

For Immediate Release
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Switzerland County EcO₁₅ Project Moves Forward

An ambitious effort to build upon Southeastern Indiana's economic growth areas, including Advanced Manufacturing, Healthcare Services, and Hospitality & Tourism, is underway in Switzerland County.

The **Economic Opportunities 2015 (EcO₁₅)** project is funded primarily by the Lilly Endowment Inc., which provided grants supporting the creation of a truly regional system of life-long learning. The vision of the project is to connect the residents of ten counties within Southeast Indiana through education to better economic opportunities by the year 2015.

The EcO₁₅ initiative directly impacts the counties of **Bartholomew, Dearborn, Decatur, Franklin, Jackson, Jefferson, Jennings, Ripley, Ohio and Switzerland.**

Locally, the **Community Foundation of Switzerland County, Inc. (CFSCI)** is the fiscal agent of grant funds for the EcO₁₅ project and provides leadership, oversight and management support services for the regionally-focused initiative.

"To best connect the program with economic development initiatives in Switzerland County and throughout the Southeast Indiana region, the CFSCI asked the **Switzerland County Economic Development Corporation** to coordinate the local activities of this program," said Pam Acton, Executive Director of the CFSCI. "The SCEDC's knowledge of the employment base in the region, including the Kentucky side the river, makes it the ideal organization to link employment opportunities with the goals of EcO₁₅."

Coordinating the local EcO₁₅ efforts is Logansport-native Mike Busch. A life-long Hoosier, Busch previously served as the Executive Director of the Fulton Economic Development Corporation in north-central Indiana. He also led the North Central Indiana Economic Development District, and chaired the task force that produced two nationally-recognized reports linking economic development success with the local workforce. Earlier in his career, Busch worked for Ivy Tech State College's Workforce and Economic Development division, and was a staff member for the late U.S. Congressman Jim Jontz. He also served as a county commissioner for eight years. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, Busch assisted two communities devastated by Hurricane Katrina with redevelopment efforts—the Mississippi county that suffered the worst of Katrina's destruction, and a parish in Louisiana north of New Orleans.

“We’re very lucky to have Mike working with us on this project,” said Jon Bond, of the SCEDC. “Few people in Indiana have his experience in how economic development connects with education & training. He has lived in rural Indiana communities all his life and understands the challenges we face.”

“My first couple of months in Switzerland County have been fantastic. I’m incredibly impressed with the community and feel so honored to be working here on the EcO₁₅ initiative,” Busch said.