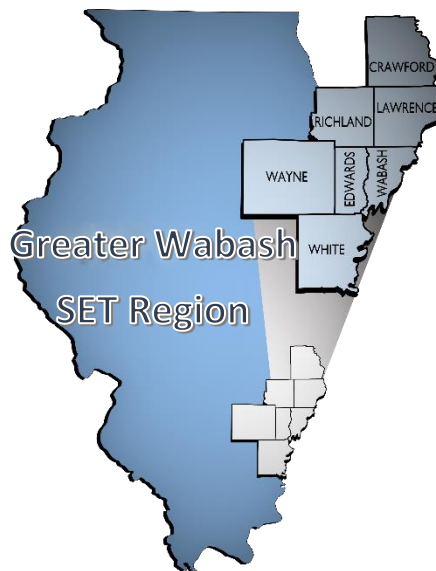




# Greater Wabash Region

## Economic Development Plan 2016-2021



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Rural Development



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
EXTENSION

*investing in communities*

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# The STRONGER ECONOMIES TOGETHER (SET) Program

The purpose of the Stronger Economies Together (SET) program is to strengthen the capacity of communities and counties in rural America to work together. The goal is to develop and implement an economic development blueprint that strategically builds on the current and emerging economic strengths of a multi-county region. The process is designed to identify the distinct advantages of the region through in-depth data analysis, asset mapping and broad participation of regional representatives and stakeholders. This document is the strategic High Quality Plan (HQP) that has resulted from completing the SET program.

Representatives of the Greater Wabash economic region applied to the SET program as a way to come together regionally, pool assets, and gain a larger voice. The SET Region mirrors the Greater Wabash Regional Planning Commission's (GWRPC) federally designated Economic Development District of Crawford, Edwards, Lawrence, Richland, Wabash, Wayne and White counties. These counties are connected geographically; they are also linked economically through the existing key industry clusters: manufacturing, oil & gas extraction, coal mining, agriculture, and transportation & logistics.

In many ways, the SET program has resulted in the formation of a new regional team. Past participation in GWRPC activities has primarily been based on the individual needs of local economic development boards, which typically operate in silos, viewing the neighboring counties as the competition. Implementing the action items described within this document will strengthen the ability of the Greater Wabash Region to secure its economic future and position it as a competitive region. The SET program is funded through USDA Rural Development, and implemented in collaboration with the nation's Regional Rural Development Centers and their land-grant university partners.

## **TIMELINE**

Aug. 6, 2015: Notification of approval to the SET program for Greater Wabash Region application

Oct. 6, 2015: A Civic Forum was held at Wabash Valley College in Mt Carmel (Wabash County) with 75+ community leaders in attendance and ready to discuss the region's future. Attendees included: the public and private sectors, healthcare, economic development organizations, agriculture, financial institutions, chambers of commerce, secondary and post-secondary education, faith-based organizations and the community.

Subsequent SET meetings & locations:

Nov. 13, 2015: Olney Central College in Olney (Richland County)

Dec. 17, 2015: Edwards County Farm Bureau in Albion (Edwards County)

Jan. 21, 2016: WB Gray Community Center in Bridgeport (Lawrence County)

Feb. 25, 2016: Frontier Community College in Fairfield (Wayne County)

Apr. 05, 2016: City Hall in Robinson (Crawford County)

May 05, 2016: Wabash Valley College in Mt Carmel (Wabash County).

Additional working group sessions were held in May & June to cover the supplementary Business Retention, Entrepreneurship and Tourism modules; and to support the development of this plan.

Greater Wabash

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This High-Quality Plan (HQP) for regional economic development will serve as the roadmap for attaining the human, institutional, and environmental goals of the participants in achieving a stronger economic future for the Greater Wabash Region. Over 100 community leaders from across the seven-county region have participated. A critical success factor will be transitioning participants from the traditional role as stakeholders articulating their individual hopes for their communities, to engaged partners committed to achieving the goals of this plan within the region.

The Greater Wabash SET region mirrors the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration's (EDA) Economic Development District maintained by the Greater Wabash Regional Planning Commission. It is comprised of the rural southeast Illinois counties of Crawford, Edwards, Lawrence, Richland, Wabash, Wayne, and White. With the Wabash River flowing at the eastern border of the entire region, the Greater Wabash area is characterized by a highly rural composition.

### Key Findings:

- Discussions between community and business leaders quickly identified that a major challenge is a struggle to maintain full employment, due to a variety of factors including: skills mismatch; lack of a trained workforce; lack of a workforce that wants to work; and the lack of necessary soft skills to maintain employment.
- Discussions also identified limited resources available within the region to support the development of small businesses and entrepreneurs or the retention and/or expansion of existing businesses. A primary resource closed in 2016 due to State of Illinois budget cuts.
- Data indicates the region's population is both declining and aging. As the number of people in the workforce (prime working age) is declining, the youth population needed in occupations to support the retiring baby-boomer generation is also declining.
- Data indicates the region's unemployment rate, currently averaging 7%, has historically been higher than both the State (6%) and the United States (5%).
- Infrastructure is essential to business development as well as quality of life and place. Water is a key area that needs to be addressed.

**Goal 1- Create a pipeline of employable workers within the region**

**Goal 2- Create a regional Business Retention & Expansion Program**

**Goal 3- Create an entrepreneurial support system in the region**

**Goal 4- Continuously improve the Quality of Life and Quality of Place in the region for future generations**

## COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE

The Greater Wabash Region is in close proximity to several large metropolitan areas, including Terre Haute, Indiana (population 61,000) and Evansville, Indiana (population 120,000). Interstate 64 runs east to west through White and Wayne counties, linking the Greater Wabash region with larger communities. As outlined by a Dun and Bradstreet database, the Region is economically linked through key employment sectors including: manufacturing; oil & gas; mining; agriculture; and transportation & logistics. The region is within a 5-hour drive of Chicago, 2 hours from St. Louis, MO, 3 hours from Indianapolis, IN and 3 hours from Nashville, TN. Manufacturing is one of the largest sectors within the region and has a substantial impact on the economy. Manufacturing combined with the large regional transportation and logistics sector makes the region an ideal location for businesses.

The Greater Wabash region consists of 1,291,675 acres of land in farms. This is equivalent to 2,018 square miles. The entire region is 2,812 square miles, making farms 71% of land use. According to the 2012 US Census of Agriculture, there are 3,280 farms in the Greater Wabash Region. The agriculture sector is one of the largest sectors in the region. Crawford County is home to one of only fifteen Ethanol Plants in the State.

In addition to manufacturing and agriculture, the Greater Wabash region includes the largest oil producing county in the entire State of Illinois (see chart below - White County). All seven Greater Wabash counties fall within the top 15 oil producing counties in the State of Illinois. Oil production is one of the largest employers as well as subsidiary and service companies that provide products to the industry and transportation.

Barrels by County - Jan.-Dec. 2015			
Name	Total	Name	Total
White	1,797,456	Coles	33,222
Marion	1,015,484	Macon	31,463
Crawford	917,055	Williamson	30,343
Lawrence	833,627	Cumberland	23,874
Fayette	737,314	Sangamon	21,489
Wabash	497,775	Bond	18,582
Wayne	403,735	Shelby	18,073
Clay	399,890	Brown	17,233
Richland	368,410	DeWitt	14,877
Gallatin	331,027	Randolph	11,096
Franklin	284,084	Moultrie	9,760
Clark	283,453	Macoupin	9,532
Jasper	264,188	Montgomery	9,233
Jefferson	195,979	St Clair	7,721
Edwards	193,560	Perry	5,454
Hamilton	171,153	Monroe	4,821
Washington	145,871	Jackson	2,250
Effingham	125,245	Schuyler	1,837
Clinton	112,300	Adams	1,499
Christian	112,206	Douglas	524
Madison	70,350	Morgan	331
Edgar	41,969	Champaign	5
Saline	33,863		
45 Illinois Counties			
Total barrels =		9,609,213	

The region is also home to natural assets related to tourism and quality of life: Red Hill State Park; Sam Dale Lake State Fish and Wildlife Area; Beall Woods State Park; Crawford County State Fish and Wildlife Area; East Fork Lake in Olney; Crawford County Forest Preserve. In addition, the area is home to several wildlife outfitters utilizing the natural resources for tourism.

See page 25 for a list of natural assets in the region developed by the SET group. In identifying the regional assets, natural resources were identified as the region's comparative advantage. This comparative advantage has been developed in the past (coal, oil, agriculture) and it has potential for greater development in the future (i.e. advanced manufacturing, agribusiness, tourism).

## METHODOLOGY

The goals, strategies and action items of this plan were established as the direct result of data analysis and group discussions which occurred during a public Civic Forum, a four-module planning process including in-depth data analysis, three supplemental module overviews (Business Retention, Entrepreneurship and Tourism), and multiple working group sessions with active participation from business, civic, and community leaders.

SET team members evaluated the Creation, Attraction, Retention and Expansion (C.A.R.E.) model as a basis for economic growth for the region; and incorporated the concepts of the ABC's (Attitude, Behavior, Conditions) of Success methodology of starting with the end in mind.

A major impediment, relevant to the C.A.R.E. model, was identified through this process. The data suggests that small businesses and entrepreneurs exist in the SET Region. However, there are currently limited resources available within the region to support the development of small businesses and entrepreneurs or to support the retention and/or expansion of existing businesses. The Illinois Small Business Development Center typically relied upon for such resources, recently closed because of state budget cuts.

One of the key benefits of the SET planning process stemmed from discussions between community and business leaders on the major challenges they face within their respective counties and communities. They quickly identified that the major challenge relates to the workforce. Local knowledge and business surveys indicate that major employers within the respective counties are struggling to maintain full employment, due to a variety of factors including: skills mismatch; lack of a trained workforce; lack of a workforce that wants to work; and the lack of necessary soft skills to maintain employment.

The SET Team identified that given the workforce challenges that currently exist throughout the region, attraction, creation or expansion of business as strategies for economic growth are not currently viable strategies. Retention currently offers the greatest potential as a foundation for growth for the Greater Wabash SET Region.

The SET Team further identified the need for people to think differently about the job opportunities available in the region, i.e. garnering new knowledge and/or awareness of the opportunities that exist locally; changing attitudes and perceptions about available job opportunities; and developing new skill sets to match the current and upcoming needs of business and industry.

