

## WCEGP taking different approach

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Tuesday, 16 July 2013 00:00 -

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The Washington County Economic Growth Partnership is undergoing a drastic reorganization process, including amended bylaws, a completely new board of directors with term limits, the search for a new director, and eventually a new name.

The changes are the result of a three-month planning project. An updated asset map was developed, identifying current county-wide infrastructure, organizations, resources, demographics, initiatives, and available sites and buildings.

Interviews were conducted with elected officials, business owners, non-profit organizations and others to understand their views on economic development priorities and expectations.

Based on the information collected during this process, a new strategic plan was created. The plan will soon be posted on a website for the public to view.

The strategic plan consists of nine recommendations. To date, four of the recommendations have been completed: amendment of the bylaws; reset and reorganize the board of directors; create term limits for all board members; and coordinate efforts with regional economic development entities, such as Radius Indiana, River Hills Economic Development District & Regional Planning Commission, Washington County Chamber of Commerce, City of Salem and the Community Marketing Group.

Initiatives underway are the search for an executive director, instituting a county-wide communications strategy, investing in small businesses, rebranding the WEGP and the implementation of performance measures.

To initiate the reorganization, all members of the existing board resigned, except the President Steve Hunt. A new board was created.

The board of directors consists of 12 to 15 members and will strive to include one representative each from the county commissioners, county council, the mayor of Salem, city council, the chamber of commerce, a financial institution, a public utility, local industry, schools, St. Vincent Hospital of Salem and the two members from the community at large.

The following were elected to the board of directors at the June 20 meeting; Steve Hunt, president; Mayor David Bower, vice president; Jack Mahuron, treasurer; John Fultz, secretary; Charles Coon, executive committee; and members Nancy Grossman, Dr. Lynn Reed, David Hoar, Viince Lewendowski, Hank Jacobi, Terry Cottongim, Bob Strange and Dana Muntz.

An executive director search committee, budget committee and press committee were formed. The WCEGP board will meet again on July 18.