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Society of Innovators has new purpose with Purdue University Northwest

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Founder
Recycled Granite*

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'Ignite the Region' initiative spurring next wave of growth



Troy Linker



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is owned and Published by
Linker Media Group, Inc.,
Troy Linker, President and CEO.

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Two-year quarterly subscription rate is \$19.95. Single magazine price is \$3.95. Requests for additional magazines will be billed shipping charges. Total circulation: 13,000. Send payment with your name, company address and contact information to: Northwest Indiana Business Magazine 905 Joliet St. #237, Dyer IN 46311

Region a hub of opportunity

Investments of time, dollars starting to yield dividends both foreign and domestic

When it comes to opportunities, Northwest Indiana's entrepreneurs have shown there's no shortage of good ideas. In fact, some concepts developed in the Region have evolved into successful business ventures and mechanisms that could help other organizations prosper in the future.

Region residents are familiar with the Society of Innovators of Northwest Indiana and the many people as well as unique ideas the organization has recognized through the years. Jerry Davich writes about the organization and its affiliation with Purdue University Northwest, and how the new partnership will use the Region's rich history of innovation as catalyst for economic development.

There has been no shortage of new development coming into the Region and state in recent years. Lauren Caggiano writes about how, between 2012 and 2015, foreign-owned companies have announced plans to invest \$6 billion into Indiana and create 20,000 new jobs for Hoosiers. More good news is on the way as Indiana's investment in infrastructure and reclaiming prime parcels for redevelopment is getting noticed.

The state and local economy aren't solely dependent on outside investment. As Bob Moulesong writes, Indiana's agriculture sales reached \$31.2 billion in 2017, with an additional \$4.6 billion in exports. With global demand strong for Indiana agricultural products, state and local leaders are examining ways to get more of them to the world.

While plenty of activity surrounds business attraction and retention,

efforts also are underway to preserve successful ventures, so they continue well into the future. Lesly Bailey talks to several Region companies and what they've done to prepare for the future to ensure successful ownership transition to preserve jobs and continued prosperity.

Proximity to its customer base was what helped lure a California company to Northwest Indiana. Jerry Davich talks with Blue Dot Safes and why it made sense for the company to locate in the Region.

Entertainment also is showing promise in the Region. Carrie Napoleon writes about how some Region entrepreneurs have found that providing fun venues and activities for children and adults can lead to successful businesses.

When Region professionals aren't on the clock, they take the time to pursue hobbies or check out what's happening in the area's entertainment scene. John Cain writes about happenings from artistic photography to live performances in Northwest Indiana, and Jack Walton highlights things to see and do in the Greater South Bend area.

Writer Philip Potempa catches up with Craig Dwight, CEO and chairman of Horizon Bank, whose pursuit of outdoor fun has taken him on adventures around the world.

And, last but not least, Indiana's Secretary of Commerce Jim Schellinger talks about how businesses, both from afar and locally, demonstrate a "commitment to making Indiana the very best place to live, work and play."

Thank you for reading this issue of Northwest Indiana Business Magazine.

Around the Region

Stay current with local people, news and events

LARRY AVILA

Business

California-based **Premier BioSource**, an agricultural biosciences company, plans to invest \$7.5 million in Jasper County to build a new research facility. The company will construct and equip a 78,000-square-foot, 600-sow, farrow-to-finish farm operation in Rensselaer, the Indiana Economic Development Corp. reported. Premier BioSource's pigs will be used solely for biomedical research and product development, contributing to advancements in heart stents, cardiac repair and rejuvenation, diabetes and insulin research, and surgical procedures. Company officials say the facility will be operational by June 2019.

Fortune's latest list of the 100 fastest growing companies features four Indiana-based businesses. Making the list, including ranking and location:

- **Patrick Industries**, 30, Elkhart
- **Thor Industries**, 54, Elkhart
- **First Internet Bancorp**, 88, Fishers
- **LCI Industries**, 96, Elkhart

To qualify for the list, a company—domestic or foreign—must be trading on a major U.S. stock exchange; report data in U.S. dollars; file quarterly reports with the SEC; have a minimum

market capitalization of \$250 million and a stock price of at least \$5 on June 29, 2018. Companies must have been trading continuously since June 30, 2015. Companies also must have revenue and net income for the four quarters ended on or before April 30, 2018, of at least \$50 million and \$10 million, respectively, and have posted an annualized growth in revenue and earnings per share of at least 15 percent annually over the three years ended on or before April 30, 2018.

Banking

Teachers Credit Union of South Bend announced Sept. 26 that it surpassed 300,000 members. The credit union celebrated the milestone throughout October by hosting promotional events for members and through charitable activities by credit union employees. Teachers Credit Union, founded in 1931, has more than \$3 billion in assets and 54 branches throughout Indiana and Southwest Michigan.

Construction

Anne Van Keppel has joined **Berglund Construction** as business development manager in the company's Chesterton office. Van Keppel previously worked in the corporate partnerships and business

development department at Valparaiso University. She will work on expanding Berglund's presence and developing relationships in Northwest Indiana. Berglund is a construction firm based in Chicago.

Education

More freshman students are enrolling at **Purdue University Northwest** while numbers of previously enrolled students choosing to continue their education at the college also are increasing. The university said in its 2018-19 fall enrollment that its first-time freshman population totaled 1,172 students, up 47 from last year. Additionally, retention of continuing PNW students increased to a school record of 69.4 percent, representing an 8.6 percent jump in the past two years.

Two **Valparaiso University** professors are partnering with colleagues from **Brown University** and **Smith College** to advance the field of data science education, thanks to a \$199,040 **TRIPODS+X** grant from the **National Science Foundation**. Valparaiso University will receive more than 50 percent of these funds and serve as the lead institution for the collaborative effort. The TRIPODS+EDU: Investigations of Student Difficulties in Data Science Instruction is one of 19 collaborative



CONSTRUCTION: Anne Van Keppel



EDUCATION: Katie Jenner



HEALTH CARE: Jesus Delgado



HEALTH CARE: Mazen Alakhras



HEALTH CARE: Gracie Michels



HEALTH CARE: Jessica Wisdom



HEALTH CARE: Scott Gogulski



IT: Tracy Matus

projects supported by NSF. Valparaiso's **Karl Schmitt**, assistant professor of mathematics and statistics and director of the college's data science program, and **Ruth Wertz**, assistant professor of general engineering, will serve as principle investigators.

U.S. News & World Report's latest list of best colleges in America features 43 schools from the Hoosier state. In the regional universities Midwest list, Butler University and Taylor University in Upland, tied for first. **Valparaiso University** was ranked fifth on the regional universities Midwest list. **Purdue University Northwest's** engineering program was ranked 35th among regional Midwest universities. There were six Indiana colleges featured on the national universities list. The universities and their rank include:

- **University of Notre Dame**, 18
- **Purdue University**, West Lafayette, 56
- **Indiana University**, Bloomington, 89
- **Ball State University**, 171
- **Indiana University-Purdue University**, Indianapolis, 194
- **Indiana State University**, 230-301

Valparaiso University has joined more than 300 other educational institutions across the nation in the **#YouAreWelcomeHere** scholarship program. **Ivy Tech Community College**, **Indiana University-South Bend** and **Purdue University Northwest** also are among the Northwest and Northcentral Indiana colleges that participate in the program. The program emerged out of a social media campaign led by Temple

University to welcome and encourage international students to study in the U.S. The scholarship program provides financial support to incoming international students.

Ivy Tech Community College has named **Katie Jenner** vice president of K-12 initiatives and statewide partnerships. Jenner will lead Ivy Tech's efforts in expanding K-14 talent development pipeline partnerships between K-12, career centers and Ivy Tech.

Health Care

The American Heart Association/American Stroke Association recently presented the hospitals of **Community Healthcare System** with **Get With The Guidelines - Stroke Quality Achievement Awards**. **St. Catherine Hospital**, East Chicago, and **St. Mary Medical Center**, Hobart, achieved Gold Plus status, and **Community Hospital**, Munster, earned Silver Plus. The hospitals also earned Target: Stroke honor roll status.

Hospital and community officials broke ground Aug. 23 on the new \$125 million **La Porte Hospital**. The new 200,000-square-foot hospital will replace the existing facility. The new hospital is part of a \$140 million commitment made possible through La Porte Hospital's affiliation with Community Health Systems of Franklin, Tenn., in March 2016. The new facility is expected to open in 2020.

Jesus Delgado was named vice president of information technology/chief information officer for **Community Foundation of Northwest Indiana Inc.**, parent company of the hospitals

of **Community Healthcare System**. Delgado will be responsible for strategic planning, directing and managing information technologies for Community Hospital, Munster; St. Catherine Hospital, East Chicago; and St. Mary Medical Center, Hobart. Delgado has more than 27 years of information technology experience.

New physicians recently joined **Franciscan Physician Network**: **Dr. Mazen Alakhras** specializes in pulmonary, critical care and sleep medicine; **Dr. E. Gracie Michels** is an obstetrician and gynecologist who will see patients at Franciscan Physician Network Rensselaer Medical Center; **Dr. Marianne Nelson**, family medicine, will see patients at Franciscan Physician Network Rensselaer Medical Center in Rensselaer.

Community Healthcare System recently welcomed new physicians to its various facilities around Northwest Indiana: **Dr. Vsevolod Tikhomirov**, cardiovascular surgeon; **Dr. Jason Frazier**, cardiothoracic surgeon; **Dr. Brian Evanson**, orthopedic surgeon; **Dr. Akata Kakodkar**, ear, nose and throat specialist; **Dr. Kedar Kakodkar**, CCNI otolaryngologist, in practice in Munster; **Dr. Natalie Sessions**, board certified in rheumatology and internal medicine; **Dr. Karen Noriega**, internal medicine; **Dr. Robert Khoury**, primary care provider.

Nurse clinician **Mary Puntillo** of **Community Hospital**, Munster, has been selected a co-recipient of the **2018 Douglas J. Leonard Indiana Caregiver of the Year** award. **The Indiana Hospital Association** award honors an individual whose performance in the delivery of care is



INSURANCE: Becky Beckman



INSURANCE: Shaun Daugherty



INSURANCE: Dana Grant



INSURANCE: Frank Jozefczak

considered exemplary by patients and peers.

Jessica Wisdom, a family nurse practitioner, has joined the staff at **Franciscan Wheatfield Health Center**, Wheatfield. Wisdom has experience in outpatient family-care settings, including hospice treatment, senior care and medical/surgical.

Dr. Scott Gogulski has joined **La Porte Physician Network Primary Care** at the LifeWorks Building in Michigan City as a family practice physician. Gogulski is board certified

by the American Osteopathic Board of Family Physicians.

Information Technology

Tracy Matus has joined the staff of **Chester Inc.** in Valparaiso as an outside sales representative. She has more than 20 years of experience working in the information technology field.

Insurance

Gibson, an insurance brokerage firm with locations in South Bend, Plymouth, Indianapolis, Fort Wayne,

and Elkhart, and Kalamazoo, Mich., recently welcomed the following new employees: **Becky Beckman**, director of marketing; **Shaun Daugherty**, director of technology; **Dana Grant**, claims specialist in risk management; **Frank Jozefczak**, client manager in the small employee benefit group; **Kaylee Vendola**, a client manager in employee benefits, SEB; and **Wendy Zook**, account manager in the employee benefits practice. The company also recently announced the following staff promotions: **Jill**



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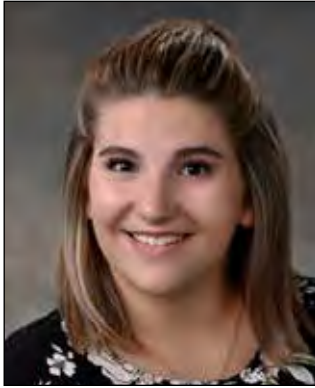
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a good start.*



*Big stores,
small shops,
good shopping.*



*Restaurants,
art, music,
a good time.*



INSURANCE: Kaylee Vendola



INSURANCE: Wendy Zook



INSURANCE: Jill Hardesty



INSURANCE: Ali Hammond

Hardesty, payroll and HR operations director in Select Business Solutions; **Ali Hammond**, accounting services project and implementation manager in Select Business Solutions; **Brock Tatic**, conversion, implementation and project specialist in Select Business Solutions; and **Megan Stockton**, HR consultant in Select Business Solutions.

