

LaGrange County Economic Development Plan

Public Questionnaire Results

Members of the public were invited to share their opinions about LaGrange County's business climate as part of the input gathering phase of the economic development planning process. More than 500 printed copies of the public questionnaire were distributed throughout the county and were available at multiple locations including all branch libraries. Printed copies were also supplied at the public meeting and focus groups. The questionnaire was accessible online through the LaGrange County Economic Development Corporation's website and the consulting firm's web page. Submissions were accepted from March 23rd through May 6th 2011. 33 questionnaires were submitted through the mail; the remaining 115 were submitted online. In total, 148 valid responses were submitted. The public questionnaire consisted of 34 questions. The number of responses to each question varied because all were optional. The results of this questionnaire indicate the perceptions of a self-selected sample of people.

Business Climate

1) How would you rate LaGrange County's overall business climate? = 1.51 Avg

<i>Response</i>	<i>Number (148 Total)</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Good	14	9.5%
Fair	54	36.5%
Poor	73	49.3%
Don't Know	7	4.7%

Capacity for Business Expansion or New Development

2) How would you describe the availability of vacant space under roof for industrial use in LaGrange County? = 1.79 Avg

<i>Response</i>	<i>Number (148 Total)</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Excellent	31	20.9%
Sufficient	76	51.4%
Insufficient	20	13.5%
Don't Know	21	14.2%

3) How would you describe the availability of vacant space under roof for non-industrial business (office space) use in LaGrange County? = 1.59 Avg

<i>Response</i>	<i>Number (148 Total)</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Excellent	12	8.1%
Sufficient	89	60.1%
Insufficient	21	14.2%
Don't Know	26	17.6%

4) How would you describe the availability of Greenfield sites (undeveloped land) served by infrastructure for industrial or non-industrial business (office space) development? = 1.56 Avg

<i>Response</i>	<i>Number (147 Total)</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Excellent	25	17.0%
Sufficient	69	46.9%
Insufficient	16	10.9%
Don't Know	37	25.2%

5) **How would you describe the *quality* of available space in LaGrange County for:**

<i>Infrastructure Area</i>	<i>Excellent</i>		<i>Adequate</i>		<i>Inadequate</i>		<i>Don't Know</i>	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Industrial = 1.78 Avg (147 Total)	26	17.7%	84	57.1%	15	10.2%	22	15.0%
Non-industrial = 1.51 Avg (145 Total)	16	11.0%	68	46.9%	35	24.1%	26	17.9%

6) **Where would you prefer to see development for industrial use?**

105 responses were submitted in answer to this question.

<i>Write-in Responses</i>	<i>Number of Mentions</i>
LaGrange	23
Existing vacant industrial space	22
Toll Road	17
Fawn River Crossing	12
SR 9	12
Topeka	10
Howe	9
Anywhere	6
Industrial park	6
Away from downtown areas	4
Downtown areas	4
Shipshewana	4
Areas that are zoned for industrial development	3
Adjacent county	2
SR 120	2
US 20	2
121 park	1
Away from farmland	1
Away from lakes	1
Away from populated areas	1
Between Shipshewana and Topeka	1
Bloomfield township	1
Clearspring township	1
East side of county	1
Johnson township	1
Near railroad	1
None	1
South Milford	1
SR 20	1
State roads	1
Wolcottville	1

7) **Where would you prefer to see development for non-industrial business (office space) use?**

102 responses were submitted in answer to this question.

<i>Write-in Responses</i>	<i>Number of Mentions</i>
LaGrange town	28
Downtown areas	26
Existing vacant space	10
Don't Know	5
Howe	5
Anywhere	4
Same as industrial space	4
Shipshewana	4
SR 9	4
Fawn River Crossing	3
Existing vacant space is in need of repairs	2
Near towns	2

Near available parking	2
Topeka	2
Uptown	2
US 20	2
Wolcottville	2
Areas zoned for commercial use	1
Depends on kind of business	1
Eden township	1
LaGrange County	1
Less important than industrial development	1
Newbury township	1
North LaGrange County	1
Road 20 West	1
Toll Road	1
Van Buren township	1
Yes	1

Infrastructure

8) How would you rate the condition of the following infrastructure areas in LaGrange County?

Infrastructure Area	Excellent		Adequate		Inadequate		Don't Know	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Roads = 1.72 Avg (147 Total)	8	5.4%	91	61.9%	45	30.6%	2	1.4%
Rail = 0.77 Avg (145 Total)	1	0.7%	22	15.2%	64	44.1%	58	40.0%
Water = 1.69 Avg (146 Total)	17	11.6%	86	58.9%	24	16.4%	19	13.0%
Sanitary Sewer = 1.53 Avg (147 Total)	14	9.5%	77	52.4%	29	19.7%	27	18.4%
Stormwater or drainage mitigation = 1.48 Avg (144 Total)	10	6.9%	80	55.6%	23	16.0%	31	21.5%
Gas = 1.84 Avg (145 Total)	21	14.5%	97	66.9%	10	6.9%	17	11.7%
Electricity = 2.01 Avg (147 Total)	30	20.4%	99	67.3%	7	4.8%	11	7.5%
Broadband access = 1.30 Avg (144 Total)	7	4.9%	50	34.7%	64	44.4%	22	15.3%

9) What would your priorities be for infrastructure improvements in LaGrange County?

96 responses were submitted in answer to this question.

Write-in Responses	Number of Mentions
Roads	46
Broadband access	22
Sanitary sewer	19
Water	13
Don't Know	4
Rails	4
Sidewalks	3
Stormwater or drainage mitigation	3
All of the above	1
Bike trail	1
Natural gas	1

Housing

10) How would you describe the supply of housing in the following categories?

Type of Housing	Excellent		Adequate		Inadequate		Don't Know	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Executive housing = 1.36 Avg (143 Total)	7	4.9%	66	46.2%	41	28.7%	29	20.3%
Single family homes for the middle class = 1.93 Avg (146 Total)	24	16.4%	95	65.1%	20	13.7%	7	4.8%
Affordable homes for lower income families = 1.60 Avg (146 Total)	17	11.6%	72	49.3%	39	26.7%	18	12.3%
Apartments or other multifamily residential opportunities = 1.39 Avg (144 Total)	8	5.6%	57	39.6%	62	43.1%	17	11.8%
Upper-end condos for retirees = 0.95 Avg (144 Total)	3	2.1%	16	11.1%	96	66.7%	29	20.1%

11) Do you have any suggestions for improving housing in LaGrange County?

74 responses were submitted in answer to this question.

Write-in Responses	Number of Mentions
No	13
Low income housing	11
Clean-up programs	10
Jobs	8
Retirement communities	5
Senior housing	5
Rental housing	4
Reuse of vacant homes	3
Code enforcement	2
Executive housing	2
Free market	2
Homes for middle class	2
Upper-end condos for retirees	2
Affordable homeownership programs	1
Affordable housing for large families	1
Better contractors	1
Improve subdivision development	1
Improved zoning in lake areas	1
Increased lot sizes in subdivisions	1
Low income assistance for utilities and home improvements	1
Low property taxes	1
Promote small business development	1
Restore housing prices	1
Sanitary sewer	1
Single-family homes for middle class	1
Subsidized single-family housing	1
Town services as incentives for attracting residents	1
Trail system	1
Water	1

Small Business

12) What resources are available for providing assistance in small business development and entrepreneurship in LaGrange County?

88 responses were submitted in answer to this question.

<i>Write-in Responses</i>	<i>Number of Mentions</i>
Don't Know	35
LaGrange County Chamber of Commerce	14
LaGrange County Economic Development Corporation	9
None	9
Banks	4
LaGrange County Convention and Visitors Bureau	3
N/A	3
Shipshewana Retail Merchant Association	3
Few	2
Government programs	2
Not many	2
Community Development Corporation	1
LaGrange County Community Foundation	1
County agencies	1
Dekko Foundation	1
Extension office	1
Grants	1
Local government	1
Lots	1
Northern Indiana Business Bureau in Ft. Wayne	1
Not enough	1
SBA	1
SBDC	1
SCORE	1
State agencies	1
Tax abatement	1
Tax incentives	1
The Howe School	1
Trine University	1

13) What additional resources are needed for small business development?

80 responses were submitted in answer to this question.

Write-In Responses to Question 13

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A demand

A plan commission that is willing to work with owners. Also have rules that do not hinder people.

A reason to bring a business into LaGrange. Why choose LaGrange over somewhere else?

A willingness to accept and assist new small business by all parts of local government. The main question to be answered is "what would attract" new small business to LaGrange Co?

Adult Computer classes, Small business loan seminars, A resource that would help new or potential new business owners go through the process of what things they need to think about prior to opening up their business. Seminar on how to write a business plan.

Anything and everything

Better grants and easy qualifying loans

Better high end and middle paying schedules

Business educational resources.

business incubator

Business retention and business incubator.

bza/ plan commission/be more friendly when they to expand

Commitment from property owners to help share the burden and use the businesses here instead of elsewhere when possible.

County government needs to be more open and helpful to bring in small business. Seems LEDC helps than County Government tears it back down

Create tax breaks and additional incentives for new business to come

Customers. Everyone shops online or in the cities.

direct employer facilitation of advance training and education of employees.

Do not know

Don't know

Don't know

Don't know

don't know

Don't know

Establish an entrepreneur development center, in partnership with the one in Ft. Wayne, using one of our vacant buildings to provide space, central office services (secretary, office equipment); advisory committee to assist with business plans, patent or copywrite assistance, etc., and as these develop set up manufacturing facilities here in LaGrange county.

Write-In Responses to Question 13

everything

Funding

Grants to help start the businesses

grants, community/ town aid for 1st year new business owners such as rent aid to encourage entrepreneurs to start in LaGrange County!

Grants, property, low taxes.

Honestly, I don't know.

I do not know

I do not know.

i dont know

I dont know what exists

I don't know.

I have no idea

I think overall it is limited because of the cost.

idk

Increased awareness/marketing of resources available through agencies mentioned in #12 above

Incubator Projects

loan opportunities

Low banking and loan rates, competent and educated people

make zoning for home business easier

Many, there are many small business in the county and need of assistance in maintaining and or starting of a business.

marketing, planning, help with permits and such

Maybe in the area of information technology, website development, etc.

More concerted outreach to potential entrepreneurs, some who already live and work in the county and some from outside. Start in high schools with Junior Achievement programs. Provide expertise and mentors from among existing business owners to help new business owners get started with something. Also, focus only on new businesses with markets that bring \$\$ into LaGrange from OUTSIDE County and area (i.e. not restaurants and styling salons). This is where economic growth comes from.

more friendly planning and building regulations

more help getting started

More tourism promotion

n/a

need more people in town business can't survive with no people

No Opinion

None

none

Not sure

Not sure

Not sure

Not sure

Not sure.

