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**#015 The BIG Goal**

## #015 The BIG Goal

September 2011

**Opportunity:** Adopt the BIG Goal: Increase the proportion of Northeast Indiana residents with high-quality degrees and credentials to 60% by the year 2025.

**Background:** One of the single most important factors that will impact the future of Northeast Indiana's economy and the prosperity of its residents is the skill level and educational attainment of its workforce. Unfortunately, trends in educational attainment compared to skills needed by 21st century employers are not matching up and unless leaders from all sectors are willing to take on this challenge, Northeast Indiana will continue to be left behind in the national economic recovery.

According to an analysis conducted by the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, a much larger proportion of jobs in the U.S. will require higher education — even in the near term. This analysis, titled *Help Wanted: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements Through 2018*, shows that fully 60 percent of jobs in the U.S will require postsecondary education by 2018.<sup>1</sup> As of 2009, the percentage of the Northeast Indiana workforce (adults between the ages of 25 – 64) with a 2 or 4 year degree or higher was just 31.5%. The region is not ready to meet these near term demands, which means potential jobs requiring post secondary training may go elsewhere.

In 2009, the Lumina Foundation for Education, based in Indianapolis, developed the BIG Goal - focusing all of their efforts towards increasing the proportion of Americans with high-quality degrees and credentials to 60% by 2025. They have aligned all of their programs and grant making with effective strategies towards achieving this goal and have reached out to communities across the country to do the same. The adoption of the BIG Goal in Northeast Indiana gives the region the ability to align its efforts toward a single long-term objective that has the potential to transform the region. A Northeast Indiana with 60% of its workforce holding a high-quality degree or credential will be a dynamic environment with an increase in per capita personal income, higher paying jobs overall, strong collaborative relationships between business and education, and a regional culture that embraces lifelong learning.

The first step toward turning the goal into action is to gain broad regional support for its adoption, followed quickly by convening community, education, and industry leaders to identify key strategies to achieve this goal.

Additionally, the Vision 2020 staff would like to propose a critical opportunity be undertaken by Vision 2020 and the Regional Opportunity Council in the near term to collaborate with the Talent Initiative in launching a comprehensive communications campaign in 2012. This communications campaign will be targeted at capitalizing on the initial success of the "Talent Made Here" campaign to increase messaging and media exposure about the importance of life-long learning and target regional stakeholders to educate them on the BIG Goal and its potential impact on the region. In order to take the communications campaign to the next level, the Vision 2020 and Talent Initiative staff propose to reach out to best practice

<sup>1</sup> Lumina Foundation for Education, "A stronger nation through higher education," September 2010.

organizations and firms with a proven track record for influencing community cultural change and seek initial seed funding from the ROC for this initiative in the amounts of \$50,000 to \$75,000.

The landscape of talent development in Northeast Indiana is vast and complex; alignment and collaboration around achieving the BIG Goal will be extremely challenging. However, it is time to leverage the rich talent pool that exists within the region's leadership to tackle one of the region's greatest challenges to its long-term growth and prosperity.

### **Citizens Advisory Panel Feedback – September 28, 2011**

#### Impact (#1 Opportunity according to Citizens Advisory Panel members)

- Could increase wages - raise overall economic wealth – per capita income
- Will meet the needs of existing businesses, enable them to grow and create more jobs
- Provide future industrial growth – business attraction

#### Difficulty

- Need to focus on funding - financial resources both for initiatives and for students themselves
- Overcome community issue – culture of dignity and quality of education and the worth of education

#### **Steps to success:**

1. Agree to the most compelling option for success and adopt the BIG goal as a region.
2. Come to consensus on the meaningful definition of high-quality degrees and credentials for Northeast Indiana and develop appropriate mechanisms for tracking the number of credentials gained.
3. Develop an educational system asset map.
4. Develop collaboratives within the different spectrums of the learning continuum (early childhood, K-12, higher education, and adult worker training) to identify near-term and long-term strategies to help achieve the BIG goal.
5. Develop a marketing and communications campaign that will foster a culture of passion for life-long learning in Northeast Indiana.

