

Switzerland County Economic Development Commission

SWITZERLAND COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY



July, 2004

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What you will read on the following pages is Switzerland County's first economic development strategy. The creation of the Switzerland County Economic Development Commission (SCEDC) by the Switzerland County Council provided a structure for the development of a strategy to prepare Switzerland County for the future.

For the past several months the SCEDC has been working with the county's government, business, and community leaders to develop this strategy. SCEDC brought community representatives together in four strategic planning sessions. The purpose of these planning meetings was to identify assets and liabilities within the county and to develop both short-term and long-range goals for improving the county's competitive position and encouraging economic growth.

The ideas and vision that emerged from the strategy meetings will enable the SCEDC to oversee an organization that can be effective in reaching the goals set out in the plan. The organization's goal will be to determine what kind of economic future the people of Switzerland County want and to promote the county's strengths to potential investors and partners.

We encourage you to look over this strategy and share it with others. We are optimistic about Switzerland County's ability to build an even brighter future.

Switzerland County Economic Development Commission



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WHY CREATE AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY?

By creating an Economic Development Strategy, the county can take advantage of the opportunity to control its own future and build the kind of community that will make us all proud.

To some, the term "economic development" is intimidating. It is mistakenly viewed as a beautiful area being destroyed by industry or a peaceful community being overrun with people. The truth is that economic development will not lead to these things at all. In fact, a community that creates and follows its own economic development strategy has a much better chance of protecting its heritage and quality of life than a community that sits by as the world grows up around it. Today, the world moves faster than ever and these continuous changes reach into every inch of our lives. Areas that prepare for the future will find themselves better equipped to maintain and improve the quality of life in their community.

There was a time when rural America was able to remain constant while the world around it grew and changed. That is no longer the case. Any community can look the other way but no community can escape the reality that the world has gotten smaller. Today, rural America feels the effects of the global economy more than ever. No community can avoid the effects of a rapidly changing economy but communities can take a hand in guiding their own future. This leaves Switzerland County with two options, we can do nothing, cross our fingers and let what happens happen, or we can develop a set of core

values and goals to guide us into the future.

By creating an Economic Development Strategy, the county can take advantage of the opportunity to control its own future and build the kind of community that will make us all proud. By developing a plan for the future that fits and compliments Switzerland County, we avoid having our future chosen for us, or by accident.

A History of Community Leadership

Switzerland County can be proud of a history of citizens stepping forward to bring employers into the community when they were needed most. Throughout the last century, several of the county's largest employers have come to Switzerland County as the result of a dedicated group of community leaders.

US Shoe

Very poor economic conditions existed in Switzerland County during the years after World War II. Virtually no industry existed in the county and there were very few jobs, an ice plant, mills, and farming was the way most people made their living. Many had to leave the county to find work.

A civic group was formed, including bankers and educators, to pursue bringing an industry into the county. This group was successful

in bringing U.S. Shoe to Vevay in 1947. The first venture was in a small building, starting out as a cutting and fitting operation, located in Vevay. In July of 1948, U.S. Shoe Corporation broke ground on a new production facility. The plant held its grand opening on December 3, 1948 in its new large building. The plant then became a full-scale operation of producing shoes from cutting the leather to completing the shoe. In its hey day U.S. Shoe employed 350 to 400 people. U.S. Shoe provided a real boom to Switzerland County where no industry was available before.

On August 3, 1999, after more than 50 years of making shoes and after undergoing two ownership changes, officials from the Nine West Group told their 260 workers that the plant was being closed. The last day of production was Friday, December 17, 1999.

Randall Textron

In the mid-1960's, word reached the County that a manufacturer located in Jefferson County that was looking for a new facility. The Vevay Switzerland County Industrial Corporation was formed to bring Randall Textron to the county, Randall opened in Vevay in the fall of 1967. The local group raised the money, through individual contributions, to purchase property. Then secured a loan to build the building. This building was leased to Randall Textron over a pe-

WHY CREATE AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY?

riod of 10 years, providing the funds to repay the loan; at that point Randall Textron became the owner of the building.

Randall opened with 50 to 75 employees and grew to 200 at its peak. When the plant closed, 150 jobs were lost at an average payroll at \$400.00 weekly with an annual payroll of \$3 million. Randall Textron closed the plant in December of 1996.

Belterra Resort and Casino

We most recently saw what a dedicated group of community leaders can accomplish with the opening and expansion of the Belterra Casino Resort.

A local group called SCORE was organized and many trips were made to Indianapolis to attend Indiana Gaming Commission meetings in an effort to

bring a casino to Switzerland County Three major presentations were made to the Indiana Gaming Commission and each time the license was delayed. when Switzerland County was finally awarded a certificate of suitability in September 1998.

Belterra Casino & Resort officially opened in October 2000. In 2003 Belterra announced an expansion, including a new 300-room hotel tower and conference space making their Hotel the seconded largest in the state. In this case, the hard work of a group of citizens resulted in the community's largest employer and largest capital investment in county history

Looking Forward

Switzerland County has

been given a tremendous opportunity to play a role in its own economic future and address economic and social issues that have faced rural areas for generations. It is possible for Switzerland County to develop an economic climate that keeps more of its young workers in the County. It is possible to maintain a rural lifestyle while enjoying a quality of life that used to be exclusive to large cities. It is also possible to create an environment that supports and encourages existing business and is attractive to new investment.

The right kind of business investment is needed to develop a climate of opportunity and partnership. No one person or organization can accomplish economic development alone, its takes collaboration, cooperation and partnerships with state, county and town governments, community leaders, business leaders and the community at large. By working together as a community we can determine our own destiny and better position Switzerland County for the future.

It is possible to maintain a rural lifestyle while enjoying a quality of life that used to be exclusive to large cities.



The hard work of a group of citizens resulted in the community's largest employer and the largest capital investment in County history.

THE STRATEGY PROCESS

The Switzerland County Economic Development Commission knew that a variety of community input was needed to develop a strategy that represented the economic development needs of the county. It was also necessary to take a realistic look at the County's economic picture and at efforts made by neighboring and similarly situated communities.

The first step was to create a Strategy Committee. The commission was careful in selecting committee members who represented a wide area of interests throughout the county. A listing of Strategy Committee members and advisors is provided in Appendix C. The first Strategy Committee meeting was held on September 18, 2003 in Vevay. At that meeting, Strategy Committee members were introduced to several state officials who deal with economic development issues, additional members of the economic development community were introduced at following meetings. At the first meeting, the committee began identifying the elements of a long-range vision for Switzerland County and began to identify the County's advantages and weaknesses from an economic development perspective.

At the second meeting, held October 16, 2003, a draft Vision Statement was developed and the Committee

continued with an economic assessment of the county. The assessment had two components, a quantitative component in the form of a printed "Factfinder" (see appendix A), and an assessment by committee members of the county's economic development advantages and weaknesses as well as opinions on what opportunities and dangers lie ahead. Once this assessment was complete, the committee was able to identify some important goals to be prioritized at the third meeting.

The committee met again on November 20, 2003. At this meeting specific goals were listed and prioritized. Thirty specific action steps

were developed to create a clear road map for the Economic Development Commission. The goals were left in draft form for the Committee to consider before the next meeting on January 15, 2004. At that meeting, the Committee gave their work a final review and identified the measures that would be used to determine the long-range success of the strategy. With the main content of the strategy approved, the commission was able to draft the remainder of the document. The Strategy Committee gave final approval to the document at their final meeting on April 28, 2004.

