

Ensuring Prosperity for the South Bend-Elkhart Region

47 Smart, Connected Communities
in North Central Indiana and Southwest Michigan



SOUTH BEND | ELKHART
SMART CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

South Bend-Elkhart Regional Development Authority and

South Bend-Elkhart Regional Partnership

February 2018

From the board of the South Bend-Elkhart Regional Development Authority:

People came together in the South Bend-Elkhart Region to pursue a Regional Cities grant from the Indiana Economic Development Corp., but from very early in the process, one thing was clear: Coming together was what makes the region stronger, not a grant.

Since those initial conversations in the fall of 2014, working together has become part of how people are doing business not just for themselves or their own communities, but as a region.

The South Bend-Elkhart Regional Development Authority (RDA) was established in 2015 to apply for and then distribute the \$42 million of state funding to spur investment and redevelopment across the region, which is primarily St. Joseph, Elkhart and Marshall counties. That grant was simply a reward for doing the right thing, an early win proving to the region that working together is in everyone's best interests.

The South Bend-Elkhart Region needs more than a singular win. In order to grow prosperity, in order to make the region thrive as one offering great jobs, cool places to live and play, and diversity in our communities, we need to continue to work together. A group of about 100 of the region's leaders have joined together to create a plan for success in the global marketplace.

Fifty years ago, per capita personal income in the region was above the national average. Today, the South Bend-Elkhart Region's per capita income is \$42,946, 87 percent of the national average according to U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) numbers.

For the region and its residents to succeed in the global economy, we must execute a plan that will drive per capita income to reach or exceed the national average. Raising per capita income will take a collective effort to grow quality of place, attract talent and help businesses succeed.

We are optimistic about the future. The soil is fertile for a renaissance. As we look around the region, we see new initiatives emerging from the foundation of hard work and entrepreneurship that has made the region historically strong. We are excited and are ready to get to work on enacting this plan and growing per capita personal income in the region.

Sincerely,

John DeSalle
Hoosier Racing Tire

John Affleck-Graves
University of Notre Dame

Kristin Pruitt
Lake City Bank

Dallas Bergl
INOVA Federal Credit Union

Pete McCown
Community Foundation of Elkhart County

How a region has come together

What if people in the South Bend-Elkhart Region talked about not having a labor short, a talent problem, and easily named the ways the region has grown together? What if a local mantra a few years or a generation from now was simply, “We no longer have a talent problem”?

It’s not a dream. It’s a possibility. The South Bend-Elkhart Region is poised for success as never before.

Employers in northern Indiana and southwestern Michigan, like those in many other regions of the United States, need workers with skill sets that match the demands of the global marketplace. Entrepreneurs are seeking investment for new ideas in manufacturing and technology. People are focused on the quality of place challenges that slow growth.

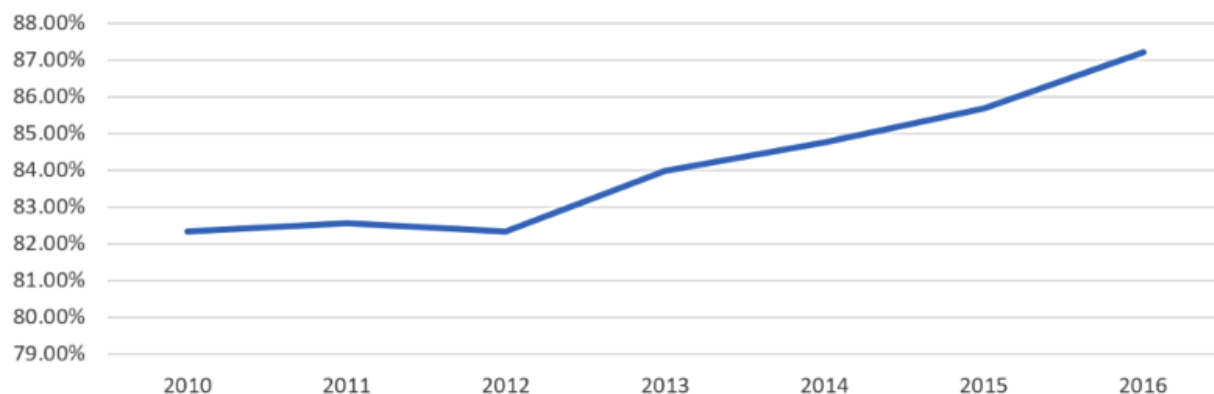
Nationally, people are asking if the Midwest is the next Silicon Valley. In Indiana, Governor Eric Holcomb is touting the benefits of doing business in the state as he woos business growth and expansion. “Indiana is on a roll. We have a lot to be proud of,” he said in Elkhart in November.

In the South Bend-Elkhart Region, leaders are coming together to achieve what communities can’t individually and grow per capita personal income.

Coming together to grow income for business owners, for the young tech worker, for women and minorities, for those who make things used by people all over the world, will make the region stronger and help those who live here pursue the American dream.

The South Bend-Elkhart Region’s per capita income is \$42,946, 87 percent of the national average according to U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) numbers. The most recent survey, using 2016 numbers, show a total rise in income of \$1 billion in the region, resulting in a \$1,436 per person increase. That’s a good start, but just a start and it’s time to return the regional average to equal or surpass the national average.

Per capita personal income: South Bend-Elkhart Region as percent of national



The story of the South Bend-Elkhart Region includes innovation, entrepreneurship and successes brought about by hard work. The region has given the world Studebaker, Alka-Seltzer and the Fighting Irish of Notre Dame. Recreational vehicles and the seedless watermelon were invented here, but the story of the region and its 47 smart, connected communities is rooted in — not mired — in the past.

Decades from now, its residents will point to the events of 2014 to 2018 as a turning point for the region. The connections being made and the ways investment, ideas and people are coming together are all transforming this region.

People here still talk about the Great Recession of 2008, which hit the region hard. Elkhart County, one of the three primary counties in the region, led the country in unemployment as its rate topped 20 percent. And South Bend was named a “dying city.”

Companies rebuilt and workers found employment, again demonstrating a determination and work ethic that is difficult to match. Workers are again making things, often for people to enjoy in their leisure time. The region makes more than 80 percent of the recreational vehicles purchased each year across the globe and is known for its manufacturing skill.

What the recession didn't change was what the region is poised to do and become. The South Bend-Elkhart Region is coming together in a new way. This one degree of latitude and longitude on the globe just a little east of Chicago is becoming a region in which people are connected by One Degree, not six; a region in which they're pointed the same direction working together toward an exciting future.

The region is attracting investment from Wall Street and potentially Silicon Valley. Several people potentially interested in creating an incubator in northern Indiana cited the low cost of living, the plentiful space and access to a range of resources. “What you guys have accomplished in a short period of time is amazing,” said a Silicon Valley investor who toured the area recently. “You guys have so many levers here. It's exciting to think of the opportunities.”

In South Bend, the Union Station completed in 1928 is now a data center utilizing dark fiber that runs alongside the railroad tracks crisscrossing the region. Union Station is on the edge of the 83 acre campus where Studebaker employees made automobiles. Now entrepreneurs are utilizing the densest fiber corridor in the nation underneath this Renaissance District and the Union Station Tech Center will become the largest mixed use tech campus in the state of Indiana.

The University of Notre Dame has been a key player in the region's success for decades. It is the largest employer in the region, directly and indirectly accounting for nearly 14,000 jobs and \$1.3 billion in economic activity. More than a third of the 41,000 students in the region who are attending college or university go to Notre Dame.

The university is focused on helping the region advance. In its most recent Strategic Plan, the university listed “external engagement” as one of its five primary goals to “engage in external collaborations that extend and deepen Notre Dame’s impact.”

A new vice president and associate provost for innovation is overseeing commercialization efforts. The university launched the Innovation, De-Risking and Enterprise Acceleration Center (IDEA Center) and is raising \$15 million to help reduce risk for startups, including the 25 it hopes to launch in 2018.

