

**A New Northwest Indiana:
A Cleaner Economy and Environment**

by

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Section I

Introduction

A hot and humid summer day is perfect for a trip to the beach. The sand burns your feet, but the water offers cool relief while you develop a bronze tan. When the lake is smooth and there are gentle breezes I like to sail my catamaran sailboat. The large sand dunes are visible from the boat, inhabited by many species and covered with marram grass. It is days like these I live for when I visit my parents at home. While this description may sound like that of a coastal vacation spot, the setting I describe is Northwest Indiana. The Indiana Dunes are globally unique because of their unusual ecological diversity and beauty. The National Park Service reports that the Indiana Dunes is home to over 1300 species of flowering plants and ferns (U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1998). Also, Henry Cowles reported in 1891 that more than 300 varieties of birds and hundreds of bald eagles, deer, bears, and timber wolves roamed the dunes and sand ridges of the region (Moore, 1959). The diversity was so exceptional that Cowles, sometimes called “the father of ecology,” developed his model of ecological succession in the dunes. Moore (1959) finds that early settlers described the area “along the shores of Lake Michigan east of Gary as one of the most remarkable regions in America, the Indiana Dune Country” (p. 16). For over a century, visitors have come from all over the world to see what the glacial masses created by force thousands of years ago.

These visitors do not come to see most of the lakeshore lined, as it is, with steel mills, power plant cooling towers and oil refineries. If you drive down Interstate 90, you can clearly see the ten-mile stretch of lakeshore that U.S. Steel’s Gary Works occupies. My college classmates tell me that Northwest Indiana is one of the dirtiest places they have seen in the United States. Indeed, for many, Northwest Indiana is just an industrial wasteland that one

passes on the road to Chicago. In addition, the region's economy is definitely diminished from what it was in its industrially vital times. Northwest Indiana used to be known for its outstanding school systems, beautiful homes and economic opportunity (Trusty, 1992). But today, many of its cities are known as crime ridden, racially divided, highly polluted failures.

While it is not the cleanest place, it is a permanent residence for many people. For a century, steel mills have lined the shores of the southern tip of Lake Michigan. Most people who drive down the Indiana Toll Road do not ever stop to see the Indiana Dunes, but they certainly remember the brown skyline, the raunchy smell and the rusting steel buildings as far as the eye can see. The environment is such that citizens of Northwest Indiana cannot tell you what clean air smells like. For example, my father has always joked, cynically, that you are not home until you can smell and see the air. The large number of steel mills and their steel producing capacity inevitably leads to pollution in Northwest Indiana. The area is marked by higher incidences of children's asthma, regular beach closings and an un-fishable, un-swimmable and undrinkable Calumet River. The sand immediately underneath the soft top layer on Northwest Indiana beaches is black from tar created by burning coal and from large barges. Still, Northwest Indiana has provided steady employment with benefits and high pay for a century. Citizens of the region viewed the smoke rising from the smoke stacks as a sign of prosperity 100 years ago (Mohl and Betten, 1986). Only a few citizens actively campaigned to save the natural environment of Northwest Indiana, primarily members of the Save the Dunes Council founded in 1952 (Engel, 1983).

The steel industry has benefits. While dunes are beautiful, the steel industry provides jobs. This began when U.S. Steel purchased ten miles of lakeshore in 1902 in the hopes of turning the supposedly desolate wasteland of marshes and dunes into a viable steel community

(Warren, 2001). Over one hundred years later, the Gary Works, Midwest Steel, former Bethlehem Steel, International Steel Group (ISG), the Port of Indiana, the Michigan City coal power plant, the BP/Amoco Oil Whiting Refinery and associated industries line the lakeshore.

Despite the obvious environmental and health damage it causes, the steel industry is supported by citizens and elected officials alike (Dowdy, 1992). The citizens of Northwest Indiana have viewed the steel industry as their life-blood and pollution as just an annoyance. The question I seek to address is in this paper whether citizens of Northwest Indiana have to choose between high paying jobs and clean air, land and water, or whether they can have both. I will answer this question in the affirmative: Northwest Indiana can have economic development and clean air, land and water. I will discuss the enterprises that could prosper in Northwest Indiana while fostering a clean environment and I will analyze the current environment in Northwest Indiana and show how it can be improved. The current environmental problems in Northwest Indiana are not irremediable.

In section II, I review the history of Northwest Indiana, detailing the incursion of industry into the region, focusing on the steel mills. Following a brief historical review, I will present the early attitudes of the citizens of Northwest Indiana from the 1880's through the 1920's. Then I will return to history by discussing the decline of the steel industry in the nation and more specifically in Northwest Indiana. In section III, I will explain through statistical analysis what the local environment is like today and follow that explanation with a demographic survey of the area as well. I will then profile the current economic situation in Section IV and the region's many explorations in the last twenty years of the potential alternative economic industries including casinos, high tech industry and sports. Then, in Section V, I will consider the obstacles that Northwest Indiana faces to changing its economy

side of Chicago, but was discouraged by residents' reaction to the extreme sulfur odor that was characteristic of Lima, Ohio crude oil. Residents complained that their city was already filled with industry. After hearing so many complaints from south side residents and comparing the price of land in Chicago and Northwest Indiana, Standard Oil decided not to build a refinery in Chicago (Moore, 1959).

Standard Oil found the same transportation, railroad and water benefits of Chicago on less expensive land in Northwest Indiana. For the purchase, Standard Oil sent its real estate and tax representative, Theodore M. Towle, to purchase land from Whiting residents, not telling them to whom they were selling. In fact, Moore (1959) says that when asked what was

parcels of land for \$678,000. It was the previous ownership of another industry that allowed U.S. Steel to purchase its lakefront property. Expansion of the steel industry in the Chicago area was largely responsible for the origin and development of East Chicago and Gary” (p. 185). Because large industries were often not welcomed with open arms next to neighborhoods that appreciated their clean air, it was important that U.S. Steel was able to purchase its land from another large corporation rather than from local residents.