Out reach from commercial and industrial resources.

Planning and zoning that is not based on "who knows who", or the "good old boys" concept. It is very frustrating in LaGrange County, as well as many other communities - to hit a brick wall of objections/questions that were not presented up front so the planner could come to the table just once with a proposal. But it certainly seems like when someone knows the right people, it's pretty much smooth sailing :(Possible modification of the plan commission rules. Some of the ordinances seem to make it extremely difficult or almost prohibit new small sole proprietor businesses.

Potential bank(s) loans.

Probably the ability to improve.

Quit giving tax breaks and other deals to larger companies who are paying low wages to come into the county. Instead, earmark those funds for local entrepreneurs.

Retain our High school and college graduates.

Someone that cares and is not out for themselves!

start up grants, tax breaks, affordable rental space, affordable internet access, how about just encouraging startups networking? too expensive to join commerce and what is benefit?

the go ahead from the community instead of everyone denying the growth of our town

there needs to be a focus on allowing major businesses come to town and get away from the mom and pop shops that can't survive

Tourism and a "reason" to settle your business in the County seat.

unknown

Unsure

We need more monies poured into aid for our community so that people can develop their ideas.

we need new council members to let business happen in lagrange.

Willingness to help !

With the present economy, anything would help.

Young motivated entrepreneurs, older people giving younger business people a chance, tax breaks for new businesses, nice looking store fronts.

Education and Workforce Development

14) How would you rate the schools K through 12 in LaGrange County? = 2.28 Avg

Response	Number (148 Total)	Percent
Good	68	45.9%
Fair	58	39.2%
Poor	17	11.5%
Don't Know	5	3.4%

15) How would you rate post-secondary training opportunities for residents in LaGrange County? = 1.34 Avg

Response	Number (148 Total)	Percent
Good	13	8.8%
Fair	39	26.4%
Poor	81	54.7%
Don't Know	15	10.1%

Text response: "but reasonable travel allows for training"

16) How would you rate the following workforce characteristics in LaGrange County?

Workforce Characteristics	Excellent		Adequate		Inadequate		Don't Know	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Basic skill levels = 1.93 Avg (148 Total)	28	18.9%	84	56.8%	32	21.6%	3	55.8%
Attitude toward lifelong learning = 1.34 Avg (147 Total)	6	4.1%	48	32.7%	82	55.8%	10	6.8%
Work ethic = 1.90 Avg (148 Total)	35	23.6%	66	44.6%	42	28.4%	4	2.7%

17) Do you have any suggestions for improving education or workforce development in LaGrange County?

81 responses were submitted in answer to this question.

Write-In Responses to Question 17
A stronger school system.
Amish get all A's for table above.
Attracting and PROMOTING private educational sources such as Trine University, Ivy Tech, etc.
Continue developing courses in senior high school to enhance learning beyond the basic labor skills--some of this is already done however if we want more technical development we need the skills for the jobs.
Continue to promote lifelong learning. Reach out to the Amish community to help provide basic entrepreneur skills.
Create some jobs
Creating demand & improving better options for education-Trine @ Howe would be a good example-if it works or not is a different discussion
Cut government programs allowing people to survive by doing nothing. (sometimes you have to feel some hunger pains to get the ambition to work)
Delivery systems directly to the workforce via the Employer.
Develop a workforce training and educational system to address those who do not have a high school education. Also development a lifelong learning system that is used customer driven.
Don't waste money on a "stay in school" campaign. We live in an Amish community, they're not going to be swayed by a billboard to keep their kids in school, its a complete waste of money trying. Respect their beliefs and know that the "drop out" rate will be skewed because of them.
Educate the children on time and money management. Help each student find ways to be able to afford to further their education.
Education is not a priority and until it is, we will continue to lag.
Encourage people to get off unemployment and contribute to the local economy. Encourage young families and singles to become more involved in local activities, which means, there needs to be those activities.
Extension courses offered in LaGrange. Travel to Fort Wayne prohibits continuation of education.
For Education- The Real teachers are at home. So parents watch the way you act around your kids bc they will act exactly like you. Dont think

<i>Write-In Responses to Question 17</i>
your children wont hide stuff from you, we were all once their age. Keep your eyes and ears open and talk to your kids Everday! Workforce Development- cant think of anything.
GED FOR THE AMISH and drop out students
GED programs for Amish students. Scholarship opportunities for "older" students. Could we get Glen Oaks more involved with education programs?
Get rid of Tech School. Have our Chamber bring in more educational seminars to LaGrange County for both individuals and employers.
Go back to basics and offer other diversified trade school training to young adults that are not college bound.
Have the ability to get rid of teachers who are inadequate so you can hire ones that actually inspire their students! And pay the GOOD ones a BETTER wage!
Higher paying jobs.
Hire only those to work in factories who have a high school diploma or higher.
I feel that schools within a county should share funds more. I am a graduate of Prairie Heights and I absolutely love the school system, but it is really struggling to survive. While I know many schools are struggling right now, I feel that more cooperation between PH, WV, & LL could really benefit all three school
I hear that Lakewood H.S. are trying "new" ideas, that's good.
I personally believe the school corporations in LaGrange County have taken great steps to improve the education of our children. For instance Lakeland is encouraging students to continue their education after high school. For those that might not be have the opportunity to continue on the corporation is trying to prepare them to enter the wrok force upon graduation. My own son will graduate as a certified mechanic.
I think more training programs should be made avialable for everyone.
I think we need to get better in tech nologi with in the schools.
I think we should look at the implementing the No Excuse College Bound Program into our schools like Avilla Elementary. The atmoshphere for the children are that college is expected and they talk about college daily. The school is surrounded by college flags and posters. I think there are several things in Lagrange that can influence our children as in other counties so we need all the encouragement that we can provide our children. The earlier the better.
If there are already programs for this, they need more advertising.
Improve funding to the schools, increase wages and incentives to teachers, give young people something to believe in about their chances of success.
Industrial attitude improvement from work force, responsibility to advance in job
It has to start in the homes and in the schools, I think the school system has tried with the Tech program, but the parents are not very receptive to it! As an employer and my husband has over 100 employees in this county, the workforce is terrible. People want something for nothing and don't want to work for what they get!
It is possible to develop a small community college like Ivy Tech or another 2 year school in LaGrange County? This will encourage new ideas and growth overall.
It's a generational problem
Lakeland School Corp has no reading curriculum. How can this be? Reading is a basic part of life and most people that go far in life have an above average reading capabilities.
Lakeland School Corporation really needs to step up and listen to what the parents are saying. It's obvious that charter schools in Indiana don't work and parents don't like how students at the high school are being evaluated. The results so far are scary.
Make it more honest and ethical, create a trustworthy and safe place of work in every location of the county. Create rules and check-ups in order to enforce this.
Make sure you know what you are doing before you start a tech school
more businesses in town the more there is to do in our town the more jobs there will be for our residents
More emphasis on academics in the public schools is needed, as are critical thinking and life skills training.
More Jobs need to be avaiable for High School Kids Working around their sports Schedule
MORE SHADOWING
n/a
need more jobs to keep our children in Lagrange county,instead of them going to where jobs are outside of county.
Need to find some kind of work for the factory workers that have been used up.
Need to spread
no
no
no
No
No
No
No. The economy is bad and there's no improving that.
Offer classes at the High schools, both college level and GED. Workforce develepment could also be done at the High schools in the County.
offer more programs
Offer some college courses at Lakeland for adults. In conjunction with a small college.
Open a college campus here! Get a new High School or add to it!
Partner with colleges
Possibly having a career center that will help people apply for positions and give mock interviews and prepare them for a job opportunity.
restaurants

<i>Write-In Responses to Question 17</i>
Secondary training for those who can not afford college
See # 13 above. Survey existing and potential businesses on what skills or educational needs they have, then design education and workforce development developing those skills.
start a community college would be great! instead of having to drive a minimum of 40 minutes one way just to further education
Stress the importance of education after high school, find out what employers in the county need in an employee and be sure the schools are emphasizing those needs, but all the training in the world is worthless unless the jobs are here for the young people once they finish their education.
The closest community colleges are almost an hour away. There are no local trade schools, those are also a bit of a drive. If we had those things closer, then more people would go. Not everyone has transportation. For those who would need rides, it would be easier to get one if it were to somewhere locally.
The partnership with Trine University is a great start but needs to be more publicized and pushed.
there is a need for more and better teachers in the school system
This begins at home!!! I blame the lack of family involvement and the support to encourage their children to succeed. I feel I am in the 50% of those who have the work ethic. Several of my friends in management complain that people do not want to work because unemployment is readily available and it is easier to learn to live on assistance than work. My children received a good education and felt they were prepared for college. However, my children also took advantage of the education opportunities in the school corporation. Some parents have complained to me that their child didn't get this or that (amazingly specifics are excluded) therefore it was the school's fault their child didn't do well. Blarney! Parents and children should be accountable for the education. It is not always the teachers' fault.
This is a tough topic to discuss given the two parallel cultures in LaGrange Co - Amish (40%)and non-Amish (60%). New Indiana education reform initiatives MAY result in competition for students among 3 school districts. This should be encouraged as a way go get them to distinguish themselves. A charter school might also be appropriate for development of a specialized technical track (not to be confused with New Tech Ed at Lakeland HS.
To start a skills education career center for high school students (11th and 12th grade)
Try to evaluate school board members and the teachers/administrators they hire
tuition reimbursement, mentoring programs
Unfortunately, the New Tech at lakeland is pushing people away. Kids are teaching kids, not teachers teaching kids. When you have a group of lazy non driven kids, it pulls all down now.
Utilize the existing relationship between Trine U. and the Howe School. Support an educational village.
We need locations for college courses through IPFW or Ivy Tech so students do not have to commute so far.
We need to find a way for industry and post-secondary education to come together, offering opportunities that encourage our young people to stay in this area.
When 4 Supt. says all students should be in vocational training we have issues. No wonder attitude is not good. Why go to college when all we do is promote manufacturing jobs and then let non high school diploma (Amish) take those jobs anyway? How about promote technology oriented jobs and try bringing in higher skilled jobs?
Yes, have some post secondary education offered and not vocational education. Market life long learning and change attitudes.
Yes, put more local money into education, as those children are our future. We should be willing to make sure they have the best education possible by partnering with the schools to make sure the schools have everything they need to do the best job possible. More grants should be made available to them, etc.
Yes, transition to a typical 4.0 grading scale. This will help our students adequately compete against others applying for college. Teach, relying on students to figure things out in groups some of the time can be helpful, but I don't agree with the full time transition to "new tech" learning.

