

# Mayor Greg Goodnight City of Kokomo

[cityofkokomo.org](http://cityofkokomo.org)

October 20, 2011 – Indiana Main Street Conference



# The Past

- December 2008 **Forbes Magazine**-Kokomo one of "America's Fastest-Dying Towns"
- By December 2010-businesses pledge new investments of more than \$1.4 billion dollars



PHOTOS: STEVE HARGREAVES/CNNMONEY.COM

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# Top Priority

Making municipal government more efficient and cost-effective was a top priority. Each department found ways to streamline services and cut costs. This allowed us to invest more in capital improvements and become, in the words of CNN Money, a “town back from the brink.” Decreasing overall city spending while increasing capital outlay is a short-term sacrifice to set the stage for the long-term success of our community.



# Downtown Revitalization

- Added 22 ½ miles of bike routes and 7 more miles of bike lanes
- Removed 11 traffic lights, 1300 street signs, and over 400 parking meters
- Added decorative 4-way stop signs
- Added 44 pedestrian bump-outs
- Converted one-way streets to two-way
- Added gateway improvements - including sculptures, decorative lighting on East Sycamore and landscaping on North Washington



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# Downtown Revitalization

- Splash Pad added to Kokomo Beach Aquatic Center
- Walk of Excellence improved
- Added Industrial Heritage Trail
- Foster Park Arts Pavilion provided free concerts
- Updated athletic courts energy-efficient lighting
- Installed 20 rain garden storm water planters



# Community Developments

- Launched the City's new trolley/bus system, providing free public transit; over 800 riders use the system daily, compared to the 100 daily expected by consultants



# Business Assistance

## Incentive Packages

- Revolving Loan Funds
  - USDA Funds
  - EDA Funds
- Kokomo TIF District
- Downtown Loan Pool
- Riverfront District
- Tax Abatements



# Business Assistance

During the economic recession the city created the Reach Higher Business Assistance Program using the Economic Development Income Tax.

- Reach Higher
  - Downtown Façade
  - Forgivable Marketing Loan
  - One Step Up - Educational Grant
- Initiatives required matching private investment



# Results

- Revitalization of downtown has resulted in seventeen new businesses opening downtown
- Overall, Kokomo's new and creative economic development programs have led to new jobs and more than \$1.4 billion of new investment
- An improvement in the city's Standard & Poor's bond rating to a state-best AA+



# Leveraging Resources

- Utilized Economic Development Income Tax for creative and unique economic development programs
- Aggressively pursued alternative funding sources
- Forged strong partnerships for maximum efficiency
  - Novia Care Clinic in partnership with Howard County and Taylor Community School
- Engaged many volunteers



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# Awards and Recognition

City and partnership efforts have been awarded:

- IACT 2010 Community Achievement Award
- Indiana Main Street Association
  - Design of Downtown Public Improvements
  - Community Impact Award
  - Outstanding Board Member
- Harvard University's "Bright Ideas"
- National Softball Association's "Most Outstanding Park"
- Forbes Magazine's "Best Places to Live Cheaply"



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# Marcus on Kokomo's Downtown



“ The City of Firsts is being transformed into The City of Color. Flowers bloom in baskets hung from decorative light poles. New planting areas have been created at street corners. Modern sculptures catch the attention of drivers and pedestrians ...

# Marcus On Kokomo's Downtown

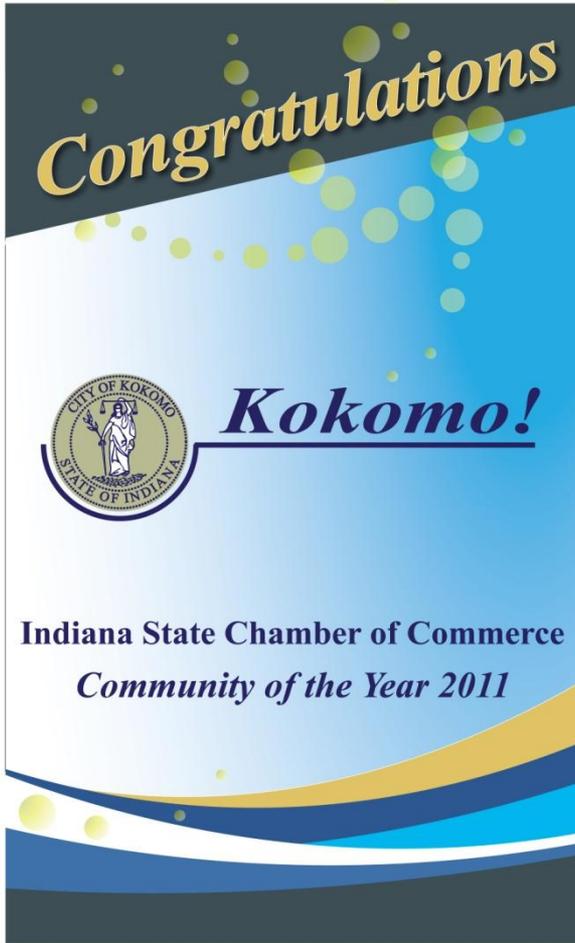
“ Many traffic lights have been replaced by stop signs which facilitate movement. Some one-way streets are now two-way passages, slowing traffic so motorists can see the many changes being made to local shops.”



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# The Present



**And...**

**Kokomo named  
2011 Indiana State  
Chamber of Commerce  
Community of the Year**

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# Thank You

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