

Regional Group Seeks Shared Economic Vision

Two heads are better than one, right? Try 27. That's the number of leaders working together throughout Northeast Indiana to advance the region as part of a six-month initiative called Vision 2020.

The goal is to develop key strategies (short and long term) revolving around five categories – a competitive business climate, 21st century talent, quality of place, infrastructure and entrepreneurship. Members of the coordinating group represent the private, public, foundation and education sectors in 10 counties: Adams, Allen, DeKalb, Huntington, LaGrange, Noble, Steuben, Wabash, Wells and Whitley.

Mark Becker is executive director of the Northeast Indiana Foundation, which is among the organizations providing funding for the project.

"Just in the few months we've been engaged in this

process, one of the best things that has come out of this is we have a cross-section of leadership from throughout the region having this dialogue and it's something we've never done before," he declares. "We're starting to see a much stronger relationship between the communities and region to work together to achieve some really bold goals."

Public input is playing a major role. The process will conclude in June at a regional summit held in Fort Wayne.

"It won't be until after the June meeting that we really will have total agreement about the direction some of this needs to take," Becker states. "We'll also focus a lot of attention on the organizational structure we need to have in place to drive the vision forward."

Resource: Mark Becker, Northeast Indiana Foundation, at www.chooseneindiana.com/philanthropy.aspx

Customers Eating Up Dining Discounts

Restaurants across the country are whipping up early bird specials and other promotions to retain (and attract) customers in response to the recession.

Take McCormick & Schmick's Seafood Restaurant, which operates approximately 80 upscale casual dining establishments throughout the United States. Scott Kennedy, general manager of the downtown Indianapolis location (the only one in the state), says the company has implemented several measures to boost business.

"We're doing a couple of things," he says. "Probably the most notable is we print new lunch and dinner menus every day. We still have the regular fare we're known for, but whenever there's an opportunity to find something (different) that's good for the guests, we'll put something in our chef-recommended portion of our menu."

In addition, the restaurant offers a lunch menu containing 10 items under \$10. Plus, it hosts a Happy Hour every day from 4-6:30 p.m. with food and drink specials.

"I'd say (the efforts have attracted) new types of customers as well as increased the volume of frequency of our regular lunch crowd," Kennedy observes.

Resources: Scott Kennedy, McCormick & Schmick's Seafood Restaurant, at www.mccormickandschmicks.com

Physicians Bring Business Expertise to Medical Field

For Aakash Chauhan, the MD/MBA program offered through the Indiana University School of Medicine and the Kelley School of Business in Indianapolis provides the best of both worlds.

"The health care industry, I believe, needs more physician-leaders who are educated in medicine and business management," he comments. "This way, physicians can ultimately control their own destiny when it comes to managing their practices (and) understanding the tumultuous and shifting environment of the business of health care today."

The fourth-year student plans to seek a residency in orthopedic surgery. While he hasn't decided which area to pursue for his master's in business administration, he says a long-term goal would involve venture capital work in the medical device field.

IU's prestigious business and medical schools (the latter is the only one in the state and the second largest in the country) are proving to be a powerful combination in attracting students.

Enrollment numbers (the program was implemented in 2002) more than doubled this year.

Advantages include cost savings (students can earn both degrees in five years compared to spending six years to complete the programs separately), enhanced career opportunities and a chance to sharpen leadership skills.

"It's important to note that MD/MBAs will have the ability to work with medical device companies, pharmaceutical companies, venture capital, upper-level management of health care institutions, etc.," Chauhan stresses. "They can positively impact and be involved in ... integral parts of the health care industry."

Resource: Indiana University Kelley School of Business Indianapolis at www.kelley.iupui.edu



Adam Moss will earn MD/MBA degrees this May and begin his residency at an Indianapolis hospital. He plans to complete his medical requirements in ophthalmology in Minneapolis, but says he can see himself coming back to Indianapolis to settle down.

