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# INDIANA'S GREAT SOUTHWEST

## the new frontier for talent and business

### Regional Cities Initiative Helps Propel Southwest Indiana Ahead of the Curve in Economic Development Strategies

With the passing Indiana HB 1001 late Thursday evening, full funding for the third Regional Cities community was secured. With three regions in the State now able to fully implement their broad-reaching Regional Cities plans, citizens will now see the advent of an economic development transition. Each of the Regional Cities initiatives focuses on overall community impacts of a myriad of economic development projects and how they can lead to a stronger "quality of place." The success of these initiatives will usher in a change in how Indiana will address economic development in the future.

A recent whitepaper authored by Amy Liu with the Brookings Institution, "[Remaking Economic Development - The Markets and Civics of Continuous Growth and Property](#)" suggests a new direction for economic development strategy that will focus on high growth and prosperity for all. Liu states, "*Leaders in cities and metro areas have an opportunity to remake economic development—to adopt a broader vision of economic development that can deliver continuous growth, prosperity, and inclusion.....*" For Southwest Indiana that means thinking more holistically about the type of work and/or wage that is sustainable for someone in our region.

The University of Washington's *Center for Women's Welfare* has issued the latest self-sufficiency standards which "...defines the amount of income necessary to meet basic needs (including taxes) without public subsidies (e.g., public housing, food stamps, Medicaid or child care) and without private/informal assistance (e.g., free babysitting by a relative or friend, food provided by churches or local food banks, or shared housing)." Indiana's data paints a very uneven picture for its residents.

In Indiana, the amount of income needed to be economically self-sufficient varies considerably by geographic location and that amount widely varies even within the Coalition's four counties, i.e. from \$14.45 to \$23.18 per hour. The self-sufficiency standard also reinforces the idea promoted by the Brookings report that for a region to be successful it needs to "set the right goals, grow from within, boost trade, invest in people and skills and better connect."

Southwest Indiana's Regional Cities strategy will be markedly different than past strategies that focused purely on transactions. This new strategy will embrace the principles espoused by Brookings as the report's author so succinctly states, "growth, prosperity and inclusion are complementary, not contradictory, goals for meaningful economic development."

For our region to succeed and become transformational and inclusive, we need to make sure that we embrace as well as enact these strategic economic development changes.

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### Economic Indicators

#### Bachelor's Degrees

##### *Within Indiana*

Indy-Carmel - 271,156

Evansville - 33,804

Ft. Wayne - 48,284

S. Bend-Mishawaka - 35,357

##### *Peer Communities*

Chattanooga, TN - 59,456

Davenport-Moline, IA - 46,296

Peoria, IL - 49,078

Spartanburg, SC - 30,799

Source: 2014 ACS 5-year data. Educational Attainment for the Population 18 years and Over.



### Indiana's Great Southwest tops the chart with site selectors

The Southwest Indiana team was once again a gold sponsor for the Site Selectors Guild, the premier site conference in North America. As part of the sponsorship, the Coalition hosted 10 U.S. and European site consultants for a private luncheon held on Music Row at Broadcast Music, Inc. (BMI) a performing rights society.

The theme of the luncheon was "talent" as Indiana's Great Southwest showcased the momentum happening in the talent-attracting regional projects from the Regional Cities Initiative. Topping off the luncheon were Shelley Skidmore and Like Strangers (Bob & Clint Moffatt), three singer-songwriters from [Wrensong/Reynsong Publishing Corporation](#).

(L-R: Greg Wathen, Nancy Deig, Shelley Skidmore, Bob Moffatt, Sabrina Newton, Clint Moffatt and Mike Schopmeyer). Photo credit - Steve Lowry.

### Indiana's Great Southwest President selected again to North America's Top 50 Economic Developers list for 2016

Consultant Connect, a consulting agency designed to bridge the gap between economic developers and site consultants, announces its 2016 list of North America's Top 50 Economic Developers which includes [Greg Wathen](#), President & CEO of the [Economic Development Coalition of Southwest Indiana](#). The economic development professionals selected for this list were nominated by their colleagues in both the economic development industry and the site consultant community for excellent practices, innovation and success in building the communities they serve.

"This annual list recognizing North America's Top 50 Economic Developers is designed to acknowledge the hard work of the top leaders in this field and elevate the conversation around economic development and job creation," said Ron Kitchens, managing partner of Consultant Connect. "Each of the leaders represented on this year's list are beyond deserving of this recognition for their efforts in building our communities brick by brick and job by job."

[continued](#)

#### Upcoming OCRA Conferences and Workshops

The Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) will be hosting regional conferences this spring to share information about its various programs, including information about the new Historic Renovation Grant Program. The session most easily accessible for residents Southwest Indiana

#### Help to Refine the State's Action Plan

The State of Indiana is asking citizens to provide their feedback on the State of Indiana Annual Action Plan for 2016. This proposed plan details the method of distribution of the State's HUD-funded programs: State Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program; Home Investment Partnership Program (HOME); Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG)

#### BUSINESS FOCUS:



For Southwest Indiana the plastics industry is a huge asset to the region as one of the nation's top injection molders, Berry Plastics, makes Evansville its global headquarters, employing 2,700. Berry's global

will be held on March 18th at the Westgate Academy Conferencing and Training Center in Odon. To register for the session or to learn more about the program and alternate dates / locations to attend, [please click here](#).

There are three remaining opportunities to attend OCRA's Learn Green for Stormwater Management workshops. They will be held in April, May and June. [For more information about the program click here](#).

If your community is interested in learning more about the details of HUD's Community Development Block Grants, consider attending the upcoming CDBG 101 course being offered on Mondays in April. The training sessions will introduce the parameters for utilizing the grant funds and steps to take to qualify for those funds. [For more information about the course, click here](#).

Program; and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) Program.

If you would like to review the draft plan, please do so before March 31, 2016. An on-line version of the plan as well as instructions for commenting can be found on the [OCRA web site](#) and on the [IHEDA web site](#).

## 2015 Annual Report Available

The annual report of the Economic Development Coalition of Southwest Indiana is now available on the web site. [Review the report here](#).

footprint also produces thermoformed products, flexible films and packaging, as well as engineered and specialty materials.

Berry Plastics' Design Center, Blue Clover Studios, has designed thousands of household products and has reduced the product development stage from weeks to hours. [Watch Blue Clover Video](#). Berry Plastics employs more than 20,000 individuals at its 124 global facilities.

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COALITION  
OF  
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