



# VISIONS

Where will your community be in the future?

Fall 2006

## STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT GROUP, INC

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### **Don't Miss Dates**

October 4th-6th

[Ohio Kentucky Indiana Planning Association](#)  
Fall Conference, Cincinnati, OH

October 31st

[Communities at the Crossroads IX](#), Balancing  
Land Use for a Prosperous State, Indianapolis

November 1st- 2nd

[2006 Indiana's Future Conference!](#) World-Class Schools for the 21st Century. Leadership, Learning and the Global Economy

November 9th- 10th

[Indiana Grantmakers Alliance Fall Conference](#), Indianapolis

November 13th- 14th

Welcome to the third quarter issue of *Visions*, SDG's electronic newsletter designed to give you useful information about community and economic development. This issue brings you ideas on land use plans for smaller communities, the Southwest Indiana Development Council's leadership workshop series, how to present your plans successfully to commissions, and a helpful tip from the SDG Librarian. In this issue you will also find SDG's "Factoid of the Month."

In addition to those articles, this issue also gives you some information on upcoming events and on what SDG staff has been doing recently.

Subsequent issues of this newsletter will be sent only to those who request it. Therefore, I hope you will click [here](#) to continue receiving SDG's *Visions*. Let us know what you think of our efforts and feel free to offer your ideas and submissions for future issues of *Visions*.

Thayr Richey  
*President, SDG*

### **Comp Plans for Small Communities** by Brian O'Neill

Many of Indiana's small towns are undertaking their first comprehensive land use plan using a state grant. The plans help these communities steer their futures, deciding the best places for housing, industrial growth and other land uses. SDG has been assisting with the planning, which involves a Community Focus Fund Planning Grant from the Indiana Office of Community Rural Affairs.

SDG is presently working with the towns of Montgomery and Odon in completing their first comprehensive plans. Both communities re

November 13th-14th

[Indiana Rural Summit](#), Indianapolis

November 15th

[Indiana Leadership Association](#) Fall Conference, Danville, IN

December 5th –6th

[Indiana Youth Institute Kids Count Conference](#), Indianapolis

December 14th –15th

SDG is presently working in the towns of Montgomery and Odon in completing their first comprehensive plans. Both communities received CFF planning grants. These grants are available to cities, incorporated towns, or counties that have not received entitlement funds from HUD. Comprehensive plans are among the activities eligible for planning awards of up to \$50,000 which require a 10% match. Upon completion and acceptance of the plan, communities are then eligible to apply for an implementation award. These awards are up to \$500,000 and also require a 10% match. (Detailed information on the guidelines and application process may be found at: <http://www.in.gov/ocra/service.html>.)

Historically, many smaller communities have not felt the need for planning and zoning or for a comprehensive plan. The benefits of planning for growth are not perceived to outweigh the costs of creating and administering a zoning ordinance. Towns like Montgomery, however, are creating comprehensive plans as policy instruments in anticipation of creating a zoning ordinance when growth in the tax base can support it.

Communities don't have to have a planning commission or a zoning ordinance to adopt a comprehensive plan. They can do it by resolution, although considerations should be made for any county regulations.

Such a plan can help communities:

- Lay the groundwork for future annexations
- Direct development to where the infrastructure and services can support it
- Prioritize capital projects involving streets, civic buildings, sanitary sewers, and schools.
- Protect property values and preserve town character
- Protect the environment as well as the health and safety of the community
- Provide a clear plan for making core neighborhoods more attractive and safe by improving and sidewalks, curbs, and streets
- Improve the economy by preserving existing businesses and encouraging entrepreneurship.
- Protect existing natural assets and recreational opportunities

