

Purdue University North Central

Economic Development

White Paper

PREMISE:

Economic Development serves to enhance the economic and social well-being of the residents of our region through:

- *Enhancement of Workforce (Technical, Managerial, Entrepreneurial)*
- *Enhancement of Infrastructure (Energy, Environment, Transportation, Communication)*
- *Enhancement of Quality of Life (Health, Human Services, Education, Environment)*

that attracts new businesses and retains existing organizations to support growth and development and respond effectively to the challenges of a global economy.

OBJECTIVES and GOALS

Purdue University North Central is strategically placed to provide assistance and support to development agencies, the public and private sectors, and non-profit organizations within the region. This can be accomplished through the creation, expansion, nurturing and promotion of several critical programs central PNC’s mission of learning, discovery and engagement.

OBJECTIVE #1

Creation of a Center for Economic Development (CED) housed at PNC

A Center for Economic Development (CED) would place PNC in the heart of the discussions and movements related to economic development within the region.

Goals:

- Maintain a current and up-to-date listing with personal contacts of all organizations within that actively engaged involved in economic development within the State of Indiana and in particular within this region. This list would include businesses, chambers of commerce, economic development corporations, and governmental offices.
- Develop an Economic Development Advisory Board for the CED that involves substantial representation from ED groups, academic institutions, other stakeholders and organizations with an interest in ED within our region
- Make PNC the regional warehouse/repository for information and data related to the region and publications pertaining to economic development
- Develop and maintain a roster of technical and professional consulting capabilities/expertise available through faculty and staff in the region.
- Promote PNC as a neutral forum for the facilitation of discussions regarding economic development projects

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- Create a regular series of forums related to various aspects of ED, such as:
 - a. *Public-Private Partnerships*
 - b. *Availability of Venture Capital*
 - c. *Sustainable Economic Development Initiatives*
 - d. *Cognizance of Environmental Issues in ED*
 - e. *Identification of regional clusters regarding strengths and weaknesses.*
- Implement training programs that address the topics necessary for both ED practitioners as well as ED board members

Action Items:

Short Term:

- Promote discussion within the community of the need to develop a centralized vision for ED within the region
- Begin discussion of PNC taking a centralized role in ED within the region and the vision for the creation of the PNC Center for Economic Development
- Secure commitment from the various ED groups as to their participation in various aspects of the Center.
- Seek out financial support (sponsorship, grants, etc) for the Center.

Long Term:

1. Establish a dedicated physical facility to house the PNC Center for Economic Development
2. Establish a long-term funding source for the Center
3. Create a Purdue Research and Technology Center either on the PNC campus or within the region that is affiliated with PNC
4. Assess progress and effectiveness of this objective on an annual basis throughout the duration of this strategic plan.

Assessment:

- Was a Center for Economic Development created? What steps were taken to make this a reality?
- What resources were necessary to complete this objective (including staffing, financial support, etc.)?

OBJECTIVE #2

Creation of a Student Leadership and Volunteer Center (SLVC)

Building on the grant from the Indiana Campus Compact, create a sustainable center that simultaneously prepares students for leadership positions as well as serving the overall community.

Goals:

- Creation of a Student Leadership and Volunteer Center for purposes of centralization of information gathering, establishment of economies of scale,

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and most importantly creation of a more systematic process of promoting student engagement through experiential learning such as:

- a. *Service Learning Projects*
 - b. *Internships*
 - c. *Volunteer activities*
 - d. *Student leadership activities*
- Support existing on-campus organizations and as well as new clubs (such as Rotaract, Dean’s Leadership Group, Student Education Association) whose missions are related to service learning.
 - Maintain a collaborative relationship with the CED for opportunities involving experiential learning.