Retention and Expansion of Employers

18) How would you rate LaGrange County's environment for retaining and expanding existing businesses? = 1.51 Avg

<i>Response</i>	<i>Number (145 Total)</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Good	19	13.1%
Fair	49	33.8%
Poor	64	44.1%
Don't Know	13	9.0%

19) Could you describe the advantages or the obstacles that local employers confront in remaining profitable or creating new jobs in LaGrange County?

74 responses were submitted in answer to this question.

<i>Write-In Responses to Question 19</i>
Advantage: Citizens of small towns prefer doing some types of business on a personal approach like insurance, salons, grocery.
Disadvantage: citizens drive miles due to prices in local.

<i>Write-In Responses to Question 19</i>
Advantages: Good basic workforce at reasonable wage base, low tax rate, good E to W Highways. Obstacles: Lack of technically skilled workforce.
Advantages: Great workforce, strong work-ethic, good values, low tax rates Obstacles: Increased competition from internet, lack of direct access to toll road from Shippshewana
Advantages: hardworking workforce and plenty of cheap unskilled/semi-skilled labor available. Land for development seems relatively cheap. Taxes no worse than other areas and much better than MI and will get even better once Corp Tax rates are lowered. Obstacles: Limited work force skills. Meth addiction epidemic impacting quality of unskilled/semi-skilled labor force. Seems to be a "no can do" attitude among many county officials and leaders.
Advantages: our population!
Amish are hardworking, nonunion and plentiful. Planning board is obstructionist.
At this point in our economy of LaGrange County. We have very little job oppurtunities and the residence have to go to other towns for employment. Need to have jobs to keep the people to help promote the economy
Being in the manufacturing business, with our economy as it is, many are suffering. We need to expand our business and move toward a more futuristic approach.
Cost, limited resources.
County has limited draw of consumer businesses to draw potential employees to this county
Don't know
economy
Employers who truly want to grow and stay up to date require employees with no less than a bachelor's degree--Lab Co. has very few candidates. Those looking to move here that have their bachelor's or higher understand the importance of schooling and are not going to come when our area schools are poor.
expanding home based businesses
From what I have heard from freinds who do have or have tried starting bussiness, the County Officials are the largest stumbling block
Government
High energy costs
I believe we are losing some very good employees to other markets because so many of our industries are low skill jobs. Pay is better elsewhere.
I can not.
I do not know
I do not know what the obstacles would be,gut we need to fill vacant industrial buildings they sit empty for a long time
i dont know
I have talked to many local business owners and they all seem to say the same things. There is no support for small businesses and the county does not make lagrange a small business friendly place.
I think the people in control of business decisions are the biggest obstacle in the improvement of this county
It is no secret that we have lost businesses because the companies moved out of the country so they could pay their employees less. People in this area simply want to work.
It seems like most local businesses are small, and mostly hire family. Most people I know drive elsewhere for work.
It seems that LaGrange County is not interested "new" businesses. They seem to want to stay with the status quo businesses, but to stay viable we are going to have to have more industries besides RV industries.
Lack of applicants. High school seniors do not seek work in our county after completing their education.
Lack of education in the workforce that stays here after school. Lack of work ethic, morals, values, etc. Bad economy all around, no one has much to spend extra.
Lack of education. Only industry here is RV. Let's add other industries, new technology, wind energy, solar, rail, etc. Not completely rely on one industry.
Lack of stores, etc.
LaGrange county attracts non-skilled people because he businesses brought into the county for the most part don't require skilled employees. The manufacturers can get away with paying low wages.
LaGrange county residents spend their dollars in towns and cities ooutside of our county because LaGrange county has nothing to keep them here.
LaGrange Standard Paper is a worthless, hard to work with, poor excuse for a printed piece of paper!
lazy and complaining workforce
Less driving to surrounding counties is an advantage and employers that care, you are not just a number!
Low income residency, competition with Wal Mart, etc. The housing and education does not attract upper income business for their families to locate in the county. Shippshewanna Area is too seasonal.
Low traffic.
Low wage rates, good strong work force, and a low cost of doing business are a huge advantage. ED attainment is low, so it corners you into a semi-skilled (formal) workforce.
Major companies moving out of area taking high paying jobs with them
Marketing expertise
money
n/a
NA
need to streamline regulatory processes
Nobody is spending money because of the economy, there has to be some incentive. The town could come together and do an event at the courthouse to bring people in. Not just old people playing music, but something that would bring the young families out.

<i>Write-In Responses to Question 19</i>
Not convinced that Lagrange county is "business friendly" with potential new business opportunities...permitting, county cooperation. Nedd to revamp the Senic cooridor rules and regs to make for business friendly.
Not enough new businesses that want to move to our community, Lagrange needs to give benefits that companies would WANT to have a place in the community
Obstacles are Commissioners and Council members who will not move forward. Decisions are never made in a timely manner, always tabled until another time. In my opion, decisions need to be made much more quickly or prospective employers and businesses will leave the county. The advantages of staying in the County would probably be access to the Toll Road and Highways.
Obstacles: educated workforce for new "high skilled" manufacturing or non manufacturing jobs. Education is key. There is "no brand" in LGC--what do we market ourselves as???
Obstacles--low educated workforce, costs for internet and services (gas, electric, utilities).
One advantage to businesses in town would be proximity. No one wants to spend more money on gas to go out to eat or shop, so they are more likely to spend their money in LaGrange when they can. A large obstacle is what is available to the public. If someone has to drive to another town because a retailer in LaGrange doesn't have the item or no one sells what the consumer is looking for, the money leaves the county and somtimes the state. LaGrange has little demand, so there is very little supply. Another obstacle is staying profitable is price. Everything is more expensive in LaGrange, It saves money to go to Wal-Mart, but everythig you need at a lower price andin one place.
Only 10% of people in LaGrange are college educated. People here are reluctant to CHANGE--want everything to stay the same.
Other bigger, chain businesses take over business. For example, Walmart, online shopping, etc.
Our wage scale is high which is good for employees - hard for employers pay isn't high enough
Poor infrastructure, i.e. broadband and roads. Zoning laws make home construction difficult. Not enough adequate executive housing additions that would attract people, and the lakes are all filled up so not much room for development there.
prices. needing to pay what the trailer factories pay so that we can compete with the workforce available
Problem is companies are moving out of the country because its cheap labor for them. That doesnt help us here.
Terrible infrastructure, terrible location for shipping/delivery, too many undereducated and under-motivated members of the workforce.
The diversification of skill levels do not exist in the county. Any new business other than housing would have to provide detailed training programs to meet their needs.
The Lagrange attitude is, "You have to be from a large city to qualify".
The need to diversify for some of our larger corporations so we are not solely dependent on RV or automative industry. Several employers I have talked with mention they are struggling not to lay off their employees because of the overall economy. Overhead is a huge impact including the state mandated increase of "fees" such as workforce development training cost and workman's comp. Many are considering sub contracting to avoid these additional expenses so the business owner can stay in business.
The town is run down. We need a large company to come in so that people flock to the town and visit the smaller stores. Small stores do not pull the people away from sturgis.
The way outsiders are treated is an obstacle, for instance the way the Howe Restaurant owner when a local department required some updates to drainage. They automatically assumed he would do it "under the table" and not to code and even said that this isn't Chicago.
There aren't enough businesses in this town to attract visitors. People want quick and convenient. They want drive thru fast food. They want a fun place to hang out and eat good food. We have Hometown Restaurant as the only place to eat in town and they put everyone out of business because the the convenience of the parking. Then there's McDonald's that thrives because it has a drive thru.
there is not enough in our town to bring people here for employeres to hire more help or make enough to stay open, when people can drive 10-15 min. and have triple the shopping and recreation options
Transportation and infrastructure aren't on a level needed by most industries today, and wages are usually too low to keep the best workers.
unrealistic rural expansion rules
Wal Mart
We lack many facilities that could be helpful in keeping people in the community (YMCA or recreational, such as a pool; high-quality day care, places -other than bars- for young people to gather)
We've had challenges in finding local management staffing. Production personel is adequate.
Without the industry, small businesses fail to thrive...our county residents are broke, and with no small business and no industry, they will stay that way.
Work ethics need improvement. Employees that are responsible and want to work.

New Employer Marketing

20) How would you rate LaGrange County's attractiveness for new employers? = 1.57 Avg

<i>Response</i>	<i>Number (144 Total)</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Good	22	15.3%
Fair	51	35.4%
Poor	58	40.3%
Don't Know	13	9.0%

21) Could you describe any obstacles or advantages in LaGrange County for attracting new employers?

74 responses were submitted in answer to this question.

