

Crossroads II
September 3, 2009, Wabash & Erie Canal, Delphi

Approximately 60 people participated in the forum on September 3. People were randomly assigned to small groups to identify the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats to the future of Carroll County. The following is a summary of the responses.

Summary of S.W.O.T.

Strengths

The strengths of Carroll County most frequently identified were:

- Volunteerism, civic participation, community pride, loyalty, caring people, motivated and concerned
- Historic sites, history, heritage of the county
- Natural resources, trails and parks
- Ag base, farmland, rural character
- Location, near urban centers
- Other strengths: highways, low cost housing, low taxes

Weaknesses

The weaknesses of the county most frequently identified were:

- Lack of job opportunities
- Shrinking tax base
- Lack of infrastructure
- No forward thinking, lack of vision, resistance to change, lack of cooperation between public entities
- Lack of incorporating diversity in leadership
- “Brain drain” – loss of youth
- Lack of social services

Opportunities

- HHH - opportunities for growth and development
- Tourism – around natural resources, Ag economy and recreation
- Space and facilities for development (more shovel ready sites, land for development, vacant facilities)
- Regional efforts with surrounding counties and with Purdue
- Include diverse population in county efforts
- Alternative energy/ “Go Green”
- Agribusiness development
- Leadership opportunities
- Need for lodging
- Other: get grants, use of technology

Threats

- Shrinking tax base and lack of growth
- HHH creating a “by-pass” to Carroll County

- Jobs and shopping outside of county
- Loss of young people, “Brain Drain”
- Divisiveness, apathy, individual agendas, lack of long-term vision
- Lack of services – emergency and social

Reports from All Tables

Strengths¹

Table 1

- * Strong Ag
- Safe communities
- Historic sites
- Volunteer spirit
- * Highways
- Trails and waterways
- Land space (beautiful)
- Strong heritage
- * Close to culture/education

Table 2

- Work ethic
- Community patronage
- * 2005 initiative of new program – successes
- Strong faith – prevention in community
- * Desire to better self – collectively
- * Diversity of talents with people willing to work hard

Table 3

- * Committed citizens
- * Diverse populations
- Community pride
- Old Settlers
- Small town, homey feel
- * Rich history

Table 4

- * 1. Great corp. of growing civic participation volunteers
- 2. Friendly community/affordable housing
- 3. Public leadership training
- 4. Low taxes
- * 5. Farmland, ag
- 6. Number of organizations

¹ * Denotes most important item.

- * 7. Community history
- * 8. Location (Laf and Kokomo)
- * 9. Natural resources
- 10. Small population
- 11. Growing regional econ. dev.

Table 5 (Full list of strengths not available)

- * Volunteerism
- * Commitment and momentum
- * Local government – reasonable tax structure and government

Table 6

- * History
- * Small groups working well together
- Culture of the county – people
- Loyalty to county
- Two rivers and 3 creeks
- * Strong agricultural base
- * Bedroom community (Lafayette and Kokomo)
- * Parks and rural feel
- Pride in history
- Fairly good schools
- Good volunteers
- Honest people
- * Low housing cost

Table 7

- Waterway recreation
- People power – dedication
- * Historic resources
- Faith in religion
- * Location two hours or less to major US city – highway
- * Rural community - Ag

Table 8

- Organizations
- Near Lafayette and Purdue
- * Natural resources
- Younger
- * Rich heritage
- Lower taxes
- * Volunteerism
- Cooperation
- License Bureau
- Ag base
- Grants

- Lakes
- Stable population
- School system

Table 9

- * People
- * Volunteers
- Small atmosphere
- Location
- * Heritage
- * Agriculture
- Hoosier Heartland

Table 10

- Caring people
- Parks
- * Motivated & concerned people
- * Agribusiness
- Small town atmosphere
- Involved, organized local government
- Work ethic
- Concerned individuals
- * Natural resources (recreation, parks)
- Education

