-duty railroad

line in need of an upgrade to serve existing and new businesses. The goal is to provide heavy-duty rail to meet the needs of customers and the operating practices of major Class 1 railroads, not to attract heavy industry to communities.

To become eligible for grants and low-interest loans, Steuben County Commissioners established a Port Authority focused on making improvements to the north-south line. The Port Authority consists of a Board of Directors made up of seven members with two members appointed by the Steuben County Commissioners and one each from the city of Angola and the towns of Fremont, Hudson, Ashley and Hamilton.

The Port Authority will lease the north-south line back to Indiana Northeastern Railroad to continue to serve existing customers on the line.



Source: Indiana Northeastern Railroad

Action Steps:

- I. Obtain legal assistance to support the formation of the Port Authority.
- II. Work with the Indiana Northeastern Railroad to assume control of the North-South line in Steuben County.
- III. Secure financial assistance to support upgrading of the north-south line.

Partners: Steuben County Commissioners, Steuben County Port Authority, Business customers, SCEDC, and Indiana Northeastern Railroad

Timeline:

- Finalize Steuben County Port Authority Board of Directors and hold first meeting by September 30, 2010.

Best Practice:**Perry County Port Authority (Indiana)**

The Perry County Port Authority, otherwise known as the Hoosier Southern Railroad (HOS) was created by a resolution of the Perry County, Indiana, Board of Commissioners in 1991 to purchase Norfolk Southern's (NS) 19.8 mile rail line from Santa Claus to Cannelton, Indiana. The county leaders knew that for the area to attract major industries, rail transportation had to be preserved. In 1996 the Port Authority acquired an additional 2.4 miles of railroad from the NS from Santa Claus to Lincoln City, Indiana. The 22 miles of rail line operates in Perry and Spencer counties and interchanges rail traffic with the NS at Lincoln City.

The Port Authority is governed by a Board of Directors who are appointed by the Perry County Commissioners to four-year terms.

The first revenue car moved in 1995. The vision of the Perry County leaders soon paid dividends to the area with the announcement by Waupaca Foundry in 1995 that they would build a new facility in the Perry County Industrial Park, located near Tell City. Rail transportation was vital to their decision to build at this site. With the City of Tell City working closely with the Port Authority, the parties were able to establish a port operation at Tell City. The combined entity provides the shippers of Perry and Spencer counties multi-modal transportation services for a 22-mile railroad. In fact, with an excellent relationship with NS and as a NS handling line carrier, the port and rail line serve as an extension for NS customers as well.

Source: <http://www.pcrailport.com/hsrailroad.htm>

6. Complete infrastructure improvements to promote immediate development of available sites.

Rationale: Site selectors and companies are looking for sites and buildings that have the infrastructure (i.e. roads, electric, gas, sewer/wastewater, water, high speed communication/broadband access) necessary for immediate development. The Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC) has developed the Shovel Ready Program to certify sites and buildings to expedite the location and permitting processes for business development and market sites through its Site Locator website. The Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership has established the Certified Site Ready program focused on marketing available sites, complimenting the IEDC program.

Currently, the SCEDC has an excellent tool on their website that lists available sites and Steuben County buildings and sites are listed by the IEDC. However, none have the 'shovel ready' designation. Additionally, Steuben County does not have any "certified sites" listed by the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership. Insights from interviews indicated the lack of sites with infrastructure in place for industrial development. For example, sewer systems are not able to add industrial clients so upgrades have to occur on a parallel track.

While some available business park and greenfield sites in the county have utilities in place, others would need road, sewer, and water improvements for development. The Town of Ashley has four economic development sites available for development and they are supporting infrastructure investments in order to make them “shovel-ready” by Fall 2010. Additionally, the town is bringing sewer and water to the east side of I-69 to prepare for future development. Prime property is available around I-69 and SR-20 in Angola and in other locations throughout the county that could better facilitate new development if sites were ‘shovel ready.’ The Town of Fremont has available sites for development in Crossroads Industrial Park but there are additional road and utility improvements needed. Greenfield sites including the Samuels Properties and Miklosko Property need sewer and/or water access.

