

The Future: Vision, Foundation, Pillars and Strategies

The data and information in the previous section beg the question: where do we go from here? More specifically, what kind of a future do we want to create for those who choose to live and work in rural Indiana; and for those who have a stake in rural Indiana regardless of where they live? One answer to this question is reflected in the following:

I envision a rural Indiana that is characterized by genuine economic opportunity, responsible stewardship of natural resources, and strong, sustainable communities that provide a high quality of life for those who call rural Indiana home. We cannot become a state of haves and have-nots. Achieving this vision will benefit all Hoosiers.

~ **Lt. Governor Becky Skillman**

RISE 2020 participants applaud and embrace this dynamic and compelling statement and suggest that certain core values are implied in such a vision. These core values are embodied in the following:

In 2020, rural Indiana is our nation's most dynamic, globally-competitive countryside,
comprised of sustainable regions and communities,
in which all natural resources are responsibly stewarded,
and all place-based assets are fully enhanced and optimized.

This countryside is welcoming and inclusive, exhibiting an unparalleled rural quality of life,

where the integrity of rural communities is maintained,
new and different voices are acknowledged and heard,
human and social capital is inspired and enhanced,

and the heritage and history of Hoosier people and places,
united with the promises of new peoples and voices,
forge a shared future,

committed to by all,
especially the young,
and infused with a common understanding of the
interdependence of all Hoosiers—rural, urban and suburban.

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This section of the report is the roadmap for moving from vision to action. There are three key components to this roadmap: a foundation; seven pillars; and proposed strategies and activities associated with both the foundation and the seven pillars.

The RISE 2020 Foundation

Those involved in the RISE 2020 initiative believe the top overall priority is to nurture the development and empowerment of a sustainable constituency that focuses on rural issues and opportunities. Historically in Indiana, in other states and nationally, there has not been a strong and well organized constituency to focus on the broad scope of rural issues, challenges and opportunities. Contrast this situation, for example, to that of the agricultural industry in which multiple agencies, organizations and institutions exist to help address the challenges and opportunities of that particular constituency, such as the plethora of farm organizations, state and federal departments of agriculture, and a national network of colleges of agriculture. Achieving the RISE 2020 vision requires a broad and sustainable rural constituency.

Priority #1: Create the constituency, voice and platform necessary to execute the Rural Indiana Strategy for Excellence and achieve “The Spirit and Quality of Place: A 2020 Vision for the Indiana Countryside.”

- Ensure that RISE 2020’s vision emanates from, is embraced by, and is stewarded through implementation by a broad Hoosier constituency, representing rural, urban and suburban citizens, communities, and interests.
 - ✧ *Communicate the RISE 2020 purpose, expected outcomes, and action steps.*
 - ◆ *Citizens, both rural and urban*
 - ◆ *Local, state, and federal elected officials*
 - ◆ *Appointed and career government professionals*
 - ◆ *Non-governmental organizations*
 - ◆ *Academic institutions*
 - ◆ *Private industry*
 - ✧ *Engage individuals, communities, and constituencies to establish a broad based partnership.*
 - ✧ *Ensure local leaders participate in regional listening sessions and provide input to the RISE 2020 Report.*
 - ✧ *Utilize peer challenging and strong advocates.*
- Identify specific policies, programs, and practice opportunities that offer strategic advantages in achieving the principles, values and goals of the RISE 2020 foundation and pillars.
 - ✧ *Convene rural constituencies and service providers to stimulate conversations, expand the capacity to lead and strengthen Indiana’s rural culture.*

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- ◆ *Assemble expanded RISE 2020 Work Groups at least twice annually to ensure conversations across sectors*
- ◆ *Convene groups on existing and emerging rural issues*
- ◆ *Provide safe places and effective facilitation for communities and sectors to hold conversations*
- ◆ *Pursue intergovernmental solutions by working intra- and inter-regionally*
- ◆ *Lead the effort with the 2006 Rural Summit and Rural Forums hosted by the Purdue Center for Regional Development*
- ◆ *Continue hosting a Rural Summit to convene rural constituencies and service providers to cross-walk rural needs, track progress of the strategy and identify additional strategies to implement RISE 2020*
- ◆ *Explore the desirability of creating a rural caucus in the General Assembly as in other states and the U.S. Congress*

- ⊘ *Identify local champions, such as local economic development organizations, chambers of commerce, community foundations, to enable local communities to align their programs with RISE 2020.*

- ⊘ *Enlist support for RISE 2020's "social contract" at key community events, such as fairs, festivals, etc.*