The concentration of other institutions of higher education is critical to the region’s growth. Indiana University South Bend provides computer science, informatics, and management information systems graduates to support the high tech cluster. IU South Bend students and alumni are critical to the growth of accounting, banking, and finance firms. Two-thirds of the more than 1,000 graduates annually remain in the area. This regional IU campus also is growing its health sciences programs at undergraduate and graduate levels to improve health outcomes and provide more professionals in this rapidly growing industry.

Saint Mary’s focuses on women’s entrepreneurship and leadership. Goshen College’s enrollment increasingly comes from local populations, including the rapidly growing Latino community. Ancilla College, Holy Cross College and Bethel College also serve thousands of students, many who remain local and contribute to regional economic prosperity. All these institutions of higher education and industry are building more partnerships with Ivy Tech Community College to foster technical training as well as increased associate and bachelor’s degree attainment.

The region came together in 2014 and 2015 around applying for a Indiana Regional Cities grant. Winning the grant demonstrated what can happen when the region comes together.

In addition to the Studebaker corridor development, Blue Ways and East Bank redevelopment projects will connect parks and neighborhoods along the river St. Joseph River in South Bend. In Elkhart, a world-class natatorium project costing more than \$70 million is underway and will be part of redevelopment that is likely to transform downtown. In Mishawaka, the Riverwalk construction is also changing the face of the city along the river in its downtown.

A coalition has formed to reduce the travel time on the South Shore commuter train between South Bend and Chicago from more than two hours to 90 minutes. The project funded by federal, state and local dollars could top \$300 million, but change how people travel, live and work across the northern part of the state.

Because of the funding for quality of place initiatives, communities working to shape what can come next. In Elkhart County, nearly 1,000 people attended meetings or forums and 4,000 comments helped shape a community action agenda focused on how to make the area more livable and connect communities.

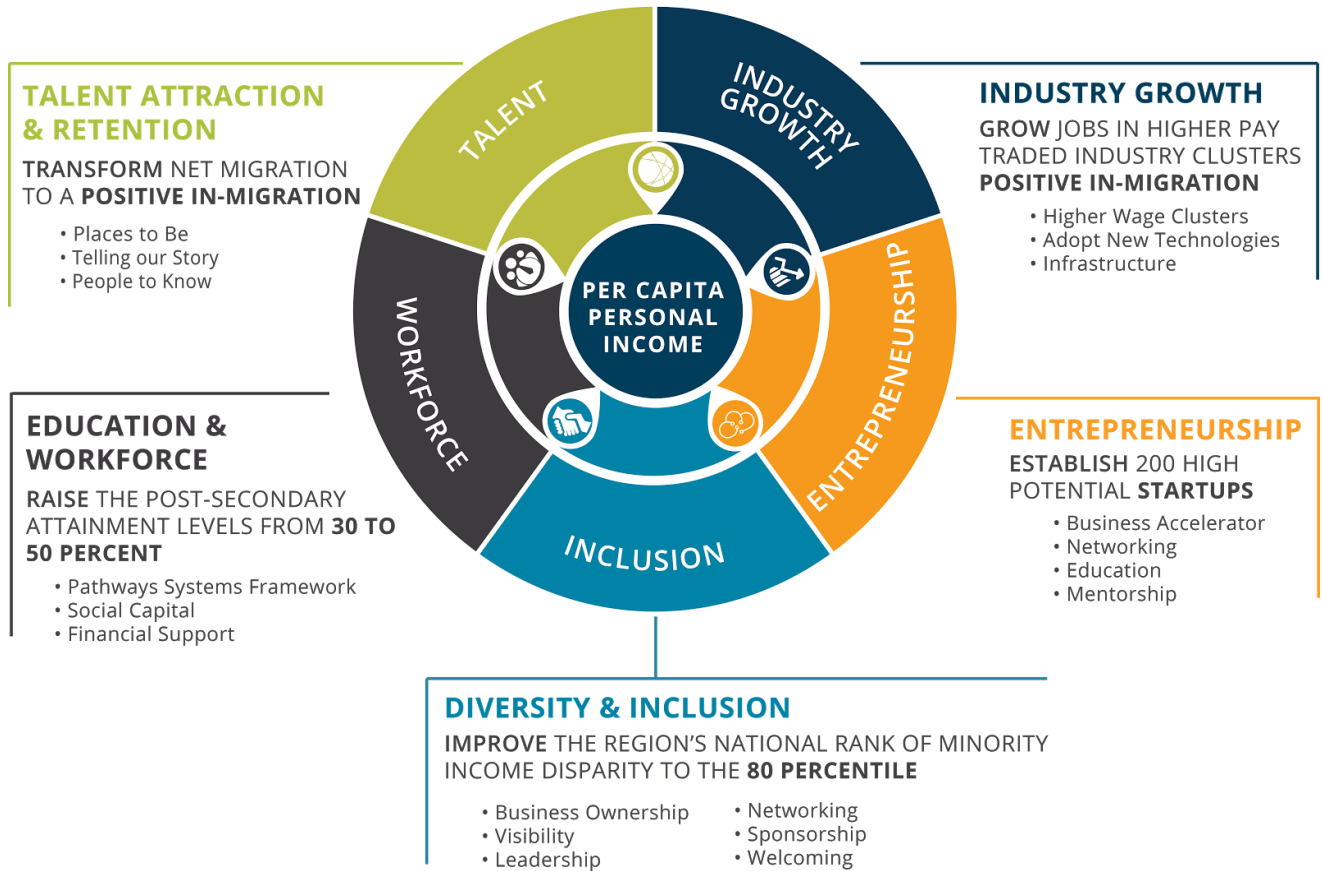
South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg encourages people to think of how their community or region can be the best version of itself, not the next Silicon Valley. At a [TEDx talk in 2015](#), he said that South Bend can become something new based on what it has been. “This is what happens when you take what you’ve got and see new value for new times,” he said, adding, “You have to make it new, but you don’t have to make it up.”

At the moment, many employers in the region are struggling to find the talent they need to fill open jobs, to advance their companies. The region needs to grow and attract the kind of talent that will make it a world-class community and economy. Changes are in motion to make that happen, to transform the community.

The board of the South Bend-Elkhart Regional Development Authority is focused on the long-term prosperity of the region and is focused on raising per capita income of its residents. Starting in 2016 and continuing in 2017, it has invited leaders in the region to come together to think about our future and focus on how it can raise income. Focusing efforts on five key areas, or pillars, will help the region match national per capita income by 2025:

- Educating a world-class workforce
- Recruiting and retaining great talent
- Attracting and growing new economy companies in complement to our remarkably strong manufacturing industries
- Helping entrepreneurs thrive
- Promoting inclusion and sparking opportunities for women and minorities

What follows are the recommendations of members of Regional Economic Development Strategy subcommittees to grow per capita income across the region.



From Michiana to South Bend-Elkhart Region (SBE)

The name most commonly used to describe the region encompassing north central Indiana and Southwest Michigan isn't on any map.

The descriptor has been in use since an Indiana politician named Thurman C. Crook purportedly submitted it to a contest in 1934 conducted by the Associated South Bend Merchants.

It may be time for a change.

“Michiana” is most often used by its residents to describe the area in northern Indiana and southwestern Michigan. It sometimes involves as many as seven counties and as few as five. Local media uses it. The problem is that Google (and hence most of the rest of the world) doesn't know where it is.

Research by Lou Pierce of Big Idea Company, a consulting and marketing firm, shows that those turning to the world's biggest internet search engine don't search for Michiana. A 30-day snapshot of Google searches shows that the most popular terms for the region are South Bend, Elkhart and Notre Dame.

How do you capture a region in just a few words?

Others have done it: The Research Triangle in Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina; Silicon Valley in California; and Austin, Texas. In all those instances, the short term captures a swath of cities and towns and people across the world have come to know them in that way.

This region straddles the Indiana-Michigan state line. It includes major cities such as South Bend, Mishawaka and Elkhart, but also smaller communities such as St. Joseph in Michigan and Goshen and Plymouth in Indiana.

When the Michiana Regional Airport became the South Bend International Airport, it had a huge economic impact. Visitors started renting cars and booking hotel rooms in the area because they could find South Bend on the map.