<i>Write-In Responses to Question 21</i>
Address the issues enumerated in question number 19, above.
Advantages are the amount of space to choose from. There is so much potential in downtown LaGrange for employers to open new businesses, but there is a lack of visitors to the area to keep them thriving.
Advantages: good work ethic; very good schools; great recreation area (lakes, park system); people are very friendly and hekpful; relatively "crime free"Obstacles:Elected officials need to be more pro-active.
Again I must say that people in the area want to work. Finding jobs has been the problem. There would be no problem in new businesses finding employees.
Again there needs to be something to WANT to be here
Again, making regulatory processes more "business-friendly"
Alot of people state it's not work if you enjoy it, maybe we could try to find a way for employees to have some pride or more satisfaction in what they do. Then those of us who have better attitudes wouldn't have to be harrassed.
An advantage would be a huge unemployed but willing workforce desperate for work.
Area has only semi-skilled employees many without much formal education.
broad band
building in areas other than industrial parks
Business moving out of LaGrange - city apperars to be dying
County building commission has high \$ rates in remodeling. County plan commission does NOT work with the people for the people.
Don't know
economy
Education level with the Amish, I feel really hurts our counties numbers. They don't understand finacial reasoning and cause problems because of that!
education levels, workforce training opportunities, lack of higher education
For employers to come here they need to have incentives of gas, electric and sewer available.
Good work force--dedicated to their jobs
Housing, schools, industries other than RVs
I know of some young people (early twenties) who want to return to live in this area. These are good kids with strong work ethics and are educated. I would hope these young people would inspire new employers to consider LaGrange County. I believe our Amish population is overlooked and misunderstood by many new employers. Many of the young Amish adults are highly intelligent, better read than most high school grads, and have a superior work ethic. These young English and Amish adults are a huge asset to our community. Unfortunately the unskilled, under educated, unmotivated young people within our county seem to stand out more and present a negative picture to potential new employers. I have no suggestions how to encourage new employers to this area. I would like to think that the "Field of Dreams" philosphy would work....if we build it (the new business) the qualified employee will come and find LaGrange County a wonderful place to live.
If LaGrange county grew with stores like Walmart or restraunts like Applebees they would bring more people to LaGrange and more jobs as well.
I'm not sure if there are any incentives in place for new employers. If there aren't there should be!
It almost seems like the residents of the county do not want to see the town grow.
Junk yards-multifamilies in single family homes-little or no interest by county in unincorporated areas
Just the image of poor housing and an inadequate availability of skilled work force would be the main perceived obstacle.
keep town clean
lack of office et al space. lack of selling outreach to potential businesses.
lack of public support for business incentives/ guaility of life issues
Lack of retail and food alternatives.
Lakes- recreation- open spaces
large base of lpeople desperate to find work.
Location near Indiana Toll Road is one advantage. Lake areas are attractive for permanent housing
Low skill levels of employees. Most industrial jobs in this county are low skill jobs.
Most of county council and commissioners are self serving in their own businesses than bringing new, high-paying jobs to the county.
Most places do not pay enough.
n/a
na
New employers will be challenged to staff a qualified Executive Management team.
Nice community Not enough advertising or seeking them out
No
No major interstate except the toll road. Companies avoid the toll road due to the high tolls.
No vision from a non corporate employer to come & remain here - IA West example. Strength: work force has in the past been good - already still here or have they left?
Obstacles: 1) LaGrange Co is geographically distant from all major business centers: FW, SB, TOL, DET, CHI etc. Cannot always look to build industry that is transporation-intensive. As price of gas goes up, this becomes bigger issue. 2) Workforce is aging and comprimised by meth epidemic at the unskilled level. 3) "No Can Do" attitude of county officials - need new and younger leadership. Advantages: Cheap land, cheap unskilled labor, decent public schools, rural charm and lifestyle. Businesses that can be attractive to Amish workers enjoy a labor

<i>Write-In Responses to Question 21</i>
advantage in terms of work ethic, reliability, low turnover etc.
Obstacles: bad ROADS Advantages: small community
Obstacles: Republicans!
Obstacles--low educated workforce, costs for internet and services (gas, electric, utilities).
people are great rules are unrealistic
Plan Commission Zoning Board
Same as number 19 above
Same as question 19
Schools, closed minds, unwelcoming attitude by certain groups.
See # 19. We have a "captive workforce" with a great work ethic that needs alternatives to the RV industry.
See #19
small towns dont attract many people so employers are not going to see it as a profitable area
Stubbornness of town board/ council, political parties. Not wanting to change.
Take a look! If you were a business looking to expand and you drove thru laGrange and then drove thru other towns, you would say, wow...that town is run down!
The county is divided into three distinct parts going East and West. The west side is predominantly Amish, the middle is lake country and the small towns, and the East is very rural and undeveloped. Development does not belong in the Eastern side of the county -leave it rural as it should be. The middle area with the small towns seem to have a mentality of "we want jobs but we don't want to change to get them". Look at LaGrange - going backward while Shipshewana keeps moving forward.
The main obstacle is an uneducated workforce.
The Spanish population has expanded greatly, many of whom do not speak, read, or write English. This needs to be addressed. As well, making sure that each person is here legally and that State and Government benefits are not given to those who are not. We stay to much in the past, farming is a big part of many families, but that too is faltering. We need new growth, and with this new ideas and ways of thinking. "Life in the past lane" is over, in order to move ahead we need to be aggressive, not anything less.
The worker availability is not in place to create in high tech and high end jobs. The talent pool is very good for those who know how to work with their hands.
There is NO night life, people want something to do besides go to grossmans
There seems to be a limited range of businesses, so starting a new business could be very intimidating...but I'm not sure how to solve this problem
This county makes it very hard for new businesses to come in LaGrange. I have known of many local business owners who had to jump through hoops to either add on or fix up their buildings.
too many businesses closed
too much red tape permits, government well situated, location.
Uncertain.
Unwillingness to help.
We are competing with already successful towns such as Shipshewana, we need to begin marketing ourselves to potential businesses as close to towns, close to the water, and not be afraid of losing that "small town feel." Our town is so "small" feeling that it is practically dead. We need to accept any and all businesses that show an interest in moving to our area. Embrace any business we can get at this point, and become choosey later.
We have a good workforce, however, we don't yet have the reputation as the place to start a business. Again, we do not have a defined industrial park.
Were a Very Small Community, im not sure if that is an advantage or not??
Western portion of county attractive for new employees, remainder of county stagnant.
What is the plan, what is being done?
Where would these employers put their place of businesses. Lagrange is limited. Wolcottville is the land of methamphetamine. We need to clean it up. Residence need to know that we will not allow this type of behavior anymore.

Availability of Commercial and Retail Shopping Opportunities

22) How would you rate LaGrange County's retail and commercial shopping opportunities? = 1.40 Avg

<i>Response</i>	<i>Number (144 Total)</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Good	10	6.9%
Fair	39	27.1%
Poor	94	65.3%
Don't Know	1	0.7%

23) Could you describe any specific deficiencies to LaGrange County's retail and commercial shopping?

90 responses were submitted in answer to this question.

<i>Write-In Responses to Question 23</i>
All 'low end', Wal-Mart quality Few clothing retail stores- small grocery stores and hardware, appliance stores
Apathy-- "it's always been this way" attitude. Too many that belong to the "Good ol' Boys" Club and can't accept or welcome progress.
Aside from the fact that everything shuts down at 8pm, it would be nice if everything in the area wasn't geared towards tourists. Whenever I need to buy clothing I usually go to Elkhart or Goshen. I buy my groceries in Sturgis at Walmart. I do go to Miller's for meat or milk, but not to buy groceries for the whole week. We have enough gas stations and hair salons, but that's about it.
Clothing. I do understand the difficulty for a small retailer to survive.
Commercial shopping centered in western portion of county. Needs to spread east.
Commercial shopping is almost non-existent!!! CVS and Miller's and 2 dollar stores.
Either the stores prices are to high (shippshewana) or you are limited to the dollar stores in lagrange.
Everyone goes to Wal-mart.
Everything costs too much! And the buildings are falling apart either do to age, poor up keep, or really BAD construction and/or design. For instance: North Point Plaza is fairly new, but the roof leaks from POOR design!
everything is lacking,have to go out of county to shop.
Excellent small merchants and niche shopping...very inconvenient access to "big-box" retailers
Food alternatives. Specialty stores that would attract people, like antiques.
For years retail stores think they need to close on Wednesdays in downtown LaGrange, which only promotes residents to travel to another town or city.
Gaping holes on our main streets.
have a retail store like gordman's in fort wayne(by the toll road) WE NEED TO STEAL BUSINESS AWAY FROM MICHIGAN
I wish we were able to get something like a Fork's in LaGrange (town)
If I go shopping it is to Kendallville, Sturgis, Goshen, or even Fort Wayne. There is no cost comparison available here.
Lack of big box retailers, no higher-end shopping, no real fine dining establishments (particularly that serve alcohol such as wine)
Lack of mainstream commercial businesses i.e. restaurants and retail.
Lack of major stores, restaurants, and too much "monopoly" over in one area. The choices are sorely lacking,and to what is available, it is very overpriced compared to retail chains.
LaGrange County has more retail shopping than most counties
LaGRange County's population being so geographically dispersed is the cause of so little retail development. Residents in the South or East go to Kendallville or Auburn. North to Sturgis and West to Middlebury/Goshen or Elhart. I would only suggest that LaGRange Co try and develop more speciality/tourist oriented retail options, and outside of Shipshewanna. E.g. Topeka, Howe, and epecially the town of LaGrange....which is just a retail disaster and a very poor reflection on the County visually as thousands of cars drive through it every day.
LaGrange needs a bigger variety of shopping opportunities
Larger retail stores needed. Everyone goes out of town.
Malls, restaurants, activities not available. Must go to Fort Wayne or South Bend
Mentality of having to go to larger city to get the best/new products. Many stores carry these items, but community does not know or does not want to support local business.
Most people do their shopping outside the county. I personally go to Sturgis many others go to Angola, Elkhart, Goshen or Kendville. LaGrange county is small town and needs more major retailers.
Most the the Big Box retail is within 15 to 30 minutes of Lagrange so it doesn't present a problem. Focus should be on small retail businesses to keep retail space full.
Much of the shopping opportunity is across the state line in Michigan.
Must go to sturgis or k-ville to go to a major store
Must leave the county for many types of purchases.
Need a large, wholesale discount store. Miller's is often unaffordable and doesn't carry a very large variety.
need more store's with cheaper prices
no
No big box stores in the whole county, no supermarket, inadequate specialty stores that meet modern societal demands and interests.
No box stores. Try to buy a pair of shoes.
no department stores
No high end
No large retailers, although one doesn't have to travel far (i.e. Sturgis) for some. However, the lack of competitive grocery stores in the county is very limiting. I see LaGrange County people constantly in Angola shopping at Meijer and Wal-Mart for groceries because there is little selection and very high prices in LaGrange County.
No nationally recognized stores of any size or content, and no likelihood of any ever wanting to come here.
No outlet malls! few restaurants!
Not enough community support, they go elsewhere to find what they need or want.
Not enough opportunities and resources for this
Not enough variety, nothing is open on Sunday.
Not much out there.
Options are extremely limited, so either the stores don't offer much of what I'm looking for or their prices are not competitive. Anytime I do my shopping, I go somewhere outside LaGrange, unless it's a quick stop on the way home.
Other than Shipshewana, what retail?
Parking - county employees take all the spots downtown
Parking is terrible!
Prices are higher than surrounding cities due to the small quantities the businesses can buy to be able to stay open.
Rather than try to compete with what the larger markets already possess, develop a niche market... ie Shipshewana.