- ⊘ *Integrate RISE 2020's foundation and pillars into strategic planning efforts, organizational meetings, and plans of work of partner organizations.*

- ⊘ *Ensure that the Indiana Office of Rural Affairs and other related parts of government use RISE 2020 to guide policies, programs and resource allocation.*

- ⊘ *Market RISE 2020 through a partnership of business, non-governmental, governmental, and academic organizations.*
 - ◆ *Develop a series of articles that explains RISE 2020 and each of its pillars to be published and distributed by the consortia's members and public channels*

- *Ensure rural constituencies, community leaders and service providers continue to support RISE 2020 and its Vision for the Indiana Countryside.*
 - ⊘ *Create a leadership team to promote, monitor and help Indiana's rural culture evolve throughout the life of RISE 2020.*
 - ◆ *Maintain and expand the consortium of existing rural constituency organizations, non-governmental organizations, governments, businesses and academic interests, to implement RISE 2020*
 - ◆ *Maintain the Working Group Chairs Committee as the RISE 2020 Coordinating Committee to provide leadership for the initiative.*
 - ◆ *Develop regional rural strategy boards to include all local leaders as well as the general public in local conversations*
 - ◆ *Coordinate existing rural organizations and service providers to emerge as a visible rural constituency to advance RISE 2020*

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- ✧ *Assemble a management group to support RISE 2020 and its leadership team.*
 - ◆ *Serve as a strong day-to-day intermediary for RISE 2020 and provide its institutional home*
 - ◆ *Coordinate the management for implementation with the organizations in the initial RISE 2020 leadership consortium*

The RISE 2020 Seven Pillars and Priority Strategies

Upon this foundation, seven strategic pillars must be erected and embraced. These pillars form a holistic framework for how rural Indiana must approach its future; and represent the unifying thread for moving from vision to action whether the area of focus is economic development, health and human services, transportation or any other sector concern. The identification and articulation of these pillars are based on research and best practices in community and rural development in the U. S. and elsewhere, and through the deliberations of those involved in the RISE 2020 initiative.

Selected strategies from the eight work groups have been synthesized and placed underneath the most appropriate pillar (see Appendix B for a complete list of potential strategies and actions developed by each work). Not all of the priority strategies make specific mention of rural, but the rural connection is always implied. Because RISE 2020 is designed to guide decisions, policy and resource allocations for the next 15 years, specific strategies, tactics and action steps will need to be continuously assessed and modified; and additional specifics such as timelines and points of responsibility will need to be developed. This is the one of the most important roles of the organized constituency that is being created and nurtured, led initially by the RISE 2020 Coordinating Committee. The priority strategies and tactics will also need to be vetted among rural residents as part of the Rural Community Input Sessions to be held during March and April (see *Next Steps* section of this report). Specific actions, timelines and tactics will often vary from locale to locale and will certainly change over time. The seven pillars, however, will not change, but will stand the test of time to 2020...and beyond.

Finally, it is essential to note that many programs and resources are already in place in the public, private and philanthropic sectors to help rural people and places. These efforts need to be continually strengthened by all involved. The Daniels-Skillman administration is committed to strengthening state government efforts and has also introduced a number of new statewide policies, programs and initiatives. Those initiatives not specifically targeted to rural Indiana must be sensitive to and respectful of the unique needs of rural Indiana. Rural stakeholders have a special responsibility to make sure their voices are heard as discussions and debate on broader statewide initiatives occur. Other sectors—private, philanthropic and local and Federal governments—must also do their share. Many of the specific suggestions in the RISE 2020 report help identify those areas of opportunity and concern where the rural perspective is of particular importance. Simultaneously, those in rural areas must take advantage of the opportunities available to them by state and federal governments, other public and private institutions and the philanthropic sector. The new Office of Rural Affairs can be most helpful to

rural communities in this regard but the communities themselves must show leadership and initiative and take the first step of reaching out for such assistance and support.

I. Establish appropriate regional frameworks to optimize rural competitive advantage in a rapidly changing global economy, building connectivity across public, private, nonprofit and academic sectors and institutions.

New economic realities demand that the people and communities of Indiana—rural and urban alike—must work together to create their own destiny. In other words they must cooperate in order to compete. Communities need visionary, risk-taking leaders and others who will:

- Collaborate across jurisdictional boundaries, recognizing that cities and counties working regionally can generate more resources and act more effectively on most common challenges.
- Cooperate across public, private, nonprofit and academic sectors and institutions, for mutual and regional advantage.