Law

Sarah Baker of Crown Point has joined the Northbrook, Ill.-based

financial services firm Hilco Global, as vice president and assistant general counsel. Baker will handle the firm's corporate legal matters as well as specific business transactions and deals requiring legal counsel. Baker was named by the National LGBT Bar Association as one of its 2015 40 Under 40.

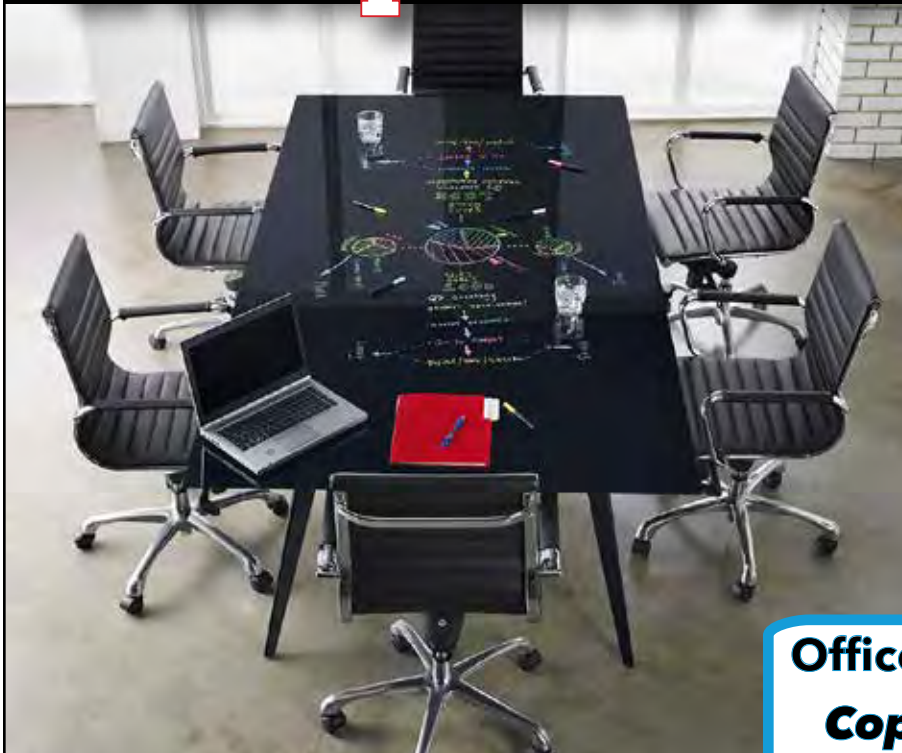
Manufacturing

A recently released revised forecast of RV industry shipments shows that 505,900 units are expected to ship to

dealers in 2018, according to the **RV Industry Association**. It will mark nine consecutive years of growth for the industry in what it says should be the highest annual total for the RV market. The association, which maintains offices in Elkhart and near the nation's capital in Reston, Va., said second-quarter shipments totaled 134,502, which was the third-highest quarterly shipment total in more than 40 years.

Specialty Steel Works Inc. announced Sept. 7 that it will make

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INSURANCE: Brock Tatich



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LAW: Sarah Baker



MEDIA: Wende Burbridge

a major capital investment at its **Niagara LaSalle Corp. Cold Finish Steel Bar** facility in Hammond. The company said the multimillion-dollar investment will include new high-performance equipment and infrastructure. The company said the new equipment will be phased in during the next year.

Media

Wende Burbridge, vice president of development for **Lakeshore Public Media**, recently was elected to

the board of directors for the **Public Radio Association of Development Officers**. PRADO provides a supportive environment for public radio development professionals through a variety of projects and services. Board members serve a three-year term. Lakeshore Public Media, based in Merrillville, operates Lakeshore PBS and Lakeshore Public Radio 89.1 FM.

Nonprofit

More than 20 new homes will be built in Mishawaka and another 20 repaired

or renovated in the Mishawaka/South Bend area as part of a **Habitat for Humanity International** initiative led by former President Jimmy Carter and his wife, Rosalynn. The 35th **Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter Work Project** brought the former president and first lady to Mishawaka on Aug. 27 when they spent the week working alongside Habitat for Humanity volunteers and future homeowners. The Carters assisted in building 22 new, affordable homes in what will become an all-Habitat for Humanity




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neighborhood in Mishawaka. Including other Habitat projects this year and others planned the rest of 2018, a total of 41 homes will either be built, renovated or repaired in Mishawaka and South Bend as part of the 2018 Carter Work Project.

Restaurants

Jordy N Jax BBQ's new Valparaiso location is now open. The restaurant's website announced the eatery hosted its grand opening Nov. 12. The restaurant was in Demotte, but it was announced by Latitude Commercial Realty of Schererville in late August that restaurant owners Bill and Kim Walz had signed a lease at 255 E. Morthland Drive in Valparaiso. The restaurant serves traditional barbecue food, as well as beer and wine.

Shipping

The **American Metal Market** has named **Ports of Indiana** the **Logistics/Transportation Provider of the Year for 2018**. The ninth annual Awards for Steel Excellence recently were announced at AMM's Steel Awards Dinner, held in conjunction with the global Steel Success Strategies XXXIII Conference in New York.

News

A high-profile location at U.S. 30 and Interstate 65 will again feature hotels, premium office space and a multi-use indoor-outdoor facility. **White Lodging** of Merrillville on Oct. 3 revealed a more than \$350 million plan to transform the site into what the hospitality firm is billing as **The Farm at Crossroad Commons**. The company says its 40-acre mixed-use redevelopment will support local and regional tourism and economic development "through unique-to-the-Region offerings." The main feature of is a working education-based farm and greenhouse, a visitor's center, and indoor-outdoor meeting and event center with more than 104,500 square feet of flexible space. The project, which would take up to three years to complete, also includes four hotels, a microbrewery, distillery, two restaurants, an art gallery and a 100,000-square-foot office building.



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A spark for launching ideas

Society of Innovators has new purpose with Purdue University Northwest



Photo by Pete Doherty for Purdue University Northwest

Past honorees of the Society of Innovators of Northwest Indiana in late October discussed how the recognition has helped their professional lives. Dave Ryan, executive director of the Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce, standing left, moderates the discussion. Seated from the left are Adela Ortega, president of Professional Locomotive Services, East Chicago; Dwayne Walker, owner of Chicagoland Popcorn, Merrillville; and Julie Rizzo, founder, Recycled Granite, Schererville.

JERRY DAVICH

The spirit of innovation is not only flying high across Northwest Indiana, it's now piloted by a new flight crew with broader horizons.

In June 2018, the vaunted Society of Innovators of NWI entered a collaboration agreement to establish itself as the Society of Innovators at Purdue University Northwest. This super-charged alliance will jettison the organization on a new flight path, expanding its impact on the Region's economy, community development and tightly focused initiatives.

"The Society of Innovators will now build on its success, propelled by the

enthusiasm of its 1,600 members and the commitment of its new board of directors," said Gary Johnson, the board's new chairman.

The recently introduced "Ignite the Region, Northwest Indiana's Strategy for Economic Transformation," spearheaded by the Northwest Indiana Forum, outlines five broad goals, including one that reflects the society's mission: "entrepreneurship and innovation."

"The society is deeply involved in the implementation process of this strategy, and it will take ownership of several initiatives outlined in the report," said Johnson, president of Mortar Net Solutions in Burns Harbor.

Johnson was one of three board members who were instrumental in keeping the society moving forward when Ivy Tech Community College chose to end its affiliation after 13 years. The other two board members involved in the transition are Don Babcock of NIPSCO and Maggi Spartz of Unity Foundation of La Porte County.

"Gary, Don and Maggi were part of the second meeting of the team that introduced 'Ignite the Region,'" said Kris Falzone, associate vice chancellor of marketing and communications at PNW. "The Society of Innovators represents a unique opportunity to expand its role as the gateway for

creators, innovators and entrepreneurs in Northwest Indiana.”

Falzone, who’s also on the society’s board, said the organization will look for new opportunities to collaborate with other groups in the private, public and not-for-profit sectors to increase its role as a driver of innovation. For example, it might work jointly with PNW to develop workshops or certificate programs.

“There also may be opportunities to support or augment PNW research and economic development efforts,” she said. “All these possibilities would be an enhancement for society members as well as for the public.”

Rewarding credentials

Many of the innovators who’ve been formally recognized by the society over the years enthusiastically welcome the news.

“I can honestly say that the Society of Innovators helped me launch my entire career,” says Julie Rizzo, the founder of Recycled Granite, whose Green Abilities team won the society’s Chanute Prize for Team Innovation in 2015. “All of this was created with one thought: what can I do with this dumpster of granite cut-offs?”

Rizzo saw an undiscovered treasure trove in discarded granite, and she now is recognized internationally as a global recycler of rocks that dinosaurs once walked on.

“I was blessed to be awarded, enabling me to create jobs across the country and to recycle millions of pounds of granite waste,” Rizzo said. “Being recognized as an innovator changed my entire perspective.”

She credits the society, as well as its former Ivy Tech mentors, O’Merrial Butchee and John Davies, for recognizing strengths in her that she never would have discovered on her own: Most notably, listing her innovations in the Congressional Record.

“This gave me major credentials that I never would have been able to achieve on my own,” said Rizzo, who has since appeared on 14 TV shows to showcase her work.