<i>Write-In Responses to Question 23</i>
residents usually leave LaGrange to do their shopping. The low income levels of residents leads them to big retailers which are o/s LaGrange Co.
Restaurants and big box retail merchants
Seek grants to "spruce up the town of LaGrange" and concentrated efforts to get different types of solid businesses. It's difficult to compete with the Walmarts, etc., but it has been done and can be done here.
Shops are too "small town" there is little to entice any young crowd to the area. We need movie stores, clothing stores, biking stores, camping stores, anything. There are enough trinket shops in Shipshewana, we need substantial businesses that the community will appreciate.
Store Hours
The large retailers are not present. Depend on the little markets and etc.
The largest town has almost no shopping! very poor. I have heard that owners of available space in LaGrange want too high a price for leasing their space.
The only place to go to shop in Lagrange County is Shipshewana. What about Lagrange, which is suppose to be the center of Lagrange County. There is only McDonalds and Subway for fast food in Lagrange. Seriously? I dont believe that the people in charge of Lagrange really want our city to grow
The only viable place for a "quality" retail shopping experience is Shipshewana. The other retail shopping experiences in the county that do exist are "dollar" or discount stores.
The stores in Shipshewana are too expensive for the average resident to shop in...Lagrange has 2 dollar stores and an expensive grocery store...there's NO clothing shopping with reasonable pricing.
there are no choices on where to shop, and what companies are here take advantage of having no competition thus over pricing their products
There are no clothing stores or shoe stores, There are very few places to get your hair done. No place to buy office supplies or have a computer repaired. LaGrange County has certainly gone downhill in the last 25 years.
There are no competitive retail businesses. Need to have more retail stores and the local people need to realize they need to shop at home and not go to area communities.
There is basically nowhere to shop in the county aside from dollar stores and knick nack shops in Shipshewana. If you want to retail shop, you go to Michigan which doesn't help the county either.
There is no where to shop for everyday things to gifts for Christmas. Can you imagine how much revenue residents generate for other counties by shopping elsewhere?
there is nothing but gas stations and restaurants
There isn't a great deal of choice in the immediate area, though you can find anything you want within driving distance
There isn't any. The only furniture places in LaGrange are so expensive you have to pay to walk in the door. It makes more sense to go to Fort Wayne and pay to have it delivered. IT still would be less expensive. Sad but true.
There's not much when it comes to purchasing clothing, unless you want to go to a consignment shop.
Too few opportunities for either.
Too many businesses of 1 thing (gas stations, salons, another grocery would be good)
too many dollar stores, not enough variety, hours of operation do not meet a lot of peoples needs, need bigger/better grocery stores (well stocked would help)
too many to mention
Town is dying not growing, makes it hard for anything other than a small grocery store or Dollar store to make it.
Uh, there's nothing besides the Dollar General and CVS
variety of retail business-most communities are too small to support retail business.
Very limited in Topeka and LaGrange. Shipshe is geared completely to tourism.
Wal Mart 10 miles away
we don't have any big box stores
We don't promote locally-owned businesses, but the last thing we need is another retailer bringing minimum wage jobs.
We have to travel to other counties to shop for shoes, clothes, etc.
we need a Walmart
we need more shopping opportunities here. most folks cross state line to go to Walmart in Michigan
well there is not much out there so we coul use another store in lagrange.
What commercial shopping?
where is it
While I am extremely grateful there are no mega stores (Wal-mart, Meijer), the town of LaGrange is a poor example of a county capitol.
You can't buy clothes, shoes,or many thing for home improvement. The gorcery only supplies select items and brands at outrageous prices.
you have to go out of town for any real shopping

Downtown Development

24) Please rate the downtown business climate for the towns in LaGrange County with which you are familiar.

Downtown Area	Excellent		Adequate		Inadequate		Don't Know	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
LaGrange = 1.47 Avg (146 Total)	12	8.2%	51	34.9%	76	52.1%	7	4.8%
Shipshewana = 2.49 Avg (144 Total)	92	63.9%	39	27.1%	4	2.8%	9	6.3%
Topeka = 1.59 Avg (143 Total)	24	16.8%	62	43.4%	32	22.4%	25	17.5%
Wolcottville = 0.99 Avg (144 Total)	1	0.7%	17	11.8%	105	72.9%	21	14.6%

Visitors and Tourism

25) How would you rate LaGrange County's efforts to promote tourism in regard to the following?

Tourism Area	Excellent		Adequate		Inadequate		Don't Know	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Lakes = 1.95 Avg (146 Total)	46	31.5%	54	37.0%	39	26.7%	7	4.8%
Parks = 1.83 Avg (145 Total)	37	25.5%	55	37.9%	45	31.0%	8	5.5%
Retail = 1.63 Avg (146 Total)	28	19.2%	42	28.8%	70	47.9%	6	4.1%
Events = 1.72 Avg (145 Total)	32	22.1%	52	35.9%	50	34.5%	11	7.6%

26) How would you rate LaGrange County's efforts to promote recreation opportunities? = 1.59 Avg

Response	Number (143 Total)	Percent
Good	16	11.2%
Fair	63	44.1%
Poor	53	37.1%
Don't Know	11	7.7%

Economic Development Plan

27) Please briefly describe three primary strengths and three primary weaknesses in the overall business climate in LaGrange County.

78 responses were submitted in answer to this question.

Write-In Responses to Question 27
The town of Howe could become a "boutique community." As a quaint local venue close to the toll road it could become an excellent site for small business and restaurants.
1) toll road and 20 access 2)?? 3)?? 1) Not enough business to draw people in 2) business that are here are run down 3) No draw to bring a new business here
1. Too many Amish. Small businesses take away from town business. 2. Small business can not compete pricewise with cities.
1.) The biggest strength is the brand that Shipshewana has built and marketed. The county needs to do a better job leveraging that brand and sharing county wide opportunities with those Shipshe tourists. 2.) support of banks seems to be adequate

<i>Write-In Responses to Question 27</i>
A strong workforce Two main roads for transportation and the Toll road A lot of pass through traffic Low skill levels of employees Low pay associated with type of jobs available. People do not have much money to spend Not enough diversity in types of employers
Amish/Amish great work ethic-low education level. Makes the numbers misleading. Location next to 80-90 a huge asset.
Availability is strong, but are weak in their advertising.
Cheap land; plenty of cheap labor; decent infrastructure
County Government is a weakness
cronyism cronyism cronyism
Dependable, honest and skilled. Bad economy, economy, economy.
Don't know
Don't know
dont know of any strengths. i never see anyone ever vote to let new business try to come to lagrange.
Good - Strong workforce for the industries already here; low cost of doing business; good highway infrastructure with the Toll Road - Weaknesses - Available buildings not current and attractive for today's industries; low educational attainment; difficult processes for permitting, etc.
Good people. Good work ethics. Sense of neighborliness. Insufficient infrastructure. Insufficient transportation. Inferior schools.
hard workers, honest workers, willing workers. keep up epa, and taxes
I cannot think of any strengths, but I feel the primary weaknesses of this county is the reluctance of expanding in the business sector
I don't really see any of these here. Weakness - few businesses, barely any industrial business, and no recreational things
I have no idea how to answer this.
I love our Parks Department and how they have improved our parks in the last ten years. I think we also have an excellent County Sheriff's department.
Lack of education, poor parking, lack of support from community (weaknesses) Strengths: location within the county, local owned,
Lag county has major through fares Many Lakes for several attractions Tourist destination
LaGrange Co is centered around two sect you have the English and the Amish. The English seek change the Amish do not. Then we hear lets not get something new because that will take away from the "mom and pop" businesses we already have.
LaGrange County has one and only one strengths for business and that is Shipshewana. The town has a good home town spirit and plenty to do.
Lakes, Shipshewana
locally owned, competitive, good selection of the few we have. not enough for a choice, prices too high, lack of selection.
Monopolization of the economy (ie: few alternative choices for food, clothing, etc); lack of aggressiveness to promote businesses; lack of space for business (presently built); Wonderful and fairly safe place to raise a family; out of work employees willing to work or try new industry
More employment, more business, good attitude.
Nice, quaint town, clean & good opportunities. No one supports local business, there is no local business to support, people are afraid to start a business because of the high unemployment rate.
No strengths. Weaknesses: Lack of intelligent vision (evidenced by Fawn River Crossing, i.e.) Lack of listening to the people of the county and their concerns. Terrible schools and failing infrastructure.
Shipshe area: Strength - unique, utilizes the Amish culture, strong retail association. Weakness - businesses are redundant, sewer costs increased for residents because of exellerated growth, town lost some of its uniqueness too touristy. LaGrange area: Strength - county seat, centrally located weakness - weak, non-progressive town board, lost 3 industries in 5 yrs. Topeka: Strength - unique, area residence appear to support the small businesses. Weakness - unknown Wolcottville: Strength - good location, good school, many good residence, new town board! weakness - town board fiscal issues from previous lack of management, lack of pride or care with many of the people who reside within the town to maintain or improve their homes and town. East side of county: Strength - logistically close to Interstate 69 or toll road, state ground provides need for certain businesses. weakness - Stroh needs development.
Small town. Slow pace. People with strong work ethic. Little variety in restaurants and events. No movie theaters
Strengths- people need jobs, space available and people commitment to the county. Weaknesses is basically no jobs available to keep residents that builds the county
Strengths - strong sense of community, central location to main highways, neighboring communities such as Steuben County Lakes and Shipshewana/Middlebury tourism. Weaknesses - attractiveness & visual appeal of the downtown area, lack of uniqueness or "draw" to attract businesses and their clientele, recreation
Strengths: Tourism major in western portion of county. Good schools throughout county. New hospital. Weaknesses: Lack of business growth beyond Shipshewana. Lack of ability to retain well-educated young people. Lack of white collar jobs.
Strength - location, availability of employees, Weakness - the people that hold offices in lagrange county
Strength: Amish community! tourism Shipshewana. Big empty lands. Weaknesses: Republicans running everything!
Strengths - (1) dedicated work force (2) Independently owned small businesses. (3) Business owners are very approachable and freindly. Weaknesses: Limited number of secondary educated residents (2) Poor access to interstates with free access (3) Nothing to attract young graduates.
Strengths 1.people buy stuff 2.unhelpful attitudes 3.These lights are on Weaknesses 1.no money 2.not much out there 3.grumpy customers
Strengths - laid back lifestyle that so many seek. Friendly people. Lots of room to develop without much competition. Weaknesses - poor roads if you get off the beaten path and would have trucks for shipping, little to no broadband connections, no rail lines.
Strengths - storefront availability, high unemployment, many homes for sale Weaknesses - high unemployment, declining population, old buildings
Strengths - work ethic, overall operational cost, willing partners in the local government. Weakness - Tough to draw talent, roads or factory access, education commitment of work force.
Strengths are the flea market, the stores in shipshewana and the town center in shipshe. The weaknesses are getting places to stay in the