Action Items:

Short Term:

- Work with the Indiana Campus Compact project during 08-09 to assist and assure a smooth transition and extension of this endeavor
- Work with the SLVC Steering Committee to lead this initiative in order to further define and establish the SLVC
- Gather information on projects and activities in which University faculty and students have been involved during the past five years and contacts for each
- Invite leaders from non-profit organizations, business leaders, and human resource representatives to an information sessions to provide information about the SLVC and to also identify future projects and opportunities for experiential learning
- Develop an annual Service Learning Day that showcase and promote service learning activities and showcasing faculty/student partnership in service learning.
- Create and maintain an “Experiential Learning Portfolio” documenting students’ various activities and achievements.
- Promote interdisciplinary and inter-institutional experiential learning opportunities.

Long Term:

- Identify a physical location for the SLVC and the appropriate staff and resources, including identify sustainable funding source to support the SLVC
- Develop a prominent web presence to enable one-stop access for organizations interested in offering SLVC activities or to obtain information, post opportunities, and centralized access for students and faculty.
- Assess progress and effectiveness of this objective on an annual basis throughout the duration of this strategic plan.

Assessment:

- Was a Student Leadership and Volunteer Center created? What steps were taken to see that the center became a reality?

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- What resources were necessary for the center (staffing, location, financial support)? Sustainability?

Objective #3

Support Regional Workforce Development

Economic Development activities to be successful require concurrent efforts to develop a workforce able to meet the challenges associated with the ever-increasing complexities of the workplace, including globalization and new technologies.

Goals:

- Continue to focus on the education of graduates from the existing associate, baccalaureate and graduate programs at PNC by preparing them to meet the challenges of the workplace. Continue to develop new programs that meet the emerging educational and entrepreneurial needs of area employers
- Systematically solicit input from external constituencies regarding currency and relevance of academic programs in relationship to today’s workplace
- Create a broader and more expansive system for developing and delivering customized training programs designed to meet the changing needs of area employers.
- Partner with the various school districts to assist in the improvement of their P-12 programs. This will serve to better prepare those students who choose to attend college as well as those that decide to pursue other opportunities.

Action Items:

Short Term:

- Partner with representatives from area P-12 programs, WorkOne, NIHRMA (Northern Indiana Human Resource Management Association), and staffing organizations to identify opportunities for improvement of overall workforce preparation in the region
- Collect, retain and promote information on faculty and staff areas of expertise to establish a comprehensive speakers’ bureau and contract training resource

Long Term:

- Develop and maintain a centralized web presence to enable one-stop access to information, speakers’ bureau, contract training assistance and general questions regarding workforce development activities.
- Identify sustainable resources to support of the web information
- Assess progress and effectiveness of this objective on an annual basis throughout the duration of this strategic plan.

Assessment:

- What steps were taken to ensure support of the regional workforce development?
- What financial resources were necessary to accomplish this (staffing, financial support, etc.)?

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Appendix A.

Membership in the Economic Development Working Group

- Derek Bjonback
- Gary Bushue
- Melissa Culbertson
- Mark Hannon
- Alan Krabbenhoft, Chair
- Debra Nielsen
- Sarah Sanders Smith
- Bryan Tomky

Appendix B.

Economic Development Open Forum

The Economic Development Working Group held an Open Forum on Monday, February 4, 2008 from 2:00-3:30pm. In addition to broadcasting the announcement and invitation to the campus community (faculty, staff, students), members of the working group emailed and phoned a sizable number of external constituents including the Chancellor’s Advisory Board, leading and influential members of the business community, the chambers of commerce and economic development corporations within the region. A total of approximately 30 persons attended the session with solid representation from both internal and external constituencies. The attendees were presented with the list of the following five questions to initiate discussion.

1. What role do you see Purdue North Central currently playing in Economic Development?
2. What role would you like to see PNC play in the future?
3. What role does PNC play in the challenges of globalization?
4. What do you believe are the greatest opportunities in terms of economic development for your marketplace?
5. What challenges do you see in capitalizing on these opportunities?

The following is a summary of the points raised by the attendees.