East Chicago and Gary became cities as a result of ISG and Gary Works. U.S. Steel, Gary Works was named after the U.S. Steel chairman Elbert H. Gary. As America expanded, the western markets began to grow economically and thus began to increase their demand for steel. Recognizing Chicago as a natural center for transportation and distribution, U.S. Steel began to look for sites that were cheap, wide open and flat to accommodate the newer open-hearth furnaces. U.S. Steel began by expanding its recently purchased Illinois Steel plant with one new blast furnace and ten new open-hearth furnaces, but they also wanted to acquire land for a new mill. The requirements for a new mill included close proximity to the lakeshore, the proper political environment and ease of purchasing. It has been said that had politics been different at the time, U.S. Steel would have expanded its South Works instead of building a

1909. Almost overnight, Gary Works became the largest steel mill in the United States (Warren, 2001).

Along with the mill, U.S. Steel built what would be labeled the “magic city” by journalists of that era, Gary, Indiana. Gary was labeled the “magic city” because it was home to the largest steel mill in the world and offered opportunity to everyone who was looking for a job (Mohl and Betten, 1986). Gary, founded in 1906, was built in conjunction with the Gary Works. It became an immigrant oasis where 60.5 percent of the population in 1920 was foreign immigrants. The immigrants included Poles, Czechs, Russians, Lithuanians, Hungarians, Croatians, Serbians, Slovaks, Turks, Greeks and Italians. Mexicans and Southern blacks were also encouraged by U.S. Steel to settle in Gary. Mohl and Betten (1986) say the city was boosted as “one of the industrial wonders of the twentieth century” (p. 14). U.S. Steel executives actively opposed building a Pullman-style industrial town where everyone lived in company owned barracks. U.S. Steel made it clear that they wanted to build a city of individually owned homes. However, the planning was criticized as lacking a long-term outlook as a sacrifice to economic gains. The layout of the city became more like Pullman’s design than was anticipated. The town became separated by income level and ethnicity. Management had their own homes, while eastern European laborers were housed in apartments separated by ethnicity and blacks migrating from the south were placed in overcrowded shanties. From the beginning, the initial haphazard lack of planning has been blamed for the racial segregation that has characterized Gary since its founding (Mohl & Betten, 1986).

At about the same time that the Gary Works was opened, other steel mills in Northwest Indiana began production. Inland Steel began operation in 1901, proving to U.S. Steel the economic advantage of locating in Northwest Indiana (Workers of the Writers Program, 1939).

Subsidiaries of U.S. Steel soon opened their doors, including American Sheet and Tinplate in 1909, American Bridge in 1911 and American Steel and Tube at Indiana Harbor in 1916. After that no new plants were opened until after World War II when National Steel and Bethlehem Steel built plants east of Gary in Portage (Warren, 1973).

It is important to note that the placing of the early industries, primarily U.S. Steel Gary Works and Standard Oil, was influenced by residents' attitudes in the urban environment of Chicago who discouraged more industrial growth (Moore, 1959). The south side of Chicago was already populated by industry that was polluting the air, land and water. The residents could be said to have been early environmental activists who would not permit more foul smelling air and pollution. While many factors may have influenced the siting of Standard Oil and Gary Works, urban activism played a crucial role.

A. Early Attitudes toward the Steel Industry

Because Gary was built to serve its mills, citizens of Gary were tied to the mills' success. Therefore, the life of any mill worker was crucially affected by U.S. Steel Corporation and its decisions. In times of economic prosperity, the mill did well and the citizens were happy, but in times of economic depression, the mill did not do well and the citizens suffered (Moore, 1959). The opinions of the mill workers were shaped by the U.S. Steel Corporation which viewed the dunes as a wasteland waiting to be improved up by industry ('A City built by the Steel Trust, 1907).

In its early years Gary Works was considered the rival of Pittsburgh and the primary steel journal, Iron Age, called Gary Works the greatest steel plant in the world (Mohl and Betten, 1986). Gary was a city where fortunes were sought by businessmen and immigrants.

The founders of the mill and the citizens of the city had mostly positive opinions of the steel industry, but (Warren, 1973). The sand was considered useless and a nuisance to early businessmen and citizens. The Workers of the Writers projects (1939) said that the government surveyors described the area as “dry land mostly white sand among the hills, wet and good-for-nothing.” The men talked about the mill and its

movement to preserve the dunes continued their campaigns after the failure to create a national park. Landscape architect Jens Jensen established the Friends of Our Native Landscape in 1919 to promote the dunes as a place people might “engage together in the pursuit of a discipline and dedicated communal life close to nature” (Engel, 1983, 204). While the

massive mill closings, layoffs of thousands of workers and steel towns going from being viable communities to ghost towns (Warren, 2001).

While Northwest Indiana has only seen one mill close, many people have been laid off, lost their pensions and felt the economic consequences of poor management. In the 1970's, crime rates increased and Gary, the steel city, experienced a phenomenon known as "white flight" as people began to emigrate to other Chicago suburban areas (Trusty, 1992, 4). Despite the disappearance of the steel industry in other parts of the country however, steel remains in Northwest Indiana. When U.S. Steel shut down most of its Pittsburgh, Birmingham and South

regulations. While a few citizens had always been concerned about the preservation of the dunes, others now began to realize through federal requirements how harmful the steel industry was to their environment and their health (Trusty, 1992). Citizens of Northwest Indiana watched the first Earth Day on television and witnessed Richard Nixon's executive order that created the Environmental Protection Agency. The national buzz for clean air, land and water infiltrated even Northwest Indiana. Though environmental regulations were instituted in 1969 and 1970, air, water and land pollution in Northwest Indiana persist. Even after small industrial plants associated with the steel mills were closed because steel production decreased in the 1980's, the environmental problems remained. Lance Trusty (1992) found that the EPA "reported that 180 million pounds of industrial poisons five times the amount released in Alaska by the Valdez disaster including lead, PCB's, and the like, flowed into Lake Michigan from the Indiana Harbor Ship Canal every year" (p. 6). The difference between 35-100 years ago and today is that the labor-intensive industries were eliminated but the five major mills in Indiana remain, leaving fewer jobs, but much of the same pollution. In this next section, the statistical pollution data will be presented to provide a clearer picture of the environment in Northwest Indiana.

