



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Dave Wellman
Communications Manager
219-644-3506
dwellman@rda.in.gov

Lake County Convention Center Study Released

A new convention center would create hundreds of jobs in Lake County and provide a big, ongoing boost to the local economy.

CROWN POINT, IN (July 10, 2018) – A new convention center in Lake County would inject nearly \$400 million into the local economy over the next 20 years, according to a new study presented today to Lake County officials. Such a facility would also create over 700 full-time, part-time and temporary construction jobs, and boost local and state tax revenues by more than \$44 million over the same time frame.

“That \$400 million is a conservative figure,” notes Bill Hanna, President and CEO of the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority (RDA), which funded the study at the request of Lake County. “It only counts direct spending by people coming from outside Lake County to attend conventions and events here. Once that money gets into the pockets of local businesses and employees, it will be spent again and again and drive millions of dollars in further economic activity.”

“This study makes it clear that a Lake County convention center is a great opportunity to create jobs and drive economic development,” says Randy Palmateer, Lake County’s representative on the RDA’s Board of Directors. “Leadership in Lake County showed real vision is commissioning this report and I am confident it will foster discussion and positive action as we move ahead.”

The study, conducted by hospitality consulting firm CSL, envisions a 145,000-square-foot convention center in Lake County, roughly half of which would be space for events, meetings

and banquets. This would include a 40,000-square-foot sub-dividable main space, a 17,000-square-foot ballroom and 13,000 square feet of meeting space.

For comparison purposes, the Radisson at Star Plaza in Merrillville had, prior to demolition, 30,000 square feet of event space.

According to the study, such a convention center would require an adjacent hotel with at least 225 rooms and another 400 to 450 hotel rooms in close proximity.

“We are pleased with the results of the study. The South Shore CVA has been touting the need for a convention center for two decades and the idea that this is both economically and fiscally viable is gratifying. Large state and regional conventions, pouring millions of dollars into the economy each year, would return and we would have another great attraction to be proud of,” said Speros A. Batistatos, President and CEO of the South Shore Convention and Visitors Authority.

Nine potential locations are presented in the study, including sites in Munster, Hammond, Gary, Merrillville, Hobart and Crown Point. The study also examines the county’s options for funding the construction, operations and maintenance of the convention center, as well as the expected annual revenues from events, estimated number and size of events and much more. A full copy of the study can be downloaded here:

<https://www.in.gov/rda/files/nwi-convention-center-study%20Report.pdf>

* * *

About the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority

Established in 2005 through a bipartisan effort including former Governor Mitchell E. Daniels, Congressman Peter J. Visclosky, key state legislators, and local elected officials, the RDA is quasi-governmental development entity entrusted to make public investment decisions within a regional framework for supporting catalytic infrastructure projects and inducing private sector investment. Years of successful results have made it a trusted and tested partner for growth in Northwest Indiana. For more information, visit www.rdatransformation.com or www.in.gov/rda