Priority Strategies and Considerations:

- Increase regional economic collaboration by developing tools and reducing restrictions.
 - ✧ *Enact legislation to establish regional industrial and technology parks, which allow for the sharing of property, sales, and income taxes.*
 - ✧ *Enhance public and private investment in regional industrial and technology parks for new and sustainable job creation and development.*
 - ✧ *Develop regional frameworks that enable public, private and philanthropic financial institutions to work together regionally to provide investment capital to businesses and communities.*
 - ✧ *Improve understanding of government structures and processes at all levels to build support for modernizing services and their delivery.*
- Create a world-class workforce, focused on place-based assets and utilizing partnerships between business and education, which is recognized globally as a key Indiana asset.
 - ✧ *Develop educational processes that focus upon the importance of regional approaches in a competitive global economy.*
 - ✧ *Increase cooperation between public and private P-12 schools and colleges and universities in the same regions to maximize educational outcomes.*
 - ✧ *Leverage community adult learning centers to strengthen regional collaboration through educational and other initiatives.*

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- Create a dynamic, integrated statewide transportation plan that embraces technological advances, serves economic and community development needs, and maximizes Indiana's advantage as the Crossroads of America.
 - ⌘ *Modernize the decision-making procedures to provide:*
 - ◆ *Knowledge-based strategies, including awareness of service gaps*
 - ◆ *Sophisticated modeling tools*
 - ◆ *Processes that embrace land use standards and natural resource uses*
 - ◆ *Technical assistance*
 - ◆ *Financial resources and asset commitments*
 - ⌘ *Examine structural changes in the way Indiana's highways are funded by linking taxes to use (e.g., miles traveled and weight).*
- Develop local understanding of all transportation system components.
 - ⌘ *Recognize the importance of intermodal transportation development, which links rural communities and opportunities into the larger statewide framework.*
 - ⌘ *Leverage the interstate and intrastate transportation systems as supply chain assets.*
 - ◆ *Design an integrated highway plan representing all connecting jurisdictions*
 - ◆ *Connect every county seat to an Interstate highway by a four-lane limited access highway*
 - ◆ *Promote intermodal development*
 - ⌘ *Leverage regional frameworks for planning and prioritization for passenger transit and freight movement.*
 - ◆ *Foster dialogue among local, state and federal transportation authorities*
 - ◆ *Develop regional transportation networks to insure that all Hoosiers have reasonable access to public/private transportation*
 - ⌘ *Promote the Small Aircraft Transportation System (SATS) program to more fully utilize the capacity of Indiana's network of small, predominantly rural, airports.*
 - ⌘ *Maximize the existing railroad system, including short-lines, to leverage freight movement and pursue passenger movement opportunities.*
 - ◆ *Explore government incentives for maintenance*
 - ◆ *Offer tax credits for maintenance similar to an Iowa program*
 - ◆ *Preserve abandoned right of way areas or if there is a rails-to-trails initiative, reserve the right to reenact the easement*
 - ◆ *Examine INDOT upgrade of railroad crossings (based on freight miles) and ensure that rural communities are included*
 - ⌘ *Improve the understanding and value of electric grid transmission, communication, and underground pipeline systems in rural communities.*

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- Initiate Quality-of-Life programs that optimize the ability of communities and regions to maximize competitive advantages and provide for the well-being of all residents.
 - ✧ *Construct a nationally recognized health and human service delivery system that addresses the special needs and circumstances of citizens living in rural areas.*
 - ✧ *Maximize regional approaches and strategies to further the needs of the Indiana tourism, arts, culture and heritage tourism (TACH) community, such as Regional Quality of Life Councils throughout Indiana.*

II. Achieve a rural leadership renaissance, to broaden and deepen civic leadership and engagement and reinvigorate civic processes.

To meet the multiple challenges facing rural Indiana, new and improved rural leadership will be needed, to reinvigorate and recommit civic processes. Such leadership and civic processes are essential. For example, recent research suggests that strong leadership and civic engagement is a precursor to—not a follower of—economic growth and development. Creation of this type of leadership will require:

- ❑ Providing intelligence, resources, and support for civic leaders, to better inform their decision-making.
- ❑ Encouraging all voices to be heard in civic affairs—tapping into the wisdom of long-established residents, and into the skills and experiences of newcomers.
- ❑ Exploring new technologies to encourage broader participation of rural people in civic affairs.