A. Pollution Levels

The current environmental condition of Northwest Indiana is among the worst in the nation. The pollution in Northwest Indiana includes toxic releases, air pollution, water pollution and land degradation. In 2002, both Porter and Lake counties were among the nation's top 10 percent dirtiest/worst counties, but Lake County was ranked 38th out of 3143 counties on the list of most polluted counties in the United States with 17,134,039 pounds of

pollution releases annually into the air,

nitrogen oxides, sulfur oxides, hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide, aerosols, asbestos, chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), ground level ozone, hazardous air pollutants (HAPs), hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs), methane, particulate matter (PM), propellants, radon, refrigerants, substitutes, and volatile organic compounds (VOCs)) per square mile than whites (Scorecard, 2004). Northwest Indiana's industries consistently violate federal air, land and water standards, leaving both Porter and Lake County among the dirtiest communities in the country. While compliance with federal standards does not mean freedom from pollution, it would be a step in the direction of an improved environment. If the mills were to come into

and majority of the population of Portage are located five miles away from the two steel mills. As a result, the city of Portage experiences very little of the pollution effects from its two steel mills. The pollution from the two steel mills blows eastward to Michigan City, where again there is decreasing population, a significant minority population and a high poverty rate relative to other cities. In Northwest Indiana, the only town with a significant minority population and high income and low poverty levels is Merrillville. This town is the exception to the region. The cities located south of the lake, away from the industry, are predominately white, with high income levels and low poverty levels (Indiana Quick Facts, 2000). While Hammond does not have its own steel mill, the city is located in the northern part of Northwest Indiana between East Chicago and Gary. The cities in the Northwest corner have similar demographics while the cities lying to the south and east also have similar demographics. The northern part of Lake County is in a never ending cycle of limited development.

to spend their free time working or sleeping because they work so many hours, and therefore have less free time to spend learning about their polluted environment or gathering their limited resources to improve it (Erler, 2004). These communities would benefit from a cleaner environment because their property values would increase with cleaner air and thus their schools would be better funded, they would spend less on health issues like asthma and might attract new business that pays high wages. While pollution has materially shaped population distributions, it has culturally shaped perceptions of the region as a whole.

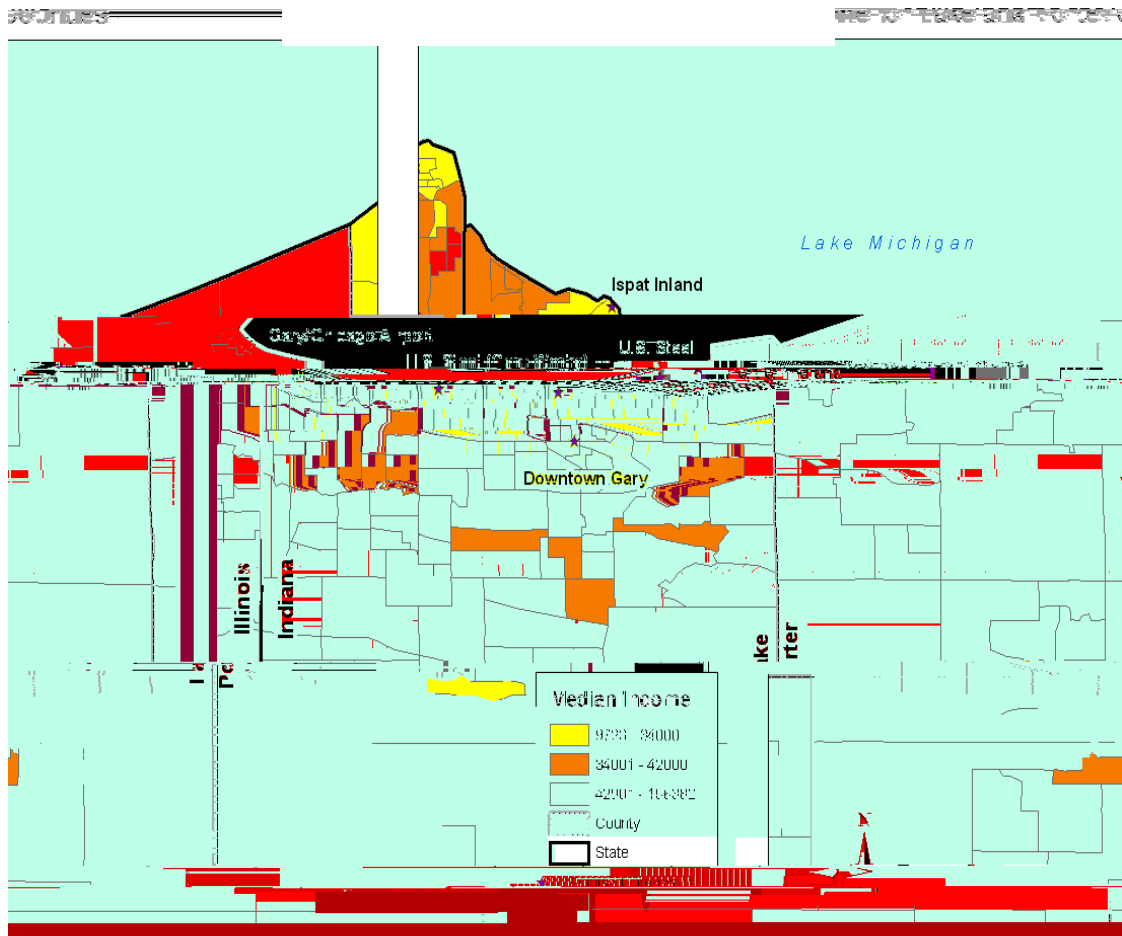


Figure 1. Median Income for Lake and Porter Counties, Indiana, 2002.

Source: Laura Paulding, College of DuPage, 2005.