There was no Table 11 and 12

Table 13

- Community togetherness
- * Commitment to improve
- Generosity of orgs/bus
- * Volunteerism
- * RR line/HHH
- Living history
- Ag
- Trails/parks

Weaknesses

Table 1

- No public transportation
- * Lack of job opportunities
- Shrinking tax base
- * Resistant to change
- Little/no diversity
- Education
- Aging population

- Lack of social services
- * Infrastructure

Table 2

- * Location, lack of access
- Lack of business – downtown
- * Lack of connectivity from township
- * Resistance to change

Table 3

- * Lack (or low) cooperation between public entities
- * Lack of new major industries, few job opportunities
- * Lack of incorporating diverse pops. within business and civic leadership

Table 4

- * 1. Lack of jobs
- 2. Lack of culture
- 3. Small population – won't support some things like #2
- 4. No money/low taxes
- * 5. Lack of infrastructure (21 cen.)
- 6. Lack of diversity
- * 7. No enough of forward thinking

Table 5 (Full list of Weaknesses not available)

- * Take advantage of opportunities
- * Lack of funding
- * Lack of vision on part of leadership of county

Table 6

- * Losing industry/commerce
- Lack of money/funds in county
- No motels or lodging
- County government
- Lack of population growth
- Weak tax base
- Many out of county jobs
- Lack of entertainment – esp. teens and young adults
- Lack of multi-family dwellings

(Priorities: pass through county, not a destination, more vision and cohesiveness between governments)

Table 7

- * Variety of shopping, lodging
- * Untapped age group, teens, young adults
- * Town rivalry

- Lack of industry
- Lack of community oriented politics

Table 8

- * Lack of business
- No hospital
- Health care
- * Acceptance of Hispanics – outsiders
- Industry declining
- Acceptance of new ideas
- County seat in corner
- * Brain drain

Table 9

- * Weak tax base
- * Lack of business – employment
- Daily media coverage
- Youth – activities and youth leave/don't come back
- Fewer people
- * Health services – emergency, senior care
- * Infrastructures
- Narrow vision

Table 10

- * Public safety numbers (staffing)
- Individuals concerned only with their piece of county
- Wait and see attitude
- * Infrastructure – roads, communications
- Leadership for children
- Cultural diversity – lack of involvement
- * Education opportunities for adults
- Manufacturing base

There is no Table 11 and 12

Table 13

- Tunnel vision
- * Financial base
- Lack of amenities and infrastructure
- Technology opportunities
- Youth involvement

Opportunities

Table 1

- * HH Highway
- * Space for new bus. (shovel ready)
- Waterways (recreational tourism)
- * Regionalized/collaborate with neighboring counties (Purdue)
- Available storefronts
- Lodging

Table 2

- * HH potential
- * Tourism
- Solid foundation – flexible
- Willingness to use technology
- * Outreach program for ethnic inclusion
- * Cheaper real estate and taxes
- * Existing vacant structures

Table 3

- Agri business
- * Tourism – HHH
- * Diversified workforce
- Geographic growth potential – space
- Leadership – volunteer opportunities
- * Alternative energy development – going green
- County grant writer
- * With business growth, increased tax base

Table 4

1. HHH
- * 2. Plan for the HHH
3. Taste of Carroll County
- * 4. Participation regional econ. dev.
5. Focus on Lake Freeman (more lake front in CC than in White Co.)
- * 6. Involve leadership CC graduates
7. Mullin property – industrial site and 75 SR extension
8. Sportsplex on old dump site (40 acres)
9. Carroll County Indiana.com

Table 5

- Consolidate efforts
- Outside funding
- * HHH (retail/industrial)
- * Room to grow
- Tourism/county history
- Stimulus \$
- Increased diversity
- Growth center of region

