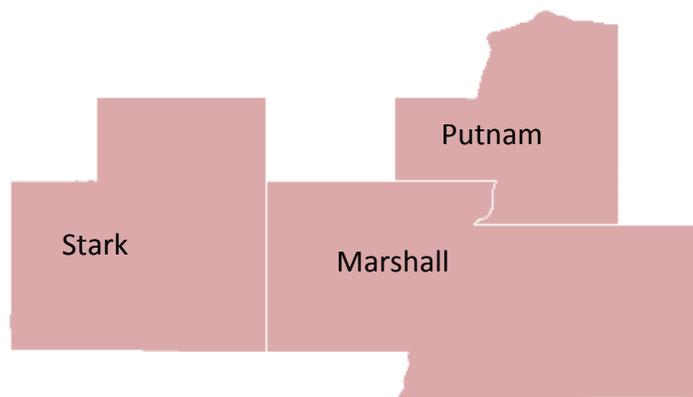


# Marshall, Putnam and Stark Counties, Illinois

## Stronger Economies Together



## High Quality Plan



# Contents

<b>Stronger Economies Together Initiative</b>	<b>Page 3</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>Page 4</b>
<b>Regional Description</b>	<b>Page 5</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>Page 7</b>
<b>Regional Collaboration</b>	<b>Page 8</b>
<b>Regional Economic Goals</b>	<b>Page 9</b>
<b>Selection Acknowledgement</b>	<b>Page 9</b>
<b>Economic Development Framework Goal</b>	<b>Page 14</b>
<b>Tourism Goal</b>	<b>Page 19</b>
<b>Infrastructure Goal</b>	<b>Page 23</b>
<b>Regional Demographic Data</b>	<b>Page 27</b>
<b>Regional Economic Data</b>	<b>Page 29</b>
<b>Regional Assets</b>	<b>Page 32</b>
<b>Regional Barriers</b>	<b>Page 33</b>
<b>Evaluation</b>	<b>Page 33</b>
<b>Dissemination Plan</b>	<b>Page 34</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>Page 35</b>
<b>Appendix</b>	<b>Page 36– 37</b>



## Stronger Economies Together Initiative

The Stronger Economies Together Initiative was launched in 2009 by USDA Rural Development in collaboration with the nation's Regional Rural Development Centers (RRDC) and their land-grant university partners. The purpose of Stronger Economies Together (SET) is to strengthen the capacity of communities in rural America to work together in developing and implementing an economic development blueprint that strategically builds on the current and emerging economic strengths of their region. Important elements of the Stronger Economies Together program will build collaboration between communities in a region, provide economic analysis that is tailored to help capture the region's current or emerging clusters and comparative economic advantages. This effort is also supported by technical assistance provided by land-grant university extension systems to the regions over a period of several months including the SET training.

In the spring of 2015 the county of Marshall decided they needed to revitalize their economic development efforts. At that time the SET program was accepting applications in the state and Marshall County felt SET could help with their goals. The group contacted officials in the neighboring counties of Putnam and Stark to determine if they would be interested in joining together in applying for SET. An application from Marshall Putnam Stark (MPS) was submitted in May 2015 and the region was accepted and began working with the SET coaching team in August 2015. A civic forum was held in September 2015 and goals were discussed and agreed upon with a wide range of participants. Over the next several months a core group of leaders and interested residents participated in 5 planning sessions in order to more fully review data and create specific goals and plans.

The SET initiative has created an opportunity for the region to begin working and planning to grow together by implementing the plan they created.



## Marshall-Putnam-Stark Region Executive Summary

The Regional Economic Development Plan that follows is intended to serve as an outline for future reference and guidance to the residents of the region in pursuit of the goals that they have created. The creative process included key regional stakeholders who represented a diverse cross section of the residents in the region. There were representatives from business, civic and community leaders.

Initially when the SET process began the regional team had in mind a few goals that they felt should be pursued: downtown revitalization; job growth in industry and agriculture; workforce development and beautification of communities. At the civic forum, which was attended by about 75 people, an initial set of goals were identified that had broad based support from the attendees. The goals that were identified in this meeting included: local education; internet/broadband infrastructure improvements; expanding cooperation between the 3 counties in regional marketing; holding a regional business summit; target industries that complement the region; and increasing the region's online presence to help with marketing the region.

The regional team then began the complex work of analyzing the demographics and industry clusters in the region to see where the evidence would point in developing strategic, measurable, achievable, realistic goals. Between October 2015 and June 2016 the team selected and refined the 3 goals they felt would lead to the best opportunities for beginning regional thinking and planning. These goals are supported by the evidence and also are in harmony with the goals that civic forum identified, indicating strong public support.

### Goal 1 – Economic Development Framework

Develop a region-wide identity and interconnected framework focused on economic development collaboration that provides the basis for business growth, retention, and creation of businesses in target industries.

### Goal 2 – Tourism Entrepreneurship

Recognizing the existing tourism assets of the region, attract visitors to local destinations through a coordinated and systematic marketing, promotion, and entrepreneur development effort throughout the region that grows both the tourism market and the number of tourism-oriented businesses.

### Goal 3 – Infrastructure

Provide infrastructure that facilitates the expansion of existing businesses, improves the communities' basic infrastructure for improved living conditions for residents and encourages other industries and businesses to locate in the region

## Regional Description

The region is comprised of the Counties of Marshall, Putnam and Stark in northwest Illinois. The area is within a 30-60 minute drive of the much larger urban centers of Bloomington-Normal, Peoria, LaSalle-Peru and the Quad Cities, and yet the region is rural in character and population. The 3 county area has a population of 24,323 and agriculture is a big driver of the economy. A large percentage of the workforce commutes outside the region for employment where job opportunities are more robust.

There is a strong transportation structure in place that can support economic development which includes 3 Interstates, one east/west and two north/south, a highway on the West, 4 railroads located in the three counties and the Illinois River running through the region.

The Illinois River passes through Marshall and Putnam Counties and is used for commercial and recreational purposes with 13 grain terminals and numerous recreation access points. The leg of the river that runs thru the town of Henry, located in Marshall County, is the future home of the Port of Henry. The port will be a commercial hub for the region which will enable the growth of container barge transport, new strategies regarding barge services, operations and container handling processes. The Illinois River Road National Scenic Byway and the Ronald Reagan Trail pass through the region and attract tourists to the area.

The 3 counties are part of several regional efforts. There are two Convention and Visitor Bureaus (CVB), the Heritage Corridor CVB (Putnam County) and the Peoria Area CVB (Marshall and Stark); 2 Workforce Regions; 3 Community College Districts and many communities have the standard Enterprise Zones, Revolving Loan Funds and TIF districts. Putnam County is part of the Illinois Valley Regional Center that can bring foreign investors to projects in the region through the EB5 program and Marshall County is part of the TRANSPORT Port District. The



region is part of the North Central Illinois Economic Development District (NCIEDD) that was designated by the U.S. Department of Commerce – Economic Development Administration in 2005. The region is also within Peoria’s Foreign Trade Zone.

On a local level the 3 counties have had some experience in working together. Marshall and Putnam share a county engineer, Farm Bureau office, county fair and a Health Department. Marshall County extended their Enterprise Zone into Stark County for the development of a project.

Yet in spite of all the mentioned efforts the region does not have any coordinated actions for regional economic development outside of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy which is produced by the North Central IL Economic Development District (NCIEDD). The entire three county area has no full time Economic Development organizations other than the NCIEDD and the Chambers are not coordinated or active. Marshall County did have an Economic Development Council made up of mainly elected officials, but it has been inactive since 2011. The Stark County Economic Development group has no employees at this time. This situation was the impetus for being involved in SET as an attempt to correct that deficiency and learn how to proceed to help the region grow.

Based on their economic makeup and size it makes sense for these counties to work together. All three counties are located close to urban areas where economic development is focused on the higher populated areas rather in these small rural counties.

## GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Marshall County is the largest in size and population with 399 square miles and has a population of 12,454. Towns located in Marshall County include Camp Grove, Henry, Lacon, La Rose, Sparland, Toluca, Varna and Wenona.

Putnam, the smallest of the three counties, consists of 172 square miles of land area and a population of 5,927. Towns located there are Granville, Hennepin, Magnolia, Mark, McNabb, Putnam and Standard.

Stark County is 288 square miles in size and contains a population of 5,942. Towns in the county are Bradford, Castleton, Elmira, La Fayette, Toulon and Wyoming.



## Introduction

Marshall Putnam and Stark Counties were selected to participate in the 2015-2016 Stronger Economies Together program that is funded by USDA Rural Development and administered by the University of Illinois Extension and USDA Rural Development. The Stronger Economies Together (SET) initiative has been used since 2009 by more than 50 regions nationwide in 28 states. The MPS group wanted to develop a realistic economic development plan that the whole region could rally behind to implement.

The Marshall Putnam Stark Region would like to thank the staff from the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development, the University of Illinois Extension and the Regional Rural Development Centers for support throughout this process. We would also like to show our appreciation to the distinguished individuals that took part in the training sessions, the civic forums and numerous other individuals for their invaluable insight and ideas that assisted in the creation of this plan.