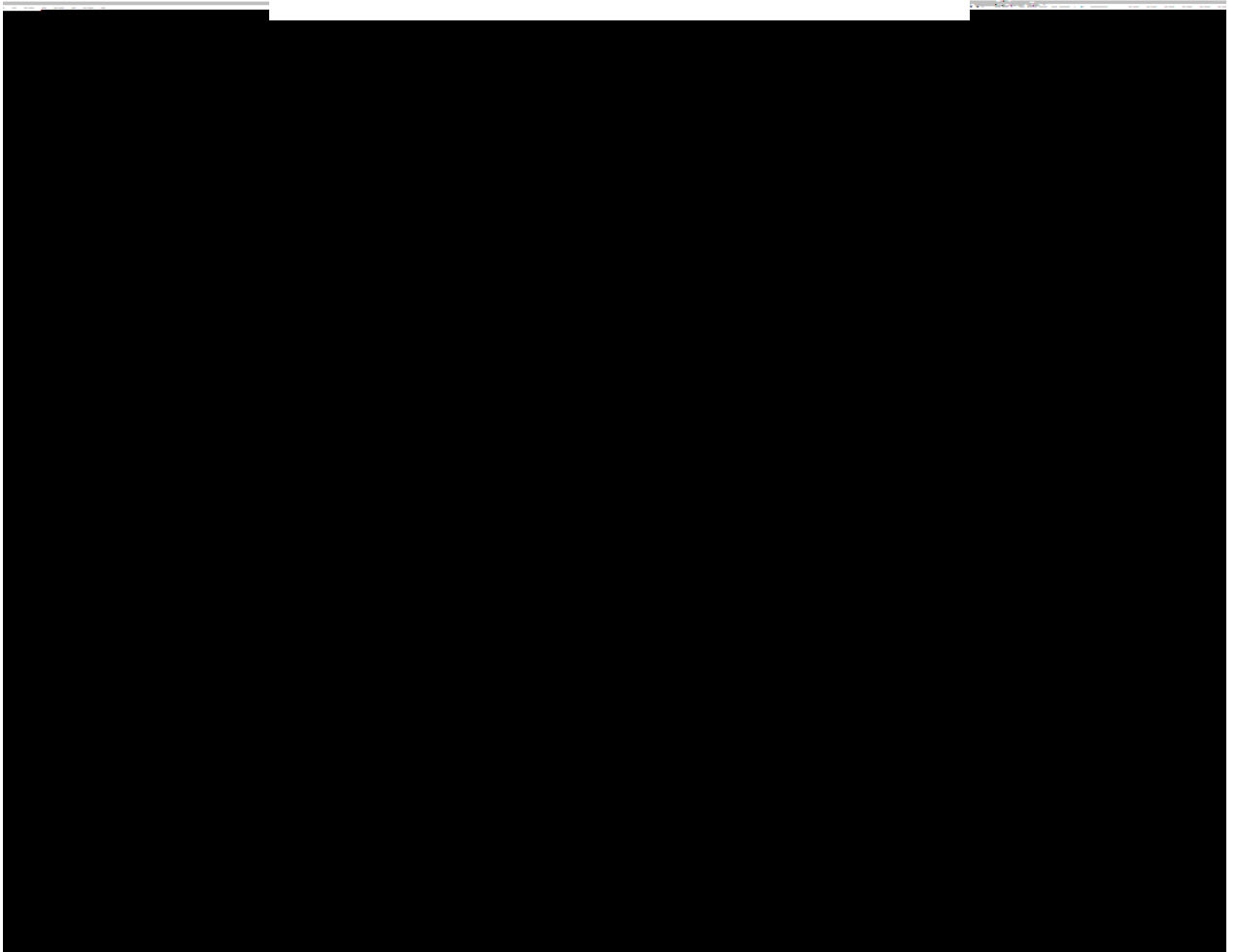


Figure 2. Percent of Minorities for Lake and Porter Counties

Source: Laura Paulding, College of DuPage, 2005.

Section IV

The Economy of Northwest Indiana

Northwest Indiana is still known to residents and outsiders as a steel-dominated area. To outsiders, driving past ISG, Midwest Steel, the former Bethlehem Steel and U.S. Steel Gary Works gives the impression that Northwest Indiana is a one-industry region. This perception is shared by the local citizens who still think that their economic livelihood and environment are determined by how well the steel industry is doing. But no matter how much the steel industry

and its pollution may dominate the landscape, Northwest Indiana is not the one-industry area that outside observers and local citizens believe.

A. Comparing Steel Towns

To illustrate this new idea, it will be helpful to compare Northwest Indiana's economic

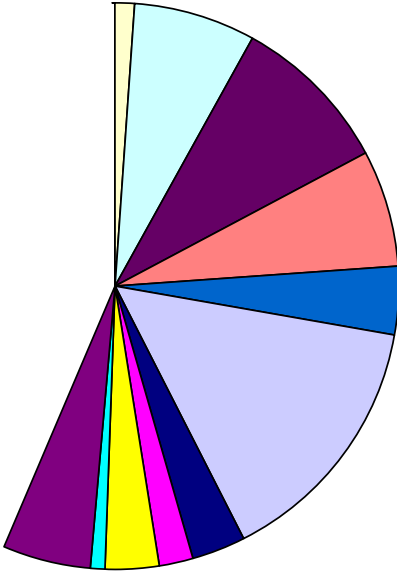
as a whole, now contributes only 4 percent of the primary payroll (County Business Patterns, 2002). Birmingham's employment is divided among health care and social and professional, scientific and technical assistance. Birmingham is viewed as a highly educated, affluent city with economic diversity (White, 1981).

Present-day Pittsburgh also has a diverse economy. No industry accounts for more than 17 percent of employment and 16 percent of income. There are five leading industries that account for greater than 8 percent of the employment and income. These sectors are health care and social assistance; retail trade; professional, scientific and technical assistance; finance; and insurance (County Business Patterns, 2002). Twenty-five years after the decline of steel in Pittsburgh, the city is economically vital. Even though the Pittsburgh area lost 130,000 U.S. Steel jobs in the steel indu

Gary's own steel manufacturing employment shows the change that has led Northwest Indiana from being a one industry region to a more diverse economy. In 1910, Gary Works employed 72% of the population of Gary. The percentages declined as the population grew over the years, but in 1920 Gary Works alone still employed 27% of Gary's population (Workers of the Writers' Program, 1939). Thus, Gary Works was the primary employer, disregarding all other manufacturing associated with steel, of Gary residents.

Comparing Lake County, where Gary is located, with statistics from Pittsburgh, Birmingham, Galesburg and its own past provides evidence that Northwest Indiana is not the one industry town that it used to be and is falsely perceived to be today. Figures 3 and 4 show that in 2002, primary metal accounted for 15 percent of the income in Lake County and 9.5 percent of jobs. Health care and social assistance also account for 16 percent of jobs and 17 percent of income

measures of economic diversification may have given me a different picture of Northwest Indiana.