“To date, we established 17 Recycled Granite franchised locations across the

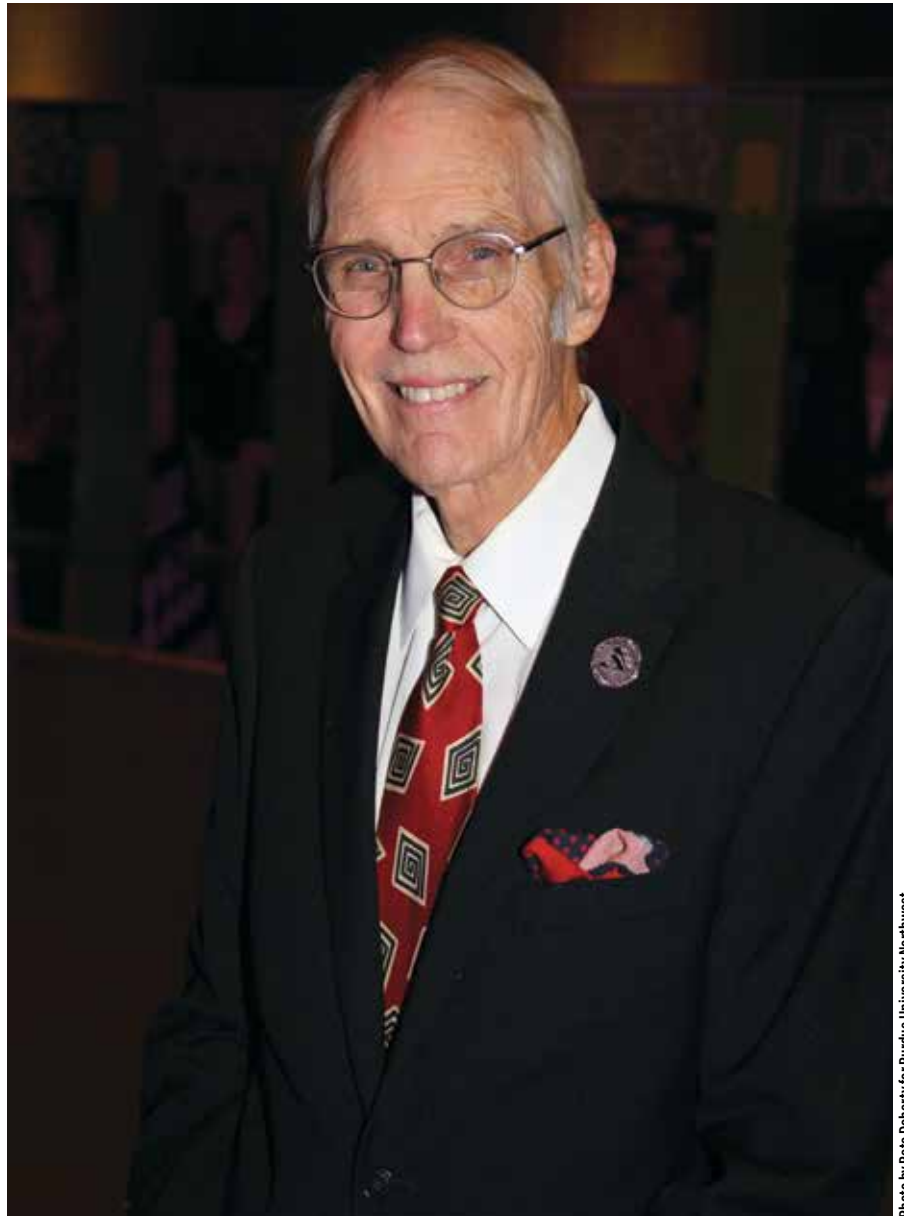


Photo by Pete Doherty for Purdue University Northwest

John Davies has been associated with the Society of Innovators of Northwest Indiana since its inception. He said Purdue University Northwest is the perfect organization to affiliate with the society because it lives and breathes innovation.

U.S. and created the Green Abilities program to train people with disabilities to have employment opportunities,” she said. “Without the support of the Society of Innovators, I would be years behind in my developments.”

Norm Fischer, founder and chief engineer of The Fischer Group in Crown Point, credits the society’s recognition as an “incredible high point” in his long career.

“It definitely brought local attention to our company through social media from many who knew us but didn’t really know what we did,” said Fischer,

who has moved to Arizona with his wife and business partner, Julie, to expand the company’s reach into the Southwest.

For 38 years, Fischer toiled as a problem solver in his industry, culminating with the patented invention of an energy-efficient compressed air desiccant dryer. Think of it as a high-tech new way to remove humidity and contaminants from the air, a necessity for industrial manufacturing. His firm designed, built and installed three large dryers for ArcelorMittal, with energy savings in excess of 7 million



Photo provided by Purdue University Northwest

John Moreland, senior research scientist, works in the control booth of the 3-D immersive theater at the Center for Innovation through Visualization and Simulation at Purdue University Northwest. The CIVS team was inducted into the Society of Innovators in 2012-2013.

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“What a great honor to have received recognition and induction as a Fellow into the Society of Innovators,” Fischer said. “It is a nice reminder to continue to do what we do best, hopefully helping to make this world a little better. Plus, we have developed two major improvements to our original invention, directly driven by the excitement of being recognized by the society.”

Neeti Parashar put Northwest Indiana under the microscope of the global scientific world by leading a high-energy physics team as part of an initiative to discover the elusive Higgs boson subatomic particle, also known as the “God Particle.”

“The discovery in 2012 remains a crowning achievement in the history of particle physics,” said Parashar, a professor of physics at PNW whose work helped land the 2013 Nobel Prize for United Kingdom’s Peter Higgs and Belgium’s Francois Englert.

In 2014, she was recognized by the society for her crucial role in the historic discovery.

“This honor was the first step, and the most critical one, that provided me the exposure to our Northwest Indiana community,” she said. “This recognition has awarded me an incredible opportunity to get immersed into a direct communication with our Region.”

The award also created awareness of the physics program at PNW, including the opportunities to conduct discovery-driven scientific research. In 2015, her research work was federally funded with \$407,000.

“Because of my research work, PNW is on the global map of scientific discoveries,” she said.

Robert Colangelo, founding farmer and president of Green Sense Farms in Portage, has noticed the society is growing in both reputation and stature. He was honored for his vertical farming innovations in 2014.

“It is a good organization to put on our company and personal resumes,” he said. “The networking with other members provides an ad-hoc support group for entrepreneurs to exchange

ideas and share experiences. There is no road map or blueprint to follow, so we are blazing new trails every day.”

Colangelo has converted his firm’s original farm into a large-scale production center for research and development. He also has teamed with key agricultural universities to provide full-scale research on a contract basis. And he has continued to raise capital to fund his U.S. farm network and to license technology for operating partners in foreign countries.

“Being an innovator means that you must be fast to fail and quick to pivot,” he said.

Welcomed success

Many other innovator inductees also have pivoted to newfound successes after being blessed by the society.

Scott Albanese recently completed a \$33 million investment in one of the world’s foremost gummy-candy factories, equipped with robots and other technology. And Stewart McMillan



Neeti Parashar, a physics professor at Purdue University Northwest, was recognized by the Society of Innovators of Northwest Indiana for her research work in 2014.

from Task Force Tips is on the heels of a successful global business regarding firefighting equipment after launching a groundbreaking training academy for firefighters, first responders and police in Valparaiso.

When the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority was honored by the society with its Accelerating Greatness Award in 2014, the first-of-its-kind organization was just making its case to the Indiana



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Photo by Michelle Hamstra

Julie Rizzo, the founder of Recycled Granite, credits the Society of Innovators with the success of her company. Her Green Abilities team won the society's Chanute Prize for Team Innovation in 2015, which launched her idea into the mainstream.

General Assembly to continue its efforts beyond the first 10 years.

"The award underscored the way we had been able to pioneer a regional approach to major infrastructure challenges like the Lake Michigan shoreline," said Bill Hanna, CEO of the RDA. "It also helped us show the General Assembly that we could bring the same kind of innovation to regional transportation and transit-oriented development."

Since that time, the RDA has worked with local, state and federal authorities to secure funding for commuter rail expansion, and to establish new ways to connect that rail system to private investment through Transit Development Districts.

"These are a first-of-their-kind innovation in Indiana, and will allow us to continue to invest in infrastructure upgrades and incentive around train stations in Lake and Porter counties," Hanna said. "This will ensure that the Region gets the maximum number of jobs and economic impact possible out of the investment in commuter rail."

On a personal level, Hanna is grateful when the hard work of his staff and its board is recognized.

"In the daily process of managing projects and relationships, it's easy to lose sight of the bigger picture," he said. "Honors like the Accelerating Greatness Award gave us an opportunity to look up and be reminded of our overarching goal to make Northwest Indiana the economic leader of Indiana's future."

Moving forward

The reinvented Society of Innovators has similar ambitions to champion Hoosier innovation and to participate in strengthening its cultural presence in this Region. On Oct. 25, the society hosted a celebration of its new incarnation at the Venue at the Horseshoe Casino in Hammond.

The organization's plans include new initiatives focused on mentorship and networking through events and social media for innovators and entrepreneurs. As well as educational programs and workshops with "how to's" to stimulate and lead innovation.

"We are working closely with Indianapolis-based Centric to help spread innovation across the state, and to spread the innovation network throughout Indiana," society President Johnson said. "We're only getting started."

And yes, of course, the society will continue to formally identify and publicly celebrate innovators and their unique achievements, following the impassioned lead of John Davies, the group's initial navigator.

"Many of these innovators live in obscurity, but the society shined a light on their genius, which is why people always love our inductions," said Davies, who served as the society's managing director for many years. "I loved how these innovators came up with their breakthrough ideas, and how they spent hours discussing those light-bulb moments."

Davies, who served as coordinator for the Oct. 25 celebration, is serving the society on a project-to-project basis. He hopes to remain involved with it at any level, and has nothing but superlatives for its new high-flying navigators.

"Purdue is a terrific host because it lives and breathes innovation," said Davies, who is launching his own innovation coaching business through Woodlands C&I Consultancy.

Through his years with the society, Davies devised 10 principles of "thinking differently" as an innovator—the common denominator with all inductees, he learned.

"They all discovered a creative idea that typically solved a problem in a new way," Davies said. "In most cases, it represents a breakthrough because it challenged the status quo, and they took a risk to pursue it, sometimes at their peril."

"These innovators could be a future Thomas Edison, Henry Ford or Orville Wright," he added, hinting at the society's adventurous new flight plans.

As its new stewards proudly boast to passengers and observers alike, if you thought the Society of Innovators was history, think again. It's new mission is to make history.

To learn more about the new Society of Innovators, visit www.nwisoi.org.

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Attracting foreign interests

Northwest Indiana emerging as a destination for global investments



Photo provided by the office of Sen. Joe Donnelly

Gary/Chicago International Airport has a full-fledged U.S. Customs facility, which Region leaders dedicated in August. Northwest Indiana economic development professionals say having the service is one of many helping the Region become a force in the global marketplace.

LAUREN CAGGIANO

While interest and investment on the part of foreign companies in Northwest Indiana is not a novelty, recent wins suggest the trend may have staying power.

For instance, Gary and Hammond put in bids for Amazon's HQ2. Gary/Chicago International Airport has a full-fledged U.S. Customs facility. Thor Industries of Elkhart recently bought a German company for \$2.4 billion and operates in a global marketplace. Japan-based Daifuku Wynright recently announced plans for a new \$26 million facility in Hobart.

Region economic and business

development representatives say Indiana is gaining interest in the global marketplace.

Setting the stage

Recent major business announcements only tell part of the story. Indiana is home to more than 800 foreign-owned business establishments that employ more than 190,900 people, according to the Indiana Economic Development Corp. The state also is home to the highest percentage of private-sector jobs coming from foreign-owned firms in the Midwest.

Between 2012 and 2015, foreign-owned companies announced plans to invest \$6 billion into Indiana and

create 20,000 new Hoosier jobs.

So, what's changed about Indiana? What is driving efforts in Indiana to make the state a destination for international business? Experts from the public sector, private sector and academic community suggest a variety of factors have helped the state become a business destination.

According to one state official, Indiana has reached a critical mass years in the making. "I think it's not a recent development but a culmination of all our efforts over the last dozen years," said Matt Saltanovitz, the Indiana Economic Development Corp.'s director for Northwest Region business development.

And state leaders do not seem to be resting on their laurels. In fact, it's quite the opposite.

"On a higher level, the governor and secretary of commerce are traveling (abroad) to bring Indiana to the world and the world to Indiana," he said.

Those efforts can translate into action. For example, Saltanovitz said it's no coincidence that Northwest Indiana is on the map. State leaders courted Israeli-owned MCP. The result? MCP, a plastics company, gained approval for a new 65,000-square-foot building in the AmeriPlex business park in Portage that's expected to bring 60 new jobs, according to the IEDC.

What about the other pieces of the puzzle? If you ask leaders of the Lake County Indiana Economic Alliance, it requires just as much looking backward as it does forward.

According to the alliance's President and CEO Karen Lauerman, "the state has stepped up its game" and is now reaping the fruits. Specifically, she cited the creation of the IEDC under then-Gov. Mitch Daniels as one critical factor in taking the state to the next level in attracting and retaining investment, both domestic and foreign.