The regional executive team include:

Chauntelle Biaggi-Bruer, Assistant Coordinator, Putnam County EMA

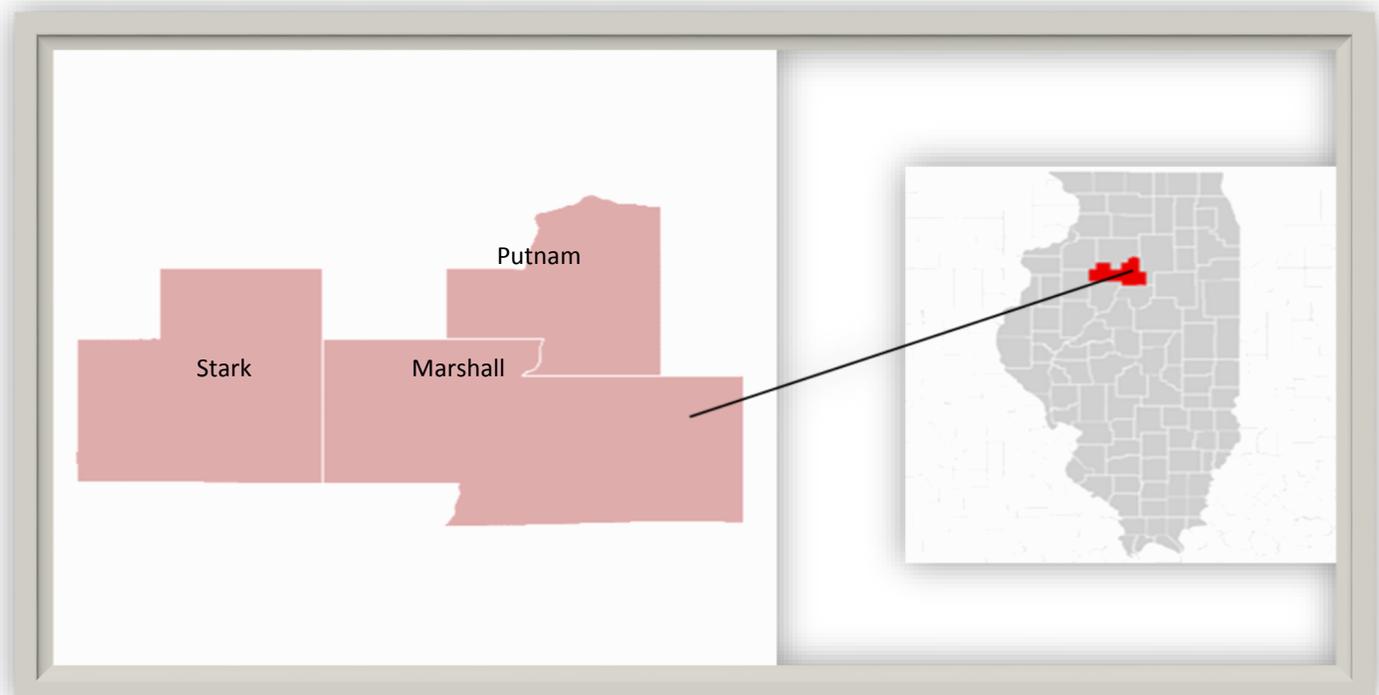
Denny Rewerts, Director, Stark County Economic Development (retired)

Tiffany Moodie, Manager, Marshall-Putnam County Farm Bureau

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Thomas Marten, Manager, Stark County Farm Bureau

Tami Rouse, Senior Case Manager, Career Link



## REGIONAL COLLABORATION

Participants in the SET process represented a wide array of organizations and groups throughout the three counties including business associations; Chambers; Farm Bureaus; private business owners; political offices such as county boards, legislators, the Airport Board; economic development groups working in the area; various service organizations; school districts; faith based groups; and conservation groups. A complete listing is provided in Appendix A at the end of this document along with the regional team members for the SET initiative.

People from all 3 counties partnered to create a plan that would benefit the entire region. The planning meetings' locations were rotated to encourage participation equally from the counties. When the economic data was reviewed and goals were being developed the goals were compared to the results from the civic forum to be sure that the final plan would have widespread public support. Businesses were interviewed during the process to obtain their input and decisions were made based in part on the responses received.

A recognition of the importance of working together to achieve economic development has been made evident through the SET process. The lack of formal economic development leadership and weak ties between the region's counties became apparent as the plan was being worked on and drafted. This further emphasized the need for more collaboration within the region to achieve desired goals and outcomes. The writing team was established with a representative from each county along with a representative from the North Central IL Council of Governments to be sure that each county's perspectives were considered.

## Regional Economic Goals

Based on information gathered at the region's Civic Forum, through SET sessions, during interviews with local businesses, and in formal and informal discussions of the regional team and regional stakeholders, the MPS Regional Team developed three regional goals to pursue.

### Goal 1 – Economic Development Framework

Develop a region-wide identity and interconnected framework focused on economic development collaboration that provides the basis for business growth, retention, and creation of businesses in target industries.

### Goal 2 – Tourism Entrepreneurship

Recognizing the existing tourism assets of the region, attract visitors to local destinations through a coordinated and systematic marketing, promotion, and entrepreneur development effort throughout the region that grows both the tourism market and the number of tourism-oriented businesses.

### Goal 3 – Infrastructure

Provide infrastructure that facilitates the expansion of existing businesses, improves the communities' basic infrastructure for improved living conditions for residents and encourages other industries and businesses to locate in the region

The MPS Economic Development Plan follows below and includes key strategies, responsible parties, a timeline for achieving strategies and goals, and key outcomes and measures. Coordinating Teams for each goal have been identified and are committed to recruiting new volunteers to participate in this regional effort.

## Selection Acknowledgement

At the Civic Forum the participants were asked to identify positive features of the region; significant challenges facing the region; and to identify regional opportunities that they felt beneficial to the region and worth pursuing as part of a regional economic development plan. There were six potential regional opportunities identified by the nearly 70 forum participants:

1. Expand local educational offerings; expand dual enrollment credit courses offered in secondary schools in the MPS Region
2. Work to enhance High Speed Internet/Broadband Infrastructure
3. Expand communication/cooperation between the three counties and their communities by cooperating in regional marketing, sharing ideas, and sharing "best practices" in government operations and economic development
4. Consider the establishment of a regional business or economic development summit and invite site selectors and real estate brokers from outside the area on familiarization tours of the region, communities, and available sites. Encourage governments and natural economic development based industries (i.e. banks, realtors etc.) to communicate and cooperate on regional initiatives.

5. Identify targeted industries and businesses that complement the region's existing businesses and workforce availability
6. Focus on marketing the benefits of the region through websites and increase the region's "online presence". Focus on site selectors, real estate professionals, and new residents (consider target messaging for specific audiences).

Over the next 8 months, the regional team explored these themes in more detail while analyzing demographics of the region, economic statistics, and industry data.

During Session #1, The MPS Region selected four initial industry clusters for further analysis based on data provided. Those clusters are included below along with the group justification for their selection for further analysis (see also Appendix B):

1. Agribusiness, Food Processing, and Technology Cluster – The MPS Region has a significant employment base in the agricultural and food processing industries. According to presented data, the regional location quotient for this cluster is 7.69 and the industry employed 2,345 workers across the region. It was determined that the employment concentration would provide a sound basis for industry recruitment and expansion efforts. While the industry is relatively mature, its employment levels led the group to decide that it was one of the clusters that they wanted to explore in further detail.
2. Energy Cluster – The MPS Region is home to a significant ethanol production facility and a large wind farm development. Additionally, a gas-powered electricity generating facility was also located in the region. Altogether, there were 666 jobs in this cluster. The Energy Cluster was classified as a "Star" Industry Cluster.
3. Fabricated Metal Production Manufacturing Cluster – Much discussion took place with regards to this cluster. The data and information presented in regards to employment numbers was deemed out of date due to the closure of a major steel mill facility in recent years. However, many members of the regional team wanted to pursue further analysis of this cluster due to the fact that a trained workforce in metal fabrication was prevalent in the area and could be utilized in recruitment efforts.
4. Business & Financial Services Cluster – While this cluster only has 771 employees, it is classified as an "Emerging" Industry. Additionally, of the top 10 industry sectors measured by employment growth between 2008 and 2013, Real Estate and Rental and Leasing along with Finance and Insurance had growth of 44% and 28%, respectively. This significantly outpaced growth at the state level.



During Session #2, the regional team reviewed the detailed targeted industry analysis for all four industries and six members of the regional team volunteered to contact companies in these clusters located in the 3 counties to ask the following questions:

1. What supporting inputs does your company require for its business (tools, supplies, raw products, technologies, specialty services/people, private or public infrastructure upgrades)
2. Are these inputs purchased locally or outside of the region?
3. Are any of the inputs available locally? If they are, can you use them?

4. Would any of your suppliers or customers consider a move closer to your facility? What would do you feel would incentivize them to do so?
5. Why is your company located in the region?
6. What would help your company expand and grow here?
7. Is the region's medical presence acceptable?

Interviewees noted that many of their companies were located in the region due to family history or access to the Illinois River. Also, many noted that inputs are purchased globally and that their facilities might be too small to attract spin-off locations from their suppliers due to the global nature of current supply chains.

