

From the Mayor
October 2013

Shortly after taking office as mayor, I sat down with our new City Council and we discussed the goals and direction for Warsaw over the next four years. Not surprisingly, three of the six strategic goals were Business Attraction, Business Retention and Expansion, and Growth Management. Among the sub goals was to: "Identify and prioritize properties available and desired for development. Create and promote shovel-ready sites for development. Use local finance tools strategically and creatively to support business attraction efforts."

The harsh reality is that despite all of the great reasons a company would want to expand or locate in our community, if there aren't any buildings or sites available, they move on down the highway to the next community. Just recently we lost a prospect that specifically wanted to come to Warsaw, because the limited inventory available did not meet their needs. Our local economic developer repeatedly trumpets the same concern.

Not long after the strategic plan was developed, I requested the Common Council to initiate annexation of 110 acres of ground on the north side of US 30, just west of Ivy Tech. The annexation (friendly) was approved. Shortly after, the City approved the inclusion of this land into the Northern Tax Increment Finance (TIF) district. This allows the City to direct the use of any new property tax revenue generated in that district for development of that district. TIF districts were developed to give municipalities the means to invest in sewer, water, streets, fiber optic cable, and storm water drainage, thus taking undeveloped ground and creating "shovel-ready sites" or building expandable shell buildings. Shovel-ready sites give clients a clean footprint to build a custom facility. This investment in infrastructure must be done in advance. If the ground is not "shovel ready" for construction, clients simply move on to the next community.

Next, we applied for and received a Certified Tech Park designation from Indiana Economic Development Corporation. This designation allows us to capture local income tax and sales tax generated within the Tech Park district, also for the development of the Tech Park.

TIF and Certified Tech Park designations were necessary to help support and develop the creation of shovel-ready building sites and expandable shell buildings, both of which the City has woefully inadequate inventory.

Expandable shell buildings have exterior walls, high ceilings, wide bays, dock facilities, and gravel floors. Since most of the work is already done, they can be completed in a very short time to meet the clients' specific needs. The buildings are on large lots and are engineered to be expandable from two to four times the square footage, immediately or for future growth.

The City is in the final stages of approving a development agreement with the landowners. The first phase of this agreement will provide for infrastructure improvements and a completed shell building in 2014. A new road will provide a

gateway into the Warsaw Tech Park and provide a safer alignment for Ivy Tech students and staff. The first section of the road will be built with complete infrastructure servicing the first phase building sites, including the shell building.

Over the next five to ten years, the City's investment could generate up to ten times the amount in "tax generating" developed land.

I am appreciative of the support our City Council has given the project. I am also appreciative of the work of our city planner and his department. As soon as the Redevelopment Commission approves the agreement, the work begins.