Northeast Indiana will be one of the first four economic growth regions in the state to benefit from Skillful Indiana, a workforce development initiative first undertaken in Colorado.

Skillful Indiana, a program of the Markle Foundation, Microsoft Philanthropies, LinkedIn, Walmart, Lumina Foundation and Purdue University in conjunction with workforce development boards and the governor’s workforce cabinet, will work with Indiana businesses and the state’s innovative educational community to equip Hoosiers with marketable skills that are the new currency of the digital economy.

Northeast Indiana Works staff have been in discussions with Skillful representatives, who will largely serve in an advisory and facilitation capacity, as well as provide informational resources.

Over the next few months, Skillful Indiana representatives said they will be in a planning phase and will work with Northeast Indiana Works in identifying ways to advance local strategic goals and address workforce development challenges.

Among the ways Skillful representatives may assist Northeast Indiana Works and its WorkOne Northeast career centers:

- Introduce a Skills Works curriculum to the region and determine the best route for deployment to employers.
- Provide staff with access to Skillful-managed professional development networks and training resources that focus specifically on upskilling frontline career coaches.
- Offer direct connections to workforce leaders in Colorado to learn and/or share successful program models.

**Stand Down Events Held Throughout Region:** An estimated 120 veterans attended the 22nd annual Fort Wayne Stand Down for Veterans in late October at Franke Park.

More than two dozen organizations were on hand to help homeless veterans and other veterans in need of assistance. Among the participating organizations: Brightpoint, Turnstone, Shepherd’s House, United Way 2-1-1, the Fort Wayne Vet Center, Volunteers of America, and UAW Local 2209.

WorkOne Northeast, which also had a table, played a critical role in helping plan the event.

Other Stand Down events drawing a total of 215 veterans were held earlier in Grant and Steuben counties.
**Build Class Graduates:** The Northeast Indiana Building Trades, Fort Wayne Urban League, Indiana Plan, Northeast Indiana Works, Ivy Tech and the city of Fort Wayne celebrated an eight-person graduating class of the BUILD program.

BUILD (Building Trades, Urban League, Indiana Plan, Local and Diversity) is a free, four-week pre-apprenticeship training program that prepares participants for a career in the skilled trades. The program is designed to assist people in being job ready, as well as having a clear understanding of the 18 skilled trades in northeast Indiana.

BUILD helps fortify an industry that provides good-paying jobs for individuals looking for a career, not just a job.

"This program is a hand up, not a handout," said Leroy Jackson, a 43-year skilled trades veteran and Northeast Indiana Works board member.

Fort Wayne is projecting a record number of construction projects over the next five years, necessitating a growing need for more skilled labor. Region-wide, meanwhile, it is estimated job growth in the construction industry will be about 10 percent in the next decade. That job growth, plus filing positions left open through retirements, will mean the industry will have to hire an additional 6,700 workers by 2028, according to data provided by Northeast Indiana Works. Twenty percent of workers in the construction industry are currently at or near retirement age.

People who graduate from the program will have earned a construction industry certification, First Aid/CPR certification, a customer service credential, and completed OSHA 10 training. They will have an opportunity to enter an apprenticeship program in their chosen field.

The latest BUILD class was funded by Northeast Indiana Works, the JPMorgan Chase Foundation and the city of Fort Wayne. The Urban League, Building Trades and the Indiana Plan oversee the program.

**Work-Based Learning Leaders Visit Region:** Darrel Zeck, executive director of the Indiana Office of Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeship, and Senior Director Carrie Lively met Nov. 14 with roughly 35 business representatives and economic development officials to encourage the development of work-based learning programs.

The public sessions took place in Fort Wayne and Marion. Zeck and Lively also met privately in Fort Wayne with northeast Indiana elected officials. All of the meetings were arranged by Northeast Indiana Works.

The work-based learning office is interested in helping employers develop flexible work-based learning programs that focus on the state’s key economic sectors and high-wage, high-demand occupations, as well as help regions build public-private partnerships to foster industry engagement. Northeast Indiana has a head start on the latter with no fewer than five sector partnerships involving manufacturers and local educators.

**Retired Teacher Earns Volunteering Honor:** Stephen Long of Fort Wayne recently received an award of excellence from Serve Indiana, a division of the Indiana Department of Workforce Development (DWD).

Long, a retired high school chemistry and biology teacher, was recognized for volunteering at Science Central, where he participates in lab activities and outreach programs that bring the lab to students.
Japanese Summit Explores Workforce Challenges: Northeast Indiana Works President Edmond O’Neal and Kim Tempel, senior director of business services/human resources, attended a Fort Wayne manufacturing summit with Japanese leaders in October.

The summit, arranged by the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership, CEPEX (The Center for Professional Exchange) and Ivy Tech Community College, featured Naoki Ito, counsel-general at the Consulate-General of Japan in Chicago.

The purpose of the summit was to discuss potential U.S.-Japan collaboration with the private sector, government authorities and educational institutions in addressing workforce development challenges.

More than 280 Japanese-owned businesses operate in Indiana, demonstrating the positive economic impact of the long-standing relationship between Indiana and Japan. Japanese companies have at least 24 locations in northeast Indiana.

Wabash WorkOne Relocates: The Wabash WorkOne Northeast career center has relocated to the Wabash County Community Learning Center.

The new address is 277 N. Thorne St., Room 107, Wabash. The last day of service at the former address, 1143 N. Cass St., Wabash, was Nov. 13.

The Wabash center at its new location will be open 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Tuesdays. The phone number remains the same: 260.563.8421.

Most Counties Will See Manufacturing Growth: Eight of 11 northeast Indiana counties are expected to see job growth in manufacturing in the next 10 years, according to a DWD analysis.

Manufacturing is the region’s largest employer with more than 84,000 workers.

The three counties not expected to see manufacturing job growth in the next decade are Allen, Huntington and Wabash. DeKalb County job growth is expected to be 6 percent, from 9,618 to 10,222.

Northeast Indiana Works Gets $85,000 Grant: DWD has awarded Northeast Indiana Works an $85,000 performance grant to help address critical workforce issues in the region, the state agency announced.

Northeast Indiana Works plans to use the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) grant to improve adult education operations, where adults who lack a high school diploma can earn an equivalency or certification to help them move to a better job. The grant also will help enhance the Jobs for America’s Graduates (JAG) program, which targets high school students, and develop career pathways.

“We extend our appreciation to the Indiana Department of Workforce Development for providing this grant and are thrilled to be able to utilize it for talent development in northeast Indiana, particularly in support of creating career pathways in the Food and Agriculture sector and enhancing JAG programs at 15 high schools,” said O’Neal. “This additional money comes at a critical time for supporting initiatives that will help the region’s employers fill high-wage in-demand jobs now and in the future.”
**DWD Makes Site Visit:** DWD’s Leslie Crist and Steve Gault conducted a site visit to Northeast Indiana Works in October.

Other site visits will be conducted at other regions throughout the state.

The purpose of the site visits is to better understand how workforce development organizations operate and learn about best practices.

**Moving Forward on Food and Ag:** Northeast Indiana Works has contracted with longtime educator and consultant Dr. Wiley Sirk to develop career pathways in the emerging Food and Agriculture Sector.

An examination of opportunities in the sector appeared in late October in a Journal Gazette article written by Northeast Indiana Works Director of Communications Rick Farrant. The article can be found at http://www.journalgazette.net/opinion/sunday-centerpiece/20181028/growth-industry

*(The next board meeting will be from 9 to 10:30 a.m. January 11, 2019 at 200 E. Main St., Suite 910, Fort Wayne)*