Many of the respondents indicated that infrastructure (road, rail, water, utilities, broadband) was very important to them remaining in the area. In particular, many respondents indicated that one of the primary pressures that could negatively impact them was the potential re-designation of I-180 from a 4-lane interstate to a county road. The existing transportation infrastructure was very attractive and promoted access. However, some respondents noted that electric utilities were not keeping pace with their demands and that the region's broadband hampered expansion potential and the ability to attract new investment in the area.

After reviewing more in-depth industry cluster information and discussing the information gathered during the interviews, it was determined that future growth in the Energy Cluster was highly dependent on federal subsidies for alternative energies and it would be difficult to develop a strategy reliant on fickle government policies. Additionally, it was discovered that the Energy Cluster data was not capturing ethanol production which was classified as "ethyl alcohol manufacturing". Information was requested for this target industry but the regional team concluded that there were not likely to be any new ethanol plants on the horizon and that any spin-off manufacturing of byproducts from ethanol production would fall under the Agri-business, Food Processing, and Technology Cluster.



In regards to the data for the Fabricated Metal Production Manufacturing Cluster and discussing the site selection criteria for companies in this cluster and detailing the key workforce attributes, it became clear that much of the advantage that the MPS Region had in this category was specifically tied to the convenient location in close proximity to the Caterpillar facilities in Peoria, IL. Based on reports, it became clear that metal fabrication production and design processes were being outsourced out of the area and the state. For the occupations that predominated in this cluster, there had been significant declines in employment between 2009 and 2014 indicating that the cluster was one that would be difficult to nurture

back to health and a more realistic vision would be to train the workers in the cluster for employment in other sectors.

While the Business & Financial Services Cluster showed impressive growth and was classified as an "Emerging Industry", the regional team concluded that this sector's growth was attributable to growth in the Agribusiness, Food Processing, and Technology Cluster and was secondarily dependent on servicing a resident population. As a result, this cluster was removed from further consideration.

Because of the area's location on the Illinois River and the presence of the Illinois River Road Scenic Byway, the regional team requested more information regarding the Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, and Visitor Industries. A report funded through the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration entitled the "Illinois River Road National Scenic Byway Business Development Study" had been released in 2012 that reviewed the tourism potential along the byway. The Illinois River Road National Scenic Byway is located along the Illinois River and impacting the MPS Region's counties as well as surrounding counties. Part of the report focused on the "gap" in what tourists want from a region and what is actually available. The report found that there was a deficit in tourism-oriented businesses in the area and this was negatively impacting the perceptions of visitors to the region. The regional team recognized that this need represented an opportunity to develop an entrepreneurship program targeting businesses that can serve the visitor population.

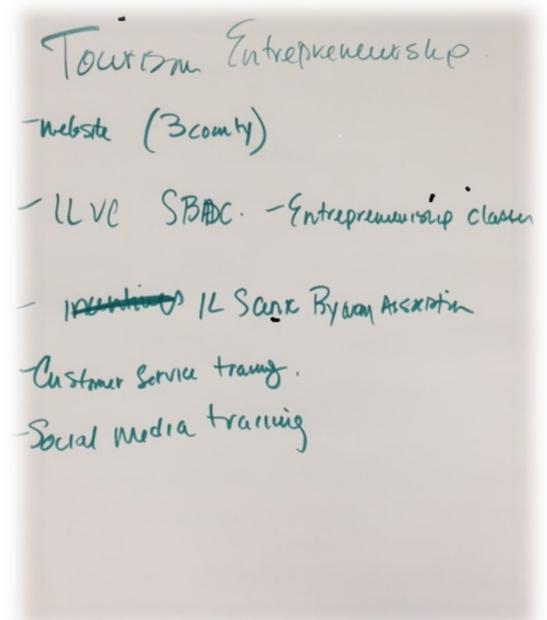


Additionally, further research by the regional team found that the tourism industry within the region, as measured by local convention and visitors bureaus, had continually grown through the last recession in terms of local tourism expenditures, payroll, and local and state tax receipts. It was determined that to serve this growing niche, one of the region's goals should include a tourism entrepreneurship strategy and build on the work that had already been conducted through the Business Development Study.

Of the other four original industry clusters, it was decided that a focus be placed on the Agribusiness, Food Processing, and Technology Cluster for further goal development. Many of the businesses in the area could be classified in this cluster or were reliant on this cluster for business development, supplier networks, or shared a workforce. Additionally, due to the size and prevalence of the cluster within the MPS Region, it was determined that there was a multiplier effect that was producing employment in other clusters including Chemicals, Energy, Transportation and Logistics, and Business & Financial Services and providing the basis of the region's economy.

Originally, the regional team had considered a targeted goal and strategy sequence focused specifically on the Agribusiness, Food Processing, and Technology Cluster. However, when developing the goals, it became apparent that the region lacked a formal economic development delivery system that would be necessary to develop a targeted agricultural industry strategy. Additionally, it was determined that the development of an economic development infrastructure and an agricultural industry target goal could be undertaken concomitantly because there was already some collaboration between the area Farm Bureaus focused on addressing the needs of the agricultural industry within the MPS region. Therefore, the regional team developed a general economic development goal under which a targeted, Agribusiness sub-goal was included.

The information garnered during the Civic Forum; through the SET Sessions that included deep dives into regional demographics, statistics and target industry data; and through the business visitation survey established the economic development priorities for the regional team. It was acknowledged



that for an economic plan to work, some type of organizational structure was necessary to manage it and brand the region with a singular identity. Additionally, for a strategy focused on the agribusiness cluster to work effectively, this economic development delivery system needed to be in place or needed to be in development at the same time.

In regards to the second goal, infrastructure was identified as a primary reason that many companies were located in the region. However, there were issues identified by Civic Forum participants and businesses in the region that acknowledged some very important issues. Broadband was identified as lagging factor in the region and there had been some talk about de-certifying an Interstate in the area that served many of the major industries and employers in the region. Additionally, the presence of the river and the potential construction of a port in Henry, Illinois solidified the importance of focusing on infrastructure as a goal.

The third goal, Tourism Entrepreneurship, was selected after reviewing target industry data and state tourism statistics as well as the “Illinois River Road National Scenic Byway Business Development Study”. Statistics showed that this was a growing industry in the MPS region; however, the business development study noted that the tourism potential for the region was underutilized and undervalued due to an identifiable gap in business offerings in the region. The regional team realized that there was a demand for business development in this growing field and if nurtured with entrepreneurial assistance and intervention, a focus on tourism could result in the development of small businesses throughout the region that enhance the region’s attractions and natural areas.

The final goals selected for inclusion in the region’s economic development plan included the following:

### Goal 1 – Economic Development Framework

Develop a region-wide identity and interconnected framework focused on economic development collaboration that provides the basis for business

### Broad Strategy

Creating an economic development service delivery system..  
Focusing on the Agribusiness, Food Processing and Technology cluster to be included in regional economic development efforts.

### Goal 2 –Tourism Entrepreneurship

Recognizing the existing tourism assets of the region, attract visitors to local destinations through a coordinated and systematic marketing, promotion, and entrepreneur development effort throughout the region that grows both the tourism market and the number of tourism-oriented businesses.

### Broad Strategy

Learn what tourism businesses currently exist; develop promotional opportunities for the industry; and provide supportive training for businesses.

### Goal 3 – Infrastructure

Provide infrastructure that facilitates the expansion of existing businesses, improves the communities’ basic infrastructure for improved living conditions for residents and encourages other industries and businesses to locate in the region

### Broad Strategy

Research how to improve Broadband and fiber optic access in the region; coordinate advocacy for public infrastructure improvements from the state; and educate communities in the region about funding opportunities.

**Goal 1: Economic Development Framework—Develop a region-wide identity and interconnected framework focused on economic development collaboration that provides the basis for business growth, retention, and creation of businesses in target industries.**

***Regional Economic Benefit***

*This goal recognizes that a formal and collaborative regional economic development framework needs to be in place before the region can succeed at business development initiatives. Through the operationalization of this goal, the region will create a formal regional process by which all three counties can collaborate on the development of a regional framework that will ultimately transform into a functioning regional economic development organization. By including initiatives focused on the Agricultural Cluster in this goal, the regional team recognizes that a focus on this particular cluster provides the grounding for the development of regional economic development framework and organization .*

<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Responsible Party **</b>	<b>Key Contacts</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Status</b>
1.0 By 2022, the MPS Region has created a viable economic development organization with participation from the region and its municipalities and at least 5% of the businesses located within the region	ED Coordinating Team	County Boards, Municipalities, Chambers of Commerce, Community Colleges, Civic Organizations, Nonprofits, Business Community, NCICG	2022	Pending
1.1 Educate and promote the region as a unified economic development region through identifiable branding	ED Coordinating Team	County Boards, Municipalities, Chambers of Commerce, Community Colleges, Civic Organizations, Nonprofits, Business Community, NCICG	2017/2018	Underway (will need to be a continuous messaging initiative)
1.2 Inventory the business and locational assets of the region including businesses, available developable sites, incentive programs, utilities, quality of life assets, and local resources	ED Coordinating Team	County Boards, Municipalities, Chambers of Commerce, Community Colleges, Civic Organizations, Nonprofits, Business Community, NCICG	2Q 2017	Underway
1.3 Launch an annual Economic Development Summit for the region that provides an annual review of regional work plans, new projects, and advocacy issues that broach all three counties and facilitates regional cooperation. Include discussions regarding an annual advocacy agenda regarding infrastructure projects and incentive programs that need support at the State and Federal levels.	ED Coordinating Team/Tourism Coordinating Team	County Boards, Municipalities, Chambers of Commerce, Community Colleges, Civic Organizations, Nonprofits, Business Community, NCICG	2018	Pending