To ensure there is a fiber optic backbone throughout Steuben County, the Indiana Metropolitan Area Network (iMAN) is working to provide broadband access to businesses, government, education, and industry. The project has been in development for ten years and parts have been deployed. The iMAN business model provides a unique opportunity to deploy countywide broadband service. The county has access to upfront capital that can be used to extend services. The plan provides for a monetary return-on-investment because iMAN owns and hosts the Internet backbone. The business model also provides ongoing support of Steuben County communities through the Steuben County Community Foundation. However, additional connectivity to other communities in the county still needs to occur.

The Tri-State Steuben County Airport is functional but its infrastructure is outdated. Employers increasingly are looking for airport access for private plane travel for senior leadership and to host arriving clients. Individuals entering the county for summer weekend stays, vacations, and to visit tourist attractions also look for a modern facility within the county that can host their aircraft. Additionally, activities could be planned and hosted by an updated airport facility.

Action Steps:

- I. SCEDC work with city and town councils to prioritize infrastructure investments to better prepare sites for development and assist, as needed with the procurement process for selecting contractors.
- II. SCEDC work with IEDC and the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership to certify current eligible sites in Steuben County. SCEDC continue to update list of available sites on www.steubenedc.com.
- III. Develop a fast track process for permitting and utility support for new businesses in Steuben County with SCEDC as an ombudsman to serve as a liaison between companies, communities, agencies, and utilities.
- IV. Work with County Commissioners to secure funding to complete development and deployment of iMAN throughout Steuben County in an accelerated fashion.

- V. County Commissioners procure the completion of an updated master plan for the Tri-State Steuben County Airport; once completed, pursue additional federal funding to make continued improvements to the airport (ex. modernization of facility, lengthening of runway).
- VI. Utilize Redevelopment Commission to prioritize facilities and/or sites for redevelopment activity.

Partners: SCEDC, iMAN, County Commissioners, Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership, IEDC, City of Angola, Towns of Ashley, Clear Lake, Fremont, Hamilton, and Orland

Timeline:

- Establish funding and begin procurement process as rapidly as possible for start of projects before November 30, 2010; target completion of projects by end of 2011.
- Finalize costs and specifications to complete infrastructure for iMAN by August 31, 2010; establish funding by October 31, 2010.
- Procure a planning firm to develop a master plan for the Tri-State Steuben County Airport by December 31, 2010.

Best Practice:

Shovel Ready Certification (New York)

Shovel Ready Certification is an ongoing component of the Build Now-NY program and is jointly administered by the Governor's Office of Regulatory Reform (GORR) and Empire State Development (ESD). Certification is available to any site in New York State that is suitable for the type of development proposed, has proper zoning and infrastructure, has completed the appropriate surveys and studies, and has received the necessary permits and approvals.

Over the past ten years, sites that had received Shovel Ready Certification have attracted over \$485 million of private capital investment in buildings and equipment. This significant investment and expansion has translated into the creation of over 2,600 new jobs and the retention of about 2,330 other jobs. Of this total, 858 of the new jobs and 1,555 of the retained jobs were created on 14 sites that were Shovel Ready certified only.

With a minimal State expenditure, the Shovel Ready Certification program has helped local communities attract substantial private-sector investment and created hundreds of jobs for New Yorkers. Those communities will continue to reap benefits in the future as more and more companies continue to be attracted to these pre-permitted sites.

Source: <http://www.gorr.state.ny.us/BuildNow-NY/ShovelReady/SRhome.htm>

7. Create a Work Ready Initiative in Steuben County.

Rationale: A qualified workforce is vital to the success of any economic development effort. Site selectors are looking for the availability of skilled and trainable workers to meet the needs of potential employers. Existing employers want training programs in place to support their workforce development needs and an available talent pipeline of reliable workers with skills to fill positions.

The workforce development system in Indiana provides measures of assistance that many employers are often unaware of or reluctant to use. Better knowledge and understanding of available services is needed to strengthen utilization and incorporation into economic development efforts.

