
SOUTH BEND

THE NEXT 100 YEARS

SOUTH BEND: "A LIFE ONGOING"

Introduction:

The historic (1922) South Bend poster captures the spirit of those times in South Bend... an era of accomplishment, energy, of "home grown" innovation -- and *confidence* -- in the forces driving the local and national economy.

The "ingredients" for innovation in today's South Bend are, of course, different than back when that poster was made in 1922. But the assets we hold in trust today are no less dynamic in helping shape the future of the community.

Consider these assets:

- South Bend is a "college town" (25,000 students among all the colleges) And, importantly the mix of students is a combination of international, national, local, and regional students. The access to college and post graduate work for graduates of area high schools in combination with the global "footprint" of Notre Dame is a resource for attracting accomplished and ambitious residents. This population also supports and can further a "subset" of the local economy geared to the tastes and, yes, "disposable income" of many of the students.
- Some great neighborhoods, of which several are undergoing renewal by owner occupants committed for the long term. These investments should help spur housing development across the spectrum, including those known as the "missing middle" housing configurations which thrived in the era captured by the historic poster. Housing here is already attaining momentum, though leaders across the community need to do more.
- Notre Dame alumni base: ND has more than 150,000 living graduates, many of whom are very successful in their careers. And, ND also has among the highest alumni contribution rates of any university in the country. There is already evidence of ND alums investing in personal residences here, but why not grow their own businesses ... regional offices, etc.... in the town which is as much a part of ND as ND is of South Bend.
- Medical Facilities/School: South Bend/Mishawaka houses two medical campuses and outlying facilities that serve the entire Michiana region. Through the IU School of Medicine partnership with Notre Dame, students at this campus can pursue a medical degree in combination with additional graduate degrees. South Bend "punches well above its weight" (population) in this dynamic field.
- South Bend is the site of a number of growing "special districts," foremost of which is the ever developing *Farmers Market District* and the *East Bank Village*. Both residential and business vitality are thriving in the East Bank area, with its landmark parochial schools. And the Farmers Market District is attracting more business ventures, like Oh Mamma's and The Elder Bread, oriented to the kind of offerings that the Market and, yes, Bambers has offered for so long. The Centennial of the Farmers Market comes in 2024. The profile of the Farmers Market District will continue to grow within the Midwest.

- The still unrealized potential “Downtown Dining and Entertainment District,” where the recent new downtown library and event center and investments in the Morris Theater can – and must – be supplemented with aggressive public/private investment to take advantage of the downtown’s easy reach from a population of a million people. The Morris has always “punched above its weight” in attracting national acts, due in part to South Bend’s fortunate location on the route between the major entertainment venue cities.
- Proximity to the Eastern Shore of Lake Michigan. The Lake has always been a unique place for folks who live in South Bend, with a dozen lakefront communities, parks and such within an easy day trip. The endless beaches and the boundless views across the water are as much a part of growing up in South Bend as is the St Joe River.
- South Bend’s historic location advantage continues to benefit it and new opportunities are in the making. Specifically, the aftermath of the COVID has caused many folks whose jobs are in the major cities to now seek a combination of “at home” and “in the ‘City’” work schedules. The continued investment in shortening the South Shore travel time to Chicago makes the part time commuter role feasible for more folks who prefer the scale and “livability” of a town like ours.
- Welcoming community: South Bend is the oldest “Crossroads” in Indiana, “The Crossroads State.” By virtue of its location as a traverse between Native American communities, early European explorers and the very geography of the North American continent, the community here at the heart of the “Portage Prairie” has played that role through the centuries, even today as a key East-West corridor and a vital Internet “Backbone” connecting states and continents runs along our city.
- On a real “people” level South Bend has historically been the most “welcoming” community in Indiana, with a mix of nationalities and races that is unsurpassed. Even in the dark days when many Hoosiers, unfortunately, joined the Ku Klux Klan in substantial numbers, South Bend was home to a growing mix of ethnic and national communities. The growing industrial power of South Bend required more and more employees, to the extent that business leaders had a major need to bring workers from around the world here. As immigrant Catholics came in greater numbers to the United States, especially in the early decades of the 20th Century, South Bend’s support of Notre Dame made it a community targeted for intimidation by the Indiana members of the Ku Klux Klan. And they failed.
- That rich “quilt” of humanity that was woven early last century by needs and loyalties has made South Bend a community that opens its doors to all. Decades later, South Bend has welcomed refugees from war, during the Hungarian Revolution in the 1950’s to today’s refugees from the Middle East and Afghanistan. **This not just a credit to the community. It is a source of strength, now and for the future.**
- **A town that loves the arts and its artists.**
 - Ring Lardner, who was a great influence of sports writing and short fiction, was born just up the road in Niles. He began his writing career in 1905 as a reporter for the *South Bend Times* in Indiana. He went on to newspapers in Chicago, where he established a reputation as a sportswriter and a master of short stories and influenced a generation of sports and fiction writers.

- Red Smith. The greatest sports journalists of his time, Smith was a Notre Dame graduate, and no doubt honed his writer's eye within the South Bend community during that time.
- Something about the rich variety of people, place and endows South Bend with a writer's vocabulary and inspiration. Even up to today, we have a great local pride in Tess Gunty, a South Bend native, who has just received one of the highest honors in American literature, the National Book Award and in the recently passed April Sayre of South Bend who was the nation's pre-eminent author of children's books about nature.
- A treasure of the visual arts. One need only tour the collections and events of the South Bend Museum of Art to appreciate the deep talent of artists who were born here or whose flourished here. In part this is because South Bend is the principal place in this varied landscape of river and woods, lake and dunes.
- One of the oldest and best symphonies in the Midwest; and IUSB is the northern Indiana home branch of the internationally ranked Indiana University School of Music and home of the international Chamber Music competition. A vibrant and talented Civic Theater.
- Finally, one cannot overestimate the social, cultural, and environmental value of our **St Joseph River**. It is timeless, has always been our defining natural feature and continues as the emotional and cultural heart of this place. It is a treasure, and as we face the future, we can count on it to have the same impact on future citizens. In fact, it has the potential to be not only the heart of our home but the core asset of a unique environmental study and preservation corridor rare in the country.