<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Key Contacts</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Status</b>
1.4 Develop a regional website that promotes a collaborative regional identify and hosts information regarding economic development, site selection information, quality of life information, regional incentives, and target industry information	ED Coordinating Team/ Tourism Coordinating Team	County Boards, Municipalities, Chambers of Commerce, Community Colleges, Civic Organizations, Nonprofits, Business Community, NCICG	2018/ 2019	Pending
1.5 Launch a quarterly series of economic development information sessions targeting regional leaders from government, industry, and nonprofits with the goal of strengthening regional relationships and provide a setting to work collaboratively on economic development projects	ED Coordinating Team	County Boards, Municipalities, Chambers of Commerce, Community Colleges, Civic Organizations, Nonprofits, Business Community, NCICG	2019	Pending
1.6 Establish a regional economic development organization with a paid staff member to respond to inquiries for the region. The organizations will be funded through a three year capital campaign effort	ED Coordinating Team	County Boards, Municipalities, Chambers of Commerce, Community Colleges, Civic Organizations, Nonprofits, Business Community, NCICG	2022	Pending
2.0 By 2022, 20% of the businesses in the Agriculture Cluster are participating in regional economic development efforts	ED Coordinating Team, Marshall - Putnam Farm Bureau, Stark County Farm Bureau	Farm Bureaus, Chambers of Commerce, Community Colleges, University of Illinois Extension, USDA	2022	Pending
2.1 Initiate a Business Retention & Expansion Program focused on the Agribusiness Cluster in the region	ED Coordinating Team, Marshall - Putnam Farm Bureau, Stark County Farm Bureau	Farm Bureaus, Chambers of Commerce, Community Colleges, University of Illinois Extension, USDA	2017	Underway
2.2 Establish an Agribusiness Advisory Group that can eventually be incorporated under the auspices of a regional economic development organization	ED Coordinating Team, Marshall - Putnam Farm Bureau, Stark County Farm Bureau	Farm Bureaus, Chambers of Commerce, Community Colleges, University of Illinois Extension, USDA	2Q 2017 with full incorporation into a regional EDO by 2022	Pending
2.3 Launch an Agribusiness Summit to discuss local, state, and national trends in the agribusiness industry	ED Coordinating Team, Ag Advisory Group, Marshall- Putnam Farm Bureau, Stark County Farm Bureau	Farm Bureaus, IL DCEO, USDA, IL State Treasurer's Office, University of Illinois Extension, County Boards, Municipalities	2018	Pending

Strategies	Responsible Party	Key Contacts	Timeline	Status
2.4 Explore targeted attraction programs focused on Asian Carp Processing, Pet Food Manufacturing, Frozen Food Manufacturing, and Agri-tourism/Local Foods	ED Coordinating Team, Ag Advisory Group, Marshall-Putnam Farm Bureau, Stark County Farm Bureau	Farm Bureaus, Chambers of Commerce, Community Colleges, University of Illinois Extension, USDA	1Q 2017	Underway
2.5 Work with USDA Agriculture Research Lab in Peoria, IL to identify potential new technologies or business spin-offs for the region	ED Coordinating Team, Ag Advisory Group, Marshall-Putnam Farm Bureau, Stark County Farm Bureau	USDA, Farm Bureaus, University of Illinois Extension	Initiate in 2Q or 3Q 2017	Pending
2.6 Support the development of the inter-modal port facility at Henry, IL that has the potential to magnify the importance and of the Agribusiness Industry within the region	ED Coordinating Team, Ag Advisory Group, Marshall-Putnam Farm Bureau, Stark County Farm Bureau	IL DCEO, Army Corps of Engineers, Ozinga Industries, County Boards, City of Henry, Railroad Companies	2017-2022	Underway

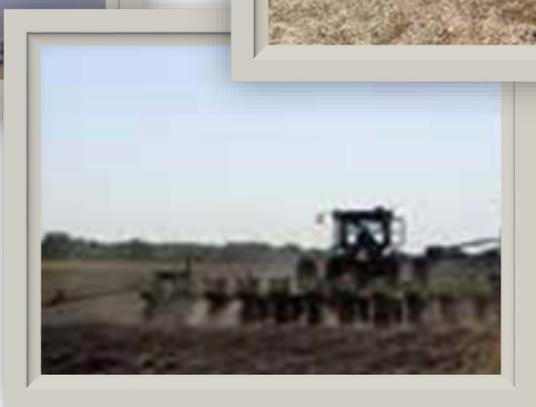
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## Targeted Outcomes:

- By 2022, a regional economic development organization will be created that will encompass all 3 counties, the majority of municipalities, and 5% of businesses located within the region, and include a paid staff member
- By 2022, 20% of businesses in the Agribusiness cluster will be participating in regional economic development efforts
- A regional economic development website will be launched (in conjunction with a tourism section) with monthly website hits of 100 by 2020 and 250 by 2022 (economic development section separately)
- Conduct, at least 10 agri-business related business retention visits annually beginning in 2017
- Identify and attract at least 5 new agri-businesses to the region by 2022

## Short term (6 months to 2 years)

- Economic Development team will work with the Tourism team to develop a “brand” for the region that makes the counties an identifiable, single unit
- Begin the process of educating the region’s constituents about the importance of a regional identity to promote economic development
- Inventory the region’s economic development assets including businesses, available sites, incentives, and resources by 2nd Quarter of 2017
- Continue with a regional Business Retention & Expansion Program focused on the Agribusiness Industry (ongoing).
- Recruit members for the Agribusiness Advisory Group
- Develop targeted response to companies in the Asian Carp Processing, Pet Food, Frozen Food Manufacturing or agri-tourism industries that have already expressed interest in MPS sites
- Provide for continuous and vigorous support and advocacy for the development of the intermodal port facilities at Henry, IL on the Illinois River



## **Intermediate (2 to 4 years)**

- **A regional economic development website (that includes tourism information) will be developed and launched by June 2018**
- **By 2018, launch Economic Development Summit and Agribusiness Summit (Agribusiness Summit can be organized as a stand-alone summit or as part of the region's general Economic Development Summit)**
- **Explore connections between the Henry, IL port and the rest of the region in an effort to support existing regional business needs and attract new industry to the region**
- **Work to identify opportunities that might arise in the Agribusiness Industry through networking and establishing relationships with key figures at the USDA's Agriculture Research Lab**
- **In 2019, launch quarterly economic development meetings for region participants in preparation for the establishment of a regional EDO**
- **Begin the process of securing funds to create a regional economic development organization to provide a central point for economic development inquiries for the region (this might be in conjunction with goal to develop a tourism promotion group)**

## **Long term (5+ years)**

- **Funding of regional marketing is adequate due to strong membership base of communities and businesses participating in the regional marketing group**
- **The region has a significant online presence and a common identity and brand by 2022**
- **Ongoing and continual engagement of the Agribusiness Industry has resulted in increased participation in regional economic development efforts, several more expansion opportunities, and new business lines/units being located within the region.**



## Goal 2: Tourism Entrepreneurship—Recognizing the existing tourism assets of the region, attract visitors to local destinations through a coordinated and systematic marketing, promotion and entrepreneur development effort throughout the region that grows both the tourism market and the number of tourism-oriented businesses.

### *Regional Economic Benefit*

*Building on the region's tourism assets and its location on the Illinois River, this goal recognizes the tourism industry's growth in the region and the need for business development initiatives to meet the needs of visitors and to grow an important economic base in the region.*

Strategies	Responsible Party **	Key Contacts	Timeline	Status
1.0 By 2022, the MPS Region has achieved a 5% increase in the number of new, profitable tourism businesses and a 15% increase in both tourism expenditures and sales tax revenues generated by tourism activities	Tourism Coordinating Team/ Economic Development Coordinating Team	County Boards, Municipalities, Chambers of Commerce, Existing Tourism Businesses, Regional Tourism Associations (Peoria Area CVB and Heritage Corridor CVB)	2022	Pending
1.1 Conduct an inventory of the number of existing tourism businesses and organizations in the 3 county region	Tourism Coordinating Team	Peoria Area CVB, Heritage Corridor CVB, Illinois Valley Area Chamber of Commerce, Lacon Area Chamber of Commerce, Wyoming Chamber of Commerce, Henry Chamber of Commerce	1Q 2017	Pending
1.2 Work with the local SBDC to develop entrepreneurship, social media, and marketing classes for existing and start-up tourism businesses	Tourism Coordinating Team	Illinois Valley Community College SBDC; Quad Cities Chamber of Commerce SBDC	2Q 2017	Pending
1.3 Develop a customer service training program for hospitality workers within the region	Tourism Coordinating Team	University of Illinois Extension	2018	Pending
1.4 Develop a regional website that promotes the tourism opportunities in the region	Tourism Coordinating Team	Counties, Municipalities	2018/2019	Pending
1.5 Research and market the "local food" and "local products" movement in the region as a means to boosting agri-tourism in the region. (this also supports the Agribusiness Cluster)	Tourism Coordinating Team	University of Illinois Extension, USDA, Peoria Area CVB, Heritage Corridor CVB	2017	Pending

