

# The State of the Regional Economy

To determine any changes in the regional economy we looked at four factors in each county:

1. Commuting Patterns
2. Unemployment Rates
3. Leading Industrial Employers
4. The per capita income compared to the state and national levels.

## **Commuting Patterns**

When studying the commuting patterns, we looked at the number of persons who live in the particular county in our region, but commute to a different county or state for employment. In addition, we looked at the number of persons who live outside a county, but commute into a county within the region for employment. According to *STATS Indiana*, the 2003 commuting patterns have not been tabulated at the time of this report. However, the 2002 commuting patterns have been revised to reflect a more accurate count. For this report we looked to see what effect the revised numbers had on the commuting patterns.

## **Unemployment Rates**

Using information from Indiana Workforce Development, unemployment rates were analyzed from 2003 to June of 2004. Then we compared each county's rate to that of the state and the nation.

## **Leading Industrial Employers**

The largest industrial employers were identified in each county. We then analyzed if each company had increased, decreased, or maintained its employment level over the last years. Lastly, we looked at what type of industry each county had.

## **Per Capita Income**

Utilizing data from the Indiana Workforce Development, we graphed the per capita income from each county and analyzed the changes from 2001 to 2002. Then we compared each county's per capita income level to that of the state and nation.

Following is a review of each county and then the analysis of the overall region.

## **CRAWFORD**

### **Commuting Patterns**

The number of persons commuting out of Crawford County to find employment in another county or state has increased by eight percent (8%) since 1998. In addition, forty-seven percent (47%) more persons are commuting into Crawford County for employment in that same period.

### **Unemployment Rate**

The unemployment rate has virtually stayed the same since 2003. In 2003 the unemployment rate in Crawford County was 5.4%. As of June of 2004, the unemployment rate was 5.3%. As of June 2004, Crawford County's unemployment rate was .06% higher than the state unemployment rate and .3% lower than the nation's unemployment rate.

### **Leading Industrial Employers**

Crawford County's two largest employers continue to be Jasper Engines and Transmissions and Mulzer Crushed Stone, Inc. Both industries have maintained their level of employment over the last year. According to the 2004 Indiana Harris Industrial Directory, the type of industry in Crawford County has not changed in the last year.

### **Per Capita Income**

Exactly like the state's average, once again Crawford County's per capita income increased at the same rate as the state, which was two percent (2%). However the average per capita income rate in Crawford County in 2002 was about \$1,600 less than the national level and approximately \$6,900 less than the state average.

## **DUBOIS**

### **Commuting Patterns**

The number of persons commuting out of Dubois County to find employment in another county or state has increased twenty percent (20%) since 1998. In addition the number of persons coming into Dubois County for employment has decreased three percent (3%) in that same period.

### **Unemployment Rate**

The unemployment rate in Dubois County has once again increased, but is still lower than most counties. As of June 2004, Dubois County's unemployment rate was 2.8% lower than the national level and once again is 1.9% lower than the state's level.

## Leading Industrial Employers

According to the 2004 Harris Indiana Industrial Directory, there are six industries in Dubois County that employ over 550 people. Of the six biggest employers, one has increased their employment, two have decreased their employment and three have maintained it. Office Furniture Systems, Inc., which manufactures wooden office furniture has had the largest decline, losing twenty-two percent (22%) of its workforce last year. According to the 2004 Harris Indiana Industrial Directory, the wood working industry continues to be the largest industry in Dubois County.

## Per Capita Income

Dubois County's per capita income decreased by two percent (2%) from 2001 to 2002. However, Dubois County's per capita income level is still approximately \$8,700 higher than the national average and \$3,400 higher than the state's average.

## ORANGE

### Commuting Patterns

The number of persons commuting out of Orange County to find employment in another county or state has increased sixteen percent (16%) since 1998. In addition, the number of persons coming into Orange County for employment has decreased thirteen percent (13%) in that same period.

### Unemployment Rate

The unemployment rate in Orange County has also stayed basically the same over the past year; however, it still remains one of the highest in the state. As of June 2004, the rate was at 8.5%, which is 2.9% higher than the national rate and 3.8% higher than the state rate.

## Leading Industrial Employers

Once again, none of the industries employing over 100 people have increased their employment levels over the last year. Mi-Lin Wood Products, and White Castle Systems, Inc. have both decreased employment levels over the past year. In addition, Superior Essex, Inc. the third largest industrial employer in the county closed its doors last year. According to the 2004 Harris Indiana Industrial Directory, the wood working industry continues to be very active in Orange County.

## Per Capita Income

Orange County's per capita income increased five percent (5%) in 2002. However, on average, Orange County's per capita income level is still \$1,400 less than the national level and \$6,600 less than the state level.