A Work Ready Steuben County initiative promotes the availability of a qualified workforce in the county. The initiative is built around quantifying the trainability of job seekers to employers. The mechanism for this is the WorkKeys, an assessment that scores individuals on math and reading capabilities. This is a portable certification that can be matched up with profiles of occupations in demand by employers who can view scores and better screen for candidates.

High school students and dislocated workers can complete the WorkKeys assessment and obtain a career readiness certificate (CRC) with an accompanying score. Employers can endorse the CRC as part of their hiring practices. This becomes recognized currency for talent that is more transferable and provides better awareness of employability than a high school diploma alone. In turn, the SCEDC can promote the county as 'work ready' incorporating in statistics on the number of trainable individuals with a CRC available to fill positions.

Additionally, initiatives that strengthen school-to-career concepts in the classroom and expose students to job experiences can be incorporated into the 'work ready' concept. For example, school districts could work with Trine University, Cameron Memorial Hospital to strengthen partnerships for internships and promote new learning strategies such as the New Tech High School approach.

Action Steps:

- I. Meet with WorkOne Northeast to discuss current WorkKeys assessment and profiling efforts in Steuben County.
- II. Coordinate efforts with the county's four school districts, Trine University, Cameron Memorial Hospital, and area manufacturers to develop a Work Ready Steering Committee. Build upon internships and in-school placements for college and high school students as well as Trine University's Middle College Program.

- III. Work with employers to market the 'work ready' concept and participate in profiling of occupations.
- IV. Market the 'work ready' concept in economic development materials for Steuben County.

Partners: Fremont Community Schools, Hamilton Community Schools, Metropolitan School District of Steuben County, Prairie Heights School Corporation, Four County Area Vocational Cooperative, Freedom Academy, Steuben County Industrial Guild, WorkOne Northeast, Steuben County Literacy Coalition, SCEDC, Trine University, Ivy Tech Community College

Timeline:

- Form Work Ready Steering Committee by September 30, 2010.

Best Practice:

Work Ready Communities - Oklahoma

To ensure that Oklahoma offers industry the innovative talent needed to compete in a knowledge-based economy, the Oklahoma Department of Commerce and the Governor's Council for Workforce & Economic Development launched the Certified Work Ready Communities program.

Work Ready Communities expands the state's skills assessment and certification effort currently offered to individual employees, job seekers, and employers through the WorkKeys and Career Readiness Certificate program.

WorkKeys, a nationally recognized workplace skills assessment test, measures communication and problem-solving, which are valuable to any occupation. The Career Readiness Certificates (CRCs) are given based on WorkKeys scores and provide a portable credential documenting that the potential or incumbent employees possess certain fundamental skills required by employers here and across the country.

Businesses use this program to recruit and hire new employees and promote and train incumbent workers; job seekers use WorkKeys and CRCs to identify education or training gaps and to validate their qualifications; and school systems use this program to develop curriculum that bridges the gap between education and the working world and to help students plan their study paths and careers. When communities are certified as Work Ready, they gain a competitive advantage over non-certified communities because they can quantify a skilled workforce to an existing employer or a new business considering Oklahoma for a new location.

Mayes County, Oklahoma was one of the first geographic areas in the nation to be designated as a Certified Work Ready Community. Mayes County leaders worked closely with their local Workforce Oklahoma center and the Northeast Oklahoma Workforce Investment Board to become one of the first communities to use the WorkKeys assessment test to measure the readiness of potential employees. This helped support the attraction of Google and Gatorade to the MidAmerica Industrial Park in the county.

Source: <http://www.okcommerce.gov/Community-Resources/Work-Ready-Communities>

8. Enhance Promotion of Tourism Opportunities.

Rationale: Tourism attracts over 750,000 visitors to Steuben County each year to its lakes, Pokagon State Park, festivals, and historical sites. The Steuben County Tourism Bureau does an excellent job marketing attractions and recreational opportunities in the county. There are areas that could be strengthened to further promote county-based tourism.

Signage for tourism attractions is not uniform throughout the county. A standardized look and feel for signs indicating attractions (ex. Trine University, Pokagon State Park, Buck Lake Ranch, Satek Winery, and Wild Winds Buffalo Preserve), camping accommodations (ex. Buck Lake Ranch, Hog Hill), lodging (ex. Potawatomi Inn, Cold Springs Resort), individual communities and lakes could make it easier to navigate the county and more inviting for visitors.

