



**SOUTH BEND | ELKHART**  
REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP

# MONTHLY update

## Letter from the CEO

We hope you all enjoyed a peaceful and restful Thanksgiving! It is hard to believe how quickly we reached the end of November. Although the Regional Partnership feels as busy as ever with year-end approaching, we want to take a moment to reflect on how thankful we are for our incredible team and dedicated partners who share a tireless passion for our goal of promoting and advancing our region's economy.

We are showcasing this remarkable sense of community in our [WE+YOU Regional Impact Series](#), a six-part video sequence that spends three minutes highlighting each of the Regional Partnership's focus areas. Since November 10th, we have released our videos for [Talent Attraction and Retention](#), [Entrepreneurship](#), and [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#). Stay tuned for a new episode every Tuesday as we prepare to highlight Industry Growth and Education and Workforce.



Our regional collaboration efforts continue with a virtual public launch of the South Bend - Elkhart Digital Innovation Hub! The SBE Digital Innovation Hub is a digital platform of the Regional Partnership, developed alongside key LIFT Network partners. The launch celebrates the culmination of a massive endeavor to comprehensively organize our region's extensive array of innovation assets – programs, resources, and facilities – in a manner suited to the needs of the Digital Innovation Hub's individual users. To date, we have already mapped over 250 assets across 100+ workforce development, business innovation, and entrepreneurial resource organizations within the region. Together, we as a community will continue growing the Digital Innovation Hub into an invaluable tool that primes the South Bend-Elkhart region to move to the forefront of economic growth. We invite all regional stakeholders to join the Regional Partnership and LIFT Network partners in attending the kickoff webinar on December 15, 2020! To reserve your spot, [register here](#).

Last, but certainly not least, the Regional Partnership is thankful for the opportunity to grow our incredible team! We are currently searching for three dynamic, creative, and self-driven individuals to support Education and Workforce, Entrepreneurship, Talent Attraction and Retention, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. For more details on each position, take a look at our [hiring page](#). Please feel free to share widely and send promising candidates in our direction!

In a season marked by gratitude and community, it goes without saying that we are deeply grateful for your ongoing engagement with the Regional Partnership. Thank you for your active participation in our region's vibrant ecosystem, and we wish you all a bright and joyful holiday season.

WE+YOU,

**Regina Emberton CEcD, CCIM, SIOR**  
President and CEO  
South Bend - Elkhart Regional Partnership



# EDUCATION & WORKFORCE

## Education and Workforce Committee Update

Economic strains of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to place unparalleled pressures on our regional labor market. While continued unemployment claims in Economic Growth Region 2 see gradual declines, from a peak of 35,804 in May of 2020 to a current level of 6,093 (via data [reported by the Indiana Business Research Center](#)), recent surges in infection rates threaten to further destabilize our regional workforce ecosystem. On November 23rd the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) released their [Job Creation and Local Economic Development 2020: Rebuilding Better report](#) that surfaced several economic and labor market challenges, down to a regional analysis framework, reinforcing the critical nature of our shared work. The report particularly placed a spotlight on the vulnerability of individuals in low-wage occupations and positioned that COVID-19 may likely accelerate industry demand for digital operating and technology skills, calling for a transition in skill requirements of our regional labor market.

With the recent launch of the [Rapid Recovery Workforce Campaign](#) and continued collaboration among workforce, education and industry, our region will continue to bridge resource gaps and ensure that learners and firms have continued access to knowledge and information to adapt to the everchanging labor market conditions.



# ENTREPRENEURSHIP

## Entrepreneurship Committee Update

The South Bend – Elkhart Regional Partnership is grateful to be one part of an awe-inspiring entrepreneurial ecosystem here in the South Bend – Elkhart region. Earlier this month, [fourteen Entrepreneurship Support Organizations \(ESOs\) convened](#) with a common goal to strengthen our network of support for local entrepreneurs; working together to increase the breadth and depth of the ecosystem by multiplying connections and improving awareness of resources such as R&D facilities, prototyping equipment, accelerator and education programs, capital sources, pitch competitions, and other activities for all participants in the startup community.

