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Press Release

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East Central Indiana residents invited to take part in June 25 community conversation to “connect the dots”

Workshop will feature panel discussions, breakout sessions and networking opportunities

MARION, Ind.—Leaders from Delaware, Grant and Madison counties are inviting citizens from the tri-county area to join them for a community conversation on June 25 to help East Central Indiana become a more connected, thriving community through economic and community development.

The event, “Speaking Regionally: Connecting the Dots in East Central Indiana,” is an integrated workshop that will feature presentations and panel discussions by statewide, regional and local leaders, as well as breakout sessions and opportunities to network. Participants are encouraged to come for the entire time, but are welcome to attend part of the workshop as well.

“This is a tremendous opportunity for our communities,” said Bobbette Snyder, executive director of the Leadership Academy of Madison County. “It’s a chance for all of us to make critical connections in the region and the state in order to propel our communities forward.”

The East Central Indiana region was one of four Indiana communities selected to host workshops on issues vital to their communities. The workshop will be convened by the Indiana Humanities Council and the Bowen Center for Public Affairs at Ball State University. Local partners include:

- Project Leadership
- Leadership Academy of Madison County
- Madison County Community Foundation
- The Community Foundation of Muncie and Delaware County
- The Community Foundation of Grant County
- Ivy Tech Community College

The day will kick off with a panel discussion on the status of federal stimulus package investment and a state-level economic development update. Moderated by Gerry Dick, host of *Inside INdiana Business*, the panelists will include Mitch Roob, **INDIANA** Secretary of Commerce and Indiana Economic Development Corporation CEO; Kevin Brinegar, Indiana Chamber of Commerce president; Matt Prine, district director for Congressman Dan Burton; and Kim Bennett, deputy district director for Congressman Mike Pence.

Following a short breakout session, the next panel will discuss the regional benefits of economic development success. Bart Peterson, former mayor of Indianapolis and distinguished fellow for the Bowen Center for Public Affairs at Ball State University, will moderate the discussion, which features Roy Budd, executive director of Energize-ECI; Rob Sparks, director of the Corporation for Economic Development; Mayor Kris Ockomon of Anderson; Mayor Sharon McShurley of Muncie; Stacy Henderson, Chief of Staff for Marion Mayor Wayne Seybold; and Tim Eckerle, Grant County's economic development director.

During lunch, breakout groups will discuss how to strengthen regional cooperation in East Central Indiana.

The last session of the day will focus on community development and tourism and will feature Amy Vaughan and Brian Blackford from the Indiana Office of Tourism Development, Selita Reichart, vice president of Red Gold, Inc., Scott Rankin, plant manager of Weaver Popcorn, and Betty Brewer, president of the Minnetrista Cultural Center.

Also participating in the workshops will be Bowen Center for Public Affairs Co-directors Sally Jo Vasicko and Ray Scheele and Indiana Humanities Council President Keira Amstutz.

The workshop will be held on the Marion Campus of Ivy Tech Community College on Thurs., June 25, from 8 a.m. - 2 p.m., and include a working lunch. There is no charge for the event itself, but there is a \$10 charge for lunch and registration is required. Space is limited. Call the Bowen Center for Public Affairs at 765.285.8982 to RSVP.

Following the workshop, the Bowen Center for Public Affairs will continue to help the region by providing access to resources and ongoing consultation. Several organizations already have joined the Bowen Center for Public Affairs and the Indiana Humanities Council in offering statewide expertise and resources:

- Indiana Chamber of Commerce
- Association of Indiana Counties
- Indiana Association of Cities and Towns
- *Inside INdiana Business* with Gerry Dick
- Indiana Grantmakers Alliance

About the Indiana Humanities Council

The Indiana Humanities Council celebrates, encourages and facilitates the thinking that leads to innovation and action. As a convener, leader and partner, the Council supports the sharing of ideas, promotes the public humanities and engages Indiana's community of minds to examine and improve the human condition. Learn more at www.indianahumanities.org.

About the Bowen Center for Public Affairs

The Bowen Center for Public Affairs at Ball State University advances the ideals of civic literacy, community involvement, and public service exemplified by the career of Dr. Otis R. Bowen. The center leads the way in Indiana toward an energized citizenry and vital community life.

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