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## Business, community leaders gather at IU Kokomo to discuss regionalism

chancellor

November 21, 2011

See the data [Here](http://www.stats.indiana.edu/pre/howard_dash/dash.html) ([http://www.stats.indiana.edu/pre/howard\\_dash/dash.html](http://www.stats.indiana.edu/pre/howard_dash/dash.html)).

**KOKOMO, IN** – Nearly 100 business and community leaders gathered at Indiana University Kokomo on Monday, November 21, for a lively discussion on transforming the economy of north central Indiana, following the release of data from the Regional Benchmarking Study, commissioned by Chancellor Michael Harris.

 Chancellor Harris and Jerry Conover talk before the presentation (<http://www.flickr.com/photos/iukokomo/sets/72157628086201441/>)  
Chancellor Harris and Jerry Conover talk before the presentation. [See More](#)  
(<http://www.flickr.com/photos/iukokomo/sets/72157628086201441/>)

“Early next year, IU Kokomo will follow up with the information presented – in conjunction with the release of the campus’ economic impact on the region – what the data means and what can be done in response,” said Harris. “This will help us gauge necessary steps needed to create a more regionally competitive economy based on knowledge, innovation, and entrepreneurship.

“North Central Indiana should brand itself in order to attract business and enhance quality of life. If we are able to unite, the future will be in abundance,” Harris added.

In the study, 13 peer communities were examined to better assess how Kokomo and its region has fared over the past decade, showing that the city has not fallen too far behind its peers in educational attainment, unemployment rate, and level of innovation. The peer communities include Anderson, S.C.; Decatur Ala.; Rocky Mount, N.C.; Morristown, Tenn.; Battle Creek, Mich.; Lebanon, Pa.; Sheboygan, Wis.; Cleveland, Tenn.; Danville, Va.; Jackson, Tenn.; Lima, Ohio; Fond du Lac, Wis.; and Rome, Ga.







In terms of innovation, none of the peer communities scored greater than the U.S. average of 100, and Kokomo and the region ranks as the second most innovative in the group. The productivity and employment and economic well-being categories were its two highest scoring sub-indexes. The fact that the second highest performing category was economic wellbeing indicates that Kokomo does well converting innovation inputs into performance outputs.

IU Kokomo commissioned this benchmarking study to support the university's work with leaders in north central Indiana aimed at understanding and enhancing the region's economic competitiveness and broadly advancing its quality of life. It is particularly timely to benchmark Kokomo now, considering the economic turmoil it has undergone due to the Great Recession.

Audience members who joined in discussion included Ivy Tech Community College Chancellor Steve Daily, State Rep. Mike Karickhoff, and Kokomo Mayor Greg Goodnight.

The study was presented by Jerry Conover, director of the Indiana Business Research Center at the IU Kelley School of Business, and includes Carroll, Cass, Clinton, Fulton, Grant, Howard, Miami, Tipton, and Wabash counties.

*Indiana University Kokomo serves north central Indiana.*

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