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Kokomo Named Indiana Chamber's 2011  
Community of the Year

The Indiana Chamber of Commerce has honored the City of Kokomo with its 2011 Community of the Year Award.

The State Chamber honored Kokomo for maximizing its strengths and forming partnerships with private industry, higher education, and local economic development organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Greater Kokomo Economic Development Alliance to develop innovative strategies to enhance the city's image and facilitate economic growth.

Those Initiatives include:

- Projects that replaced downtown traffic signals with decorative four-way stop signs, converted one-way streets to two-way, and removed over 400 parking meters.
- The revitalization of downtown Kokomo through infrastructure improvements, the creation of a TIF district and riverfront district, and beautification efforts that resulted in seventeen new businesses opening downtown.
- A focus on city parks that now attract thousands of visitors annually to events at a new outdoor pavilion, a new "Splash Pad" children's feature at the Kokomo Beach waterpark, a nationally recognized softball complex, several miles of expanded and improved recreational trails and bike lanes, and updated athletic courts with energy-efficient lightning.
- Working closely with business leaders to create new and creative economic development programs that have led to new jobs and more than \$1.3 billion of new investment in Kokomo.
- An expanding alternative transportation network that now includes free public transportation via City-Line trolleys.
- An improvement in the city's bond rating to a state-best AA+.

All of these initiatives were accomplished without raising taxes or adding fees.

"Kokomo is a resilient and determined community. We all work together to improve our neighborhoods and create an attractive environment for businesses and their employees. Our investments in infrastructure and quality of life amenities across the board have been very successful," said Kokomo Mayor Greg Goodnight. "The Community of the Year Award validates the hard work of dozens of organizations and hundreds of community advocates. Receiving this distinguished honor sends the message that Kokomo is a progressive city with a pro-business environment that welcomes employers and employees."

"I am proud to be a part of a community where the efforts and leadership of Mayor Goodnight, city & county officials, the Alliance, the Chamber, the business community, non-profit organizations and the citizens all link to make Kokomo a great place to live, work, play and grow your business," said Kokomo Chamber President Jeff Cardwell. "Each of us has had to think differently, break-down barriers and innovate to make Kokomo prosperous. This award is well-deserved. Congratulations to all!"

"On behalf of the Alliance, we are extremely excited about this recognition," said Jeb Conrad, President and CEO of the Greater Kokomo Economic Development Alliance. "Besides being a great tribute to our community, it will be an excellent asset to showcase our community as a business location."

Kokomo will be officially honored with the Community of the Year Award during the Indiana Chamber's 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Awards Dinner on November 17<sup>th</sup> at the JW Marriott Hotel in downtown Indianapolis. Four-time Super Bowl champion and Hall of Fame quarterback Terry Bradshaw will be the keynote speaker. More than 1,500 people are expected to attend.