

Executive Summary

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (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?**

We directed these questions to four main areas that Indiana 15 Regional Planning Commission addresses daily. These areas include Economic and Socioeconomic issues, Infrastructure, Natural and Historic Resources, Physical Environment, Transportation, Health and Safety, and Regional Planning Promotion.

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 complement 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 what projects need to be accomplished in order to achieve the goals and objectives set in the previous section. All the identified projects were scored in this section. Then the top five projects in the following areas were identified:

- Economic Development
- Infrastructure
- Transportation
- Planning
- Community Facilities
- Public Safety

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, citizens and local elected officials

are demanding greater accountability for the funds being allocated at each level of government. 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.

To make this document a success, we must continue to use it as a guide over the next three years. This document provides a benchmark for the future and a context for planning based on the District's strengths and weaknesses. If this document is used effectively it will allow our local governments to work both individually and cooperatively to make the region successful.

Indiana 15 Regional Planning Commission