A variety of community input was needed to develop a strategy that represented the economic development needs of the County.



Community pride was considered a strength for Switzerland County.

VISION STATEMENT

The first task for the Strategy Committee was to arrive at a common vision for the county. A vision statement is an important first step in developing an economic development strategy. It is a means for the Strategy Committee to describe, in a broad sense, the type of community they would like themselves and their children to call home.

Its purpose is not to be binding on the community as a whole or to put restrictions on the subject matter of the strategy. It is not a place for specific goals or extensive detail and it must allow room for change as the community continues to evolve. Once this ideal image is agreed upon, it is used as a reference point. As goals and strategies are

discussed, they can be compared to the Vision Statement to determine if they will move the county in the direction it wants to go.

Our Vision

Switzerland County will be a community that has taken command of its own future. It will retain and attract talented people by providing a high quality of life as well as growing social and economic opportunities. The community will be renowned throughout the tri-state region for:

Protecting a clean, safe, rural lifestyle while providing 21st century infrastructure, public, medical, and education services.

Being a home to a top quality workforce and to businesses that not only offer high-skill job opportunities but are also great community citizens.

A Vision Statement is a means for the Strategy Committee to describe, in a broad sense, the type of community they would like themselves and their children to call home.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS

If the Vision Statement describes the county's ideal economic development destination, then the goals could best be described as a roadmap to that destination. The goals identify the "big picture" elements of the county's economic development strategy. Once these

goals are identified, they are then broken down into specific initiatives and action steps. For Switzerland County's first economic development strategy, the Strategy Committee identified five primary economic development goals. Because these goals are broad,

more specific success measurements are built into the planning process

The Strategy Committee identified five primary economic development goals.

Our Goals

- ***Build the county's capacity for aggressive economic development initiatives.***
- ***Retain and expand the county's existing business base.***
- ***Attract new businesses that provide high pay, high skill jobs to the community.***
- ***Maintain and enhance a quality of life that will encourage young workers to remain in and return to the county.***
- ***Form a community-driven economic development approach with buy-in from all community interests.***

SUCCESS MEASURES

HOW WILL WE KNOW IF WE ARE ON TRACK?

A critical and often overlooked aspect of an economic development strategy is to create measures that determine the success of the strategy. In measuring the success of an economic development strategy, there are two important questions to ask; "Are we achieving our goals" and "Are we moving closer to our vision?" The effectiveness of a strategy is more accurately measured over a longer period of time but an occasional evaluation of the county's economic performance can tell whether adjustments are needed. While more measures may be added later, it was decided that a limited set of measurements would make the county's progress easier to track in the earlier phases of implementing the strategy. The following seven success measures were selected.

Annual percentage growth in employment that outpaces the State-wide Average:

The number of people employed in Switzerland County grew by 1.2% from 2002 to 2003 compared to total employment statewide that grew by 0.6%. As the national economic climate improves, Indiana is likely to see employment growth at a higher rate. For Switzerland County to achieve its economic development goals, it is important that it continues to outperform the state in

employment growth. *Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics*

Annual rate of increase in the number of business establishments above the Statewide average:

Switzerland County had no change in the number of business establishments from 2001 to 2002 compared to a rise of 0.13% in the Midwest overall. It would be possible for Switzerland County's rate of increase to rise quickly with only a small number of new businesses. *Source: U.S. Census Bureau*

Annual percentage growth in per capita income above the U.S. average:

Switzerland County's per capita income grew by 4.10% from 2001 to 2002 compared to a growth rate of 3.30% in the U.S. overall. While the county is already above the U.S. average in this measurement, it is important that this trend continue. *Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis*

Poverty Rate below the U.S. average:

Switzerland County's poverty rate is 13.9%. This is currently above the U.S. average of 12.4%. This is

an indicator that can quickly improve as the per capita income and number of business establishments in the community rise. *Source: Indiana Business Research Center*

Percentage of the workforce age eighteen to forty four at or above the Statewide average:

In 2000, 36.5% of Switzerland County's population fell in the 18-44 age group compared to 39.6% statewide. A rise in the percentage of workers in this age group suggests that products of the county's education system are choosing to live in the county. While not the entire workforce, the people in this age group are a good indicator of a community's long-term worker availability. *U.S. Census Bureau*

Completion of Action Steps included in Economic Development Strategy:

One simple way to gauge the success of the strategy is to identify how many of its action steps have been completed.

Updates on economic development progress circulated to the county every quarter:

Regular progress reports are a good sign of how

A critical and often overlooked aspect of an economic development strategy is to create measures that determine the success of the strategy.

SUCCESS MEASURES

HOW WILL WE KNOW IF WE ARE ON TRACK?

well a plan is being followed. It is also a great way to test community interest.

These measures are just a sample of the ways in which the county could determine the success of its economic development strategy. There are plenty of other factors that could be used. It is important to keep in mind that no factor is a direct result of any strategy. There are a variety of circumstances that could bring about changes in these or any other measurements completely independent of a community's economic development efforts. When reporting on these measures in the future, it is important to try to identify as many of these external factors as possible to help the county determine the effect of

further changes in the local economy.

Comparable Counties

Another way to track the county's progress is to identify similar areas and compare Switzerland county's performance to those areas over time. For this strategy, we have chosen five similarly situated Indiana counties. While no Indiana county is an exact match to Switzerland County, it is possible to look at a group of counties, each having some similarity. Some of the counties below were selected based on similar population. Others were chosen because of similar income levels, rural/urban disparity, industrial makeup, or commuting patterns. Switzerland County's Economic Development Com-

mission intends to compare Switzerland County's progress with progress in these counties to gauge the effectiveness of economic development efforts. It is important to note that, like in the measurements above, unforeseen events can effect one community differently from another and make these comparisons more difficult. We recommend the following Indiana counties for comparing Switzerland County's progress: Ohio, Union, Crawford, Starke, Orange, and Spencer.

Regular progress reports are a good sign of how well a plan is being followed.



Success should be measured on how well the strategy serves existing and potential employers.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

What follow are 14 initiatives to keep Switzerland County in command of its economic future. Out of these initiatives come 30 specific action steps that, when enacted, will build momentum for economic development in the county. The initiatives and action steps are arranged according to the goals expressed on page eight.

Goal 1: Build the county's capacity for aggressive economic development initiatives.

"You've got be in the game before you can be a winner"

Successful economic development most often comes from a combination of luck and preparation. This "luck" usually comes in the form of a large employer that chooses to locate in a community or a home-grown business that experiences rapid growth. It is no coincidence that this "luck" seems to favor communities that have taken steps to participate in their own economic growth. The following initiatives are designed to move Switzerland County into the economic development arena and elevate the county's profile as a great place to do business:

Initiative 1: Establish and enable an economic development organization.

Action Step 1: Establish a non-profit corporation to carry out economic development activities.

The county has already taken an important step in establishing a county Economic Development Commission. By creating a corresponding non-profit corporation, the commission can gain the flexibility needed to carry out economic development activities. The corporation's non-profit status will allow it to easily receive grant dollars from foundations as well as state and federal government. It also provides a tax incentive for other organizations to assist in funding the county's economic development efforts.

Action Step 2 Assess staffing needs and create necessary job descriptions.