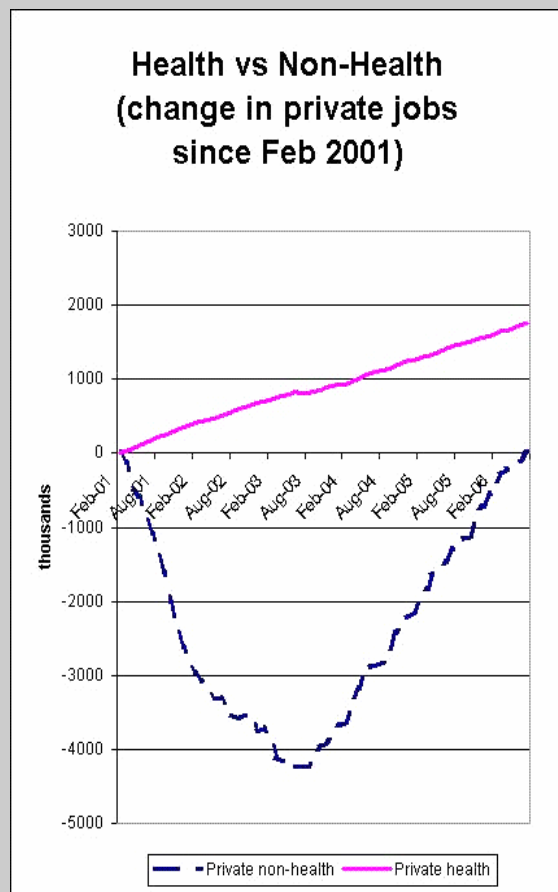
Even without a zoning ordinance, a comprehensive plan can help communities move toward achieving these outcomes. Because public input is a key activity, the planning process helps build support for difficult issues such as annexations and new capital projects. Maps and images representing priorities for capital projects provide understandable roadmaps to meeting community needs. With a plan and priorities in place, communities are also eligible to apply for a CFF implementation award to fund improvements to infrastructure.

By taking advantage of the CFF program, smaller communities are taking charge of their futures and gaining access to planning and implementation funds. Even without enacting a zoning ordinance, there are many reasons to create a comprehensive plan.

## Factoid

Since 2001, 1.7 million new jobs have been added in the health-care sector, which includes related industries such as pharmaceuticals and health insurance. Meanwhile, the number of private-sector jobs outside of health care is no higher than it was five years ago.

[Source: Business Week, September 15, 2006](#)



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# 5 Ways to Pass Your Plan

by **Scott Burgins**

A plan that never gets implemented can be worse than not doing a plan at all. If it's left untouched, later groups who want to plan will face charges of, "We tried that before and nothing happened."

As a consultant, I routinely help clients get their plans accepted and launched. In my private life, as a member of my community's Plan Commission, I routinely hear other people attempt to get their plans underway.

Here are five things I've learned about gaining approval for new plans:

1. Be ready to explain how you worked – and worked *hard* – to get public involvement. You held meetings; you surveyed; you called; you faxed and you e-mailed. Anything less gives the decision makers a good excuse to put off making a decision.
2. Co-op your opponents. During the planning process it's tempting to avoid people who are "too negative and just cause trouble." Maybe so, but if you include them early they can cause trouble under *your* conditions. If you ignore them, they will show up late in the process claiming they were never given a chance to take part - and they will be right.
3. Anticipate piercing questions. In fact, make clear what your plan *doesn't* have or wasn't able to accomplish. Being honest is a reward unto itself, but can also defuse later criticism.
4. Have some visuals. Photos, small posters or hand-outs can all help communicate your ideas to people who see better than they listen.
5. Have a few concrete steps ready. "If this is accepted tonight, within three months we will have ..." With this kind of phrasing, anyone opposed to your plan seems to be in the way of progress.

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## The SWIDC Leadership Series

by **Thayr Richey**

Creating and maintaining leadership is a challenge for communities of all sizes. But despite the effort involved, it is critical for every town to have local leaders involved in key issues such as economic development.

Recognizing this need, the Southwestern Indiana Development Council (SWIDC) launched a series of programs on leadership and economic development for each of the organization's 14 member counties.

SDG was asked to facilitate the meetings.

SWIDC had received a grant from the Indiana Rural Development Council to create the program, and worked with Dr. Nancy Kovanich to assemble a PowerPoint™ presentation for each county. The purpose of the program was to bring together leaders throughout the county to discuss their roles in economic development.