So, what does that look like? The IEDC is the state of Indiana's lead economic development agency. The IEDC was established in February 2005 to replace the former Indiana Department of Commerce. To respond quickly to business needs, the IEDC operates like a business. To that end, the IEDC is organized as a public-private partnership governed by a board of directors.

Bold moves

In addition to the creation of the IEDC, Don Koliboski, vice president of economic development at the alliance, contends the state has made some bold moves in recent years that continue to benefit the business climate. For one, the elimination of the inventory tax has been a "major step in moving forward." Second, he said the privatization of the toll road through a lease to Indiana Toll Road Concession Co. by Daniels was forward-thinking.

As part of the concession, ITRCC pledged to spend \$200 million on



Photo provided by BP Images

The BP Whiting Refinery paid out \$190 million to 525 vendors and supported more than 11,300 jobs last year. BP employs more than 1,700 workers in Indiana.

capital improvements to the facility during the first three years of the lease and about \$4.4 billion over the life of the concession. By leasing the facility, the state was able to retire \$225 million in debt. It allocated the remainder of the lease proceeds to several funds used solely to pay for infrastructure projects throughout the state. Koliboski said the deal in turn has driven private investment, which can equate to job creation.

Third, he said decreasing the floor of depreciation tax from 30 percent to 10 percent of the total value of inventory has meant great things for manufacturing and the supply chain in general. "That's helped our core industries," Koliboski said, noting that BP's continued investment in Whiting was no doubt encouraged by this latter factor.

In 2017, the refinery replaced two steam-driven turbines used to pump cooling water with electric-driven turbines that require less energy to achieve the same flow, according to a statement from the company. The company said it began constructing a \$300 million naphtha hydrotreating unit that will significantly reduce the amount of sulfur in its fuel, allowing it to make cleaner products and meet federal standards.

Whiting continues to be a powerhouse as BP's largest refinery in the world. It produces about 10 million gallons of gasoline, 3.5 million

GLOBAL VIEW

Region economic and business development representatives say Indiana is gaining interest in the global marketplace. Here is the proof:

- Japan-based Daifuku Wynright recently announced plans for a new \$26 million facility in Hobart. Wynright hopes the new site will be operational by January 2020.
- Indiana state leaders courted Israeli-owned MCP, a plastics company, which now has plans for a new 65,000-square-foot building in the AmeriPlex business park in Portage. It expects to bring 60 new jobs.
- In 2017 at its Whiting refinery, BP replaced two steam-driven turbines used to pump cooling water with electric-driven turbines that require less energy to achieve the same flow, according to a statement from the company. The company said it began constructing a \$300 million naphtha hydrotreating unit that will significantly reduce the amount of sulfur in its fuel, allowing it to make cleaner products and meet federal standards. Whiting is BP's largest refinery anywhere in the world.
- Indiana is home to more than 800 foreign-owned business establishments that employ more than 190,900 people. The state also is home to the highest percentage of private-sector jobs coming from foreign-owned firms in the Midwest.
- Between 2012 and 2015, foreign-owned companies announced plans to invest \$6 billion into Indiana and create 20,000 new Hoosier jobs.

gallons of diesel and 1.7 million gallons of jet fuel each day, along with about 5 percent of all asphalt in the U.S., according to a statement from BP.

“By way of perspective, Whiting produces enough gasoline each day to support the average daily fuel needs of more than 7 million cars,” according to the company’s reports.

The economic impact in the Region cannot be understated either. The

BP Whiting Refinery on Northwest Indiana’s lakeshore paid out \$190 million to 525 vendors and supported more than 11,300 jobs last year. BP employs more than 1,700 workers in Indiana, pays \$3.8 million in property taxes and contributes \$3.9 million a year to community causes, according to the 2018 U.S. Economic Impact Report.

Looking at how the three factors mentioned intersect, Koliboski said

overall the landscape is more business friendly. “It’s all about tax certainty now,” he said. “There’s been a corporate culture shift.”

Lauerman and Koliboski have seen a shift of a different kind too. Other states are looking to Indiana as a case study for what works. “We’re doing something,” he said. “We’re not sitting on our hands. We are recognized as not idled—we’re aggressive.”

The bigger picture

Organizations like the LCEA tend to concern themselves with the micro picture, while others look at things from a more holistic standpoint. Economists often fall into the latter camp when analyzing the current state of affairs, including Micah Pollak, an assistant professor of economics with Indiana University Northwest.

In his estimation, the conversation needs to go beyond a dollars-and-cents evaluation.

“These things (like lower taxes, less regulation, etc.) are certainly important initially, but they are only good in getting people in the door,” he said.

In other words, he said stakeholders need to take it a step further. Variables like a qualified workforce are what keep companies in the game, he added.

“We haven’t put together a complete package yet, but that’s starting to change,” he said.

For example, the state still lags behind others in markers such as poverty, income and educational attainment. On the consumer side, he said intangibles like high-end shopping, green space and quality housing can help keep talent here.

Anthony Sindone, clinical assistant professor of finance and economic development at Purdue University Northwest, challenges the conventional narrative that foreign investment should be more highly valued or celebrated.

“To me investment is investment,” he said. “If there’s a good business climate and a high probability of ROI, it doesn’t matter whether it’s domestic or foreign. What’s good for any business is good for a foreign business.”

However, he contends that foreign



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investment can be attractive to the state and its residents from one specific vantage point.

"If we focus our attention on foreign investment, an inflow of capital will result," he said. "From that injection we can generate more income."

And increased income has the power to affect what Sindone refers to as "the human side of things." In other words, individuals, families and communities can become stronger from investments.

He applauds the efforts of everyone from the governor's office to the local level in making Indiana a better place.

"We are seeing tremendous efforts to build this place to the full potential of what it can be," he said.

Investing in the future

Daifuku Wynright Corp. is one of those companies that's betting on Indiana for its own growth. Wynright Corp., a wholly-owned subsidiary of Daifuku North America, is a provider of intelligent material handling systems. They design, manufacture, integrate and install a full spectrum of intralogistics solutions, offering both Wynright-branded and third-party equipment to meet client needs. Wynright was acquired in 2013 by Daifuku Webb.

In September, the company announced plans to expand its North American manufacturing capabilities with what it says will be a state-of-the-art manufacturing complex and office, built on a 44-acre site in the Northwind Crossings business park in Hobart adjacent to I-65. The new 320,400-square-foot facility will consolidate two manufacturing operations, creating almost 600 new jobs in Indiana by the end of 2021, according to a statement from the company.

Wynright hopes the new site will be operational by January 2020. But this may be just the beginning.

"We look forward and expect business to double in the next five years," said Kevin Ambrose, president and CEO of Wynright Corp.

But why Northwest Indiana? Ambrose said the decision is rooted in a few factors. He said the firm already had facilities in the Region, so it made

sense to scale.

"It's important to reward (employees') loyalty by minimizing disruption but also being able to grow," he said.

The proximity to Chicago and its airport, he added, is also a selling point from an international business standpoint.

"We provide unique solutions that are all people based," he said.

Regarding its plans for growth in

workforce, Ambrose knows not all jobs are created equally. He said those new jobs will represent multiple sectors. He said positions will run the gamut from assembly and welding jobs to more white-collar positions in engineering and project management.

He said the state's training incentive programs have been attractive as they look to skill up the workforce to support growth.

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Tips for making plan for future

Solid succession strategies keep companies growing, prospering



Photo provided by Kruggel Lawton CPAs

Kevin Kruggel, partner at Kruggel Lawton CPAs with locations in South Bend; Elkhart; St. Joseph, Mich.; and Knoxville, Tenn., works with companies on planning for the future. Kruggel said the biggest thing to stress is that every plan is individualistic to the particular owner.

LESLEY BAILEY

Pete Korellis knows his business and those who work for him will be taken care of long after he decides to step away from his company.

He recognizes succession plans are vital for entrepreneurs to ensure their businesses thrive in the future.

“A well-thought succession plan is one of the most important things a business owner will ever have to do,” said Korellis, president and CEO of Korellis Roofing in Hammond. “It prepares your company for the next generation of leadership.

“Without a good succession plan or

“You can’t just hand the company to your kids as they have to have something to lose if it doesn’t work.”

—Paul Applegate, Applegate & Co. CPAs in Michigan City

without putting the right people in leadership positions, most companies do not survive the next generation.”

Kevin Kruggel, partner at Kruggel Lawton CPAs, said entrepreneurs work hard to build their businesses, so it’s

important to protect their families in case of an accident or illness because it might create instability within the business.

“Why spend all that time working so hard building it if you are not protecting it ultimately,” said Kruggel, whose firm has locations in South Bend; Elkhart; St. Joseph, Mich.; and Knoxville, Tenn.

When it comes to a succession strategy, Region experts and entrepreneurs have taken different approaches to overcome planning hurdles and pave the way for a company’s future success by putting together and maintaining a transition blueprint.

No two plans alike

Paul Applegate of Applegate & Co. CPAs in Michigan City said there are three routes for succession planning: selling or transferring to family or longtime employees or selling to an outside buyer.

“The first step is a conversation,” Applegate said.

He said, if the business is staying within the family, his team assists with putting together—along with an attorney—the initial structure of the transaction and helping get it down on paper.

“At this point, we need to bring the kids in to talk about the concept and figure out: Do you even want to do this?” Applegate said. “I have seen headaches if that happens, and it’s better to know up front if the kids are in or not.”

He said, if the next generation is in the family, the children need to have “some skin in the game.”

It’s a concept that he has used with his own business and children: Blake and Megan.

He recommended a client put into place a buy-one-get-one-free stock program. It not only helped make the client’s company more affordable but also spurred a sense of ownership.

“You can’t just hand the company to your kids as they have to have something to lose if it doesn’t work,” Applegate said. “When my kids initially came back to the company, I gifted them a small percentage each and said this is a gift, but the rest you have to buy.

“If the next generation doesn’t have skin in the game, the chance of long-term success is diminished.”

Kruggel said the biggest thing to stress is that every plan is individualistic to the particular owner.

“No two plans are the same,” Kruggel said. “The first thing we do is understand our clients and what their goals are for their businesses.

“If they want their successors to be family members, it looks a lot different to transition to family members or longtime loyal employees than trying to maximize value by selling to a synergistic buyer.”



Photo by John Bregg

Dean Rothschild, center, with his sons Adam, left, and Rob, of Rothschild Agency Inc. of Merrillville, shown here at the Independent Agents award ceremony, didn’t want to pressure his sons to take over the business. Ultimately, his succession plan relies on them.

Outside the family

Dean Rothschild of Merrillville-based Rothschild Agency Inc. didn’t want to pressure sons Rob and Adam into taking on the family business.

“Through my own experience, I have friends and acquaintances who were driven by their parents into the family business,” he said. “I wanted to let my sons make their own career decisions. They knew we had a family business, and if they were interested, that was fine.”

Both sons tried different career paths before deciding to work with Dean at the full-service general insurance agency, which concentrates on middle-market commercial insurance.

“I am very fortunate to have a strong line of communication with them where we are able to share both the positive and negatives with one another,” he said.

Kruggel said business owners need to be objective when they decide whether family is the right fit for taking over the company.

“I have seen cases where the next generation really isn’t capable and then they run the business into the ground. It would have been better for the whole family dynamic if they had sold it to an outsider,” he said. “If you have questions about it, your outside professionals may be more objective

when looking at the next generation.

“A professional skilled management team can spend time coaching the kids and educating them properly to run the business.”

For Korellis, his son took a different route in life—joining the Army—so Korellis is carrying on his company through an employee stock ownership plan.

“After years of planning and preparation for an inevitable succession of leadership, we decided on an ESOP. Korellis Roofing is now 100 percent employee-owned, and the entire management team is still in place,” he said. “My role has not changed. I intend to be president and CEO until sometime in 2021. An ESOP fits very well with a company that is closely held, profitable and not very marketable.

