



GREATER KOKOMO
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
ALLIANCE

2019

ANNUAL REPORT

2019 AT A GLANCE

[GREATER KOKOMO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE]

SIGNIFICANT EXPANSION PROJECTS



\$7M

*Capital
investments*



25

*Planned
new jobs*



\$180K

*In state
incentives*

3,000+ ATTENDEES REGISTERED FOR 77 CHAMBER EVENTS

14

ribbon cuttings



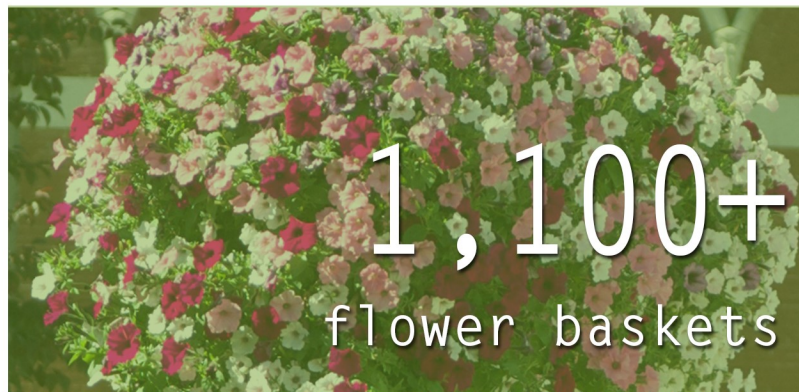
8

weeks of new trail
walking program



2

alley activations
open with exhibits



1,100+

flower baskets



30,000

*visitor guides
distributed*



\$500,000+

*economic impact
of state events hosted*



88,000+

*seasonal visitor
promotion's reach*



Charlie Sparks
Alliance
President
& CEO



Mike McCool
Manager,
Economic
Development



Susan Alexander
Manager,
Downtown
Initiatives



Sherry Matlock
Manager,
Visitors
Bureau



CONNECT WITH THE ALLIANCE

All offices of the Greater Kokomo Economic Development Alliance are housed inside the Inventrek Technology Park located at 700 E. Firmin St., Kokomo, IN 46902.

CONTACT US

Alliance, Inventrek

765-457-2000

Chamber, Downtown

765-457-5301

Visitors Bureau

765-457-6802

FIND US ONLINE

GreaterKokomo.com

VisitKokomo.org

ThisIsKokomo.com

FirstFridayKokomo.com

GET SOCIAL WITH US

@GreaterKokomo

@VisitKokomo

@KokomoChamber

@Inventrek

@DowntownKokomo



Amy Conrad
Manager,
Operations
& Finance



Liz Kerns
Manager,
Chamber of
Commerce



Sandy Chapin
Coordinator,
Chamber
Membership



Caele Pemberton
Manager,
Marketing
& Media



Michelle Reed
Office
Manager



Linda Wilson
Administrative
Coordinator



Dan Giesecke
Facilities
Manager

WHO WE ARE

The Greater Kokomo Economic Development Alliance focuses on developing economic prosperity for our community by achieving goals and executing programs that benefit Kokomo and Howard County's residents, businesses, organizations and visitors.

The Alliance consists of the combined efforts of Greater Kokomo Downtown Association, Greater Kokomo Visitors Bureau, Greater Kokomo Chamber of Commerce and Inventrek Technology Park.

Together, the Alliance's vision, mission and values guide our strategic plan and define the ways in which we execute that plan to accomplish the goals within each organizational priority.



Our Vision

The shared vision of these five divisions is to foster economic prosperity for Kokomo and Howard County through new investment, population growth, and the continued success of our area's current employers and residents.

Our Mission

The Greater Kokomo Economic Development Alliance aligns, links and leverages resources to build community prosperity.