Economic development is a full-time endeavor that will, at some point, require full-time employees to implement. Some grant programs that could partially fund the corporation have extensive application processes, requiring a lot of time and effort to complete. A large staff is not needed but it is important to have an economic development professional constantly working with local businesses and promoting the county to potential industries. It is also important to have someone who can respond quickly to prospects requesting information. Specific staffing needs, timeta-

bles, and job descriptions will depend on how quickly the county progresses with the other initiatives outlined in this strategy.

Initiative 2: Identify and pursue a revenue stream for economic development.

Action Step 3: Secure dedicated funds for economic development activities. Even a small economic development organization needs money to operate. It is difficult to attract a professional staff or even to hold the interest of volunteers if basic funding is not in place. It is critical that the county provide an annual stream of funding to the Economic Development Commission for implementation of the Economic Development Strategy. Once basic functions are established and maintained, the Corporation can raise outside dollars for additional activities.

Action Step 4: Pursue available state, federal, and non-profit grant funding. Grant funding is important because it shifts some of the burden of funding economic development away from public sources and it encourages buy-in from other interested members of the community. Foundation dollars are easier to get if the organization has non-profit status. Potential funding sources vary from gift contributions to

Successful economic development most often comes from a combination of luck and preparation.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

grant funding for specific projects.

Initiative 3: Identify and address immediate infrastructure limitations to economic development.

Action Step 5: Address capacity limitations of Patriot Water Company. Water capacity is the single largest infrastructure challenge for economic development facing Switzerland County today. It can severely limit all growth, residential, commercial, and industrial. It is important that the Economic Development Commission works with Patriot Municipal Utilities and county elected officials to quickly solve this problem. Efforts should include keeping county leaders and other interested parties informed as the capacity issue is solved and alerting them to any obstacles that may arise in mak-

ing new water meters available.

Action Step 6: Communicate county priorities for state highway improvements to Indiana Department of Transportation. A simple and often overlooked step in improving a community's infrastructure is to identify common priorities and present them to state officials. While there are many factors that go into choosing highway improvement priorities, state policy makers use the input of those in a community, especially if community leaders agree on what improvements are most important.

Action Step 7: Examine sewer capacity and costs of extending to targeted locations. New businesses will require access to a municipal sewer system. This could involve extensive cost and delays if a sewer has to be extended to a new area.

One way to prepare for this is to identify likely development locations in the county and estimate the cost of extending sewer services to them. Some municipal wastewater services in the county are already assessing extension options.

Action Step 8: Develop and execute a strategy to deploy affordable high-speed internet access to existing businesses and potential development sites. The fastest growing business infrastructure need in the country is access to high-speed internet. Because it is a relatively new need, which even some larger cities can not deliver, it presents an opportunity to rural areas to gain a competitive advantage. A rural community with available high speed internet can offer its residents and businesses the convenience and flexibility of a metropolitan area while still providing a rural quality of life. In some cases, there are federal funds available to help rural communities deploy high-speed internet connections, but to do so requires a well developed plan, taking into account changing technology and efforts of other communities. We recommend that a working group be formed to develop a high speed internet strategy for the county.

Goal 2: Retain and expand the county's existing business base.

The fastest growing business infrastructure need in the country is access to high-speed internet.



Communicating a common set of infrastructure priorities to State leaders can be helpful in a community's development efforts.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

A community will see more growth from its existing businesses than it is likely to see from recruiting new ones. The existing businesses of a community are the foundation of its economy. They are more deeply rooted in the community and most of them have already proven that they can survive in the region. An economic development strategy cannot be successful if it does not take the needs of existing business into account first. Supporting existing businesses is often overlooked because it is not as exciting and attention getting as recruiting a new business, but the results of a good business retention and expansion effort can be impressive.

Initiative 4: Develop an ongoing mechanism for assessing needs of existing business.

Action Step 9: Create database of current businesses. It has frequently been shown that the vast majority of a community's economic growth will come from existing businesses. It is important that any county economic development effort address needs and barriers to expansion of existing businesses. The first step is to identify these businesses. Efforts in this area have already been made by the Vevay/Switzerland County Foundation. Additional steps should build on the Foundation's existing database, expanding the list with

information from state and federal sources and making sure the database is in a format that allows survey information to be added.

Action Step 10: Conduct a preliminary survey of county businesses. Once a database of existing businesses is developed, the Economic Development Corporation should begin a regular practice of identifying the needs and concerns of county businesses. The easiest way to gather and track this information is through a regular survey. There are several general business surveys that are publicly available but at least a portion of the survey should be tailored to the specific information needs of the county. Information gathered in these surveys can be very useful in developing a business expansion and retention policy for the county.

Initiative 5: Create an Entrepreneurs' Support Network

Action Step 11: Distribute an inventory of state and regional tools for entrepreneurs. There are several excellent guides of business tools already in print. What is important at the local level is to be certain that any local programs are added to the list and to make sure that people are available to explain the programs and assist in applications.

Action Step 12: Recruit a pool of potential advisors and make them available to local entrepreneurs. This may be as simple as putting more people in contact with the Southeast Indiana Small Business Development Center, but developing a pool of business advisors in the county can be a win-win situation for all parties involved. Another resource in the area is the Center for Business Preparation at Hanover College, which enables college students to assist local businesses. Attorneys, accountants, bankers and others who perform business services might be willing to donate a few hours a week to consult with entrepreneurs and new businesses. This can help a young business avoid a lot of pitfalls that come from not being adequately informed. It also helps those volunteering their time develop a client base for the future.

Initiative 6: Assess and enhance the county's current and future workforce

Action Step 13: Utilize state resources for worker training and assessment. The availability of a quality workforce is the number one concern of many businesses when choosing a location. A number of resources have been made available by the State of Indiana to assist in worker training and matching worker skills to local

A community will see more growth from its existing businesses than it is likely to see from recruiting new ones.

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business needs. Among these are training grants for businesses and the Indiana@Work program, which matches worker skills to the needs of employers. The Economic Development Corporation should begin a dialogue with the Indiana Department of Workforce Development, their local Workforce Investment Board, and the Indiana Department of Commerce to identify which tools would be most useful to Switzerland County.

Action Step 14: Participate with neighboring counties in a workforce analysis and skills alliance. One of the most common barriers to business growth today is the unavailability of workers with the necessary skills. A snapshot of the area's current workforce skills and the region's capacity to train workers is an important step to crossing this hurdle. Once the skill level of the area workforce is assessed, a community can begin to target areas of need. A Skills Alliance is a group of business or community leaders who are brought together by a common workforce need. This need could arise because the businesses are in the same industry (plastics, or automotive suppliers) or it could be a variety of business types that are in need of a particular skill (welders, electricians). By working together these skills alliances can build the volume of needed workers to a level that makes it fea-

sible to bring the training to an area. By regularly meeting to discuss workforce issues, these businesses can also identify common needs that they might not have previously considered.

Initiative 7: Leverage the county's current agricultural base by providing specialized agribusiness services.

Action Step 15: Form an agri-business advisory group to coordinate resources and promote awareness in agri-business, agri-tourism, and alternative crops. This group should include agricultural interests, such as the Purdue Extension Service, the Soil Conservation Service, and the Farm Bureau, but it should also include community interests, such as the Economic Development Corporation, the Tourism Commission and business interests.

