

INDIANAVISION

2025

A PLAN FOR HOOSIER PROSPERITY



# ADVANCING OUR FUTURE

NORTHWEST REGION REPORT – DECEMBER 2013

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## **Indiana Vision 2025 – OUTLINE OF KEY DRIVERS AND GOALS**

### **DRIVER 1: OUTSTANDING TALENT**

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

### **DRIVER 2: ATTRACTIVE BUSINESS CLIMATE**

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

### **DRIVER 3: SUPERIOR INFRASTRUCTURE**

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

### **DRIVER 4: DYNAMIC & CREATIVE CULTURE**

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

**Introduction**

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

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

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



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

**Forum Structure**

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



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

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

**Speakers addressing goals under each driver included:**

**DRIVER 1: Outstanding Talent**

- Don Babcock, Director of Economic Development, NIPSCO
- Dr. Peggy Buffington, Superintendent, School City of Hobart

**DRIVER 2: Attractive Business Climate**

- Rex Richards, President, Valparaiso Chamber of Commerce

**DRIVER 3: Superior Infrastructure**

- Carl Lisek, Executive Director, South Shore Clean Cities, Inc.

**DRIVER 4: Dynamic and Creative Culture**

- Kelly Schwedland, Entrepreneur-in-Residence, Elevate Ventures

**Northwest Region Participants**

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

**Don Babcock**  
Director of Economic  
Development  
NIPSCO

**Michael Baird**  
Interim Director  
Boys & Girls Club of Northwest  
Indiana

**Lee Botts**  
Executive Producer  
Green Heron Productions

**Dr. Peggy Buffington**  
Superintendent  
School City of Hobart

**Mark Chamberlain**  
Chairman & CEO  
Lakeside Wealth Management  
Group

**Sen. Dan Coats**  
State of Indiana  
United States Congress

**Jack Cole**  
Director, Member & External  
Relations  
Indiana Grantmakers Alliance

**Dr. Jim Dworkin**  
Chancellor  
Purdue North Central

**Jim Dyer**  
Sr. Vice President  
Berglund Construction

**Heather Ennis**  
Executive Director  
Duneland Chamber of  
Commerce

**Hon. Karen Freeman-  
Wilson**  
Mayor  
City of Gary

**Charley Gillispie**  
Sr. VP, Administration & Finance  
(Ret.)  
Valparaiso University

**Heather Harrigan**  
Executive Director  
Empower Porter County

**J. Forest Hayes**  
Director, Department of  
Commerce  
City of Gary

**Kristin Henry**  
Business Banking Relationship  
Manager  
PNC Bank

**Dr. Debra Howe**  
Superintendent  
Tri-Creek School Corp.

**Clarence Hulse**  
Executive Director  
Economic Development Corp. of  
Michigan City

**Jim Jorgensen**  
Partner  
Hoepfner, Wagner & Evans, LLP

**Denarie Kane**  
Staff Advisor  
City of Hobart

**Carl Lisek**  
Executive Director  
South Shore Clean Cities, Inc.

**Russ Marcinek**  
Dean of Students  
Crown Point High School

**David Malik**  
Vice Chancellor  
Indiana University Northwest

**Robert McDermott**  
Assistant Principal  
Crown Point High School

**Regina Moody**  
Vice President  
Chase Bank

**Leigh Morris**  
Interim President & CEO  
Legacy Foundation

**James Muhammad**  
President & CEO  
Lakeshore Public Media

**Kay Nelson**  
Director of Environmental Affairs  
Northwest Indiana Forum

**Tim Nelson**  
Vice President  
