

# THRIVE

summer 2025

Vol. 1 No. 2

YOUR CONNECTION FOR A THRIVING **ELKHART** COUNTY

## The Chair's Message

### Impressive numbers found in 2024 annual report, but EDC's beginnings merit highlighting

Once again, the Economic Development Corporation of Elkhart County (EDC) has impressive numbers to share in our [2024 annual report](#).

However, instead of focusing on the data, it's worth reflecting on how this non-profit organization began.

I may not be "old as dirt," but I was there when the EDC was first imagined.

As a young farm business owner and Farm Bureau leader, I joined a group of community leaders who laid the groundwork for what became our EDC.

The EDC didn't happen overnight. It took a strategic plan, months of discussion, and the collaboration of a diverse community united by a shared goal: To build a sustainable, diversified economy. In 2001, the EDC held its first board meeting.

Elkhart County has long been known for its resilience and innovation — traits that helped us identify a risk in our heavy reliance on the RV industry. Rather than wait for disruption, we asked: Why not encourage innovation now while times are good?

Our diversification strategy was sometimes seen as anti-RV, but it was never about turning away from our strengths. Instead, it was about using them as a springboard into other sectors. With support from local government, businesses, chambers, and the RV industry itself, the EDC developed incentives to attract and retain a variety of businesses.

Today, Elkhart County's economy is more diverse than ever. The EDC is central to this progress, its success from a dedicated staff, supportive board, and collaborative community. As its role evolves, the EDC continues to focus on incentives while also helping companies reduce costs and improve workforce education.

I encourage you to read the annual report and see how your EDC is helping shape a strong economic future for Elkhart County.

Mike Yoder, EDC Board President/Chair  
Town Manager, Bristol, Indiana



### Empowering local manufacturers

## Regional Skills Accelerator grant helps offset training costs, enhances bottom line

At the Economic Development Corporation of Elkhart County (EDC), we are committed to helping local companies enhance their bottom line by connecting them with various grants, incentives, and programs.

Training is one of our key priorities, and it can significantly contribute to creating a positive organizational culture.

The federal Regional Skills Accelerator training grant is designed to help offset training expenses. The 50-50 matching grant, from the Rehabilita-

tion Services Administration, provides employers with a subsidy of up to \$750 per employee up to a maximum of \$15,000 per employer.

The key qualifiers are the training be done by an approved provider/trainer; the employee receive a certification and/or a certificate of completion; and an element of financial reward for the employee completing the training.

If you're interested in this grant opportunity, we will guide you through the entire process. That begins with

a conversation and the development of a training program.

Please reach out to me at your earliest convenience.

David A. Damerow  
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Business Retention  
and Expansion  
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The Economic Development Corporation (EDC) of Elkhart County has been a fantastic partner for Champagne Metals since our move to the area over 15 years ago. Their expertise in navigating incentive programs has been a key factor in our ability to grow and better serve our customers. We have also enjoyed utilizing a breadth of training services that they offer to better expand on knowledge and industry compliance. To put it simply, our partnership with EDC has been an integral part of our success!”

Burns Getchell  
Vice President of Operations, Champagne Metals



**CHAMPAGNE**  
**Metals**

about

**CHAMPAGNE METALS**  
FOUNDED: 1996  
HEADQUARTERS: Glenpool, OK  
OPERATIONS: 51360 Greenfield Parkway, Middlebury, IN 46540 — and in Glenpool, OK; Aurora, CO; Coon Rapids, MN; Santa Teresa, NM; Lebanon, MO; and Montreal  
OWNERSHIP: Privately owned by Mark and Jennifer Smith  
LEADERSHIP: Brandon Champagne, president; privately-held and family-owned company  
PRODUCTS: Premier metal service center specializing in aluminum sheet and aluminum coil processing.  
WEBSITE: <https://champagnemetals.com/>

## Upcoming Training Classes & Events

ChatGPT Real World Application  
for the Back Office  
June 18 | 8 a.m.-11 a.m.

Customer Focused  
Communication & Listening Skills  
June 24 | 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Introduction to Programmable  
Logic Controls (PLCs)  
(five-session series)

July 10 | 8 a.m.-4 p.m.  
July 11 | 8 a.m.-4 p.m.  
July 16 | 8 a.m.-4 p.m.  
July 17 | 8 a.m.-4 p.m.  
July 18 | 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

Managing Stress in the  
Customer Service Arena  
July 15 | 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Introduction to TRIZ (Theory of  
Inventive Problem Solving)  
July 22 | 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Time Management &  
Customer Service  
August 19 | 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Responding to  
Customer Complaints  
September 23 | 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Conflict Resolution Skills  
in Customer Service  
October 21 | 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

**4.0** Automation  
**EXPO**

Northern Indiana Event Center,  
21565 Executive Parkway,  
Elkhart, IN 46514  
October 15-16 | 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

For exhibitor information and free  
general admission tickets for the  
2025 4.0 Automation Expo, visit  
[www.elkhartcountybiz.com/#](http://www.elkhartcountybiz.com/#)



Training  
Opportunities  
Delivered By

**PURDUE**  
UNIVERSITY  
Manufacturing  
Extension Partnership

Hosted By  
**EDC**  
Economic Development Corporation  
Elkhart County, Indiana

For detailed descriptions of these classes and more, scan code or visit [elkhartcountybiz.com/classes/](http://elkhartcountybiz.com/classes/)

## 2024 CLASSES BY THE NUMBERS

**34**  
CLASSES  
DELIVERED

**413**  
EMPLOYEES  
ATTENDED

**41**  
COMPANIES  
IMPACTED

## TO DATE ...

The EDC has delivered **231 classes** and has  
trained **3,185 employees** which has impacted  
**445 companies** in Elkhart County.

## Want the full picture?

Explore the full impact of the  
EDC in 2024 — click the annual  
report cover or scan the  
QR code to  
download.