If you are looking to participate in a Pre-Accelerator program, note that January 31st is the application deadline for the Spring cohort! We have partnered with [Elevate Origins](#) to offer spring, summer and fall cohorts in 2021 that will provide virtual group learning, one-on-one coaching, and live pitch practice to startups. There will be tracks for Pre-Seed and Seed stage startups, where participants will develop investor-ready pitch decks, executive summaries, and will be prepared to compete for investment funding.

### Related News

- [Elevate Origins Re-Accelerator Program and Deadlines](#)
- [Entrepreneurship WE+YOU Regional Impact Video](#)



# DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

## Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee Update

November is closing out with great news! From the State of Indiana with the [recent appointment of the first ever Chief Equity, Inclusion and Opportunity Officer, Karrah Herring](#), a native of South Bend to [the selection of Jacquelyn Rucker](#) as the first Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer for Teacher's Credit Union, to Kathy Burnette, owner of Brain Lair Books being featured in a [national gift list from Small Business Majority](#). Kathy is a HustleSBE and Women's Entrepreneurship Initiative at Saint Mary's College graduate, and recently spoke about both opportunities in the [latest WE+YOU Regional Impact Series episode!](#)

The DEI committee continues to press forward towards achieving the audacious goal of being in the top 20% of peer metro areas for minority income equality by 2025. One key challenge to us achieving our goal is actionable and timely data. In order to better understand the needs in our community, we will be conducting a Regional Belonging Survey that will target 1,000 individuals in this region. The survey will uncover essential insights to inform the programs and steps we take to strengthen our region. We need the support of regional associations, social groups, and networks to distribute the survey in early 2021. If you are willing to share the survey with your network, colleagues, or throughout your associations, [please click here](#).

If your company isn't sure where to start with your diversity, equity and inclusion program, or you would like to learn more about the resources the DEI initiative can provide your company, [please click here and submit your inquiry](#).



# INDUSTRY GROWTH

## Industry Growth Committee Update

Digital transformation is an inevitable reality for our regional economy. Automation, a key function of industry advancement, has been on the radar of companies across the South Bend - Elkhart region long before the emergence of the pandemic. A community in the heart of our region, the Elkhart-Goshen MSA, was highlighted as having the highest density of robotics per 1,000 workers in 2017 for a smaller city, according to a Brookings Report titled: [Where the Robots Are](#). In 2020, as conversations continue about the transition to a more digital workplace, experts are highlighting the importance that automation holds now more than ever. In RSM's recent [Industrials Industry Outlook](#), they note the critical role of digitization and technology in the operation of manufacturers and how this need has been exacerbated by COVID-19. This is even more evident as McKinsey & Company shows how the implementation of new technology is unfolding and what the future looks like in this space; [Industry 4.0: Reimagining manufacturing operations after COVID-19](#).

Indiana is supporting companies who are embracing the adoption of smart technologies amid the pandemic. This fall, after two rounds of grant awards, [six companies](#) in the SBE region received [Manufacturing Readiness Grants](#), one of three initiatives in the State's [EASE program](#).

### Related News

- [iNDustry Labs at Notre Dame announces inaugural faculty affiliates cohort](#)



# TALENT ATTRACTION & RETENTION

## Talent Attraction and Retention Committee Update

To date, over \$38.1 million of the [Regional Cities Initiative](#) grant has been disbursed to support the region's 26 quality-of-place projects. Of the 26 projects, 18 have been completed, five are under construction, and three are in the planning phase.

Earlier this month, we launched the first episode of our [WE+YOU Regional Impact Series](#) featuring the South Bend – Elkhart Regional Partnership's Talent Attraction and Retention initiative. During the video, Diana Lawson, CEO of the Elkhart County Convention and Visitors Bureau provides an overview of the strategies executed on and work that has been done in the past year, including the development and launch of the WE+YOU regional brand. Our featured impact is Carolina Pagán, the Events and Marketing Coordinator and Business Diversity Initiative Council Liaison for the Greater Elkhart Chamber of Commerce. To watch this episode visit our [Facebook Page](#), [YouTube Page](#), or [our website](#)! Share the video using the hashtag, #WEplusYOU.

We look forward to sharing the good news with you every month! If you want more than just a monthly update, visit the [News](#) and [Events](#) pages of our website or follow us on social media.

To subscribe to our monthly newsletter, [click here!](#)

Have feedback? Please contact us at [info@southbendelkhart.org](mailto:info@southbendelkhart.org).