

# BUILDING RELEVANCE THROUGH ADVOCACY & COMMUNICATION

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# KEYS FOR A SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY

- Think about what you believe to be the top one or two keys to success for communities.
  - What should county commissioners be striving for?

# KEYS FOR A SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY

Relevance

# THE MEANING OF ADVOCACY

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- Today, county commissioners are charged with providing local government services and advocating for priorities at the state and federal level.
- Commissioners are focused on protecting and developing their communities:
  - Local Revenue
  - Home Rule/Local Autonomy
  - Workforce/Talent Attraction & Retention
  - Population Growth
  - Economic Development
- In other words, successful county leaders have become community influencers whose main purpose is to effect change at the local, state and federal levels that benefits the short- and long-term priorities of their communities.

# ARE WE MEETING OUR MISSION?

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- Build Relevance > Influence Community > Effect Change > Improve Community
  - An effective advocacy strategy is the interwoven theme that drives this chain of events.



Build Relevance > Influence Community > Effect  
Change > Improve Community

# BUILD RELEVANCE



- On a scale of 1-10, how relevant do you believe your county officials are to:
  - Your constituents/community?
  - State and federal leaders?



# BUILD RELEVANCE

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- You cannot achieve a “10” in your relevance to state and federal leaders if you are not first a “10” in your relevancy to your community. Why?
  - Often times, non-governmental community leaders walk hand-in-hand with local or state government officials in determining the future of a community or state.
  - While government officials have the power to change policies and effect change, the other community leaders have the resources necessary for carrying out and sustaining a change, whether those resources be financial, educational, or human capital driven.

# BUILD RELEVANCE

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- An effective advocacy strategy prioritizes continual relationship-building and collaboration with all community, state and federal leaders, which positions a county's commissioners to be essential players in all decisions.
- As a relevant member of the community, your goal is to be seen as the one who can best connect the dots.



Build Relevance > Influence Community > Effect  
Change > Improve Community

# INFLUENCE COMMUNITY

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- Utilize your relevance to bring others along in educating and advocating for impactful policies.
- Create buy-in and utilize public support when advocating to state and federal leaders
- What is good for the community is good for the state/nation.

# INFLUENCE COMMUNITY

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- The Silo Effect
- Strive to be a community convener.
- Establish a unified vision—a rising tide floats all boats.

# INFLUENCE COMMUNITY

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- Crafting a legislative or policy agenda, which identifies the common priorities of the community as a whole, promotes buy-in from local leaders and sets the stage for a comprehensive direct lobbying strategy to achieve your goals.
- Utilizing this agenda, your advocacy strategy should focus on delegating efforts amongst local leaders and stakeholders.

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Build Relevance > Influence Community > Effect  
Change > Improve Community

# EFFECT CHANGE

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- Direct lobbying efforts must be intentional and well-organized.
  - In the 2023 Indiana General Assembly Session, 1,154 bills were introduced, yet only 252, or 22%, passed.
  - How do we get our priorities into the 22%?
    - Tell the right story to the right decisionmakers.



# EFFECT CHANGE

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- Effective storytelling as part of direct lobbying efforts must include the following:
  - Full and Accurate Data
  - Persuasive Tone
    - Utilize community buy-in
  - Concise Demonstration of Need
  - Appealing Design and Message
  - Constant Deliverance

# EFFECT CHANGE

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- Why is storytelling important?
  - You have to convince at least 77 legislators (26 in the Senate and 51 in the House) to support your proposal.
  - Especially if requesting funding or other forms of assistance that give your community a leg-up, you must prove that you are worthy.
    - Make it easy for them to support you and explain their vote back home.

# EFFECT CHANGE

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- Do not expect success every time (22%)
- Persistence is key

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Build Relevance > Influence Community > Effect  
Change > Improve Community

# IMPROVE COMMUNITY

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- Never become complacent with your position—other communities won't.
  - Complacent communities get left behind.
- Regularly reevaluate and refine your agenda to ensure that there is always a priority to be striving for.



HOW DOES THIS TRANSLATE TO YOUR  
CONSTITUENTS & COMMUNITY?



# Communication & Storytelling

# COMMUNICATION AND STORYTELLING

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- Helping your community understand the opportunities and/or hurdles at hand.
  - Decomplicating a complicated process.
    - Outlining the why, the how, and the who.
      - Why is this important to the community?
      - Who will this impact?
      - How will we accomplish the opportunity at hand?



