Compendium:

NORTHEAST INDIANA WORKS

Board Newsletter, October 2025

Dear Board Members:

In late July 2025, Congressman **Marlin Stutzman** joined forces with Purdue University Fort Wayne (PFW), and WorkOne Northeast to host the annual job fair at the PFW Walb Student Union. Designed to connect job seekers throughout northeast Indiana with local employers, the event drew strong participation and spot-lighted key workforce development efforts across the region.

More than 64 employers attended the job fair, collectively offering over 1,700 job openings spanning industries such as manufacturing, healthcare, government, finance, law enforcement, and transportation. Attendees included students, individuals currently employed, and those actively seeking new opportunities.

Rep. Stutzman Job Fair connects hundreds of job seekers with local employers

Congressman Stutzman expressed gratitude for the collaboration that made the event possible, citing the organization's shared commitment to expanding workforce opportunities. He thanked PFW, WorkOne Northeast, and the many employers who participated, calling the job fair an important resource for the community. Employers used the to collect applications and conduct interviews for their labor needs.

PFW Staff were also present to share information about educational pathways for pursuing further education. Nearly 300 people participated in the job fair, taking advantage of the chance to meet directly with employers, sharpen their resume and interviewing skills with WorkOne, and learn about what is needed to enter or advance in today's job market.

"The job market of late has become more competitive, not only in the number of open positions available but also in the skills required," said Edmond O'Neal, president and CEO of Northeast Indiana Works. "This job fair and the guidance provided by WorkOne are terrific opportunities to start or enhance a career."

Three JAG Employees Receive State Award: **Rachel Bryant**, Youth Evolvement Program Manager for northeast Indiana, was recognized with the Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) Glynn Hines Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2025 Indiana State Training Seminar in June.

This award is given by the Department of Workforce Development to those who have devoted themselves to JAG with consistency and vision. The award is named after a long-term JAG specialist from northeast Indiana, Glynn Hines.

Bryant oversees school-based programs and out of school youth services for northeast Indiana. She has pioneered efforts that include virtual guest speakers, regional career tours, and the first JAG signing day. Two other JAG leaders were recognized. **Amber Morgan** received Outstanding Rookie Specialist of the Year from JAG Indiana. **Andrea Freeze** received Outstanding Specialist of the Year and a 10-year service award. In northeast Indiana, JAG programs are overseen by Northeast Indiana Works and administered by Brightpoint.

Business Retention and Expansion Visits Strengthen Local Partnerships: Workforce and economic growth go hand in hand, and Northeast Indiana Works is proud to play an active role in supporting the Indiana Economic Development Corporation's (IEDC) asset-based development strategy. This approach focuses on connecting business with the resources they need to grow while strengthening the local pipeline of skilled workers.

President & CEO, Edmond O'Neal joins BR&E visits

Recently, Northeast Indiana Works joined several partners on business retention and expansion visits in the Fort Wayne region. Participants included representatives from the IEDC (John Sheedy, Linda Walczak), Greater Fort Wayne, Inc. (Adam Welch), Ivy Tech Community College (Joe McMichael), the Office of Governor Braun (Mary Martin), Purdue University Fort Wayne (Sean Ryan), Indiana Secretary of Commerce David Adams, and Indiana Department of Workforce Development Commissioner Josh Richardson. Together, the group met with local employers QuickCut and Valbruna Group to learn more about their operations, challenges and growth opportunities.

These visits underscored the importance of collaboration in driving both business expansion and workforce readiness. By sitting down with company leaders, our team and partners were able to better understand the skills and credentials most in demand and to identify ways to connect workers with the training and resources necessary for long-term success.

Continuing these partnerships is critical to ensuring that Hoosier workers have the opportunities they need to succeed, while local businesses remain competitive and prepared for the future. Northeast Indiana Works looks forward to building on the momentum from these visits and continuing to strengthen the region's economy through workforce alignment and employer engagement.

Manufacturing Begins With Me: Inspiring Future Makers: Earlier this summer, Northeast Indiana Works partnered with Ivy Tech Fort Wayne to host two Manufacturing Experience Day Camps at Ivy Tech. These camps, part of the broader Manufacturing Begins With Me initiative, gave middle school students the chance to explore manufacturing through hands-on learning. Activities included building bird feeders, completing electrical circuits, and welding toy airplanes. Many students shared that welding was their favorite part of the day, with some even expressing new interest in pursuing it as a future career.

Since the first camp in Noble County in 2022, more than one hundred students have taken part in this program. The impact has gone beyond the classroom, sparking curiosity about technical skills and helping students envision career pathways they may not have considered before. The program's visibility continues to grow as well. Our digital outreach efforts have reached over 2.5 million people across Instagram, TikTok and Facebook, thanks to the support of the Don Wood Foundation.

Looking ahead, Northeast Indiana Works will host two additional camps in October, one in Noble County and another in Steuben County.

Northeast Indiana Works at NAWDP Conference: In August, Vice President **Kim Tempel** represented Northeast Indiana Works at the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals (NAWDP) Conference in Denver, Colorado. The event, co-hosted by the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment and the Rocky Mountain Workforce Development Association, was created to equip workforce professionals with the skills, knowledge, and expertise needed to excel in business services and strengthen employer partnerships.

The conference featured a variety of sessions on workforce system linkages, business engagement, economic development, and talent pipeline development. Attendees had the opportunity to hear directly from experienced professionals and industry leaders who shared best practices and real-word strategies that can be applied to the challenges and opportunities facing our region.

In addition to the structured sessions, the conference offered Kim the chance to connect with peers from across the country. These conversations provided valuable opportunities to exchange ideas, build relationships, and explore innovative approaches to workforce development. As she reflected on her experience, Kim emphasized how valuable it was to learn from others while also sharing the work happening in northeast Indiana.

Participation in events like NAWDP helps ensure that Northeast Indiana Works remains at the forefront of workforce development innovation. By engaging in national conversations and bringing back new insights, we strengthen our ability to serve both businesses and job seekers here at home.

(*The next board meeting will be from 9 to 10:30 a.m. October 3, 2025. It will be in person and virtual.)*