Action Step 16: Utilize state and federal resources for value-added agriculture. A value added approach to agriculture is a way of making a community's agricultural base more profitable by doing more of the production process in the community. With the after-harvest production systems for most common crops already being well established, most successful value-added agriculture efforts involve alternative crops or livestock. This gives the farmer a niche in the marketplace. That niche alone can lead to higher profits but it also enables farmers to expand their business by participating in more of the production process. There are many sources of assistance available, but a critical first step is for the Agri-business Advisory Group created in Step 15 to identify those in the community who might

A value added approach to agriculture is a way of making a community's agricultural base more profitable by doing more of the production process in the community.



Many successful value-added agriculture efforts involve alternative crops or livestock.

Vevay Newspapers Photo

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

be interested in a value-added approach to farming.

Goal 3: Attract new businesses that provide high pay, high skill jobs to the community.

The field of business attraction is constantly changing. The communities that have the most success are the ones that manage to stay informed on what businesses are looking for and demonstrate that their community fits that profile. This requires strategic marketing but, more importantly, it requires community preparation.

Initiative 8: Prepare county information to enable-quick response to potential business inquiries.

Action Step 17: Create database of potential development sites in the county. If a business is considering Switzerland County as a place to locate, one of their first questions will be what sites are available. Communities that cannot answer this question immediately are often out of the running. The first step is identifying these sites. After that, basic characteristics about each site will need to be gathered. The more specific a community can be in its initial conversation with a prospect, the more likely that prospect is to remain interested.

Action Step 18: Gather

extensive data on the county to have readily available for industry request. In addition to providing information on specific sites, it is crucial to be able to provide extensive information about the county and surrounding region. This includes workforce information, tax information, utility costs, available recreation and amenities, and other factors a company will consider. Once this information is initially compiled, it is available at a moment's notice for anyone requesting it and will only require occasional updates.

Initiative 9: Increase the County's appeal to prospects by reducing time needed to develop a site.

Action Step 19: Have at least one site completely serviced, "shovel ready," and under county control so that it is immediately available. As our national economy comes out of a recession, many businesses will experience rapid and often unexpected growth. As fast growing companies need to expand quickly, every day of production lost is a loss of profits and market share. They do not have time to go through the list of activities involved in preparing a site for development. It is not uncommon for the community that either already has a suitable building available or has a site "shovel ready," (ready to begin construction immediately), to attract a business for this reason alone.

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Action Step 20: Examine county permitting processes for potential snares to a development. It is important to look at the way building and construction permits are issued in a community to be sure that there are no unnecessary delays or redundancies in the process. Being able to offer a streamlined or "fast-track" permitting process to an employer can be appealing, especially if they are in a hurry to develop.

Action Step 21: Conduct preliminary feasibility study on a commercial or industrial park. A commercial or industrial park is a big investment that should be carefully researched before any building is done. In addition, as these parks become more specialized, Switzerland County will want to position itself to take advantage of incentives and market niches that may arise. There are many organizations available to do these types of studies. This would be most effective after a list of potential development sites is created.

Initiative 10: Promote local economic development efforts throughout the region

Action Step 22: Maintain a presence on relevant regional boards. Switzerland County is already well represented on

The communities that have the most success are the ones that manage to stay informed on what businesses are looking for and demonstrate that their community fits that profile.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

several economic development boards in southeastern Indiana. Once formed, the Economic Development Corporation should take this a step further and get involved with the Greater Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce and other multi-state organizations. The County's economic growth is most likely to come from the greater Cincinnati area and it is important for the County to maintain a presence in organizations representing the tri-state region.

Action Step 23: Develop basic marketing materials, including a website. In the early phases of a community's economic development efforts, marketing is usually less important than community preparation. However, even in these early phases, some marketing can be useful. This early marketing should be done in partnership with

the County Tourism Commission to best leverage marketing dollars. While the business attraction message will be somewhat different from tourism marketing, overall costs can be kept down by sharing common materials. One thing that tourists and businesses have in common is that they will both do a considerable amount of research on the Internet before making any other type of personal contact. A web site is a simple marketing tool that, if properly done, can reach a large number of people at a low cost. The greatest impact would come from partnering with other organizations to develop one top-quality Internet gateway to Switzerland County. A partnership will also be helpful in keeping the site regularly updated.

Action Step 24: Coordinate economic develop-

ment marketing and tourism efforts. The County's tourism and economic development efforts will both see more success if the two interests work together. Ways the two groups could work together include participation on each other's boards, combined marketing, generating leads between the two groups. For example, basic economic development materials could be made available at tourism offices and at tourist attractions. A great way to introduce economic development prospect to the county is through tourist activities. It is not uncommon for people to buy property in the county simply because they were driving through and liked what they saw. The same situation is possible with a business.

Action Step 25: Attempt to identify a niche for the county within the region.

If Switzerland County can identify a unique competitive advantage within the Greater Cincinnati Region, it will have its first target market for aggressive economic development activity. Identifying a market niche can be a challenge but there are several common ways to do it. It usually begins with economic research. By identifying what types of industries the county has a high concentration of compared to the region, state, and nation, we can identify the types

The County's tourism and economic development efforts will both see more success if the two interests work together.



There are many similarities between tourism and economic development marketing.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

of industries that would be likely to locate in the county. It is also possible that the county will have competitive advantages that are more subjective. These are found by identifying what Switzerland County is known for and what the county has traditionally been good at. Identifying a market niche is something that can be done over time. In fact, it will be more effective if it is done after the county's basic economic development capacity is built.

Goal 4: Maintain and enhance a quality of life that will encourage a younger workforce to remain in and return to the county.

As people and businesses continue to become more mobile, one of the most important economic development activities a community can undertake is to continue to be a place where people want to live. Businesses need talented workers and are willing to locate where those workers are. By attracting and retaining a talented workforce, Switzerland County can create for itself one of the greatest economic development advantages available today.

Initiative 11: Increase County residents access to affordable housing

Action Step 26: Create a local citizens group to sponsor periodic "brainstorming" sessions regarding housing issues in the county. This working group would consist of representatives from the Economic Development Corporation, Employers, Bankers, Realtors, the County School Corporation, Community Housing Development Organizations and senior citizen representatives. The mission of this group would be to improve the quality of life of Switzerland County residents by providing safe affordable housing for all citizens.

Initiative 12: Improve Arts, Amenities, Recreation, and Cultural opportunities within the County.

Action Step 27: Form a working group on Arts, Amenities, Recreation, and Culture. This group would consist of representatives from the Economic Development Corporation, town and county parks, YMCA, the County Historical Society, County Tourism Commission, County School Corporation, and any other organizations or individuals with an interest in this topic. The mission of this group would be to improve the quality of life of Switzerland County by creating and maintaining recreational and cultural opportunities that small rural communities generally do not have available.

Initiative 13: Maintain contact with Switzerland County's younger population as they en-



Quality of life can be improved by creating recreational and cultural opportunities that small rural communities generally do not have available.

One of the most important economic development activities a community can undertake is to continue to be a place where people want to live.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

ter their professional lives.