# ENGAGING THE RIGHT COMMUNITY LEADERS

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- Who you're connected with matters.
- Who are the most influential leaders in your community?
- How are they engaged with you?
  - How are you interacting with and engaging the next generation of influential leaders?
- How are you incorporating various facets of business leaders?

# COMMUNICATION AND STORYTELLING

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- Helping your community understand the opportunities and/or hurdles at hand.
  - Filter through the fluff and overflow of information.
    - Outlining the who, what, when, where, why, and how.
    - What are the facts that the state cares about?

# BUILDING TRUST THROUGH COMMUNICATION

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- Transitioning from hoping people will listen to knowing that they want to listen.
- This transition is done through building trust.
  - Is your message transparent?
  - Is your message coherent?
  - Is your message relevant?
  - Is your message timely?
  - Is your message often?

# BUILDING COMMUNICATION AND STORYTELLING EFFORTS

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- Thoughtful communication strategies include the following:
  - Effective and thorough messaging
    - Key Messages, Testimonials, Brand, etc.
  - Community and Campaign Branding
    - Visual representation of your message
  - Public Relations
  - Digital Communication
  - Supporting Materials

# COMMUNICATION AND STORYTELLING



At the end of the day, you don't have to be an advocacy expert, but you do need to be an effective storyteller.



# ADVOCACY & COMMUNICATION IN ACTION

# STATE ADVOCACY



# FEDERAL ADVOCACY





# FOOD AND BEVERAGE TAX

## WHAT WILL



## MEAN FOR ME?

when you go out to a restaurant and spend money on a meal



a small additional fee will appear on your bill



if you spend  
**\$20.00**

that's an extra  
**\$0.20**

that money goes to making a convention center a reality



which increases tourism and improves quality of life for Vigo County residents

## COMMUNITIES WHERE YOU *already* PAY FOOD & BEVERAGE



**28** Indiana communities currently charge Food & Beverage fees

*It's our turn*  
**TO GROW**



## WHAT EXACTLY DOES FOOD & BEVERAGE AFFECT?

**THE 1% FEE**  
does NOT apply to ...



GROCERIES

UNPREPARED FOOD

CATERING SERVICE

It DOES apply to ...

*Menu*

DINE-IN RESTAURANTS

FAST FOOD RESTAURANTS

PREPARED MEALS

HOT BAR ITEMS

BUFFETS

PREPARED DELI ITEMS

CATERED FOOD

# A CASINO IN TERRE HAUTE MEANS...

**300-400  
NEW JOBS**



**\$100-\$150  
MILLION  
CONSTRUCTION PROJECT**

## NEW GAMING TAX REVENUE



## NEW PROPERTY TAX REVENUE



## INCREASED INCOME TAX REVENUE



## INCREASED FOOD & BEVERAGE TAX REVENUE



## INCREASED INNKEEPER'S TAX REVENUE



**EMPLOYMENT  
RATES**

**TH**  
TERRE HAUTE  
*is All In*

**TAX  
REVENUE**

# VOTE YES ON #1

**SUPPORT**  
**VOTE YES ON #1**



**VOLUNTEER FOR THE  
LABOR DAY PARADE!**



**VOTE YES  
ON #1**

**TO CONSTRUCT A**

**CASINO**

**IN**

**TERRE HAUTE**

**VIGO COUNTY VOTES**

**NOV. 5**

**CasinoTerreHaute.com**

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## A CASINO IN TERRE HAUTE

WILL BRING

**400 NEW JOBS**

As well as 150  
construction-related jobs



**ECONOMIC GROWTH**

Millions of dollars in economic  
growth and new investment

**NEW MONEY FOR SCHOOLS**

Nearly half a million dollars each  
year in new money for Vigo  
County public schools



**TOURISM & ENTERTAINMENT**

New entertainment venues, restaurants,  
and hotels attracting thousands of new  
visitors to Vigo County each year

**QUALITY OF LIFE**

Increased tourism to boost local  
businesses, create more jobs and  
generate additional tax revenue



**EVERY VIGO COUNTY  
REGISTERED VOTER CAN  
VOTE**

**VOTE YES**

**ON #1**

**CasinoTerreHaute.com**

# OPPORTUNITY AWAITS

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- Whether you are a small or large community, the benefits of an organized and intentional advocacy strategy are worth the effort.
- As you continue to seek ways to instill relevance in your service to your constituents and community, I encourage you to think about this:

Build Relevance > Influence Community > Effect Change >  
Improve Community

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# QUESTIONS?

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