Chase Bank

**Chip Pettit**  
Principal  
Crown Point High School

**Craig Pratt**  
Senior Vice President  
Fifth Third Bank

**Rex Richards**  
President  
Valparaiso Chamber of Commerce

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

**Dr. Dennis Rittenmeyer**  
Executive Director  
One Region, One Vision

**Dave Ryan**  
Executive Director  
Lakeshore Chamber of  
Commerce

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

**Kelly Schwedland**  
Entrepreneur-in-Residence  
Elevate Ventures

**Mike Seitz**  
President  
LaPorte Chamber of Commerce

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

**Charlie Weaver**  
Executive Director  
Starke County Economic  
Development Foundation

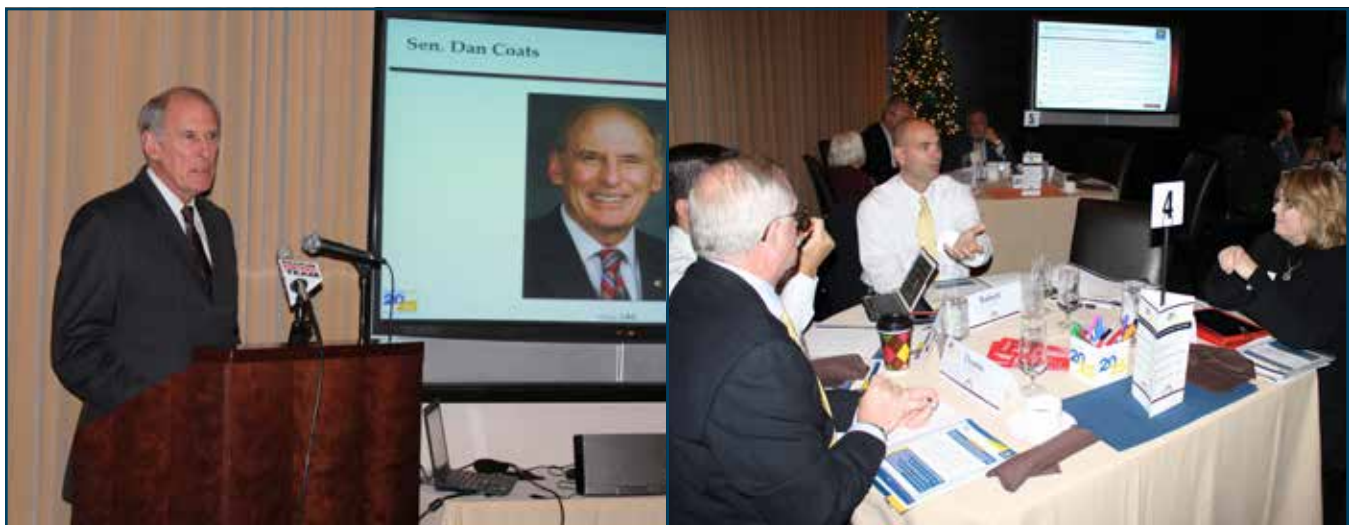
**Chris White**  
Publisher  
The Times Media Company

**Linda Woloshansky**  
President & CEO  
The Center for Workforce  
Innovations

**Beth Wrobel**  
CEO  
HealthLinc

**Barbara Young**  
President  
Porter County Community  
Foundation

\* Denotes Regional Partner





**Northwest Region Challenges & Opportunities**

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

**PRIMARY CHALLENGES**

- 1. Educational Excellence:** As it shares with other regions of the state, a high priority in Northwest Indiana is ensuring that citizens have exceptional preparation for productive, relevant careers and vocations. Forum participants noted a number of critical issues currently affecting education attainment, particularly inadequate funding. The challenge impacts all age groups. Participants also noted the importance of listening to the recommendations of the educational community and connecting educators and employers.
- 2. Transportation Infrastructure:** The Northwest region is noted for its excellent pathways for moving people, products and ideas. The network must continue to grow. Participants noted that improved passenger rail, highways and public transportation are all points of emphasis. Increased access to ports and air service could greatly impact future economic prosperity.
- 3. Community/Political Leadership:** Forum participants regarded attracting exceptionally talented people to public and private service as a challenge. Recent elections and appointments in the region have provided reason for hope that gifted, visionary individuals are being drawn to serve.
- 4. Regional Identity:** Perhaps more than any other area of the state, Northwest Indiana possesses a regional identity that is not historically positive. Lingering images of old steel mills remain the perception of many. Changing the preconceived notions will require marketing Northwest Indiana as a dynamic brand in touch with the needs of a high-tech economy.
- 5. Training/Job Creation:** Workforce development and job creation are closely tied to both educational achievement and regional identity. The region must continue to address the broad need of providing a technically competent labor force necessary for attracting and retaining technically-focused industries.
- 6. Racial Diversity and Renewal:** The region is a diverse mix of race and culture. While the cooperation and collaboration across cultural boundaries has improved significantly over the years, forum participants acknowledge that gaps still exist.
- 7. Cohesive Planning:** Good forward planning has been evident over the past decade or longer. Often, though, the planning occurs within the boundaries of counties or municipalities and without the broader vision of the region in mind.



