

Governor Mike Pence
Indiana Black Expo – Governor’s Reception
July 16, 2013
Remarks as Prepared for Delivery

Thank you, Jackie, for that kind introduction, and thank you Tanya for your leadership of this fine organization.

It is a pleasure to be with you today to honor some amazing Hoosiers who should serve as examples to us all. These individuals exemplify community service and servant leadership.

Servant leaders listen before they lead. They put others first. They strive to do what is right, and they are not afraid to roll up their sleeves and do the work that needs to be done. They do not lead from the top. They lead by example, often from the trenches. They do what they do, not for honor or for glory, but because they believe in what they are doing and they put their communities and others first.

I believe that if we all were better servant leaders, if we all put others’ needs a little more ahead of our own, our families would be stronger, our communities would be safer, our businesses would be more prosperous, our government would be better.

I know a lot of you joining us spent the morning in the Business Conference talking about how to grow your businesses and make them stronger.

We want to help you do that. And we’re making good progress in making Indiana an even better place to do business, with tax cuts and a push to cut red tape.

Indiana is strong and growing stronger. I regularly talk with CEOs and governors in other states, and let me tell you we are the fiscal envy of the nation. While other states are struggling just to make ends meet, Indiana has made important investments in education and infrastructure and still ended the year with a surplus.

But we still face many challenges as a state. We welcomed the recent news that the unemployment rate statewide dropped, but despite our positive trajectory, the people of Indiana feel strongly that our economy’s growth is not matching the hopes, aspirations and dreams of our people.

That's where some of today's honorees come in.

Where would we be without our faith-based community and the leaders who give us hope and inspire us even as we roll up our sleeves and do the work we need to build businesses and provide new opportunities and help the hurting in our communities?

As I travel the Hoosier state, I've found that there's optimism in Indiana. There's a sense of potential in the Hoosier state, but people know that families are struggling in this state. There are a quarter of a million Hoosiers out of work, and not enough are taking advantage of the educational opportunities our great state offers. We've got to do better.

We start by creating good jobs and by recognizing that education is critical to our success in job creation. Our state's education system will play a key role in Indiana's economic development, both because strong schools help companies attract talented employees and because they develop the quality employees of the future.

Getting results in our schools will pay off in new jobs, higher wages and great opportunities for our kids, and for all of us in the Hoosier state.

All honest work is honorable work, and our schools should work just as well for our kids who want to get a job as they do for our kids who want to get a college degree. Every student deserves the same opportunity for success, whether they want to go to college or start their career right out of high school.

That's why we are busy making career, technical and vocational education a priority in every high school in Indiana.

Just last week we announced our appointees to the Indiana Career Council, which is made up of business professionals, legislators and education experts who will review, reform and realign our educational, career training and job skills development efforts across the state for the benefit of Indiana's workforce.

Creating new career and technical education opportunities will increase our graduation rates by providing a clear path for success for all of our students, in high school and beyond.

It will increase private sector employment across Indiana. It will improve the quality of our Hoosier workforce. It will give our kids new opportunities that so many so desperately need.

To do that well, we will be engaging businesses in every region in the state—hopefully including some of you who are in this room right now—to connect our educational opportunities with career opportunities.

When Hoosier students graduate from our high schools, we want their diploma to have immediate currency in the workplace. Our regional approach helps do that in a way that best meets employers' needs.

These efforts will help us attack the stubbornly high unemployment rate and the high school dropout rate that challenge our communities. And I know that those who serve on these councils will serve, not for their own glory, but for the good of their communities, their regions, and ultimately, the entire state.

As I have traveled throughout the Hoosier State, one thing has held true no matter where I go. Hoosiers are the best people on earth. They are decent, hard-working, compassionate people. They want their communities to be vibrant, welcoming places. And they are willing to roll up their sleeves to make that happen.

Today I challenge you to do as those we honor have done: Find a place to make a difference, and give it your all. Together we will make Indiana an even better place.