Priority Strategies and Considerations:

- Develop educational initiatives to enhance civic engagement in rural Indiana and produce the next generation of active citizens and leaders serving rural communities and regions.
 - ✧ *Strengthen public and private leadership programs, including higher education and nongovernmental organizations, which will:*
 - ◆ *Increase awareness of rural issues and opportunities, especially with decision makers*
 - ◆ *Insure that all communities in Indiana have access to a vibrant cultural and collaborative environment*
 - ◆ *Generate additional and sustainable financial resources to fund local and regional leadership development*
 - ✧ *Encourage public, private and philanthropic financial institutions and service companies to support and participate in community and regional leadership development programs.*
- Increase the leadership capacity of local leaders and champions who are knowledgeable and influential about future workforce and education needs, opportunities and strategies.

- ✧ *Create shared leadership and responsibility for workforce development in which individuals, families and communities value education.*
 - ◆ *Promote the development of marketable skill sets*
 - ◆ *Encourage career advancement and business development*
 - ◆ *Embrace a globally diverse workforce*
- ✧ *Cultivate innovative and entrepreneurial leadership in rural Indiana through the development of entrepreneur networks and investment of additional resources.*

III. Invest in rural Indiana’s unique, place-based assets, to fully optimize and enhance our diverse natural resources, the heritage, history, arts and cultures of our people and places, the integrity of our rural communities, and the human and social capital of all Indiana citizens.

Rural communities are rich in many ways, but, too often, the rural mindset is “woe is me”. This emphasis on deficiencies and shortcomings is very problematic if rural Indiana is to move forward. Every community has some combination of human, social, economic, cultural and natural assets that can be translated into opportunities for revitalization. This can happen by:

- *Fostering a change in public and civic attitudes, from emphasizing deficiencies in rural areas to identifying and building upon unique rural assets.*
- *Providing the tools and resources to enable communities to identify and take advantage of these assets, in ways that protect and nurture them for future generations*

Priority Strategies and Considerations:

- *Assist rural communities and regions in identifying their comparative and competitive advantages for use in developing economic growth strategies.*
 - ✧ *Design and pursue economic development strategies that leverage Indiana’s and its regions’ geographic locations.*
 - ✧ *Support Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) analyses by helping rural communities and regions:*
 - ◆ *Collect and analyze data*
 - ◆ *Utilize new and existing development tools*
 - *GPS/GIS and other spatial planning tools*
 - *Cutting-edge technologies*
 - ◆ *Assemble strategic intelligence*
 - ◆ *Provide opportunities to capitalize upon regional advantages*
 - ◆ *Develop and disseminate ABCD information*
 - ✧ *Advance a rural Indiana culture built upon self-reliance, forward thinking, being asset-rich and proud.*

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- ✧ *Position rural communities as ideal environments for welcoming and stimulating creativity and innovation.*
 - ◆ *Establish incentives for new and emerging businesses to locate in rural communities.*
 - ◆ *Encourage NGOs such as local economic development organizations, chambers of commerce, community foundations and service groups to work across traditional boundaries to capture economic potential*
 - ◆ *Develop a plan to engage Hoosier expatriates to reconnect with Indiana and their hometown communities for business creation and investment*
- Modernize rural Indiana’s physical infrastructure to meet the needs of citizens and empower communities to pursue economic growth.
 - ✧ *Ensure that every community has access to high-speed connectivity and communications technologies, including the option of creating local finance authorities to achieve this goal.*
 - ✧ *Design and implement an integrated state land use strategy to make the best use of Indiana’s diverse natural resources, heritage, cultures, people and place-based assets.*
 - ◆ *Encourage the adoption of responsible local and state land use policies that will support and sustain economic development, heritage and culture amenities*
 - *Work with land use experts to develop standards and definitions that cross geo-political boundaries, i.e. a zoning designation in one area should mean the same in all jurisdictions*
 - *Create uniform public sector capacity for decision-making through the use of staff professionals*
 - *Encourage the creation of Rural Regional Planning Organizations to mirror Regional or Metropolitan Planning Organizations*
 - ◆ *Protect biodiversity and manage existing natural resource assets in a sustainable fashion, through improvement and maintenance of ecological health*
 - *Provide the opportunity for all landowners to participate in conservation and protection initiatives*
 - *Strengthen the network of regional and local land trusts protecting and enhancing natural amenities*
 - *Increase public ownership of Indiana’s natural resource base, e.g. greenways, hiking trails, statewide bicycle routes, and related types of public uses*
 - ✧ *Enhance private investment in transportation systems.*
 - ✧ *Build a disaster management framework where communities help communities that will enhance Indiana’s capacity to respond and adjust to catastrophic events and losses.*