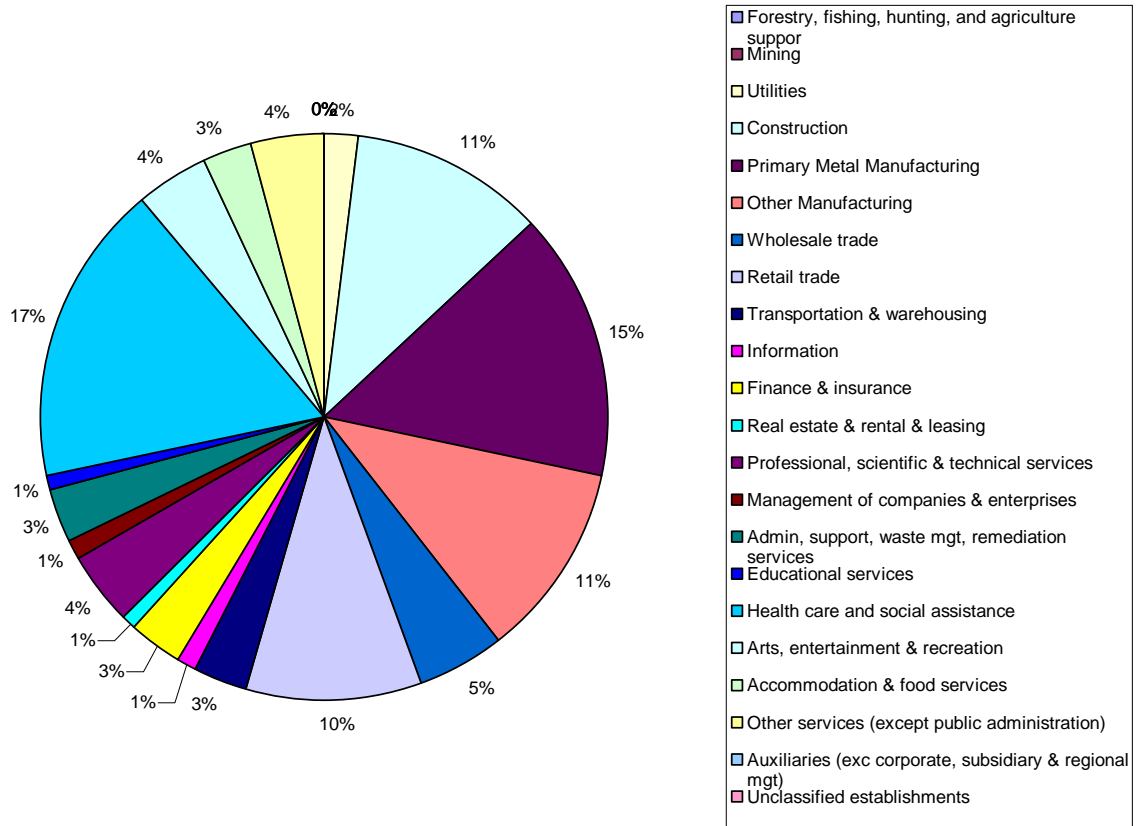


Figure 4. Earnings Distribution for Lake County 2002.

Nevertheless, the perception

have brought limited success. These ventures include the five riverboat casinos, professional and semi-professional sports teams, expanding the Gary Regional Airport, integrating Northwest Indiana into Chicago's economy, ideas of high tech low-impact industry, tourism and lakefront communities.

Casinos

Gary attempted to attract business investors when Mayor Scott King decided to host the Miss USA Pageant in 1993 (Potempa, 2002). While he did not get the attention of any technologically based businesses, he did catch the eye of Donald Trump. As a result, in the 1990's Northwest Indiana became home to five riverboat casinos. While casinos in the traditional sense of a permanent building site were not permitted in Indiana, businessmen figured out that if their casinos were located in the water on boats, technically they would not be breaking the law. And so Northwest Indiana became home to Trump and Majestic Star Casinos in Gary, Harrah's in East Chicago, Horseshoe Casino in Hammond and Blue Chip Casino in Michigan City. The casinos brought hope to the region with the idea that they would create a large tax base on which the cities could draw on to expand their economies (Inkley, 1993). Casino tax revenues in Gary contributed \$216,943,746.66 from 1997-2004. The revenue was used to pay for the airport, education, community, infrastructure and judgments/debt services (King & Mahmoud, 2005). However, the casinos have turned out to be a much larger benefit to the owners than to the cities that house them. Four of the five casinos are unionized and at the end of 2004 and beginning of 2005, service workers at these casinos all threatened to strike on the basis of poor wages and lack of health care benefits. The employees are complaining that their average wage is only \$7.25 per hour and that families

cannot be raised on such a low wage while the businesses that own the casinos make fortunes (Erler, 2004). Thus, while this business has come to fruition, it is not the savior that it was expected to be, especially for the cities in the northern part of Lake County where Northwest Indiana's economic and social problems are concentrated.

Sports

The most well known business venture for Northwest Indiana has involved professional sports, specifically the Chicago/Gary Bears. While the Chicago Bears management was searching for a new stadium, it threatened to leave Chicagoland totally and relocate to nearby Gary, Indiana. While the threats were most likely used to get the City of Chicago to build the Bears a new stadium, for a brief moment in time the "Gary Bears" represented a possibility that could have boosted the economy of Northwest Indiana (Porta & Murzyn, 1995). After the Chicago/Gary Bears idea fell through, residents and politicians were motivated by the Gary Bears proposal and began looking for sports teams to set up shop in Northwest Indiana. These efforts have brought limited success, but semi-professional success nonetheless in the form of Gary Steelheads basketball and Gary Railcats baseball. The teams are popular and well attended, but do not offer the economic base that people have been searching for since the decline of steel. The sports teams are part of the entertainment industry which provides fewer than 5 percent of employment and income in Lake County where the teams are located (County Business Patterns, 2002).

Airlines

Another business venture located in northern Lake County is the Gary/Chicago Regional Airport. When Chicago began to have problems servicing all of its airline customers, it began looking for a site to build a third Chicago airport. Four sites were proposed, three in Illinois and one in Indiana. The Indiana proposal was for the expansion of the Gary/Chicago Airport. This proposal never came to fruition and the Chicago airport dilemma remains. However, politicians were inspired by the prospect of expanding the airport and Gary/Chicago Regional Airport soon hosted Southeast Airlines, Hooters Air, ATA, and more (Gary/Chicago Airport, 2004). The routes became popular with residents in the area because of the ease of using the airport and the popular destinations the airlines provide to North Carolina and Florida. However, yet again, problems arose,

another suburb providing all the amenities of

and highly educated retirees and white collar workers who bring tax revenue and purchasing power to the area. The table below compares each of those beach communities to the average household annual income for Porter County.

Table 1. Northwest Indiana’s Lakefront Community Incomes

	Ogden Dunes	Dunes Acres	Beverly Shores	Porter County
Household Annual Income	76,924	94,843	59,107	53,100

Taken from (Community Profiles, 2005). & (Dune Acres Profile, 2005).

These communities have significantly higher incomes than most of Northwest Indiana.