With these realities in mind, the SET Team identified two foundational goal areas:

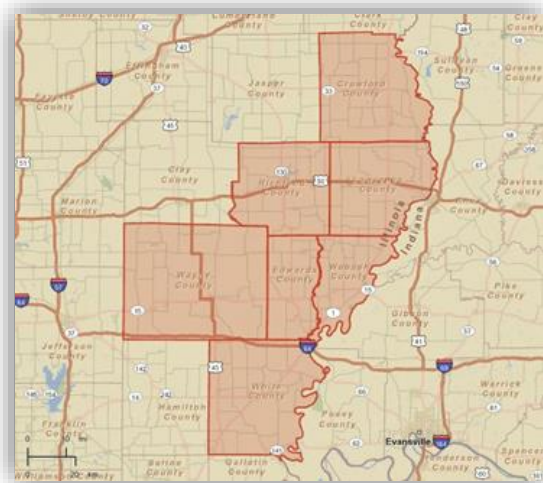
- 1) Address the employability of the region's workforce;
- 2) Provide support services for existing business and industry.

The team also identified the need to support the creation of new small businesses and entrepreneurs within the region; and to make improvements to residential quality of life that would also support further opportunities for regional arts & tourism growth and development.

## GREATER WABASH DESCRIPTION

The Greater Wabash SET region mirrors the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration's (EDA) Economic Development District maintained by the Greater Wabash Regional Planning Commission.

The SET Region is comprised of the rural southeast Illinois counties of Crawford, Edwards, Lawrence, Richland, Wabash, Wayne, and White. With the Wabash River flowing at the eastern border of the entire region, the Greater Wabash area is characterized by a highly rural composition. Roughly covering 2,812 square miles, the seven-county region has a total of 43 incorporated communities and a total population of 101,976. The seven-county region is categorized as 59% rural with less than 1% of total square miles categorized as urban.



The region is in close proximity to several large metropolitan areas, including Terre Haute, Indiana (population 61,000) and Evansville, Indiana (population 120,000). Interstate 64 runs east to west through White and Wayne counties, linking the Greater Wabash region with larger communities. As outlined by a Dun and Bradstreet database, the Region is economically linked through key employment sectors including: manufacturing; oil & gas; mining; agriculture; and transportation & logistics.

Nearly 90% of total establishments in the region have nine or fewer employees. (page 34-35)

Less than 1% of total establishments have more than 100 employees.

The sharp contrasts characterized by these statistics create a unique set of dynamics, as the region seeks balance between providing support to large employers while exploring opportunities to provide support to small businesses and entrepreneurs. (Source: [youreconomy.org](http://youreconomy.org))



**Marathon  
Petroleum Corporation**



**Web Printing Controls**  
A **BALDWIN** Company



**TOYOTA BOSHOKU**  
Global Website



## REGIONAL COLLABORATION

All seven counties were represented during the SET planning process. Team Members came from a variety of sectors including: non-profit; public; private; higher education; K-12 education; business; workforce development; and faith-based. A list of Team Members can be found at Appendix A- pages 28-29.

Most of the SET Team Members serve other local boards or organizations and many have worked together at some point prior to the beginning of the SET project. This project helped to interconnect the group in many ways.

Key decision makers and organizations have demonstrated their commitment to support the plan's goals and implementation by participating actively in the SET sessions over the course of the planning process and by continuing to discuss steps related to the fulfillment of the goals established by the Plan. A list of these organizations can be found at Appendix B- page 30.

The region's community colleges are poised to play a vital role in helping the SET Team achieve all of the goals outlined in the plan. Representatives from the community colleges have provided input on what kind of training and educational opportunities are currently available in the region to help meet the goals of the working groups. By providing dual credit in area high schools and extra training in regional employers' facilities, the community colleges can help in obtaining the goal of training the future workforce for employment, retraining the current workforce to obtain additional skills needed for employment, and educating interested parties in successful tactics to run a business.



The Illinois Eastern Community Colleges district is made up of four community colleges in the Greater Wabash Region: Frontier Community College in Fairfield (Wayne County); Lincoln Trail College in Robinson (Crawford County); Olney Central College in Olney (Richland County); and Wabash Valley College in Mt. Carmel (Wabash County). Approximately two-thirds of White County, including the county seat of Carmi, is included in the Southeastern Illinois College district, which also serves Pope, Hardin, Saline, Gallatin and a small portion of Hamilton County.

Due to other obligations, not every SET Team Member was able to attend every SET session, however, participants who were unable to participate in person, received electronic communications keeping them abreast of the topics being discussed at sessions they may have missed.

A SET program presentation was made to the Greater Wabash Regional Planning Commission Board of Directors at their Annual Meeting in March of 2016, where the plan's draft goals and strategies were outlined and additional input and support for the plan was received. The Board is comprised of citizen and government representatives from all counties participating in SET.





## REGIONAL ECONOMIC GOALS AND PLAN

Greater Wabash Regional Planning Commission, recognized by the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration as an economic development district, is comprised of the governing bodies of the seven counties in the SET project. GWRPC is required to maintain a current Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, or CEDS. The opportunity to engage in Stronger Economies Together (SET) arose in July 2015 at the same time the CEDS was being updated. Realizing key opportunities for alignment, GWRPC and its contingent of economic development partners engaged the tool of the SET process to lay the foundation for the CEDS. The SET process has allowed for a much stronger and more diverse CEDS than could have been possible without the SET project. Both plans were used to align goals and streamline economic development.



Based on subjective input from the region coupled with the objective data explored throughout the Stronger Economies Together process, the following goals have been identified for the Greater Wabash Region:

**Goal 1- Create a pipeline of employable workers within the region**

**Goal 2- Create a regional Business Retention & Expansion Program**

**Goal 3- Create an entrepreneurial support system in the region**

**Goal 4- Continuously improve the Quality of Life and Quality of Place in the region for future generations**

# Goal 1- Create a pipeline of employable workers within the region

## Regional Economic Benefits

A talent pipeline created for the region's employers will address the region's ongoing issue of chronic unfilled jobs and lack of an appropriately educated workforce. Appropriate education needs to be provided to create a workforce talent pipeline within the region. The benefits to appropriately educating the region's youth for jobs that are available within the region and helping them develop into employable adults will be an increase in the quality of the region's workforce. A quality workforce will make the region more economically competitive and ultimately keep more youth in the region. The work within this goal area is designed to educate the youth (Junior High and High School) about the job and career opportunities that are available within the region. When students are aware of job opportunities, they will be more likely to choose a career in these fields instead of blindly choosing a career path. Linking employers with students at the high school level will allow these students to not only see what jobs are available after they graduate high school but will also allow them to develop relationships with the business owners and managers. Personal interaction and education on companies in the region will create a more personal connection for these graduating seniors as they move into the world of adulthood and work. The ultimate goal is for these students to feel connected to the area and choose a career path that they will be able to work in within the region. By educating the students while they are still in high school, they will have a better idea of what college programs they will need to take. In some cases, the companies might even pay for the student's education. There are some small initiatives such as Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities (CEO) and Junior Achievement but they are not widespread and only serve a handful of students.

## Evidence Base for Goal

- Businesses throughout the region, in all key industries, are experiencing chronic workforce issues. They report they cannot fill open positions and when they do, the employees lack soft skills and often do not stay with the employer long-term.
- Population decline, an aging workforce, brain drain, subsistence and government assistance combined with the lack of soft skills is stifling future growth for this region and placing the viability of the existing businesses and industries in peril.
- Using workforce training and education as the regional foundations for growth will ensure that existing businesses are retained, while also creating opportunities for their individual growth and expansion. In turn, this will create a regional workforce which will also help attract new business and industry to the region.

## Goal 1- Team Members

Greater Wabash Regional Planning Commission \* Illinois Eastern Community Colleges \* Southeastern Illinois College \* Southern 14 WIB \* Wabash Area Development Inc. \* K-12 Superintendents \* Champion Laboratories, Inc. \* Web Printing Controls \* Marathon Oil \* Local Economic Development Directors \* University of Illinois Extension \* Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity \* LWIA 23 \* K-12 Guidance Counselors \* K-12 Teachers \* CEO Students \* College Students \* Illinois Department of Employment Security



**Goal #1 Strategy - Fill open employment positions in the region and reduce youth population loss by giving the region's K-12 students the tools, knowledge, and a plan necessary for successful employability upon high school graduation**

Strategy	Responsible Party	Timeline	Measurements
Hold regional Business/Education symposium	GWRPC-and SET subcommittee	Fall 2016	Hold an educational event that is attended by the region's major employers, K-12 Superintendents, Community colleges, workforce representatives (Workforce boards and State workforce), elected officials and economic development directors
Create Partners in Education Group (PIE)	GWRPC- SET Subcommittee	December 2016- after symposium	Create a group that is a consortium of K-12 Superintendents/Guidance/Teachers, Community Colleges, businesses, workforce development and economic development), and college students for each of the community college areas (5) that meets quarterly.
Develop opportunities for tours/internships/ job shadowing between K-12 and the business community by 2017-2018 school year	PIE Group	2017-2019	Hold Manufacturer's Day events in the region, hold tours of business facilities, establish connections between schools and businesses and keep track of the number of students who participate, collaboration with local workforce boards and place students with employers

Educate the Jr./ Sr. High School students on employment possibilities in the region	PIE Group, College Students, Past CEO Students, Employers, IDES	Spring 2018	Create videos and marketing materials of the region's employers and jobs available in the region. Use videos, brochures, speakers, field trips/tours, and social media to educate youth. Keep track of the number of local high school guidance counselors who disseminate information. Organize the region's job listings so open jobs are easily found. Host events with Illinois Department of Employment Security to market free services provided through the State to employers and job seekers.
Explore ACT Career Readiness Certificates and the ACT Work Ready Communities program	PIE Group	2018	Establish ACT Career Readiness certificates/Work Ready Communities (WRC) programs
Build upon existing or implement Work Ethic (soft skills) programs in the region's high schools (i.e. World Class Workforce; DOL Skills to Pay the Bills)	PIE Group	2018	Establish work ethic (soft skills) programs within the region's high schools that soft skills education is taught as part of the core curriculum to all students
Research and implement a Leadership program in the region's K-12 schools by 2017-2018. (i.e. Leader in Me, Character Counts, Bring Your A Game, Choices, 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership)	PIE Group	2018	Implement a leadership program within K-12 schools
Create career and technical certificates that the region's high school students can earn upon completion of the program	Community Colleges	Fall 2019	Implement college certificate programs in high schools

## Goal 2- Create a regional Business Retention & Expansion Program (BR&E)

### Regional Economic Benefits

A Regional Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) program is a long-term, systematic approach to open and maintain a path of communication between the community and its businesses and industries. It can help:

- Identify reasons businesses are located in this region, and issues the business may be experiencing
- Aggregate data can be used to identify regional issues that are impacting not only specific businesses, but perhaps the future viability of the region
- Provide information for planning specific programs and policies that will to address business needs and develop regional strategies for marketing and business recruitment
- Create opportunities for shared communication
- Anchor businesses to the region and encourage them to grow locally
- Retain existing jobs and promote additional employment opportunities
- Demonstrate a commitment to existing employers which may result in the recruitment of new businesses
- Provide an early warning system to identify businesses that are performing poorly and might fail or those that are doing so well that expansion/relocation could be options.