By the middle of September, Thayr had led programs in five of the SWIDC member counties: Greene, Orange, Pike, Spencer, and Warrick counties. Each program has drawn between 25 and 40 participants. At each meeting SWIDC's local economic development representative spoke about their program.

Key issues that have arisen from the lively discussions include:

- The use of public funds for economic development
- The role of local government in assisting the in development of business parks
- The relationship between retention of established basic employers and recruitment of new basic employers
- The roles of leaders on local government commissions
- How need to keep the public informed on the benefits of economic development programs

SDG expects to complete the series of meetings by the end of December.

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**SDG Librarian**  
by **Catie Kosinski**

## How to Make ‘Too Much Information’ Work for You

Ever noticed the letters “RSS” on a website and wondered what they meant? Chances are you’ve used RSS feeds but may not have realized it. The name RSS translates to “Really Simple Syndication.” RSS provides a standard format for syndication that simplifies the organization of information with RSS aggregators and readers. The RSS standard format is often called a feed, stream, or channel.

What does all this mean for you? RSS feeds may seem like just another avenue to waste time on the Internet, but they can make finding online info easier. You can select the information you want to view online and an RSS reader will organize everything for you on single interface. RSS readers and aggregators let you edit your feed preferences to personalize the information you see online. Just choose feeds from your favorite news sources, websites, blogs, and podcasts.

There are several RSS readers available online and most are free. All of the aggregators offer comparable services, but you might discover that you prefer one over another.

**Bloglines** ([www.bloglines.com](http://www.bloglines.com)): is an online aggregator that is free. Bloglines is easy to use, which makes it a good choice for novice RSS users. It also offers free email accounts to users.

**Newsgator** ([www.newsgator.com](http://www.newsgator.com)): is another free online RSS reader. However, Newsgator offers a downloadable version for \$30. The downloadable edition offers several additional features that are unavailable on the online version.

**Sharpreader** ([www.sharpreader.net](http://www.sharpreader.net)): is a free RSS aggregator available for download that was designed for use on PCs. This reader is recommended for more experienced RSS users. It gives users more control of organizing feeds and creating information folders.

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## SDG News

### SDG President Addresses Evansville Regional Economic Development Workshop

On August 31 SDG’s president, Thayr Richey, spoke at a half-day program in Evansville on current issues in economic development.

The program was organized by Vanderburgh County officials, including County Commissioner President Cheryl Munson, as well as Connie Fowler, Director of the Indiana Economic Development Corporation’s Southwest Indiana Regional Office, and Jim Holderread, Deputy Director, Vision-e. Approximately 120 leaders from the region attended the meeting.

At the event, Thayr spoke on the Process of Economic Development, with an emphasis on new business recruitment. A few of the issues Thayr covered included new trends in economic development:

- Increasingly globalized economy
- Movement from an old-line, manufacturing-based economy to knowledge-based, new technology economy
- Movement from dependence upon manufacturing jobs to dependence upon service sector jobs
- Shortened time frame for site location

Thayr compared the process of new business recruitment from a community’s perspective to the game of musical

Thayr compared the process of new business recruitment from a community's perspective to the game of musical chairs. In addition, Thayr discussed the importance of Indiana's regions and major cities to develop long-term relationships with international businesses in Asia and Europe.

## **SDG's Twofold Approach to an Age Old Debate**

Build it and they will come. This is a common sentiment among many local developers. However, people often debate about what comes first: residential development or a booming population. SDG is now working with communities to address residential development and residential recruitment simultaneously.

Within the last year, two very different Indiana counties saw the need to attract both home builders and commuters. Like leaders in many other places, both felt they had an inadequate housing supply to attract new residents. At the same time, economic development leaders and elected officials needed to change a declining or stagnating population.

SDG advised its clients to address both sides of the issue simultaneously. The end result of this process yielded promising research. Frequently, builders and commuters have misconceptions about a community's assets. The process SDG uses gives residential builders and prospective residents fresh perspectives on the community.

Looking at a community through new lenses provides local leaders with new strategies for encouraging home builders and attracting new residents.