- * New leadership

Table 6

- * Lots of room for growth – Ag, tourism, industry
- Technology
- Tourism destination – Canal, heritage, natural rural charm
- Old Order community
- * Destination county – destination is focused and tourism is a tool/means
- * HHH
- Alternative fuels/energy – either location or supplier of the resources/equipment for this

Table 7

- * Land availability for growth
- * Alternative energy industry
- Networking with other community with similar focus
- * Tourism – make it a destination
- Replace lost industry
- Incorporate diversity programs in community
- Market our “goods” (tourism, resources)

Table 8

- * Destination for visitors
- Jobs coming with HHH
- Attracting hotel, restaurants
- Ability to get grants
- * Help from Purdue/think regionally partnership
- Include diversified people
- * Develop Agri. Businesses
- Wind energy
- Signature bridge
- Complete the Opera House
- Tavern on the Canal
- Bedroom communities

Table 9

- * Marketing our assets
- * Hoosier Heartland/ 75 extension (expanded transportation)
- Volunteer
- * Agriculture business
- Tourism
- Lodging

Table 10

- * Integrate natural resources, Ag economy and recreation

- * HHH business access in and out
- * Utilities
- * Diversified workforce
- Use of grants
- New Ag business (dairy)
- Recreational facilities
- * Green energy
- Use of business/ people - diversity

There is no Table 11 and 12

Table 13

- * HHH/75
- Purdue Research Park
- * Physical assets
- Resources
- * Diversity
- Ag

Threats

Table 1

- * Shrinking tax base
- Consolidation
- * Divisiveness (political, cultural)
- Workforce undereducated
- Inability to spend \$\$\$
- Transportation (air runway)
- Emergency services (lack)
- * GIS

Table 2

- * Lack of first response
- * Lack of growth – people leaving, job loss
- * Losing next generation

Table 3

- HHH making us a bypass county
- * Potential of losing the county museum
- Economic downturn
- * Agri business to natural resources - environment
- * With growth losing community identity

Table 4

- * 1. Being a pass thru community, not being a destination

- * 2. Being a bedroom community
- * 3. Young people leaving because of lack of job opportunities
- * 4. Not being shovel ready for new industries
- 5. Loss of our standards – drugs and crime because of HHH. HHH brings good and bad

Table 5

- Appeal of other county regional decisions
- * HHH bypass CC
- * Lack of job opportunities
- Knowledge to survive
- * Lack of vision
- Funding \$
- Apathy

Table 6

- * HHH (cutting off community/county, really becoming a pass through county)
- * Too much income/wages spent out of county
- Stagnation and lack of vision
- * Brain drain
- Lack of medical services
- Flooding
- Lack of retirement housing and opportunities
- * Changing tax structure from state
- NCLB – no child left behind
- Failing to allow new residents to integrate

Table 7

- * Not enough marketing
- * Technology is changing quick, we're not keeping up
- Health care needs are outsourced to other counties
- * Take over of Ag land from outside of county interests, i.e., government/business

Table 8

- * Ag conflicts – CAFO
- * Lack of vision - county leaders
- * Tax base
- Lack of business (withdrawing)
- No hotel or B&Bs
- Too many nearby shopping areas
- Adult bookstores with HHH
- Empty stores

Table 9

- Lodging, lack of
- * Shopping – purchasing outside county
- Brain drain
- Poor work ethic (youth)
- * Lack of long-term visioning
- * Lack of funding
- Rules & regulation

Table 10

- * Apathy
- Failure to act on weaknesses
- Dying communities
- *Lack of long-term interest in moving forward
- *Recession
- *Individual agendas
- Competition from adjacent counties and global org.
- Lack of tax base
- *Education (lack of)

(There was no Table 11 and 12)

Table 13

- * HHH
- Ag
- * Irrational develop.
- * Leadership/vision
- Negativity/can't/division
- Lack of jobs
- Status quo
- * Tax base decrease

Compiled by Janet Ayres and Lynn Corson, September 6, 2009