### Evidence Base for Goal

The strongest assets in the region are the existing businesses. Communities throughout the region depend upon existing businesses for economic stability. It is easier to retain existing businesses than to attract new ones. Statistics show that up to 80% of new jobs are created by existing businesses. Discussions within the SET process revealed workforce employability to be a significant challenge to existing and future businesses in the area. This process further demonstrated the value of providing businesses with an ongoing opportunity to provide input and help make a difference in how issues that affect their business are addressed. A BR&E program allows the community to learn about the company, their industry and relationship to the community. It also provides an opportunity to identify issues and concerns that pertain to the local economy and correct those that negatively impact the business climate. A regional approach is essential to the viability of the business climate and aggregated data from a regional BR&E program will assist in highlighting competitive strengths, opportunities for improvements, and barriers to growth and/or expansion. Many companies share the same concerns; aggregated data enables the region to present the common issues and identify solutions.

### Goal 2- Team Members

Greater Wabash Regional Planning Commission \* Local Economic Development Directors \* University of Illinois Extension \* Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity \* Illinois Workforce Development \* Utility Providers



**Goal 2- Strategy- Form a regional Business Support Group and visit regional employers to conduct interviews and aggregate data**

Strategy	Responsible Party	Timeline	Measurements
Form a Business Support Group (BSG)	Greater Wabash Regional Planning Commission, Economic Development Organizations, State of Illinois DCEO regional team representatives, State of Illinois Regional workforce representative	2016	Identify communities/counties throughout the region that currently do or do not have a BR&E program. Identify what resources or organizations are available to perform retention visits. Obtain buy-in as necessary and assign responsibility to specific organizations that will be performing BR&E visits in each county. Meet semi-annually to gather data, strategize techniques and coordinate efforts.
Participate in the C.O.R.E. initiative sponsored by major Illinois utilities Ameren Illinois, ComEd; Illinois agencies, EDA and DCEO	BSG (Business Support Group)	First half of 2017	Obtain a Synchronist System license through Ameren Illinois issued to GWRPC, with intent to customize industry modules, obtain access to reports and data sets. Use the specific set of survey questions provided through C.O.R.E. / Synchronist System. Perform a set number of business visits per county and enter into the Synchronist system.
Publish aggregate data through organizational reports, economic development organizations' websites and social media outlets	Greater Wabash Regional Planning Commission	2018	Publish reports on an annual basis with data generated from the Synchronist software.



## Goal 3- Create an entrepreneurial support system in the region

### **Regional Economic Benefits**

Small business is the backbone of the regional economy. By creating an entrepreneur friendly environment, the region will continue to grow and create jobs.

### **Evidence Base for Goal**

The Greater Wabash Region recognizes the importance of small businesses and entrepreneurship to the local and regional economies. In 2011, self-employed and businesses with 9 or fewer employees made up 89.8% of total establishments and contributed 32.8% of the total jobs for the region. Over the period from 2001 to 2011, self-employed and businesses with 9 or fewer employees experienced the largest percentage of growth in jobs for the region at 33% and 5% respectively. With this knowledge, this goal focuses on funding and programming towards strengthening support services, training, and financing for small businesses and entrepreneurs in Greater Wabash Counties.

See page 22- Evidence Base for The Plan - Demographic Data Patent Information

### Goal 3- Team Members

Greater Wabash Regional Planning Commission \* Local Economic Development Directors \* University of Illinois Extension \* Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity \* Illinois Workforce Development \* Illinois Eastern Community Colleges \* Illinois Department of Employment Security \* Utility Providers

### Goal 3- Strategy- Create a support system including programs and resources for entrepreneurs within the region

Strategy	Responsible Party	Timeline	Measurements
Create an entrepreneurship plan for the region	GWRPC, Community Colleges, Business Support Group	2017-2018	Create a sustainable plan for the region's entrepreneurs Including a staffing plan to provide support for business planning as well as "life after the ribbon cutting". Create advertising/awareness program to lure and funnel entrepreneurs into the system. Identify groups of businesses in the region that can also provide support & advice to entrepreneurs. Create a funding model for the plan (i.e. self-sustaining model)
Collaborate with the education community to deliver entrepreneurship programming	GWRPC, U of I Extension, Community Colleges, ED Directors	2017-2018	Create entrepreneurial groups and host educational sessions for current or prospective entrepreneurs within the groups. Measures are: # of members in the groups, # of educational sessions hosted, # of new business start-ups as a result of sessions. Build off the existing youth entrepreneurship initiatives in the region to create an adult initiative.
Partner with the Business Support Group and PIE group to identify opportunities for new business endeavors	GWRPC, PIE Group, BSG Group	2018	Solve business issues, create businesses, and retain businesses by utilizing the support system of the BSG group and the PIE group. Explore new options for business in the region such as Cooperatives.
Create a community support group for entrepreneurs	GWRPC, PIE Group, BSG Group	2019	Utilize the connections in the PIE group and the BSG group to create a network of business professions who will serve as community support volunteers to assist new business start-ups with questions related to their business. # of volunteers in the group and # of referrals to volunteers.

## Goal 4- Continuously improve the Quality of Life and Quality of Place within the region for future generations

### Regional Economic Benefits

Improving the quality of life and place is expected to reduce the population decline, reduce the economic leakage outside the region, increase the region's ability to attract and retain a high quality workforce, and increase economic revenue from outside tourists. Quality infrastructure is essential to business creation, business attraction, business retention and business expansion (CARE). In addition to business, good quality infrastructure is essential for quality of life and place for area residents. One main infrastructure issue identified by the SET group is good quality, affordable water. The Greater Wabash Regional Planning Commission works with all local governments to create collaborative solutions to these regional infrastructure issues.

### Evidence Base for Goal

The region has natural resources (see comparative advantage and assets) and as they relate to tourism, the resources are an economic development advantage. In order to capitalize on this, the region needs to maintain the quality of life and place as well as develop tourism opportunities. After analyzing the data, the SET group chose Arts, Entertainment, Recreation and Visitor Industries as a viable industry to pursue. It was among the "EMERGING" clusters and had a Location Quotient of 0.44. Location quotient (LQ) is a valuable way of quantifying how concentrated a particular industry, cluster, occupation, or demographic group is in a region as compared to the nation. It can reveal what makes a particular region "unique" in comparison to the national average. An LQ of less than 1 could indicate an opportunity to develop that sector in the local area. The Arts/Entertainment Cluster has viable opportunity for growth but only after all infrastructure issues have been addressed. Adequate water, sewer, roads, broadband and other basic infrastructure must be in place so that citizens and tourists have a good quality of life and place. Greater Wabash Regional Planning Commission works closely with all bodies of government within the region to help provide funding opportunities for infrastructure projects. Government bodies are represented on the GWRPC board and work closely together on local and regional projects.

### Goal 4- Team Members

Greater Wabash Regional Planning Commission \* Local Economic Development Directors \* University of Illinois Extension \* Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity \* Local Chambers of Commerce \* IllinoisSouth Tourism

**Goal 4- Strategy- - Improve the Quality of Life and Quality of Place in the region for future generations.**

Strategy	Responsible Party	Timeline	Measurements
Identify key contacts in each county / community in the region	GWRPC, ED Directors, Chambers	2017	Create a list of key individuals that would be beneficial in the regional "Quality of Life and Place" Team (i.e. Chambers, tourism bureaus, individual city groups, colleges, faith-based groups, member businesses)
Create a team of regional Chambers and key contacts (Chamber Group)	GWRPC	2017	Create a group of Chamber Directors and tourism professionals from all seven counties (Quality of Life and Place Team) that meets at least semi-annually
Identify infrastructure needs (Water, sewer, transportation, broadband, medical, tourism/recreation assets needed to complement visitors' and resident's leisure experiences, etc.)	GWRPC	Ongoing - 2022	Create a list of current assets and needs
Provide administrative support to communities in need of funding for infrastructure improvements	GWRPC	Ongoing- 2022	Increase the number of funding awards received to help provide infrastructure to communities to support residents and businesses, collaborations between communities to provide joint infrastructure projects
Develop a regional marketing plan and create destination experiences that attracts visitors to the region	Quality of Life and Place Team, IllinoisSouth Tourism	Ongoing- 2022	Create Regional Plan. Establish events that draw outside tourists to the region (increase in hotel/motel taxes)

# TARGET OUTCOMES

	Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3	Goal 4
<b>Short Term-Attitudes</b> <i>12 months</i>	Educate the region's businesses, K-12 education and community colleges on the need for improved employment related education for the region's youth	Educate local communities on the need for a regional Business Retention and Expansion Support Group	Educate the region on why entrepreneurship is important to the region and develop a sense of urgency among current business and educational institutions to assist in helping entrepreneurs	Educate the region's key contacts on the need for regional collaboration for tourism and infrastructure needs
<b>Inter-Mediate-Behaviors</b> <i>1-4 years</i>	Create a partnership between the region's businesses, K-12 education, community colleges, workforce and economic development leaders	Create a Business Support Group that values business retention visits. All communities participate in the BSG and perform retention visits where information is aggregated and utilized to have a larger voice in finding solutions and promoting regional strengths and weaknesses	Business and education communities in the region participate in a regional effort to enhance entrepreneurship	Create a Regional "Quality of Life" team and host regional tourism events while collaborating regionally on infrastructure needs
<b>Long Term-Conditions</b> <i>5+ years</i>	A long term, lasting program of educational opportunities for the region's youth which will ultimately fill the jobs within the region resulting	Enhanced support for existing business - fewer businesses leave the area an increase in business attraction	A long-term program with business to business support groups, education support groups and support for "life after the ribbon cutting" that will ultimately help create more businesses within the region and keep them open	Population increases and tourism increases

