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**THE ULTIMATE MAGAZINE FOR SITE SELECTORS, RELOCATION & INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

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**THE RIGHT LOCATION FOR SUCCESS**



# Meet one of America's top sites:

## Huntington County, Indiana, USA



### Tenacious. Resilient. Determined. Trustworthy. TESTED!

In 2014, these are important words to business owners. They're music to the ears of investors in today's global marketplace as well. And when they're harnessed by a commitment to excellence, you've discovered Northeast Indiana!

Huntington County, Indiana (population 35,000), lies in the heart of the Great Lakes Region of the United States and the coalition of communities forming the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership. The Great Recession tested the character of the region, and the tenacity, resilience and determination of the people and businesses there have resulted in a recovery that's nothing short of astonishing.

### Huntington County's remarkable recovery

You could say the turnaround in Huntington County followed the ancient wisdom of Saint Francis of Assisi: "Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible."

In 2009, for example, the unemployment rate in Huntington County peaked at 14.3%. Today, it's recovered to a modest 5.7%. Nearly 94% of formerly vacant industrial building space has now been redeveloped, and greenfield sites are available with interstate access.

In fact, since 2008, more than 40 industries have invested more than a combined \$215 million, creating more than 1,800 new jobs while retaining more than 5,800 existing jobs. During that same period of time, 16 new industries have located to Huntington County for the first time.

In 2014, small business development likewise reached a new record with nearly 20 small restaurants, retail and service establishments opening.

### Exceptional location, workforce and value

Economic development is a systematic effort to preserve and enhance the vitality of a community's economy. It's best described as a "team sport" and most resembles a long-distance relay race. Everyone on the team has a role to play and must pass the baton to the next team member to be successful.

According to Mark Wickersham, executive director, Huntington County Economic Development, "The key to our community's revitalization has been an understanding of this 'team' approach – and the quote from Saint Francis of Assisi about doing what's necessary, then possible and then seemingly impossible. We've also focused on the basic theme that location, workforce and value for the investor are assets we have in abundance."

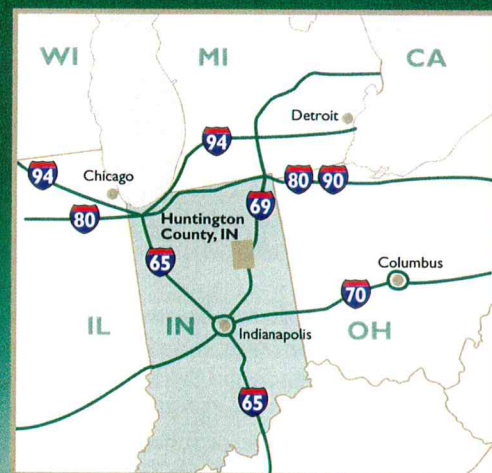
#### Location.

While every economic development organization in the United States claims to be in a convenient location, Northeast Indiana makes quite the credible case. Airports, interstate highways, rail service, ports of entry, and proximity to both the supply chain, customers and capital are plentiful and convenient.

In the air, Fort Wayne International Airport and a series of municipal



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general aviation airports provide excellent access to Northeast Indiana. On the ground, Interstate 69, Interstate 80 and Interstate 94 are supplemented by the 4-lane, limited-access highways of U.S. 30 and U.S. 24, providing a critical "spinal column" for surface transportation.

Add to that the CSX Railroad and the Norfolk Southern Railroad, two outstanding transportation assets. These connect the region to freight moving into the Great Lakes Region from anywhere in the world through either the Gulf of Mexico through Kansas City, Missouri or the Atlantic Coast via multi-modal terminals at Columbus, Ohio.

Furthermore, freshwater ports are available as well via the Saint Lawrence Seaway and the Mississippi River system. To quote the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership, "You can get there from here."

### **Workforce quality.**

A location is only as good as the talent of its workforce. In 2010, Continental Structural Plastics (CSP) opened a plant in Huntington. CSP Huntington manufactures body panels for the automotive industry, including Chevy's Corvette Stingray, named the 2014 Car of the Year at the North American International Auto Show in Detroit.

"Corvette buyers demand perfection, and our local workforce delivers results," said Huntington Mayor Brooks Fetter.

In 2009, Onward Manufacturing Company of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, opened a plant in Huntington. The company manufactures award-winning gas barbecue grills, and Consumer Reports magazine has recognized two of their products as Best Buys.

"Onward is just another example of how the Huntington workforce demonstrates a commitment to excellence," said Wickersham. "In fact, our highly skilled workforce and pro-business environment have convinced several international giants to locate their multimillion-dollar facilities here." These internationally owned companies include:

- Brazilian-owned Gerdau Steel
- Canadian-owned Onward Manufacturing
- French-owned Schneider Electric
- German-owned Bendix Commercial Vehicle Systems
- Japanese-owned Helena Chemical Company

Other major employers include:

- United Technologies – UTEC
- Continental Structural Plastics

A final testament to the workforce quality is that Huntington County makes products the world uses every day. A small company called PHD, Inc., makes it possible for the world to have plastic drinking bottles. "They make the pneumatic actuators that manufacturers need to make plastic drinking bottles for the world," said Wickersham.

And that's just the beginning. The S.C. Johnson Company's Glade Plug-In Air Fresheners rely on plastic molds from the Miami Tool & Die Company in Huntington.

Heating and cooling giants such as Carrier Corporation and Rheem enjoy the excellence of electronic controls engineered and designed by United Technologies UTEC facility in Huntington's Riverfork Industrial Park.

Moreover, Comcast, Metronet and others provide world-class telecommunications infrastructure to the area, providing consumers virtually unlimited bandwidth and communications access to the global marketplace.

### **Value – Return On Investment**

In addition to affordable real estate and labor, Huntington County offers

investors additional value simply by being located in Indiana, a state consistently recognized for job creation and business-friendly policies. Some of its many accolades include:

- 1st in the Midwest and 6th in the United States in Chief Executive Magazine's annual "Best & Worst States" survey, 2014
- 1st in the Midwest and 10th in the United States in the Tax Foundation's 2014 Business (friendly) Tax Climate Index
- 1st in the Midwest and 7th in the United States as the best place to do business in the Pollina Corporate Top 10 Pro-Business States, 2014

In addition, Indiana is one of only 11 states in the United States to have a AAA credit rating from Standard & Poors, Fitch and Moody's.

### **Regional, 10-county collaboration**

On the regional level, Huntington County is one of 10 counties in the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership, benefiting from the shared commitment to excellence, innovation and customer service.

The region is diverse and dynamic, and known for everything from rural charm to urban excitement. Member counties include Adams, Allen, DeKalb, Huntington, LaGrange, Noble, Steuben, Wabash, Wells, and Whitley Counties.

Regional workforce, education and business development initiatives add even more opportunities for success.

### **Attractive location for foreign investment**

Finally, on the global stage, Northeast Indiana has a growing reputation as an attractive location for foreign direct investment. More than 50 internationally owned companies from 17 different nations have either located manufacturing facilities or their U.S./North American headquarters facilities in the region.

Key industry clusters include agriculture, automotive manufacturing, food processing, steel production/metal processing, defense, medical devices, insurance and logistics. The region offers a Foreign Trade Zone, allowing companies engaged in importing and exporting an opportunity for duty exemptions and payment deferrals.

"As the world rediscovers Northeast Indiana, the opportunities become limitless," said Wickersham.

**Top:**

**Lt. Governor Ellsperman visits Huntington & tours Helena Chemical Facility**

**Bottom:**

**Novae Project 2014 Aerial Image from July**