Critical Condition? Primary Care in U.S. Trails Other Countries

While health care reform in the United States remains controversial, a recent study by the Commonwealth Fund suggests not enough is being done when it comes to primary care.

Conducted last year, the study examined basic services provided by more than 10,000 physicians in 11 countries (Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom and the United States) and their costs. Findings revealed that the United States spends the most on health care overall, but lags behind in areas such as access, use of information technology and performance-based financial incentives.

Unlike the majority of Dutch, New Zealand and U.K. doctors, only 29% of U.S. physicians offer after-hours care. In addition, just 46% of primary care doctors in the United States employ

electronic medical records – lauded by advocates as a major cost-saving measure – as opposed to more than 90% in Australia, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden and the U.K.

While just one-third of primary care physicians in the United States report receiving performance-based financial incentives, many other countries – including the U.K. (89%), Netherlands (81%), New Zealand (80%), Italy (70%) and Australia (65%) – have much higher rates in this area.

Domestically, 58% of physicians – which surpasses all countries surveyed – shared that patients struggle to pay for medications and treatment.

Resource: A Survey of Primary Care Physicians in 11 Countries, 2009: Perspectives on Care, Costs and Experiences at www.commonwealthfund.org

Graduate, Law School Applications Up; Recession the Reason?

According to a recent *New York Times* article, the recession is motivating people to pursue graduate and law school degrees to increase their marketability. Applications at Indiana's flagship universities have risen, but it's unclear how significant a role the recession is playing.

"Applications for graduate non-professional programs rose approximately 9.6% last year (2008-2009) and 6.5% this year (2009-2010)," comments David Daleke, associate dean for academic affairs at the University Graduate School of Indiana University. "Generally speaking, graduate program applications tend to rise during periods of economic downturn."

Through the end of February, annual applications to the IU Maurer School of Law had jumped roughly 50%.

"Most of the people I'm talking to are talking about law school because they've been planning to (apply) for some time," shares Dani Weatherford, director of recruitment and admissions.

At the Purdue University Graduate School in West Lafayette, interest in masters and doctoral programs has been growing for the last five years. As of February 28, applications for fall 2010 totaled 15,473 vs. 13,869 for the previous year.

"Our staff has had a couple individuals recently mention that they were focusing more on a job search, but wanted information about graduate school in case they weren't able to secure employment due to the poor economy," notes Dana Werner, director of graduate student recruitment services.

Resources: David Daleke, University Graduate School of Indiana University, at <http://graduate.indiana.edu>

Dani Weatherford, Indiana University Maurer School of Law, at www.law.indiana.edu

Dana Werner, Purdue University Graduate School, at www.gradschool.purdue.edu

Counties Combine Marketing Efforts

They say presentation is everything – whether it's a flawlessly wrapped gift, a teen's passionate plea to borrow the family car or a business proposal. An organization formed in late 2009 to serve as a marketing arm for nine Indiana counties is applying that philosophy as it develops one cohesive voice to tout the region's strengths.

Collaboration, supporters contend, will yield greater economic vitality than independent efforts.

MidWest Indiana Economic Development's goals include identifying unique regional assets and developing a unified message; increasing business retention and attraction; advancing a knowledge-based workforce (emphasizing education, work ethic and innovation); and encouraging entrepreneurship and postsecondary education.

Participating counties are Benton, Carroll, Cass, Fountain, Montgomery, Pulaski, Tippecanoe, Warren and White.

"Today's economy is global," observes Connie Neining, chairperson for MidWest Indiana Economic Development (and executive director of the White County Economic Development Organization). "An opportunity for a small, rural community to be noticed in the global marketplace is very difficult. By joining forces, we have a louder voice and we have benefits we can share across county lines."

She says it's important for the counties to partner to promote regional advantages, which include:

- a strong educational system;
- transportation infrastructure;
- tourism;
- alternative energy projects; and
- manufacturing and agricultural sectors.

Resource: Connie Neining, MidWest Indiana Economic Development, at www.midwestindiana.com

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