## UPDATE GOAL 1

The SET Team is pleased to report that Goal 1 Strategy– *Hold a Regional Symposium as a Kick-Off Event in the Fall of 2016* has already been achieved. In an effort to garner additional support and jump start SET Goal #1, the Workforce working group hosted the Greater Wabash Region Business/Education Symposium on Tuesday, August 9, 2016 at the Carmi – White County High School in Carmi (White County). The Symposium was organized to bring together representatives of business, higher education, K-12 education, workforce, and the public sector for a regional discussion on efforts to transform the quality of the region’s workforce. The 79 community leaders in attendance heard presentations from the following:

- Mr. Chris Masingill, Federal Co-Chairman of the Delta Regional Authority (DRA), outlined DRA’s workforce development initiatives
- Mr. Jonathon Hallberg, Executive Director of Jefferson County Development Corporation, outlined the components of Jefferson County Promise: A World Class Workforce Initiative (Jefferson County is located northwest of the SET Region, Mt Vernon, the county seat is located at the intersection of I-57 and I-64)
- Ms. Stepheny McMahon, Economic Development Director for Sullivan, Illinois, spoke about their No Job Left Behind Initiative to promote manufacturing careers and job readiness (Sullivan, Illinois is in the Central Illinois county of Moultrie- northwest of the SET Region)
- Mr. Kurtis Bunfill, an Agri-Fab, Inc. representative, outlined how their Sullivan, Illinois based lawn care product manufacturing business has developed initiatives to support Sullivan’s No Job Left Behind Initiative
- Ms. Tiffany Macke, Community Economic Development Educator with the University of Illinois Extension, provided an overview of the Living Your Dreams activity which encourages youth and adult audiences to plan for and take action on things that make them happy

After the speaker presentations, participants broke out into working groups based on their community college district for roundtable discussions about the current state of the region’s workforce and how they were willing to participate in the SET process.

On August 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>, the Workforce working group hosted Business/Education Partners in Employability (PIE) Group working sessions at three community college locations: Wabash Valley College in Mt Carmel; Frontier Community College in Fairfield; and Southeastern Illinois College in Carmi. These working sessions were a continuation of the dialogue that began at the August 9<sup>th</sup> Business/Education Symposium in support of the development of a high quality regional workforce.

As a result of SET and the Business/Education Symposium, the Region’s workforce challenges are widely known. Those participating recognize that the existing methods are no longer effective and are willing to work together for solutions.



Business Symposium Event Held on August 9<sup>th</sup>



## UPDATE GOAL 2

The SET Team is pleased to report that Goal 2 Strategy–*Form a Business Support Group* has already been achieved. To garner additional support and jump start SET Goal #2, DCEO hosted a meeting at Greater Wabash Regional Planning Commission on October 26<sup>th</sup>. The State of Illinois introduced the CORE initiative in September and all economic development directors, Greater Wabash RPC, Ameren Illinois and DCEO attended the introduction meeting as well as the meeting on October 26<sup>th</sup>. The group is poised to begin Business Retention and Expansion visits in early 2017 and is currently working on the other strategies related to Goal 2.

University of Illinois Extension has hired a new Extension Educator for Community and Economic Development serving Edwards, Lawrence, Richland, Wabash, and Wayne Counties. Steven Groner brings a plethora of expertise that will be utilized in Goal 2. Steve started his career as a product designer and now applies those skills to solve complex business problems. After earning a MBA degree from Benedictine University in Lisle, Illinois he then focused on marketing assignments with several well established downstate manufacturers. Most recently, he served as director of the Institute for Entrepreneurial Success at Kaskaskia College. Programs included; a regional small business development center, start-up incubator space, youth initiatives, foreign trade education and entrepreneur clubs. They then expanded services to help start-up companies grow after launch- adding tools such as profit analysis, long-range planning and roundtable peer discussion groups. Steve will be offering a “How to Start a Small Business Class” within the SET Counties.

### UPDATE GOAL 3

The SET Team is pleased to report that Goal 3 *Strategy – Partner with the Business Support Group and PIE group to identify opportunities for new business endeavors* has begun work. On October 25<sup>th</sup>, Greater Wabash Regional Planning Commission, Wabash Valley College and USDA Rural Development hosted a COOP Event. Over 30 people attended the half-day long event to learn about the Cooperative model and how it can benefit businesses. The educational forum brought together individuals and organizations interested in how coops can support community economic development. The purpose of the forum was to: provide information on current trends and opportunities in cooperative development, expand understanding of the role of cooperatives in community economic development, generate new and support existing interest, and provide follow up direction to help move opportunities forward toward reality. The key note speaker was Margaret Bau, who has been a Cooperative Development Specialist with USDA Rural Development since 1998. Also involved was personnel from the Illinois Cooperative Development Center, hosted by the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs at Western Illinois University.



COOP Event Hosted by Wabash Valley College- State of Illinois USDA Director, Colleen Callahan, presenting to the group.



Margaret Bau speaking with Edwards County FFA Students about Coops.

#### UPDATE GOAL 4

The SET Team is pleased to report that Goal 4 Strategy- Provide support to communities in need of infrastructure improvements is currently being implemented in a regional effort. On January 31, 2017, the Wabash Valley Water Commission was formed and held their first meeting. This regional water commission will be exploring the possibility of a regional water treatment plant. Providing clean quality water to the residents of the Greater Wabash Region remains a priority for GWRPC. This regional water initiative could provide long term solutions to an age-old problem. The Water Commission is currently made up of members from three of the SET counties, several SET members as well as administrative support from the GWRPC office. It is expected that this water commission will grow to serve almost all 7 of the counties within the SET region.

# EVIDENCE BASE FOR PLAN

## REGIONAL DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

**The region's population is both declining and aging.** This combination can be a cause for concern, indicating that as the number of people in the workforce (prime working age) is declining; the youth population needed in occupations to support the retiring baby-boomer generation is also declining. The Greater Wabash region population declined 3% from 2000-2014 and is projected to decline another 3% before the year 2020. In 2000, the region's population 40 years of age and over was 50%; in 2014, that percentage had risen to 53%.

**In the last ten years, the region has had a steady trend of increased total population in poverty** and the real median household income has stayed relatively stagnant. Perhaps of greatest concern is the increase in the percentage of minors (ages 0-17) living in poverty, which increased from 17% in 2003 to 23% in 2013.

**Within the Greater Wabash region, the percentage of residents holding a bachelor's degree or higher, is 18% lower than the State of Illinois.** This could be related to the fact that the seven-county region does not house a University, as the region's adult educational attainment level of a high school diploma or less is 8% higher than the rest of the State.

Despite the absence of a University, the region does have a strong community college system due to the presence of the four Illinois Eastern Community Colleges (Wabash Valley College, Frontier Community College, Lincoln Trail College, Olney Central College) and Southeastern Illinois College.

**Signs that the region may be lacking resources to support entrepreneurs** and might not be able to provide new businesses with the business support services needed for successful growth are indicated by a patent ratio of .06 per 1,000 jobs in the region, compared to .47 for the state.

**The region's unemployment rate has historically been higher** than both the State and the United State average. Per county unemployment rates, not seasonally adjusted for May 2016 ranged from 6% in Edwards County to 9% in Wayne County for an average of 7% for the seven-county region in comparison with the State of Illinois at 6% and the United States at 5%.

**Earnings per Worker are a major reason for concern.** In 2014, the average earning per worker in the region was about 66% of the State average. While the region may have a lower cost of living, the lower earnings per worker rate may be contributing to population loss as the youth population searches elsewhere for higher paying jobs.

**Analysis of the region's labor force** for 2013 indicates that 49% of the region's labor force is employed outside the region, leaving 51% as both living and working in the region. While out-commuters bring dollars back into the region, this begs the question as to why they are employed outside the region. Also, 9,968 workers who commute into the region do not live here.

## REGIONAL ECONOMIC DATA

Establishment data suggests the need to continue to support the large employers while seeking to identify additional resources to support the growing number of small businesses and entrepreneurs in the Region.

**Analysis of the region's establishments** (a physical business location) over the period from 2000 to 2011 indicates a net positive change of 18% including a net positive migration of 54 (number of establishments leaving vs the number moving into the region).

**Analysis of the region's establishments by company stages from 2000-2011** indicates that 90% of total SET region establishments have less than 10 employees:

Stage 0 – Self Employed: 33% of total establishments, up 4%

Stage 1 - with 2 to 9 employees: 53% of total establishments, up 2%

Stage 2 – with 10 to 99 employees: 10%, of total establishments, down 2%

State 3 – with 100 or more employees: .07% of total establishments, down .02%.

**Analysis of the region's jobs by company stages** from 2000-2011 indicates:

The SET Region lost 724 jobs representing a 2% decrease in total jobs.

Stage 0 – Self Employed establishments, grew by 33% for a gain of 697 jobs

Stage 3 (100-499 employees) establishments, declined by 18% for a loss of 1,855 jobs; this represents the most significant loss.

Stage 4 (500+ employees) establishments also grew by 8% or 411 jobs over the period.

**Analysis of sales by company stages** indicated that the SET Region lost sales in all five company stages. The 29% decline represents a \$1.9 billion loss from 2000-2011.

**The Regional Requirements Report** provided by the Purdue Center for Regional Development suggests the SET Region is experiencing leakages throughout its Industry Clusters. It assesses a dollar value to requirements being satisfied within the region and outside the region. It further suggests the need to identify opportunities for import substitution to fill gaps currently being satisfied outside the region.

**Within STEM** (Science, Technology, Engineering & Math), the SET Region experienced negative job growth of 1% while the rest of the State of Illinois experienced positive job growth of 5% over the period from 2009 to 2014.

## INDUSTRY CLUSTER ANALYSIS

The Industry Cluster Analysis Report provided to the SET Team by the Purdue Center for Regional Development, outlined the primary industry clusters supporting the region as follows:

### **Mature**

The mature industry clusters, while relatively concentrated were trending downward; the SET Region might find it worthwhile to invest in efforts to “shore up” the concentration of these industries. This is particularly important for heavily specialized industries, such as Transportation Equipment Manufacturing, which is 5 times more concentrated as compared to the nation.

### **Star**

The star industry clusters, Agribusiness, Food Processing & Technology, are experiencing growth; additionally, they are three times more concentrated in this region than nationally.

### **Emerging**

The emerging clusters, while not heavily concentrated, are poised for future growth and should be deemed “emerging opportunities.”