Our Values

We are guided to act and driven to succeed by four sets of values:

- Integrity and respect
- Inclusiveness
- Efficiency and effectiveness
- Continuous improvement

Our Strategic Priorities

Our goals and actions align with five strategic priorities:

- Leadership and collaboration:** Drive initiatives that lead to community economic prosperity for the maximum benefit of current and future generations
- Economic vitality:** Facilitate the economic growth of the community through the attraction of jobs, investment, visitors, and residents
- Talent attraction:** Develop, retain, and attract talent to enhance the community's workforce, culture, and diversity
- Innovation and entrepreneurship:** Foster an optimistic, persistent entrepreneurial culture and provide infrastructure for innovators to create and grow business enterprises
- Placemaking:** Promote and support efforts to drive investment and quality assets to benefit current and future employers and residents
- Organizational Development:** Drive initiatives not tied to a specific strategic priority, but instead functions of organizational activity essential to the growth of the Alliance as a whole.

ALLIANCE LEADERSHIP - 2019

ALLIANCE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- **Chair:** Jean Neel
- DeAndra Beard
- Robb Blume
- Matt Collins
- David Dukes
- Greg Goodnight
- Jeff Griffin
- Steve Hartwig
- Jeff Hauswald
- Rhonda Heytens
- Joe Hooper
- Margie Johnson
- Kevin Johnston
- Amanda Lewton
- Jon Marley
- Cary Mawbey
- Dean McCurdy
- Tom Miklik
- Marcus Misinec
- Jennifer Ogle
- Jim Papacek
- Brian Pier
- Susan Sciame-Gieseke
- Paul Wyman

GREATER KOKOMO VISITORS BUREAU BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- **President:** Kirk Daniels
- Jim Calabro
- Sheila Haworth
- Damon Johnson
- Amber Jordan
- Marie Lindskoog
- Jennifer Ogle
- Jeremy Orwig
- Bambi Roe

GREATER KOKOMO CHAMBER COUNCIL

- **Chair:** Brian Pier
- Ethan Ackschewski
- Jake Adams
- Greg Bewley
- Joni Delon
- Mike Hagy
- Jennifer Hindman
- Dorothea Irwin
- Jon Marley
- Karen McLean
- Tyler Moore
- Randy Morris
- Seth Mote
- Deb Mumaw
- Amy Pate
- Brad Priday
- Sarah Pitzer
- Janessa Reece
- Jonathan Rogers
- Blake Rollins
- Diana Tenbrook
- Cathy Valcke
- Michael Ward

GREATER KOKOMO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

- **Chair:** Jon Marley
- Greg Aaron
- Peggy Baugher
- Roger Feldhaus
- Greg Gordon
- Robert Hickman
- Kevin Johnston
- Jennifer Jordan
- Dustin Lane
- Richard Moore
- Jeff Nelson
- Amy Pate
- John Roberts
- Michael Ward

GREATER KOKOMO INVENTREK COUNCIL

- **Chair:** Andy Baker
- Greg Aaron
- Peggy Baugher
- Bryan Bitner
- Robb Blume
- Jeff Griffin
- Bob Hingst
- Jennifer Jordan
- Tyler Moore
- Andy Rink

GREATER KOKOMO CREATIVE PLACEMAKING COUNCIL

- **Chair:** Marcus Misinec
- Robert Cox
- Jennifer Jordan
- Laura O'Donnell
- John Perszyk
- Cassie Salinas
- Catherine Valcke

OUR COMMUNITY: AT A GLANCE

PEOPLE



82,031

total population

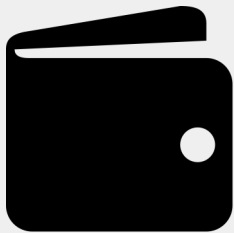
LABOR FORCE



38,942

total labor force

INCOME & SPENDING:



\$53,309

median income



\$11,106

shelter



\$9,618

transportation



\$7,817

food/beverages

MAJOR EMPLOYERS

FCA US LLC

HAYNES INTERNATIONAL

DELPHI TECHNOLOGIES

APTIV PLC

GENERAL MOTORS

COMMUNITY HOWARD

REGIONAL HEALTH

ST. VINCENT KOKOMO

BONA VISTA PROGRAMS

INDIANA UNIVERSITY
KOKOMO

KOKOMO SCHOOL
CORPORATION

SYNDICATE SALES

KOKOMO IN THE NEWS

“With (The Drive), we are building on a strong history of facilitating the growth of small businesses and looking to the future to recognize, support and celebrate entrepreneurs who are growing their businesses and creating jobs right here in our community.”