It would seem economically advantageous to ha

Like the beach communities in Northwest Indiana, the southwestern Michigan beach communities have higher incomes than the rest of their county. Both Grand Beach and New Buffalo are lakefront communities with many seasonal residents. Tourism is an important aspect of their economy. They rely upon accommodations, food services, summer rentals, recreation, and retail and are primarily operational during the summer months (County Business Patterns, 2002).

These communities thrive with the same natural dune environment that Northwest Indiana has in natural areas that have not been degraded by the steel industry. These communities have clean air, land and water. Berrien County, Michigan is among the cleanest counties in the United States for water, toxics

The property taxes are lower in Indiana than in neighboring Chicago, and there is plenty of undeveloped land for development. Northwest Indiana failed to attract any big technology fish. People have blamed a number of things including air pollution, a lack of cultural activities, poor school systems and crime. There have been more initiatives to attract technology businesses this past year. The Purdue Technology Center of Northwest Indiana opened its doors in 2004 hoping to offer office space, management consulting, mentoring and other services, that could dramatically increase the chances of success for new companies (Benman and Holocek, 2005). The new center hopes to increase the number of high paying jobs in the area. Improving environmental quality would also boost business interest in the area.

Tourism

Another industry that has been explored is tourism. Northwest Indiana is home to the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore and the Indiana Dunes State Park. Many tourists come to see the dunes, learn the history of the region and to enjoy the beach. The National Lakeshore comprises 15,067 acres presently. The Park also has jurisdiction over 3,253 acres of other public lands including the Indiana Dunes State Park and 1,050 acres of private land. Over 2

Lakeshore visitor's center located close to In

situation. My grandfathers on both my mother's and father's side worked at U.S. Steel. My father and his older brother worked in the mills during their summers in college.

The last four generations of the inhabitants of Northwest Indiana have been connected to the steel mill economically and culturally. The steel industry has dominated Northwest Indiana for over one hundred years. That historical connection alone makes it difficult to make a change away from steel dominating the landscape, culture and economy. As in other industrial cities, when there was smoke rising out of the mills, times were good (Warren, 2001). For people who grew up with the steel industry, the early 1980's steel production slow down was seen as purely negative. Clearly the economy suffered when an industry that supplied 40 percent of the area's income and employment failed to make a profit for the first time in their lives (Trusty, 1992). Those same individuals grew up without the Environmental Protection Agency and now run the economy of

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B. Ideology of the Environment vs. Jobs

A second obstacle to improving Northwest Indiana's environment is the notion that environmentalism and job security are mutually exclusive. Especially in Northwest Indiana where the steel industries blamed environmental protection for their economic downturn, it is difficult to convince the people who work or used to work for the steel industry that Northwest Indiana needs improved environmental regulation.

For large industries, environmental protection is often their scapegoat when economic downturn occurs. However, this supposed connection has been repeatedly proven false. Indeed, environmental protection has strengthened industry. For example; the 1964 Wilderness Act is known to have preserved the timber industry in the northwestern United States, which had been declining in employment and revenue since the 1930's (Hagen et al, 1992). In the case of steel, Kenneth Warren explains, U.S. Steel's decline in the late 1970's and early 1980's was not the result of environmental regulation, but of bad business practices (2001). American steel lagged behind the rest of world technologically, trying unsuccessfully to ride upon its past world steel dominance. In reality, the American steel industry began faltering back in the 1950's (Warren, 2001). But unfortunately for the environmental community, the widely visible decline of the steel industry in the 1970's and 1980's coincided with the first federal regulations of air, land and water pollution. To this day, environmental regulation is seen as stifling to business and so is disfavored by the steel industry. The steel industry has been successful in making the citizenry of Northwest Indiana believe that their jobs have been destroyed by environmental legislation as well as by foreign competition. Therefore, federal or state attempts to further regulate the steel industry are frowned upon by much of Northwest Indiana's population.

C. Steel Industry Infrastructure

A third obstacle to change from steel dominance in Northwest Indiana is the physical presence of the steel mills. U.S. Steel Gary Works alone sits upon ten miles of lakefront and includes blast furnaces, a coke plant and a finishing mill that utilizes acid in large quantities. If land is to be recovered from steel production, building structures need to be removed, the land needs to be purchased, and extensive clean up projects must occur. For the former International Steel Group (ISG) plant in East Chicago and U.S. Steel Gary Works, the clean up projects would be most difficult. Both of those plants ran unregulated for seventy years. Parts of their lands are classified as Superfund sites and could be tied up in federal bureaucratic processes for up to a decade. The cost to recover the Gary Works and East Chicago plant land would be enormous.

While Northwest Indiana could look to brownfields-type redevelopment, which has been very successful at recovering the steel plant areas in Pittsburgh, cleanup would be more difficult in Northwest Indiana because the steel industry is still operating. Unlike Pittsburgh, where clean-up occurred after the mills shut down, clean-up in Northwest Indiana would involve working with the steel industries that are still trying to make a profit (Hays, 2003). The steel industry in Northwest Indiana is currently making profit and is not in danger of shutting down (Holocek, 2004). While this is good news for the economy of Northwest Indiana, it may make recovering land from the industry and cleaning up the environment in general more complicated.

My own experience working with U.S. Steel displays well how difficult it is to clean the land while the steel industry is still involved. Working for a consulting company within U.S.

Steel, I was assigned to lay out the plans of the present and past sewer systems back at the mill's inception. Our main source for the systems was the previous company that had been assigned to do the same thing we were working on. I later learned that U.S. Steel's strategy to deal with cleaning up their sewer systems was to hire a new consulting firm every ten years. Each firm would get only so far and then the new company would only be permitted access to some of the previous firm's work. Thus, no company would get far enough along to get to the

Indiana Greens, the Calumet Project and others, but the overall economic and industrial character of Northwest Indiana has not changed.

Despite the increased awareness of a few small environmental groups, the lack of environmental awareness among the general public is also an obstacle to improving the region's economy and environment. In the twenty years I have lived in Northwest Indiana, active environmentalism has never been highly visible. The largest environmental issues were invasive zebra mussels in Lake Michigan and E. coli in the summer swimming waters. Air pollution was considered a pest, but an accepted pest. I have never heard of a parents' group concerned about their children's asthma or other health concerns. The groups that are best known, primarily the Save the Dunes Council have existed under one name or another since the original battle for the dunes in the first decades of the twentieth century (Engel, 1983). Only since I have been in high school has the town where I grew up, Ogden Dunes, organized an environmental council as part of the town council. The Indiana Department of Environmental Management does not make their presence well known. Their website has a complaint forum (<http://www.in.gov/idem/pollutioncomplaints/>) that I, as a resident of the town of Ogden Dunes, was not informed about until 2002.