<i>Write-In Responses to Question 27</i>
town of lagrange.
Strengths include Amish workers, close to the toll road and US 20, space. Weaknesses include types of businesses (RV and MH), lack of educated workforce, transient workforce.
Strengths 1) Personal 2) Specialized 3) Unique Weaknesses 1) Lack of competition (for prices) 2) Lack of variety 3) Lack of advertisement strengths 1. good opportunity for mom and pop stores to thrive 2. good parking 3. can pick an choose which part of town to open in weaknesses 1. no competition 2. buildings are run down 3. companies in lagrange county are only looking to make a profit instead helping the customers
Strengths 1. Proximity to toll road 2. Some still unspoiled areas 3. Major cities within an hours drive Weaknesses 1. Apathy 2. Large Population without high school education 3. large population of people who no longer have pride in their homes or community
Strengths) work ethic retail environment in Shipshewana highway access Weaknesses) outmigration of youth challenging regulatory environment remoteness
Strengths: Good workforce, tourism, access to supplies for RV industry Weaknesses: Towns within the county do not see each other as allies, but more as competitors. We do not work together well.
Strengths: Nice community, loyal people, and supportive business people Weaknesses: variety, hours, and locations
Strengths: 1). existing trained workforce for RV related business. 2). trained and skilled workforce in agriculture related industry. 3). strong woodworking association and businesses. Weaknesses 1). lack of infrastructure/broadband 2). lack of education at all levels 3). negative indicators: 60% high school degree and 8% Bachelor
Strengths: 1. Shipshewana has numerous shops for visitors, 2. Dollar stores provide necessities, 3. ? Weaknesses: 1. Visitors flock to Shipshewana and the rest of the county is going downhill, 2. No major retail stores, 3. No other attractions to county except Shipshewana.
Strengths: beauty of the environment, steady population but doubled in summer by cottagers occupation. Weaknesses: little cohesion among businesses, no public transportation, ease of mobility to other commercial centers--e.g. Fort Wayne, Michigan, South Bend, and Elkhart.
Strengths: Caring community, helpfulness for business owners by other citizens, fair amount of space for new businesses Weaknesses: bigger industries and businesses beat out small-town businesses
Strengths: Chamber of Commerce, roadways, proximity to larger town (Ft. Wayne, South Bend, etc.) Weaknesses: schools, apathy, close minded council/community members
Strengths: ERC and County will assist, logistics available Weaknesses: Mass Transit, Strengthen RV industry, Motivation to work
Strengths: friendly population, good schools, lots of empty buildings to be occupied Weaknesses: High drug use, lack of high expectations among many, lack of opportunity for advancement
Strengths: good work ethic; excellent recreation with all of the lakes;cery nice place to live--people are friendly. Weaknesses:County government more re-active than pro-active; all regulations need to be reasonable;county government needs to be more open in their actions concerning the public.
Strengths: Little current business, so no competition to new entrepreneurs, Small town atmosphere, Weaknesses: Afraid of losing small town feel, need to be open to commercial/franchise businesses,
Strengths: location, location, location. Weaknesses: energy costs, plan commission, building commission.
Strengths: None Weaknesses: Infrastructure, Local Gov.regulation(too many), lack of willingness within LaGrange to incentivise new business here
Strengths: skilled work force, available industrial buildings, Fawn River Crossing. Weakness: lack of a diversified workforce, retail,
Strengths: 1. climate 2. location Weaknesses 1. Leadership in government 2. pay scale
Strengths: 1. Opportunity to grow 2. available locations 3. location near toll road attracts tourists Weaknesses: 1. Low income 2. uneducated 3. lack of leadership, self serving government
Strengths: 1. Plenty of small businesses 2. Easy accessibility 3. Good tourist market Weaknesses: 1. It seems like every restaurant and store sells the same thing (need more diversity) 2. New businesses don't seem to last very long 3. Need less seasonal stuff. Need more year round stuff. 2.
Strengths: Plenty of empty buildings available High unemployment (available workforce) E.D.C. (You guys are trying) Weaknesses: Lack of a professional image Lack of skilled diverse labor Lack of government development influence
Strengths:Small town feel, good access to infrastructure, lots of openings Weaknesses:Not enough industry, not enough retail, not enough money
there are plenty of bars plenty of dollar type stores enough small sit-down restaurants not enough fast food restaurants no department stores not enough choices of places to shop
toll road, location, location economy,economy,economy
We have a nice quaint town full of history to attract tourists but we have no events during the summer to attract them for example fresh markets. therefor entrepanerus hesitate on starting a business in the area because there is not enough traffic to open a retail store or coffee shop etc.
Weakness: Retention of employees for business. Not many choices for shopping. Except for Shipshewana; no tourist draw to county. Strengths: Small town community; Farming;
Weakness: federal overspending. Strengths: Shipshewana and tourism. Rural values and Pigeon River.
Weakness: LaGrange County communities do not communicate or cooperate well with each other. The county does not promote itself as a whole very well Strengths: Great natural resources and rural lifestyle.
weaknesses: It is all geared toward Shipshewana and industry. it is too expensive to have a small business here. strengths: we have good people that need to be encouraged and promoted. and our lakes are parks need to be promoted better.
Weaknesses--this county puts too much emphasis on the RV industry. It (the county) needs to diversify!
Weakness-LaGrange County seems to only be focused on Shipshewana Strength-Fawn River Crossing is ready for "occupancy" Weakness-Need to work harder to get industry into FRC
Work ethic. Great Location. Work force numbers. Lack of county recruitment agressiveness, too restrictive,

28) Please briefly describe three threats or three opportunities that confront LaGrange County in its economic development efforts.

71 responses were submitted in answer to this question.

<i>Write-In Responses to Question 28</i>
General attitude toward change.
1) Exclusive reliance on industries that only pay \$8-\$11/hr. Cannot sustain families or communities if those are only jobs available, 2) County leaders with no vision and energy to make good things happen, 3) Methamphetamine - carting users off to jail isn't working.
1) Threat of struggling economy (we haven't seemed to find an answer yet to help our citizens) 2) Opportunity of advancement (plenty of room to grow, not overcrowded) 3) Opportunity of improvement (reputable businesses, organizations, schools, etc. have already made a name for themselves and now have room to grow)
1) threat..other towns around spend money on the town to look nice, ours spend it on nice offices for county people to sit in.
1)Older outdated vacant buildings. 2) Roads are in terrible condition 3) Sturgis, Angola, Kendallville, Goshen and Fort Wayne are winning in the competition for LaGrange county residents dollars.
1. High unemployment forces people to go to other counties. 2. Tourism is focused on Shipshewana only. 3. There is nothing to do in the county for families, which could be a great opportunity for someone to come up with.
1. larger more progressive towns that desire to grow- go after businesses to locate in their areas. 2. No water/sewers in some locations-Howe 3. Leadership in government
1. Leadership 2. Volunteers 3. Motivation
1:Code Enforcement threatens actual growth 2: sign ordinance(tax) 3:out of control local Gov. taxing everything they can think of.
A threat would be lack of leadership. A mayor is accountable to a city--who is accountable for LGC?? Our attitude to bridging relationships with state agencies/other jurisdictions is terrible. There are resources of ED. Opportunity is unemployment can only get better and hopefully stabilizes.
Area is a farming/manufacturing community. Many will not want change to occur and prefer the slower pace~ however this is holding back our youth~~ what exactly do we offer our high school/college age for employment or retainment oppurtunities..I want to leave as well.
availability of inexpensive office/warehouse space in Elkhart County, Lagrange county board making it difficult to build or add on/renovate
Balancing maintaining clean water resources with growth
Because there is not enough traffic in LaGrange we are loosing business here. If we have no jobs to offer we have no business no traffic and all fails.
Don't know
down fall because the cost of living
FARM LAND is lost to houses living with built in fields. too many trees being remoced to burn outside furnaces. Our lakes/ water quality are in jeopardy due to over population. Too many COA's.
Gas prices, Gas prices, and Gas prices
In some communities the down town has been turned into a professional area, not enough involvement by down town businesses.
Ineptness of a very unprofessional group of county commissioners with inadequate experience, and a lack reasonable vision and concern for the real issues at hand.
Lack of interest, cash, need.
Lack of ordnance enforcement,Lake of employee continuing education and training. Efficiency both in cost management and operations of services. Captive workforce available for employment, the sheer beauty for the county, and it's personality.
Lack of public support for development from the population and Community Leaders.
LaGrange County "shuts down" after 5 or 6pm. I believe people do not want to live here nor do they choose to visit the area because there is not after business hours activities or "life". Take better advantage of the lakes and the beautiful parks systems that the County has. Lack of professional jobs available to college graduates and young professionals.
LaGrange County Government--lack of quick decision making--needs to be open to other businesses than just RV.
LaGrange county needs to seek companies that pay a living wage with opportunities to advance within; and the type of companies that will give our high school graduates a reason to stay here; they should also be "good supporters of the community".
Local agencies, banks, investment firms, judges like to pry into your financials and attack you accordingly. The hypocrisy of combining religion and politics is shameful. And the total disregard towards tax-payers and how this county deals with complaints is pathetic.
Local attitudes concerning "change". Low salary levels. Greater need for community partnering within county. Opportunities: Low tax rates. Low cost of living.
losing it's amish heritage losing it's countryside keeping roads up to date +
Low volume of affordable land. A general fear of growth amongst residents Workforce development
Methamphetamine, dirty, and there is no expectation of the citizens. Wolcottville is a mess.
Need shovel ready spaces to go that are complete with infrastructure given the available buildings (which are not that many); opportunity with the specialty foods initiative that needs further exploration; threat is from the lack of private funding and low level of public funding to the EDC.
No diversity in business. Limited draw for shopping; residents go outside county. New grads do not find oppourtunities inside county so they often relocate.
not enough employment no one hiring felons pay rate too low
Not having a plan in place before moving forward with something.
One major threat is the lack of jobs. If people aren't working they do not have money to spend.
People not spending money, conservative opinions, area to expand. People have money to spend, young families & singles who would support