- Work collaboratively with VU and Ivy Tech on economic development issues.
- Work with local entrepreneurs to develop hybrid corporations.
- The definition of economic development differs greatly between areas like northern Lake County and southern LaPorte County.
- Be sure to emphasize PNC’s neutral position in economic development in the white paper that is being developed.
- PNC should offer forums on such topics as public-private partnerships, availability of venture capital, etc.
- PNC should involve students more and more in local economic development. This will help them to stay in the area.

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- Indiana Campus Compact grant for Student Leadership and Volunteerism Center could handle internships, special programs, etc.
- How do you reach out to the general public to educate them on such things as the intermodal, etc? PNC could take a leadership role in helping to demystify such things.
- Development of a sense of regionalism in terms of economic development.
- PNC could provide information that could be easily accessed on economic development.
- We need to emphasize the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore more and the importance of environmentally conscientious businesses.
- We need to benchmark PNC with the other college and university campuses in this region in terms of economic development.
- PNC students should be taught the importance of a strong work ethic, staying drug free, etc. Local employers are having a difficult time with younger workers who have not developed such a work ethic and cannot pass drug testing.
- PNC needs to work with the local P-12 institutions to strengthen quality of graduates
- Develop a consortium of colleges & universities for contract training
- How do we get the message about engagement out to the communities we serve?
- PNC should continue to foster dialogue between the ED players.
- Always be cognizant of environmental issues when working on economic development.
- Hold forums for the public to disseminate information about what is going on in economic development in the region.
- Development of an Economic Development Advisory Board that includes the major ED players in the area.
- Development of an Economic Development Center housed at PNC.
- Development of a new business curriculum focusing on economic development (interdisciplinary program?)
- Feedback is important; assessment is important.

Appendix C. Questionnaire

1. What role do you see Purdue North Central currently playing in Economic Development?

- *Unify County Leaders to work together. Work as one economic entity, LaPorte County. LaPorte vs. Porter County & City of Michigan City vs. City of LaPorte*
- *PNC has proven to be an excellent leader and facilitator of county-wide and regional development opportunities. PNC also is a strong supporter of the arts through the Lubeznik Center and Sinai Forum. PNC has good linkages into the high school system for credit transfer. PNC also provides great support of the Boys & Girls Club in Michigan City. The recent hire of Dr. Larryl Matthews was an excellent choice particularly with his vision for the University's role in ED. On the improvement side...the county-wide plan seemed to stall at different points. That said, I am not sure if the responsibility rests on PNC or the community.*
- *Reaching out to communities to provide development services including students. Future nature of firms.*

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- *PNC is working to provide more highly educated workers to create more highly skilled jobs in NW Indiana. With two new hospitals coming to Porter County it will be very important to provide these facilities with the skilled labor that they will need.*
- *Continue current leadership role and provide research support.*
- *Educating our citizens in order to provide a local workforce that will help NW Indiana keep current businesses. Secondly, incubating the real estate development of the Michigan City/Westville corridor.*
- *PNC needs to be a community leader in the workforce development field for Indiana. The quality of graduates directly impacts the quality of the development and business community. If we can produce graduates with skill sets that match up with the needs of the community, then we will go a long way toward growing the business environment in Indiana. In addition, we stand a better chance of limiting the brain drain by having better jobs in the state which will keep graduates here.*
- *PNC has been an incredibly important catalyst in helping to break down geographic barriers and in helping governmental officials in La Porte and Porter Counties to see how much more we can accomplish collaboratively rather than perpetuating the unproductive competitive attitudes of the past.*
- *A sponsor and distributor of general information on county, state and national trends. Dealing with large firms and talking about helping local businesses and monitoring globalization efforts in the area.*
- *Primary - as a provider of an educated workforce; Secondarily - as an advisor and sounding board for local business*
- *I am not familiar with their current role, other than I understand that they are active in convening groups for discussions on important issues*
- *PNC and similar regional universities can play an important and unique role for their regional business community. They are small enough to respond to the unique needs of their regional business community for professional and technically-trained graduates. At the same time, they can offer world-class education opportunities. By partnering with the regional business community, PNC could 1) develop an internship program for its business and engineering school students – such a program would give real world experience to its students and, at the same time, help the region’s business community. 2) It could set up curriculum review committees composed of the region’s business community to evaluate its professional and engineering programs.*
- *The bottom line is that graduates from regional universities are likely to take their first job after graduation in the region. Moreover, many graduate students at regional universities are already employed by firms in the region. By addressing the needs of the regional business community, PNU would help both their graduates and develop supportive business connections.*