“The ESOP suits our team very well. It reinforces the ‘family’ culture that my father, George Korellis, started. It also provides the potential of incredible retirement opportunities for the employees who have helped us get to the top of our industry.”

Prepare sooner not later

At minimum, Kruggel recommends having a contingency plan in place at an early age in case of a sudden event. This could include life insurance as well as who would take on

leadership roles within the business if something happens to the owner.

“You should have an immediate plan in place in case some type of tragedy occurs,” Kruggel said. “Not having a contingency plan in place is one of the biggest mistakes. People are so busy working in their businesses, they don’t work on their businesses or succession plans. It’s too easy to say I am only 30, but you never know about an

unforeseen circumstance—you have to at least do the minimum.”

Rothschild says entrepreneurs need to embrace the inevitable and the effects of the owner no longer being in charge.

“If you have been in business for 35 to 40 years, you may lose your edge or not wake up tomorrow or with a disability, that is a concern for the business itself, employees and clients,” he said. “I

think any small business owner needs to be realistic and take into consideration that they need to create at least the minimum what if plan: What if I can’t work tomorrow?”

Ideally, Kruggel said about 10 years before retirement is a good time to begin to nail down specifics of a plan.

Applegate said succession planning is not something that can be done overnight.

“It takes a lot of time,” Applegate said. “If it’s an outside person (you are selling to), you have to find that person, negotiate the transaction and draw up the legal paperwork.”

Korellis said, while his company’s formal succession into ESOP started Jan. 1, 2018, it had been in the works for five years.

“If you start considering a succession plan because you actually need one right away, it could be too late,” he said.

Kruggel said, once a plan is in place, entrepreneurs need to be mindful of adjusting as time goes on.

“You have to update it,” he said. “Maybe you thought an employee would be the successor, but now something has happened. You have to continue to assess on an annual basis.”

True expectations

Rothschild believes entrepreneurs need to be honest with themselves when deciding on a perpetuation plan.

“As the principal, your ID is not just as John Doe, but as John Doe, owner of the ABC company. All of a sudden when you sell, you are back to John Doe,” he said. “You have to come to the realization: Do I have a need to be inside and continue to be associated as John Doe with the ABC Company?”

Rothschild also had to weigh what was important to him as a business owner and advises other entrepreneurs to do the same. While selling to an outsider might offer a bigger paycheck, the business might not be the same under a new owner.

“It was important to me to perpetuate my business for my employees and clients who helped bring me to where I am today,” he said. “When a business is sold to a third party, the team generally comes in and superimposes

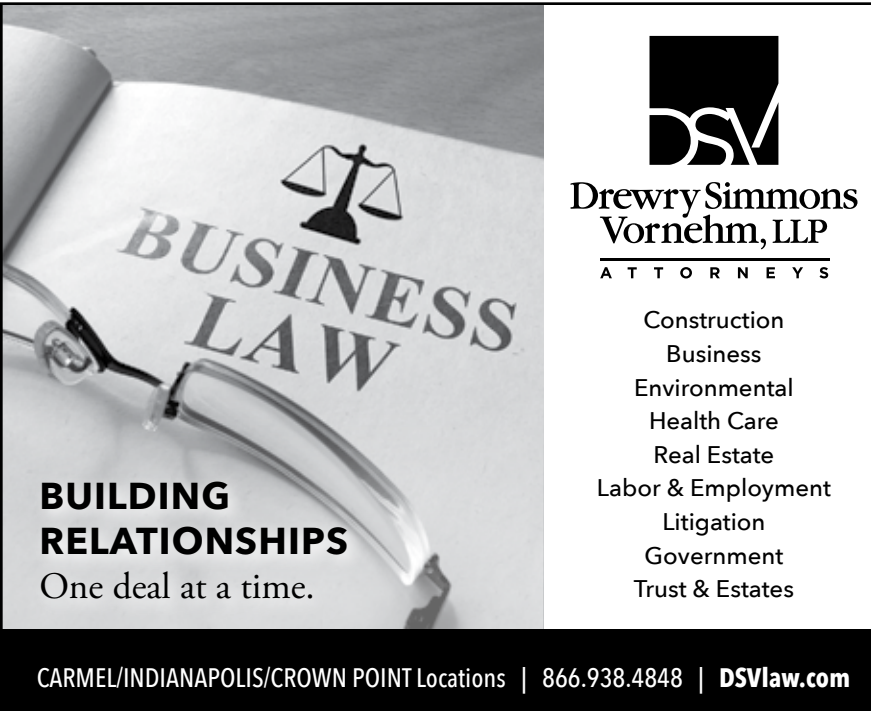


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its own culture.”

Rothschild said, by perpetuating from within, this firm’s culture is maintained and sustained.

“I needed my two sons to buy into that fact,” he said. “Our culture here is we meet with the business owner face-to-face to discuss needs and solutions and that is an important ingredient that differentiates us.”

If keeping it within the family, entrepreneurs also need to be realistic about balancing the move of their business to the next generation while continuing with their own roles.

“It’s a slow process,” Applegate said. “I want to work part time as long as I can physically and mentally do it.”

Rothschild remains active in the business handling long-term accounts and bringing a sense of “gray-hair stability” to the office. He will continue to take cues from his sons moving forward.

“At this point, they like having me as a sounding board,” he said. “I am



Photo provided by Korellis Roofing

Korellis Roofing in Hammond has moved to an employee stock ownership plan or ESOP. From left: Dan Kieपुरa, director of roofing operations; John Ziolkowski, vice president of roofing operations; Pete Korellis, president and CEO; and Jeff Tharp, executive vice president and COO lead the management team. Korellis said he will stay on board till 2021.

happy to continue in my role until such a point when they’re asking: Why not spend more time in Florida?

“I am a believer that a plan is more

successful if the current decision makers can train the future decision makers. I often tell my boys: You make the decision. You make this call.”



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LO-19036-002B

Making the world take notice

Farming methods raising Indiana's profile in global marketplace



Photo provided by Ceres Solutions

Ceres representative Tony Courtney (left) is with farmer Brian Herd of Herd Agri-Enterprises of Logansport. Courtney is assisting Herd to work with technology to determine field management. Ceres Solutions has headquarters in Crawfordsville.

BOB MOULESONG

Agriculture is big business in the Hoosier state. When it comes to production of corn, soybeans, peppermint, spearmint, watermelon, tomatoes, cantaloupe and pumpkins, Indiana ranked in the top 10 nationally in 2017 for those crops.

On the livestock side, Indiana is in the top 10 in hogs, turkeys and eggs. All from a state not in the top 10 in number of farms or farm acreage. That's productivity and efficiency to make any businessman proud.

Agriculture sales in 2017 reached \$31.2 billion, with an additional \$4.6 billion in exports, according to state estimates.

With a strong production track record, state and Region officials are examining ways to get more Indiana agricultural products to the world.

Fueling growth sustainably

The Indiana State Department of Agriculture advocates for Indiana agriculture at all levels. The ISDA is responsible for managing soil conservation, promoting economic development and agricultural innovation and supporting agricultural youth development.

Indiana is home to 56,800 farms, making it the 11th-largest farming state in the nation, and is a leader in many agricultural products.

"Corn and soybeans are still major Indiana crops," said Bruce Kettler, director of the ISDA. "But today, our farmers produce a wide variety of other crops and livestock."

A great example is the hardwoods of Indiana forests, used to create home and office furniture.

"One way we advocate for farmers and agribusinesses is through economic development," Kettler says. "Indiana agriculture employs over 107,000 workers directly and adds another 80,000 jobs indirectly."

That ripple effect into connecting businesses makes agriculture second to manufacturing as a major player in the state's economy.

The \$4.6 billion in annual exports is above and beyond the \$31 billion in U.S. sales, Kettler notes.

“Indiana exports agriculture products all over the world,” he said. “Canada is the No. 1 country we export to, followed by China, Mexico, Japan, Taiwan and the European Union.” Some of the main products exported are corn, feed grains, pork, dairy and soybeans. “Indiana agricultural processors utilize rail and ship to send our products all over the world,” he said.

More than \$90 million in dairy products are exported annually, with the majority going to Mexico, according to state estimates based on USDA data. More than \$450 million in poultry and pork products are exported annually, with China the major recipient.

“Indiana’s exports continue to grow annually,” Kettler said. “We also experience growth in feed grains to many nations. That’s a result of our increases in productivity and efficiency.”

Trade agreements and tariffs have been widely discussed in recent months, creating uncertainty for farmers, but progress is being made, as can be seen by the recent U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement.

“Under NAFTA, our agriculture products were at zero tariff,” Kettler said. “Under the proposed new agreement, USMCA, it is our understanding that agriculture products will remain at zero, which is critical.”

ISDA has several programs and initiatives aimed at growing the state’s agribusiness. One program is Indiana Grown, which promotes products grown, raised, produced or processed in the state. The program has more than 1,200 members and works to add value and create new markets for Indiana farmers, while generating consumer awareness about these products.

Rural broadband connectivity is a project close to Kettler’s heart.

“The ISDA is working with several other departments and businesses to bring affordable high-speed broadband internet to all areas of rural Indiana,” he said. “Technology is a keystone of economic development and education,



Photo provided by the Ports of Indiana

A barge of fertilizer is being unloaded into a truck at the Ports of Indiana Mount Vernon. The inland river ports at Mount Vernon and Jeffersonville export cargo to the Gulf of Mexico where the products are transloaded to ocean vessels for transport all over the world.

and we need to provide every tool available to all of our constituents.”

The ISDA believes that putting the internet in the hands of farmers will improve their information base, which will in turn increase their knowledge of new concepts in agribusiness.

The Ports of Indiana

A discussion of exports, interstate and international, would be incomplete without the Ports of Indiana. With three ports on the Ohio River and Lake Michigan, the operating system moved 11.8 million tons of cargo, 3.7 million tons of that agricultural products in 2017. Aggregated agriculture products are the second largest cargo handled at the ports, according to Shelley Triol, the ports’ director of communications and strategic Initiatives.

“Ships come through the St. Lawrence Seaway directly to our Port of Indiana-Burns Harbor,” Triol said. “Outgoing agriculture cargoes are placed on ships which navigate the seaway to access global markets through the Atlantic Ocean.”

The inland river ports at Mount Vernon and Jeffersonville export cargo to the Gulf of Mexico where the products are transloaded to ocean vessels for transport all over the world.

“Our ports export grain, soy products, fertilizer, ethanol and dried distillers’

grains,” Triol explained. “Ethanol, for example, is shipped out of Mount Vernon by barge to blending facilities domestically. Dried distillers’ grains are shipped for use in animal feed both domestically and internationally.”

While the Ports of Indiana are mainly transporting by boat, rail and truck also are involved.

“Grain and soy products are produced in Indiana, trucked to the grain elevators at the ports, then sold to both domestic and overseas markets,” Triol says. “We have a grain elevator at each port.”

Overseas demand results in export growth at the ports.

“The Mount Vernon port recorded its best volume year ever in 2017, and has already passed that total this year,” Triol said. “The export of agricultural products was one of the top drivers for our growth.”

The ports provide a ripple effect regarding jobs.

“It’s important to note that our ports are located in agricultural regions around the state,” Triol said. “We provide agriculture clusters that in turn provide tremendous synergies for ag-related businesses. For instance, there’s a grain elevator next to a soybean processing plant next to an ethanol plant at Mount Vernon.”

These synergies reduce the time



Photo provided by Chester AG Systems

A Chester AG Systems irrigation system waters a corn field in Northwest Indiana. Aaron Shidler, division manager at Chester, said 2018 was a prime example that irrigated acres are plentiful and non-irrigated acres suffered from the drought.

between processing steps and/or distribution while it creates jobs.