#### **Options**

- a. Pursue opportunity
- b. Obtain further information
- c. Realign/Refocus the opportunity
- d. Put aside for future consideration

# Competitive Business Climate

 ROC Opportunities

**#001 Permitting**

**#002 Non-Stop Air Service Options**

## #001 Permitting

April 2011

**Opportunity:** Streamline the permitting and zoning processes in Northeast Indiana to create one of the most consistent and business friendly regions in the country.

**Background:** Throughout the Vision 2020 process of leadership interviews and county outreach meetings, “establishing a business-friendly tax and regulatory climate” was often near the top of wish lists in the Competitive Business Climate pillar. More than half of the counties ranked this initiative in the top two *must haves* for the region. Oddly enough, some didn’t rank this issue at all, implying that they have no issues with the regulatory climate and permitting and creating inconsistency across the region. Overall in the process, this issue was ranked second in terms of priority. This was taken into consideration going into topical group discussions, which determined it was a strong enough initiative to include as a strategy in the presentation at the Regional Economic Summit. To be noted, some communities may view permitting/zoning as a competitive advantage over other communities within the region and may not support the need for consistency.

Since the Summit, High Performance Government Network (HPGN), a not-for-profit consulting organization dedicated to cultivating thriving communities, has created and is working to survey local government agencies and key business customers to accurately assess the current permitting process.

Marketing Northeast Indiana as a region requires an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of current permitting. To speak from a common basis when discussing permitting would be a strong asset to Northeast Indiana—a streamlined, business-friendly permitting process would raise Northeast Indiana’s reputation as a place conducive to business with a competitive business climate.

### **Update – September, 2011:**

HPGN completed an initial survey of permitting entities and their customers in June of 2011, of which 11 city and county permitting entities from across Northeast Indiana, and 34 permitting customers participated in the study. The Executive Summary from the survey stated the following:

“Survey results showed high variability in the commercial permitting processes of each jurisdiction, as well as discrepancies in the metrics that are tracked. Customers were difficult to reach due to the lack of contact information provided by each jurisdiction, but those customers who were contacted value the same qualities: a transparent, fair, easy-to-access system. Customers have misperceptions about the process between jurisdictions because of the different levels of transparency and variations in the actual processes used. ”

HPGN recommends the following next steps to bring about streamlined permitting in Northeast Indiana. This process will require key support, buy-in, and leadership from the permitting process owners. Without their direct engagement, this initiative will not be successful.

- Create jurisdictional profiles of the existing processes, stakeholders, customer feedback and potential change agents.
- Identify champions in each jurisdiction to promote the process and ensure participation.
- Define the future state of the commercial permitting process for the region as a whole by involving the individual process owners.
- Implement the new process in each jurisdiction and track results.
- Overcome implementation challenges, including changing ordinances.
- Revise the process and set goals. After the new process has been in place, process owners and champions must report on the status of their changes and set uniform goals for the region that can be measured and clearly communicated.

#### **Citizens Advisory Panel Feedback – September 28, 2011**

##### Impact

- Efficiency – sharing of information (more jobs)
- Would encourage rapid growth and entrepreneurial success
- Could eliminate competitive disadvantages that our county or city might have

##### Difficulty

- Hard to get groups to agree on what steps should be to simple and standardized. Cost of technology and training on services that would make this possible would be

##### **Options**

- A. Pursue opportunity
- B. Obtain further information
- C. Realign/Refocus the opportunity
- D. Put aside for future consideration

## #002 Non-Stop Air Service Options

April 2011

**Opportunity:** Attract new air service providers to Fort Wayne International Airport (FWA) in order to increase non-stop air service options in Northeast Indiana.

**Background:** FWA serves as the commercial airport for the region, drawing not only from Northeast Indiana, but from Northwest Ohio and South Central Michigan. Passenger traffic reached a peak in 2000 with over 360,000 annual passengers, on nine different airlines, offering on average of 50 flights per day, to nine markets. Today the average number of daily flights is 20, the number of airlines reduced to four, and enplanements dropping to approximately 270,000 passengers. The positive news is that with all the reductions, the number of non-stop destinations has remained the same during the peak travel period of the year, but seat capacity, access to major business markets in the East, and alternative hub options remain critical issues facing the region.

