



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Contact:** Dave Wellman  
Communications Manager  
219-644-3506  
[dwellman@rda.in.gov](mailto:dwellman@rda.in.gov)

# RDA Board Approves \$13.5 Million in Grants and Loans

*Buffington Harbor access road improvements, brownfield loan funds and economic development incentives approved in actions taken today.*

Crown Point, IN (June 17, 2015) – The Board of Directors of the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority today approved roughly \$13.5 million in matching grants and loans to support more than \$160 million in infrastructure and economic development projects in Northwest Indiana.

“We’ve had some things on hold since the beginning of the year,” says RDA President and CEO Bill Hanna. “There were significant questions about our future funding going into the last session of the General Assembly and the board thought it best to adopt a ‘wait and see’ attitude before committing to anything beyond what we had already committed to. Now that the RDA has received fresh funding and direction from the legislature, we want to move forward as expeditiously as possible so these projects can get started and begin delivering benefits to the region.”

Actions taken today by the RDA Board include:

- Approval of a \$7.456 million matching grant for the City of Gary for access road improvements at Buffington Harbor. This grant is contingent on final funding commitments from the Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC), which has pledged \$2.3 million, and Gary, which has promised a \$3.5 million contribution.

This project will expand the newly constructed Gary Marina Access Road (Buffington Harbor Drive) to include an additional travel lane that provides direct access to industrial sites near the

## GRANTS ADD 1

Gary/Chicago International Airport and the lakefront from Cline Avenue. This will allow industrial traffic to be separated from Majestic Star Casino traffic and enhance economic development efforts at the airport.

- Authorized use of the RDA's No Interest Securitized Forgivable Loan Program (a.k.a. the Deal-Closing Fund) for two pending economic development projects in Northwest Indiana. The RDA agreed to provide:
  - \$2.5 million to support a potential \$110 million investment in Hobart that would create approximately 600 full and part-time jobs, and
  - \$3.5 million for a proposed \$35.6 million investment in East Chicago that would relocate about 250 jobs to the region and create an additional 100 new jobs over the next three years.

Ongoing negotiations between the companies involved, the IEDC and local officials preclude releasing further details of these projects at this time. RDA funds will only be used if the projects are finalized. These projects represent the final uses of the No Interest Securitized Forgivable Loan Program, which permanently sunsets July 1 by order of the Indiana General Assembly.

- Agreed to partner with Purdue and the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) to pursue federal funds under the new NOAA Regional Coastal Resilience Grants Program. The RDA will provide \$150,000, and Purdue and NIRPC \$50,000 each, to access \$500,000 in additional federal funding under the program.

The coastal resilience grants program will support regional (Lake, Porter and La Porte counties) approaches to activities that build resilience of coastal regions, communities, and economic sectors to the negative impacts from extreme weather events, climate hazards, changing lakefront conditions, and the vulnerability/climate protection of the South Shore train and Gary Airport.

- Approved the first loan from the Brownfield Revolving Loan Fund in the amount of \$400,000 for the City of Gary for asbestos abatement at the Ambassador Apartments. Part of a \$1.7 million demolition project, this effort will transform a dangerous, abandoned apartment building in the Horace Mann neighborhood into a vibrant green space with mixed-use development potential. The projects planned completion date is February 2016.



## GRANTS ADD 2

The loan fund is managed by the Northwest Indiana Brownfield Coalition (NWIBC). The Coalition and Loan Committee include the cities of East Chicago, Hammond, Gary, and also NIRPC, the Indiana Department of Environmental Management, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the RDA. The NWIBC Loan Committee, on June 12, voted to approve the application. The loan term is five years with 0% interest charged as long as the loan is fully repaid within that time.

- Finally, the Board of Directors approved an amount not to exceed \$450,000 to update the RDA's Comprehensive Strategic Plan as required by legislation passed in the 2015 Indiana General Assembly. The update is a prerequisite to RDA receiving \$6 million annually from the state for construction of the West Lake Corridor.

Because of this need to closely integrate the planning of transit-oriented development (TOD) side-by-side with the planning of rail construction and financing, the update will include both the West Lake and TOD planning elements. The update, to be done by Policy Analytics, LLC and American Structurepoint, will be completed by April 2016.

\* \* \*

### **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](http://www.rdatransformation.com) or [www.in.gov/rda](http://www.in.gov/rda)