



Indiana Association of Regional Councils

The gateway to regional development in Indiana

Spring 2017



The Purdue Center for Regional Development (PCRD) seeks to pioneer new ideas and strategies that contribute to regional collaboration, innovation and prosperity.



Established in 1997, the Indiana Association of Regional Councils (IARC) provides a statewide forum for staff and board members of Indiana’s regional planning agencies to network and share ideas that promote economic and community development, transportation planning and smart-growth issues throughout Indiana.

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



AIM Roundtable discussion on road funding.

Everyone around the state is talking about road funding, including IARC. The AIM Roundtables focused on educating local governments about road funding, and IARC was part of the conversation. The 2017 Winter Roundtables were held in six (6) communities across the state. As a sponsor of the AIM Roundtables, IARC presented information beneficial to local governments about how to maximize their spending on road funding. We appreciate AIM including us in the conversation.

With the headlines reading, “The elimination of EDA” and “President’s budget cuts 4 Billion from HUD,” it was time to discuss the importance of these programs with Indiana’s federal elected officials. IARC hosted a Legislative Luncheon on March 9 to discuss the importance of three (3) federal programs. IARC’s membership educated representatives from two senate offices and seven of the congressional offices about Community Development Block Grant Funding through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Economic Development Administration and funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation. Local governments across the State of Indiana have relied on these funds to leverage local dollars to enhance regional community and economic development. We appreciate the support Indiana’s federal elected officials have given IARC and the local governments they serve.

Mark your calendars for IARC’s Annual Conference. This year the conference will be held at the Omni Severin Hotel on November 8-9, 2017. Additional information will be posted on our website.

Sincerely,
Theresa Criss-Hartwig
Executive Director



FROM FINANCIAL BURDEN TO A LEADING EXAMPLE



New 45-ft. diameter secondary clarifiers.

By Wessler Engineering

The Town of Greentown, located just 8 miles East of Kokomo, was experiencing issues with its wastewater treatment plant in the late 1990s. The situation resulted in a Sewer Connection Ban being issued by IDEM due to hydraulic overloading and effluent quality violations.

The ban had several major impacts on the Town. Because of the ban, the Town was not allowed to create any additional sewer connections until the ban was lifted. This prevented the addition of at least one residential development, if not more, as well as any potential businesses that were thinking about



New headworks structure including fine screening and raw sewage pumping.

coming to the Town.

In addition to the ban, the Town was also issued an Agreed Order in 2006, meaning that if the Town failed to comply

with the needed and necessary changes to its treatment operations, it would incur a major financial penalty.

With the potential for financial sanctions looming, the Town chose to bring in Wessler Engineering to develop a plan to remove the Town from both the ban and the agreed order. In conjunction with Wessler Engineering, the Town used new and energy-efficient technology and equipment to expand the plant’s capacity, opening the doors to new economic and residential growth.

The plant upgrades were funded through Indiana’s State Revolving Fund Program (SRF), providing a low interest rate for the project and included a full 0.5 percent interest rate reduction due to the inclusion of multiple “green” technologies and design.



Modified oxidation ditch with new blowers, fine-bubble diffused air, and submersible mixers.

Studies of pre-construction and post-construction electric bills were conducted and revealed an approximate 33 percent energy use reduction with the newly upgraded plant, which equaled a savings of just under \$19,000 per year.

Not only was energy saved with the upgrades, but money was also saved on solid waste disposal – an estimated \$50,000 per year, based on a comparison of 2014 disposal costs to the average disposal cost for the years 2009 to 2012.

Upon completion of the project, Greentown was released from both the Sewer Ban and Agreed Order. The Town was also the recipient of a Merit Award for Engineering Excellence from the American Council of Engineering Companies of Indiana in recognition of the efficiency of the Town’s newly upgraded Wastewater Treatment Plant.

ABOUT WESSLER ENGINEERING

Since 1975, Wessler Engineering has been trusted by our

clients to address their civil and environmental engineering needs with a level of service that has resulted in a repeat business rate of more than 90 percent. Wessler offers the attention and service of a smaller firm but has the resources and expertise of a larger firm. Please visit our website at www.wesslerengineering.com for more information about the services we provide or additional clients we have served.

EASTERN INDIANA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION'S (EIRPC) SET PLAN IS GRANTED HQP (HIGH QUALITY PLAN) STATUS BY USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT

EIRPC was notified on February 21, 2017, that their SET Plan had been granted "High Quality Plan" status by the review committee of USDA Rural Development. That designation will allow members of the region to apply for funding for projects identified in the plan from the USDA's Office of Rural Development. A 30-member SET Planning Committee had been working on formulating the regional economic development plan for the 5-county region for almost 18 months. The committee consisted of elected officials, business people and economic development directors from all five of the member counties (Fayette, Randolph, Rush, Union, and Wayne).

The plan focuses on six economic development goals for the region:

- 1) Workforce Development
- 2) Agriculture / Food Processing
- 3) Health Care
- 4) Infrastructure
- 5) Quality of Place
- 6) Collaboration

Each goal has Objectives and Strategies identified for the region, as well as metrics to measure the region's progress. The overall success of the plan will be measured by improvements in Community Vitality Indicators as established by the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs.

Now that the plan has been approved by USDA Rural Affairs, the first steps toward implementation will include a public forum to share the plan with the citizens of the region. We will also be forming committees to organize work for each of the six goals.

The first committee to be formed will be for the Quality of Place Goal. One of the objectives under the Quality of Place Goal is to assess the current condition of the region's housing stock and to develop a plan to improve it. EIRPC will engage the Purdue Center for Regional Development to perform a Housing Study. We are currently working to raise \$25,000 to pay for the study. The result will be a report on the deficiencies in the regional housing market and recommendations on local policies that can be put in place to



Town of Russiaville receiving the Community Crossings Award.

reduce those deficiencies over time.