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- Capitalize on Indiana’s natural resources base for new and sustainable job creation and economic development, such as value-added agriculture, energy sources and agri-tourism.
 - ✧ *Foster political inspiration and courage to protect Indiana’s natural resources.*
 - ✧ *Facilitate rural leadership capacity to manage natural resources and other placed-based assets.*
 - ✧ *Recognize and embrace extraction industries, such as timber and mining, and renewable agricultural production with stewardship practices consistent with Indiana’s goals and opportunities.*
 - ✧ *Expand Indiana’s natural resource based tourism industry and provide incentives for small business development in this area.*
 - ✧ *Assist in the development of at least one conservation club or its equivalent in each of Indiana’s 92 counties.*
- Capitalize on Indiana’s tourism, arts, culture, and heritage (TACH) assets for job creation and economic development.
 - ✧ *Market Indiana’s unique arts, culture, heritage and tourism assets to attract and retain people and businesses.*
 - ◆ *Utilize a public and private development investment model*
 - ◆ *Establish or expand Cultural Arts Districts*
 - ◆ *Foster an environment of historic preservation*
 - ◆ *Provide economic development incentives and related programs, such as tax abatements and the Community Development Block Grant Program*
 - ◆ *Allocate a portion of cultural, arts, heritage and tourism organizations’ technical assistance grants to further the development of collaborative and regional prototype grants that focus on or include rural communities.*
 - ✧ *Create a vibrant cultural environment for all rural communities.*
 - ◆ *Create a system for developing cultural and historical maps for Indiana such as heritage trails, wine trails and cuisine tours*
 - ◆ *Create rural Indiana artist cooperatives and incubators to assist members with marketing and business management*
 - ◆ *Sustain a population base in rural Indiana that is capable of supporting a quality rural health and human service delivery system, cultural and art initiatives, and other quality-of-life amenities*
 - ◆ *Create an effective branding and marketing strategy that highlights Indiana’s assets, including the economic, natural resources and quality of life amenities found in rural Indiana*
 - ◆ *Pursue opportunities associated with a “Made In Indiana” program*

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- ✧ *Establish the rural arts community as a leader and an integrative intermediary in celebrating and embracing all types of diversity.*
 - ◆ *Create a 21st century, system-based, data framework to support the advancement of the Indiana tourism, arts, culture, and heritage.*
 - ◆ *Maximize regional assets by improving communication and cooperation among tourism, heritage, natural resources, arts and cultural organizations and agencies.*
- Promote public awareness and utilization of place-based assets for their economic and quality-of-life value. These include, but are not limited to:
 - ✧ *Promote the use of agriculturally-based renewable fuels, green materials, biodegradable products, and recycling to protect and conserve resources.*
 - ✧ *Utilize rural Indiana's working spaces, greenspaces and open spaces to capture economic and quality-of-life opportunities.*
 - ✧ *Utilize undervalued community assets such as rural airports, school facilities, historic structures, and brownfields.*
 - ✧ *Integrate tourism, arts, cultural, and heritage into the K-12 curriculum and activities beyond the school system that engage youth.*
 - ◆ *Coordinate youth exchanges that focus on the arts*
 - ◆ *Conduct a K-12 "university tour" focusing on the arts*
 - ✧ *Ensure that the Indiana arts community is reaching into rural areas with its programs and resources.*
 - ◆ *Include artists in residence programs*
 - ◆ *Ensure rural youth have reasonable access to arts and cultural opportunities comparable to those in Indiana's urban areas*
 - ✧ *Promote the arts, cultural, heritage and tourism with programs and exhibits at various sector and cross sector venues.*
- Increase local, state, and federal funding to maximize the economic and quality of life place-based assets impacting Indiana's human capital, social capital, natural resources, heritage, history, arts, and places.
 - ✧ *Increase state, federal and private funding for Indiana programs through:*
 - ◆ *Grants*
 - ◆ *Collaborative agreements between diverse organizations*
 - ◆ *Equitable distribution of dollars to rural and urban areas*
 - ◆ *Elimination of the urban bias associated with state statute match requirements*
 - ✧ *Capture a greater share of Indiana citizens' federal tax dollars for Indiana projects by creating a pool of matching funds and other innovative options.*

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- ◆ *Focus efforts of Indiana’s congressional delegation to insure the state gets a greater share of federal dollars to maintain, enhance and expand its transportation needs*
- ◆ *Create long-term public and private funding streams to strengthen multiple-year transportation planning and project development*
- ⌘ *Increase the local funding base through creative taxing mechanisms to fund natural resource conservation and education, such as impact fees and water park fees.*
- ⌘ *Create matching funds to leverage federal dollars for natural resource conservation, technical assistance and organizational support for communities.*

IV. Build a “Rural Innovation Culture” to enhance public and private entrepreneurship and build collaborative systems which sustain public, private and philanthropic commitments to achieving this goal.

