

Executive Summary

The reader of this document will find it divided into five sections. This section titled "Executive Summary" gives you an overview of the information covered within the Annual Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). This section also includes a list of Indiana 15 Regional Planning Commission's Board of Directors, a list of the members of the CEDS Committee, Indiana 15 Regional Planning Commission's 2004 Budget and the resolution adopting the 2004 CEDS.

Under the advisement of the *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Guidelines*, the annual CEDS answers the following four questions about Indiana 15 Regional Planning Commission:

1. **Where are we?**
2. **Where do we want to be?**
3. **How do we get there?**
4. **How are we doing?**

In answering the question, "Where are we?" we decided to let the facts speak for themselves. This section gives you a clear understanding of the local economic climate in the region. Current demographic and economic data has been used and placed in easily read charts and graphs.

The section named "Vision: Where do we want to be?" provides the basis for formulating the action plan and serves as a benchmark to evaluate the accomplishments of the CEDS process. The Commission's goals and objectives are identified for each area. These goals and objectives compliment Indiana 15 Regional Planning Commission's Mission Statement, and were taken under consideration in the next two sections.

The "Action Plan: How do we get there?" section, focused on the strategies needed to accomplish the goals and objectives determined in the last section. The strategies set forth in this document describe the general goals this plan is seeking to achieve. It also identifies the threat the Commission faces in accomplishing these goals. This section also identifies the future projects of each of our communities and scores the top projects.

Lastly, the Commission answers the question, "How are we doing?" in the final section. Indiana 15 Regional Planning Commission evaluated itself based on the projects we have completed in the last year and the additional grant funds we have been able to bring back to the communities.

The greatest challenge this Commission faces in achieving the goals the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy has set forth, is the fact that local, state, and federal funds are becoming increasingly difficult to obtain. In addition, most local governments cannot generate the required local match for most state and federal grants. As a result,

strategic planning such as the CEDS becomes even more needed even though adequate funding is not always available for this process. However, Indiana 15 Regional Planning Commission realizes that through strategic planning, development within the region will be more cost effective and result in the most efficient utilization of available funding.

Local governments lacking the funding required for most federal or state grant programs has forced Indiana 15 Regional Planning Commission to reevaluate our future project scoring criteria. Indiana 15 Regional Planning Commission is in the process of developing a new scoring criteria that adds readiness to proceed components to the scoring process.

To make the CEDS document a success, Indiana 15 Regional Planning Commission will continue to use this document as a guide. This document must act as a basic blueprint for the future and a mark in which to grade us. If this document is used effectively it will allow our local governments to work both individually and cooperatively to make the region successful.

The Staff of Indiana 15 Regional Planning Commission