Various studies over the past few years have indentified leakage, or the systemic diversion of "local" passengers to alternative airports, mainly due to the desire for lower fares, as the main challenge facing FWA. Not surprisingly, Indianapolis International Airport is the largest beneficiary of this leakage. Although strides have been made during the past two years to narrow this "fare gap", the continued presence of low cost carriers, most notably Air Tran and Southwest, and the desire of Delta to maintain a competitive position in the Indianapolis marketplace, have resulted in Indianapolis air fares being well below the U.S. average. Additionally, the availability of larger aircraft and more non-stop markets, approximately 20, allows for reduced travel time to major business markets, which contributes to the leakage FWA experiences.

The FWA Authority's efforts to educate those that live and do business in the region continue, as well as its continued marketing to airlines about the benefits and opportunities that exist at FWA. The Authority is doing this by focusing on the known strengths of the marketplace, the benefits of a strong and innovative airport, and the number of non-realized potential travelers. Furthermore, part of this ongoing effort is the adoption and promotion of an incentive program aimed at reducing the exposure to some inherent risks, such as the volatile cost of fuel in the aviation industry. In today's competitive environment incentives are part of the cost of doing business, and are necessary to ensure that both the community and airline work to the benefit of both parties to ensure the success of both parties.

For additional non-stop flights and/or markets to be added at Fort Wayne International the following must occur:

1. The airline/s must be convinced that the FWA market is viable to the desired destination.
2. The route being proposed is the best option for them, providing the best ROI.
3. Firm commitments from Northeast Indiana companies to fly the new route.
4. Support from the general community for the new flights.
5. The operational availability of equipment, staff, and facilities.

For the inauguration of service by a low cost carrier such as Air Tran, a significant monetary commitment will have to be made to the airline. This could take the form of a revenue guarantee or other financial instrument that will offset all risk associated with the startup and continued operation of the airline at FWA.

**Update – September, 2011:**

*[Update provided by Dave Young, Vice President of Air Service Development, Greater Fort Wayne Chamber of Commerce and the Fort Wayne-Allen County Airport Authority]*

The Fort Wayne International Airport (FWA) has lost 2 flights to Cincinnati (due to a significant reduction in flights in and out of Cincinnati by Delta), but has picked up a year round flight to Minneapolis (previously planned to be a seasonal flight only) and an extra daily flight to Atlanta. FWA lost one flight to Chicago, but picked up an extra daily flight to Dallas. There may be some overlap to these flight changes due to timing. Once these changes are complete, FWA will have a net zero change in daily flights, but was able to pick up increases in daily flight options to some of the major hubs. The current focus is on gaining east coast access for FWA passengers, most notably to Washington DC. More information will be provided at the Annual Air Service Luncheon on September 28, 2011 from 11:30am – 1:00pm at the Fort Wayne Chamber.

**Citizens Advisory Panel Feedback – September 28, 2011**

- Offer guaranteed flights/ low cost carriers – increase dependability
- Provide cab service or car service – pick up to take home
- Provide incentive program – free food, beverages, improved customer service
- Have more direct, non-stop flights – flights to Washington, DC, not Baltimore - More Fort Wayne to O'Hare

**Possible Opportunity Strategies:**

1. Continue vigorous efforts to press for flights aimed at filling the needs of the region.
2. Provide cash incentives to defray start-up costs and operations.
3. Mobilize the business community to fund propose flights through pre-purchase or advancing of tickets.
4. Develop a proposal to encourage the regional EDC's and the State to offer marketing and funding incentives for the route(s).

**Options:**

- A. Pursue opportunity
- B. Obtain further information
- C. Realign/Refocus the opportunity
- D. Put aside for future consideration

# Entrepreneurship

 **ROC Opportunities**

**#011 JumpStart**

## #011 JumpStart

June 2011

**Opportunity:** Leverage significant federal and national foundation resources to establish entrepreneurial services based on the successful JumpStart model. These services would complement existing entrepreneurial services at the Northeast Indiana Small Business Development Center (SBDC), Northeast Indiana Innovation Center (NIIC), and Women's Enterprise Center. The goal of this initiative is to demonstrably improve outcomes for high growth entrepreneurs in our region.