The majority of tourism is confined to the summertime months and activities around the lakes. The quarter mile toboggan run at Pokagon State Park is an asset to leverage in the winter. Working with neighboring counties in Northern and Northeast Indiana to jointly promote attractions could extend daytrips into multi-day stays during the off-season.

Agriculture operations are an important part of the landscape within the county and support the livelihood of many families. Currently, there are multiple farmers markets that operate in Steuben County. It is important to convene conversations between farmers, lake residents, and communities to seek ways to protect watersheds while utilizing the agricultural working lands that connect the land between the lakes. There are also additional opportunities around agritourism to consider that could complement tourist attractions and promote locally grown products.

The “Played Here, Made Here” concept provides a great opportunity to meld the goals of the Steuben County Tourism Bureau and SCEDC. By focusing on manufacturers and suppliers of recreational equipment, the strategy needs both organizations to collaborate to leverage resources and maximize impact.

Action Steps:

- I. Develop proposal that defines specifications and costs associated with county gateway and wayfinding signage.
- II. Seek sources for leveraging costs and approach County Commissioners for funding request and procure professional firm to design, construct, and install wayfinding signage throughout the county.

- III. Convene a Community-Farmers Alliance Group to promote conversations and awareness about agriculture including local markets, farmers markets, and agritourism.
- IV. Connect producers interested in developing agritourism sites with Purdue University's experts and others to create enterprises that complement their existing operations or create new operations.
- V. Link Steuben County to other Northern Indiana attractions along the Indiana Toll Road and I-69 – participate with the Northern Indiana Tourism Development Commission to extend attractions across the Northern Tier of Indiana.
- VI. Coordinate a marketing strategy for the Accelerator Incubator in partnership with the Steuben County Tourism Bureau focused on sharing information with tourists and summer lake communities.
- VII. Create an Outdoor Recreational Event(s) to bring together outdoor recreational equipment manufacturers and suppliers to showcase their products while marketing the community as a prospective relocation or expansion community and encouraging local companies to enter the equipment manufacturing arena.

Partners: Steuben County Tourism Bureau, SCEDC, Purdue Extension, Trine University, High School Ag. Education programs, Steuben County Farm Bureau

Timeline:

- Develop proposal for gateway and wayfinding signage by September 2010; procure professional firm by December 15, 2010.

Best Practice:

America's Historic Triangle (Virginia)

The Historic Triangle area is a premier visitor destination that includes Busch Gardens, Colonial Williamsburg, The College of William & Mary, Historic Jamestowne, Jamestown Settlement, Yorktown Battlefield, Yorktown Victory Center and Water Country. While the area is without equal in what it has to offer, visitors frequently complained that it was difficult to find their way around. Visitor confusion was exacerbated by a challenging road network with heavy traffic, as well as missing, outdated and uncoordinated signs.

In February 2004, the City of Williamsburg, James City County and York County spearheaded the formation of the Wayfinding Group. Membership included Busch Gardens Williamsburg/Water Country USA, City of Williamsburg, The College of William & Mary, Colonial National Historical Park Service, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Greater Williamsburg Chamber and Tourism Alliance, James City County, Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation, Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), and York County. The time that elapsed between the first stakeholder meeting and installation of Virginia's First Regional Wayfinding Sign System was 24 months.

Previously, VDOT's signing program included the following four programs: a) Logo Program Sign, b) General Motorist Services Sign, c) Supplemental Guide Sign, d) Tourist Oriented Direction Sign. For several reasons, including the historical nature of the area and the many destinations in close proximity, the group felt that the traveling public needed additional information to locate attractions. Because the proposed wayfinding system deviated from the standards set out in the Manual on

Uniform Traffic Control Devices, VDOT submitted a request for approval as an experiment. The Federal Highway Administration approved the wayfinding experiment through VDOT and The Historic Triangle Area Wayfinding Sign System was put into motion.