Based on the research, several entities have already adopted new names. The St. Joseph County Chamber of Commerce is now the South Bend Regional Chamber of Commerce. The Michiana Partnership is now the South Bend - Elkhart Regional Partnership, working with St. Joseph, Marshall and Elkhart counties in Indiana and Berrien and Cass counties in Michigan. Other counties could be considered part of the region as well depending on circumstances.

A growing number of people, after learning the data, are using the term “South Bend - Elkhart Region.” It may take time for the language to change, but using a term no one can find on a map is unlikely to help the region.

Educating a world-class workforce

Goal: Raise the post-secondary attainment level among the region's residents from 30 to 50 percent by 2025

Educational attainment is a serious issue in our region. Though more than 40,000 people are studying here in higher education, the number and percentage of its residents with more than a high school education are lower than those in other communities. That plays a key role in the kind of jobs and industries that are available.

Wages fell in the region during the Great Recession, particularly in manufacturing jobs. As those wages have fallen, so has the prosperity of the region.

Historically in the region, some residents were able to secure high-paying manufacturing jobs without even high school education, but those jobs have become increasingly rare. The region has a small percentage of Amish or Old Order Mennonites who attend school only through eighth grade and often work in manufacturing, either at factories or home-based businesses. Though the region and surrounding areas is home to the third-largest Amish community in the country, the total is less than 2 percent of our region's population.

As a whole, the South Bend-Elkhart Region lags behind other areas in educational attainment. One in five residents has attended some college but didn't get a degree. Less than 10 percent have associate's degree. Less than 25 percent of people living in the region have a bachelor's degree. That educational attainment of 30 percent trails much of the country.

The Lumina Foundation has established a national goal of having 60 percent of U.S. residents having a "college degree, workforce certificate, industry certification or some other high-quality credential" by 2025. Currently the nation is at 45.8 percent and Indiana is at 41.1 percent. The three Indiana counties in the region have a blended attainment rate of 35.5 percent, though they vary widely. Elkhart is at 30.1 percent, Marshall at 32.7 percent and St. Joseph at 43.6 percent.

Reaching 50 percent in the region by 2025 would be challenging yet attainable. The addition of certificates would allow counties to set their own goals across different kinds of credentials depending on workforce needs. The region's 13 colleges and universities are shifting to focus on the needs of the workforce in the region and provide solutions, ranging from several colleges providing customized and certified training to focusing degree programs to meet needs in high-wage sectors.

Education is workforce development. Our educational institutions, ranging from early childhood care and education to the many public and private school systems to the colleges and universities, must be in the business of expanding the workforce that will stay and work in our share of the global economy. We have a concentration of higher educational institutions in the South Bend-Elkhart region, but too many students in the public institutions drop out or stop out

for longer periods of time. Those at private institutions, largely from outside the region, need to see more economic opportunities and quality of life to stay.

The region must focus on increasing the availability of work-ready talent for all key industry sectors. It should set a goal of raising post-secondary education attainment levels to 50 percent by 2025.

The job of preparing workers for a changing global economy both now and in the future isn't just a task to be handed to educators. It's something that is best done by a coalition of educators and industry with the participation of students and workers who want to prepare for success in the modern workplace.

The strength of the region's educational institutions and how engagement is happening between them, employers and agencies such as the WorkOne regional office, Horizon Education Alliance and the South Bend Regional Chamber of Commerce bodes well for the region. People working at solutions from different perspectives have already begun sharing best practices and building efficiencies.

Regional sector partnerships are already being forged in all three counties of the region. Exploration of how to frame educational efforts around career pathways is underway in the region. Creating additional opportunities for One Degree connections, events and career exploration is important as well. Establishing a culture of mentoring in the region will be important as the region works at growing new generations of learners and workers. Developing strong afterschool networks to bulk educational opportunities will also help the region.

Bringing parents and the broader community into these conversations and opportunities can help those who want more post-secondary education opportunities but are unsure how to access them.

The region can remove financial barriers through involvement in Indiana's 21st Century Scholars program, building dual credit capacity in high schools, and increasing FAFSA completion rates.

In order for the region to grow workforce development, it should undertake the following strategies:

1. Implement a regional "Pathways System Framework" across the region by:
 - 1.1. **Creating regional sector partnerships in key industries that lead to economic success.** This can start at the county level, but always building regional infrastructure. In Elkhart County, there are opportunities to convene the recreational vehicles employers. In Marshall County, it could start around business services and education. Within advanced manufacturing, partnerships

have already begun in Elkhart and St. Joseph counties. In the region as a whole, Information Technology and healthcare conversations are also underway.

- 1.2. **Build the South Bend-Elkhart Region Industry & Education Innovation Network.** This network will help groups share best practices across sectors, determine ways to align cross-sector efforts to meet common goals and work to develop collaborative action when appropriate. It could also be the focal point from which a middle school “Job Spark” event is created for career/sector exposure.
 - 1.3. **Nurture local employers working collaboratively with educators to build out the pathways system framework.** Business-education roundtables can help orient business and education leaders and a Workforce Education & Training Resource Event would connect employers with best practices in recruitment, retention and employee training, as well as introduce them to local education and training resources to support their efforts. Within schools, programs for students and adults can be created with partnerships such as Ford Next Generation Learning and National Center for College and Career Transitions (NC3T). Increasing apprenticeship programs for students and adults would follow. Starting in elementary schools, inquiry-based experiential education is needed to change education in the region.
 - 1.4. **Finish development of the South Bend-Elkhart Region Industry-Education Portal.** The web-based tool is under development with key industry and education partners; rolling it out by late 2018 would help efforts.
 - 1.5. **Expand career development among students.** The region has a growing number of career education pathway and career exposure events, but coordinating Manufacturing Day efforts in which middle school and high school students visit local facilities and growing the range of careers to which students are introduced can happen within sector partnerships. Giving both students and educators work-based learning opportunities through events and internships will help the region’s efforts.
2. **Increase social capital to improve academic and life success for individuals across the region.**
 - 2.1. **Strengthen after- and out-of-school programming for all students.** Mapping existing programming, identifying gaps and developing stronger networks to enhance out-of-school learning opportunities is important.
 - 2.2. **Establish a culture of mentoring across the region for students and adults.** In the One Degree region, helping learners find mentors and encouraging community leaders to embrace their roles as mentors will strengthen the region. Faith communities can be drawn into the efforts and how mentorship happens in both faith and educational circles can be included in regional storytelling and marketing efforts.
 - 2.3. **Educate parents and the broader community on what future careers look**

- like and the pathways to them.** Broad-based buy-in will help build a different culture around education and career preparation in the region.
- 2.4. **Build a network of completion counselors to increase post-secondary education success among adults with some college experience.** Hiring counselors that work across the region can help both individual students, but also help identify needs across the region.
 - 2.5. **Connect adult learners and employers with resources to encourage advanced education and training.** Leveraging the Indiana Commission for Higher Education's Next Level Jobs Initiative would provide grant funding for raising awareness. Colleges and employers could expand customized worker training programs such as the one Bethel College is doing. Ongoing conversations through sector partnerships and One Degree connections can assist employers in supporting employees as lifelong learners.
3. **Help students overcome financial barriers to post-secondary success.**
 - 3.1. **Maximize utilization of Indiana's 21st Century Scholars program from enrollment to college completion.** Engage school corporations and community partners to ensure that at least 75 percent of low-income, eligible students in our region enroll in the program by the end of eighth grade and 90 percent of enrolled high school students complete the 12 college and career success activities required by the Indiana Commission for Higher Education to maintain scholarship eligibility. Work with Indiana University South Bend, Ivy Tech South Bend-Elkhart and other postsecondary institutions in the region to improve enrollment, completion and retention through improved student counseling, mentoring, tutoring and support.
 - 3.2. **Increase FAFSA completion rates.** High schools in the region and elsewhere encourage filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, but there isn't a systematic approach in the region. Investigating best practices in other communities with one and implementing them here could increase higher education participation and successful completion of degrees.
 - 3.3. **Build dual-credit capacity in high schools.** Indiana law is changing to require teachers to have 18 credit hours in a content area in order to offer both high school and college credit. The region's higher education providers, particularly Indiana University South Bend, Bethel College and Goshen College, could help teachers obtain the graduate courses in order to continue and expand dual credit options in the region's high schools.