Strategies	Responsible	Key Contacts	Timeline	Status
2.0 By 2022, solutions to address the 3 gaps identified in the IL River Road National Scenic Byway (IRRNSB) Business Development Study will be implemented in communities along the byway	Tourism Coordinating Team	Counties, Municipalities	2018	Pending
2.1 Develop a team to collaborate with the Illinois River Road National Scenic Byway Association, to review the gaps that exist in regards to local businesses that are needed to promote local tourism and select 3 high priority areas to focus on. The IRRNSB Business Development Study will be utilized as the basis for this strategy.	Tourism Coordinating Team	Counties, Municipalities	2018	Pending
2.2 Launch a regional marketing group to coordinate tourism efforts in the three county region	Tourism Coordinating Team	Counties, Municipalities	2019	Pending

**\*\*Tourism Coordinating Team**

Denny Rewerts, City of Wyoming EDC – dennystarkco@gmail.com

Mary Ann Magnuson, Henry Community Character Counts President – marymag5@hotmail.com

Crystal Rosebecke, Tri County Opportunity Council – crosebecke@tcochelps.org

Jay McCracken, Retired Mayor and Former Educator - jmccracken@iasaedu.org



## Targeted Outcomes:

- By 2022, increase tourism expenditures in the region by 15% from \$19 million to nearly \$21.9 million
- By 2022, increase the number to tourism jobs in the region from 90 to 120
- By 2022, increase local sales tax receipts garnered through tourism activities by 15% from \$1 million to \$1,150,000
- Develop regional tourism website with monthly web hits of 250 by 2020 and 500 by 2022
- Conduct at least 2 tourism-oriented entrepreneurship classes beginning in 2018

## Short term (6 months to 2 years)

- Create a tourism team by January 2017 consisting of representatives from all three counties who are committed to working on improving tourism in the region
- Tourism team will work with the Economic Development team to develop a “brand” for the region that makes the counties an identifiable, single unit
- Inventory tourism assets, organizations, businesses, and facilities to create a baseline by March 2017
- Team will meet with SBDCs by 2nd quarter of 2017 to design/create two classes: one for entrepreneurs and another for both new and existing businesses on the use of social media for marketing purposes
- Team explores the potential inclusion of “local foods” and “local products” as a means to support agri-tourism across the region
- Team will meet with U of I Extension to implement a Customer Service Training Seminar for local businesses to be launched in 2018



## **Intermediate (2 to 4 years)**

- A regional tourism website (or section on the regional economic development website) will be developed and launched by March 2018
- Regional collaboration for region-wide tourism events will begin December 2020
  - ◊ Expanded tourism options include agri-tourism tours,
- Team will collaborate with Illinois River Road National Scenic Byway (IRRNSB) Association and North Central Illinois Council of Governments on issues identified in the IRRNSB Business Study:
  - ◊ Team will utilize the results from the Illinois River Road National Scenic Byway Business Study to develop action plans to address gaps within tourism businesses in the area
- Begin the process of securing funds to create a regional marketing group to coordinate tourism activities in the region

## **Long term (5+ years)**

- Funding of regional marketing is adequate due to strong membership base of communities and businesses participating in the regional marketing group
- A unified message that includes cross marketing, regional communications, and targeted messaging is known locally and used by 2022
- Tourism entrepreneurship becomes a significant addition to the economy generating new business opportunities, jobs, spending, and local tax revenues.



## Goal 3: Infrastructure—Provide infrastructure that facilitates the expansion of existing businesses, improves the communities’ basic infrastructure for improved living conditions for residents and encourages other industries and businesses to locate in the region.

### *Regional Economic Benefit*

*Maintaining and expanding the region’s infrastructure is an important ingredient to the region’s competitiveness. This goal is focused on three important areas for the region: Broadband, roadways, and an intermodal port and is designed to protect and enhance existing infrastructures while laying the groundwork for the expansion of new infrastructures that promote the expansion and attraction of new business opportunities to the region*

Strategies	Responsible Party **	Key Contacts	Timeline	Status
1.0 By 2022 the MPS region has achieved broadband access and fiber optics in all 3 counties that is on par with the nearby population centers of Peoria and	Infrastructure Coordinating Team	County Boards, Municipalities, Telecommunication Companies, ISP’s	2022	Pending
1.1 Form a committee that will make contacts to learn what options are currently available in the 3 counties and ways to improve access.	Infrastructure Coordinating Team	County Boards, Municipalities, Telecommunication Companies, ISP’s	2017	Pending
1.2 Research the potential for creating a public/private entity to deliver expanded broadband communication service to the region.	Infrastructure Coordinating Team	County Boards, Municipalities, Telecommunication Companies, ISP’s	2018	Pending
2.0 By 2022 the infrastructure in the region will be improved, this includes river, roads, and rail, and will be capable of servicing the residents and businesses in the region in a safe and efficient manner.	Infrastructure Coordinating Team	VOICE Educational Lobby Assn. Labor Organizations, Civic Groups, Farm Bureaus, USDOT and IDOT, Army Corps of Engineers, RR’s, IDNR, County Boards, Municipalities	2022	Pending
2.1 Hold a regional meeting to determine which road projects should be prioritized for funding from the state. Communicate this priority as a group to the local state politicians (supports economic development summit strategy: 1.3)	Infrastructure Coordinating Team	VOICE Educational Lobby Assn. Labor Organizations, Civic Groups, Farm Bureaus, USDOT and IDOT, RR’s, IDNR, County Boards, Municipalities	2017	Pending
2.2 Advocate at the state level for local projects; we will have a mechanism in place where we will always have two roadway projects in preliminary engineering, planning and final engineering for our three county region. Our goal is to have at least two of our roadway projects in the pipeline at all times.	Infrastructure Coordinating Team	VOICE Educational Lobby Assn. Labor Organizations, Civic Groups, Farm Bureaus, USDOT and IDOT, RR’s, IDNR, County Boards, Municipalities	2017	Pending

Strategies	Responsible Party	Key Contacts	Timeline	Status
3.0 By 2022 the quality of utilities in all the communities in the 3 county region will be up to date, safe and adequate for the residents, businesses, and schools. This includes water, waste water and drainage/flood plain issues.	Infrastructure Coordinating Team	DCEO, USDA, EDA, Utility Companies, County Boards, Municipalities	2022	Pending
3.1 Develop a listing to distribute to all communities in the region to notify them of funding opportunities and entities that can assist with projects. This list will be provided to local officials and appropriate personnel (city clerks, water operators, etc).	Infrastructure Coordinating Team	DCEO, USDA, EDA, Utility Companies, County Boards, Municipalities	2020	Pending
4.0 By 2022 there will be the provision of assistance and support on the development of the port in Henry, IL to be a viable multiplier for Economic Development in the 3 county region	Infrastructure Coordinating Team, City of Henry, Ozinga Materials, Army Corps of Engineers, Iowa Interstate RR	Mayor and City Council of Henry, County Boards, Municipalities, Foreign Trade Zone, TRANSPORT (Port Authority), Fleeting Service Providers, Army Corps of Engineers	2022	Ongoing
4.1 Form a group to keep local and state politicians informed about the importance of funding the port in Henry and its strategic importance to economic development efforts in the region	Infrastructure Coordinating Team, City of Henry, Ozinga Materials, Army Corps of Engineers, Iowa Interstate RR	Mayor and City Council of Henry, County Boards, Municipalities, Foreign Trade Zone, TRANSPORT (Port Authority), Fleeting Service Providers, Army Corps of Engineers	2016	Ongoing

## **\*\* Infrastructure Coordinating Team**

Pat Sloan, Marshall and Putnam County Highway Engineer – [psloan@marshallcountyillinois.com](mailto:psloan@marshallcountyillinois.com),  
 Kristina Popurella, IDOT Employee & Putnam Co. School Board – [pcsdoard7@gmail.com](mailto:pcsdoard7@gmail.com)  
 Gary Goodwin, FBFM Fieldman and Essex Township Board Member – [gooding2@frontier.com](mailto:gooding2@frontier.com)  
 Jeff Bergfeld, Landscape Architect and City of Henry Alderman – [jeffbco@gmail.com](mailto:jeffbco@gmail.com)  
 Carl Carlson, Putnam County Superintendent of Schools – [carlsonc@pcschoools535.org](mailto:carlsonc@pcschoools535.org)



## Targeted Outcomes:

- By 2022, high speed broadband infrastructure will be available to 50 percent of the region's population
- Beginning in 2017, host regional meeting to determine road projects and other infrastructure projects that will be advocated at state and federal levels
- Implement at least one regional transportation project identified through Illinois Department of Transportation per year starting in 2018; have two project in the queue at all times (planning, preliminary engineering, engineering)
- Beginning in 2017, develop annual listing of funding opportunities for communities needing assistance in upgrading water infrastructure and utilities and distribute to all communities in the region
- By 2022, the Port at Henry, IL will be under construction