<i>Write-In Responses to Question 28</i>
something fun,& nice town
Plan commission that works for the people & is voted by the people. County government is over staffed & makes absurd laws concerning looks of property.
Poor community, no jobs
same as #27 above
same as above
See above.
Support small business and not try to push them away! Shippshewana is great, but LaGrange has a lot to desire! Keep people out of office that will benefit from their own business adventures that concern the county!
the buildings in this town are falling apart, companies looking for a place to start up at see this town falling apart and assume businesses always fail here (which is a good assumption). Need to open more chain stores and fast food restrants, mom and pop stores and home town restrants are nice but some times we just need a drive through or variety.
The dollar store going into Howe is an excellent opportunity for Howe. Getting rid of the ugly used car dealership in Howe was fantastic. Unfortunately it moved to Lagrange and I think in the long run it will hurt the subway and other businesses in the shopping mall as he gets more cars and has it looking like Howe again.
The draw of the lakes rivers and parks are much underrated
The number one threat is that too many downtown business are closed.
The school system is not supporting our students with a solid education so they can seek employment.
Threat: lack of diverse industries Opportunities: many young educated, skilled adults have returned or want to return; Safe county with recreational activities available. Energy opportunities for electricity could be expanded by once again using the damn near Ontario to generate electricity.
Threat: the overall backward attitude of not wanting change. oppurtunities: maybe these guys will die soon.
Threats - lack of industrial growth and job security for employees; citizens fear of change; Opportunities - central location, beautiful town square,
threats - low expectations among many parents; a sense among many that their efforts won't pay off given the current economy
Threats - the attitude of the political climate (very narrow-minded and self-centered), unwilling to change or adjust in some areas (downtown LaGrange) Opportunities - lots of land to develop, model after Shippshewana development for an example of control and keeping local values while bringing commerce
Threats include lack of educated workforce and educational opportunities, meth, isolation. Opportunities include proximity to major cities and transportation routes, strong work ethic in the Amish.
Threats- People are leaving, not much to do for entertainment, lack of local employers. Opportunities - perfect place to locate a world headquarters, lots of empty buildings and homes, low taxes, low cost of living, available workforce.
Threats 1. Most people drive to counties to buy most of their stuff 2. Lagrange County needs something other than Amish crap to draw people in to spend money 3. This place seems to just shut down and hibernate in the winter. We need to change that.
Threats 1. People in authority without foresight, knowledge, and common sense 2. Apathy Opportunities Not sure what opportunities exist since anyone with a college degree usually leaves town unless you're an attorney, accountant, dentist. We seem to be attractive to tattoo parlors.
Threats: Too much industry Knowledge to operate machinery (electronics) Drugs, attendance problems
Threats: Gas at \$4.29/gal plus. Close to transportation.
Threats: High unemployment, lack of higher education Opportunities: Great work ethic, tight knit families,
Threats: Ignorance of people in charge; Inability to make a balanced budget; and POOR ROADS. Opportunities: Plenty of already "broken ground" to be improved upon ie - existing, empty structures; St. Rds 9 & 20 intersecting county; and out of work people waiting for jobs.
Threats: LaGrange has closed down a lot of factory jobs in the last few years! Opportunity: We can rebuild the tourism sector with Amish community!
Threats: Losing money hand over fist by focusing all on manufacturing. Opportunities: We have smart, entrepreneurial people that need to be encouraged, promoted, supported.
Threats: Schools, apathy, refusal to accept positive change. Opportunities: Great parks, empty buildings that need owners (both business and industrial), close to major roads (toll rd, US 20, etc.)
Threats: Unwillingness to change No foresite for future growth No local Govt regulation for housing
Threats: Too much frivolous spending, loss of more industry, small business failure
Threats-Toll road cost versus alternative routes; inability to diversify the type of business that we can attract to have a diversified portfolio of industry;
Too high property taxes. No real infrastructure. Thinking still caught up in the world of fifty years ago.
unknown
We need to take the opportunities to get new businesses into our community and do whatever it takes to lure them in. Our communities depend on it. Since LaGrange has lost so many factories, etc., we need to entice more to come in to fill the vacant buildings and to make sure that more people move into our community to keep it growing strong. With Obama being willing to do things in our area, we need to make sure that he knows LaGrange is interested in participating.
Weakness in the RV/mfg housing segment - LaGrange has too much exposure to this single segment.

29) What do you want your community to be like in 10 years?

90 responses were submitted in answer to this question.

<i>Write-In Responses to Question 29</i>
"Alive" with activity, visually attractive, healthy job availability.
2% unemployment Schools with high scholastic achievement A diverse workforce
A beautiful thriving community, great jobs and businesses
A community proud of its excellent schools and an attractive place for entrepreneurial ventures
A community that planned for the growth that it was experincing
A community with diversified companies and businesses that pay well, treat employees as they want to be treated. A population that is well-informed, and willing to make their community even better. A community that offers a varity of recreational opportunities: art, music, entertainment--that helps helps everyone to pull together more.
a far cry from where it is heading now.
A more diversified industrial base; growing tourism; shovel ready sites developed and with buildings on them; higher quality of life; industry base that still supports the workers skills here presently but with more advancement!
A nice, quiet bedroom community where people can raise their families without urban sprawl, industrial intrusion, and other modern-day negatives.
A place tourists like to visit due to our shopping, recreation and culture. We need to emphasize our strengths!
A thriving community where there is volunteers willing to give time, money, and leadership
AN ECONOMIC POWERHOUSE with low taxes
An economically developed community that has opened its doors and expanded it way of thinking to make it marketable in the 21st century.
beautiful
Bedroom community for surrounding counties with an array of housing stock. We are not a county of fortune 500 companies but better served to house people and create a residentially pleasing environment.
better than a dying ghost town.
bigger more to do family oriented
Clean, less drugs I realize there can never be a drug free county. I want to be proud of Lagrange.
clean...either repair all the old buildings that are falling apart or tear them down and build new. duplexes instead of just large apartment buildings, families with kids need housing with enough bedrooms and that offer room for kids to play out side.
Cleaned up with less manufacturing and more emphasis on businesses that would attract tourism. Upscale retirement community between 121 & Howe
Eco-friendly! Better jobs that stick around, not NAFTA! Better advertisement for events , broadband access to the whole county!
Every available building occupied and a viable industry or business in all the town. hate to see empty buildings.
Farming & horticulture. Saw mills. Working & self supporting, frugal helpful to one another.
flourishing
Free, but I doubt it. There's a good fascist base among the good o' boys.
Full of parks and sidewalks where people can walk freely and enjoy being outside.
Full of variety. Accessable on foot, by bike, or car. Clean. Space between you and your neighbor. Full of places for the family to enjoy each other's company, rain or shine.
Great! If we are willing to get busy and compete in the market.
Howe A small village that will have better housing to attract younger, ambitious couples who will take pride in their community and volunteer to make "Howe a great place to call home."
I like its provincialism! That is why I stay here!
I like what Goshen has done to their downtown. Storefronts filled and the first Friday street fairs are fun.
I love Lagrange the way it is. We may not have a lot of businesses in the area and have to go to Angola or Sturgis for most of our shopping, but I love the close knit community that comes with living in small town. It would be nice to have another restaurant for lunch that has drive through service.
I moved to LaGrange to enjoy the rural life on the lakes, so I want that to be preserved, but I also want to see ALL the County's small communities thrive and be good places to live, work and shop & visit.
I want downtown LaGrange to be like Shipy is in the summer.
I want the lakes and rivers to be as pure as they are today. Howe needs clean drinking water and sewers
i will like to see more employment opportunities, and parks specialy in howe there is nothing beside the park down town
I would hope for a change in the political climate, more progressive ideas without loosing our core values of family and faith. I would like to see our community to continue to hold respect for the unique Amish culture and lifestyle and to encourage peaceful existence between the two. I look forward to seeing new, younger, innovative persons come to the local boards, committees and political arena and would hope their ideas would be given some consideration and courtesy.
I would like my community to welcome with open arms, new people and businesses and stop treating it like the retirement community that it is. If we continue down this path, we will never attract any new people or business because we make it impossible to live here or do business here.
I would like to see some growth but still have that small town feel.
I would love for the community to be thriving. I would love to have more parks like Delt Church park for my daughter to play at and to have picnics at.
I would love to see less unemployment in the area. I would also like to see more entertainment or activities come into the area for families and young people.
I would love to see more jobs comes to LaGrange county so that it becomes an attractive place for singles to settle down. I don't want to see things become overcrowded, but I think we can efficiently utilize the space that we are in and grow into new, undeveloped areas. I would love to see the educational opportunities grow and the schools become more financially stable. The education of our children is one of the most important responsibilities we have been given, and right now I feel we are not fulfilling our duties. And I would love to see more housing become available of more variety; such as apartments.

<i>Write-In Responses to Question 29</i>
I'd like to see LaGrange as a flourishing, growing community with safe streets and the same friendly neighborhood atmosphere.
Just want to save what we already have. More would be better but what we do have needs our attention now!
Keep and have available jobs for our children's retention & job security
keep same (Shipshewana) if you add to much will not have small town feeling
Like it was 25 years ago. People walking in town. Small town hospitality.
Maintain agriculture community intermingled with other diverse businesses or industry.
more business friendly, more effectively marketed
More diverse employment, Less of community divisiveness (East,Middle, West)
more modernized, more chain restaurants, cleaner neighborhoods
More progressive, more open to outside influences, more opportunities for recreation/leisure/restaurants,lake life, etc.
more small business oriented
More than two fast food joints and mom and pop eateries that go out in a year or less.
more vibrant down town areas. more sites for commercial and business developement.
Much the same as it is now, but improved upon. Remodel, tear down, or reinvigorate existing structures to serve business needs instead of breaking new ground & creating more urban sprawl.
One that is clean, constantly developing, and becoming more well-known around the state. A place where people can feel safe and cared about, where the environment is physically, spiritually, and emotionally safe.
Porsperous, clean, I want to see people moving in, not out
Preserved historically while growing economically - see Sturgis MI
Probably very similiar to what we see today.
Prosperous
Quiet, peaceful, less industry, less government intrusion.
quiet, the same
small town feeling, but with some of the bigger city luxuries
Something for young people
Stay consistent with jobs, new inventions encouraged with patience.
Steady business growth and a vibrant downtown (like Goshen).
Still rural with full employment, low crime and strong infrastructure.
The same with more business
The workforce employed in jobs that pay a living wage, empty houses filled with new workers who have relocated due to their jobs, pride in the community, a variety of employment oportunites to draw people to the county.
Things need to change or why would your kids move back to LaGrange, we push them to go to college and they can't get college education jobs in this county that pays so why return!
thriving
Thriving
Thriving
Thriving business - able to shop and dine without going to another town
Thriving business and industrial sector Affordable housing and land
thriving community built on common sence business
Thriving would be nice.
Thriving! Downtown revitalized. Empty factories up and running. New multi sport athletic fields like other towns have. Roads improved (have you tried driving west on Michigan street lately?) Street lites and sidewalks in neighbor hood areas for safety. People proud of their community again!
Thriving, full of business, both industry and retail.
Thriving, not just surviving!
Thriving. I would love to see tourist in the town of LaGrange, not just in Shipshwana. I would like a town that I had when I was a child.
To support this community with a hand up, not continue with hand outs.
Unemployment below national level. Retail choices for residents. Diversity in business oportunities.
Vibrant downtown; diversified food options; specialty retail; community center with a wellness component to it; bike and walking trails;
Vibrant downtowns. Bedroom community to Ft. Wayne, Goshen, Elkhart.
we need a community center for all ages, we need a good walking trail for all ages like in ligonier or sturgis we need something besides mcdonalds for fast food there is not even a decent place for grandparents to take children we only have a park in town geared for small children with no shade. we need high speed internet, natural gas lines, tennis courts, a place for adults to sit,read,walk that is landscaped.
We need to fill our vacated spaces--promote them, make them desirable and affordable. Promote our parks and beautiful countryside, our family/hometown feel.
With the new hospital and new library in the town of LaGrange I would love to see our town grow with business like small resturants, shopping and coffee shops. Make it more tourist friendly by being allowed to set up tables outside and planting trees in downtown area.
Would be nice to have more convenient college oportunities.