**Background:** While Northeast Indiana has considerable capabilities in durable goods manufacturing, existing clusters in defense and aerospace, medical devices, and food processing, and a strong work ethic, its growth potential is constrained by low educational attainment, below national average "top tier" occupations in technology and management, and very limited amounts of capital to support startup businesses (venture capital). The region has a history of successful entrepreneurship, but does not currently have a strong reputation for new high growth startups that can transform the economy. Other regions in similar economic situations, like Pittsburgh and Northeast Ohio, have spurred the development of high growth entrepreneurial companies through programs that provide small amount of capital combined with support services that are designed to help young companies develop innovative products and get them to market, quickly.

JumpStart Community Advisors is a part of Northeast Ohio-based JumpStart Inc., a nationally recognized nonprofit organization that has been working since 2004 to transform the economic impact of Northeast Ohio's entrepreneurial companies and build a sustainable ecosystem to support company growth. In collaboration with state, regional, and community leaders, JumpStart Community Advisors is applying the experience and expertise JumpStart has gained through its work to accelerate entrepreneurial success in Northeast Indiana. JumpStart is also working on similar projects in North Central and Northwest Indiana, and is advising IEDC on statewide support programs.

Since mid-2010, JumpStart Community Advisors has been working with a group of 24 regional stakeholders on developing a Regional Entrepreneurship Action Plan (REAP). The planning process is funded by the U.S. Economic Development Administration, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, and the Surdna Foundation – each of whom has expressed interest in providing subsequent program funding if presented with a compelling case. The project is led by JumpStart Inc., with strong collaboration from the Northeast Indiana Regional Fund and the Indiana Economic Development Corporation.

The ultimate goal of Northeast Indiana JumpStart Project is to transform entrepreneurship in the 10-county region into a significant engine for regional economic growth by developing high growth companies based on regional strengths that can attract follow-on funding, and fostering a robust and thriving entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystem unified in the region which increases the wealth in our region.

JumpStart is focused on two types of entrepreneurs. The first are those start-up companies that are capable of explosive growth and are therefore likely to be able to attract angel or venture capital. The second are small businesses – likely existing – which will never be

attractive to angels or venture capital but which are capable of growing into profitable medium-sized enterprises. There are many other types of entrepreneurs, but JumpStart focuses on these two segments. In order to establish the scale necessary to attract outside funding, JumpStart anticipates a program that would operate across all of northern Indiana.

There are very limited resources currently available for entrepreneurs, and their availability varies across the region. While the NIIC and the SBDC provide some services to these types of businesses, there is a distinct lack of capital that is critical to the development of high growth startups. Private investors typically shy away from the high risks associated at this stage, and even the State of Indiana's 21Fund has focused its money on companies nearer to commercialization. In addition, the NIIC and SBDC have both expressed that they would benefit from the types of services JumpStart could offer including technical due diligence support, commercialization planning, market and product assessment, and a region-wide online connectivity tool for entrepreneurs, advisors, mentors, and investors.

JumpStart anticipates creation of an Accelerator Grant program that would provide small grants (\$10,000 to \$25,000) to companies for needs such as prototype development to help them qualify for investor funding. This funding would be accompanied by guidance from Entrepreneurs in Residence, who would work in coordination with the NIIC, the SBDC and local economic development organizations. Services would be provided throughout the region, wherever the entrepreneur is located. In addition, a Northern Indiana Seed Fund would be created that would provide investments of \$150,000 to \$500,000.

JumpStart will raise funds for these efforts from the federal government and national foundations. Such funding will require match from within the region and the state.