“It also reduces costs for customers,” Triol said. “Synergies at our ports include multimodal connections and job-ready industrial sites that can help companies hit the ground running.”

The Ports of Indiana have land open for development that can provide the agriculture industry access to the water, railroad access and expansive

direct highway infrastructure. All these positive features provide access to broader market opportunities and can be a beacon for business.

Precision agronomy

Ceres Solutions, with headquarters in Crawfordsville, is a co-op committed to best practices for the benefit of their farmer-members and for the air, water and soil. With 8,000 active

members, it is one of the largest and most active co-ops’ in Indiana.

“We are a value-added co-op that utilizes technology and the science of agronomy to increase the efficiency and productivity of our farmer-members,” said Jeff Troike, president and CEO. “We provide assistance to Indiana farmers in several ways, such as soil and moisture analysis, satellite imagery, field potential, seed, fuel and feed.”

Ceres provides members with precision agronomy services that result in accurate, quality and reliable testing results.

“We help farmers learn about the nuances of their field,” Troike said. “We test acreage through grids and zones that show the differences throughout the field.”

A large field might have significant differences regarding nutrition and moisture, according to Troike.

“It’s not efficient for a farmer to overfeed one area because another area is underfed,” he said. “The tools we use, the science behind them and the interpretations from our staff can show which areas are in a greater need than others. Fertilizer and water can be applied as needed to that particular grid. That results in more productivity at less cost.”

Over the years, the science of farming has grown by leaps and bounds.

“Decision farming is based on precision,” Troike said. “When farmers have the right information, they can significantly increase their output.”

If farmers have the right data, they can produce between 200 and 220 bushels of corn and between 70 and 75 bushels of soybeans per acre. That’s an increase of 30 percent in one generation.

“Because of advancements in agriculture, our food supply remains the safest, most affordable and most abundant in the world,” Troike said.

Irrigating the economy

In addition to creating ripple-effect jobs through exportation, agriculture brings the bacon closer to home through support services.

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Hammond and Westville, Indiana



Judson, is a one-stop shop for irrigation systems, grain handling and storage facilities for agribusiness.

"We have sold and installed around 2,000 center-pivot irrigation units," says Aaron Shidler, division manager of Chester AG Systems. "Our irrigation started off with vegetable growers and eventually grew into irrigating a large variety of crops."

Chester irrigates a large amount of corn and soybean acreage, but specialty crops request high demands of their products and services.

"Most residents of Indiana think we only grow corn here, but that's far from the truth," Shidler said. "Northwest Indiana has such a neat variety of seed corn, mint, popcorn, potatoes, tomatoes, green beans, pickles, onions and turf grass."

Making it rain when the crops need it is what Chester irrigation systems are all about.

"Timing is everything when trying to grow these crops," he said. "Mother Nature doesn't always supply the

needed moisture for successful crops."

Shidler said 2018 was a prime example that irrigated acres are plentiful and non-irrigated acres suffered from the drought.

"Our Northwest Indiana farmers see an increase in bushels per acre with irrigation applying water when needed," he says.

Chester AG also designs and builds grain storage facilities, with more than 1,500 grain storage bins across Northwest Indiana.

"The AG sector requires and demands a large amount of employment for the community," Shidler said. "It's a true trickle-down effect that involves many people and businesses."

More than corn in Indiana

Indiana Grown, the initiative of the ISDA, helps Hoosier farmers get their brand, reputation and products out to consumers all over the state. Kendall and Tammy Culp, owners of Culp Family Farms in Rensselaer, have seen the benefits of the program. They also

have their eyes on a bigger prize.

"In addition to grain crops, Tammy and I raise livestock," Culp said. "We raise pork and beef on our 2,000 acres. We sell frozen cuts at the local farmers market on Tuesdays and Saturdays. On Tuesday evenings, we grill pork burgers for customers, and that's gone over really well."

The Culs provide quality meats to Fenwick Farms Brewing Co., the first brewpub to open in Rensselaer.

"Fenwick gives us a promote on the menu, which we greatly appreciate," Culp said.

Working with Indiana Grown has been a plus for the Culs.

"The ISDA has a great networking and promotional market," Culp said. "We're now working with them on a strategic marketing plan to expand our brand across the state."

"We hope Indiana Grown can help us get our meats into other restaurants and brewpubs that want to feature local farmers who raise quality products."



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Fun leads to business success

Region entrepreneurs find niche entertaining youths and adults



Photo by Michelle Hamstra

Patricia Sidener, here with husband Philip, wanted to create an atmosphere for people of all ages at Twincade, the business she opened two years ago at 108 N. Broad St., in Griffith. She is one of a growing sector of entrepreneurs catering to adults and their children.

CARRIE NAPOLEON

It's a noisy path to Patricia Sidener's office at the back of her Griffith gastropub.

Bells and buzzers beep in the background while loudly playing music fills in any potential void in the cacophony as you walk past the rows of video games and pinball machines that line the walls and open spaces in Twincade.

It is a nontraditional office for a nontraditional business where adults and children alike come and play the various arcade games, grab a bite to eat and a beverage. The all-ages gastropub turns 21 and older at 9 p.m., and the

arcade games, once viewed as a youthful outlet, draw young and old alike, which keeps Sidener and her staff busy.

"I wanted to create an atmosphere," she said. It was important the venue was some place she was comfortable and that would be inviting to people of all ages. She was hoping to replicate the vibe of similar businesses in Chicago and New York.

Visitors from youngsters to 80-year-olds have made their way to Twincade since it opened two years ago. Sidener is still surprised that she is running a business that caters to people playing.

Sidener is among a growing sector of entrepreneurs who are cashing in

on parents' desire to find fun activities for their kids that they can enjoy as well—possibly fuel that grown-up desire to recapture a piece of childhood. Meanwhile, they get to participate in more interactive opportunities to make the most of their entertainment dollars.

People regardless of age like to play for many reasons, according to a recent Washington Post report, where Lynn Barnett, a professor of recreation, sports and tourism at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, said one theory is people play because play is therapeutic. In studies, including one conducted by Barnett, play at work

has been shown to have the benefit of improving employee performance and job satisfaction, while play at home can enhance bonding and communication, she said.

A different career path

Laura Bayne, manager of Edge Adventures-Deep River Park in Crown Point, says she never really expected her business management degree would lead to working outdoors making a living helping people of all ages play.

"In most management positions, you are working inside. This is different," Bayne said.

The park's busy nature and the company's quick growth bode well for the future of the business. Deep River is the third Edge Adventures park in Indiana. Between 50 and 100 people a day come through the park during the summer season when it is open every day. It takes between 16 and 20 employees to staff the park at its peak. It opens in spring and fall for weekend adventures. There are five different courses for visitors to try. The courses are open to the public and for group and business events.

Bayne said it is the unique nature of the business and the bonding it creates between the people who tackle the different obstacle courses that keep people coming to the park.

"It's a challenge. It's something you normally don't do," Bayne said.

It is also a great bonding experience, she said, especially for businesses who bring their staffs to the park. Helping one another successfully navigate the obstacles is part of what makes the experience one visitors do not soon forget.

"I enjoy enriching people's lives. It is something you're not normally used to doing out there: walking across logs and wooden bridges 20 feet off the ground, and then going back and doing another course because they enjoy it so much," Bayne said.

Finding a niche

Whether people are realizing the therapeutic value of play or they just want to have fun, the business



Photo provided by Laser Ball

Keith Perez saw a niche in the business of play. He says most people want the fun brought to them, so he started Laser Ball, a part-time gig where he brings the playing field to his clients.

model that started with companies like ShowBiz Pizza Place Inc., in 1977, which changed its name to Chuck E. Cheese in 1998, continues to evolve to offer activities for teens and adults, as well as children. Chuck E. Cheese now operates a system of more than 580 stores in 47 states and 12 foreign countries or territories, according to its website.

Dave & Busters, a restaurant and video game chain catering to adults,

followed in its predecessors' footsteps and opened its first location in 1982, according to the company website. Today the company has 118 locations in the U.S. with three more slated to open soon.

Entertainment-based businesses continue to evolve to encompass a growing range of activities. Paintball, go-carts, trampolines and zip-lines are just some of the adventures eager consumers can tap for a good time.

Destinations, including the Mascot Hall of Fame in Whiting, take on fun on a larger scale.

Keith Perez is one of those entrepreneurs counting on fun to make a profit. He says he was always into paintball growing up. His enjoyment of the sport continued into adulthood.

The 31-year-old full-time police officer said he always envisioned himself owning a paintball facility one

day—his own facility designed with field structures and battle areas where he could turn his hobby into a business for like-minded enthusiasts.

“When I was looking at how costly it was, I realized it was just a pipe dream,” Perez said.

That didn’t stop him from finding a way to make work out of play. Instead of opening a physical location, Perez has managed to hang on to his

full-time job while turning his hobby into a part-time business. Perez said the popularity of the sport was on the upswing with paintball facilities popping up across the country when he stepped into the market in 2012. When he learned about hybrid paintball equipment modified for laser tag, he knew he was on to something.

“You still get the air recoil, you just don’t experience the pain and the mess that paintball makes,” Perez said. Laser Ball became his niche.

Instead of opening a physical location, Perez said he made his business portable to cater to the growing number of people who want activity-based entertainment and relish convenience.

Growing demand fed a new industry, which created a proliferation of companies offering bounce houses, portable inflatable water slides and other equipment for rent. Once reserved for festivals and public events, equipment was made small enough to be set up in an average-sized residential backyard.

Perez capitalized on the trend. Making his business mobile gives him flexibility to bring the fun to his customers.

“Most people want you to bring the entertainment to them,” Perez said. “I would say I am right in the beginning of that new phase, that new era.”

Entertainment is business

Speros Batistatos, president and CEO of the South Shore Convention and Visitors Authority, said entertainment-based businesses have a positive impact on lengthening guest stays in the Region and increasing their spending. Whether people come to Northwest Indiana to visit friends and relatives, as leisure travelers or for amateur sporting events, having things to do other than the primary motivation for travel encourages additional spending and overnight stays.

“The Mascot Hall of Fame will be a destination,” Batistatos said. Venues like Edge Adventures, Twincade, Jak’s Warehouse, Deep River Waterpark, Zao Island and myriad other entertainment-based businesses throughout Northwest Indiana might not be

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primary destinations, but they play an important role in filling the blanks that round out the South Shore destination for travelers.

“They help us keep that visitor we have longer,” Batistatos said. “That’s just as important as getting the visitor here.”

The proof is in the technology, which has created a travel-savvy consumer, who today, with a little planning, aims to get a bigger bang for his or her traveling dollar. More and more visitors use online resources to plan their trips, look for bargains, tap loyalty programs and make sure their itineraries are packed with activities outside their main reason for visiting the Region, Batistatos said.

Travelers using the South Shore CVA online travel planner “UTrip” round out plans for their stay in the Region. Users find and schedule different activities such as the waterpark, an arcade or zip-lining experience. Visitors to Northwest Indiana have multiple things to do when coming to the South Shore and that helps make a compelling argument on the CVA’s website for people to stay those extra days and spend that extra money, he said.

Ancillary businesses that create opportunities to entertain visitors play a vital role in how the CVA sells the Region to certain demographics.

“These are very important small business additions to our portfolio as a destination,” Batistatos said.

The popularity of these venues can be seen when amateur sporting events bring in visitors from outside the Region.

“The places are just jammed,” he said. “They are an important way for us to extract more visitor spending and help small businesses create additional paychecks and more profit.”

