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Connect with Southern Indiana is a leadership program sponsored by the University of Southern Indiana to boost Indiana's retention of intellectual capital. At the heart of the program is developing creative problem solving skills and promoting active citizenship. Participants expand their opportunities for creating new **connections**: with other residents, with local and regional organizations, between communities, and between USI and the region. These connections are designed to transcend traditional boundaries of towns and counties, occupation, and demography.

Participation in **Connect with Southern Indiana** provides invaluable, tangible skills, including the opportunity to meet others from the region with similar concerns and interests, identify areas for collaborative projects, and meet business and civic leaders while developing creative problem solving skills. All programs will be facilitated by USI faculty and staff and community leaders.

Connect with Southern Indiana has evolved over the years to remain up to date with new trends. The program's main educational focus is a social entrepreneurship model in which participants seek innovative solutions to a variety of problems or needs. Participants in this program will bridge the gap between entrepreneurial thought and practice by focusing on activities that must be carried out by entrepreneurial-oriented organizations. This program is designed to actively immerse participants in the strategic entrepreneurial process with the objectives to reinforce and develop divergent thinking, analytical thinking, and communication skills. The primary goal is the development and communication of an organizational model in an atmosphere that is based on team collaboration and coaching.

The 2014 **Connect with Southern Indiana** session will include residents from Dubois, Gibson, Knox, Perry, Pike, Posey, Spencer, Vanderburgh, and Warrick counties. Those selected participate in a total of ten full day sessions over a six month period and are required to develop a collaborative project that will be presented at the conclusion of the program on June 6, 2014.

Program cost: The University of Southern Indiana covers all program expenses, including overnight accommodations, facilitation, meals, location rental fees, and materials. Participants provide their transportation to and from sessions and volunteer time to attend sessions and work on projects. Because the program is free and openings are limited, applicants must indicate their willingness and ability to participate in all sessions and complete out-of-class project work, which may require several team meetings.

Who should apply? People who are interested in improving the quality of life in their community and their region—those who desire to develop regional leadership skills, those seeking to increase involvement, or those new to the area and are not yet active in the region. A year's residence in the region prior to January 2014 is required.