Innovation and entrepreneurship go hand and hand. Neither is restricted to the private sector and neither is restricted to urban areas. A “rural innovation culture” must be created in Indiana which will require:

- ❑ Incorporating entrepreneurship learning into school curricula, to foster abilities to think creatively, plan effectively, marshal resources, and make things happen.
- ❑ Developing an environment, infrastructure, and resources to encourage and support Hoosiers as they create their own enterprises, either to generate income and jobs or to provide services to improve the quality of life in their communities.
- ❑ Providing and supporting rural citizens, firms, and institutions to pursue innovation in products, processes and services that may attract venture capital and ultimately increase productivity and job creation in rural regions.

Priority Strategies and Considerations:

- Cultivate an entrepreneurial environment so rural Indiana’s regions, communities and individuals can compete in today’s innovation and knowledge-based economy.
 - ⌘ *Promote an Indiana culture that embraces change and rewards risk-taking.*
 - ◆ *Create awareness and capitalize on international market opportunities, such as production, processing and selling, that puts Indiana in a leadership role in the emerging innovation and knowledge-based economy*
 - ◆ *Develop educational systems and support networks that foster lifelong learning for workforce needs and entrepreneurial pursuits*
 - ⌘ *Incorporate entrepreneurial training in public and private educational systems:*
 - *K-12 schools*
 - *Post-secondary institutions*
 - *Youth organizations with business focuses*
 - *NGOs collaboration*

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- ◆ *Initiate a statewide secondary entrepreneurial business competition whereby teams from every school system in Indiana can compete for school and student venture capital*
- ◆ *Every college or university that has a school or department of business should work to insure that entrepreneurship courses and certification programs are available to all students regardless of their course of study*
- ⌘ *Introduce processes that guide state and local governments toward a more common strategic vision for Indiana.*
 - ◆ *Improve federal, state and local governmental effectiveness and outcomes by:*
 - *Aligning the strategic plans of state government agencies*
 - *Reducing agency overlap and duplication*
 - *Changing regulations that limit the flexibility of local jurisdictions*
 - *Creating incentives for local governments to coordinate public services*
 - *Develop and utilize a rural differential tool to assess state regulations to ensure equitable services to rural citizens.*
- *Advance business creation and entrepreneurship as a key economic development strategy for rural Indiana.*
 - ⌘ *Build an understanding that economic development is part of a broader community development process.*
 - ◆ *Require and provide economic and community development training for all state employees involved in economic and community development, such as the Indiana Economic Development Corporation, Indiana Department of Transportation, Office of Rural Affairs, Indiana State Department of Agriculture, Department of Workforce Development and other state agencies, so as to reinvent the culture of state government*
 - ◆ *Develop new metrics that capture the scope of community development activities, quality-of-life efforts, economic development initiatives*
 - ⌘ *Extend high-speed broadband service to underserved rural communities, regional industrial and technology parks, and citizens to minimize the digital divide which is creating economic, educational and quality-of-life hardships.*
 - ⌘ *Foster community leadership training that improves understanding of entrepreneurs' needs and wants.*
 - ⌘ *Create a support mechanism to assist and track entrepreneurs as they work through the public and private service provider network.*
- *Retain and attract our best and brightest young people in rural communities by providing economic opportunities and quality of life amenities.*
- *Create regional and statewide venture capital funding programs and initiatives to promote public and private entrepreneurship.*

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- ✧ *Expand the scope of local philanthropic sources, such as United Way, community foundations, charitable organizations and others, to promote and support economic development efforts.*
- ✧ *Capture a percentage of employee state withholdings (taxes) from new or start-up companies for growth needs such as allowing companies to use the captured funds for a defined period to offset borrowing monies.*
- ✧ *Increase entrepreneurial spin-offs and new businesses directly related to investments in education and workforce training.*
- **Expand an integrated post-secondary education network of public and private institutions, which is easily accessible, marketed well, and focuses on emerging workforce and economic development needs.**
 - ✧ *Provide state funding to encourage state colleges and universities to offer one or two economic development services that would be regional or statewide in nature.*
 - ✧ *Create a seamless, user-friendly system of articulation and credit transfer among institutions of higher education, including greater use of dual credit and concurrent enrollment programs.*
 - ◆ *Increase Advanced Placement and college credit courses into high schools' curricula*
 - ◆ *Expand access to college course work through high speed internet in rural areas*
 - ✧ *Construct a central portal for education information and opportunities supported by public and private institutions.*
 - ✧ *Create and enhance admission strategies and incentive programs, including community based scholarship programs that are designed to fill worker shortages in key areas, such as health care professionals entering primary care, regional industrial and technology parks, or working in rural Indiana.*
 - ✧ *Improve salary and training of teachers to attract more people into the profession, especially in the areas of math, science and foreign languages..*
 - ◆ *Recruit more students into career tracks for math, science and foreign language teachers*
 - ◆ *Expand upon Indiana's nationally-recognized Workforce Teacher Training program*
- **Develop a “best practice” learning culture across sectors, communities and regions.**
 - ✧ *Create awareness and sharing of existing successes.*