IF YOU GO

- Twincade, 108 N Broad St., Griffith, www.twincade.com, 219-237-9980
- Edge Adventures, 9001 E Lincoln Hwy, Crown Point, www.edgeadventureparks.com/deep-river, 800-590-8347
- Laser Ball, Valparaiso, www.laserball.net, 219-765-7392



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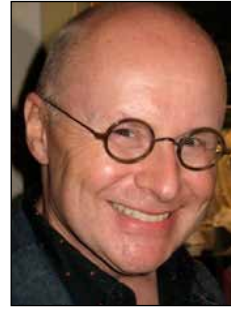
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Things to see and do



John Cain



Jack Walton

An update on art and entertainment options across the Region

NORTHWEST INDIANA

JOHN CAIN

Urban ruins

"Haunts," the second exhibit in the two-part "Urban Ruins" series organized by South Shore Arts, runs Feb. 8 through April 21, at the Center for Visual and Performing Arts in Munster with an artist reception from 1-3 p.m. March 3. The exhibit features work by guerrilla photographers lured to Gary and other cities to capture the haunting beauty of architectural ruins on the verge of being re-purposed as gardens and other public spaces. Photography by Decay Devils Tyrell Anderson and Lori Gonzalez will be included, along with work by Joey Lax-Salinas, Eric Holubow, Guy Rhodes, Bob Palmieri, Matthew Kaplan, Tom Hocker, Mike Kinsch, Joel Henderson and Dennis Crane. The "Urban Legends" exhibits travel to three Gary venues—ArtHouse: A Social Kitchen, the Gary Public Library and the Marshall J. Gardner Center in Miller—in February and June. 219-836-1839 or SouthShoreArtsOnline.org.

Million-dollar quartet

On Dec. 4, 1956, Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis and Carl Perkins gathered at Sun Records in Memphis for what became one of the greatest jam sessions ever. Perkins was to record songs with Lewis. Presley stopped by the studio with his girlfriend. Cash was there to talk to recording impresario Sam Phillips. They soon joined together in a jam session with Phillips attempting to re-sign Cash to a new contract,



Photo provided by John Cain

"Haunts" the second exhibit in the two-part Urban Ruins series organized by South Shore Arts, will run Feb. 8 through April 21 at the Center for Visual and Performing Arts in Munster. This photo is the work of Tyrell Anderson of 2.0 Photography, which he calls "City Bones."

unaware that he'd already signed with Columbia Records. This thrilling musical invites audiences into the studio for the true story of one unforgettable night, when four legends brought down the house with hits like "Blue Suede Shoes," "Great Balls of Fire" and "Walk the Line." Production runs Feb. 14 through March 24. 219-836-3255 or www.theatreatthecenter.com.

'Swing State'

What if the people who are ruining this country were your only friends? In "Swing State," Bonnie has promised God that she'll save every little soul in her Appalachian kindergarten class, and if that means risking her job or triggering her chronic back pain, well, so be it. Neil, the new chiropractor in town, sees things differently. A gay, new-age transplant from Brooklyn, Neil

is over the moon when his first treatment turns out to be a miracle cure. But Bonnie, feeling things she hasn't felt in years, has a different response: "Put me back," she insists. When Neil refuses, they're off on an epic battle. Feb. 22 through March 8. 219-937-8780 or www.towletheater.org.

'Waiting for a Sign'

Either figuratively or literally, and whether from God or Mother Nature, "Waiting for a Sign" explores the use of signage, text and iconography—visual images and symbols—in the work of eight contemporary artists. We encounter signs every day, from billboards to businesses to our own front yards. Signage is part of the typical American landscape. Originally a tool for identification, signs have arguably evolved from an advertising

medium to a fine art. Signage has a multitude of jobs: to provide a persuasive message or one of protest, to instruct, to direct, or to provide tools to navigate a search for meaning and truth. Accordingly, these eight artists employ and transform visual language to deliver messages of environmental justice, protest, personal identity and hope. The work included in this show marries verbal and visual communication. Considering text as shape, form and action, the artists use humor, plain text and provocative statements to engage us. Exhibiting artists include Willie Baronet, Diana Guerrero-Macia, Corey Hagelberg, Cheryl Pope, Kay Rosen, Joel Ross, Deb Sokolow and Bernard Williams. Exhibit runs through Jan. 12. 219-874-4900 or www.lubeznikcenter.org.

Visit the South Shore Arts Regional Calendar for more information on exhibits, concerts, plays and other arts events at SouthShoreArtsOnline.org. Tune in to Lakeshore Public Radio, 89.1 FM, for “Eye on the Arts” interviews with area artists and arts providers at 8:45 a.m. and 2:45 p.m. every Monday or watch “Eye on the Arts” on Lakeshore PTV at 7 p.m. every first Friday.

GREATER SOUTH BEND

JACK WALTON

Morris Performing Arts Center is back

Usually, it's the performers on stage who are supposed to bring the house down. However, South Bend's Morris Performing Arts Center made the news for the wrong reasons in September when a 2.5-foot piece of plaster fell to the ground from high on the rim of the venue's oculus dome. The Morris opened in 1922 and underwent a grand renovation between 1998 and 2000. It re-emerged in fine form as the area's oldest and biggest arts space, and fortunately the plaster incident proved to be only a minor setback. A handful of shows had to be moved to the nearby Century Center until the structural issue was addressed. Now, the Morris is back in action, with all its planned shows on schedule. On Jan. 18, dance fans have a rare opportunity to catch



Photo by Humberto Decanini

Kelly Morgan's Uzima! African Drumming and Dance ensemble comes to the University of Notre Dame's DeBartolo Performing Arts Center on Jan. 19.

an elite-level performance from the National Ballet Theatre of Odessa, when the 55-dancer troupe brings its touring production of “Swan Lake.” Usually, area ballet lovers need to go to the Joffrey Ballet in Chicago to see something other than an annual “Nutcracker” locally. This full-scale production of “Swan Lake” presents a faithful account of the stunning work set to music of Tchaikovsky and with choreography by Marius Petipa and Lev Ivanov. On Jan. 21, the South Bend Symphony Orchestra presents its annual Martin Luther King Day celebration concert. From Jan. 25 through 27, it will present the touring version of “Evita,” the story of Eva Peron as told in musical form by Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice. John Mellencamp, Indiana's own rock 'n' roll poet laureate of sorts, comes to the Morris on Feb. 7. The eight-member cast of “Stomp” performs its unconventional, wordless magic on Feb. 24. 574-235-9190 or morriscenter.org.

Coming to Notre Dame

The University of Notre Dame's DeBartolo Performing Arts Center welcomes Maestro Alastair Willis and the South Bend Symphony Orchestra on Jan. 13 for a concert that features works by Osvaldo Golijov and Gabriela Lena Frank, culminating in a performance of Beethoven's Symphony No. 2. Kelly Morgan brings her high-energy ensemble, Uzima! African Drumming and Dance, on Jan. 19. On Jan. 26, it's Raul Midón, an R&B singer-songwriter. Scott Bradlee's Postmodern Jukebox, a group that does live “remixes” of recent pop songs recast in older styles, plays Feb. 2. The Crossing, a Grammy-winning

chamber choir, performs under the direction of Donald Nally on Feb. 10. The Irish Theatre of Chicago on Feb. 15 performs “Mojo Mickybo,” by playwright Owen McCafferty, a story about two boys set in the summer of 1970 in Belfast. 574-631-2800 or performingarts.nd.edu.

South Bend Theatre

South Bend Civic Theatre opens 2019 by going back to Sophocles and his timeless “Antigone,” from Jan. 21 through 26. From Feb. 1 through 10, it's the stage version of Aaron Sorkin's “A Few Good Men,” in which two Marines and two attorneys figure out if they want the truth and if they can even handle the truth. Ray Bradbury's “Fahrenheit 451” portrays a nightmare world in which books and ideas are the enemy of an anti-intellectual, fascist government. The play runs at South Bend Civic Theatre from Feb. 14 through 20. 574-234-1112 or sbct.org.

What's new in visual arts

Two museums offer a chance for people to come in from the cold and enjoy the visual arts. In downtown South Bend at the South Bend Museum of Art, visual arts meet philosophy in the work of multidisciplinary artist Mike Slaski in an exhibit opening Jan. 12 continues through April. At the University of Notre Dame's Snite Museum of Art, an exhibition titled “Strategies of Appropriation in Contemporary Native American Art” opens Feb. 2 and continues through May. . Contact the SBMA at 574-235-9102 or southbendart.org. 574-631-5466 or sniteartmuseum.nd.edu.

Expanding to the Midwest

California safe maker sets up new location in Hammond

JERRY DAVICH

Not only does Kevin Trimble own a trademarked “Second Amendment” residential gun safe in his home, but many of his house guests also end up owning one.

“These gun safes are fairly new with our company, but already they’re very popular with our customers,” said Trimble, vice president of Blue Dot Safes, a custom safe manufacturer and service provider with a new location in Hammond.

The gun safes are specifically designed to safely protect firearms of any kind, from smaller vaults for guns and pistols to larger safes that house up to 30 larger weapons. These progressive safes come with a one-hour factory-certified fire protection rating up to 1,700-degrees.

“These safes are a timely addition to our line of products,” Trimble said.

The California-based company, in operation since 2004, is one of only a few manufacturers in this country that produces customized commercial and residential safes. It does so in its 90,000-square-foot factory in Pomona, a suburb of Los Angeles.

“We take great pride as a customized manufacturer that caters to our customers’ loss prevention and security needs,” said Trimble, whose work history boasts 25 years of experience in retail loss prevention and related investigations. “Our mission is to provide customers with peace of mind by securing their assets against theft.”

The firm offers an assortment of safes, from cash deposit products for national retail establishments such as Little Caesars and Family Dollar to more high-tech commercial products such as Tech Guard, designed with a 10-minute delay to allow customers a safe place to protect high-priced digital-age devices.

The company also offers “smart



Photo provided by Blue Dot Safes

Kevin Trimble is vice president of Blue Dot Safes, which recently opened an office in Hammond. The location has a showroom, call-support center and distribution-fulfillment hub.

safes” that protect against counterfeit currency, while routinely servicing mom-and-pop shops, jewelry stores and corporate offices.

Blue Dot is expanding its reach into the Midwest with a refurbished 60,000-square-foot facility at 430 Russell St. in Hammond. The company said its Hammond location was scheduled to begin operations in November and includes a 24/7 call-support center, a distribution-fulfillment hub and a showroom.

“The showroom will allow our customers to kick the tires on our products,” Trimble said.

The majority of the firm’s national customer base resides east of the Mississippi River, prompting a location

somewhere in the Midwest to cater to those clients.

“Preferably in the Chicago area,” said Trimble, 46, who became familiar with Northwest Indiana through his former position as director of U.S. security for the McDonald’s corporation.

Blue Dot officials, including its president and chief executive officer, Berge Jalakian, were happy to “stumble on” the new location in Hammond.

The city kicked in financial assistance through its business facade rebate program.

With an asking price of \$1.25 million, the site was more cost-effective and accommodating than other potential sites in Chicago, Trimble said. Plus, some of the site’s employee base, expected to swell to 26 workers, are from Northwest Indiana and nearby communities.

Also, the Indiana Economic Development Corp. offered up to \$210,000 in conditional tax credits, based on the number of jobs and performance-based incentives.