The Historic Triangle Area Wayfinding Sign System includes the following categories:

- 1. Interstate Gateway Supplemental Guide Sign – an initial gateway sign at the entranceway of a Wayfinding Region on the Interstate system that welcomes visitors to the area*
- 2. Gateway Sign – a gateway sign at major corridors*
- 3. Trailblazer A & B Signs – signs that direct visitors to specific key destinations*

Now, as visitors explore the region, ineffective and uncoordinated signs have been replaced with well-placed, seamless signage. Featuring the patriotic colors of red, white and blue, the new signs are both welcoming and easy to read.

Source: http://www.vml.org/VTC/07VTC-PDF/VTC07Feb_Web.pdf



Call to Action: Leadership Engagement and Development

The SCEDC has indicated an interest in taking economic development efforts and the organization “to the next level.” The Board of Directors and Staff were instrumental in supporting the development of this plan providing insights and recommendations. Let’s capitalize on this momentum and work towards aggressively implementing the strategic plan. To guide this process, the SCEDC staff and Board of Directors must consider:

- Establishing a board “re-engagement” effort by broadening board membership to include more private sector representation. Establish a robust and active committee structure reflective of the recommendations (ex. Accelerating Entrepreneurship Committee, Work Ready Committee).
- Assigning accountability for various parts of the strategic plan to appropriate staff, Board members, and contractors to ensure progress occurs in a timely and effective manner.
- Determining staffing gaps, if any, for implementation of the strategic plan and how to fill these gaps. At a minimum, there appears to be support needed for overall project management for launch of implementation, some elements related to the Biomedical Center of Excellence strategy, some elements of the work ready strategy, and business diversification strategy.
- Working with the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership to coordinate implementation of the plan with the Vision 2020 effort.
- Using committees/project teams to draw upon the expertise of local leaders, and regional and state resources specialists to address strategies and specific projects. Project teams should provide a start and stop date to respect members’ limited time constraints.
- Committing to an “annual checkup” during which the entire community is invited to come together to reflect (discuss and evaluate) upon the progress of the past year and project (discuss and plan) for the year ahead. This planning process will keep the plan fresh, flexible, and responsive to the communities, county, and regional challenges and opportunities.

Appendix A - Community Mini - Plans

City of Angola



Assets:

Angola Area Chamber of Commerce

Cameron Memorial Hospital

Metropolitan School District of Steuben County

Pokagon State Park

Trine University

Tri-State Steuben County Airport

Demographics

- POPULATION: 7,894 (July 2008)
- POPULATION CHANGE (since 2000): +7.5%
- MEDIAN AGE: 29.3 (July 2008)
- MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME: \$38,738 (2008)
- INDUSTRY: Transportation equipment (13.1%), Educational Services (13%), Health care (7.2%), Accommodation and food services (6.4%), Metal and metal products (5.8%)
- EDUCATION: High School or higher (81.2%) – Bachelor's Degree or higher (19.7%), Graduate degree (9.4%)
- RESIDENTS WORKING IN STEUBEN COUNTY: 84.0%
- MEAN TRAVEL TIME TO WORK: 15.5 minutes

Major Employers

- *Vestil Manufacturing*
- *Cameron Memorial Hospital*
- *R.R. Donnelly*
- *Trine University*
- *Angola Wire Products, Inc.*
- *Tenneco*
- *General Products Corporation*
- *Metal Spinners, Inc.*
- *Wolf Envelope*

Key Themes from Interviews

- Largest community in Steuben County – population center and hub for business activity.
- Downtown revitalization project improves appearance and infrastructure to improve current and encourage new business activity.
- Trine University is major driver of economy – enrollment is growing; upgrades, new construction projects are underway; expanding curriculum to offer coursework related to biomedical engineering.
- Cameron Memorial Community Hospital is second largest employer in town – highly trained professionals and service jobs mix, demand for amenities, volunteers and local spending. Detailed planning and design of a replacement hospital and a medical office building is underway.
- Pokagon State Park is a valuable asset attracting over 750,000 visitors throughout the year.
- Concentration of jobs in manufacturing – wages not as high as in other parts of the state, quality of workforce is generally good.
- Truck traffic through downtown causes congestion and is a safety concern – volume increasing due to trucks avoiding tolls.
- Lack of shovel ready sites in Angola ready for immediate development.
- Good balance between work and quality of life – not marketed as well as it could be.