Action Step 28: Track high school graduates and keep them informed on opportunities in Switzerland County and surrounding areas. As the county's student population has grown, it has become harder to keep track of graduates as they leave high school. While a tracking effort would not likely keep track of everyone, keeping current information on as many graduates as possible would enable the Economic Development Corporation to perform a valuable service to the student and to the community. This service could be something as simple as an occasional newsletter, informing the recent graduates of potential employment opportunities in the area and other infor-

mation about their hometown. This enables the economic developer to get a reliable count of how many graduates are remaining in or moving back to the county. For the graduate, it keeps them in touch with their community and alerts them to opportunities they might not have otherwise discovered.

Goal 5: Form a community driven economic development approach with buy-in from all community interests.

Businesses want to locate in communities that will be supportive of them. It is encouraging to both existing and potential businesses to see community involvement in the economic development process. Keeping the community involved means more than simply keeping

them informed. They should be encouraged to actively participate in the process. Switzerland County has the opportunity to take charge of its own future through its economic development activities. This opportunity is too important not to involve the whole community.

Initiative 14: *Solicit Community Input on Economic Development Efforts*

Action Step 29: Release the final strategy document at a public event. An economic development strategy can itself be a tool to involve the community in economic development efforts. A public event would draw community attention to the County's strategy and to the importance of economic development

Action Step 30: Maintain ongoing communication with county residents through news media and other outlets. As the implementation of the strategy begins, it is critically important to let the community know what the Economic Development Corporation is up to. This can be as simple as writing a regular update for the county newspaper or as elaborate as developing an ongoing economic development newsletter.

Businesses want to locate in communities that will be supportive of them.



It is important to maintain contact with the county's younger population as they leave school and enter their professional lives.

NEXT STEPS

The success or failure of an economic development strategy depends on its implementation. It is common for a community to develop a plan only to never use it. It is important to build in accountability and monitoring as part of the planning process. The following steps should be taken to ensure that the strategy is successful.

Step 1: Assign action steps to the appropriate people.

Community success is a team effort and the Economic Development Strategy will be more successful if the work is divided up. This means identifying people in the community who are capable and willing to take a leadership role on some of the action steps. Spreading the effort will lighten the load on Economic Development Commission members and build community involvement.

Step 2: Produce a quarterly report on the progress of the

plan.

Regular reporting of the plan's progress will serve two purposes. It allows the Commission to communicate what it has accomplished. It also allows them to draw attention to roadblocks in the process and involve more people in finding a solution. While reporting four times a year seems frequent, it is the best way to keep momentum going and to keep community leaders interested in economic development efforts.

Step 3: Maintain a timeline to track the strategy's progress, and determine when it needs to be updated.

An updated economic development strategy needs to be in hand before the original strategy is completely enacted. This keeps the momentum of the county's efforts moving forward. The easiest way to project when the strategy needs to be updated is to map its implementation on a time-

line. This will have other advantages as well, such as identifying whether the plan's implementation is on schedule.

Step 4: Celebrate and publicize successes.

Rather than treat the strategy's action steps as a checklist, treat each item as an opportunity to showcase the county's achievement and success. Informing the media and the economic development field of the county's successes will elevate the county's profile in the state and region. It may also get the attention of potential business prospects.

Step 5: Be prepared to adapt the strategy for changing circumstances.

An advantage of producing regular updates to an economic development strategy is the ability to make changes as they are needed. A strategy that can be adapted as circumstances change is more likely to be successful.

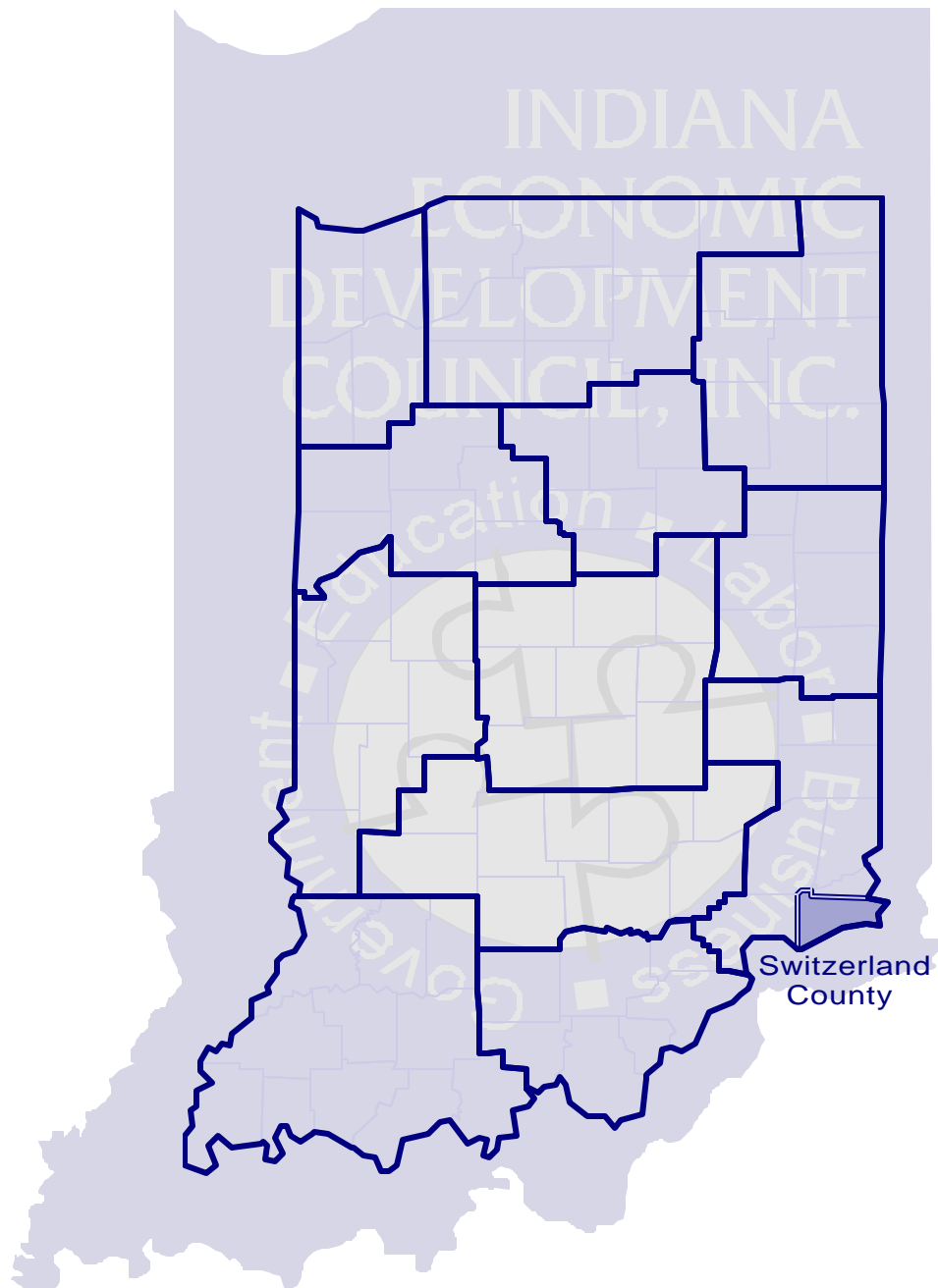
The success or failure of an economic development strategy depends on its implementation.



Community success is a team effort.

Vevay Newspapers Photo

APPENDIX A: SWITZELAND COUNTY FACTFINDER



Indiana Economic Development Council, Inc.

