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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Indiana First Region Launches Comprehensive Growth Strategy

SOUTHERN INDIANA (March 5, 2024) - The Indiana First Region is optimistic for READI 2.0, and its opportunity to enhance the quality of life and place in Southern Indiana. They successfully submitted their application to the state on February 16th.

The Indiana First Region, which includes Harrison, Knox, Perry, Pike, and Spencer counties have capitalized on the first round of READI funding by immediately leveraging its $15 million grant to attract as much as $155 million in total regional investments. Grant funds are accelerating projects the five-county region has prioritized, which include Talent Attraction, Business Development, Development Viability, Housing, and Quality of Life and Place. Regional leaders especially understand construction of diverse housing options are fundamental to help numerous communities live, work, and play in safe, affordable, and enriching communities.

“The shortage of quality, workforce housing in our region is among the greatest challenges to economic growth,” said Chris Pfaff, Chairman of the Indiana First Committee. “The Indiana First region is focusing our efforts to address these gaps, in addition to other strategic priorities.”

The region has had great success with the initial round of READI, and has been boldly creating momentum by developing a comprehensive regional strategy. The region has hosted numerous input sessions across the region to assess quality-of-life needs. These meetings drew more than 80 distinct anchor organizations and stakeholders. As a result, these focus group efforts developed a vision and goals for the next ten years and beyond. The Indiana First Region estimates private capital investments of $445+ million to leverage the $74.9 million READI 2.0 grant request. This will provide the Indiana First Region an overall impact of $656+ million.

Indiana First is committed to growing the region’s population, cultivating vibrant communities, and building a foundation that serves present and future Hoosiers. By increasing the availability of shovel-ready sites, launching efforts to develop innovation and residential development, and more, the region is confident they will capitalize on the READI grant funds and accelerate the quality-of-life investments throughout the region.

For more information on the Indiana First Region and to stay up to date on the success of 1.0 projects, please visit: <https://swidc.org/regional-strategy/indiana-first/>

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**About Indiana First**

The Indiana First READI Region is an active working partnership of the local economic development partnerships in Harrison, Knox, Perry, Pike, and Spencer Counties in southwest Indiana. The Region was awarded $15 million from the state’s first iteration of the READI program, intended to accelerate projects that will enhance the area’s quality of life, and increase competitiveness for economic growth.

**About READI**

Indiana’s nationally recognized Regional Economic Acceleration and Development Initiative (READI), administered by the Indiana Economic Development Corp., allocated $500 million in initial funding for projects which will improve the quality of place, life, and opportunity in communities throughout the state. It also encourages a new level of regional collaborations that bring mutual stakeholders together to determine for themselves the future of their communities.

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