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Northwest Indiana Forum Foundation and IEDC Approve Funding for Nine Additional READI Projects

August 21, 2023 - Portage – Thirty-four (34) projects were selected by a team representing talent, business development and marketing, infrastructure, quality of place and entrepreneurship and innovation. The Northwest Indiana Forum spearheaded the efforts to secure \$50 million in READI grant funding. These selected projects have leveraged nearly \$700 million of matched spending that will spur development and growth in Northwest Indiana. The Northwest Indiana Forum represents Lake, Porter, LaPorte, Newton, Jasper, Starke and Pulaski counties.

Nine of the thirty-four projects were approved recently for READI funding by the Northwest Indiana Forum Foundation and the Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC). These projects have met all the necessary requirements to receive READI grant funding.

These projects include:

East Corporate Hangar Campus - Gary/Chicago International Airport - \$1,410,000 READI / \$16,410,000 Total Investment - Located minutes from the shores of Lake Michigan and just 25 miles from downtown Chicago, The Gary/Chicago International Airport (GCIA) is a full-service airport, capable of serving general aviation, corporate, commercial, and cargo users. GCIA has two economic development opportunities in front of them. The addition of two aircraft hangars with concrete ramps to connect them directly to the airport runways. By providing the necessary capital, hangar construction will attract aviation companies to Indiana from Illinois and Michigan. Both hangars will be leased to aviation companies over a term of at least 30 years.

Evergreen Marketing Content Plan – Northwest Indiana Forum - \$919,000 READI / \$2,919,000 Total Investment - The purpose of the Evergreen Marketing Content Plan is to increase economic development, boost talent attraction and talent retention from our local universities, and attract visitors to support our growing quality of place ecosystem. This plan will unify our region's voice and streamline proven marketing distribution methods - maximizing return on investment. Technical infrastructure, attraction development, and strategic marketing assets will be developed and distributed to targeted audiences primed to move to, invest in, work in, and raise a family in Northwest Indiana. Assets will also be distributed to both public and private entities that share the same vision to stimulate sustainable economic impact for talent attraction, talent retention, business attraction, travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation across Northwest Indiana.

"The Evergreen Marketing Plan is a bold declaration of our region's potential and a testament to our commitment to growth. With this plan, we're not just promoting our assets – we're igniting a movement, inviting businesses to join us in crafting a vibrant economic landscape. Our region's story is one of resilience, innovation, and community, and through this marketing plan, we're

ensuring that story reverberates across borders and industries. Organizations are encouraged to join this movement to maximize the reach of these marketing dollars for the Region."

Heather Ennis, President and CEO

Medical Resident Program – HealthLinc, Inc. - \$940,000 READI / \$4,438,131 Total Investment - Northwest Indiana's seven county region has a population of more than 750,000 with eleven general hospitals, four Federally Qualified Healthcare Centers (FQHC), and three in-patient mental health facilities, but no residency programs. HealthLinc provides interaction with multiple health specialties including pharmacy, optometry, dentistry, podiatry, chiropractic services and behavioral health. At HealthLinc, we serve as the family medicine practice clinic for the residents in Lake, Porter, LaPorte, Starke and St Joseph counties in Northwest Indiana. The HealthLinc Family Medicine Residency Program will be the first of the Northwest Graduate Medical Education Consortium. It will host 6 residents per year for a total of 18 residents over the first three years. Residents will see a minimum of 1,650 patients.

"We are grateful for the support of the Northwest Indiana Forum Foundation and the IEDC" states Beth Wrobel, HealthLinc CEO. "The READI grant will significantly improve our ability to achieve health equity and positive health outcomes for our patients and communities. One of the goals of the program is to build a pipeline of physicians who will remain in the region after completing their residency and provide quality health care to high-need patients who rely on community health centers"

Manufacturing Lab, Michigan City– Ivy Tech Community College - \$258,500 READI / \$485,818 Total Investment - LaPorte County's strong manufacturing history continues to drive economic growth. There is a huge demand to fill manufacturing positions, but also a lack of skilled, qualified workers. LaPorte County is lagging behind the state average for post-secondary credentials. Ivy Tech Community College in Michigan City hopes to create opportunities for students to complete much-needed post-secondary credentials aligned with the local industry workforce needs. Ivy Tech has already renovated the lab space. READI funds would procure the remaining necessary equipment to deliver the educational and training programs to both traditional and non-traditional students.

Reimagining Michigan City – Prison Relocation Study – Economic Development Corporation Michigan City - \$329,000 READI / \$482,333 Total Investment – The Reimagining Michigan City – Prison Relocation Study is a comprehensive impact study of moving the prison out of downtown Michigan City/the lakefront, and reimagining that land for recreation, retail, restaurant, and mixed-use space. The prison is currently a barrier to economic growth, so relocating it would create an opportunity for Northwest Indiana to grow talent, attract investment and raise per capita income, while tying together the TDDs of the soon to be double tracked commuter rail line and reclamation of the lakefront.