### **Transforming**

Within the industry clusters having less specialization, industries that are also experiencing negative growth suggests that any transformation of the industry would require a substantial investment of monies and resources.

### **Target Industry Clusters**

The SET Team selected seven target industry clusters for a deeper exploration:

**Mature:** Transportation & Logistics; Transportation Equipment Manufacturing; Energy

**Star:** Agribusiness, Food Processing & Technology; Advanced Materials

**Emerging:** Information Technology & Telecommunications; Arts, Entertainment, Recreation & Visitor Industries

The Team determined that base level resources were needed prior to targeting the existing Mature & Star Industry Clusters for further growth and development. These resources include:

- Addressing the employability issues of the region’s labor force
- Identifying resources to support traditional business retention and expansion efforts
- Developing capacity within the region to support the creation of small businesses and entrepreneurs

The Team identified the Emerging Cluster of Arts, Entertainment, Recreation & Visitor Industries as a viable opportunity to combine assets, and work together. While not a significant industry cluster for the region, it is currently supporting 833 jobs with a Location Quotient of 0.44. It was decided to develop a regional marketing plan and identify improvements in residential quality of life that would also support further opportunities for regional growth and development within this sector.



## REGIONAL ASSETS

Regional Assets compiled during the SET planning process that represent resources to support and/or have demonstrated support for the Plan:

### Financial Assets:

- Local civic organizations committed to raising funds for special projects
- Access to revolving loan funds to support regional business growth & expansion
- Local foundation grant availability
- Community banks committed to using Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) to serve needs

### Political Assets:

- At the local level
- At the state level, including Representative David Reis and Senator Dale Righter

### Social Assets:

A wide variety of civic and faith-based organizations have demonstrated a commitment to the SET planning process including: local tourism organizations; chambers of commerce; retail merchant associations; and volunteer groups

**Human Assets:** A wide variety of human capital assets that can collectively create economic value for individuals, businesses and the community have been identified. These include:

- **Education**, i.e. K-12 educators; 5 community college districts; Junior Achievement programs; Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities (CEO) programs; extra-curricular programs, i.e. 4-H, FFA, FBLA
- **Local & State organizations**, i.e. The Greater Wabash Regional Planning Commission; local community and economic development organizations; Local Workforce Investment Areas 23 & 26, Illinois Dept. of Commerce & Economic Opportunity; Historical societies; local churches; community service groups
- **Business & Industry**

### Cultural Assets:

A wide variety of cultural assets that can be utilized to support the Region have also been identified. These cultural assets include: museums, historic sites, arts festivals, and local landmarks

### Natural Assets:

Oil and Coal deposits

Recreational Areas including:

- Red Hill State Park; Sam Dale Lake State Fish and Wildlife Area; Beall Woods State Park; Crawford County State Fish and Wildlife Area; East Fork Lake in Olney; Crawford County Forest Preserve

Farmland for agriculture use

Land with ample hunting/fishing

## POTENTIAL CHALLENGES AND RELATED STRATEGIES

Potential barriers to the successful implementation of the SET Plan Goals and Strategies include:

- **Funding** – The SET Plan is being prepared at a time of great uncertainty for the local economies given the unprecedented budget impasse at the State level that has stretched into its second year. Commitments of resources from organizations, local governments, agencies, etc., are included from the standpoint that current resources will remain as the new budget is outlined after the November 2016 election cycle.

**Strategy:** Meanwhile, the use of grant opportunities and local funding options may determine the fate of proposed projects. Non-reliance on state government to support local projects coupled with regional collaboration efforts will result in a win-win for the Region.

- **Politics** – Local governments and the Set region’s representatives at the state level have *expressed* support of the SET Plan; however, given the current political climate, gaining *actual funding* support for the Region’s initiatives may prove difficult.

**Strategy:** Speaking with one voice and leveraging existing political relationships state-wide can contribute to overcoming this potential barrier.

- **Buy-In / Support** – While a dedicated group of individuals have come together as a Team and demonstrated their commitment to the SET planning process, obtaining buy-in and support from additional stakeholders will be crucial to the long-term success of the project.

**Strategy:** Promoting success stories and demonstrating the value of the programs developed as a result of the SET planning process can contribute to overcoming this potential barrier.

- **Geographic Location** – Access to needed resources may be limited, based on the region’s geographic location.

**Strategy:** By working together as a Region or identifying ways to create the needed resources within the region, we can help support the growth of the region’s economy.

- **Sustainability** – As shown in the data reviewed during the SET planning process, a large number of businesses have closed in recent years.

**Strategy:** Although more businesses are opening than closing, it will be important to find a way to bridge that gap and decrease the number of business closings to keep the region’s communities from facing continued economic decline.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The GREATER WABASH Region would like to thank the staff from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development, the Regional Rural Development Centers, and University of Illinois Extension for support throughout the course of this project. We would also like to show our appreciation to Greater Wabash Regional Planning Commission, Illinois Eastern Community College, local economic development districts, Hoosier Energy, Ameren Illinois, and the distinguished individuals that took part in the training sessions, and numerous other individuals, for their invaluable insight and ideas that led to the creation of this plan.

Region's Contact Information:

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# Appendices

## Appendix A: Planning Team Members

Alex Pleasant	CCDA	Crawford	Non-Profit
Allan Aldredge	Olney Central College	Richland	Higher Education
Allen Barker	City of Olney	Richland	Public
Alyssa Parrott	Frontier Community College	Wayne	Higher Education
Ben Anderson	Wabash Valley FS	Edwards	Private
Ben Ross	MCAEA	Wabash	Non-Profit
Beth Hallam	Mitchell Insurance	Edwards	Private
Bill Hudson	City of Mt. Carmel	Wabash	Public
Bob Ferguson	First Financial Bank	Richland	Private
Brian Ray	White County Highway	White	Public
Bridgett Volk	People State Bank of Newton	Lawrence	Private
Brittany Campagna	BrushFire Creative	Wabash	Private
Clarence Gross	Red Hill School	Lawrence	K-12 Education
Colleen Whyte	Fairfield National Bank	Wayne	Private
Connie Calvert	CCDA	Crawford	Non-Profit
David Jordan	City of Grayville	White	Public
David Savage	GWRPC	ALL	Public
Debbie Mason	Village of West Salem	Edwards	Public
Dennis Turpin	City of Albion	Edwards	Public
Don Price	FNB Allendale	Wabash	Private
Don Wagner	City of Lawrenceville	Lawrence	Public
Donna Hodgson	First Bank	Wabash	Private
Doug Anderson	Illinois Farm Bureau	White/Wayne	Non-Profit
Doug Painter	First Bank	Wabash	Private
Doyle Hucker	IGA	Wayne	Private
Eric Ikemire	First Mid Bank	Wabash	Private
Gary Hutchinson	City of Sumner	Lawrence	
Gary Ritz	FNB	Wabash	Private
Gerald Edgren	Frontier Community College	Wayne	Higher Education
J. Roy Dee	Dee Drilling	Wabash	Private
Jackie Summers	First Christian Church	Wabash County	Faith based
Jakie Walker	Red Hill School	Lawrence	K-12 Education
Jeff Quyle	Hoosier Energy	Richland, Wayne, White, Edwards, Wabash	Non-Profit
Jerry Houser	Wayne White Electric	Richland, Wayne, White, Edwards, Wabash	Non-Profit
Jervaise McDaniel	IECC	Richland	Higher Education
Jessica Buckles	U of I Extension	Lawrence	Higher Education
Jill Rigg	Village of West Salem	Edwards	Public
Jim Ellis	Palestine Development	Crawford	Non-Profit
Jim Mowrey	Rep. Sales Inc.	Richland	Private
Jim Pfeister	Tourism Board	Wabash	Non-Profit
Jim Summers	First Christian	Wabash	Faith based
Joe Bisch	City of Grayville	White	Public
Joe Hunt	Southern Illinois Scale	Richland	
Joe Judge	City of Mt. Carmel	Wabash	Public
JoEllen Seil	City of Grayville	White	Public
John Evans	BD Independence	Wabash	Private
Justin Dugar	City of Mt. Carmel	Wabash	Public
Karissa Turner	Wabash General Hospital	Wabash	Public
Kathy Bunting	Fairfield Memorial Hospital	Wayne	Non-Profit
Katie Weaver	Frontier Community College	Wayne	student

Kevin Madden	WSJD	Wabash	Private
Kevin Pierce	LWIA	Richland, Crawford, Lawrence	Workforce Board
Kim Carlson	Village of West Salem	Edwards	
Kim Watson	DCEO	ALL	Public
Kriss Donovan			
Kurtis Swartz	Bi-State Authority Airport	Lawrence	Non-Profit
Larry Hodgson	Short Cunningham Funeral Home	Wabash	Private
Lesley Hipsher	Chamber of Commerce	Wabash	Chamber
Margaret Felts	Mt. Carmel Public Utility	Wabash	Private
Marie Goff	Cra-wa-la	Lawrence	
Matt Fowler	Wabash Valley College	Wabash	Education
Melissa Crowe	Grayville CUSD #1	White, Edwards	K-12 Education
Melissa Felling	City of Albion	Edwards	Public
Mike Sullivan	IECC	ALL	Higher Education
Nikki Roser	First Bank	White	Private
Norlyn Crandall	Fairfield Fountain of Life Church	Wayne	Faith based
Pam Barbee	SO14 WIB	Wayne, Wabash, White, Edwards	Workforce Board
Pat Schofield	Village of Palestine	Crawford	Public
Patrick Pape	DCEO	ALL	Public
Phil Summers	Mt. Carmel Register	Wabash	Private
Randy Hallam	Mitchell Insurance	Edwards	Private
Ray Vaughn	City of Olney	Richland	Public
Rick Andrews	Andrews Oil	Wabash	Private
Rob Dean	Wabash County Board	Wabash	Public
Robert Conn	Wabash Valley College	Wabash	Higher Education
Robie Thompson	Wabash County Board	Wabash	Public
Robin Dean	First Mid Bank	Wabash	Private
Rod Nolan	City of Lawrenceville	Lawrence	Public
Roger Kull	Kull Insurance	Lawrence	Private
Roger Pethtel	City of Robinson	Crawford	Public
Royce Carter	Wayne County Board	Wayne	Public
Rudy Witsman	City of Mt. Carmel	Wabash	Public
Sandra Irvine	City of Carmi	White	Public
Sarah Emery	Grayville CUSD #1	White, Edwards	K-12 Education
Sarah Mann	GWRPC	All	Public
Scott Merkle	Fairfield National Bank	Wayne	Private
Shana Holmes	SouthEastern Illinois Agency on Aging	Wabash	Non-Profit
Shirley McAdams	Village of Palestine	Crawford	Public
Steve McMahon	City of Albion	Edwards	Public
Suzie Moudy	Volunteer/Private	Edwards	citizen
Terry Beckerman	Maple Hill Restoration/Tourism Board	Wabash County	Private
Tim Buss	Wabash 348	Wabash	K-12 Education
Tom Dersch	Dersch Energy	Wabash County	Private
Tyler Funk	Bi-State Authority Airport	Lawrence	Non-Profit
Victoria Goad	Farm Bureau	Lawrence	Non-Profit
Wayne Henegar	HCI Consulting	Wabash	Private
Flo Simpson	Fairfield Area Development	Wayne	Public
Courtney Yockey	Richland County Development Corp.	Richland	Non-Profit
Charlotte St. Ledger	Fairfield Memorial Hospital	Wayne	Non-Profit
Bill Brian	Lawrence County Board	Lawrence	Public
Terry Bruce	IECC	ALL	Higher Education
Kara Kuykendall	GWRPC	ALL	Public