Formal education about environmental issues is nearly non-existent. From kindergarten through high school, I was never offered the opportunity to take an environmental science course, even as an elective. The Lake and Porter County Solid Waste Management Districts have one traveling educator and a few on-site educators for active teachers who seek them out. The Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore has an education center, again something that must be sought out by active teachers who can take field trips.

Adults also have very little access to environmental education unless they seek it out. The local newspapers, The Post Tribune and The Northwest Indiana Times, have begun to make environmental issues a regular part of the news. But to go beyond the limited education offered by newspapers in Northwest Indiana, one would have to join the Northwest Indiana Greens, The Calumet Project or the Save the Dunes Council as well as attend town or city meetings. This lack of opportunity to learn about the environment in everyday life stifles to the ability of citizens to become environmentally aware.

E. Industry

The largest and most formidable force against change in Northwest Indiana is the steel industry itself. It is not in their interest to meet federal regulations and so they often do not. Their environmental goal, from my own experience working in Gary Works, is to appear to be making an active effort to keep the public's health in mind. Because of their collective political and economic presence, the steel mills are difficult to challenge. To openly challenge the steel industry would be to challenge the economy of Northwest Indiana in many people's minds.

F. Public Perceptions of the Steel Mills and the Environment

If a change in industry is going to occur, despite these obstacles, it is important to determine what the attitudes of the citizens of Northwest Indiana are toward the steel mills and their environment. Perhaps the citizens of Northwest Indiana are satisfied with a degraded environment and a mixed and economy of service, steel industry and outsourced Chicago jobs. If this is the case, there would be little reason to attempt to determine what industries would be best for the economy and environment of Northwest Indiana. It is also important to know if

people feel a change in the structure of the region would be possible. If the attitudes of the citizens of Northwest Indiana are similar to attitudes recorded in the area 100 years ago, the environment will continue to be degraded.

The attitudes of Northwest Indiana residents about the steel mills and the local environment differ. The population in question includes members of the Save the Dunes Council, mill workers and those related to mill workers, parents of children with asthma, businessmen trying to make a living and many others. The following opinions were recorded from citizens of Portage in 1990, recalling their reaction to National Steel's Midwest plant that was built from 1959 to 1962. James B. Lane (1991), a professor of history at Indiana University Northwest and a long-time resident of Northwest Indiana, quotes one long-time resident of Portage, Alexander Saims, as having mixed feelings about the mills: "In a way it's a shame that all the prime land was taken up by the steel companies Midwest and Bethlehem. But it sat idle for years and nothing ever happened to it. It was great wide open wilderness; but, of course, jobs are important too" (p. 25). Mr. Saims recognized the need for conservation and the need for jobs. While it seems that his attitude favored jobs over conservation, he certainly acknowledged the wilderness that can be found in Northwest Indiana.

Richard Kline and Leon West had strongly positive opinions of the new mills. These men saw the mills as tax bases and the Dunes as simply piles of sand. In great contrast, Robert Kuhn, a Portage businessman, and Mel Tract, a resident of the lakefront community, Ogden Dunes, focused on the environmental impact the mills have had (Lane, 1991).

This unscientific sample of attitudes does not provide an obvious single answer about what the residents of Northwest Indiana feel about the presence of the steel mills. It may be that opinions are greatly divided. However, it is likely that many people, like Alexander Saims,

recognized the effect the mills have on the environment, but favors jobs over the environment and felt that the two could not coincide. More extreme opinions in favor of the mills or the environment are probably less common.

While opinions may have changed in the 1990's, many residents of Portage were opposed to the initial establishment of the National Lakeshore in 1966. Russell Willis, an active Republican lawyer, was of the opinion that because the Dunes were already degraded, there was no point in trying to save them in the 1960's. William Westergreen, President of the Town Board, and Cortie Wilson, member of the Porter County Democratic Central Committee, opposed the National Lakeshore because they wanted to have beachfront property or city parks

Section VI

While improving Northwest Indiana by diversifying its economy and cleaning its environment seems like a daunting task, at least the region has other steel cities to look to for guidance. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and Birmingham, Alabama, as mentioned earlier, were both major steel cities at the same time that Northwest Indiana steel thrived (Holocek, 2003). Since the nation-wide steel decline in the late 1970's, those two cities have undergone transformations to diverse economies, as mentioned in section III, and have cleaner environments.

Pittsburgh “was hit harder yet rebounded faster than many similar industrial regions around the world” following the steel bust (Briem, 2003, p.1). Through a multitude of initiatives Pittsburgh has become a thriving city once again. The citizens of Pittsburgh took great initiatives to preserve their steel culture, while moving to a service based economy. The Allegheny Conference for Community Development was set up to deal with Pittsburgh's economic, social, cultural and environmental issues in the 1940's. In recent years, the Conference, building on decades-long efforts, helped create a new Pittsburgh where unemployment is now below the national average and which integrates the multiple facets of Pittsburgh's enduring industrial heritage. One resident says that “One secret to Pittsburgh's transformation is that it was not done by abandoning manufacturing workers and firms” (Briem, 2003, p.1).

Pittsburgh has created a city that embraces the past, but moves on to the future. One example is the Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area. The Heritage area is located along the Allegheny River where many of the steel mills used to stand. Some of steel mill structures still stand, incorporated into a river walk, restaurants and retail area. Their mission is “historic

preservation, cultural conservation, education, recreation and resource development” (Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area, 2004).

Section VII

Implementation

For Northwest Indiana to achieve a diversified economy and improved environment, there must be careful planning. The steel industry will remain, but what steps can be taken to improve its environment record and supplement the industry economically. Two comprehensive plans for improving Northwest Indiana have already been presented recently as well a major change in property taxes in Lake County that may be helpful in improving the environment. First, The Marquette Plan, which includes the participation of five cities, aims to recover much of the unused lakefront that had been formerly used by industry or roads. This lakefront land would be used for trails, parks, beaches and recreation areas. The second proposal that has been suggested is a Calumet/Northwest Indiana National Heritage Park which would integrate the natural, cultural and recreational resources of the area. The Park would be managed through partnerships between public and private groups. The goal of the Park would be to preserve the industrial history, natural resources and culture of Northwest Indiana. Both of these plans are ambitious efforts to recover land that is nationally and/or globally significant. They are praised by many who wish to see an improvement in the environment and economy of Northwest Indiana. Finally, the property tax changes have shifted the source of income from the industries along the lake to the individual residents. This shift, while initially perceived as negative because of the increased expense, may develop a civil society that expects more out of their tax dollars. These three major changes may spur more positive change in Northwest Indiana.