**“KOKOMO BUSINESS PITCH
COMPETITION AWARDS \$10,000”
- INSIDE INDIANA BUSINESS**

“It is an honor to join forces with these hard-working economic development groups to help bring lasting change and improvement to their communities,” said Erin Schneider, Indiana director of economic development for Duke Energy.”

**“POTENTIAL BUSINESS PARK
ENVISIONED NEAR FCA PLANTS”
- KOKOMO TRIBUNE**

“The technology park has provided start-up companies with tools, resources and physical needs required to grow since 2004. It is one of just 22 Certified Technology Parks in the state of Indiana.”

**“PURDUE SET TO MOVE KOKOMO
PROGRAM TO INVENTREK
- KOKOMO TRIBUNE**

“A Greater Kokomo Visitors Bureau study found most of our visitors had positive experiences in our community. Convention and Visitors Bureau manager Sherry Matlock said residents need to know how to share all that our community has to offer.”

**“BE OUR BEST AMBASSADOR”
- KOKOMO TRIBUNE**

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



\$7 Million Invested in Kokomo headquarters

Merrell Bros, Inc., the largest privately owned biosolids management company in the United States, announced in January of 2019 its plans to invest more than \$7 million in its headquarters facility in Howard County.

Merrell Bros, established in 1982 by Kokomo farmers Ted and Terry Merrell, has grown to oversee projects in over 30 states, including Alaska. The new investment brings 25 new jobs to the area.

“We at Merrell Bros., Inc. have been blessed to grow and work in Howard County, Indiana,” said Karson Merrell, controller for the company. “We want to thank the Howard County Council and the State of Indiana for considering our project and allowing us to continue to grow in Howard County. This project allows Merrell Bros. to continue to service nationwide projects from our national headquarters in Kokomo.”

25
new jobs



Kokomo named a Healthy Community

Kokomo and Howard County were designated as an Indiana Healthy Community by the Wellness Council of Indiana during the Wellness Summit on Sept. 17, 2019.

This initiative aims to help communities focus on implementing and sustaining a culture of health and well-being to spur economic vitality.

A division of the Indiana Chamber of Commerce, the Wellness Council takes a workforce development and economic improvement approach by focusing heavily on employer participation in wellness programs.

The Alliance has developed a comprehensive strategy to move toward long-term community health and economic prosperity.

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY: In 2019, the Greater Kokomo Economic Development Alliance submitted a legislative agenda focused on supporting investment and improving the quality of life in Howard County, providing adequate funding of K-12 and post-secondary education, supporting publically funded preschool initiatives, developing and maintaining effective workforce development programs and maintaining an attractive business climate.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



Member Engagement

The Chamber grew engagement with its various volunteer working groups throughout 2019. The Women's Business Council and Young Professionals Network established executive committees to help lead the groups and grow overall membership. The Legislative Affairs Committee addressed key policy issues in a business-focused legislative agenda. The Chamber Ambassadors restructured to focus on key objectives, including business member engagement, retention and recruitment.

Chamber now a Grow with Google partner

Grow with Google

In 2019, the Greater Kokomo Chamber of Commerce became a Grow with Google partner, providing Google resources to the Chamber and its members.

Through this partnership, the Chamber has received access to guides, forums and support from a dedicated Google team to help businesses grow their online presence and marketing strategies.

Increased Educational Opportunities



In 2019, we prioritized education, professional development and workforce development opportunities for our members. Through the Educate & Elevate series, the Chamber provided free educational sessions to members on issues relevant to business professionals.

Chamber Check-Ins



In 2019, the Chamber implemented Chamber Check-Ins, a chance for the Chamber to touch base with each member at some point throughout the year. These check-ins are continuing through 2020.



