



Executive Summary: Owen County Chamber and EDC

This executive summary proposes the formation of an Economic Development District (EDD) encompassing Owen County, Monroe County, and Brown County in Indiana. The amalgamation of these counties into a unified entity presents numerous advantages across various key sectors including workforce migration, trails and nature connections, industry patterns, arts and culture, and transportation corridors.

Workforce Migration:

Pooling resources and workforce talent from Owen, Monroe, and Brown counties would create a more robust and diversified labor pool. This increased talent pool would attract businesses seeking skilled workers and foster innovation through knowledge sharing and collaboration. Workforce migration data from these three counties further demonstrate the existing regional industry synergy.

Trails and Nature Connections:

The region boasts a rich natural landscape with numerous trails and outdoor recreational opportunities. McCormick's Creek - Indiana's first State Park, Monroe Reservoir – 10,750 acres of surface water, and Brown County State Park – Indiana's largest park are just a few examples of the natural beauty that draws visitors to this region. These counties also are proactive in completing a joined trail system that would connect all three counties. By joining forces, the EDD can leverage these natural assets to promote eco-tourism, outdoor recreation, and sustainable development. This would not only enhance the quality of life for residents but also attract visitors and businesses seeking a vibrant natural environment.

Industry Patterns:

Each county brings unique industry strengths to the table, ranging from agriculture and manufacturing to technology and healthcare. By forming an EDD, these diverse industries can synergize, creating a more resilient and adaptive economic ecosystem. Some of the cluster industries in this region include medical device innovation, information and communication technology, tourism and hospitality, and advanced manufacturing. Continued collaboration can lead to the development of specialized clusters, fostering innovation and competitiveness on a regional scale.

Arts and Culture:

The cultural heritage and artistic communities in Owen, Monroe, and Brown counties are significant contributors to the region's identity and attractiveness. The Brown County artist colony established by T.C. Steele in 1907 along with the new Brown County Music Center provide exceptional entertainment and feature Indiana's best artists. The Ezkenazi Art Museum located on the campus of Indiana University lets guests discover treasures from around the globe. Monroe County also hosts the nationally recognized Indiana Limestone Symposium. By aligning cultural initiatives and supporting artistic endeavors, the EDD can amplify the region's cultural appeal, drawing tourists, businesses, and residents alike. This would not only stimulate economic growth but also enrich the cultural fabric of the region.

Transportation Corridors:

Strategic transportation planning is crucial for facilitating commerce, connectivity, and accessibility within the EDD. New housing, and industry continue to select the Highway 46 corridor as their anchor location and the completion of Interstate 69 will continue to connect this region to the rest of the nation. These connections will draw more visitors and coordinate further transportation infrastructure development across county lines. The EDD can optimize logistical efficiency, reduce congestion, and improve connectivity to regional markets. This would enhance the region's attractiveness for businesses looking to establish or expand operations.

In conclusion, the formation of an Economic Development District encompassing Owen, Monroe, and Brown counties presents a compelling opportunity to leverage the collective strengths of each county for mutual benefit. By fostering collaboration across workforce migration, trails and nature connections, industry patterns, arts and culture, and transportation corridors, the EDD can drive sustainable economic growth, enhance quality of life, and position the region as a competitive and vibrant destination for residents, businesses, and visitors alike.