One North Capitol Avenue, Suite 900, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2224

Phone: (317) 234-2371 Fax: (317) 233-0399

E-mail: info@iedc.org Web: www.iedc.org

GEOGRAPHIC PROFILE

- Switzerland Co. is located in southeastern Indiana and has a land area of 221 square miles
- The largest town in Switzerland Co. is Vevay (pop. 1735 according to 2000 Census)
- Second Largest – Patriot (pop. 202)
- Neighboring Communities:
- Rising Sun (pop. 2470)
- Madison (pop 12,004)
- Versailles (pop. 1784)
- Warsaw, KY (pop. 1811)

Major Landmarks: Ohio River

No major universities or vocational schools within county

Nearby: Hanover College – Hanover, Indiana

Ivy Tech State College – Madison and Lawrenceburg, Indiana

Jefferson Community College – Carrolton, Kentucky

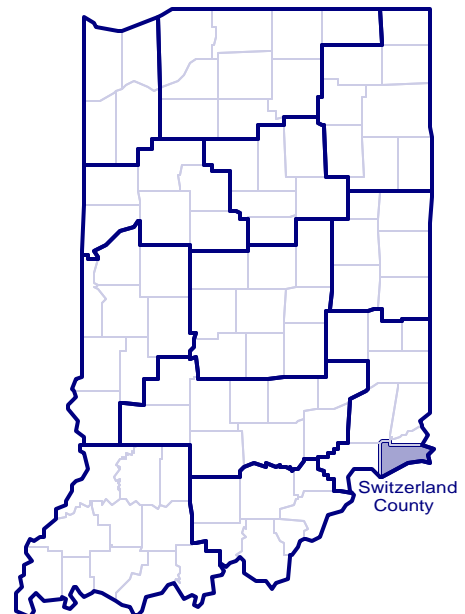
Indiana University Southeast – New Albany, Indiana

Northern Kentucky University – Ft. Mitchell, Kentucky

University of Cincinnati – Cincinnati, Ohio

Xavier University – Cincinnati, Ohio

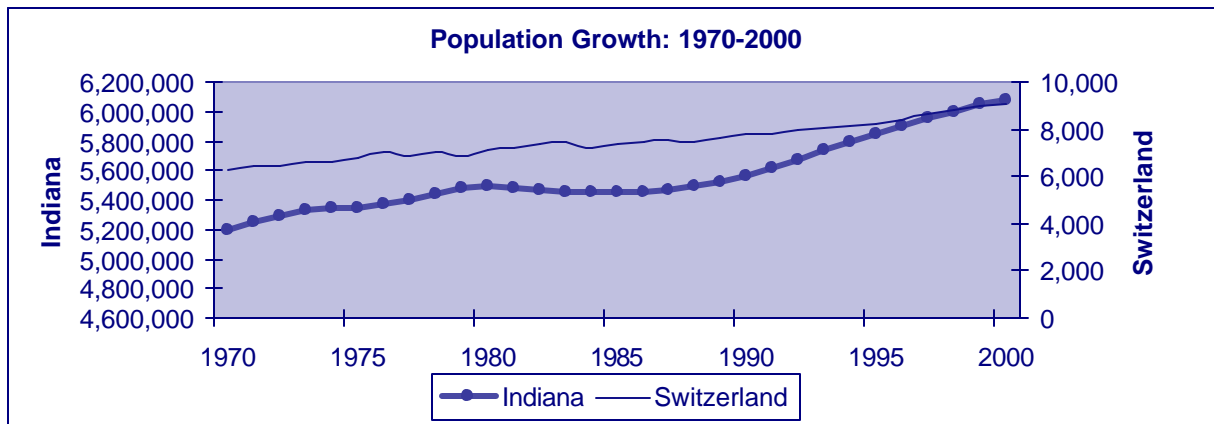
- Located near several metropolitan areas including:
 - Indianapolis (2 hours NW)
 - Cincinnati (1 hour E)
 - Louisville (1 hour W)
 - Lexington (2 hours SE)



POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS

Population growth has a positive relationship with economic growth. Areas that experience economic growth experience more rapid population growth because of the migration of job seekers to that area. Switzerland County has grown in population every year since 1984, and since 1970 Switzerland County (+43.8%) has grown at a higher rate than the state of Indiana (+17.0%) overall. Among the 92 counties in Indiana, Switzerland County ranked 14th in percent growth from 1990-2000 with a rate of 17.1 percent. This statistic can be deceiving, however, as Switzerland County still had a much lower population per square mile than the region and the state overall. In fact, Switzerland County ranked 84th among the 92 counties in terms of population density.

It is important for a growing economy to have an ample labor force to meet the demands of businesses interested in locating or expanding operations in an area. The labor force in an area tends to shrink during recessions because discouraged workers may stop pursuing jobs or choose to leave an area altogether. The size of a population serves as a good indicator of the size of the labor force. Usually, when a population grows, so does the labor force. This did not hold, however, for Switzerland County. Even as County population grew by 17.1 percent, county labor force shrank by 1.0 percent, indicating that population growth was due more to a combination of increased birth rates and decreased death rates than migration of job seekers to the county.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

RACE AND AGE DEMOGRAPHICS

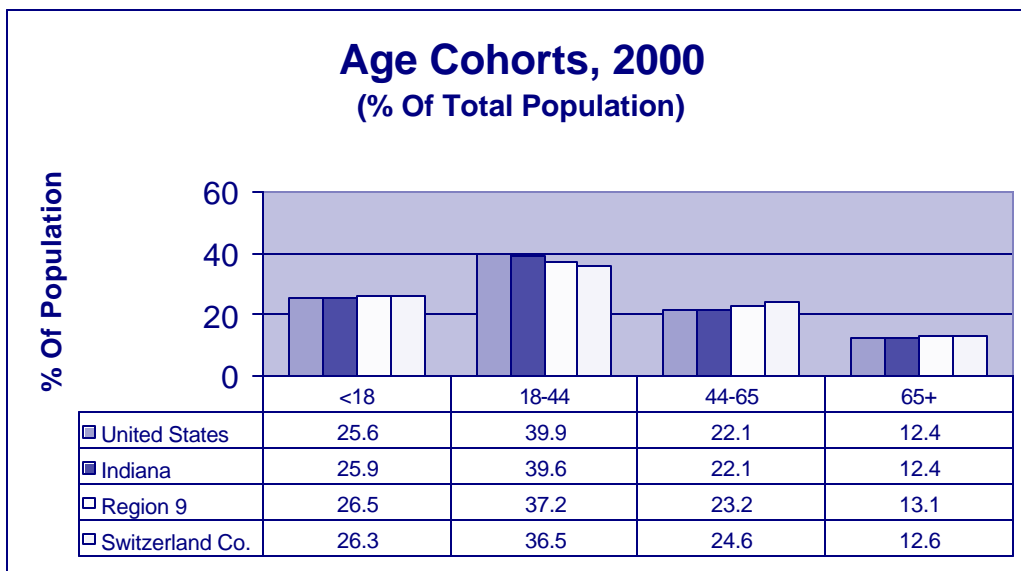
The characteristics of the labor force tend to mirror the characteristics of the population. Population demographics such as age and race are indicators of the diversity of the labor force. The age and racial diversity of Switzerland County’s population is well in line with Indiana Department of Commerce Region 9, overall.