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2. What role would you like to see PNC play in the future?

- *Facilitate county wide efforts, regional efforts, work to unite LaPorte and Porter County as an economic unit.*
- *Continue in the current role. We need more statistical support of regional-wide development, specifically in the development of Gross Regional Product and insight into which sectors of the economy are growing or declining. Continue to build within existing staff, knowledge of the needs of area businesses. These communications need to take place with staff visits to individual businesses and perhaps even multi-day facility reviews (This may be happening already?). Champion getting a Purdue sponsored Tech Park similar to Merrillville or doing more with the Michigan City Business Incubator.*
- *Expanding Public/Private Partnerships.*
- *PNC needs to provide a business incubator to help create more small businesses in NW Indiana to diversity our economic base.*
- *Continue to expand PNC's curriculum, degrees and facilities. Continue to representation on local economic organizations. Provide a forum for open dialogue. Provide research support. Open university research data banks to the public.*
- *Provide programs that act as a catalyst to bring in new businesses to the area because of an educated workforce or because the graduates start their own businesses. Ideally this would start a momentum of growth that would feed upon itself.*
- *Regional leader in on-line education and workforce development. Why wait for another large university to capture this market?*
- *I'd like to see PNC take a much more proactive role in helping local government officials and economic development officials to become more strategically focused in economic development efforts. What jobs do we REALLY need in this area and how can we go about making our area more attractive to employers who might be considering relocation or establishing a new operation. We need to leverage the full resources of Purdue (PNC and West Lafayette) to strengthen our recruitment and retention posture.*
- *Becoming a leader in obtaining information and distributing it to interested parties and businesses. A massive amount of information crosses over our desk and we as business owners do not have enough time to properly evaluate it. We could use some of the PNC resources to help existing small businesses to succeed and obtain local work.*
- *Continue the roles noted above; Continue and expand proactive partnering with businesses in the area. Some ideas to consider:*
 - *Develop and offer non-credit seminars and workshops to assist small and newly-formed businesses in preparing and executing business plans, possibly in conjunction with the Center for Entrepreneurship*
 - *Provide more opportunities for small/new businesses to utilize the students and faculty in growing their businesses. The TAP program currently coordinated by the West Lafayette campus, plus the intern and cooperative education programs, should be expanded and managed by PNC.*
 - *Establish closer ties with Discovery Park, and proactively promote their capabilities to businesses in the area (especially larger, established businesses)*
 - *Develop a close relationship with the SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives) program offered by the Small Business Administration, so that PNC resources could be made available through SCORE (and other similar programs that may be available from other sources).*

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- Form a fee-based service for information technology assistance (programming, network management, related services) to small/new businesses in the area. This could provide meaningful part-time employment opportunities for students, while also providing local technical expertise to small/new businesses at affordable prices.
- I suspect they may play an important role in assisting in providing information:
 - Serving as a research center on specific challenges/topics
 - Serving as a research/information source to prospects and ED organizations
- PNC through its graduates can provide the region’s business community with world-class professionally-trained individuals who will ensure that they stay competitive and innovative. This helps both the graduate in gaining needed experience to advance his/her career and the business community.