Here for the business community

With our broad base of members and resources, the Chamber represents the voice of business to key policy makers. The Chamber is the lead organization in our community that represents businesses of all sizes, sectors and stages.

2019 GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS PROGRAMMING

THIRD HOUSE SESSIONS

The Chamber hosted three informational sessions with state lawmakers, providing members and the community an opportunity to hear from legislators and ask questions about issues before the Indiana General Assembly.

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

The Chamber developed a legislative agenda focused on priorities and issues impacting Chamber members.

CANDIDATE FORUMS

Planned in conjunction with community partners, the forums help educate voters on candidates seeking local and state offices.

14

Businesses celebrated grand openings and anniversary ribbon cuttings with the Greater Kokomo Chamber of Commerce in 2019.

Chamber advocates for community wellness

In partnership with the Wellness Council of Indiana and Indiana Workforce Recovery, the Chamber offered Employer Opioid Strategy events, helping to educate employers on how to manage the impact of substance misuse on the current and future workforce.

Alliance recognizes individuals, businesses making a difference in the community

The Alliance celebrated a successful year for the organization and the community with awards during its 106th annual celebration.

FIRSTS AWARD: Tammie Brock

DOWNTOWN CHAMPION AWARD: Flaherty & Collins Properties

CHAMBER AMBASSADOR OF THE YEAR: Laura Hileman, Guardian Angel Foundation

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR: Jon Marley, Horizon Bank

BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR: Margaret Johnson, Ascension St. Vincent Kokomo

WOMEN'S BUSINESS COUNCIL MEMBER OF THE YEAR: Sarah Pitzer, Security Federal Savings Bank

SMALL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR: Kokomo Coffee Company

LARGE BUSINESS OF THE YEAR: Community First Bank of Indiana

IMPACT AWARD: Kokomo Urban Outreach

ELIZABETH FOSTER AWARD: Kalena James, LCR Coaching

DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION



SHAK Makerspace receives face-lift

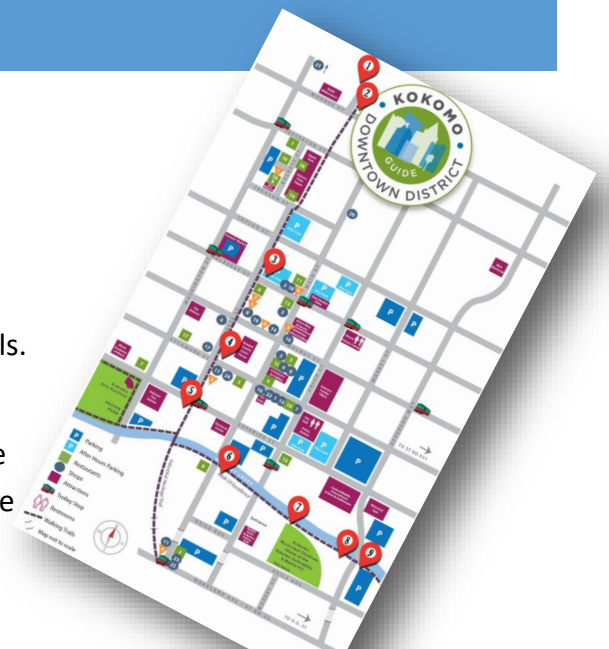
SHAK Makerspace, located on Jefferson Street in downtown Kokomo, received a face-lift in 2019, revamping the organization's façade and attracting new attention to this hub for hands-on creativity.

During 2019, the organization also saw an increase in membership with more programming targeting makers in Howard County.

Sculpture Walk brings public art to well-traveled trails

In 2019, the Downtown Association and the City of Kokomo partnered together to bring nine sculptures to the community, exhibited along the Industrial Heritage and Walk of Excellence trails.

These sculptures were chosen from nearly 100 submissions to the Downtown Association's national call for public art. Each sculpture is on loan from the artist for the inaugural 2019-2021 exhibit of the sculpture walk.