Recruiting and retaining great talent

Goal: Transforming net out-migration (now nearly double the state average of 2 persons per 1,000 per year) to a positive in-migration by 2025

The South Bend-Elkhart region has succeeded in attracting some of the best and brightest to the region as college students. More than 40,000 students are enrolled in higher education in the region.

The region's challenge isn't getting some of the best talent in the world to come here. The University of Notre Dame is one of the country's best known universities. Indiana University and Purdue University offer world-class educations to students at campuses in the region. Liberal arts colleges, including Saint Mary's College, Goshen College, Ancilla College and Bethel College, are acclaimed for their programs.

However, the region retains only a small percentage of these well-educated people once they graduate or obtain advanced degrees. If the region can engage the students during their time here, connecting them via One Degree connections to internships, jobs and communities, it can dramatically impact the talent pool. Graduates can become employees and residents in the region.

The problem extends beyond the region. Indiana graduates the 14th highest number of college graduates in the United States, but ranks 48th in keeping them. Lilly Endowment, based in Indianapolis, has poured millions of dollars into trying to solve the issue, but what remains clear is there must be opportunities for graduates in order for them to work and have the lifestyle they want in order to consider staying. "Experience and economic research has demonstrated that the root of the net out-migration problem is a lack of opportunities for young professionals, not their lack of preparedness or awareness," said the [Innovate Indiana Regional Development Plan](#).

Drew Klacic, senior policy analyst with the Indiana Public Policy Institute, says that the challenge for the state is that jobs don't match degrees and the quality of life doesn't match the desires and/or demands of the graduates. The state must grow more and better jobs to stem the flow of talent to other areas, which are also working to grow more and better jobs, perhaps at a faster rate.

Northern Indiana isn't currently recognized as a hotspot such as Austin, Portland or Silicon Valley for the graduate looking to start a career in a fun place. It can, however, offer quality of life that combines innovation and investment in the future with the Midwestern values of work ethic, tradition and family. The South Bend-Elkhart region also provides easy access to

considerable cultural resources in Chicago as well as recreational access to Lake Michigan and the emerging farm-to-table, vineyards, and breweries of southwest Michigan.

The region also offers easy and quick opportunities for involvement and leadership. In its first five years, EnFocus has worked on 120 projects a year, supporting the region with civic innovation and connecting 100 to 200 interns a year to potential employers in the community. The program's growth from South Bend to other parts of the region demonstrates how the region can successfully train, retain and connect bright young people.

The barriers to finding employment, affordable housing and ways to contribute to the community are simply lower than most other communities. The connection to potential success isn't six degrees away. It's One Degree away.

In order for the region to overcome the out-migration that is common in the Midwest, to grow together, it should undertake the following strategies:

1. **Places To Be: Enhance desirability of the South Bend - Elkhart Region through increased community spaces, diverse housing choices, and connectivity among communities.**
 - 1.1. **Develop a regional housing strategy to increase diverse housing choices, create a new college graduate homebuyer program and create homebuyer incentives.** The region already has a range of housing options, including downtown apartments, townhouse developments and waterfront properties along dozens of lakes and rivers. Yet as people want housing in walkable environments and new kinds of housing, the region needs to respond with a comprehensive planning approach that doesn't limit individual communities and enhances the options in the region.
 - 1.2. **Promote and increase public transportation and trail connectivity options within and between communities in the region.** A trolley system operates in parts of the region, but isn't fully enough developed to help most of the region's residents. South Bend's new Lime Bikes initiative is a different kind of public transportation allowing users to rent bikes for a short period of time for rides within the city. The region has a number of popular trails, but few of them are connected. The communities of the region need to come together to tackle these issues.
 - 1.3. **Promote and increase broadband access in urban and rural communities.** Though what's called dark fiber that is the backbone of the internet in the United States runs through the region, some communities lack reliable broadband service. Efforts to expand fiber optic trunks and access to them in the region have been underway for a number of years, but need to advance more quickly.

- 1.4. **Develop an app for the region to showcase a community dashboard and increase engagement in the region.** By offering a way for current and potential residents in the region to obtain data about it, the engagement and understanding of it as a place can grow. Determining the metrics will help the community determine what drives change.
 - 1.5. **Create and implement an organizational structure to evaluate and certify public and community spaces.** If the region can identify and help assess the types of spaces in each community, residents of the region are more likely to understand how they can be better utilized.
2. **Telling Our Story: Develop a comprehensive internal and external communications strategy based on “One Degree of Separation” from social, physical and professional opportunities.**
 - 2.1. **Design and implement a long-term storytelling process highlighting unique success stories across the region.** Historically the story has been segmented, but not unified. Telling the stories of how the redeveloped Studebaker corridor is giving birth to new tech-based businesses, how Goshen has become a place for entrepreneurs of lifestyle business, how research at the University of Notre Dame is being commercialized will grow community pride.
 - 2.2. **Create and promote regional and national branding campaign based on the concept of “One Degree.”** Telling the story nationally of how closely connected the region is and the access its residents have to resources needed for success will help the region compete internationally. Logos, media, merchandise and events can all help tell the region’s story more broadly.
 - 2.3. **Coordinate and create a regional events database.** Though numerous activity calendars are in place in individual communities, there’s no good regional database. Knitting together existing calendars into one that represents the region would help build regionalism.
 - 2.4. **Develop and implement a program in which people could contact a local resident with questions about amenities and activities.** The “text-a-townie” program can be promoted as a “One Degree” function.
 - 2.5. **Organize regular “place-hack” events to generate new place-based ideas and connect those working as placemakers.**
 3. **People To Know: Define, organize, and promote engagement initiatives to attract and retain talent at all levels.**
 - 3.1. **Leverage and expand the enFocus internship program.** The program started in South Bend in 2012 and is expanding into Elkhart. Recent graduates, including those with advanced degrees, join enFocus as fellows to work on research projects for clients in the region. In its first five years, about 80 percent of the

fellows so far have stayed in the region, making enFocus a hugely successful talent attraction engine.

- 3.2. **Create regional TED-style One Degree events focused on areas of job growth.** One Degree events could be expanded and other events in the region could focus on new opportunities. A new IDEA Week in the region intends to do this each April.
- 3.3. **Develop a rotational leadership program for regional college interns.** A program drawing up to 20 interns a year from the colleges and universities across the region would expose young people to the opportunities in the region where they're studying and help retain talent.
- 3.4. **Develop and implement a regional welcome kit and rewards program for prospective and newly relocated professionals and families, as well as students.** Recruitment efforts in the region can be enhanced by giving tools and resources for employers as they convince workers to move here. Residents can learn the region better as they take part in the program.
- 3.5. **Coordinate and expand "One Degree of Separation" events across the region for all age groups.** Young Professional groups can come together in the region. Non-profit agencies can unite within the region to tackle larger problems and mobilize volunteers. Social activities geared toward residents of the entire region would help both individuals connect and unite the region as a whole. Engaging those who are studying or working here in civic discourse and activity will help connect them with the region more deeply.

Helping entrepreneurs thrive

Goal: Help establish 200 high-potential startups, both privately and by commercializing research from local universities, by 2025.

Successful entrepreneurs have already put the South Bend-Elkhart Region on the world's economic map.

The region has a proud history of innovation and successful companies built on the vision and moxie of entrepreneurs. Companies like Oliver Plow, Whirlpool, Miles Laboratories, Studebaker, AM General, Skyline Homes, Hoosier Racing Tire, Jayco, Press-Ganey, Conn-Selmer, Smoker Craft Marine, Crowe Horwath and many others created tens of thousands of jobs here because of a courageous and creative spirit that is part of our region.

In the 21st century, the region can become a hub for a new set of companies with highly skilled workers using advanced tools and methods for bringing products to the global marketplace. The region needs lifestyle startups to serve those who live and work here, but focusing on startups with the potential to employ a larger share of people and grow into the global economy could remarkably improve the region's economy.