## Appendix B: Key Organizations

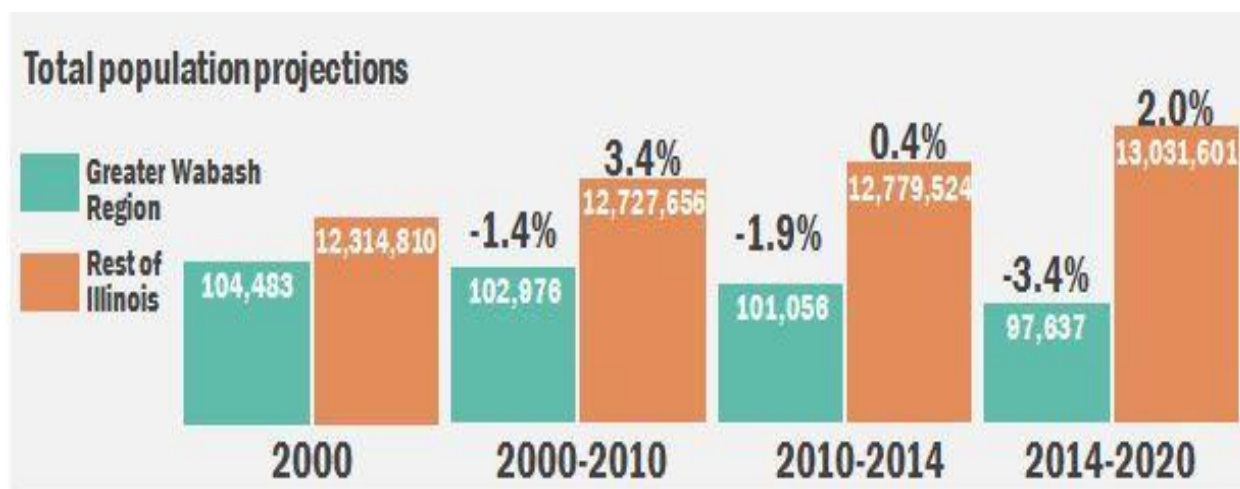
City of Albion, Edwards County  
City of Carmi, White County  
City of Grayville, White/Edwards County  
City of Lawrenceville, Lawrence County  
City of Mt. Carmel, Wabash County  
City of Olney, Richland County  
City of Robinson, Crawford County  
Crawford County Development Association  
Fairfield Memorial Hospital  
Fairfield National Bank  
Fairfield-Wayne County Area Economic Development Commission  
Greater Wabash Regional Planning Commission  
Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity  
Lawrence County Farm Bureau  
Lawrence County Industrial Development Council  
Local Workforce Innovation Area 23  
Mount Carmel Area Economic Alliance  
Palestine Development Association  
Richland County Development Corporation  
Southern 14 Workforce Investment Board  
The Illinois Eastern Community Colleges  
Village of Palestine, Crawford County  
Wayne County Farm Bureau  
White County Farm Bureau  
University of Illinois Extension



## Appendix C: Full Data Set

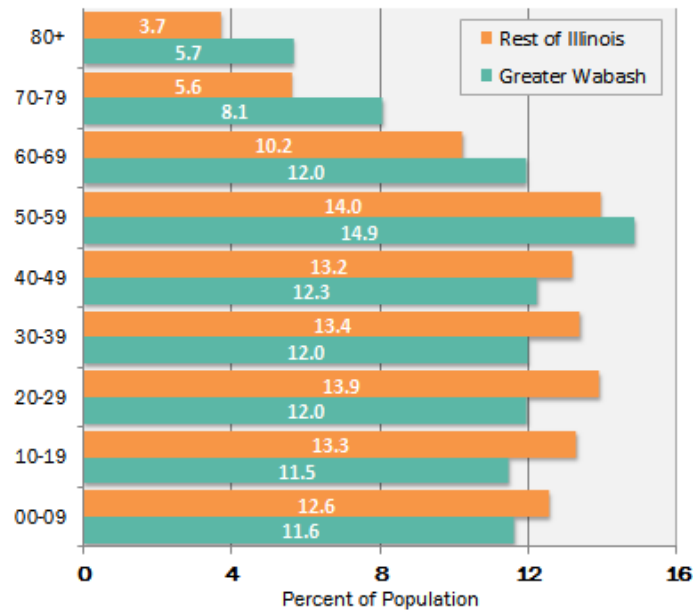
### REGIONAL DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

The economic region comprises seven southeast region counties, commonly referred to as the Greater Wabash Region, as it mirrors the Greater Wabash Regional Planning Commission's Economic Development District. The seven-county region (population: 101,976) is categorized as 59% rural with less than 1% of total square miles categorized as urban. County populations range from the smallest (Edwards: 6,721) to the largest (Crawford: 19,817) with all seven counties categorized as Non-Core. The region's population is both aging and declining. The Greater Wabash region population declined 3.3% from 2000-2014 and is projected to decline another 3.4% before the year 2020. In contrast, the State of Illinois' population increased by 3.8% from 2000-2014 and is projected to increase by 2.0% before the year 2020.

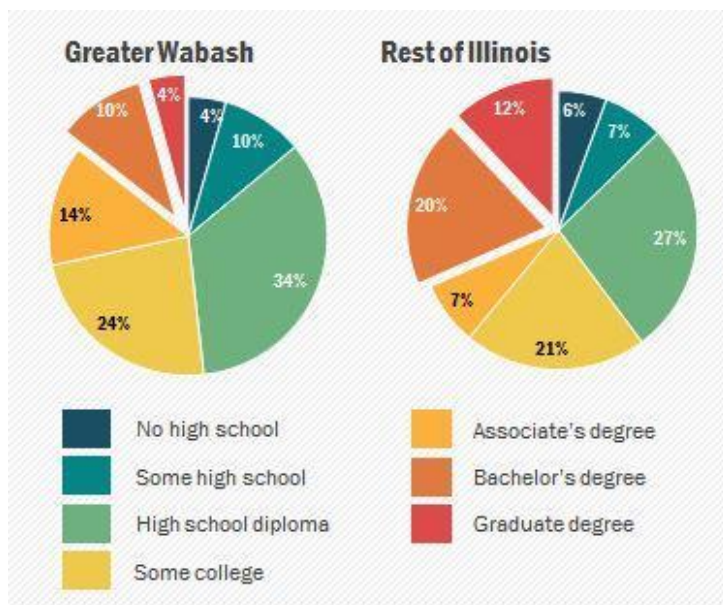


The region also has an aging population. In 2000, the region's population 40 years of age and over was 49.8% compared to the State at 41.4%. In 2014, the region's population over the age of 40 was 53% for the Greater Wabash Region and 46.7% for the State. Although, the State's population is aging at a faster rate than the Greater Wabash region, this region still has 6.3% more individuals 40 years of age or over when compared to the State. An aging population can be a cause for concern due to the fact that the number of people in the workforce declines (prime working age) and the youth population which would be needed in occupations to support the retiring baby-boomer generation is declining.

A visual presentation of the age distribution of the population

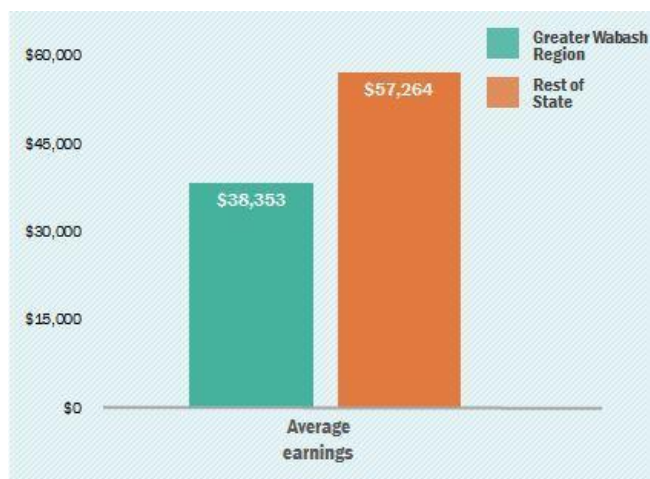


In the last ten years, the region has had a steady trend of increased total population in poverty (11.7% in 2003 to 15.8% in 2013) and the real median household income has stayed relatively stagnant over the last 10 years (\$43,001 in 2003 to \$43,820 in 2013). Of perhaps, utmost concern in the increase in the percentage of minors (ages 0-17) living in poverty, which increased from 16.5% in 2003 to 23.3% in 2013.



Within the Greater Wabash Region, 48% of the adult population has an educational attainment level of a high school diploma or less in comparison with 40% for the rest of the State. In contrast, only 14% of the adult population in the Greater Wabash Region has attained a bachelor's degree or higher compared to the State of Illinois which has 32% of adults with such degrees. The smaller percentage of residents with a bachelor's degree or higher, results in the Region having a greater percentage of residents with some college or an associate's degree at 38% in comparison with the State at 28%. The fact that the seven-county region does not house a University could be a contributor to the smaller percentage of residents having a bachelor's degree or higher. Despite the absence of a University, the region does have a strong community college system due to the presence of the four Illinois Eastern Community Colleges (Wabash Valley College, Frontier Community College, Lincoln Trail College, Olney Central College) and Southeastern Illinois College.

