

THRIVE

winter 2025

YOUR CONNECTION FOR A THRIVING **ELKHART COUNTY**



**ELKHART
COUNTY**

#1 Mid-Sized
MSAs in
Manufacturing*



From the CEO's Desk

Welcome to THRIVE: Your Connection to Growth and Opportunity in Elkhart County

All of us at the Economic Development Corporation of Elkhart County (EDC) are excited to provide the inaugural edition of our quarterly newsletter **THRIVE**.

Our goal is to provide you with accurate and timely updates on what's happening and information and support that is available for our local businesses from the EDC perspective in Elkhart County as well as the South Bend-Elkhart region.

Our EDC mission/vision focus is to attract, retain and develop a sustainable and innovative economic base. We aggressively work in our business expansion and retention efforts with local businesses to understand their unique pain points and barriers and assist them in whatever way is requested. We help them grow and improve their profitability and capabilities to ensure awareness of the toolbox of resources available both locally and regionally.

We drive the dialogue between industry, government and education sectors to ensure Elkhart County and our surrounding region is a thriving community to take full advantage of local and regional 21st century opportunities. We engage with our community partners to address opportunities, drive positive changes, and implement solutions as technology and business rapidly change.

As Elkhart County evolves, talent development and business retention remain top priorities. The EDC is engaged with Vibrant Communities and other quality of place initiatives with a burning desire to make Elkhart County the best locale to live, work, and play.

Please let us know how we can help and thanks for your support.



Chris Stager, EDC President/CEO

Empowering Local Manufacturers

Solutions for Efficiency, Savings, and Growth

The Economic Development Corporation of Elkhart County (EDC) collaborates with local manufacturers to enhance processes, improve efficiency, and boost overall profitability.

Time is often a major concern while running a business. Staying informed about opportunities for increased efficiency and profitability can be challenging.

We team with local companies to enhance productivity and profitability with training opportunities and funding, free or reduced cost-saving strategies, site selection assistance

and local and state incentives. Here's an example.

Almost all companies that utilize compressed air have leaks in their systems, leading to unnecessary energy expenses. We offer solutions that can repair all your leaks at no cost.

We also assist local businesses with utility cost management. Over the years, Indiana's electricity prices have risen significantly (90% more expensive today compared to 2004), and this trend is expected to continue. We partner with a technology partner that can help you reduce your

electricity costs by up to 30%. They assist in lowering electricity costs by using real-time use data to improve operational practices.

For more details on these and other EDC business expansion and retention programs, please contact David Damerow to schedule a meeting at your business or organization.

David A. Damerow
Director of
Business Retention
and Expansion
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We have worked with the EDC of Elkhart County on several successful projects over the years, bringing continued growth opportunities to both our companies and our employees. The EDC team has always provided us with the right direction and resources necessary to make informed decisions; **we consider them a valuable and trusted partner.** Their emphasis on employee training and development — along with an enduring commitment to making Elkhart County a better place to work and live — ensures a prosperous future. That gives us confidence to invest further in this community.”

Ben Smith, CEO — Great Lakes Forest Products, Inc. / Great Lakes Forest Lamination, Inc



about

GREAT LAKES FOREST PRODUCTS, INC.

FOUNDED: 1989

HEADQUARTERS: 21861 Protecta Drive, Elkhart, IN 46516

OPERATIONS: Corporate office and five plants in Elkhart.

OWNERSHIP: Privately owned by Mark and Jennifer Smith

LEADERSHIP: Ben Smith, CEO

PRODUCTS: Specialists in remanufactured and bulk lumber and domestic and imported plywood.

Investing in TRAINING

The Economic Development Corporation of Elkhart County (EDC) staff partners with local and state training partners to provide grants and other financial support to local businesses for training. We do this while helping companies identify areas where they can customize the training curriculum to enhance employee skills, streamline and improve operational processes, and ultimately improve company culture.

Since 2017, the EDC has partnered with the Purdue University Manufacturing Extension Partnership, Ivy Tech Community College, Indiana University South Bend and the Labs for Industry Futures and Transformation at the University of Notre Dame to provide a wide variety of workforce training to companies in the Elkhart-South Bend region.

To date, over 3,000 employees from over 410 regional companies have taken advantage of the varied training offered at our facility. We provide short duration,



affordable and industry driven solutions that help increase business productivity and improve manufacturing processes. Our curriculum at the EDC is primarily driven by requests from industry and is offered in our facility, onsite at our client’s facilities, and online as well through complimentary workshops.

The EDC invested \$65,000 in 2023 to develop a leading-edge digital classroom to provide enhanced onsite and digital hybrid training solutions. This facility utilizes the latest Microsoft Teams Rooms technology and has a state-of-the-art 4K auto-tracking camera system as well as improved audio, visual, and recording capabilities. The room seats 30 people comfortably in a classroom setting and is available for Elkhart County businesses on a first-come, first-served basis.

Upcoming Training Classes & Events

Team Building in Manufacturing

Jan. 14 | 7:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Leadership Skills for Success Series (nine-session series)

Jan. 15 | 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Feb. 5 | 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Feb. 26 | 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Mar. 19 | 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
 April 9 | 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
 April 30 | 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
 May 21 | 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
 June 11 | 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
 July 9 | 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

Waste Stream Mapping

Jan. 16 | 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

Mastering Strategic Supplier Management

Jan. 21 | 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

Becoming a Better You Through Personal Accountability

Jan. 29 | 7:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Introduction to Industrial Electrical Principles & Troubleshooting Part 1

Jan. 30 | 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Jan. 31 | 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

Introduction to Industrial Electrical Principles & Troubleshooting Part 2

Feb. 6 | 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Feb. 7 | 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

Leading & Coaching for Superior Performance

Feb. 11 | 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

Leadership Skills for Success for Managers, (six-session series)

Feb. 12 | 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Mar. 5 | 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Mar. 26 | 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
 April 16 | 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
 May 7 | 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
 May 28 | 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

Introduction to Industrial Electrical Principles & Troubleshooting Part 3

Feb. 13 | 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Feb. 14 | 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

Employee Retention Strategies

Feb. 18 | 1 p.m.-4 p.m.

Inventory Management Playbook: Tools & Strategies for Success

Feb. 19 | 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

Introduction to Programmable Logic Controls (PLCs), (five-session series)

Mar. 6 | 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Mar. 7 | 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Mar. 12 | 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Mar. 13 | 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Mar. 14 | 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

Supply Chain Finance Essentials: Optimizing Cash Flow & Profitability

Mar. 18 | 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

Sales, Inventory, and Operation Planning (SIOP): Forecasting, Capacity & Performance Excellence

May 13 | 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

Training Opportunities Delivered By



Manufacturing Extension Partnership

For detailed descriptions of these classes and more, scan code or visit elkhartcountybiz.com/classes/