Creating a welcoming community



In addition to planting flowers, coordinating First Fridays, the annual Strawberry Festival and working with downtown businesses, the Greater Kokomo Downtown Association works to create a welcoming environment for more than just people - we're hoping to attract pollinators, too.

The Downtown Association and Duke Energy worked side-by-side in 2019 to create a pollinator habitat along Defenbaugh Street, planting native flowering plants to sustain pollinators with nutrient-rich nectar and pollen.

Kokomo Farmers' Market opens downtown store

The Kokomo Farmers' Market continued to grow and evolve in 2019 with the opening of a new store in downtown Kokomo. The market store offers fresh produce, handmade goods and hot foods created by local farmers and vendors.



2019 DOWNTOWN EVENTS



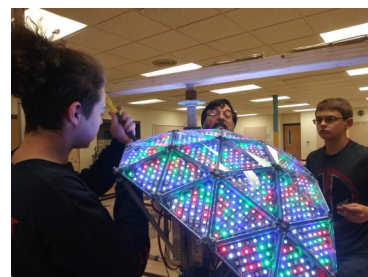
First Friday

This monthly, arts-based event entered its seventh year and continues to attract thousands to the downtown area throughout the year.



Strawberry Festival

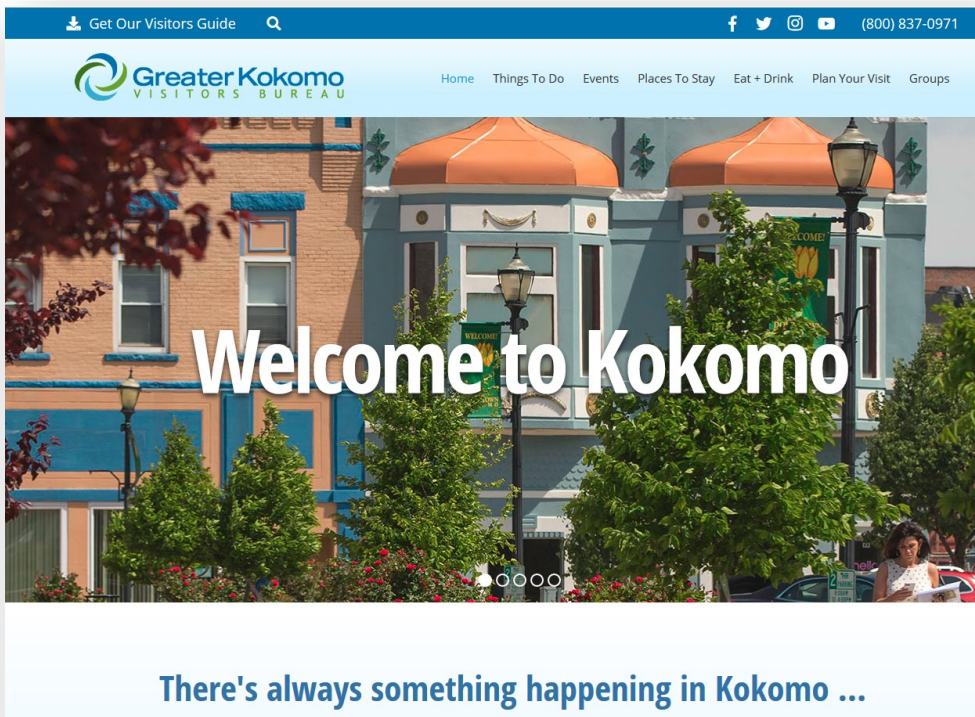
This annual event draws a huge crowd to downtown for strawberry shortcake, local vendors and organizations.



New Year's Eve Ball Drop

Thanks to Duke Energy and the Kokomo TechnoKats robotics team, Kokomo celebrated New Year's Eve with a new lighted ball.

VISITORS BUREAU



New website highlights events, community resources

In 2019, the Greater Kokomo Visitors Bureau developed a new website to better highlight and promote the Kokomo community. The redesigned site, found at visitkokomo.org, is user-friendly and easy to navigate. In addition to upcoming events, annual festivals, restaurants, local attractions and places to stay, the website features a blog and a social media feed, showing off the positive experiences of visitors and residents.