#### **Update – September, 2011:**

A one year pilot program, called Quick Start, is being launched in the fall of 2011 to provide expert advisory services to accelerate entrepreneurial services to small, high growth companies. It is a partnership of the Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC), Elevate Ventures, each of the three northern Indiana regions, and JumpStart. The primary goals of Quick Start include:

- Offering immediate high impact entrepreneurship services and access to capital for entrepreneurial opportunities and small, high growth companies (aka economic gardening) in the three regions;
- Maintain the momentum created by the JumpStart planning projects;
- Provide tangible evidence to national funders that Indiana and its northern regions are committed to a regional approach to entrepreneurship and innovation; and
- Build working partnerships between each of the regions and Elevate Ventures, a statewide venture development organization created and funded in part by IEDC.

Quick Start is not an end in itself – it is designed to transition the regions into a longer term program to support entrepreneurship. This longer term program is being developed now, and is intended to significantly enhance the regions capacity for outreach, entrepreneurial support services, and investment.

The long-term plan will be completed in September. The proposed regional budget for the long-term program is \$6,000,000 for three years of services, investment, and overhead. The initial proposed sources of funding for this budget include: JumpStart - National Funders (\$3M), Elevate – State Funders (\$2M), and regional funders (\$1M). The ROC could consider providing initial seed funding of \$50,000 - \$75,000 towards this regional match.

## **Citizens Advisory Panel Feedback – September 28, 2011**

### Impact

- Promote innovation and creativity/openness/ think outside the box
- Collaborate more - Influential groups can be connected – power in numbers

### Difficulty

- Need to draw capital/angels here – hard to find the resources
- Hard to get people to take the risk of starting a business, get community buy-in
- There is no Deal Flow – Fort Wayne is 2nd largest city, but funding isn't there

### **Possible Opportunity Strategies:**

1. Provide a small amount of capital to the JumpStart initiative as part of the match required to attract outside funding and as a statement of approval by the ROC.
2. Encourage other funders (including Northeast Indiana foundations and Legacy Fort Wayne) to provide financial support to the initiative.
3. Publically endorse this initiative and work with the JumpStart stakeholders group to secure needed funding.

### **Options**

- A. Pursue opportunity
- B. Obtain further information
- C. Realign/Refocus the opportunity
- D. Put aside for future consideration

## ROC Opportunities

**#009 Regional Internet Access**

**#010 Regional Interstate Accessibility**

## #009 Regional Internet Access

**April 2011**

**Opportunity:** Expand broadband width and availability to become one of the most wired regions in the country.

**Background:** Going by different names—fiber, fiber optics, high speed, broadband, broadband DSL, wireless—it means the same thing: access to the internet. In Northeast Indiana, the ability to access the internet is inconsistent. In some areas, WiFi hot spots seem to be everywhere. In other areas, internet access is spotty at best. Throughout the Vision 2020 process, this issue arose repeatedly, with seven different counties listing it as a high-priority *must have* or *game-changing tactic* for their county. In the end, “Expand broadband width and availability” was listed as the third-highest must have infrastructure initiative, and was of great enough concern that it was voted on at the Regional Economic Summit.

Broadband was listed by the region as a tool to attract and maintain businesses, create a competitive business climate, attract more entrepreneurs who may choose to live in a rural area, create bedroom communities, and attract more diverse industries. Additionally it was listed as critical to success and fundamental in a communication-driven economy.

In Steuben County, iMAN is deploying a community fiber optic data network and using revenue from paid subscriptions to the fiber backbone for ongoing charitable projects through the community foundation. Funding support was also provided by the county commissioners. Adams County is also engaged in a program to provide fiber throughout the county.

**Update – September, 2011:**

No update at this time.

**Citizens Advisory Panel Feedback – September 28, 2011**

Impact

- It is needed to “keep up” in economic development – not geographically bound, brings international impact.
- Possible opportunity to establish the region as a technology leader

Difficulty

- Fairly Expensive – Will the cost outweigh the benefit?
- Do we have the resources?
- Will there be opposition from current providers?