Patents are an important indicator of the level of innovation in the region. The region's patents per 1,000 jobs from 2000-2011 was 0.06 per 1,000 jobs while the State was at .47 patents per 1,000 jobs. From 2000-2011, 0.03 patents per 1,000 residents were issued in the Greater Wabash region whereas there were 0.27 patents per 1,000 residents in the State. This data suggests that the region may be lacking resources to support entrepreneurs and might not be able to provide new businesses with the business support services needed for successful growth.



The region's unemployment rate has historically been higher than both the State and the United State average. Per county unemployment rates, not seasonally adjusted for May 2016 ranged from 5.5% in Edwards County to 8.5% in Wayne County for an average of 6.6% for the seven-county region in comparison with the State of Illinois at 5.6% and the United States at 4.5%.

One of the main areas of concern for the Region is the Earnings per Worker. In 2014, the average earning per worker for the State was \$57,264 while the region had an average earnings per worker rate of \$38,353, which is about 66% of the State average. While the region may have a lower cost of living, the lower earnings per worker rate may be contributing to population loss as the youth population looks elsewhere for employment in search of higher paying jobs.

Analysis of the region's labor force for 2013 indicates there were 9,968 in-commuters (those working in the region by living outside the region), 22,223 out-commuters (those living in the region but working outside the region) and 23,137 who both lived and worked in the region. Of the 33,105 jobs in the region, 69.9% are held by residents who both work and live in the region. In contrast, 49.0% of the region's labor force is employed outside the region, leaving 51.0% as both living and working in the region. While out-commuters bring dollars back into the region, this begs the question as to why they are employed outside the region. Is there a lack of jobs in the region for these workers? Is there a skills mismatch with jobs available compared to education and/or skill level? Also, why do the 9,968 workers who commute into the region not live here? Is this a quality of life issue?

## Journey to Work



### REGIONAL ECONOMIC DATA

An analysis of the region's establishments (a physical business location) over the period from 2000 to 2011 indicates that 5,792 new establishments were launched. 4,723 establishments closed during the same period, for a net positive change of 17.6% including a net positive of 54 (number of establishments leaving vs the number moving into the region).

Analysis of the region's establishments by company stages for 2011 indicated that 37.1% of the SET Region's 7,510 establishments were defined as Stage 0 – Self Employed, up from 32.7% of total establishments of 6,387 in the year 2000 for an overall growth of 697 Stage 0 establishments over the period from 2000 to 2011. Stage 1 companies, defined as those with 2 to 9 employees comprised an additional 52.7% of total establishments, indicating that 89.8% of total SET Region establishments have less than 10 employees, up from 87.2% in the year 2000. Slightly less than 10% (9.5%) of total establishments had 10 to 99 employees (Stage 2) in the year 2011, down from 11.9% in 2000. The remaining 0.7% of 2011 establishments had 100 or more employees, down from 0.9% in 2000.

Number of Establishments by Company Stages				
	2000		2011	
Stage	Establishments	Proportion	Establishments	Proportion
Stage 0	2,087	32.7%	2,784	37.1%
Stage 1	3,478	54.5%	3,961	52.7%
Stage 2	761	11.9%	711	9.5%
Stage 3	53	0.8%	46	0.6%
Stage 4	8	0.1%	8	0.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,387</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>7,510</b>	<b>100%</b>

Analysis of the region's jobs by company stages for 2011 in comparison with 2000, indicates that the SET Region lost 724 jobs over the period for a -2% change in total jobs. The most significant loss occurred in Stage 3 (100-499 employees) which declined by 18% over the period for a loss of 1,855 jobs, while Stage 0 – Self Employed grew by 33% over the same period increasing the number of jobs/establishments by 697. Stage 4 (500+ employees) establishments also grew by 8% or 411 jobs over the period.

## Establishments

Number of Jobs by Company Stages			
Year	2001	2011	% Change
Stage 0	2,087	2,784	33%
Stage 1	12,043	12,644	5%
Stage 2	18,100	17,522	-3%
Stage 3	10,304	8,449	-18%
Stage 4	5,259	5,670	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>47,793</b>	<b>47,069</b>	<b>-2%</b>

Analysis of sales by company stages indicated that the SET Region lost sales in all five company stages for an overall % change of – 29% for an overall loss in dollars of 1.9 billion over the period from 2000 to 2011.

This establishment data suggests the need to continue to support the large employers while seeking to identify additional resources to support the growing number of small businesses and entrepreneurs in the Region.

As outlined in the reports provided by the Purdue Center for Regional Development, top industry sector employment growth occurred over the period from 2009 to 2014 in the following NAICS sectors ranging from 116% to 5% in the following categories, respectively: Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services; Real Estate and Rental and Leasing; Finance and Insurance; Management of Companies and Enterprises; Arts, Entertainment and Recreation; Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction; and Professional, Scientific and Technical Services.

In contrast, top industry sector employment declined over the period from 2008 to 2013 in the following NAICS sectors ranging from -24% to -4% in the following categories, respectively: Utilities; Educational Services; Information; Construction; Retail Trade; Transportation and Warehousing; Other Services; and Government. In the industry sector reports, growth and decline within the SET Region's employment sectors did not closely mirror percentage changes experienced by the State of Illinois, resulting in either dramatic growth in comparison with the State or negative growth in sectors the State was experiencing positive growth rates.

The Regional Requirements Report provided by the Purdue Center for Regional Development suggests the SET Region is experiencing leakages throughout its Industry Clusters as the chart assesses a dollar value to requirements being satisfied within the region and outside the region. This chart suggests the need to identify opportunities for import substitution to fill gaps currently being satisfied outside the region.

The top five occupations in 2014 as reported were: Management Occupations (13.5%); Office and Administrative Support Occupations (10.6%); Sales and Related Occupations (10.2%); Production Occupations (8.3%); and Transportation and Material Moving Occupations (7.9%).

Within STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Math), the SET Region experienced negative growth in jobs of -1% while the rest of the State of Illinois experienced positive growth in jobs of 5% over the period from 2009 to 2014.

As outlined in the Industry Cluster Analysis Report provided to the SET Team by the Purdue Center for Regional Development, the primary industry clusters supporting the region were as follows:

MATURE (concentrated in the region but experiencing negative growth)

- Transportation Equipment Manufacturing (5.07 LQ, 2,199 J)
- Energy – Fossil & Renewable (3.46 LQ, 9,253 J)
- Manufacturing Supercluster (1.9 LQ, 3,184 J)
- Transportation & Logistics (1.15 LQ, 1,799 J)
- Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing (1.14 LQ, 458 J)
- Machinery Manufacturing (1.14 LQ, 371 J)

STAR (concentrated in the region and experiencing positive growth)

- Agribusiness, Food Processing & Technology (3.31 LQ, 4,847 J)
- Advanced Materials (1.86 LQ, 2,740 J)
- Mining (1.02 LQ, 151 J)

EMERGING (under-represented in the region but experiencing positive growth)

- Forest & Wood Products (0.66 LQ, 469 J)
- Business & Financial Services (0.52 LQ, 3,420 J)
- Computer & Electronic Products Manufacturing (0.50, 147 J)
- Arts, Entertainment, Recreation & Visitors Industries (0.44 LQ, 833 J)
- Information Technology & Telecommunications (0.35 LQ, 685 J)

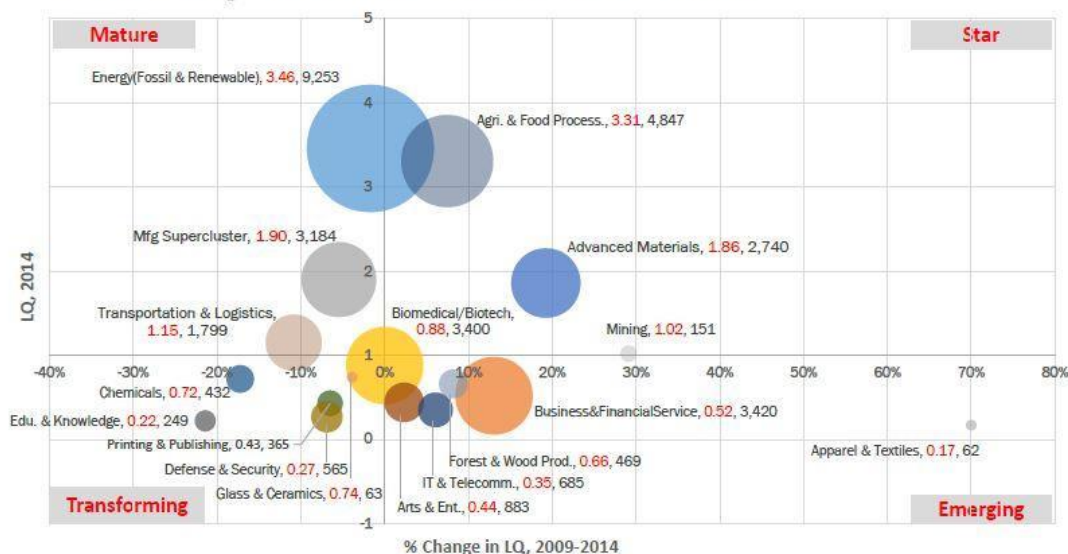
TRANSFORMING (under-represented in the region and experiencing negative growth)

- Biomedical/Biotechnical (0.88 LQ, 3,400 J)
- Glass & Ceramics (0.74 LQ, 63 J)
- Chemicals (0.72 LQ, 432 J)
- Printing & Publishing (0.43 LQ, 365 J)
- Defense & Security (0.27 LQ, 565 J)
- Education & Knowledge Creation (0.22 LQ, 249 J)

*LQ is defined as the Location Quotient – a calculation that demonstrates how concentrated (or specialized) a particular industry is in the region as compared to the nation. A LQ of 1 indicates no concentration or specialization. A LQ of less than 1 means the region has less concentration or specialization as compared to the nation. A LQ greater than 1 means the region has a greater concentration or specialization as compared to the nation.*

*J represents the number of total jobs (full and part-time jobs by place of work) in the cluster in the region.*

## Industry cluster bubble chart



As outlined in the documentation provided in conjunction with the Industry Cluster Analysis, the six mature industry clusters, while relatively concentrated were trending downward, so the SET Region might find it worthwhile to invest in efforts to “shore up” the concentration of these industries. This is particularly important for heavily specialized industries, such as Transportation Equipment Manufacturing, which is 5 times more concentrated as compared to the nation. Within the SET



Regions' three Star Industry Clusters, Agribusiness, Food Processing & Technology is experiencing growth, in addition to being times more concentrated in the region as compared to the nation.