POPULATION BY RACE AND HISPANIC ORIGIN, 2000

	White	African American	Native-American	Asian American	Other	Hispanic
United States	75.1%	12.3%	0.9%	3.6%	8.0%	12.5%
Indiana	87.5%	8.4%	0.3%	1.0%	2.9%	3.5%
Region 9	97.8%	0.7%	0.2%	0.3%	0.9%	0.9%
Switzerland	98.8%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	0.8%	0.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Age Cohorts, 2000
(% Of Total Population)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

INCOME DEMOGRAPHICS

It is important for an economy to have a healthy concentration of well-paid jobs. There is a low supply of well-paying jobs in Switzerland County, as indicated by the county average weekly wage and the level of personal income in the county.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, on average, workers in Switzerland County earned \$488 per week during 2002. This is \$135 less per week (\$7,000/year) than the state average. While 79 percent of all Indiana workers covered by the unemployment insurance program earned at least \$500 per week, less than 20 percent of Switzerland County workers earned at least \$500 per week in 2002.

Since 1980, Switzerland County has lagged behind the nation overall in average per capita personal income, a pattern mirrored by the commerce region and, to a lesser degree, the state of Indiana overall. Switzerland County's average per capita income in 2001 was barely half that of the national average. This translates that executive and professional employment is relatively sparse in the county, making it extremely difficult for people in the county to raise their standard of living. This theory is further underscored when looking at Effective Buying Income (EBI) for the county as published by Sales and Management Marketing Magazine. Switzerland County had a higher percentage of low-income families and a much lower percentage of high-income families in comparison to the state as a whole. The proportion of low and middle-income households (EBI=\$34,999 or less) in Switzerland county is 61.2 percent; this is 14 percentage points more than the state average. These statistics suggest that higher income jobs with larger, more established companies are not readily available.

Per Capita Personal Income				
	1980	1990	2000	2001
United States	\$10,183	\$19,572	\$29,760	\$30,413
Indiana	\$9,449	\$17,616	\$27,010	\$27,522
IN as % of US	92.8%	90.0%	90.8%	90.5%
Region 9	\$8,058	\$14,995	\$23,793	\$24,568
R9 as % of US	79.1%	76.6%	80.0%	80.8%
Switzerland	\$6,285	\$11,683	\$17,215	\$17,495
Swit. as % of US	61.7%	59.7%	57.8%	57.5%

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis

EDUCATION DEMOGRAPHICS

With the availability of transportation and ease of relocation within the United States, workers with higher educational attainment can easily move to areas with jobs that typically require a high level of training and pay higher wages. Therefore, the educational attainment of an area's population is indicative of the quality, and at times quantity, of jobs available in an area. Conversely, information intense businesses tend to locate in areas where the supply of well-trained workers is greater.

Low high school graduation rates may suggest the absence of jobs requiring a high school diploma that pay substantially higher than those that do not require a diploma, thus lowering the incentive to graduate. The level of educational attainment in Switzerland County is low when compared to the State or the Nation. This suggests that a considerable amount of jobs in the county do not require a high school or college diploma.

ADULT EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, 2000

	Adults 25 Years + With HS Diploma		Adults 25 Years + With Bachelor's Degree or Higher	
	Percent	State Rank	Percent	State Rank
United States	80.4		24.4	
Indiana	82.1		19.4	
Region 9	78.7		12.5	
Switzerland	71.4	90	7.6	92

Source: Indiana Business Research Center

POVERTY

Public Assistance Trends, Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF)

1999 ESTIMATED POVERTY RATES	
United States	12.4
Indiana	9.5
Switzerland	13.9

	Total TANF Recipients 2001	TANF % of Population	% Change 2000-2001
Indiana	108,382	1.77%	41.5%
Region 9	1,693	0.87%	32.0%
Switzerland	56	0.60%	24.4%

Source: Indiana Business Research Center

The estimated poverty rate within Switzerland County is higher than the national average. This is important because the state average is significantly lower than the national average, making Switzerland County among the poorer counties in the state. In fact, at 13.9 percent, Switzerland county has the highest poverty rate in Region 9. Despite the high poverty rate, Switzerland County has a lower percentage of people accepting welfare assistance than both the State and Region 9.

INCOME AND EARNINGS

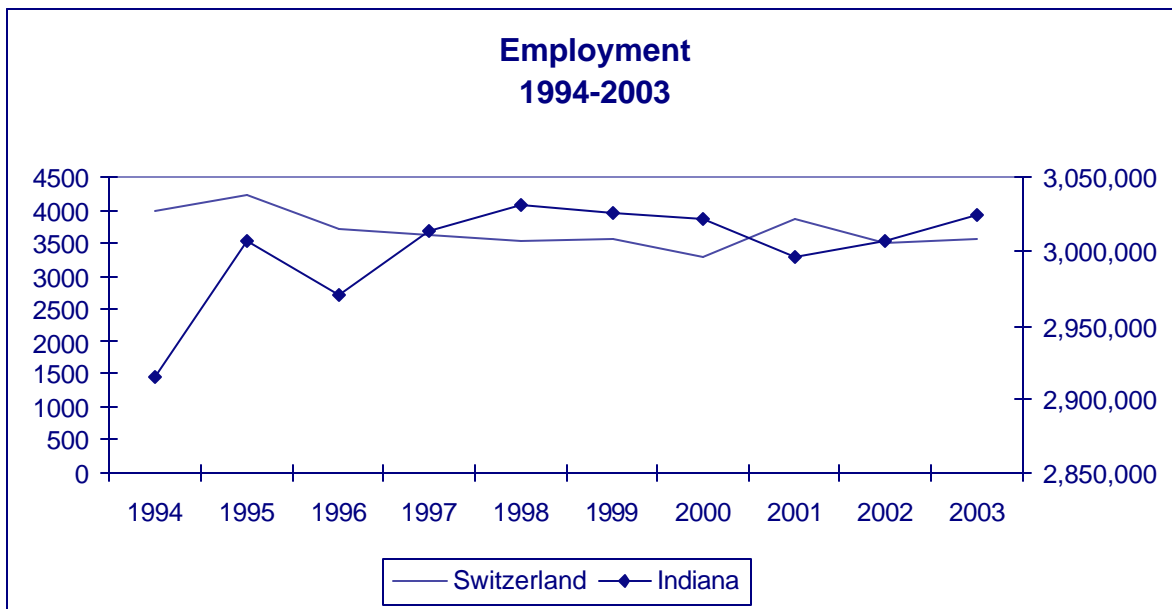
It is important that an economy has a diversified employment base. An economy that is overly dependent on a single industry is more vulnerable to the business cycle of that industry. In such a case, other industries lack the ability to absorb unemployment caused by layoffs in that dominant industry.

In 2002, there were 2,380 workers covered by the unemployment insurance program in Switzerland County. The top five industry classifications in terms of employment in Switzerland County for the year 2002 were:

- Accommodation and Food Services.....Undisclosed
- Local and State Government400 employees
- Manufacturing.....180 employees
- Health Care and Social Assistance.....150 employees
- Finance and Insurance Services.....50 employees

LABOR MARKET OUTLOOK

The number of people employed in Switzerland County increased by 42 (1.2 Percent) from 2002 to 2003. The number employed in the state overall increased by 0.6 percent.



Source: Local Area Unemployment Statistics, Bureau of Labor Statistics

COMMUTING PATTERNS

Commuting patterns indicate how much employment is available in one area. If a significant number of workers commute away from their county to work, it indicates that there are an insufficient number of jobs in that county.