**Possible Opportunity Strategies:**

1. Regionalize current iMAN initiative model
2. Explore other methods of achieving regional broadband access
3. Rely on existing utility providers to supply area with broadband access

**Options:**

- A. Pursue opportunity
- B. Obtain further information
- C. Realign/Refocus the opportunity
- D. Put aside for future consideration

## #010 Regional Interstate Accessibility

April 2011

**Opportunity:** Improve access to our business and manufacturing centers in Northeast Indiana in order to reap the full economic benefit of existing transportation corridors

**Background:** Northeast Indiana's economic vitality and ability to remain competitive depend on the efficient transport of people and goods to the nation and the world. The Interstate Highways connects Northeast Indiana to numerous markets throughout North America and to vital ports critical for exporting our products to international destinations. Access to Interstate 69 and Interstate 80/90 is critical for efficiently moving raw materials, people and services to our production facilities, and moving the products and refined materials to market. The Interstate Highway System provides the level of mobility necessary to compete in today's global business climate.

The interstate highway system is the "work horse" of the nation's highway system that serves major population centers, international border crossings, ports, airports, public transportation facilities, and other intermodal transportation facilities and major transportation destinations; meet national defense requirements; and serve interstate and interregional travel. Representing just over one percent of the nation's highway system mileage, the interstate highway system carries nearly one quarter of all roadway traffic.

A region's industrial and employment base is closely tied to the quality of the transportation system. Good, dependable transportation infrastructure allows businesses to receive inputs to production facilities and to transport finished goods to market in an efficient manner. An efficient transportation system allows companies to lower transportation and production costs that result in higher productivity and profits.

Funds invested to upgrade or maintain the quality of access to the Interstate system enable firms to ship and receive goods more cheaply (as trucks can reach destinations without major delays) and to improve service (as delivery schedules become more reliable). Subsequently, more timely and reliable deliveries allow firms with efficient Interstate access to minimize their stationary inventories, thereby saving inventory and storage costs and enhancing productivity. Collectively, this translates into higher productivity for the entire region.

### **Update – September, 2011:**

The Regional Chamber announced on August 26, 2011 that it has begun to concentrate efforts on the Lafayette Center Road extension project (#2 potential project below). The effort includes the establishment of a multi-county, public-private taskforce that will serve as the chief advocate and public voice of the proposal. Its goal is to enhance infrastructure along four miles of county road between I-69 at the General Motors cloverleaf and US 24 at the town of Roanoke. While the Regional Chamber's top priority is the Lafayette Center Road extension project, their policy committee is continuing to prioritize other regional transportation projects (many of which are included below).

## **Citizens Advisory Panel Feedback – September 28, 2011**

### Impact

- Would have the ability to distribute product through Midwest/get materials into region
- Could attract new business – increase jobs

### Difficulty

- Hard to accomplish because of housing additions
- Need to improve maintenance of roads – costly
- Economy – convincing people it's important

### **Possible Opportunity Strategies:**

1. Prepare feasibility studies to estimate economic benefits and real costs for specific highway projects that improve interstate access.
2. Work with the Indiana Department of Transportation to assist in financing roadway projects that improve access between industrial and business centers in Northeast Indiana and the Interstate system.
3. Identify other funding strategies for projects that provide efficient interstate access.

### **Potential Projects:**

#### **Interstate 69**

1. Bluffton-State Road 124 (Super 2)
2. Wabash, Huntington and Roanoke – Road 900 W (Huntington County) and Lafayette Center Road (Allen County)
3. New Haven and Fort Wayne – Ryan Road/Bruick Road Interchange @ US 24
4. New Haven, Woodburn and Fort Wayne – US 24 and I-469 interchange
5. Ossian – US 224
6. Markle – US 224
7. Kendaville-US 6
8. Waterloo – US 6
9. Garrett – SR 8
10. Churubusco, La Otto, Ari, Garrett and Auburn-County Road 11 A, County Road 56 and State Road 205
11. Ashley/Hudson and Hamilton – State Road 4 and County Line Road/800 South

#### **Interstate 80/90**

12. Orland – State Road 327
13. Shippshewana – State Road 5
14. Kendaville, Mongo and Brighton–State Road 3

### **Options:**

- A. Pursue opportunity
- B. Obtain further information
- C. Realign/Refocus the opportunity
- D. Put aside for future consideration



## #012 Downtown Riverfront Development

## #012 Downtown Riverfront Development

**June 2011**

**Opportunity:** Capitalize on Northeast Indiana's waterways by developing downtown Fort Wayne's riverfront, which would serve as a catalyst for future development throughout the region, expand the area's tourism and cultural footprint, and weave together multiple aspects of quality of life: recreation and trails, arts and culture, large scale attractions and urban living. In concert with all of the plans that are in place, including those that address water quality and downtown revitalization, now is the time to launch riverfront development in Fort Wayne and beyond.