The region has emerging opportunities in data hosting and analysis, cloud computing and other tech sectors. Jobs in those sectors are higher paying and would help raise per capita income in the region, the primary goal of the South Bend - Elkhart Regional Development Authority.

Entrepreneurs often need not only capital, but also business services and a range of support from a local economy. The better the region is at providing that — as well as communicating and connecting what is already available and happening here — the more entrepreneurially minded people will be able to accomplish in raising the region's per capita income.

In a recent assessment of the best startup cities in the Midwest, South Bend ranked 15th on venture capital funding since 2015, totaling \$53 million.

The Regional Development Authority entered a partnership with Elevate Ventures, which is both a venture capital firm and entrepreneurial development advocate for early stage companies and high potential startups in Indiana.

A group of entrepreneurs from the region are part of the Startup South Bend - Elkhart board using the funding to build an entrepreneurial ecosystem. To determine how these funds can be best leveraged, members are working with the local entrepreneurial community to understand their needs when it comes to both investment and workforce talent. With these people, emerging technology in the region, and ongoing research at the University of Notre Dame and other higher education institutions, the South Bend-Elkhart Region has the potential to become a "brainbelt" area the way other rustbelt cities such as Akron and Albany have done, as

described in the book “The Smartest Places On Earth: Why Rustbelts are the Emerging Hotspots of Global Innovation.”

Entrepreneurs are fostering and promoting the creation of an entrepreneurial ecosystem in the South Bend-Elkhart Region by stimulating the entrepreneurial spirit and culture in our citizens, identifying and nurturing new business startups, and supporting the growth of existing high-potential businesses. The effort is in concert with the efforts at the University of Notre Dame to commercialize its research. In 2016, the university had 41 inventors named on 24 issued patents, bringing the total to 86 active inventors named on 169 current patents. Nine technology licenses were granted to eight different companies, six of which were startups.

Notre Dame is starting the IDEA Center and has plans help start 25 businesses in 2018 and more in years to come.

IU South Bend is home to multi-county Indiana Small Business Development Center, offering a variety of services, from business strategy to export advice. Saint Mary’s Women’s Entrepreneurship Initiative recently received a \$245,000 federal grant to help women in St. Joseph County to build businesses.

The Startup South Bend-Elkhart Board, in its efforts to promote a culture friendly to entrepreneurs, agreed to these principles:

- Support and celebrate entrepreneurship.
- Encourage and support reasoned and calculated risk taking.
- Willingly provide advice, mentoring and assistance to others even when there is no apparent return to you. Everyone helps everyone as much as possible and individuals, the ecosystem and the region all benefit. A rising tide lifts all boats.
- Welcome new members to the community, introduce them to others, and learn from them.
- Encourage and support networking and collaboration as vital to all our success.
- Value failure and its role in the startup community. When anyone in the ecosystem fails, help all involved learn the lessons from the failure and support them in their ongoing start-up efforts
- Support all other businesses in the region and whenever possible, buy from them.
- Value and respect everyone for their unique attributes, contribution and capabilities.

The region can be the hub for a new set of thriving, cutting edge, and highly skilled businesses that are setting an example in the global marketplace. Those businesses tend to pay higher wages and would raise per capita income in the region.

In order to grow the number of startups and assist entrepreneurs to grow the per capita income, the region should undertake the following strategies:

1. Initiate and support robust business accelerator programs.
 - 1.1. Support both the Notre Dame and INVANTI programs financially and with mentors if appropriate.
 - 1.2. Investigate the need for support for enFocus business initiatives, SBIR driven startups and other business accelerators.
 - 1.3. Court startup inquiries.
2. Establish and support a robust program of regional networking meetings and events along with an aggressive public relations and information dissemination program.
 - 2.1. Initiate and support regional networking meetings for a broad range of groups working at creating a startup culture.
 - 2.2. Support and coordinate all regional efforts for the first IDEA week in April 2018.
 - 2.3. Establish a schedule and promote ongoing startup related events throughout the year.
 - 2.4. Continually optimize and promote the StartupSouth BendElkhart.com website.
 - 2.5. Promote and embed our positive business and startup support culture.
 - 2.6. Utilizing advertising, media and social media including a public relations and blogging strategy should be implemented as part of the One Degree marketing effort.
3. Provide Startup support services and facilities.
 - 3.1. Establish and support a central point of contact in order to record, direct and track all requests for assistance by startups and inquiries from out of our region.
 - 3.2. In order to respond and provide assistance to all business inquiries, a network of mentors is needed to offer advice in:
 - 3.2.1. Business models and strategy.
 - 3.2.2. Subject matter experts in technology and science.
 - 3.2.3. Marketing and business operations.
 - 3.2.4. Accounting, insurance and health insurance.
 - 3.2.5. Assistance in getting customers.

- 3.3. Establish a “Finance Mentoring committee” to provide financial mentoring to startups and recommend HPSG applicants to Elevate Ventures.
- 3.4. Insure the adequacy of coworking and maker spaces and promote their use.
- 3.5. Develop a standard set of regionally accepted legal documents.
- 3.6. Provide Angel and Venture Capital investor training to accredited investors.
- 3.7. Establish a Startup Board Central Office with a paid administrator in order to complete the following:
 - 3.7.1. Establish and continually complete the processes required to accomplish the boards plans and mission.
 - 3.7.2. Coordinate our plans and actions with the other committees.
 - 3.7.3. Monitor the accomplishment of other actions to create a startup culture within the region.

Attracting and growing new economy companies in complement to our remarkably strong manufacturing industries

Goal: Growing jobs in higher pay traded industry clusters by 20 percent by 2025

The South Bend-Elkhart Region has a higher concentration of manufacturing jobs than almost anywhere in the United States. In Elkhart County, more than four in 10 people work in the sector, a level nearly five times higher than the national average.

People in the region are good at making things, whether it's recreational vehicles, band instruments or racing tires.

We need to keep those jobs, but in the same way a company would scale up to add a product line, the South Bend-Elkhart Region can scale up in industry clusters that build on what's already here.

That's both more likely and more practical than trying to add completely new clusters. It's not likely that the region will become a mining sector hub. It could, however, grow the number of jobs in the downstream chemical cluster and the metalworking technologies cluster.

The average pay is \$53,298 in Indiana for downstream chemical products and related clusters. In metalworking technology, the average pay in the region is \$47,724.

"The Plan for Prosperity, Growth and Inclusion, V. 1.0," an analysis conducted in 2016 by volunteers for the Regional Development Authority, identified these clusters and several others as having high potential for the region. In addition, the Brookings Institution listed the clusters among its advanced industries.

If the region can increase the share of employment in higher pay traded industry clusters, per capita income will grow and the region and its residents will flourish.

Several strategies will help the region accomplish this. Simply connecting existing businesses will help. Improving supply chain options and creating ones needed by existing industries will make the region more successful. Creating consortiums and improving communication among industries are steps toward accomplishing this.

Adopting new technologies and helping businesses with technical support will increase productivity and revenue, as well as connecting them more strongly to higher education institutions will help create a workforce of the future.

The region has a huge opportunity to use emerging expertise to land government contracts for existing companies. A number of meetings in the region in recent months have started those processes.

The region is a mere 90 miles from Chicago, the nation's third largest economy, and near other economic centers such as Indianapolis, Detroit and Columbus. I-80, I-90 and I-94 cross the region and are easily accessible. Norfolk Southern Corp., a railway company which operates 19,500 route miles in 22 states and serves every major container port in the eastern United States, has its second largest rail-car classification yard in Elkhart.

The region has opportunities to better connect to other markets. The South Bend International Airport has capacity to add more airlines, daily flights and non-stop destinations.

A \$290 million project funded with federal, state and local support is slated to reduce the travel time between South Bend and Chicago from more than 2½ hours to 90 minutes.