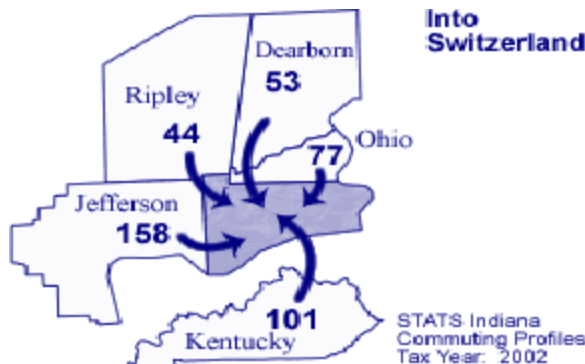
On average, the daily commute of worker who resides in Switzerland County is 33.6 minutes long, that is eleven minutes more than the state average and about eight minutes more than the national average. This suggests that for most Switzerland County residents, there are few jobs close to home.

In 2002, only 60.2 percent of the Switzerland County Labor Force worked in Switzerland County, the rest commuted out of the county to work. Due to its close proximity to Kentucky, the county saw 9.8% of this labor force commute to Kentucky in 2002. In 2002, 18.1 percent of the Switzerland County Labor Force were commuting out of state for work. The following is a series of information on commuting patterns prepared by the Indiana Business Research Center.

Switzerland County Annual Commuting Trends Profile
Based on Indiana IT-40 Returns for Tax Year 2002

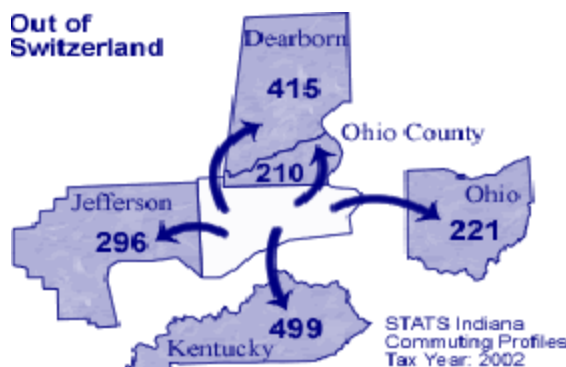
Top five counties sending workers INTO Switzerland County:

Jefferson County	158
Kentucky	101
Ohio County	77
Dearborn County	53
Ripley County	44
Total of above	433 workers
(12.1% of Switzerland County work force)	



Top five counties receiving workers FROM Switzerland County:

Kentucky	499
Dearborn County	415
Jefferson County	296
Ohio (State)	221
Ohio County	210
Total of above	1,641 workers
(32.1% of Switzerland County labor force)	



APPENDIX B: COMMUNITY SELF-ASSESSMENT

An important indicator of how a community is viewed by others is how the people living in the community view it. Members of the Strategy Committee looked at their own perceptions of Switzerland County by identifying what they felt were the advantages and weaknesses to doing business in the county. It is important to remember that these are general perceptions identified by one or more committee members and not the opinion of the Strategy Committee as a whole or the Economic Development Commission.

Advantages

Strong work ethic
 Safe place to live
 Ample room to grow
 Location advantage between several large cities
 Quality schools:

- Technology Certification Program
- Award-winning math and science curriculum

Continuous improvement to school system
 Religion – Strong faith/based community
 Attractive County parks
 Excellent emergency medical services
 Excellent YMCA facility in Vevay
 Ohio River bridge
 Presence along Ohio River
 Excellent quality of life
 Community pride
 Sense of volunteerism
 Proximity to recreation venues (Kentucky Speedway, Kings Island)
 Foundation for the arts
 Beauty/Scenery
 Belterra Resort & Casino
 2 Golf courses
 Involved business leaders
 Strong Chamber of Commerce
 #1 in hunting and fishing
 Ogle Haus
 Wage competitive
 Good workforce to employ within county
 Warm, friendly, caring community
 Regional Planning Commission

Weaknesses

Water – restricted access
 Lack of quality roads
 Communication across community about public issues
 Some have a near-sighted view of the future
 Lack of skilled (trained) labor
 High-speed Internet availability
 Lack of community involvement in many areas

APPENDIX B: COMMUNITY SELF-ASSESSMENT

Very little local media
Difficult to maintain community identity
Disconnect with State Capital
Lack of affordable housing – particularly rental and senior housing
Few incentives for children to continue education
Roads in and out of county
Lack of countywide industrial infrastructure
Flood plain
Anti-business sentiment in some areas
Little advanced telecommunications
Size – Lack of critical mass
Lack of support for entrepreneurs
Lack of cooperation between counties
Cross-state coordination

Once the advantages and weaknesses were assessed the committee looked ahead to what opportunities and dangers are currently facing or might in the future face the county's economic development efforts.

Opportunities

I-71 Ramp in Gallatin County
Lack of land for development in neighboring counties
Workforce challenges in other areas
New Stream of revenue (casino)
County is not limited to particular industrial sectors in rapidly changing economy
New ED emphasis on quality of life
Communities everywhere struggle with broadband challenge.

Dangers

Water availability
Unwillingness to change by some
Erosion of gaming revenue
Changing global economy
Road degradation
Danger of becoming bedroom community

APPENDIX C: SWITZERLAND COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY COMMITTEE

Strategy Committee Members

Steve Crabtree, County Council
Mark Archer, Planning & Zoning
Pat Lanman, Vevay Newspapers
Roy L. Patterson, Contractor
Bobbi King-Marksberry, MainSource Bank
Rick Peters, SCNGC
K. C. Banta, County Commissioner
Virgil McKay, Former SCEDC
Gary McAllister, SC Surveyor
John Kniola, County Planning Commission
Pam Hutchinson, Patriot Town
James L. Caudill, Town of Patriot
Tony Gregory, Swiss Caps
Lynn Wilson, Realtor
John Keeton, County Council
James Hayes, Town of Vevay
Debbie Scudder, Realtor
Keith Smith, Town of Vevay
Rhonda Griffin, SCEDC
Darin Gullion, SC School Corp., SCEDC
Judy Firth, SCEDC

Strategy Committee Advisors

James Ude, IN Department of Transportation
Joe Hall, IN Department of Transportation
Connie Combs, Regional 9 IN Department of Commerce
Vicki Kellerman, Region 9 IN Department of Commerce
Sharon Morris, Sprint
Charles F. Marsh, SIECO Engineering
Susan Craig, Southern IN Regional Planning Commission
Chip Orben, Cinergy
Dick Heupel, Hoosier Energy
Aaron Culp, IN Department of Workforce Development
Jon Bond, IN Economic Development Council

ABOUT THE SCEDC

The Switzerland County Economic Development Commission was created by the Switzerland County Council on August 10, 2002. The commission was created to encourage economic activity and job creation within Switzerland County.



The commission is made up of three members, one appointed by the Switzerland County Council, one appointed by the Switzerland County Board of Commissioners and one by the Vevay Town Council.

Current members of the Switzerland County Economic Development Commission are:

Judith E. Firth, President

Rhonda Griffin, Vice President

Darin K. Gullion, Secretary

Switzerland County Economic Development Commission
P.O. Box 192
Vevay, IN 47043
Phone: (812) 427-2533
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Web: <http://www.switzerlandusa.com>