

Switzerland County Economic Development Strategy Update Newsletter



COUNTY AWARDED GRANT FOR WORKFORCE TRAINING PROJECT

What's New:

- *County Awarded grant for Workforce Training Project*
- *Wireless Internet Project is a Success*
- *Switzerland County Hosts Association of Indiana Counties Conference*
- *County Approves New Comprehensive Plan*

Switzerland County has been selected to participate in an exciting new regional initiative that will bring new opportunities to the community. The Economic Opportunities 2015 Initiative (EcO15) is funded by the Lilly Endowment, Inc, and overseen by the Heritage Fund of Columbus, Indiana. The project seeks to create a regional system of workforce training and life-long learning in Southeast Indiana. Locally, grant funds were received by the Community Foundation of Switzerland County and the project

will be implemented by the Switzerland County Economic Development Corporation. A grant for phase one of the project has already been awarded to the county.

In the first phase of the project, a project director will be hired and planning and research will be conducted for later phases of the project. Additional grant dollars are available as a specific project plan is developed for Switzerland County. The project funding period is three years.



The goal of EcO15 is to improve economic opportunity in Switzerland County through education and training.

COUNTY APPROVES NEW COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DOCUMENT

Switzerland County leaders have approved a new comprehensive planning document for the community. The comprehensive plan, which gained its final approval in mid-July, was the product of over two years of planning and preparation by community volunteers. The plan was developed through a series of public forums held in 2007 and 2008. Community members were encouraged to attend and offer input. Final adoption of the plan required

approval by the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, the Switzerland County Planning Commission, The Vevay Town Board, The Patriot Town Board and the Switzerland County Commissioners.

The next step for the Switzerland County Planning Commission will be to develop new ordinances to implement and enforce the new Comprehensive Plan. This process is already underway and is expected to be completed in 2008.

SWITZERLAND COUNTY HOSTS ASSOCIATION OF INDIANA COUNTIES

Switzerland County was selected as the host community for the 2008 Association of Indiana Counties Conference. The conference, which was attended by over 700 Indiana elected officials, was held at the Belterra Hotel and Conference Center. A Switzerland County Economic Development Corporation representative served on the host committee for the event. Also serving on the host committee were

elected officials from Switzerland County and neighboring communities. The local host committee played a crucial role in the attraction, planning, and coordination of the event. The event gave Switzerland County great exposure with elected leaders from across Indiana. Local events included an evening of shopping, dining, and entertainment in Vevay's Main Street District.

WIRELESS INTERNET PROJECT IS A SUCCESS



Wireless technology is used to improve access to high-speed internet

The first phase of Switzerland County's High Speed Internet initiative has been a great success. In 2005, the Switzerland County Economic Development Corporation created a Broadband Advisory Group to assess and improve Switzerland County's access to high speed internet. This began a two-year process of surveying the demand for high-speed internet in the community and identifying potential service providers.

In late 2007, the project's first wireless internet transmission equipment was purchased through the County Economic Development

Fund. In February of 2008, the equipment was installed at two Switzerland County locations. Tower Space was provided by the Patriot Water Company in the Quercus Grove area and K95.9 *Froggy* FM at their Center Square tower. Internet service from both transmission locations is provided by ORVCOMM, an internet utility operated by the City of Rising Sun.

To date, over 120 users have signed up for internet service using the new towers. This number is double the usage projections for the first six months and is more than adequate demand to

continue the project.

An expansion of the internet service into new areas of the county is planned for early 2009.

For anyone within seven aerial miles of the existing tower locations in Quercus Grove and Center Square, ORVCOMM will provide a free signal test to determine if the service is available at your home or business. ORVCOMM can be reached at (812)438-3616 or online at www.orvcomm.com.



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