## Short term (6 months to 2 years)

- Infrastructure Coordinating Team will recruit members from the three counties to participate
- In 2017/2018 hold regional meeting to discuss roadway projects, water
- Work to preserve I-180's status as an interstate and protect it from being decommissioned through state and federal level advocacy
- Provide for continuous and vigorous support and advocacy for the development of the intermodal port facilities at Henry, IL on the Illinois River
- Work with NCICG (North Central Illinois Council of Governments) and other parties to develop a brief regarding the importance of I-180 to the development of the Port at Henry, IL
- Form a specific committee to explore broadband access and provision issues in the region and to begin to address local needs
- Actively pursue funding to update the lock and dam system on the Illinois River, as well as its channels



## **Intermediate (2 to 4 years)**

- After a period of exploration, begin developing a public/private partnership to accelerate the deployment of broadband infrastructure across the region by cultivating relationships with state entities as well as private sector providers
- Partner with Illinois Department of Commerce, Illinois Department of Transportation, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Illinois EPA the USDA and other state and federal agencies to host an annual regional meeting/expo regarding infrastructure funding in the region

## **Long term (5+ years)**

- Infrastructure Coordinating Team will work under the auspices of a regional economic development entity
- Improvements to the region's infrastructure are continuously monitored, advocated for, and funded at reasonable levels
- Government and industry will work collaboratively to address infrastructure issues in the region
- Broadband infrastructure has expanded throughout the region and high speed internet access is available to at least 50 percent of the population in the three counties
- Construction of the intermodal port facility at Henry, IL is underway with at least 3 industrial users

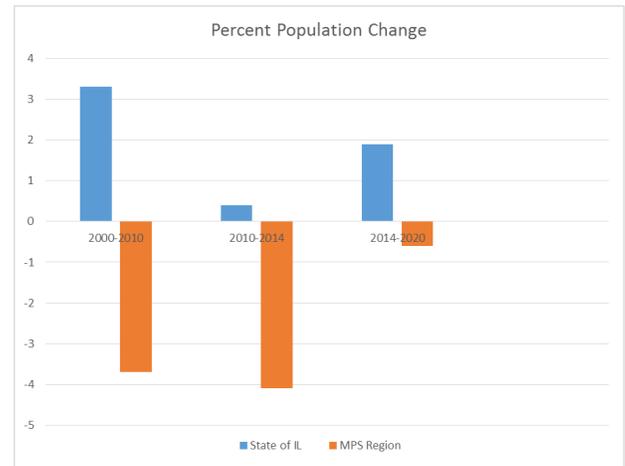
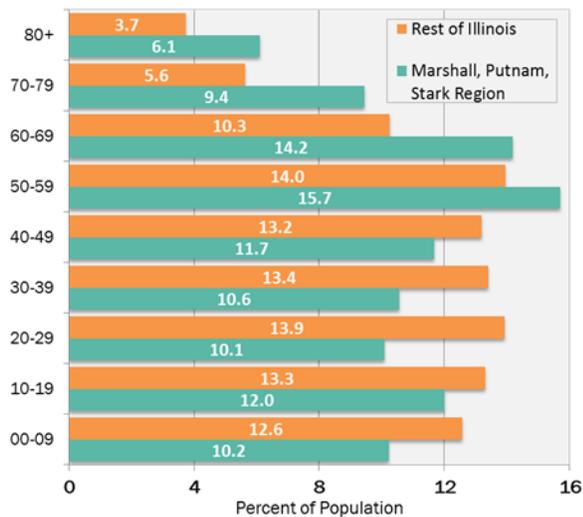


# EVIDENCE BASE FOR THE PLAN

## Regional Demographic Data:

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the MPS Region is seeing both a decline and aging of their **population**. The current population of 23,414 represents an 8.5 % decrease since the 2000 census while during the same time period the State of Illinois' population grew by 3.5%. In 2000, 37.8% of the regional population fell into the prime workforce **age range** of 20-49 years but by 2014 that percentage had decreased to 32.4%. Conversely, the percentage of the population over 60 years old increased from 23.5% in 2000 to 29.7% in 2014. The State of Illinois, as a whole, has seen a similar shift in population to the older ranges, as well.

Age distribution of the population (in percent) and Population Change (in percent)

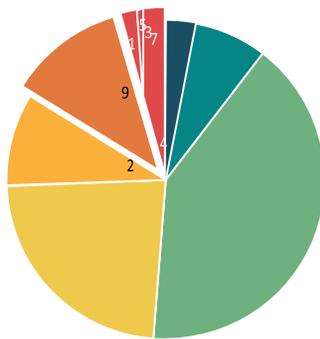


The population decrease can be attributed to a number of factors. Like all rural, agricultural counties, the farm population has continued to shrink while average farm sizes have increased. Community sizes have remained relatively stable but the emptying of the countryside of residents has contributed to the decline in population in these counties. Additionally, the close proximity of the MPS Region to the Peoria, LaSalle-Peru, and Bloomington-Normal Metros provides a number of residents diverse work opportunities. To alleviate commutes, many residents gravitate to the Metro regions in new home areas. Finally, the MPS Region lacks a number of amenities that could attract or retain a growing population. At this time, the region lacks hospitals/medical centers, a community college campus of any kind, and there is a very real dearth in grocery retailers. With surrounding metros providing these amenities, many residents are attracted to live in these locales with a more diverse array of services.

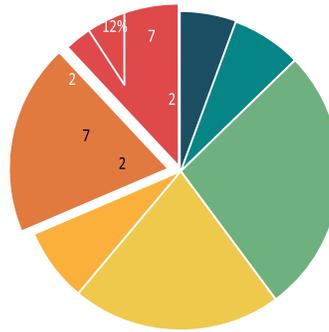
There is little **racial diversity** in the region with whites making up a 97.5% of the population. A slight increase in diversification has occurred due to the fact that the Hispanic population has increased from 1.4% to 3.1% of the population in 2014.

A Bachelor's degree or higher was attained by 32% of the State's population while in the MPS Region, 17% have achieved the same amount of **educational training**. However, 32% of area residents have completed an Associate's degree or have some college training compared to the state's average of 28% of the population for the same educational levels. Additionally, 90% of the MPS region's population has a high school diploma or GED versus the state average of 87%.

Marshall-Putnam-Stark



Rest of Illinois



The median **household income** for the region has dropped markedly to \$53,136 from 2008 when the median household income was \$55,309. Like all communities across the United States, the MPS Region was impacted by the Global Financial Crisis that began that year and endured through 2010. However, real median household income in 2003 (in 2013 dollars) for the region was \$53,761 indicating that the region has not fully recovered from the 2008 crisis. Additionally, with the loss of manufacturing jobs during the 2000's, average wage rates have been suppressed.

Another statistic that can be attributed to the fallout from the great recession and the restructuring of the U.S. manufacturing sector is the increase in **poverty rates**. That figure has increased from 7.8% to 10.1% in 2013. For minors, the poverty rate is higher and increased faster over the 2003-2013 period to a total in 2013 of 16.4%.

## Regional Economic Data:

In 2014, the **average earnings** per worker in the MPS Region were \$37,772 compared to the state average of \$57,165. The disparity is threefold: first, state figures include the City of Chicago and its affluent suburban counties, where approximately 70% of the state's total population resides and where wages and salaries are naturally higher; secondly, the MPS Region's older population has a significant portion in its retirement years and reliant on retirement savings, pension, and/or social security that will be necessarily less than the salaries earned by workers; and thirdly, as a rural region, the industries in the area are less diverse and more focused on agriculture, manufacturing, and extractive industries rather than those that predominate in a global financial and innovation center such as the Chicago land area.

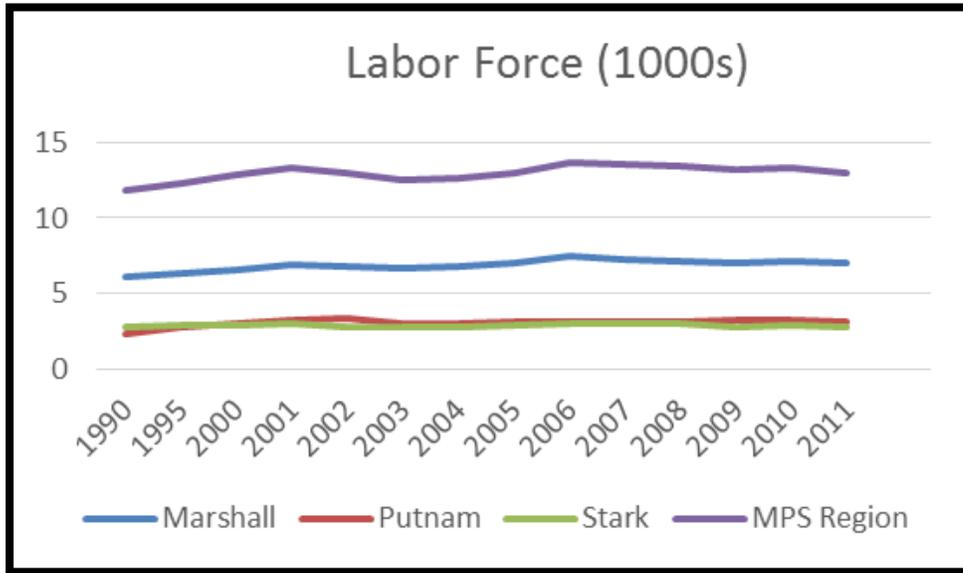
While the **unemployment rates** for the State of Illinois and the United States have tracked closely together between 2004 and 2014, the MPS Region's unemployment in 2009 jumped to 12% compared to the state and national rates of 9.7% and 9.6%. As of 2014, the unemployment rate for the MPS Region had decreased to 7.5% while the state and national rates were both 6.2%. Agricultural regions tend to have fluctuations due to seasonal employment but additionally, Central Illinois where the MPS Region lies was drastically impacted by the downturn in manufacturing industries both within the region and in the surrounding Metro areas.

