

For Immediate Release

Northeast Indiana Site Certification Program Unveiled

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FORT WAYNE, Ind. January 6, 2010-The Northeast Indiana Foundation and Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership have announced the establishment of a northeast Indiana-specific site certification program called "Certified Site Ready." The unveiling of the Certified Site Ready program accompanies the announcement of northeast Indiana's first six certified sites.

The Certified Site Ready program has been established in northeast Indiana to increase the region's inventory of development ready sites to best meet the needs of site selectors and prospect companies in today's highly competitive global site selection market. Northeast Indiana's Certified Site Ready complements the Shovel Ready certification established by the Indiana Economic Development Corporation, creating another avenue through which certification can be achieved.

"Communities that are proactive in preparing sites for development will be in a prime position to move forward in the site selection process" said Mark Becker, Executive Director of the Northeast Indiana Foundation. "It is critical for northeast Indiana to develop an inventory of development ready sites to complement state efforts in marketing the region globally. This program advances the region's reputation for high standards."

A site earns Certified Site Ready status after a successful assessment completed by a third party. Fulfilling this role for the Certified Site Ready program is Mark Williams, President and founder of Strategic Development Group. Each certified site is required to meet benchmarked standards in 15 categories which ensure that the site is prepared for an expedited development process, catering to the stringent timelines of prospect companies and significantly minimizing risk.

"Site certification provides a distinct competitive advantage in the site selection process for sites that are successful in achieving this designation," said Mark Williams. "The local economic development organizations that have completed the rigorous certification process should be congratulated for their success in significantly enhancing the region's readiness to attract jobs and capital investment."

"Certified Site Ready is critical to our efforts to move the region to the forefront of the site selection process," said Bill Konyha, President & CEO of the Economic Development Group of Wabash County and LEDO Council Chairman. "It is a very important and necessary step forward for the region and will result in northeast Indiana counties being considered by site selectors for industrial projects of the future."

The certification program is available for sites located in Adams, Allen, DeKalb, LaGrange, Huntington, Noble, Steuben, Wabash, Wells and Whitley counties. Those counties receiving certification for locations in this round of announcements include: Adams, Huntington, LaGrange, Noble and Wells. Other counties that have sites pending certification are: DeKalb, Wabash.

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About the Northeast Indiana Foundation: *The Northeast Indiana Foundation's mission is to support the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership and its 10 member counties through the funding and coordination of charitable activities which directly contribute to its mission of facilitating the creation of new business investment and high quality jobs for the region.*

About the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership: *Created in 2006, the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership's mission is to market the 10-county region and team with local economic development organizations (LEDOs) to bring new jobs and commercial investment to the area. The Partnership concluded a successful Investment campaign in October of 2006 targeting an initial operating period of five years. The RP's global marketing efforts will be on behalf of LEDO's in Adams, Allen, DeKalb, Huntington, LaGrange, Noble, Steuben, Wabash, Wells and Whitley counties.*

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