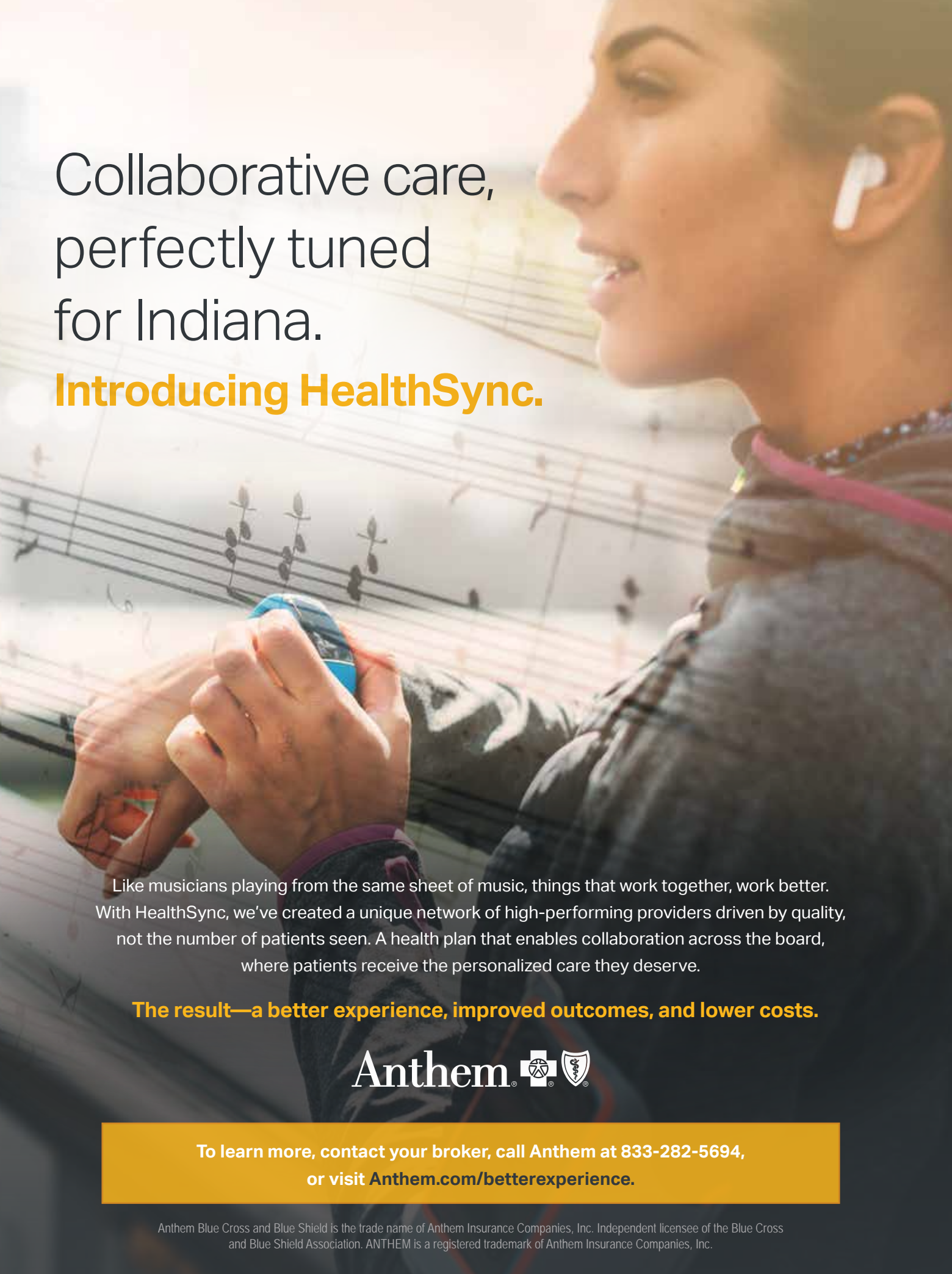
“We’re excited to welcome Blue Dot Safes to the Hoosier state as they... create good jobs in Northwest Indiana,” IEDC President Elaine Bedel said in a statement.

Trimble said the Hammond property was initially identified in the first quarter of 2018 and worked with the city, state and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to secure approvals. Trimble and his staff also have been hands-on, doing some of the grunt work at the site to prepare for its grand opening.

“This is a great opportunity for our company,” he said.

“We’re excited to be a part of the Northwest Indiana community, and we’re looking forward to growing into this new space.”

For more information on Blue Dot Safes, visit www.bluedotsafes.com.



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CEO explores the world

Next adventure always on mind of Horizon Bank chairman



Photo provided by Craig Dwight

Craig Dwight and his wife, Pamela, traveled to Norway in August 2017 to visit his great-grandfather's homeland. Horizon Bank's CEO has traveled the world, including 49 of the United States. Next on his list is a trip to Disney World with his grandchildren.

PHILIP POTEPA

Craig Dwight, CEO and chairman of Horizon Bank, treasures advice his mother Wilma, now 97, imparted decades ago.

"My mother always said, 'never turn down an invitation because it's also a new opportunity,' which is a good rule to follow," said Dwight, who shares his travel hobby passion with his wife, Pamela.

On Oct. 13, the Michigan City couple returned from a 14-day trip to Africa, including time in Tanzania and Rwanda, exploring new cultures and mountain trek escapes. He said their three grown children and their four grandchildren also have inherited the same adventurous spirit.

Of his 39 years in the banking industry, Dwight's career includes 33 years with Horizon Bank, which

has 65 offices, including 15 serving Northwest Indiana.

Dwight was born in South Dakota where he grew up with farming grandparents. In the 1960s, his father moved his family to Michigan City where Dwight graduated from Michigan City Rogers High School in 1975 and then earned his bachelor's degree in business administration from Indiana University in 1979.

"What's interesting is that I never grew up with a family who traveled, not even family vacations," Dwight said. "My dad always worked seven days a week, and my mother was busy with the garden and household, so we didn't travel.

"Late in life, my father said one of his regrets was never taking myself and my sisters to Disney World when we were growing up."

Dwight's great love of travel began in his youth when he would spend summers going back to South Dakota where he worked on his grandparents' farm, as well as weekend trips with his Boy Scout troop and church group.

Today, he's visited 49 states, with Idaho the one destination that has eluded his travels.

"A few years back, we were snowmobiling in January through Yellowstone, and we were just six miles away from the state line to cross into Idaho, and almost did, except bad weather prevented us," Dwight said.

His journey log extends throughout Europe, and he recently added his African expedition, along with other favorite international destinations. He enjoys sightseeing, but also seeks out biking, hiking, mountain exploration, skiing and scuba diving.

"I've been able to scuba dive many places, from Lake Michigan to the Caribbean," he said.

"I learned to scuba dive with our family right here at the Michigan City YMCA, and some of our first experiences underwater was to go (to) a flooded rock quarry, which is really quite challenging because the water is very cold, and as you get deeper, it gets very dark."

He said he is fortunate, Pamela, his wife of 36 years, has his same adventurous spirit.

"My wife shares my same eagerness to discover the world, both near and far," Dwight said.

"She learned to snow ski at age 36 and water ski at age 58. We seldom revisit the same place twice because there are so many other opportunities on our very long list."

Though it's difficult for Dwight to cite his favorite map memories from among so many, he especially loved the top of Copper Mountain in Colorado for the thrill of skiing to the base, as well as the coral reef scuba adventure he enjoyed while at Grand Cayman Island.

"When you are scuba diving, it's very relaxing because of the controlled breathing, which makes it a very slow and rewarding experience," he said.

"You are surrounded by quiet. And when in a coral reef, it's another world where beauty is all around you."

He also recalls one of his first "pinch me, is this really happening" moments, which was about 1980 during his first trip to Paris.

"I remember having coffee just across the street from Notre Dame Cathedral and thinking about how I wrote about this same destination in my high school French class for an assignment about the greatest cathedrals of the world, and suddenly, here I am looking at history," he said.

One of his most exhausting excursions was a 470-mile bicycle ride for seven days in August, spending nights in a tent.

"Even though I've traveled far across the miles, I always recommend how many close and exciting travel opportunities we have right here in

Northwest Indiana for exploring, especially at the Dunes and throughout La Porte County," he said.

Other important travel tips he gained from his absorbed expertise is to always "do your homework and research before a trip to be prepared, but also be willing to roll with the punches and be open to try something unplanned at the spur of the moment."

"We've had our luggage lost or


expectations not play out as we had hoped, but you can't let it ruin a trip or let it frustrate you," he said.

And as for his father's dream that one day Dwight would visit Disney World, that "check mark" happened with his wife and his own children in the early 1990s.

"Now, I've been talking with my wife that it's time for us to take our grandkids with us for a Disney trip," he said.

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Jim Schellinger

Hoosiers taking Northwest Indiana to the next level

'Ignite the Region' initiative spurring next wave of growth

JIM SCHELLINGER

Serving as Indiana's secretary of commerce and helping lead the Indiana Economic Development Corp. (IEDC), I have the opportunity to see firsthand the incredible work being done to drive Indiana forward and take our economy to the next level. Indiana is ranked first in the Midwest and fifth in the nation for doing business, and we are recognized among the best in the U.S. for our regulatory environment, affordability, infrastructure and quality of life. These accolades show why Indiana is an easy choice for locating and growing a business. While these accolades demonstrate the many benefits of doing business here, they're a greater reflection of our timeless commitment to making Indiana the very best place to live, work and play.

Nowhere is that commitment more evident than in Northwest Indiana. The Region is not just competing for projects, it's winning them. And that's a testament to not only the unique advantages that Northwest Indiana boasts—like proximity to the third largest metro area in the U.S., an international port and international airport—but also to the tremendous collaboration taking place at the local and regional levels.

In the last few years, the IEDC and Northwest Indiana have secured 106 commitments from companies to locate or grow in the Region with plans to create up to 7,838 new Hoosier jobs. Eleven of those projects have occurred so far in 2018 alone! Companies like Hoist Liftruck, Daifuku Wynright

Corp. and HMD Trucking are expanding from the west across state lines, lured by the opportunity of monumental savings and space available for future growth. International firms like MCP in Israel have chosen to locate new operations in the Region when faced with a world of other options. And, supported by the confidence that

"Northwest Indiana's future is full of promise because of the work being done today." —Jim Schellinger, secretary of commerce for the state of Indiana

comes with operating in a pro-growth business climate and an available skilled workforce, Northwest Indiana staples like U. S. Steel Corp., Arconic and Pratt Paper are forging ahead here, making significant investments in their facilities that support global operations.

Despite the steady drumbeat of good news in Northwest Indiana, I'm confident we have only scratched the surface on what's to come. The work being done now across the Region, and in partnership with the state, has the potential to transform the makeup of Northwest Indiana and enhance the lives of Hoosiers for generations to come. This fall, I was honored to join regional leaders as they rolled out a bold vision to come together like never before and "Ignite the Region," with a focus on five key pillars for growth: increasing business development and

marketing of the Region, fostering entrepreneurship and innovation, enhancing infrastructure, growing the talent pool and launching place-making efforts.

In today's world, economic development is about so much more than tax credits or the latest unemployment figure. It's about communities. It's about people. It's about coming together to support each other and working together to build healthy, vibrant communities where people want to live, work and play. People are at the heart of Gov. Eric Holcomb's Next Level Agenda, and I'm encouraged to see people at the forefront of Northwest Indiana's vision for the future.

Between this Region's 45 miles of Lake Michigan coastline, a homegrown brewery that's won over the world, national attractions like Fair Oaks Farms and Northwest Indiana natives who are reinventing their home with transformative projects like the new Digital Crossroads of America Data Center, this Region is no stranger to world-class quality-of-life amenities. And with a bold plan underway to double track the South Shore Line, we'll significantly increase connectivity from Chicago to Northwest Indiana all the way to my heart (well, hometown) in South Bend and be better positioned to attract new businesses and new talent.

Northwest Indiana's future is full of promise because of the work being done today.

Working together, I am confident that we will "Ignite the Region" and continue taking Indiana to the next level in a state that works.

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