A significant portion of the population in the MPS Region **commutes to jobs** outside of the region. Of the 12,581 jobs held by residents within the region as of 2013, 9,907 or 78.7% of those jobs were outside of the MPS Region and 2,674 (21.3%) of those jobs were within the MPS Region and held by residents.

### Journey to Work



Based on 2013 figures, there were a total of 5,780 **jobs within the MPS Region**. Of those, 3,106 (53.7%) were held by folks living outside of the region while 2,674 (46.3%) of the jobs were held by MPS Region residents. As result, the region exports a significant portion of its workforce to surrounding regions but also imports a substantial number of workers from outside the region to fill the jobs generated within the Region. This indicates that the region has the labor force needed to attract new business and also to work in existing businesses that will most likely be impacted by an inevitable wave of retirements predicted for the region through 2020.



The **number of establishments** in the region has increased from 1,766 in 2000 to 2,103 in 2011. In that time frame a total of 1,596 new establishments were launched in the region while 1,251 closed. Considering net migration, there was total of 337 new businesses in the region, an increase of 19.1%. Significant growth in the self-employed and businesses with 2-9 workers fueled this growth. The number of jobs at MPS Region-based establishments increased 7.1% from 10,044 in 2001 to 10,761 in 2011.

While there was growth in establishments and jobs between 2001 and 2011, total sales generated by these establishments decreased by 21.4% during the same time period. One significantly large steel mill closed during this time resulting in the eradication of 750 local jobs and wiping out approximately \$180 million worth of sales that contributed to the region's total.

## Regional Assets

While all three counties are primarily rural in nature, Putnam County is part of the Ottawa-Peru, IL Micropolitan Statistical Area which is also included in the Chicago-Naperville, IL-IN-WI Combined Statistical Area. Both Marshall and Stark Counties are in the Peoria, IL Metropolitan Statistical Area. The cities of LaSalle-Peru, Ottawa, and Peoria provide significant employment opportunities for residents in the region.

The central location of the counties within the north central portion of the state has resulted in the area having significant transportation assets that serve the regional economy and industries within the area. Roadways serving the region include I-180 and I-39, U. S. Highway 51, and 12 state routes. Three railroads also transverse the region and these include the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF), Union Pacific (UP), and Iowa Interstate Railroad.

An additional transportation and recreational asset is the Illinois River. The river is part of the 336 mile Illinois Waterway System that provides a shipping connection from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico via the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers. Primary shipments along the river include coal, chemicals, petroleum, soybeans, and corn. The Illinois River is also a significant recreational and tourism asset for the region with the Illinois River Road Scenic Byway winding along the river through wetlands, prairies, and woodland areas that attract an abundance of biodiversity of wildlife. Several thousand acres of pristine lands have been set aside in the area in state parks, conservation districts, and private lands to preserve the original character of the region.

According to results from the MPS Region's Civic Forum held on September 23, 2015, **Transportation**, and all of its permutations, was identified as the top strength for the region and an important asset. Transportation was followed by **Strong Local School Systems (K-12)**, and **Quality of Life/Small Town Atmosphere** as the top assets of the region.

After a review of top level data at the forum, other regional assets were identified. The cost of doing business is lower and attractive to businesses – wages and taxes included. The region's residents are more likely to have attained at least a high school diploma and the region has the workers available to work in new or expanding businesses. There is a modicum of family structure stability and community cohesion. The region offers incentives and also trends more innovative than the state as a whole.

The region is also home to a number of home grown businesses that have family ties to the area. Many of these businesses have significant employment bases within the region's communities. The counties have a well-developed and active agricultural business base that has also attracted an Ethanol plant to the area, as well as a wind farm that spans Marshall and Stark Counties.



## Potential Barriers

The Civic Forum also identified a number of trends that posed potential barriers and challenges for the region in forging an alliance to pursue regional economic development planning. A primary issue of concern was the **State of Illinois' business climate** and the ongoing budget battle in Springfield that was impacting tax revenues flowing into the communities to support local programs including education and public works programs, as well as social service activities.

Related to the state's crisis, **there is real concern that state-designated Enterprise Zones will become a proxy battle between interests in Springfield.** In Illinois, there is a significant division between Chicago Metro interests where nearly 70 percent of the state's population resides and "Downstate Illinois" (Downstate Illinois = all areas in Illinois outside of Chicago and the Counties of Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, and Will). This is not a political party split but rather one focused on urban/suburban versus the primarily rural downstate regions. With more political representation, there is the perception that new enterprise legislation will favor the more populated Chicago Metro resulting in fewer enterprise zones in downstate Illinois. Putnam County and Marshall County (Marshall County's enterprise zone was extended into Stark County for the development of a wind farm there) both have enterprise zones that have come up for renewal.

While the region has a core of manufacturing industries, **the last recession eliminated many layers of production employment that have not recovered.** Additionally, with the trend in automation, many production jobs may not be coming back and the remaining positions require different skill sets than what is available. While civic forum participants noted that there was an available workforce, further discussion revealed that many of the workers did not have the skills to fill existing positions or the positions that were in demand were at lower wages than what could be obtained in larger metros surrounding the regions. This contributes to the significant number of regional residents who commute out of the region to work.

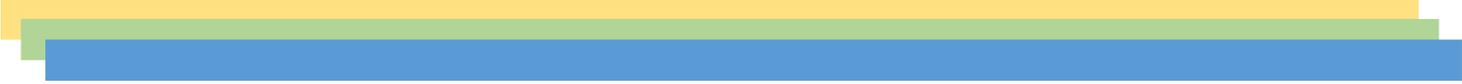
The prevalent perception that there is a lack of jobs and industry and the associated workforce mismatch between skills and available jobs has also contributed to **younger adults leaving the region** for opportunities elsewhere. This exodus of younger adults is prevalent throughout the State of Illinois and is especially pronounced in rural regions that are getting progressively older with time. Another contributing factor is the region **lacks the amenities** that a younger workforce would find attractive. There are no college facilities within the three counties and the region is served by hospitals and medical center located outside of the region. There is also a dearth of grocery and other retail options in the area, as well. While smaller grocery retailers and convenience stores are present, larger brand name grocery retailers are located outside the region in neighboring counties.



Additionally, while the Illinois River Road Scenic Byway crosses the region as does the Rock Island Nature Trail, there is a **lack of local retail businesses available for travelers to utilize**. The Illinois River, while seen as a major asset for transportation, is also an underutilized recreational asset in the region.

One of the most important barriers identified was that **the region lacked a cohesive identity and was essentially invisible online**. While the counties are part of an Economic Development District and members of a common council of governments, from the outside, there is no indication of internal regional collaboration. There is no coordinating agency that manages economic or community development for the three counties. There are no countywide economic development groups in two of the three counties and there are only four chambers of commerce active within the region and those are community focused.

A primary discussion for this group was “if you want economic development and you want to attract businesses to the area, how do you do that and who is responsible?” Without the online presence and a regional brand, it is difficult to communicate to new or existing businesses that they are welcome in the area. With no organizations focused on regional economic development, there also is no staff focused on handling inquiries or even to direct organizational strategies.



## Evaluation Plan

The plan includes key measures and strategies that have been selected to work together to enhance the MPS Region’s economy. Measures used to track progress include tracking outcomes attached to specific goals and strategies and monitoring key industry trends, regional demographic data, and regional economic statistics for observable changes that can be attributed to goal and strategy implementation. It is understood that the plan is a living document and can be modified to reflect new information provided by a continuous loop of evaluative data.

The MPS Regional Team has designed a plan that includes progressive steps in attaining goals and broadening the reach of the plan to include both public and private sector members in the region. Through the established working groups focused on each of the goals, quarterly progress meetings will share information and progress on the achievement of goals and strategy development. Working groups will report progress to local County Boards on a Semi-Annual basis.

It is expected that the working groups will expand to meet their objectives and to identify expertise, locally or regionally, that might need to be added through following five years.

# Dissemination Plan

## ***Purpose:***

1. Create public awareness of the Partners for Progress SET Plan
2. Recruit members/volunteers for Goal Teams

## ***Awareness Campaign – 2016-2017***

- Presentation on the Plan to be offered at each individual county board meeting.
- Contact local media for coverage.
- Materials made available to the general public at each county courthouse.
- Contact each village president/city mayor to present the completed plan to them in a personal meeting.
- Disseminate the plan to each Chamber of Commerce.