In order for the region to grow employment in higher pay traded industry clusters, it should undertake the following strategies:

1. Grow connections and relationships by improving company access to Low-Cost and Convenient Supply Chain Options.
 - 1.1. Increase the use of local (existing and recruited) supply sources by regional manufacturers. In order to do that, groups such as chambers, the South Bend-Elkhart Regional Partnership and those who have been part of the Regional Development Authority's Startup and Industry Growth committees will need to educate employers on using Conexus Icon, a statewide business-to-business database. Recruiting or starting companies to meet high-demand needs and helping businesses with similar needs align will also help grow jobs within clusters.
2. Accelerate expansion of employment and profitability at existing companies in scaleup clusters by:
 - 2.1. **Explore the development of an advanced manufacturing lab.** The region would benefit greatly from a lab developed through the partnership of local higher education providers and companies needing workers with that expertise.
 - 2.2. **Increasing the number of government contracts secured by existing companies.** There is a tremendous opportunity here and several individuals in the region have expertise in other communities in fostering this type of work.
 - 2.3. **Create a regional position focused on cluster and sector partnerships.** The region needs someone to quarterback activities and build connections across manufacturing and education. While a number of people in the region are

working at these in a variety of ways, a person working at this at a regional level could enhance what can be accomplished.

- 2.4. **Help companies adopt new technology by:**
 - 2.4.1. Encouraging an innovative business culture. Public incentives, celebrating successes and providing consultation could help accomplish this.
 - 2.4.2. Providing business and technical assistance to help companies accelerate growth and integrate new technologies. Identifying both companies and the kinds of assistance needed are part of this effort.
 - 2.4.3. Fostering both commercialization of technologies from college and university research and the research and development within companies.
 - 2.5. Helping companies find capital to fund expansion by deepening relationship with local banks and increasing investments.
 - 2.6. Increasing exports. International trade opportunities could help companies in the region grow.
 - 2.7. Increase productivity by offering opportunities for business engagement within clusters. Identifying leaders within industries and forming consortiums such as peer groups, sector partnerships and industry councils can spark growth.
 - 2.8. Attracting new companies that support those within the clusters. This could mean changing business recruitment strategies by regional and local economic development professionals.
3. **Improve infrastructure for the region's growing number of companies and people.**
 - 3.1. **Improve connectivity to major US and International markets.**
 - 3.1.1. Expand options from South Bend International Airport.
 - 3.1.1.1. Increasing the number of major airlines, daily flights and non-stop destinations accessible from SBN. Data is available on how the region's residents utilize the major airport here as well as others in surrounding areas. Using that to target routes and secure investment to help grow options is key.
 - 3.1.1.2. Increase the number of business and leisure travelers flying existing routes from SBN.
 - 3.1.1.3. Utilize empty charter flight seats originating from private airports in the region.
 - 3.1.2. Improve connectivity to Chicago. Reducing the travel time between South Bend and Chicago from 2 ½ hours on the South Shore commuter train to 90 minutes. Promoting the business and quality of life benefits of the improvement can grow ridership.
 - 3.2. **Increase the availability of speculative buildings and sites available in the market.**

- 3.2.1. Increasing the region's ability to help business expansion and relocation requirements for rail-served sites.
- 3.2.2. Increasing the availability of speculative buildings and shovel-ready sites available in the market. Though land is one of the region's resources, too few buildings are readily available to help company growth.

Promoting diversity and sparking opportunities for women and minorities

Goal: Improve South Bend-Elkhart Region's national MSA percentile rank of minority income disparity from the 15th percentile to the 80th percentile by 2025.

The South Bend-Elkhart Region is among the most diverse in the state of Indiana and minority populations continue to grow. All three counties in the region became more diverse from 2010 to 2015. According to the Indiana Business Research Center at Indiana University's Kelley School of Business assessment of the 2013 estimates, Hispanic and Asian populations were predicted to climb while non-Hispanic white populations decline.

As the region looks at its prosperity, it is critical to assure that its minority populations are key contributors both as employees and business owners. We must create a community that embraces the value of diverse experiences, skills, and ideas. In so doing, the region will be better poised for success in the global marketplace.

The region is doing better in terms of minority-owned businesses and employment opportunities than other communities of similar size and makeup, according to the analysis in "A Plan for Prosperity, Growth and Inclusion, Version 1.0." Yet there is significant room for improvement. The African-American unemployment rate is two times that of the total population in the region and for Hispanics, the rate is 1.5 times higher. Minority households' average income is between 74 percent and 89 percent lower than the overall average household income for the region.

Members of the Regional Development Authority's Diversity & Inclusion Committee made a number of recommendations and are now working to establish a Midstates Minority Supplier Council chapter in the region. The chapter would help businesses owned by women and minorities become certified and gain access to an additional level of support and guidance. The group plans to utilize the council as a foundation on which to build its other recommendations and initiatives.

Higher education institutions in the region such as Goshen College, Indiana University South Bend, and Ivy Tech Community College are working closely with minority students and providing opportunities. Goshen College has a goal of being a Hispanic-Serving Institution with at least 25 percent of full-time students being Hispanic. In 2016-17, Goshen was 20 percent Hispanic among traditional students, 17 percent if you add in adult and graduate students. Bethel College's enrollment of students of color has grown from 19 percent to 26 percent over the last five years. IU South Bend's Latino population has grown by nearly 40 percent in the past several years, raising its undergraduate Hispanic population to 10 percent of its student body,

about the same percentage as its African-American student body.

The Center for Intercultural and International Education at the college and the Institute for Latino Studies at the University of Notre Dame are both conducting research and working with the fastest-growing and youngest population group in the United States. IU South Bend's Civil Rights Heritage Center fosters conversations on the diverse experiences of African-Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans in the region. Bringing together minority students at the region's colleges and universities is a key way to strengthen growth opportunities both for the individuals and the region as a whole.

In the South Bend-Elkhart Region, an emerging collection of groups are working to knit together minority groups and promote diversity and inclusion. Creating and enhancing One Degree networks in the region among minorities will help grow per capita income among workers, business owners and potential entrepreneurs.

Expanding opportunities for minorities isn't just the task of one group or set of people. It's an effort that must be woven throughout all efforts to grow per capita income and sustained prosperity in the region. The region cannot realize its full potential when any of its citizens are left behind. As such, diversity and inclusion must be integrated into the strategies prioritized by the other four pillars and subcommittees.

In order for the region to grow opportunities and and per capita income for women and minorities, the region should:

1. **Increase the number of minority- and women-owned businesses in the region.** Establish a local chapter of the Midstates Minority Supplier Development Council, an affiliate of the National Minority Supplier Development Council which is the global leader in advancing business opportunities for its certified Asian, Black, Hispanic and Native American business enterprises and connecting them to member corporations. The council helps chapters and their members with education, support, and guidance. The council could also be key in developing initiatives to guiding business enterprises toward securing government contracts.
2. **Develop a database of minority professionals and students.** When looking to fill a position, employers often have a difficult time ensuring that the candidate pool is sufficiently diverse. By creating a database of diverse professionals and students in the region, employers can ensure they are including diverse candidates in their recruiting efforts. (similar to North Texas LEAD <http://northtexaslead.org/>) Inviting professionals and students to participate will be key. Educating the community about the database and its benefits, as well as inviting employers and recruiting firms to utilize it, will help the effort.

3. **Raise the visibility of minority leaders.** Telling the stories of leaders in minority communities and filling public and influential roles with minority professionals can strengthen the region. The current generation and next generation of minorities in the labor force need to be able to see faces like their own in positions of leadership. Telling those stories through marketing and journalistic channels, as well as assuring that minority leaders are visible at local conferences, meetings, ceremonies and other events is important, as is promoting diversity and inclusion as groups seek people for key leadership roles locally.
4. **Increase networking opportunities for minority professionals and students in the region.** Providing professional networking spaces that are inclusive to diversity is a critical step to overcoming barriers that exist for many in our community. By utilizing current networking groups such as Young Professionals Network and creating new networking events, in general and industry-specific, this region will be able move toward its full potential.
5. **Develop sponsorship opportunities for minority professionals and students.** Mentorship is important and can be helpful, but sponsorship goes beyond that to advocate and act on behalf of proteges rather than simply providing advice and guidance. By utilizing the growing database and creating more One Degree connections, successful minorities in the region can ensure others are able to find and grow opportunities.
6. **Increase minority participation in management training.** Educational institutions and others with established management training programs can be a foundation for the region to improve opportunities available to its diverse population. Funding minority participation and promoting diversity and inclusion in management and leadership programs will be critical to sparking opportunities for all individuals in the region. Further, working with businesses to ensure their training programs and career pathways are inclusive and diverse will have an extraordinary impact on the prosperity of all the citizens in the region.
7. **Support immigrants to fully participate in the social, civic and economic opportunities of the South Bend - Elkhart Region.** Local government, business and civil society partners have a strong commitment to understand and highlight the contributions immigrants are making by growing the population, increasing the tax base, starting new businesses, creating jobs, and adding vibrancy and culture to our social fabric. The Region was recently awarded a Gateways for Growth research grant from New American Economy and Welcoming America to assess contributions of immigrants in the five-county area and use the data to develop concrete strategies to integrate immigrants and foster economic growth.

