

From the Mayor...

August 3, 2018

When I was first elected mayor in 2012, one of my highest priorities was to expand the US 30 industrial park that sits adjacent to IVY Tech. Coming out of a recession that was stifling to economic growth, we needed to develop industrial sites that would create opportunities for both new and existing local industry.

The original industrial park on the east side of Silveus Crossing was about 100 acres and included Medtronic and Winona PVD. With a goal of expansion, we set our sites on 130 acres on the west side of the road that extended to County Road 200 West.

In the meantime, the State of Indiana was working hard to revitalize the post-recession climate for economic growth. One of the programs initiated by the Indiana Economic Development Corporation was to create technology parks around the state. The program was designed to assist Hoosier communities attract and stimulate high technology industrial research and manufacturing. It allowed communities with industrial zoned property and a commitment to high tech manufacturing to apply for a "Technology Park" designation. If approved, it would allow all sales tax and state income tax increment generated from newly created sales and payroll within the "Technology Park" to be used for park infrastructure and business incubator/accelerator development.

Through acquisition and annexation of an additional 110 acres, the city increased the total size of the park to around 200 acres. In 2012, our planning and hard work paid off when the site was designated a Certified Technology Park.

The Redevelopment Commission then entered into an agreement with Westhill Development, a group of local developers, to work out the details of the development process. Phase One involved forty acres north of Ivy Tech. It began with road construction (the westward extension of Polk Drive), storm and wastewater facility construction, and installation of digital fiber, water, gas, and electric utilities to service four large shovel ready lots.

Construction of a speculative 62,500 square foot shell building on one of those lots was the next step. The immediate availability of an expandable industrial building was a strategy designed to attract serious prospects to the park.

Soon after, Banner Medical constructed and moved into a 40,000 square foot building on the second of four lots in 2016. They project steady growth and expect to create over 75 jobs in the next five years.

This year, Patrick Industries committed to occupy the shell building with 100 employees operating a state of the art fiberglass manufacturing process. They are also in the process of a full facility expansion to 125,000 square feet to meet their needs and create even more jobs.

Meanwhile Winona PVD, a legacy manufacturing facility in the original park, has a expanded three times since 2012 and grown from 35 employees to over 150.

Which brings me to the point of today's column. The success of the Tech Park has yielded not only the aforementioned jobs, but also investment of tens of millions of dollars of equipment and improvements that has now necessitated the second phase of expansion.

This involves the extension of Polk Drive and all of the necessary utility infrastructure to county road 200 west. In addition, the shell building expansion construction is going on, county road 300 North road improvements continue, and the lots in phase two are starting to be graded. There is quite a bit of activity in the tech park this summer!

Indiana proclaims to be a state that is "open for business" and we are proud to be a part of that!