3. What role does PNC play in the challenges of globalization?

- Get the message out that we exist in a global economy. Expand the scope of understanding.
- Host seminars and develop classes. Consider incorporating speakers in Sinai Forum. Develop a database of local firms that are already doing business internationally. Perhaps some focus on entrepreneurship as a way to compete against low cost foreign labor.
- A role of educator about surviving what is inevitably unstoppable.
- PNC currently helps to fortify the United States’ position as the number one agricultural producer in the world. We need to continue our research in this area as we will face steeper challenges in feeding the world while we divert more crops to fuel motor vehicles.
- Opportunity for advanced education for the local populace. Opportunity to provide a variety of cultural experiences
- Manufacturing, as we know it, in the U.S. is a thing of the past. In order for the U.S. to continue to be a leader in the global economy we must become the innovators of the world. Science, engineering and technology are key. The good news is that as the world becomes more open and accessible the size of the global economy will continue to grow. This may provide an opportunity for the amount of hi-tech jobs to replace the manufacturing jobs. Our Universities must tailor their programs to prepare for this and a much higher percentage of our population will require higher education.
- I think this role is limited in that PNC needs to help Regionalize the workforce and the quality of the area before we can think about a role in the globalization process.
- I haven’t seen much in this regard.
- Globalization is too big of a function for most small businesses like ours. It is always interesting to hear about the successes but has no direct impact on ours. PNC can work directly on globalization with a very select group.
- Promote “responsible” globalization to students and businesses in the area. Some ideas:
 - Ensure that the faculty understands and embraces globalization (there may be some “retraining” necessary).
 - Hire (perhaps jointly with other Purdue campuses) international faculty for key classes in the business and technology curricula.
 - Offer “globalization” courses, especially as a part of technical and business curricula. The courses should focus on the key messages from current well-respected publications such as Friedman’s *The World is Flat* plus others.
 - Offer “study abroad” opportunities, perhaps in conjunction with West Lafayette.

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- *I fear that too many universities attempt to help the business community meet global challenges by setting up international research or trade assistance centers. I think these efforts often fall short. PNC’s role is to provide its students with the skills and know-how that can add value to their employers in the global marketplace. It is through its students that PNC can make a difference, instead of stepping into the realm of holding conferences and opening assistance centers.*

4. What do you believe are the greatest opportunities in terms of economic development for your marketplace?

- *Proximity to Chicago; Location on Lake Michigan; Location to major distribution channels; road, rail, ship.*
- *In LaPorte, it would be the potential for a major multi-modal center. For the Region it would be the RDA initiatives of the Gary/Chicago Airport, the extension of the South Shore and the Marquette Plan. Concepts for connectivity between the various forms of transportation need to be developed and economics defined.*
- *Regional service that provides unique analysis.*
- *PNC needs to grow more small businesses that will provide better jobs without the support of labor unions. Labor unions in NW Indiana have discouraged the sort of business investment that has benefited other states in the form of foreign auto manufacturers such as PMB, Toyota, Hyundai, Nissan, Honda, etc. These facilities have been a huge economic boon to their communities. They provide good, high paying jobs and manufacture a product that U.S. automakers are having difficulty doing. NW Indiana labor is considered too hostile for a manufacturer of this stature to build a plant here. An auto manufacturer would benefit from close proximity to raw materials, rail transportation, barge transportation, and interstate highway transportation. The only thing they lack is a friendly workforce.*
- *Logistics*
 - *Warehousing*
 - *Rail road*
 - *Gas and oil*
 - *Communications (I believe communications and the rapid movement of data should be considered under logistics.)*
- *Quality of Life – Image*
 - *Healthy communities*
 - *County, State and National Parks*
 - *Lake Michigan*
 - *Healthy food products*
- *Being in the field of construction, obviously, the more business grows locally the more construction projects will be available to build.*
- *We are all about economic development and trying to attract businesses and executives to Northwest Indiana. For the area to grow, we will need the State of Indiana to work directly with developers and local governments to identify the best and most likely places for development and to do whatever is necessary to compete within this region.*
- *Clearly the intermodal facility and related development offers a major economic boost. I’d like to see us have a more structured way of working with entrepreneurs to help them establish and prosper their operations in our area.*