A history of the South Bend-Elkhart Regional Development Authority and the future of collaboration

In the fall of 2014, the Indiana Economic Development Corp. planned a series of regional forums around the state to discuss possible grants to communities who could come together as regions.

One wasn't planned for North Central Indiana, but after a phone call, the IEDC agreed to have one in South Bend. The event was publicized, but no one really knew how many and who would show up at the Gillespie Center.

Several hundred folks came. The crowd was a mix of public officials and civic leaders, a collection of people from around the region representing a number of industries and interests. Community organizers joined together with some of the region's largest employers to pursue this opportunity.

A group of people agreed to gather and discuss whether to pursue the \$42 million state Regional Cities grant to fund quality of life projects in the region. There was not only agreement to pursue the grant, but eager contributions of the \$130,000 needed to pull together an application.

Michiana Partnership (now South Bend-Elkhart Regional Partnership), which had been created by local economic development organizations to market the area and pursue leads, worked closely with the Michiana Area Council of Governments in convening local organizations such as the Community Foundation of Elkhart County, City of Goshen and enFocus, to pursue good for the region. A group of leaders began meeting weekly to complete the application. Forums and meetings in St. Joseph, Elkhart and Marshall counties helped identify gaps and themes in each county and throughout the region.

Eventually, 40 potential projects totaling \$736.93 million of needed investment became part of the "Innovate Indiana Regional Development Plan" for Regional Cities of Northern Indiana that was submitted in August 2015. In December, the IEDC approved the application. The region joined Gov. Mike Pence in lobbying the Indiana General Assembly for addition funds to support a third \$42 million grant and in April 2016 the Legislature approved funding for the three winning regions including Fort Wayne and Evansville. Gov. Pence came to the region to sign the bill into law in Goshen.

Local government leaders appointed five people to the board for the Regional Development Authority. John Affleck-Graves, executive vice president of the University of Notre Dame, agreed to be chairman of the group. In its 2012 strategic plan, Notre Dame had put forth the

goal of becoming the premier research institution and that led to further engagement with the community.

The RDA board awards grants funding up to 20 percent into a portfolio of construction or development projects focused on improving the quality of life and contributing toward the positive national branding of the region. The RDA has prioritized 26 projects to receive funding.

Early in the conversations, those at the table agreed that coming together as a region was worth the effort even if North Central Indiana wasn't selected for one of the \$42 million grants. Ultimately, the success in winning the \$42 million grant demonstrated how the region working together is in everyone's best interest. Even as the RDA was implementing the regional cities projects, community leaders voiced strong interest in developing a comprehensive plan that would build economic strength in the region and lead our efforts beyond the quality of place focus.

In January 2016, 15 leaders from three counties gathered as a Strategy Development Team to develop underlying principles for a regional development plan. The members discussed at length the region's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Following these discussions, Karl King, retired partner with Crowe Horwath LLC, drafted "A Plan for Prosperity, Growth and Inclusion Version 1.0." The 90-page report outlines in detail the data points for the region compared to benchmarks from peer regions, including Appleton, Wisconsin; Cedar Rapids, Iowa; Wichita, Kansas; and both Lancaster and York, Pennsylvania.

Following that report, the Regional Development Authority convened a process to build on that foundation. The RDA appointed a group of 19 people as the Entrepreneurship Subcommittee, now called the Startup South Bend - Elkhart Board. That group began meeting in late 2016 to create, grow and sustain a regional entrepreneurial ecosystem. Civic, business and university representatives contributed \$1 million and Elevate Ventures contributed \$1.5 million.

The RDA created four additional subcommittees to work at industry growth, talent attraction and retention, education and workforce development, and diversity and inclusion, all with the goal of increasing per capita income in the region.

Over the last number of months, they've had meetings, forums and even a PlaceHack, an event focused on telling the region's story. All the meetings and conversations have resulted in a plan that is optimistic about the opportunities and the future of the South Bend-Elkhart Region.

The need for a regional economic development body

Throughout 2016 and 2017, the RDA convened hundreds of stakeholders in developing strategies in support of the overarching goal to increase per capita personal income in the region. This work launched an evolving process to assess, manage, and improve the South Bend-Elkhart Region's economy. In order for that process to be implemented, a well-resourced and coordinated regional economic development body is needed.

The South Bend-Elkhart Regional Partnership was formed in 2011 by the lead economic development organizations (LEDOs) in seven counties and the first staff was hired in 2013. The initial focus was marketing the region, but the partnership was instrumental in applying for Indiana's Regional Cities grant and became the administrative entity for the Regional Development Authority when the region won the \$42 million grant in 2015. Throughout 2016 and 2017, the Partnership was key in disbursing the funds for the projects and assisting with the Regional Economic Development Strategy work and a growing number of regional activities.

The RDA and the LEDOs have worked together to develop the following proposed framework for execution of the Plan in which the RDA and LEDOs, along with other key stakeholders and representatives from the five committees, align in their economic development efforts and appoint representatives to govern the South Bend-Elkhart Regional Partnership as it works to execute the strategies in this plan.



Part of what sets the region apart is also what highlights the need for a framework that includes such broad geographic and thematic representation.

The South Bend-Elkhart Region spans northern Indiana and southwestern Michigan with differing funding engines and state governments, but residents that flow back and forth across the border regularly for work and play. While many regions in the United States are defined by a single urban area, the South Bend-Elkhart Region has a collection of small to mid-sized cities and a number of smaller communities, totaling 47 across multiple counties.

The University of Notre Dame is the region's largest employer and research institution, but it is far from the only significant player in the region's higher education efforts. Indiana University, Purdue University, Ivy Tech Community College, and Southwestern Michigan College are all public, state schools with campuses in the region. A number of private colleges educate nurses, teachers, and those in other professions, who choose to live and work in the region.

These schools, as well as the municipalities, the chambers of commerce, and economic development corporations, and others share a common interest in advancing the region's economy. If the region is to act on the recommendations in this plan, it needs an organization that helps coordinate the work, ranging from executing coordinating activities for the Startup Board to assuring that the commitment to enroll 21st Century Scholars happens. The region must focus on aligning the efforts of various stakeholders and encourage the region to work together to achieve what it can't as individual communities.

That will take engagement and funding. An effort to raise funds to adequately resource the Partnership is underway so that the infrastructure is in place to support the region's growth.

Simply put

As dozens of people gathered over a period of months to talk about the future of the South Bend-Elkhart Region, a number of common themes emerged. Simply put, numerous people independently identified common opportunities for the region to grow and advance together.

Mentorship: Young entrepreneurs need ones who have been through the process of coming up with an idea, launching a company and then exiting successfully. Minorities and women are asking for mentors. Companies facing transitions or unsure of how to navigate potential growth can use the help of others in service sectors or regional economic development. Time and time again, the need for mentors, for counsel from those who have experience, was named as important and needed in SBE.

Connection: The notion of “One Degree” works in the region. People are tightly knit. Cities and towns are often closely connected. South Bend and Mishawaka are distinct cities, but the boundaries blur one another. When someone wants to make a difference, the region affords the opportunity and encourages success. Civic and thought leaders in the region are coming together in an unprecedented way to envision the future of South Bend - Elkhart and its communities. In addition, the region is geographically close to Chicago and linked by rail, highways and internet fiber to the Midwest, eastern United States and global economy.

Work Ethic: The region is good at making things. The residents work hard. Many employers tout the way workers tackle tasks. The only complaint at the moment is needing more workers.