Options to Consider for Economic Development

- **Diversify manufacturing base** – work with employers to identify new and emerging markets besides automotive.
- **Facilitate the development of the area around I-69 and US 20** – work to redevelop and better utilize properties for development.
- **Strengthen partnerships between Trine University, Cameron Memorial Hospital, local K-12 schools and local manufacturers** – investigate innovative approaches that link education to career opportunities (ex. internships, New Tech High School concept).

- **Market a shovel ready business park in Angola.**
- **Improve the functionality and aesthetic quality of our most highly traveled corridors** (ex. N. Wayne Street).
- **Have a solid plan in place that addresses redevelopment of brownfield sites** to serve as a resource to illustrate the issues, liabilities and also positive potential these sites have for the city.

Town of Ashley



Assets:

Ashley-Hudson Chamber of Commerce

Ashley Industrial Park

Ashley Town Council

Demographics

- POPULATION: 992 (July 2008)
- POPULATION CHANGE (since 2000): -1.8%
- MEDIAN AGE: 30.3 (July 2008)
- MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME: \$43,799 (2008)
- INDUSTRY: Transportation equipment (21.7%), Metal and metal products (9.9%), Construction (7.9%), Plastics and rubber products (7.4%), Accommodations and food services (5.8%)
- EDUCATION: High School or higher (80%) – Bachelor's Degree or higher (3.1%), Graduate degree (1%)
- RESIDENTS WORKING IN STEUBEN COUNTY: 45.6%
- MEAN TRAVEL TIME TO WORK: 18.6 minutes

Major Employers

- *TI Group Automotive Systems*
- *Ashley Industrial Molding*
- *Trin, Inc.*
- *Bostwick-Braun Company*
- *K-Tech*
- *Klink Trucking*

Key Themes from Interviews

- Ashley has a different look and feel than other communities farther north in "lake country." It appears ready for industrial development and has several key features in place – I-69 interchange with S.R. 4, available land adjacent to the interstate and in its industrial park, and the Indiana Northeastern Railroad Company's east-west line. Infrastructure is still a challenge. While it doesn't have a good east-west highway connector, it is only six miles to US 6, eight miles to US 20, and 16 miles to the Indiana Toll Road.
- Four economic development sites are available for development with infrastructure investments being made to make all properties "shovel-ready" by Fall 2010. The town is bringing sewer and water to the east side of I-69 to prepare for future development.
- The Indiana Northeastern Railroad (INERR) runs a heavy-duty line through the town - they are adding sidings to accommodate growing needs of K-Tech Specialty Coatings, a sister company of Klink Trucking, and Stoy Farms, a large family farming operation north of town.
- Just east of Ashley, at Steubenville, the INERR has a north-south connector rail line that services business Angola and Fremont before heading into Michigan. It is a light-duty rail that needs to be upgraded if it is to remain viable.

Options to Consider for Economic Development

- **Upgrades to the Northeastern Indiana Railroad** – convert the Steubenville to Ray north-south light-duty railroad line to a heavy-duty railroad line capable of carrying heavier cargo loads. This positions Ashley as a more viable site to potential industry investors looking for the capability to transport and receive commodities and goods from points north, west and south by rail.
- **Continue to prepare "shovel-ready" sites east of I-69.**
- **Needs ready access to high-speed broadband services** – a primary route of the iMAN broadband fiber optic backbone is targeted for Ashley as Phase 4 to be deployed in 2011.
- **Continue cooperative agreements with DeKalb County Economic Development Partnership** - work together to bring businesses and jobs to Ashley, such as recent investment with Scot Industries.
- **Attract more outdoor recreation businesses to the county** - leverage the county's lake and recreation culture with business development, i.e. 3 Rivers Archery Supply.