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- ✧ *Build upon existing models and introducing new pilot projects which encourage risk-taking and creative approaches (supported by public and private funds) and funded by government and non-government organizations.*
- ✧ *Enhance and create networks of existing and potential entrepreneurs.*
- ✧ *Expand education and workforce development initiatives in rural Indiana, such as community based learning centers, distance education technologies and online learning campuses and educational opportunities specific to the needs of regional industrial and technology parks.*
- ✧ *Encourage the use of efficient and effective learning models and partnerships for future successes of rural Indiana communities through inter-agency and cross-sector cooperation.*
- Integrate the RISE 2020 pillars, strategies, and rural policy needs into Legislative and Congressional initiatives, such as the 2007 Farm Bill.

V. Engage the youth and young adults of rural Indiana in achieving the RISE 2020 vision, so they build a rural countryside in which they wish to stay, and other young people wish to come.

Too often, the voices and talents of young people are overlooked or undervalued, ignoring the fact they represent the future of rural Indiana. Rural youth must be actively and meaningfully involved by:

- ❑ Engaging youth directly in civic decision-making, providing them with the skills and opportunities for personal development and the desire to return to their home communities after experiencing the outside world.
- ❑ Channeling the energies of young people into constructive action within and for their communities.

Priority Strategies and Considerations:

- Involve youth and young adults in policy development, leadership, educational initiatives and programs impacting their families, communities, and regions.
- ✧ *Provide economic opportunities and quality of life amenities that encourage young people to remain in and attract other young people to rural Indiana communities.*
 - ◆ *Develop business clusters to concentrate resources around regional assets*
 - ◆ *Encourage young people to develop innovative strategies for the delivery of public goods and services*
 - ◆ *Create an environment in which adults encourage and allow young people to bring forth new ideas that can reinvent and refresh Indiana's rural culture*

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- ✧ *Cultivate business entrepreneurship among young people in rural Indiana.*
 - ◆ *Integrate entrepreneurship into K-12 and post-secondary curricula*
 - ◆ *Work with youth organizations to promote entrepreneurship and place-based businesses*
 - ◆ *Establish a specialty loan program, in partnership with schools, to create new businesses by young people*
- ✧ *Enrich Indiana's human capital and transform it into a world-class workforce and a progressive civic society.*
 - ◆ *Foster civic engagement through community service projects and organizations*
 - ◆ *Provide challenge grants for youth groups to pursue civic change*
 - ◆ *Create and fund prototype programs in schools for civic engagement*
- Promote youth engagement in the civic structures of their communities, such as serving on government and non-governmental councils and boards.

VI. Ensure that rural Indiana's substantial wealth is retained, enhanced, and harnessed, to generate new wealth and capture emerging economic opportunities for all citizens.

Contrary to conventional wisdom, substantial wealth already exists in rural Indiana, but it must be harnessed, protected, and enhanced for sustained economic well-being. This can be achieved by:

- Providing the means by which all rural people and families can save and invest for their future—to buy or repair a house, to pay for their own children's higher education and training, to start their own businesses, to create a rainy day fund to pay for medical and other emergencies, or provide for retirement.
- Protecting the assets rural people already have by providing affordable financial services, and reducing predatory lending practices.
- Making greater use of local community foundations or other community financial intermediaries to be repositories for retaining wealth in rural communities.

Priority Strategies and Considerations:

- Generate and retain local and regional wealth to develop economic opportunities and quality-of-life amenities for rural Indiana communities.
- ✧ *Generate and effectively use the broad range of capital found in Indiana---human and intellectual capital, social capital, and financial capital.*
- ✧ *Create a dynamic financial system that is built upon private, public and philanthropic capital sources, which provides reasonable access to capital for the full range of business types, sizes and stages of growth.*