Vast educational resources: The University of Notre Dame is the largest and best known of any of the higher education institutions in the region, but Indiana University, Saint Mary’s College, Goshen College, Bethel College, Purdue University, Ivy Tech Community College and several other private colleges educate students. The South Bend-Elkhart Region has a stunning range of options for those seeking additional education. Burgeoning entrepreneurship education programs are growing from elementary to college levels. There are challenges, but also immense resources already here.

Regaining prosperity: The region’s average wages were once above the national average. They’ve now fallen below. The educational institutions are working with businesses in new ways. Access to internet fiber is spurring growth of a tech sector. Advanced manufacturing is within reach of entrepreneurs who have excelled at innovating new ways of making things. Wages are on the rise again in a strong local economy, but larger initiatives are being discussed regionally to assure that long-term, sustained growth of per capita income is possible for the region’s workers.

South Bend-Elkhart Regional Economic Development Strategy Team

Lead Committee

Pete McCown, Community Foundation of Elkhart County, REDS Committee Chair
Marshall King, REDS Communications Director
Regina Emberton, South Bend Elkhart Regional Partnership, Co-Chairwoman of Industry Growth Committee
Jan Fye, SEA Results Advisors LLC, Co-Chairwoman of Industry Growth Committee
Rob DeCleene, Visit South Bend Mishawaka, Co-Chairman of Talent Committee
Diana Lawson, Elkhart County Convention and Visitors Bureau, Co-Chairwoman of Talent Committee
John DeSalle, Hoosier Racing Tire, RDA Liaison to Talent Committee
Dallas Bergl, INOVA Federal Credit Union, RDA Liaison to Talent Committee
Brian Wiebe, Horizon Education Alliance, Co-Chairman of Workforce Committee
Terry Allison, IU South Bend, Co-Chairman of Workforce Committee
John Affleck-Graves, University of Notre Dame, RDA Liaison to Workforce Committee
Tracy Graham, Graham Allen Partners, Chairman of Inclusion Committee
Kristin Pruitt, Lake City Bank, RDA Liaison to Inclusion Committee
Tim Sexton, University of Notre Dame, Liaison to Inclusion Committee
Larry Garatoni, HQ Investments, Chairman of Entrepreneurship Committee

Joined Planning Team for Execution Phase

Chuck Lehman, Lehman and Lehman, Co-Chairman for Talent Committee
Meghan Sullivan, Fidelity National Title-Indiana, Co-Chairwoman for Talent Committee
Jim Keenan, Leighton Foundation
Amish Shah, Kem Krest, Co-Chairman for Inclusion
Gary Neidig, ITAMCO, Co-Chair for Entrepreneurship

Committee Support

Tressa Huddleston, Community Foundation of Elkhart County
Sarah Niespodziany, South Bend Elkhart Regional Partnership
Claudia Bell, INOVA Federal Credit Union
Bernard Akatu, University of Notre Dame
Sue Haynes, HQ Investments
Marcia Tatay, Graham Allen Partners

Workforce Committee

Brian Wiebe, Horizon Education Alliance, Co-Chairman
Terry Allison, IU South Bend, Co-Chairman

John Affleck-Graves, University of Notre Dame, RDA Liaison
Jim Cawthon, Ancilla College
Jan Cervelli, Saint Mary's College
Gregg Chenoweth, Bethel College
Tom Coley, Ivy Tech Community College
Lex Dennis, enFocus
Kate Lee, South Bend Regional Chamber of Commerce
Rose Meissner, Community Foundation of St. Joseph County
Mike Sanders, Purdue Polytech
Greg Vollmer, WorkOne

Talent Committee

Diana Lawson, Elkhart County Convention and Visitors Bureau, Co-Chairwoman
Rob DeCleene, Visit South Bend Mishawaka, Co-Chairman
Dallas Bergl, INOVA Federal Credit Union, RDA Liaison
Erin Bonin, Kruggel Lawton CPAs
Mark Brinson, City of Goshen
Radharani Buenrostro Magallon, Latino Student Alliance of Elkhart County
Sam Centellas, La Casa de Amistad, Inc.
Marvin Curtis, IU South Bend
David Daugherty, Goshen Chamber of Commerce
Kyle Hannon, Greater Elkhart Chamber of Commerce
Joe Hart, South Bend Cubs
Chris Hooley, Berkshire Hathaway Realty
Cori Humes, Marshall County Convention and Visitors Bureau
Eric Kanagy, RedPost
Kara Kelly, Saint Mary's College
Julia King, Goshen Common Council
Chuck Lehman, Lehman and Lehman
Pete Owsianowski, Integritas Search LLC
Aaron Perri, South Bend Venues, Parks & Art
Brian Prince, Flaherty & Collins Properties
Meghan Sullivan, Fidelity National Title-Indiana
Chris Stager, Economic Development Corporation of Elkhart County
Andrew Wiand, enFocus, Inc.
Linda Yoder, Marshall County Community Foundation
Crystal Welsh, City of Elkhart

Industry Growth Committee

Regina Emberton, South Bend-Elkhart Regional Partnership, Co-Chairwoman
Jan Fye, SEA Results Advisors, LLC Co-Chairwoman
John Affleck-Graves, University of Notre Dame, RDA Liaison
Dave Behr, Indiana Economic Development Corp.

Chris Brown, South Bend Regional Chamber of Commerce
Jerry Chavez, Marshall County Economic Development Corp.
Bill Davis, Hilltop Wealth Solutions
Melanie Deford, University of Notre Dame
Mark Dobson, Economic Development Corporation of Elkhart County
Melody Eby, Cressy Commercial Real Estate
Scott Ford, Bradley Co.
Austin Gammage, City of South Bend
Barkley Garrett, Southwestern Michigan Economic Growth Alliance
Nick Kieffer, Goshen Chamber of Commerce
Shelley Klug, Indiana Michigan Power
Aaron Kobb, St. Joseph County Airport Authority
Jeff Rea, South Bend Regional Chamber of Commerce
James Turnwald, Michiana Area Council of Governments
Pat McMahon, Retired, University of Notre Dame
Ken Prince, City of Mishawaka
Bill Schalliol, St. Joseph County
George Spohrer, Retired, Crowe Horwath
Chris Stager, Economic Development Corporation of Elkhart County
Abby Wiles, City of Elkhart

Startup South Bend-Elkhart Committee (formerly Entrepreneurship Committee)

Larry Garatoni, HQ Investments, Chairman
Pete McCown, Community Foundation of Elkhart County, RDA liaison
Bob Bernhard, University of Notre Dame
Tim Braun, EmNet, LLC
Steve Brenneman, ATC Trailers
Max Brickman, Heartland VC
Rich Carlton, Data Realty
Jerry Chavez, Marshall County Economic Development Corp.
Shane Fimbel, Trek10
Gary Gigot, Vennli
Iris Hammel, RISE
Jim Keenan, Leighton Foundation
Jim Larkin, Catalyst/Lark Investments
Gina Leichty, Eyedart Creative Studio
Gavin Ferlic, Elevate Ventures
John Miller, Founder, SMART Temps
Gary Neidig, ITAMCO
Amish Shah, Kem Krest
Bryan Ritchie, University of Notre Dame

Diversity and Inclusion Committee

Tracy Graham, Graham Allen Partners, Chairman

Kristin Pruitt, Lake City Bank, RDA Liaison

Jacqueline Barton, Specialized Staffing

Bethany Hartley, Startup Moxie

Redgina Hill, Bethel College

Marian Hodges, Data Realty

Jessica Koscher, ADEC

Tim Sexton, University of Notre Dame

Amish Shah, Kem Krest

Marcia Tatay, Graham Allen Partners

Isaac Torres, Intercambio Express

About the author

Marshall V. King is a freelance journalist and writer who has worked as communications director for the Regional Economic Development Strategy of the South Bend-Elkhart Regional Development Authority. He was a longtime reporter, columnist and editor at The Elkhart Truth and continues to work for several publications in northern Indiana. He also works as an independent contractor for businesses and non-profits, including the Community Foundation of Elkhart County.