Town of Clear Lake



Assets:

Clear Lake Association

Clear Lake Yacht Club

Demographics

- POPULATION: 244 (July 2007)
- POPULATION CHANGE (since 2000): n/a
- MEDIAN AGE: 50 (July 2007)
- MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME: \$60,098 (2008)
- INDUSTRY: Educational services (18.8%), Health care (9.4%), Transportation equipment (8.7%), Public administration (7.4%), Finance and insurance (7.4%)
- EDUCATION: High School or higher (96.9%) – Bachelor's degree or higher (24.3%), Graduate degree (11.9%)
- RESIDENTS WORKING IN STEUBEN COUNTY: 67.6%
- MEAN TRAVEL TIME TO WORK: 26.9 minutes

Key Themes from Interviews

- Clear Lake is primarily a lake community that has incorporated to provide greater oversight of the lake and surrounding property.
- There is public beach that is currently operated by Steuben County, but Clear Lake residents are interested in purchasing the beach from the county to improve its control and oversight.
- There are three retail businesses in the community – Clear Lake Marina and two restaurants.

Options to Consider for Economic Development

- Work with Steuben County to purchase the public beach on Clear Lake to provide better control and oversight.

Town of Fremont



Assets:

Fremont Area Chamber of Commerce

Fremont Community Schools

Fremont Moose Lodge

Fremont America Legion

Three Industrial Parks

Dedicated Truck Route

Proximity to I-69, SR 80 and SR 90

Developable Green Field Sites

Railroad Access

Vistula and Town Parks

The Outlet Shoppes at Fremont

Satek Winery

Wild Winds Buffalo Farm

Yogi Bear Jellystone Park Resort

Pokagon State Park

I-Man Fiber Optic Project

Demographics

- POPULATION: 1,609 (July 2008)
- POPULATION CHANGE (since 2000): -5.1%
- MEDIAN AGE: 31.7 (July 2008)
- MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME: \$46,934 (2008)
- INDUSTRY: Transportation equipment (17.7%), Metal and metal products (10.4%), Educational services (7.2%), Accommodation and food services (6.7%), Health care (3.9%)
- EDUCATION: High School or higher (83.3%) – Bachelor's Degree or higher (12.6%), Graduate degree (3.1%)
- RESIDENTS WORKING IN STEUBEN COUNTY: 84.0%
- MEAN TRAVEL TIME TO WORK: 16.4 minutes

Major Employers

- Cardinal Glass Industries
- Cold Heading-Fremont Heading
- Dexter Axle
- Autoform Tool & Mfg Inc
- Metal Improvement Company
- Letica Corporation
- LaGrange Products
- General Aluminum
- New Horizons Baking Company
- WCT: Western Consolidated
- Wenzel Metal Spinning
- Swager Communications, Inc
- Fremont Plastics
- Health Equipment Manufacturing
- Rees, Inc.
- Dresser - Wayne
- Koester Metals, Inc.

Key Themes from Interviews

- Concentration of manufacturing operations - Many workers from Michigan and Ohio work at the plants – a study several years back estimated that 40% of the employees in Fremont’s plants were from out-of-state.
- Crossroads Industrial Park – has tenants (ex. Cardinal IG Glass) but 20 acres are still available.
- Town has a number of vacant buildings on the market – some are read for immediate use but one site, the Fremont Wire Building has been vacant for 10 years
- Good school district, could incorporate better with employers.
- Fremont was named A Tree City, USA in 2006, 2007 & 2008.
- Redevelopment Commission set up with five members and an established TIF area.
- There is a developed concept plan for Broad Street Park focused on creating multi-use pathways.

Options to Consider for Economic Development

- Work to connect employers and Fremont Community Schools to establish school-to-career activities including career days, job shadowing, and potentially internship opportunities.
- Purchase Fremont Wire Building, demolish building and prepare the site for redevelopment.
- Town of Fremont has completed a conceptual, planning study of downtown Fremont and has applied for funding for the construction of a Downtown Revitalization project. Continue to work to complete this revitalization.
- Work to fill empty Industrial buildings with homegrown, start-up business ventures and /or new business.
- Implement Concept Plan for the development of Broad Street Park.