**Background:** Northeast Indiana's numerous water resources make the region unique and should be used to give it a competitive advantage that would attract young professionals, families and empty nesters. A riverfront development in downtown Fort Wayne would foster a quality of life that can support economic growth, neighborhood development, and expanded business and retail diversity.

Working in concert with transportation planning efforts, riverfront development could serve as a central hub for an integrated system aimed at connecting the region through walking and biking trails, public transit and various waterways themselves, spurring additional riverfront developments throughout the region. Additionally, these could also act as an educational tool to teach residents about Northeast Indiana's vast water resources and enhance efforts to preserve its water quality.

This community has the opportunity to create a truly unique riverfront development by drawing upon the values and ideas that were put forward in the city's first plan by landscape architect George Kessler in 1912, and which have been continually referenced in the planning work done by the Board of Park Commissioners and the Headwaters Park Commission. These community led organizations hired internationally recognized landscape architects and planners such as Arthur Schurcliff, Adolphe Jaenicke, and local architect Eric Kuhne. By emphasizing this unique heritage, nature and recreation, and acknowledging their importance to the human psyche and economic development, the riverfront will be an attraction in and of itself. The development should be designed in such a way that it has a positive impact on water quality and can be used as an educational tool to teach people about our natural resources.

All great regions have a strong metropolitan center. We need a quality "heavy hitter" attraction such as a riverfront development, which could complement current amenities, such as Parkview Field. When Chattanooga began working on its Vision, one of the major findings was that it had turned its back on a major asset, the Tennessee River. As seen in Chattanooga and other communities that have capitalized on their riverfronts, this type of development expands well beyond the central project. Riverfront development could lead to a rejuvenation of Northeast Indiana.

## **Update – September, 2011:**

The Quality of Life Action Team completed its recommendations for the next steps to be taken towards advancing downtown riverfront development. Immediate issues facing downtown riverfront development include but are not limited to: public perception about the quality and possible uses of the rivers, lack of access points on the rivers, and lack of funding for development. Long-term issues include but are not limited to: water quality and flood mitigation (looking at both urban and rural implications), and lack of long-term strategic planning, funding and development focused specifically on downtown riverfront development within Fort Wayne, as well as other regional communities with downtown riverfronts. Vision 2020 staff has begun conversations with key members from Friends of the Rivers about developing a partnership to help with the facilitation of further downtown riverfront development planning efforts. Additionally, the Legacy Fort Wayne taskforce announced on Tuesday, August 30, 2011, that it is focusing the funding recommendations for the \$75 million from the Light Lease Settlement Funds on three categories, one of which is downtown improvements and riverfront development.

## **Citizens Advisory Panel Feedback – September 28, 2011**

### Impact

- There will be a rise in tourism – events on the water, festivals, restaurants, shopping
- Could bring the region together - Lakes for leisure, rivers for active lifestyle

### Difficulty

- Need a comprehensive, cohesive plan of retail, restaurants, etc. - Long term stability/sustainability
- Find a balance between development and conservation.  
Watch for flooding – ACOE really must know what the flow is

### **Possible Opportunity Strategies:**

- Through public-private partnerships, work to identify areas of Fort Wayne's rivers that are conducive for the development of businesses and recreational amenities.
- Pursue attractions that would be compatible with riverfront development and would draw people to the area for dining, shopping, entertainment and recreation.
- Identify obstacles from the past that have prevented riverfront development and pursue ways to minimize or eliminate them.
- Develop riverfront properties within downtown Fort Wayne.

### **Options**

- A. Pursue opportunity
- B. Obtain further information
- C. Realign/Refocus the opportunity
- D. Put aside for future consideration