

Press Release

For Immediate Release:

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State Officials Designate Southwest Indiana as state's ninth 21st Century Talent Region

EVANSVILLE, Indiana— Indiana Secretary of Career Connections and Talent Blair Milo joined state and local officials today to announce the Southwest Indiana Region as Indiana's ninth [21st Century Talent Region](#), a statewide designation awarded to Indiana communities focused on working collaboratively to attract, develop and connect talent.

“Southwest Indiana business, education and community leaders have been instrumental in growing talent, fostering innovation and improving communities in the southwest corner of Indiana,” said Secretary Milo. “The collaborative approach they have taken, building relationships within Hoosier communities and across state lines, has helped them set the foundation for attracting, developing and connecting talent to the region and state as a 21st Century Talent Region.”

The Office of Career Connections and Talent, with support from the Indiana Economic Development Corporation and technical assistance from [CivicLab](#), launched the 21st Century Talent Region initiative to encourage local governments, businesses, educational institutions, nonprofits, and economic and workforce development partners to create and implement plans 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.

“The 21st Century Talent Region designation brings together key stakeholders within the community to build cohesive relationships for stronger programs and more effective use of resources,” said Grow Southwest Indiana Workforce Board Chair Makenzie Coulter.

During the event, Secretary Milo and Indiana Destination Development Corporation Secretary and CEO Elaine Bedel presented President and CEO of Southwest Indiana Chamber of Commerce Tara Barney with the official 21st Century Talent Region designation. The Southwest Indiana Region is a bi-state, five-county region encompassing the Evansville Metropolitan Statistical Area including Gibson, Posey, Vanderburgh and Warrick Counties in southwest Indiana, along with Henderson County in Kentucky.

“The Greater Evansville region is on a roll. We have prioritized inclusivity, quality of place and talent development as cornerstones of our economic development,” said President of Growth Alliance for Greater Evansville Ellen Horan. “The ‘E is for everyone’ and Talent 2025 initiatives laid the groundwork for aligning our efforts with the State’s 21st Century Talent Region designation and State workforce initiatives and resources.”

Spearheaded by the Southwest Indiana Chamber of Commerce, the Southwest Indiana Region identified key priorities through the 21st Century Talent Region initiative to, by 2025:

- Leverage the power of place to grow the region’s population by 2.8 percent;

- Utilize their home-grown learning system to increase educational attainment with credentials beyond high school from 23.2 to 25 percent, and;
- Focus on equitable economic opportunities to advance median household incomes from \$47,914 to \$55,042.

“Congratulations to Southwest Indiana on their designation as a 21st Century Talent Region. Over the years, I have witnessed this region working together effectively, thinking creatively, and acting collaboratively. By doing so, Southwest Indiana has established itself as a great place to live, work, visit and explore. I have no doubt that they will continue to build upon this important accomplishment, and I look forward to sharing in their future achievements,” said Secretary Bedel.

Currently, 83 Indiana counties are actively engaged in regional planning through the 21st Century Talent Region initiative. The addition of Southwest Indiana brings designations to 51 of Indiana's 92 counties, covering a population of more than 3.5 million Hoosiers. Previously designated 21st Century Talent Regions include [Northwest Indiana](#), [West Central Indiana](#), [Eastside Economic Recovery and Mobility District](#), [South Bend-Elkhart](#), [Hamilton County](#), [Indiana Uplands](#), [EcO Network of Southeast Indiana](#) and [Northeast Indiana](#).

For more information on how to receive the designation, visit in.gov/cct/21CTR.htm or contact the Office of Career Connections and Talent at 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.

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