A. Marquette Plan

The most innovative idea to improve the environment of Northwest Indiana is known as The Marquette Plan, proposed by Democratic Congressman Pete Visclosky in 2003 and adopted in 2004. The goal of the plan is to recapture the shoreline by transforming industrial areas into parks, trails, housing and shops. The plan consists of two parts, a short-term plan and a long-term plan. The plan involves five communities, East Chicago, Gary, Hammond, Portage and Whiting. If the plan were completed, it would open up 21 miles of private land, resulting in 80 percent of shoreline being accessible to the public, compared to the 33 percent of the shoreline currently open to public access. The plan was first presented in October 2003, but Visclosky says he has been envisioning this plan for 20 years. The land will be acquired as industries turn over land they no longer need for production. The governments do not seek to seize land from the steel and oil companies (Zorn, 2005).

The short-term projects envisioned by the Marquette Plan include:

Lakefront Trail in Hammond, improving Whihala Park on Whiting's lakefront

Building a bridge for new steel access in East Chicago so that the old bridge may be used by the public to access an existing beach

Improve Jerose Park in Gary

Improve Lake Street beach in Gary

Remove Mitchell Generating Plant and prepare for lakefront development

Remove the water purification system within Midwest Steel and reclaim the land for public beach access for Portage.

The long term projects proposed by the Marquette Plan include:

The Hammond Lakefront Trail which would run to the Illinois border including a bridge at Calumet Avenue

Whiting/East Chicago Lakefront improvement which may relocate the BP water purification facilities and allow for the integration and connection of Whihala Park, Whiting Park, ISG beachfront and Heritage Park

Connecting the Northwest Indiana water systems: Wolf Lake, Indiana Harbor Ship Canal, George Lake, Grand Calumet River, and Lake Michigan

Industrial Consolidation of BP in Whiting, U.S. Steel Gary works, ISG in East Chicago and Port of Indiana lands that are unused and reclamation.

Altering the shipping canal at ISG in East Chicago and connecting bridges to allow the area to fit better into the community and reclaim land.

Gary lakefront Master plan to connect east and west lakefront development areas.

Northside of Portage master plan

(Zorn, 2005).

The Marquette Plan is ambitious and it is exciting to see it developing and being actively adopted by the five communities involved. However, there is a lack of public interest and some public opposition. Some environmental citizens are concerned that the plan emphasizes development while residents would like to see nature preserves and publicly owned and controlled land instead. Another critic emphasizes that the early phases of the plan are skewed in favor of the steel industry and fail to serve the public. For instance, the short-term plans have included building two new bridges for ISG in East Chicago and Midwest Steel in

Portage. The Portage bridge is now completed and the ISG bridge is in progress while other steps have not begun. Some residents feel that while the Marquette Plan is a good start, it is also important to recognize that the landscape presence of the steel industry is not just about real estate, but also about pollution (Zorn, 2005). However, the plan is being praised by the local Quality of Life Council, a volunteer group of Porter and Lake County citizens (Brown, 2004).

B. Property Tax Changes

Until 2004, industry located along the lakefront paid 90% of Lake County's property taxes. BP oil refinery, International Steel Group (ISG) and U.S. Steel Gary Works collectively paid over \$9 million annually to the county. Dan Lowery, a professor at Indiana University Northwest, says that the result was that few individuals cared how the city spent the property tax money or whether it was used to support the political patronage system. Now that homeowners have experienced a sudden hike in property taxes as the tax burden was handed over from industry, citizens are more aware and more concerned about how their tax dollars are being spent (Smith 2004). Having witnessed the decay of a city that has collected millions in property taxes from ISG and its riverboat casino, East Chicago citizens are finally demanding to see more results. This property tax change may aid the citizens of Northwest Indiana in a quest to clean up the region's environment. If, as Dan Lowery says, citizens continue to demand to see more results from their city governments and realize the steel industry is not contributing to the cities of Lake County as much, there is hope for negotiating with the steel industry to clean up.

C. National Heritage Area

Another option for preserving lands in Northwest Indiana would be to create a National Heritage Area for the Lake Calumet/Northwest Indiana region. This region is comprised of the southwest suburbs of Chicago and Lake and Porter Counties in Indiana. The advantage of this plan is that it would draw on the historical pride in steel of the region while preserving land and restoring natural areas. This plan has been anticipated for many years. The Lake Michigan Region Planning Council suggested in 1968 that plan was needed for the Little Calumet River

We can see the beginnings of movement from local and federal government towards that end in the form of the Marquette Plan and National Heritage Plan. However, neither plan addresses the environmental air and water degradation that plagues Northwest Indiana nor has either plan been citizen driven. The Marquette Plan is the brainchild of the politicians in Northwest Indiana, not its citizens (Zorn, 2005).

The National Heritage Plan also does not address pollution, but it does integrate the ever-important element of culture with the land recovery addressed by the Marquette Plan. A National Heritage Area would require substantial public, private and government involvement and cooperation. Citizens would be able to celebrate their steel industry history while improving the environment. If support were rallied, citizen involvement in improving the environment within Northwest Indiana would drive many improvements in the area. The National Heritage Park is a novel idea and should be explored and implemented.

I conclude with my vision for Northwest Indiana. While residents and politicians have been looking for a quick fix that can replace or supplement steel, it is the mixture of many industries that will secure a stable economy for Northwest Indiana. Technology, tourism, real estate, the Chicago connection, light industry and other industries should all be pursued. I would encourage residents, government and business to diversify the region's economy based on the region's strengths. In addition, while pollution is to be expected with the amount of industry in the region, these industries must be brought into compliance with federal environmental standards. I envision educating the residents of Northwest Indiana through the schools, chamber of commerce meetings, city council meetings and local civic associations about their right to a cleaner environment. A strong civil society, fully aware and in negotiation with industry and government would alter Northwest Indiana. Then, active

discourse between the many interested parties in Northwest Indiana can achieve their individual goals for a cleaner economy and environment.

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