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- *I’m probably not qualified to answer this question, given that I am retired and living in Arizona right now.*
- *Some day LaPorte County will be a player in growth and development. The past and sometimes present history shows very little imagination and major restrictions imposed on developments. “So much talk and such little action.” Our present greatest opportunity is to obtain work outside of LaPorte County and wait and hope the changes come soon enough to keep us in business.*
- *I am not familiar with any of the research or strategic plans for NW Indiana. Without such information, I would suggest “getting the Chicago metro area growth to move strongly into NW Indiana... (ride that horse!)”*
- *Not applicable to our situation – non-profit economic research.*

5. What challenges do you see in capitalizing on these opportunities?

- *Too many selfish agendas; Narrow focus (City vs. City; County vs. County); Failure to work as a broader economic unit.*
- *Education, communication, leadership...we have many existing resources that are yet untapped. Too often, we look to get more financial resources to achieve our goals rather than recommitting existing resources that are under-utilized.*
- *Your communication of organizational strategy at the institution itself.*
- *Indiana is under great pressure to reduce property taxes. The common way to attract business to an area is to provide tax breaks to the corporation. Public pressure will make it difficult to create attractive tax incentives for these corporations while the general populace feels they are being taxed out of their homes.*
- *Inability for a unified voice to support a consistent message over a long period of time what this area is all about. No rallying point for the community to focus around. Too many studies and no action. Stop wasting the money and take action.*
- *If the opportunities arise, we will need skilled people to manage the projects. We have had past conversations with PNC regarding the need for programs tailored for construction superintendents and project managers.*
- *The State of Indiana does not have a strong enough reputation to compete with Illinois and Michigan. This perception will need to be changed. The State of Indiana will need to commit time and energy to investing in Northwest Indiana and avoiding the secularized treatment Indianapolis gives to Lake and Porter counties.*
- *Inertia. Unwillingness to change. Political timidity.*
- *The challenge is to survive and be in position to capitalize when the County changes. To obtain and hold experienced staff is a major problem. Having local governments understand that there are excellent companies in the County and they don’t have to pay higher fees for Indianapolis firms.*
- *Executing many of the suggestions that I have made will require significant time and effort from the faculty and staff. I’m concerned that the current members are already 100% busy and won’t be able to allocate the necessary time. Therefore, re-prioritizing and re-allocating scarce faculty and staff time will be an important step. Additionally, while PNC has achieved its “autonomy”, it probably shouldn’t try to do everything on its own. Some of the effort will likely need assistance from West Lafayette and other third-parties, so it will be important to establish good working relationships with these various sources.*

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- *Clearly identifying NW Indiana as an attractive expansion of Chicago.*
- *Avoiding the urge to create some special, separate, competing image.*
- *Not applicable to our situation – non-profit economic research*

Appendix D. Other meetings attended:

Purdue University Economic Development Listening Session

February 20, 2008

Purdue Technology Center-Northwest Indiana, Merrillville, IN.

Discussion Points

(1) Future Economic Development Challenges – Presentation by Dr. Jay Akridge

- Energy
- Health Care Delivery
- Chronic Disease Management
- Next Generation of Manufacturing
- Creativity
- Homeland Security
- Education

Purdue activities include the following:

- Supporting the entrepreneurial climate
- Supporting new business development
- Providing incubating support
- Enhancing regional competitiveness
- Build human capital
- Support community and economic development planning
- Support business recruitment and retention

(2) Discussion (perhaps 30 people in attendance, Purdue extension and economic development folks, and some business reps)

“What can Purdue do to increase its impact on economic development?”