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- ✧ *Enhance community and economic development efforts through strategic development of Indiana's philanthropic capacity.*
- ✧ *Enhance rural technology transfer through research, adaptation, and commercialization.*
- ✧ *Produce companies that meet key economic growth indicators, such as the Fortune 500, Inc. 200, etc.*
- Expand access to financial resources to support Indiana's entrepreneurs.
 - ✧ *Enhance and publicize early stage capital investment programs for new and emerging businesses.*
 - ✧ *Build a strategy to fund and encourage youth entrepreneurship in rural Indiana.*
 - ✧ *Increase funding for venture capital, research and development, economic development initiatives and college scholarships:*
 - ◆ *Obtain revenues by targeting a one percent (1%) increase in the state sales tax*
 - ◆ *Develop a 401(k) investment option to fund the development of a state venture capital pool*
 - ✧ *Exploit federally-designated HubZones (historically underutilized business zones) by encouraging businesses to become certified and gain preferential treatment when bidding on some contracts and to increase awareness of contract opportunities. Identify and market the communities which are within these zones.*
 - ✧ *Maximize micro-enterprise and micro-loan programs to optimize the creative ingenuity in Indiana, especially among entrepreneurs.*
 - ◆ *Train local foundations, Community Action Agencies and NGOs to initiate these services*
 - ◆ *Improve the marketing of existing programs to expand their use in local communities*
- Minimize the rural differential of rules, regulations and other barriers that hinder banks and other institutions from providing capital to rural businesses and communities.
 - ✧ *Raise the cap on the state rehabilitation tax credit to enable more funds to be available to support arts, culture and heritage initiatives.*
 - ✧ *Develop structures that make it easier for community banks to be an intermediary for loan guarantees and other types of state and federal programs and incentives designed to stimulate local business development.*
- Develop an economic structure and climate in which adequate wages are available to support workers and their communities.

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- ✧ *Enrich Indiana's human capital and transform it into a world-class workforce and a progressive civic society.*
- ✧ *Create and leverage additional funding to support investments in education and workforce training.*
 - ◆ *Leverage additional philanthropic support*
 - ◆ *Secure more federal funds*
 - ◆ *Leverage science and technology initiatives*
 - ◆ *Maximize tuition credits and teacher training*
- ✧ *Foster a responsive education and training system that generates a world-class workforce while simultaneously building career and economic ladders for the Indiana's workforce.*
 - ◆ *Support the direction of the Department of Workforce Development in restructuring Workforce Investment Boards and the use of competition as a community tool*
- ✧ *To establish and reach the following goal: at least 50% of Indiana residents 30 years of age will graduate from a post-secondary institution.*

VII. Ensure all rural residents are engaged in achieving this vision and advantaged in its outcomes, by embracing approaches which specifically address the challenges faced by the poor, minorities, and those undervalued or with special needs and which ensure all citizens have reasonable access to basic human and social services and are authentically included in community decision-making.

If communities only tap into part of their community resource, they will not have all that it takes to compete economically. To access all available assets, communities must find ways of:

- Embracing the idea that all people can make a positive contribution to rural community life and that no community can fully prosper if there are some who are excluded and disenfranchised.
- Promoting community decision-making and action that directly engages ethnic and racial minorities, the poor and the invisible.

Additionally, basic human and social services should not be rationed on the basis of where one happens to live or on the basis of economic means.

Priority Strategies and Considerations:

- Ensure that all citizens, including the poor, minorities, and those with special needs, have equal opportunity and access to employment, social services and quality-of-life amenities.
 - ✧ *Reduce human inequality in Indiana, such as cultural discrimination, economic disparity, digital divide, and access to quality of life amenities.*

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- ✧ *Ensure that all residents of Indiana have reasonable geographic and financial access to basic medical care, mental health preventative and oral health services.*
 - ◆ *Utilize a comprehensive family assessment to determine the needs and provide coordinated delivery of health, wellness and human services to low resource families*
 - ◆ *Remove barriers and create financial incentives to assure Medicaid-supported services can be offered and supported by all providers, including primary care physicians, physician specialists, advanced practice nurses and physician assistants*
 - *Minimize Medicaid changes that may cause rural health care providers to end their participation in the program*
 - ◆ *Insure that adequate and affordable in-home support services are available to the disabled and elderly*
- Create a health and human service delivery system that improves the quality of life that attracts innovative businesses and talented people.
- Ensure every county has adequate public transportation to meet the special needs of those who are geographically isolated or unable to access local health and human services.
- Celebrate and embrace a multi-cultural Indiana premised upon the unique gifts and values inherent within diverse cultures.
- Implement innovative mechanisms to address the special needs of the homeless and to help all Hoosiers gain access to affordable housing.
 - ✧ *Increase financial support for the Housing Trust Fund to insure all Hoosiers have access to safe and affordable housing*
 - ✧ *Utilize small real estate transaction fees to supplement homeless programs funding*