At the same time, we are working on establishing a website for the region that can be the repository for all the information being generated by this committee work. It is our intention that this website will make it easier for the counties, and the towns and cities within these counties, to work more collaboratively on the challenges that we all face. For more information on the Eastern Indiana Regional Planning Commission and the recently completed economic development plan, please contact:

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NORTH CENTRAL INDIANA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL – NCIRPC CASS, CLINTON, FULTON, HOWARD, MIAMI & TIPTON

ROAD FUNDING

Last year, the Indiana Department of Transportation rolled out the Community Crossings grant program. This 50/50 grant program offered communities a new funding mechanism to repair and improve local roads and bridges. NCIRPC worked directly with local elected officials in the Towns of Bunker Hill, Greentown, Kewanna, Onward and Russiaville to complete the required Pavement Asset Management Plan and to

submit project applications. These communities received eight grant awards for projects totaling over \$400,000. Across the North Central region, 20 units of government received \$6 million in Community Crossings funding. The Regional Planning Council provided services or technical assistance to 11 of the 20.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

NCIRPC is working closely with the region's economic development professionals and local industries in a collaborative effort with the Region 4 Workforce Board to receive two workforce grants in 2016. The \$2.2 million Skill UP Indiana grant supports a training curriculum to develop a talent pipeline for the Advance Manufacturing sector. And the nearly \$6 million America's Promise grant – the only one awarded in Indiana – will accelerate the development and expansion of regional workforce skills across a variety of career pathways. Both programs highlight the strength of our regional partnerships that includes industry leaders, senior level leadership from workforce and economic development organizations, secondary and post-secondary education institutions, elected officials and other community stakeholders.

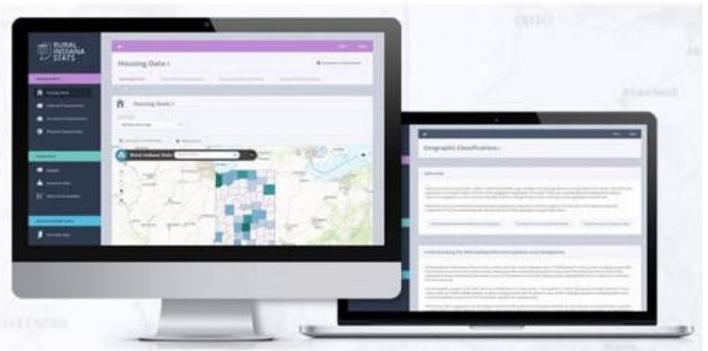
REGIONAL PLANNING

The USDA Stronger Economies Together (SET) program kicked-off in November. Community stakeholders are navigating through a strategic planning process led by the Purdue Center for Regional Development to update the region's 2012 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. This plan will direct the efforts of the council by serving as a guide to foster competitive communities and to build a stronger regional economy. The final plan will be completed in the spring of 2017.

PURDUE & OCRA RELEASE NEW RURAL INDIANA STATS WEBSITE

A new valuable online data platform -- Rural Indiana Stats -- is now available to individuals and organizations in Indiana that want access to a unique mix of data on Indiana's 92 counties. The website, a product of a partnership between the Purdue Center for Regional Development (PCRD) and the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA), offers access to more than 80 county-level variables. The major data products available on the Rural Indiana Stats website include:

- **County Geographic Typologies**, such as the mix of geographic classifications available to determine the metropolitan/nonmetropolitan status and the economic distress features of counties in the state;
- **Housing Characteristics**, including the stock, age and cost of owner and rental-occupied housing;
- **Local Government Fiscal Information**, such as the nature and source of local government revenues and expenditures;
- **Socioeconomic Characteristics**, including the population, economic, health, and cultural attributes of Indiana's counties; and,
- **Community Vitality Indicators**, a mix of six metrics that OCRA is encouraging counties to use to track their socioeconomic progress over time.



“Rural Indiana Stats offers users important options that are not typically available on data sites,” notes Bo Beaulieu, PCRD director. “These include the ability to compare information on two user-selected counties at the same time, the capacity to visualize data using the online mapping option, and the ability to export data and images for use in reports or other user-defined documents.”

To access the Rural Indiana Stats site, visit <http://www.ruralindianastats.com>. You are encouraged to contact the Purdue Center for Regional Development (pcrd@purdue.edu) if you have any questions about the online site or the timeline for future data updates.

Rural Indiana Stats Webinar for IARC Members and Guests – May 1, 2017, 1-2:30 p.m. Eastern

Mark your calendar to take part in a 90-minute webinar to be hosted by the Purdue Center for Rural Development and the Office of Community and Rural Affairs. To register for the webinar, go to <http://eepurl.com/ciWIlz>.

TOWN OF CHRISNEY RECREATION TRAIL PROJECT

Recreation is an integral part of a community's economic and social health. A great accomplishment for the Town of Chrisney is the new bicycling and walking trail. The half mile trail engages fun and healthy activity.



Ribbon cutting ceremony for the new trails in Chrisney.

The Town with the assistance of Indiana 15 Regional Planning Commission secured funds in the amount of \$150,000 through the Indiana Department of Natural Resources – Recreational Trails Program. The town contributed nearly \$40,000 in funding and labor for the walking and bicycling trail. Commonwealth Engineers designed the new trail.



The Chrisney community enjoys the newly opened trails.

Community support, excitement and pride was overwhelming at the October 27, 2016, ribbon cutting ceremony. A presentation by the Town Council President and Clerk Treasurer and fly over can be watched by going to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RNzJydpsozk>.