Town of Hamilton



Assets:

Hamilton Chamber of Commerce

Hamilton Community Schools

Hamilton Lake Association

Hog Hill

Black Creek Crossing

Cold Springs Resort

Demographics

- POPULATION: 1,234 (July 2007)
- POPULATION CHANGE (since 2000): n/a
- MEDIAN AGE: 38.8 (July 2007)
- MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME: \$49,288 (2008)
- INDUSTRY: Transportation equipment (13.2%), Construction (9.0%), Metal and metal products (8.2%), Educational services (7.7%), Machinery (6.9%)
- EDUCATION: High School or higher (82.3%) – Bachelor's Degree or higher (10%), Graduate degree (4%)
- RESIDENTS WORKING IN STEUBEN COUNTY: 46.6%
- MEAN TRAVEL TIME TO WORK: 20.5 minutes

Major Employers

- *Air-Way Manufacturing*
- *EMF Corporation – Hamilton facility*
- *Halex Company*
- *Pittsfield of Indiana, Inc.*
- *AZZ Galvanizing of Hamilton, Inc.*
- *Triton Metal Products*
- *Plastic Processors*
- *Superior Canopy*
- *Rieke Plastics*

Key Themes from Interviews

- Hamilton Lake covers over 800 acres with a depth of over 90'.
- Downtown Hamilton is located along the south shore of the lake with restaurants, merchants and professional services.
- Hamilton Lake attracts a significant population during the summer to lake houses and cottages.
- Few vacant properties – only vacant industrial style building is the Essman building
- Recently attracted Triton Metal Products from Bryan, Ohio to establish operations at a vacant site in town – existing allows for all operations to be performed under one roof; located building using the SCEDC website.

Options to Consider for Economic Development

- **Work to identify occupants for the Essman building.**
- **Accelerate establishment of TIF district** in Hamilton working holding necessary meetings to get a planning document completed.
- **Identify and zone** additional sites for future industrial development.

Town of Orland



Assets:

Orland Chamber of Commerce

Orland Industrial Park

Demographics

- POPULATION: 320 (July 2008)
- POPULATION CHANGE (since 2000): -6.2%
- MEDIAN AGE: 36.4 (July 2008)
- MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME: \$47,032 (2008)
- INDUSTRY: Transportation equipment (23.8%), Metal and metal products (9.4%), Construction (7.5%), Educational services (6.9%), Accommodation and food services (5.0%)
- EDUCATION: High School or higher (82.6%) – Bachelor's Degree or higher (8.5%), Graduate or professional degree (2.8%)
- RESIDENTS WORKING IN STEUBEN COUNTY: 68.1%
- MEAN TRAVEL TIME TO WORK: 25.9 minutes

Major Employers

- *Miller Poultry*
- *Diversapack*
- *Madsen Wire Products, Inc.*
- *UCOM Inc.*

Key Themes from Interviews

- Industrial Park Expansion – the Chamber of Commerce, which owns the park, is extending the access road so that it will have connection to S.R. 120 to complement the existing entry off of S.R. 327.
- The Chamber is considering purchasing additional land to expand the industrial park on the southwest corner of town.
- Orland is currently installing new sidewalks and curbs and improving the SR 327-SR 120 intersection as part of an Indiana Downtown Revitalization Grant Project.
- The Steuben Lakes Regional Waste District is installing new sewers for Orland and two lakes nearby – Brown and Wall with completion targeted for early summer 2010.
- The industrial park has a vacant 93,000 sf building available for immediate use.
- Orland is in one of the more agriculturally productive areas of the county with several agricultural-related businesses in or near the town.

Options to Consider for Economic Development

- **Industrial Park upgrades** – if the Chamber has the resources, it should:
 - purchase the additional acreage to expand the park and provide space for new construction.
 - complete the road extension to connect the park to SR 120.
- **Continue to market local services to residents on key lakes** – Wall, Brown, Lime, Gage, Pleasant – to maintain strong retail base.
- **An Agri-Tourism enterprise** might be an option for this area if there are willing farm/business owners. Some innovative Christmas tree farms have created winter experiences in conjunction with tree purchases.