

**Press Release**

For Immediate Release:

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## **State Officials Designate Southeast Indiana as 21st Century Talent Region**

**COLUMBUS, Ind.** (August 2, 2019) – Indiana Secretary of Career Connections and Talent Blair Milo and Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC) President Elaine Bedel will join southeast Indiana officials today to announce the [EcO Network of Southeast Indiana](#) as the state’s second [21st Century Talent Region](#), a statewide designation awarded to Indiana communities focused on working collaboratively to attract, develop and connect talent.

“The EcO Network Partner Communities have been working diligently to cultivate the collaborative partnerships necessary for regional development and growth in southeast Indiana,” said Secretary Milo. “Their collective leadership has been inspirational and will be key to helping grow the population, increase educational attainment, and raise household income for the region.”

In partnership with the Office of Career Connections and Talent, the IEDC and [with technical assistance from CivicLab](#), the 21st Century Talent Region initiative encourages local governments, businesses, educational institutions, nonprofits, and economic and workforce development partners to create and implement a plan to increase educational attainment, raise household income and grow the population in a region. By taking a comprehensive, systems approach, participating regions will identify strategic priorities and projects aimed at helping its communities create a better quality of place, develop and skill up its workforce, and connect talented Hoosiers with businesses seeking to fill high-demand, high-wage jobs.

“Ensuring a sustainable pipeline of talent to support our region’s critical industry sectors requires a systems approach to cross-sector collaboration that links the learning system with economic opportunity in the places we call home in southeast Indiana,” said Kathy Oren, executive director of Community Education Coalition. “Our region has established a long history of effective collaboration, and we are excited to continue this collaborative work through shared strategies to attract, develop and connect talent in our region.”

During an event at Columbus City Hall, Secretary Milo and Bedel will present Columbus Mayor James Lienhoop, Seymour Mayor Craig Luedeman and representatives from the EcO Network with the official 21st Century Talent Region designation. The EcO Network of Southeast Indiana represents Batesville, Columbus, Greensburg, North Vernon, Rising Sun and Seymour, and is the largest initiative under the Community Education Coalition.

"We have the opportunity to leverage this terrific 21st Century Talent Region designation from the State of Indiana to ensure that all talent in our communities and region will come together to make our communities even more vibrant and more welcoming – where today’s and tomorrow’s leaders from business, education, and community are working together to improve the human condition," said Srikanth Padmanabhan, vice president of Cummins Inc. and president of Cummins Engine Business.

Spearheaded by the Columbus Area Economic Growth Council (CAEGC), the region identified key priorities through the 21st Century Talent Region initiative, including:

- Completing goal setting for regional talent attraction and connection numbers by the end of 2019;
- Building out talent dashboards for at least all partner communities by the end of 2019; and
- Identifying the shared talent attraction, development, and connection strategies around which the region can build communities of practice in southeast Indiana.

“As our state’s economy continues to flourish, Indiana is committed to attracting and cultivating a diverse and talented workforce that is ready to fill the jobs of tomorrow,” said Bedel. “Through the 21st Century Talent Regions initiative, Indiana is building on regional collaboration efforts occurring throughout the state, encouraging communities to work together to identify and invest in transformative projects focused on quality of place and talent attraction. We’re excited to see the southeast Indiana region move forward with its strategic plan and partner with leaders from the business, academic and civic community to transform their region into a destination for talent.”

For more information on how to receive the designation, visit [in.gov/cct/21CTR.htm](http://in.gov/cct/21CTR.htm) or contact the Office of Career Connections and Talent at [secretary@cct.in.gov](mailto:secretary@cct.in.gov) to communicate your interest and discuss next steps.

#### **About the Office of Career Connections and Talent**

*As part of his Next Level Indiana Agenda, Governor Eric J. Holcomb established the Secretary of Career Connections and Talent as a new cabinet-level position in state government to serve as Indiana’s chief talent and recruiting official. Secretary Blair Milo and the Office of Career Connections and Talent is dedicated to continuously assessing needs, identifying promising practices, connecting Hoosier workers to employment opportunities, and coordinating future priorities to improve the quality and quantity of Hoosier workers to ensure a skilled and talented workforce within the state of Indiana.*

#### **About the Indiana Economic Development Corporation**

*The Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC) leads the state of Indiana’s economic development efforts, helping businesses launch, grow and locate in the state. Governed by a 15-member board chaired by Governor Eric J. Holcomb, the IEDC manages many initiatives, including performance-based tax credits, workforce training grants, innovation and entrepreneurship resources, public infrastructure assistance, and talent attraction and retention efforts. For more information about the IEDC, visit [www.iedc.in.gov](http://www.iedc.in.gov).*

#### **About CivicLab**

*CivicLab is a nonprofit institute dedicated to advancing the practice of civic collaboration. CivicLab emerged from the Community Education Coalition (CEC) in Columbus, Indiana, a nationally recognized partnership of education, business, and community leaders focused on aligning and integrating the community’s learning system with economic growth and a high quality of life. Since its inception, CivicLab has partnered with over 275 communities and organizations across the U.S. and trained more than 10,000 leaders of foundations, educational institutions, community government, corporations, and community development organizations.*

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