## ***MPS Planning Team:***

Jeff Bergfeld \* Chauntelle Biagi-Bruer \* Bill Campion \* Duane Calbow \* Teresa Clausen \*

Bobby Cofoid \* Mary Crook \* Hank Gauwitz \* Jill Guynn \* Karl Ham \* Lorali Heintzelman \*

Penny Hexdall \* Larry Hollis \* Gary Kroeschen \* Kevin Kunkel \* Chris Laible \* Kevin Lindeman \*  
Brad Lindstrom \* Terry Madsen \* Mary Ann Magnuson \* Coleen Magnussen \* Pat Maher \*

Thomas Marten \* Jay McCracken \* Ron McNeil \* Tiffany Moodie \* Robert Mueller \* Jim Nolan \*

Bob Read \* Denny Rewerts \* Crystal Rosebecke \* Tami Rouse \* Phil St John \* Henry Waldinger \*

Sandra Woest \* Hank Zilm.

## ***Regional Collaboration – The MPS Region has buy in from several key decision makers and businesses.***

Melody Anderson – Wyoming Chamber of Commerce \* Joe Bella – Calvary Bible Church, Lacon \* Jeff Bergfeld – City of Henry Alderman \* Duane Calbow – Putnam County Board Chairman \* Kevin Coleman – Village of Hennepin President \* Bob Fecht – Marshall-Putnam Farm Bureau Board President \* Dave Horras – Ag View FS General Manager \* Kevin Lindeman – NCICG \* Barry Logan – Marshall County Airport \* Coleen Magnussen – Stark County Board Chairwoman \* Jay McCracken – Putnam County Schools \* Travis McGlasson – Marshall County Board Vice Chairman \* Denny Rewerts – City of Wyoming Economic Development \* Mark Rewerts – State Bank of Toulon \* Bob Rouse – Green Gables Inc. \* Pat Sloan – Marshall and Putnam County Highway Engineer \* Henry Waldinger – Village of Bradford Mayor

# Acknowledgements

## Executive Committee Members:

- Denny Rewerts, City of Wyoming Economic Development Advisor
- Chauntelle Biagi-Bruer, Putnam County EMA Assistant Coordinator
- Tami Rouse, Career Link UWDB Marshall and Stark Counties
- Tiffany Moodie, Marshall-Putnam Farm Bureau Manager
- Thomas Marten, Stark County Farm Bureau Manager

## Special Thanks to the Following:

- Russell Medley, Extension Educator, Community and Economic Development, UIUC Extension
- Susan Petrea, Area Director, USDA Rural Development
- Kate O'Hara, Community and Economic Development Coordinator and Public Information Coordinator, USDA Rural Development
- Kevin Lindeman, NCICG



**Marshall County, Illinois**



**Stark  
County  
Illinois**



**Economic Development**



## APPENDIX A:

### **MPS regional team**

Travis McGlasson—Marshall County Board; Duane Calbow—Putnam County Board; Coleen Magnussen—Stark County Board; Mark Rewerts—State Bank of Tolono; Jay McCracken—Putnam County Schools; Dave Horras—AgView FS; Henry Waldinger—Village of Bradford; Kevin Coleman—Village of Hennipen; Robert Fecht—Marshall Putnam Farm Bureau; Kevin Lindeman—North Central IL Council of Governments; Dennis Rewerts—Stark County Economic Development Partnership; Barry Logan—Marshall County Airport; Bob Rouse—Green Gables Inc.; Jeff Bergfeld—City of Henry; Joe Bella—Calvary Bible Church; Melody Anderson—Wyoming Chamber of Commerce; Pat Sloan—Engineer Marshall Putnam Counties; Tiffany Moodie—Marshall Putnam Farm Bureau; and Chauntelle Biagi-Bruer.

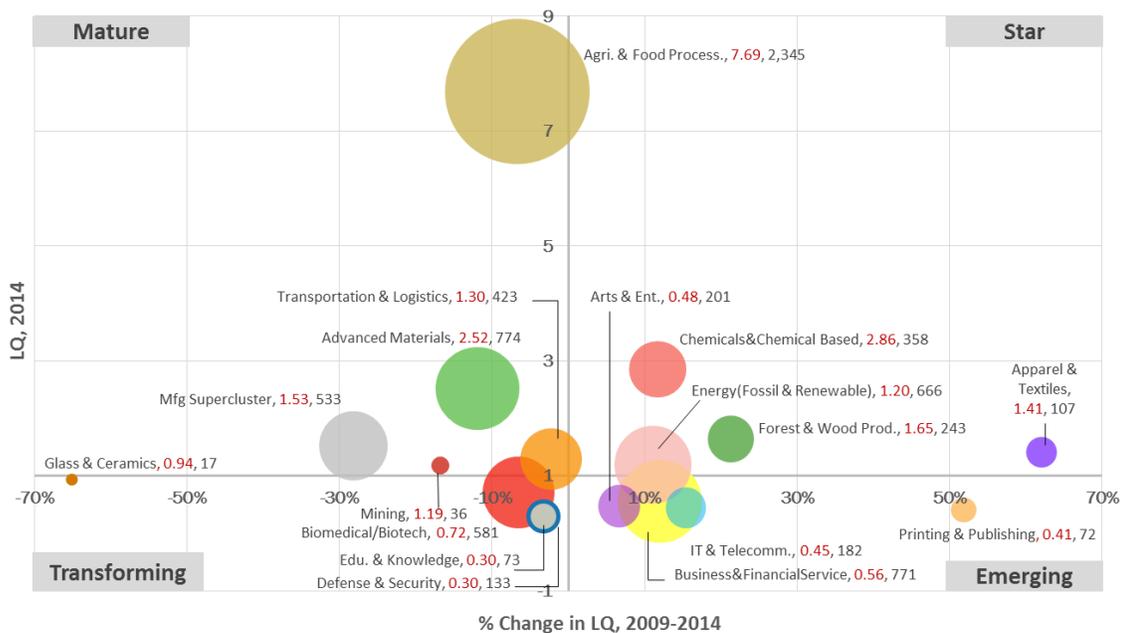
### ***MPS Planning Team:***

Jeff Bergfeld, Chauntelle Biagi-Bruer, Bill Champion, Duane Calbow, Teresa Clausen, Bobby Cofoid, Mary Crook, Hank Gauwitz, Jill Guynn, Karl Ham, Lorali Heintzelman, Penny Hexdall, Larry Hollis, Gary Kroeschen, Kevin Kunkel, Chris Laible, Kevin Lindeman, Brad Lindstrom, Terry Madsen, Mary Ann Magnuson, Coleen Magnussen, Pat Maher, Thomas Marten, Jay McCracken, Ron McNeil, Tiffany Moodie, Robert Mueller, Jim Nolan, Bob Read, Denny Rewerts, Crystal Rosebecke, Tami Rouse, Phil St John, Henry Waldinger, Sandra Woest and Hank Zilm.

### ***Regional Collaboration – The MPS Region has buy in from several key decision makers and businesses.***

Melody Anderson – Wyoming Chamber of Commerce \* Joe Bella – Calvary Bible Church \* Lacon Jeff Bergfeld – City of Henry Alderman \* Duane Calbow – Putnam County Board Chairman \* Kevin Coleman – Village of Hennepin President \* Bob Fecht – Marshall-Putnam Farm Bureau Board President \* Dave Horras – Ag View FS General Manager \* Kevin Lindeman – NCICG \* Barry Logan – Marshall County Airport \* Coleen Magnussen – Stark County Board Chairwoman \* Jay McCracken – Putnam County Schools \* Travis McGlasson – Marshall County Board Vice Chairman \* Denny Rewerts – City of Wyoming Economic Development \* Mark Rewerts – State Bank of Toulon \* Bob Rouse – Green Gables Inc. \* Pat Sloan – Marshall and Putnam County Highway Engineer \* Henry Waldinger – Village of Bradford Mayor

## APPENDIX B



### Mature Industries

Seven industry clusters in the Marshall-Putnam-Stark Region are in the Maturing stage: Agribusiness, Food Processing & Technology, Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing, Advanced Materials, Primary Metal Manufacturing, Manufacturing Supercluster, Transportation & Logistics, and Mining. These industries are relatively concentrated, but their growth is trending downward. It is worth noting, however, that the Marshall-Putnam-Stark Region may find it worthwhile to invest in efforts to shore up the concentration of these industries.

### Transforming Industries

Transforming clusters capture the mix of industries that are experiencing relative decline and limited export capability. In the Marshall-Putnam-Stark Region, Glass & Ceramics, Biomedical/Biotechnical, Machinery Manufacturing, Defense & Security, and Education & Knowledge Creation, are all Transforming clusters. Any amount of growth in these industries would require relatively large investments.

### Star Industries

Star industry clusters are highly concentrated, exporting and still experiencing growth in the region. The most highly concentrated of the Star industry clusters in the Marshall-Putnam-Stark Region is Chemicals & Chemical Based. Its location quotient is 2.86, indicating that the cluster is nearly 3 times more concentrated in the region compared to the U.S. Other strong clusters of note in the region include Computer & Electronic Product Mfg., Forest & Wood Products, Apparel & Textiles, and Energy (Fossil & Renewable).

### Emerging Industries

Industry clusters that may be poised for future growth are classified as "Emerging." There are four Emerging clusters in the Marshall-Putnam-Stark Region: Business & Financial Service, Arts & Entertainment, IT & Telecommunication, and Printing & Publishing