Responses

- Match Purdue expertise to economic development needs of the community.
- Regional and national review of technologies – select those that have some potential for Northwest Indiana
- Evaluation of regional possibilities for growth, identify our assets and liabilities
- Benchmark our region against other regions that are doing better than us.
- Provide current statistical data on what’s going on in the regional, state, and Midwest economies. What areas are growing locally, not growing locally, and compare to state and Midwest region?

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- Use the University’s research facilities to recruit new business
 - Create a “Center for Regional Development” to undertake the statistical analysis of economic developments, identify growth possibilities (including economic development clusters). Involve local community decision-makers in the management of the Center. (name Sam Cortes came up, who is he?). Also involve Workforce Development in this process.
 - Purdue needs to be at the table with Economic Development leaders. Purdue needs to make its commitment visible and known.
 - Purdue could provide training for elected leadership on economic development (this is what we are proposing at PNC)
 - Purdue could research existing economic development programs with the objective of identifying ways to make the programs more effective
 - Purdue needs to be more directly involved with business
- (3) Other stated questions for comment.
- “What are the top three issues that must be addressed to stimulate economic development in your region/industry/size of firm?”
 - Local resistance to growth.
 - Urban/rural sprawl and lack of planning for economic development
 - Workforce talent pool is limited
 - “Can you identify any existing economic development programs that Purdue is currently involved in that have had or have the potential to make a significant positive impact on your community/industry/region?”
 - State of Indiana, Department of Commerce is doing a good job in providing support to attracting new business.
 - Purdue perhaps needs to partner with them.
 - The Purdue “Edge Program” is successful. A model for the future?
 - Purdue Extension service is a successful program.
 - “What can Purdue do to be a better partner in economic development initiatives in you region?”
 - Please see above.
 - “What are the attributes of groups in the region that can be leveraged to increase Purdue’s contribution to economic development?”
 - Take a “holistic approach” to ensure all interests are represented in economic development activities to ensure no “eleventh hour” opposition occurs to well-designed economic development programming and activities.

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*Valparaiso Economic Development Corporation Annual Meeting
February 14, 2008
Strongbow Inn, Valparaiso*

This meeting was the annual meeting for the Valparaiso Economic Development Corporation. It focused on its accomplishments for 2007 and its plan of work for 2008. Gerry Dick, host and creator of *Inside Indiana Business* television was the featured speaker.

2007 Accomplishments & Successes

- Supported Porter Health Systems in its efforts to obtain rezoning designation for its new hospital campus.
- Maintained the Economic Development Tool Box
- Continued on-going business retention calls
- Continued exploration and support for commuter rail service between Valparaiso and Chicago metro area.
- Explored possible incubation concepts with Pittsburgh Gateways Corporation.
- Assisted Memorial Hospital and the City of Valparaiso in creation of Medical Office Technology zoning and Tax Increment Financing district.
- Completed a study of available land for potential industrial needs.
- Provided support to strategically explore options for beneficial utilization of airport property.
- Implemented Valparaiso University targeted marketing plan.
- Developed shovel-ready sites.
- Retained Matt Murphy as VEDC Vice President.
- Hosted International Business Seminar to inform local businesses on various aspects of exporting local products overseas.

2008 Plan of Work

- Obtain approval of Certified Technology Park status.
- Implementation of marketing data clearinghouse and continue Valparaiso University targeted marketing plan.
- Initiate Advanced Manufacturing Forums with local businesses.
- Continue exploration of incubation concepts with Pittsburgh Gateways Corporation.
- Create task force to implement South Shore extension.
- Continue development of shovel-ready sites.
- Strengthen state, regional and local partnerships.
- Continue business retention calls.
- Provide workshops on workforce development issues.
- Maximize existing economic development opportunities including Cumberland Crossing, EastGate and the Airport.
- Promote international economic development strategy.
- Enhance communications with investor community, existing businesses, public funding sources and other key stakeholders.