**OVERARCHING OPPORTUNITIES TO LEVERAGE**

- 1. Location:** Northwest Indiana is a geographical sweet spot for growth-minded people, businesses and organizations. With its proximity to Chicago and its access to interstates, rail and ports, the region boasts a transportation diversity that few areas in the Midwest could rival.
- 2. Natural Resources:** Northwest Indiana has elements of both nature and nurture working in its favor. Lake Michigan, the lakefront, state parks and regional attractions are helping build a quality of life vital to the growth of the region. As cultural and recreational opportunities increase, so do the opportunities to attract and retain new businesses.
- 3. Commuter/Freight Rail Transportation:** Forum participants identified extensive rail infrastructure as a distinct strategic advantage. There are significant opportunities to expand rail’s impact to move people and products. When combined with other modes of transportation, rail line access can play a crucial role in the growth of the regional economy.
- 4. Gary Airport:** A resource with exceptional potential (though currently underutilized) is the Gary airport. With runways long enough to handle increased passenger and freight flights, Gary is a convenient, efficient and logical alternative to Chicago’s airports.
- 5. Trend Towards Regional Cooperation:** Although regional cooperation has historically been viewed as a challenge, there are strong initiatives such as NWI Regional Development Authority and One Region, One Vision that are turning the tide on collaboration.

**Northwest Region Prioritized Goals**

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

<p><b>DRIVER 1: Outstanding Talent</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increase to 90% the proportion of Indiana students who graduate from high school ready for college and/or career training.</li> <li>2. Develop, implement and fully fund a comprehensive plan for addressing the skills shortages of adult and incumbent workers who lack minimum basic skills.</li> <li>3. Eliminate the educational achievement gaps at all levels, from pre-school through college, for disadvantaged populations.</li> <li>4. Increase to 60% the proportion of Indiana residents with high quality postsecondary credentials.</li> <li>5. Increase the proficiency of Indiana students in math, science and reading to “Top 5” status internationally.</li> </ol>	<p><b>DRIVER 2: Attractive Business Climate</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Enact comprehensive government reform at the state and local levels to increase efficiency and effectiveness in delivery of services.</li> <li>2. Attain a “Top 5” ranking among all states for Indiana’s business regulatory environment.</li> <li>3. Contain health care costs through patient-directed access and outcomes-based incentives.</li> </ol>
<p><b>DRIVER 3: Superior Infrastructure</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop and implement new fiscal systems to support the array of infrastructure projects critical to economic growth.</li> <li>2. Aggressively build out the state’s advanced telecommunications networks.</li> <li>3. Create and implement a plan to position Indiana as a net exporter of energy.</li> <li>4. Develop and implement a strategic water resource plan that ensures adequate fresh water for citizens and business.</li> <li>5. Diversify Indiana’s energy mix with an emphasis on clean coal, nuclear power and renewables.</li> </ol>	<p><b>DRIVER 4: Dynamic and Creative Culture</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Promote a culture that further values diversity and civility, attracting and retaining talented individuals.</li> <li>2. Develop entrepreneurship and aggressively promote business start-ups through education, networking, investment and financial support.</li> <li>3. Increase Indiana exports to achieve “Top 5” ranking per capita among all states.</li> </ol>

**Northwest Regional Forum Observations & Recommendations**

**Key Driver #1: Outstanding Talent**

CHORUS Observations:

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

Participant Statements and Themes:

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



**Key Driver #2: Attractive Business Climate**CHORUS Observations:

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

Participant Statements and Themes:

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

**Key Driver #3: Superior Infrastructure**CHORUS Observations:

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

Participant Statements and Themes:

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

**Key Driver #4: Dynamic & Creative Culture**CHORUS Observations:

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

Participant Statements and Themes:

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

**MOVING FORWARD >>>**

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

Just as cooperation within the region is emphasized here (as well as in several other areas of the state in which forums took place), it is important for regions to share best practices and learn from each other. While the challenges in each region are somewhat unique, solutions often revolve around effective communication and collaboration. Strategies and initiatives that prove successful in one location could provide valuable lessons for others in different regions. For true statewide progress toward the goals of *Indiana Vision 2025*, each region must be as strong as possible. The best way to help make that happen is by working together.

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