

Foundation Continues to Play Critical Role



Is Indiana better off than it was 30-plus years ago?

When it comes to the state's business climate, the answer is a resounding yes.

The Indiana Chamber Foundation has been a significant contributor in advancing many of the long-term public policy and program improvements that have taken place since its creation in 1981. The Foundation identifies the challenges, commissions the research (working with state and national experts) to clearly benchmark the current state of affairs in Indiana and provides credible ideas and solutions to these issues.

Projects are closely aligned with the Indiana Chamber's advocacy efforts. No matter the topic – economic development, tax and fiscal policy, education and workforce development, government efficiency – the goal is always the same: Look ahead at Indiana's future and find ways to move the state forward.

"We always set out with ambitious goals and the belief that the work will make a major impact," states Christy Huston, executive director. "Through strong partnerships, profound research and Indiana Chamber follow-up, we have managed to accomplish that in a number of instances."

A few examples:

- *A State Tax Comparative Cost Analysis of Indiana and Competitive States for Major Indiana Industries* (1996) helped provide tangible evidence used for the historic 2002 tax restructuring.
- In the education arena, the *Human Capital Retention Project* (1999) recommended steps to reduce the migration of top graduate talent from Indiana colleges and universities. Creation of the Ivy Tech Community College system and what became Indiana INTERNnet, the statewide resource for internship opportunities to retain

Hoosier talent, grew out of the recommendations.

- Workforce development has been a continued focus. The 2008 *Indiana's Adult Education and Workforce Skills Performance Report* highlighted that 931,000 adult Hoosiers (one in three workers) don't have the required skills for 21st century jobs. That study led to several successful follow-ups that both take a closer look at Indiana's performance in providing worker services and offering suggestions for improvements.

Early studies established the groundwork for what became *Economic Vision 2010*, the Chamber's 10-year economic development plan for the state. Many goals and initiatives were accomplished, including raising K-12 education standards, telecommunications reform, eliminating the inventory and corporate gross receipts taxes, adopting daylight saving time and much more.

On the heels of the influential *Economic Vision 2010* (and building upon many of its concepts) came *Indiana Vision 2025*, the current plan to position Indiana, its enterprises and its citizens for economic prosperity. The 33 goals in *Indiana Vision 2025* are grouped into four drivers, including Dynamic and Creative Culture. Entrepreneurial efforts are critical, leading to the creation in 2015 of the *Indiana Vision 2025* Dynamic Leader of the Year award.

While the Indiana Chamber strives to provide the best business climate for today's companies and their employees, the Foundation's work delivers forward-thinking research and ideas to help ensure future success.

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