

# Indiana Vision 2025

## A Plan for Hoosier Prosperity

By Tom Schuman

**T**he calendar may have just recently turned to 2012 and there are many goals to accomplish in the new year, but at least part of the Indiana Chamber focus will be on 2025 – as in *Indiana Vision 2025*.

Read on to learn about this important initiative. In future issues, we will more closely examine each of the driver areas, why these ambitious goals need to be accomplished and how that can take place.

### What is *Indiana Vision 2025*?

A comprehensive, multi-year initiative, coordinated by the Indiana Chamber, to provide direction, leadership and a long-range economic development strategy for the state to help ensure the prosperity of Hoosiers. It seeks to build upon similar past efforts – specifically, the Chamber’s *Economic Vision 2010*.

### What is the overall goal?

Mission statement: “Indiana will be a global leader in innovation and economic opportunity where enterprises and citizens prosper.” In other words, make the state an even better place to live, work and raise a family.

### How was the plan developed?

A 24-person task force of business and association leaders from throughout the state met over a 14-month period to review the results of *Economic Vision 2010*, hear presentations and engage in discussions with state and national policy experts, and determine goals and initiatives to be included in the plan.

### Who led the effort?

Chris LaMothe, the president of the Indiana Chamber from 1992-2002 and a current board of directors member, served as task force chairman. LaMothe guided the development of *Economic Vision 2010* during his tenure as president. In addition, several other board members involved in the 2010 process also served on the 2025 committee.

### Why is this plan important?

In blunt terms, while many good people are working hard to improve our state, there is no long-term effort to ensure future success. Political terms and policy realities often result in a forward-looking approach that reaches only a few years at best. Many of the initiatives in *Indiana Vision 2025* will take multi-year efforts in order to make substantial progress.

Kevin Brinegar, Indiana Chamber president, says *Economic Vision 2010* resulted in a number of public policy improvements over the first decade of the century. “The world is a much different place than in 1999, however, and there is a great deal of work left to do. This new plan will not only guide the Chamber’s advocacy efforts, but is the only broad-based strategy out there. We want it to truly be Indiana’s vision, not just that of the Chamber.”

### What are the key drivers identified?

- Outstanding talent
- Attractive business climate
- Superior infrastructure
- Dynamic and creative culture

### Outstanding Talent: Key Goals

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





### Attractive Business Climate: Key Goals

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

### Superior Infrastructure: Key Goals

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



### Dynamic & Creative Culture: Key Goals

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

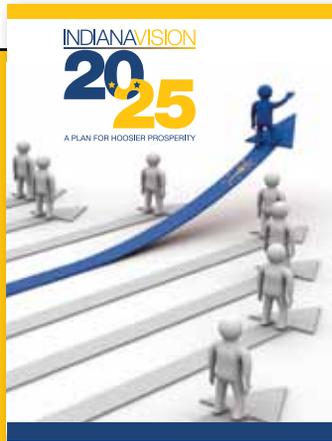
## Our Future State

The following is taken from the closing section of the full *Indiana Vision 2025* document.

The premise of this plan is that by engaging now in thoughtful consideration of the future we may shape it. We are not willing to leave the future prosperity of Hoosiers to chance, but rather seek to enhance it by our actions today. Through this plan, we have attempted to establish a roadmap to prosperity where Hoosiers can achieve a higher quality of life than otherwise possible.

Today, Indiana is a very, very good place to live, work and raise a family. But we are greedy, in a good sense. We want Indiana to be the very best. We want to build on our current advantages and shore up our weaknesses. An honest self-assessment reveals that we must improve on today's reality when:

- At least one in four young people fail to achieve the bare minimum of a quality high school education.
- Only slightly more than one-third of high school graduates go on to achieve the postsecondary credentials necessary to succeed in today's competitive jobs market.
- High smoking and obesity levels contribute to ever-rising health care costs and, most importantly, cut short far too many lives.
- We waste tens of millions of taxpayer dollars on local government systems that are inefficient and, in many cases, ineffective.
- A few "chinks" in an otherwise positive tax system drive some business and personal resources elsewhere.
- Our valuable energy and water resources are at risk due to a lack of upkeep and long-term planning.
- Despite robust investment, transportation and telecommunications infrastructure is likewise at risk.
- We don't provide entrepreneurs, young and old, with nearly enough tools and resources to start and grow their businesses close to home.



- We send subtle (and sometimes more blunt) messages that some people are not welcome based on who they are or their country of origin.

While the year 2025 may appear far off, it is never too soon to begin going from "very good" to "great" as a state. Embodied in *Indiana Vision 2025* is a framework for action that will lead to numerous desirable outcomes for our state.

If we work together to accomplish initiatives within this plan, we see Indiana as a future leader in which:

- At least 90% (with the ultimate goal of 100%) of students are fully prepared to enter college or the workforce.
- A minimum of 60% of Indiana residents have the postsecondary credentials or degrees that lead to personal achievement and business development.
- Individuals embrace wellness to enhance their own quality of life, workplaces and communities.
- Local government becomes a more effective resource, rather than serving as an impediment, to facilitate jobs and economic growth.
- Tax policy attracts additional investment and allows successful individuals to remain in our state and serve as valuable mentors and contributors throughout their lifetimes.
- We are assured that flipping the light switch and turning on the faucet will deliver the affordable power and water we are accustomed to for personal and business needs.
- Our physical and digital infrastructure prove to be valuable advantages over regional and national competitors.
- We not only keep more young people and future business leaders at home, but attract talented individuals from around the country and across the world.
- We have a culture that is open and accepting, paving the way for invention, creativity and prosperity.

## How will progress be measured?

Many of the identified goals have specific – and lofty – targets (examples: top five status internationally in various education categories and top 12 rankings in venture capital, patents and other dynamic culture measures). Progress will be continually evaluated as updated data become available.

Other goals (examples: adopting a right-to-work statute, and developing and implementing a strategic water resource plan) will be the result of ongoing legislative and regulatory efforts – evaluated by the Chamber annually.

## What's next?

Just as developing *Indiana Vision 2025* was a 14-month activity, the outreach to groups, organizations and individuals throughout the state will be a lengthy process. Chamber staff, many of those on the task force, a large number of Indiana Chamber board members and other advocates will be discussing the plan and receiving feedback from government

and community leaders, business representatives, media outlets and Indiana citizens.

Regional forums and a statewide summit are being developed for the summer and fall of this year. Additional research and studies will be conducted in order to provide the tools needed to help decision-makers move forward.

## What can you do to assist?

Brinegar: "Become an advocate. Read the stories both here and in your local media, listen to the interviews and commentary, attend an upcoming event, urge legislators and other leaders to take the necessary long-term approach and do what you can to help ensure that Indiana will be the absolute best it can be now and for future generations."

### INFORMATION LINK

**Resource:** View the full *Indiana Vision 2025* plan at [www.indianachamber.com](http://www.indianachamber.com)