As outlined in the Industry Cluster Analysis, within the SET Regions' three Star Industry Clusters - Agribusiness, Food Processing & Technology is experiencing growth, in addition to being 3 times more concentrated in the region as compared to the nation. The SET Region also has six mature industry clusters, which were also relatively concentrated in the Region. For example, Transportation Equipment Manufacturing is 5 times more specialized in the Region as compared to the nation. While the mature industry clusters are trending downward, in effect experiencing negative growth; given their relative concentration in the Region, it is important to explore opportunities to "shore up" the concentration of these industries within the Region.

Within the industry clusters that the SET Region has less specialization, industries that are also experiencing negative growth suggests that any transformation of the industry would require a substantial investment of monies and resources. The SET Region's six emerging clusters, while not heavily concentrated are poised for future growth and should, therefore, be deemed "emerging opportunities."

After evaluation of the SET Region's Industry Cluster Analysis, the Team selected seven target industry clusters for a deeper exploration. The seven industries selected included a mix of star, emerging and mature industries. The target industry clusters selected were: Agribusiness, Food Processing & Technology (Star); Advanced Materials (Star); Information Technology & Telecommunications (Emerging); Arts, Entertainment, Recreation & Visitor Industries (Emerging); Transportation & Logistics (Mature); Transportation Equipment Manufacturing (Mature); and Energy (Mature).

After thorough analysis of the Industry Cluster reports, it was determined that base level resources were needed prior to targeting the existing Star and Mature Industry Clusters for further growth and development. The base level resources identified include: addressing the employability issues of the region's labor force; identifying resources to support traditional business retention and expansion efforts; and developing capacity within the region to support the creation of small businesses and entrepreneurs.

With this in mind, the SET Team did identify one Emerging Industry Cluster that they felt they had significant capacity to begin addressing by working and thinking regionally. While not a significant Industry Cluster for the Region, the Arts, Entertainment, Recreation & Visitor Industries was currently supporting 833 jobs with a Location Quotient of 0.44. Prior to SET, the Region's communities and counties focused solely on their individual resources that supported the industry. However, as they came together as a regional team, this Emerging Cluster, though still under-represented in the region, appeared as an opportunity to work together toward the development of a regional marketing plan that would support their combined assets and perhaps provide further opportunities for growth and development within the sector.



## Appendix E- Full Goal Charts

<b>Goal 1</b> <b>STRATEGY 1- Fill open employment positions in the region and reduce population loss among youth by giving the region's K-12 students the tools, knowledge, and a plan necessary for successful employability upon high school graduation.</b>				
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Key Contact</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Measurements</b>
Hold a regional Business/Education symposium	Sarah Mann, GWRPC	Fall 2016	GWRPC-and SET sub-committee	Hold an educational event that is attended by the region's major employers, K-12 Superintendents, Community colleges, workforce representatives (Workforce boards and State workforce), elected officials and economic development directors
Create Partners in Education Group (PIE)	David Savage, GWRPC	December 2016- after symposium	GWRPC-SET sub-committee	Create a group that is a consortium of K-12 Superintendents/Guidance/Teachers, Community Colleges, businesses, workforce development and economic development), and college students for each of the community college areas (5) that meets quarterly.
Develop opportunities for tours/internships/job shadowing between K-12 and the business community by 2017-2018 school year	PIE Group- David Savage, GWRPC	2017-2019	PIE Group	Hold Manufacturer's Day events in the region, hold tours of business facilities, establish connections between schools and businesses and keep track of the number of students who participate, collaboration with local workforce boards and place students with employers

Educate the Jr./ Sr. High School students on employment possibilities in the region	Matt Fowler, Wabash Valley College/ David Savage, GWRPC	Spring 2018	PIE Group, College Students, Past CEO Students, Employers, IDES	Create videos and marketing materials of the region's employers and jobs available in the region. Use videos, brochures, speakers, field trips/tours, and social media to educate youth. Keep track of the number of local high school guidance counselors who disseminate information. Organize the region's job listings so open jobs are easily found. Host events with Illinois Department of Employment Security to market free services provided through the State to employers and job seekers.
Explore ACT Career Readiness Certificates and the ACT Work Ready Communities program	Sarah Mann, GWRPC	2018	PIE Group	Establish ACT Career Readiness certificates/Work Ready Communities (WRC) programs
Build upon existing or Implement Work Ethic (soft skills) programs in the region's high schools (i.e. World Class Workforce; DOL Skills to Pay the Bills)	David Savage, GWRPC	2018	PIE Group	Establish work ethic (soft skills) programs within the region's high schools that is taught as part of the core curriculum to all students
Research and implement a Leadership program in the region's K-12 schools by 2017-2018. (i.e. Leader in Me, Character counts, Bring your A game, Choices, 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership)	David Savage, GWRPC	2018	PIE Group	Implement a leadership program within K-12 schools
Create career and technical certificates that the region's high school students can earn upon completion of the program	Jay Edgren and Matt Fowler, IECC	Fall 2019	Community Colleges	Implement college certificate programs in high schools

<b>Goal 2</b> <b>Strategy- Form a regional Business Support Group and visit regional employers to conduct interviews and aggregate data</b>				
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Key Contact</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Measurements</b>
Form a Business Support Group (BSG)	2016	Sarah Mann, GWRPC & Courtney Yockey, RCDC	Greater Wabash Regional Planning Commission, Economic Development Organizations, State of Illinois DCEO regional team representatives, State of Illinois Regional workforce representative	Identify communities/counties throughout the region that currently do or do not have a BR&E program. Identify what resources or organizations are available to perform retention visits. Obtain buy-in as necessary and assign responsibility to specific organizations that will be performing BR&E visits in each county. Meet semi-annually to gather data, strategize techniques and coordinate efforts.
Participate in the C.O.R.E. initiative sponsored by major Illinois utilities Ameren-Illinois, ComEd; Illinois agencies, EDA and DCEO	First half of 2017	Sarah Mann, GWRPC & Courtney Yockey, RCDC	BSG (Business Support Group)	Obtain a Synchronist System license through Ameren Illinois issued to GWRPC, with intent to customize industry modules, obtain access to reports and data sets. Use the specific set of survey questions provided through C.O.R.E. / Synchronist System. Perform a set number of business visits per county and enter into the Synchronist system.
Publish aggregate data on an annual basis through organizational reports, economic development organizations' websites and media outlets	2018	Sarah Mann, GWRPC	Greater Wabash Regional Planning Commission	Publish reports on an annual basis with data generated from the Synchronist software.

<b>Goal 3- Strategy- Create a support system including programs and resources for entrepreneurs within the region</b>				
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Key Contact</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Measurements</b>
Create an entrepreneurship plan for the region	2017-2018	Sarah Mann, GWRPC	GWRPC, Community Colleges, Business Support Group	Create a sustainable plan for the region's entrepreneurs Including a staffing plan to provide support for business planning as well as "life after the ribbon cutting". Create advertising/awareness program to lure and funnel entrepreneurs into the system. Identify groups of businesses in the region that can also provide support & advice to entrepreneurs. Create a funding model for the plan (i.e. self-sustaining model)
Collaborate with the education community to deliver entrepreneurship programming	2017-2018	U of I Extension-Community Economic Development	GWRPC, U of I Extension, Community Colleges, ED Directors	Create entrepreneurial groups and host educational sessions for current or prospective entrepreneurs within the groups. Measures include: # of members in the groups, # of educational sessions hosted, # of new business start-ups as a result of sessions. Build off the existing youth entrepreneurship initiatives in the region to create an adult initiative.
Partner with the Business Support Group and PIE group to identify opportunities for new business endeavors	2018	Business Support Group-Courtney Yockey, RCDC	GWRPC, PIE Group, BSG Group	Solve business issues, create businesses, and retain businesses by utilizing the support system of the BSG group and the PIE group. Explore new options for business in the region such as Cooperatives.
Create a community support group for entrepreneurs	2019	Sarah Mann, GWRPC	GWRPC, PIE Group, BSG Group	Utilize the connections in the PIE group and the BSG group to create a network of business professions who will serve as community support volunteers to assist new business start-ups with questions related to their business. # of volunteers in the group and # of referrals to volunteers.

**Goal 4-****Strategy- Improve the Quality of Life and Quality of Place in the region for future generations**

Strategy	Timeline	Key Contacts	Responsible Party	Measurements
Identify key contacts in each county/ community in the region	2017	Sarah Mann, GWRPC	GWRPC, ED Directors, Chambers	Create a list of key individuals that would be beneficial in the regional "Quality of Life and Place" Team (i.e. Chambers, tourism bureaus, individual city groups, colleges, faith-based groups, member businesses)
Create a team of regional Chambers and key contacts (Chamber Group)	2017	David Savage, GWRPC	GWRPC	Create a group of Chamber Directors and tourism professionals (Quality of Life and Place Team) from all 7 counties that meets at least semi-annually
Identify infrastructure needs (Water, sewer, transportation, broadband, medical, tourism/recreation assets needed to complement visitors' and residents' leisure experiences, etc.)	Ongoing -2022	Sarah Mann, GWRPC	GWRPC	Create a list of current assets and needs
Provide support to communities in need of infrastructure improvements	Ongoing- 2022	Sarah Mann, GWRPC	GWRPC	Increase the number of funding awards received to help provide infrastructure to communities to support residents and businesses, collaborations between communities to provide joint infrastructure projects
Develop a regional marketing plan and create destination experiences that attracts visitors to the region	Ongoing- 2022	Sarah Mann, GWRPC	Quality of Life Team	Create Regional Plan. Establish events that draw outside tourists to the region (increase in hotel/motel taxes)

## Acronyms

SET- Stronger Economies Together

GWRPC - Greater Wabash Regional Planning Commission

IECC - Illinois Eastern Community College

DCEO - Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity

BR & E – Business Retention and Expansion

HQP - High Quality Plan

CARE - Creation, Attraction, Retention, Expansion

PIE - Partners in Education

CORE - Creating Opportunities for Expansion and Retention

LWIA 23 - Local Workforce Innovation Area 23

WADI - Wabash Area Development Inc.

K-12 - Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade

BSG - Business Support Group

EDA - U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration

IDES – Illinois Department of Employment Security

LQ – Location Quotient