## **PERRY**

### Commuting Patterns

The number of persons commuting out of Perry County to find employment in another county or state has decreased four percent (4%) since 1998. In addition the number of persons coming into Perry County for employment has increased sixteen (16%) in that same period.

### Unemployment Rate

The unemployment rate in Perry County also has not changed much over the last year. As of June 2004 the unemployment rate was at 5.2%, which is 0.4% lower than the national level, and 0.5% higher than the state level.

### Leading Industrial Employers

There has not been much change in the employment levels of the biggest employers in Perry County over the past year. Perry County, unlike most counties in the region, continues to have a diverse type of manufacturers, not solely depending on the wood manufacturing industry.

### Per Capita Income

Perry County's per capita income level has increased at or about the same level as the state. On average, Perry County's per capita income level is now approximately \$600 more than the national level and \$5,200 less than the state level.

## **PIKE**

### Commuting Patterns

The number of persons commuting out of Pike County to find employment in another county or state basically stayed the since 1998. In addition, the number of persons coming into Pike County for employment has increased sixteen percent (16%) in that same period.

### Unemployment Rate

The unemployment rate in Pike County has continued to increase over the past year. As of June 2004 the unemployment rate was 5.9%, which is 0.3% higher than the national level and 1.2% higher than the state's level. This rate will grow even larger in the next few months, with the closing of Kindill Mining Company in September.

### Leading Industrial Employers

Pike County had five companies that employ over 100 people, three of which mine bituminous surface coal. Pike County lost its second largest employer this month, losing

approximately 240 jobs. However, three of the five largest employers in Pike County have increased their employment levels over the last year.

#### Per Capita Income

In 2002 Pike County's per capita decreased by \$1,843, which is an eight percent (8%) decrease. Pike County's per capita income level is on average \$1,200 less than the nation's level and \$6,500 less than the state's level.

### **SPENCER**

#### Commuting Patterns

The number of persons commuting out of Spencer County to find employment in another county or state has decreased two percent (2%) since 1998. However, the number of persons coming into Spencer County for employment has decreased twenty-two percent (22%) in that same period.

#### Unemployment Rate

The unemployment rate in Spencer County has decreased to 4.1% in the past year. Spencer County's unemployment rate is 1.5% lower than the national level and 0.6% lower than the state level. However, that rate will increase in the upcoming months with the closure of Peerless Pottery, Inc. closing in October.

#### Leading Industrial Employers

Spencer County's fifth largest employer, Peerless Pottery, Inc. will be shutting its doors in October 2004 losing 167 jobs. The employment trends are mixed among the other four companies. Two have maintained their employment level, two have declined their level and one has increased its employment level.

#### Per Capita Income

Spencer County's per capita income decreased slightly in 2002 by one percent (1%). Spencer County's per capita income is on average \$2,000 higher than the national average but \$3,200 less than the state average.

### **Conclusion**

#### Commuting Patterns

The number of people commuting into the region for employment has decreased four percent (4%) since 1998. The number of people within the region that are leaving the region to find employment in another county or state has increased five percent (5%) since 1998. Overall, the counties in the region are not retaining their workers. There are some definite warning signs of possible trouble ahead. Dubois County employs the majority of the workers in the region and the number of people leaving Dubois County for employment has increased twenty percent (20%) since 1998.

## Unemployment Rates

The unemployment rate has basically stayed the same in most of the region since 2003. Pike and Spencer Counties have experienced the most change. Pike County has experienced a 0.7% increase since last year and is anticipating an even greater increase in the upcoming months with the closure of their seconded largest employer. Spencer County has experienced a 0.6% decrease in the unemployment rate over the last year, however they are anticipating an increase in the next few months due to the closing of their fifth largest employer, Peerless Pottery, Inc.

## Leading Industrial Employers

Of the largest industrial employers of the region, most companies are either maintaining their current level of employment or growing, with the exception of the wood working industry. Unfortunately, our region depends intensely on this sector of manufacturing. There was a significant decline in Dubois and Orange Counties' employment due to their dependence on the wood working industry. However, the auto industry is doing well within the region. Jasper Engines and Transmission Inc. has grown significantly. In addition there has been a number of new automotive suppliers to come into the region due to the new Toyota Plant in Princeton, Indiana.

## Per Capita Income

From 2001 to 2002, the nation's per capita income decreased drastically by twenty-five percent (25%). However, the state's per capita income increased by two percent (2%). Over that same time period, the region's per capita income decreased by one percent (1%). Pike County had the largest decline with an eight percent (8%) decrease. However, Orange County, which had the regions lowest per capita income in 2001, increased by five percent (5%).