30) Please share any additional comments relevant to this planning process.

52 responses were submitted in answer to this question.

<i>Write-In Responses to Question 30</i>
A county Y is a great idea but the costs would be prohibitive. A community pool would be nice but should be tied in to Lakeland School Corp property and funded by all three school budgets for swim teams, with grants and taxpayer money. Care should be taken to open the facility to the public with minimal restrictions and should be minimal use fee based. We cvan't afford a "Y"... note Kendalville Y's budget problems.
A lot of NE Indiana EDC efforts seem to focus on growing jobs that pay \$8-\$11/hr on the basis that any jobs are better than no jobs. In the long run this is just not true, because \$8-\$11/hr jobs cannot sustain families and therefore cannot sustain communities. Focus EDC efforts on attracting/incenting jobs that will pay \$15-\$25-\$50/hr and provide job training and employee relocation incentives if necessary to get people upskilled or moved into LaGrange County, where they can pay more in income taxes, property taxes and spend more money in our shops and restaurants and other businesses. Over time, the \$8-\$11/hr work force will shrink through emigration to areas where they can find any work. I know this sounds Machavillian, however, we cannot control unskilled wages...these are determined by an ever-expanding global work force and it's a waste of EDC resources and energy to keep fighting the battle on that playing field.
Add green, landscaped areas. Make people abide by ordinances & create more planned areas, parks, etc
Again, I think education should be at the top of the list to keep our community growing and flourishing. Invest in education.
All I'm hearing is slave labor, low skilled jobs at the expense of tax-payers! At the same time polluting our environment. The biggest crooks in this county are the judges. I refuse to do any business in this faith-based, fascist county.
Any opportunities to bring in new business should be welcomed. Knowing that other neighboring counties have missed out on these changes to bring in business by passing on matching funds for development and infrastructure, I would hope that LaGrange being so business friendly already wouldn't miss this opportunity to bring in new business.
At one time there was a very successful local program called "Leadership LaGrange County". This was a year-long adult training program that helped to identify and train potential leaders within LaGrange County. The program existed for about 8 years and graduated about 100 individuals. Look around - many of the successful folks you see in laGrange County now are graduates of this program. There is something to be learned from it, and maybe someone should consider resurrecting it again in hopes of gaining new vision from within.
Back off a lot of restrictions and requirement
Be better stewards of the public's money. For instance, no more boondoggles like Fawn River Crossing that wastes our time and money for no return.
Bring fast-food jobs! company jobs! Elect democrats!
Do all the good you can to all the people you can all the time you can
Don't forget the children. We, as a community, offer little in order to give our youth an outlet. We need to throw the book at the meth dealers/manufacturers before they slime their way into every corner of our community. We need to provide our children with options and direction and enforce the same on parents, who are a huge problem with drugs as well. Obviously we have too much time on some of our hands and cannot find a constructive way to deal with life.
EDC Doing excellent job. Time will tell. Too soon to turn industry amid jobs available.
Good luck.
How can you improve heaven on Earth?!?! No mobs, no traffic, no noise. Beauty of nature and the lakes. Friendliness and a spirit of helpfulness. Adequate and responsible services.
I believe once this town cleans up and offers better living situations, more people will want to open up businesses here and this town will begin to thrive.
I believe our citizens have good ideas shich should be encouraged and implemented. Too many surveys have been done--with many hours of citizen input--only to sit and gather dust in our county offices. Hopefully this survey won't suffer the same fate!
I do not live in LaGrange Co. but my children do. I visit them at school and take them to the parks and special events, like Corn School.
I guess at least you are asking! Maybe things will change!
I have not lived here very long and I do not plan on staying very long either. This is not the place for my family. I may return when I retire.
I have only lived in LaGrange County for the last five years, but what I have noticed it that the County seems to be very segmented/divided. How can the different towns and burgs be united? People need to realize that by supporting and promoting each unique location can benefit everyone in the county.
I honestly don't know how to fix the problems this county is in. There is no revenue, unemployment is high, there are no jobs, downtown LaGrange is going to waste, drugs are rampant, the whole county is going down the tubes. The only way to make things any better in my idea is to bring in tourists.
I just overall want to emphasise from someone who grew up in the area, I feel LaGrange is dying! Houses are rundown, roads are in bad shape, factories are empty, bussiness gone, school going down hill, sports teams cannot even compete with other smaller local schools, no community sport fields. I feel we really need to come up with a way to draw people in instead making them want to move away...
I live in Howe and we can't get off first base
I think a change needs to be made at the top, get these people out who are afraid of change. This town is dying and I want to raise a family here someday, but I want our schools to increase education standards, and have something fun to do on the weekends, every weekend, not twice a year.
It would be nice to share the results of the survey electronically if people would like to see it. It would also be good for the powers to be to reach consensus on what goals and objectives the EDC needs to address.
I've been seeing a LOT of logging operations lately, particularly around bodies of water - one of the ways to stop our water ways being polluted by runoff is to have that runoff filtered by natural vegetation BEFORE it gets into the waterways. Replant along rivers, lakes, & streams. Prohibit building so close to waterways. Protect the natural land before it's all ruined & tore down. Replant large windbreaks that have been logged.
Keep pushing....
local small towns can not be kept to the same epa standards as the big towes

<i>Write-In Responses to Question 30</i>
Maybe get some new people in charge? Or get the community more involved? All we have is farmer's markets, 4H fair, and Corn School it seems like. More "Town Hall meeting" type stuff?
n/a
Need more types of industry, not just RV which is not sustainable.
None
None
Our proposed industrial areas/commercial with little or no utilities can not compete with Elkhart, Kendallville, Sturgis, etc. But we can create more dynamic neighborhoods. How many manufacturing jobs were LOST in Indiana since 1990?? So what are we trying to accomplish??
People won't come if we can't make this a community worth living in. Downtown LaGrange is still like a ghost town, and when we do get new business it consists of dollar stores and consignment shops. We need to provide more opportunities for the young people - from jobs to socialization to recreation.
Promote Lagrange County by plugging the excellent park system we have along with the top notch tourist attraction Shipshewana
Remove the Good Ole Boy type of politics that have taken the town of LaGrange in the wrong direction for years.
Stop all of this attempt to redefine the county and its people and let us live in peace and solitude without encumbering us to excess taxation for low-paying jobs and undesired capital projects.
thank-you for the survey
The local Governments must be on board with any plans for change. If that can't happen, nothing will ever change in this county.
The new library is a wonderful example of growth while preserving the historic nature of the community. Good job! As I mentioned, we need to "think outside the box" and make Lagrange County a draw location. Whether that be by way a new industrial park, a refurbished downtown, a new sports complex to draw local teams, a casino - all can be tasteful and beneficial to a community. Increase visitors to LaGrange County and the business and jobs will follow which will stimulate the real estate market which will circle back to jobs and growth.
The town boards and villages need to become more progressive and collaborate with the EDC for the overall benefit of the county. Is there currently a group of said people who meet regularly?
We are still a Christian community. If God is for us, who can be against us? We can be a shiny city (or community) on a hill!
We could be a thriving little community if only we would focus on truly educating our students, looking for outsiders to come and join our community, and quit relying on the old way of attracting manufacturing jobs. We need to look at the future of growing areas like medical, internet and green living.
We have to communicate the need to plan now for the future, rather than reacting to what the future will bring
We have wonderful roads and enough local businesses to do fresh markets on the weekends and advertise it extensively to get more traffic in the county and more people interested in living in the area or starting a business.
We moved here a little over 10 years ago, and I have watched Lagrange turn from a pleasant little town to a run down ghost town, and it saddens me. It really makes me want to leave.
We need a rec. center, bowling alley back or anything in that line of business there is nothing here for anyone to do
We need to focus on high learning and jobs that will do that, not manufacturing and industry. It is 2011, not 1971.
What natural assets could be promoted? County Parks, Fish & Wildlife Area, State Nature Preserves, Lakes Vacations that might work well in county. Fishing, Hunting, Camping, canoe trips, antiques, shopping, agri-tourism
Would like to see some good come from this process. We should have begun when there was a better economy.

Demographic Information

31) Your name:

<i>Write-In Responses to Question 31</i>
Andrea Brooks
Big LaGrange County Fan
Bob Hypes
Bontrager
Cheryl Dcarmona
Christine Miramonti
Dalonda Young
David Miller
David Nelson
Dennis R. DeMara
Dorothy H. Yunker
Erica Gilliland
Fred Brown
gerald and tanya yoder
john e wright jr
john quake
John Schmilt
Judith
Larry Braid

<i>Write-In Responses to Question 31</i>
Lindy
Margien L Lund
Mike Metz
mont arnold
Mrs. Slaven
Nancy Flores
Nate Jones
Phil Macome
Phil Yunker
Rex R Pranger
S. Clark
Samuel Gutierrez
Steve Scott-Welty
Todd
Weaver

32) What is the highest level of education you have completed?

<i>Response</i>	<i>Number (143 Total)</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Less than high school	3	2.1%
High school diploma or GED	23	16.1%
More than high school	35	24.5%
Associate Degree	28	19.6%
Bachelor Degree	31	21.7%
Graduate Degree or higher	23	16.1%

33) How long have you been a LaGrange County resident?

<i>Response</i>	<i>Number (143 Total)</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Less than a year	2	1.4%
1 to 5 years	10	7.0%
6 to 10 years	9	6.3%
11 to 20 years	28	19.6%
More than 21 years	86	60.1%
Not a resident	8	5.6%

34) What is your zip code?

<i>Response</i>	<i>Number (136 Total)</i>	<i>Percent</i>
LaGrange	58	42.7%
Howe	34	25.0%
Wolcottville	20	14.7%
Shipshewana	12	8.8%
Topeka	4	2.9%
Middlebury	2	1.5%
Fort Wayne	1	0.7%
Fremont	1	0.7%
Goshen	1	0.7%
Millersburg	1	0.7%
Orland	1	0.7%
Stroh	1	0.7%

(END OF QUESTIONNAIRE)