

# Higher ed officials discuss grant projects

By DAVID KRONKE

TRIBUNE-STAR

Terre Haute's higher-learning educators shared their visions for the Regional Economic Acceleration and Development Initiative (READI) funding they have received from the state of Indiana.

In a presentation Tuesday moderated by Wabash River Regional Development Authority President Greg Goode at the Vigo County History Center, officials from Indiana State University, Ivy Tech Terre Haute, Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology and Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College – which Indiana Secretary of Commerce Brad Chambers deemed “an intimidating lot” – discussed how they are investing their funding.

ISU President Deborah Curtis explained that the school will use its \$1 million grant to renovate the campus' Chestnut Building for increased capacity and opportunities at ISU's Early Learning Center, which would eventually relocate there. She said ISU aligns its curriculum to meet Indiana's needs, and that the Early Learning Center represents “a huge impact and great return on the investment.”

Ivy Tech Community College Terre Haute Chancellor Leanne Crooks said her school's \$1 million grant would go to diversity initiatives as well as renovating and expanding health science facilities. She noted that Ivy Tech offered courses in nine different health-care disciplines outside of nursing, and



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Ivy Tech Terre Haute Chancellor Leanne Crooks, Indiana State University President Deborah Curtis, Indiana Secretary of Commerce Brad Chambers, Rose-Hulman President Rob Coons and Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College Provost Janet Clark gathered Tuesday to discuss how their schools will invest their READI funding.

that 20% of local hospitals' workforce come from Ivy Tech.

Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology President Rob Coons touted moving Rose's engineering consulting firm Rose-Hulman Ventures from 6 miles south of the main campus to a building at the intersection of Indiana 46 and 42 on property acquired by the institute from the Hulman family. Rose-Hulman received \$1.5 million in READI funding.

Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College Provost Janet Clark said the school will use its \$1.5 million to expand equestrian facilities and surrounding parking. This will enable SMWC to “improve

equine event amenities,” she said, and increase the number of collegiate equine competitions in Terre Haute, which will increase the amount of the area's tourism money.

Secretary of Commerce Chambers said he and Governor Eric Holcomb trusted local governments to allot the READI funding.

“Community and community leaders understand what's most important for them, so there's nothing more important than the governor and I getting with community leaders and understanding the priorities that are going to help grow your communities,” Chambers said.

Overall, the ultimate goal behind the funding is to encourage people to move to Indiana.

“There's nothing more to our state's future and the state's economy than growing our population – you grow your population, you grow your workforce,” Chambers noted. “Industry needs workforce. The new natural resource is people and talent, which comes from population growth. Investing in quality of life that will attract people and keep people is super-important to our state's future.”

Chambers said, “We're pleased with how the money was allocated – it just takes time for those projects to come to fruition.”

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