"As we embark on exploring the investment and development opportunities available as the prison relocates, we are honored to be the recipient of READI grant funds under the NWI Forum's Ignite the Region initiative," said Economic Development Corporation Michigan City Executive Director Clarence L. Hulse. "The support of our Region partners is vital to truly evaluate the path forward for this prime location. Our team seeks to ensure that we are creating the optimal strategy at this pivotal stage in our community with the opportunity to reimagine Michigan City through the READI funding partnership."

Rural Entrepreneurship & Innovation Taskforce – Pulaski County Community Development Commission - \$65,800 READI / \$75,800 Total Investment - The goal of the Rural Entrepreneur & Innovation Taskforce project is to build a regional identity and collaborative network for entrepreneurship in Jasper, Newton, Pulaski, and Starke Counties and the rural areas of Lake, Porter, and La Porte Counties, as well as to strengthen each County's entrepreneurial development toolkit and messaging.

Initial objectives are to assess and prioritize economic-development programming, tools, and resource needs and to solidify design and costs of programming and, as needed, facilities across these communities. Long-term objectives are to roll out tools and brand practices to ignite small-business development and growth, and more robust collaboration among service providers supporting entrepreneurs and innovators.

The importance of entrepreneurship to rural economies cannot be overstated. Not only do mom-and-pop shops create the same sense of place as they do in the neighborhoods of urban areas, but it is often necessary for larger-scale investment that creates employment opportunities to be driven from within when our communities lack the demographic or logistical strengths of larger cities. This project will allow our economic-development agencies to build stronger toolkits for assisting entrepreneurs in our own counties while strengthening regional bonds to allow for improved crosspollination of ideas, leveraging of shared resources, and broader exposure for our homegrown businesses. Nathan Origer, Executive Director

The Silos at Sanders Farm - Crow Holdings Development - \$1,410,000 READI / \$158,718,491 Total Investment - The Silos at Sanders Farm is a 195-acre investment-grade business park bringing Class A warehouse and distribution space to the broader NW Indiana market. At capacity, the park will offer more than 2.5M square feet under roof. The initial 1.27M SF building is being built on spec, and the rest of the land will be improved to a developable state for build-to-suit opportunities. The Town of Merrillville has partnered with Crow Holdings on this project by contributing tax abatement & TIF dollars. The development will bring hundreds of jobs and millions of dollars in wages, plus tax revenue, to the area.

US Cold Infrastructure to I65 and SR2 – United States Cold Storage - \$940,000 READI / \$125,350,642 - United States Cold Storage (USCS) offers highly reliable, cost-effective, and environmentally sustainable solutions for the frozen and refrigerated food industries. USCS owns 130 acres at State Road 2 (SR2) and Colorado Street in Lake County. USCS plans to develop a 245,735 square foot facility with a budgeted cost of \$120.6M. The building will be fully automated and have 13.1 million cubic feet of refrigerated storage space. Additional acreage will be developed in the future. The Lake County Council and the Lake County Board of Commissioners are supportive of the USCS project and have approved a 10-year real and personal property tax abatement commencing once the building is operational. USCS is committed to community & workforce collaboration and has engaged with Purdue University and Ivy Tech Community College on building design, internships/apprenticeships. USCS will recruit locally for all open positions, utilizing the Job Center of Lake County.

The State of Indiana has been great to work with! Not only does it support our new Lowell, IN, project but state officials also express continued interest in our USCS Lebanon, IN, location. Through grants and other funding measures, Indiana continues to invest in infrastructure and

improvements. This all helps to make it attractive for talented people to become part of the USCS Family. We appreciate the state's "Business-friendly" climate and approach. It truly enables USCS to attract and provide a people-first culture. United States Cold Storage Team

Saxon Indiana Tract 1 Kenmara – Saxon Partners, Indiana - \$1,410,000 READI / \$163,152,000 Total Investment – Kenmara is a phased, master-planned commercial development on a 59.0-acre site in Munster, Indiana, formerly the Indiana portion of the Lansing County Club. The project will include 720,000 sq.ft. of commercial space designed for healthcare and business commerce. At stabilization, the Project will exceed \$200 million in value and will house approximately 2,700 employees.

This grant will accomplish exactly what it was meant for: giving us momentum on Phase 1A Infrastructure that will allow us to activate one of the greatest economic development opportunities in NW Indiana, with all READI dollars classified for public benefit. Gary Warfel, Saxon Partners

Launched by Gov. Holcomb and led by the IEDC, READI builds on the framework and successes of the Indiana Regional Cities Initiative and the 21st Century Talent Initiative, encouraging regional collaboration and data-driven, long-term planning that, when implemented, will attract and retain talent in Indiana. The \$500 million READI fund was passed by legislation during the 2021 session, and an additional \$500 million was allocated by the Indiana General Assembly in 2023 for READI 2. More information is available at IndianaREADI.com.

About IEDC

The Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC) is charged with growing the State economy, driving economic development, helping businesses launch, grow and locate in the state. Governed by a 15-member board chaired by Governor Eric J. Holcomb, the IEDC manages many initiatives, including performance-based tax credits, workforce training grants, innovation and entrepreneurship resources, public infrastructure assistance, and talent attraction and retention efforts. For more information about the IEDC, visit iedc.in.gov.