Thanks to this new design, we've seen a 45 percent increase in website traffic and a 62 percent increase in website users over the last year.



KOKOMO IN THE SPOTLIGHT

TravellIN Magazine

"We Care Park Light Display"

-

"The 2019 Staycation Travel Guide"

...

Indy SOUTH Magazine

"Heart of Glass"

...

Visit Indiana blog

"5 Kokomo Summer Stops that Won't Break the Bank"

-

"5 Stops Everyone Must Make in Kokomo"

...

Wagon Pilot Adventures

"Get an Inside Look at America's Oldest Art Glass Factory in Kokomo, Indiana"

-

"Old Ben and the Sycamore Stump in Kokomo, Indiana"

...

Indy with Kids

"Archery Tag and Other Fun at Crown Haven Center"

\$500,000+

ECONOMIC IMPACT TO HOWARD COUNTY FROM STATEWIDE EVENTS HOSTED HERE

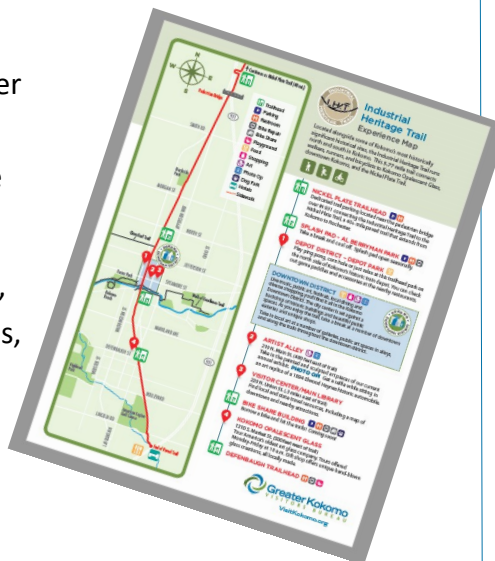
- Indiana FIRST State Robotics Championship
- Indiana Horseshoe Pitchers Association State Tournament
- Indiana Field Archery State Tournament
- National Softball Association Men's Silver World Series
- National Softball Association Women's World Series
- American Legion Senior Regional Invitational
- American Legion Baseball Junior Regionals and State Finals
- Gus Macker 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament
- Ohio Valley Regional Baseball Tournament
- Indiana American Legion State Golf Tournament
- Distinguished Young Women of Indiana State Program
- Hoosier Hustler B-58 Military Reunion

The Visitors Bureau assisted event organizers in bringing these events to Howard County through sponsorships, visitor resources or both.

Trail Experience Maps highlight miles of Kokomo trails

In 2019, the Visitors Bureau and the Downtown Association worked together to create a new Trail Experience Map, showing off the miles of trails available for pedestrians and bikers.

The map shows the Industrial Heritage, Walk of Excellence, and Cloverleaf trails, as well as several attractions and destinations throughout the city. The maps can be found at the Visitors Center inside Inventrek.



In 2019, we hosted six travel writers, resulting in a variety of articles and blog posts highlighting our community. These travel writers helped bring new visitors and attention to our community for attractions such as Kokomo Opalescent Glass and Heritage Farm.

Our 2019 Visitors Guide brought a fresh design with nearly 30,000 copies distributed. This design will carry through 2020.



INVENTREK TECH PARK



The Shared Drive, a co-working space inside the Inventrek Technology Park, hosted its first Drive Competition in 2019, inviting new and emerging entrepreneurs to compete for a chance to win up to \$10,000.



- Tim Brnayan of RepuStream won \$6,000 for his online reputation management software.
- Chris Rohaly of Green Alternatives, Inc., won \$3,000 for his solar energy savings systems.
- Brian Mikesell of Strong Arm Systems received \$1,000 for his patented lock for classrooms.

Inventrek Tenant Update

DATE	# OF TENANTS	OCCUPANCY RATE
August 2016	27	94%
May 2017	14	35%
December 2017	32	80%
December 2018	37	90%
December 2019	40	92%

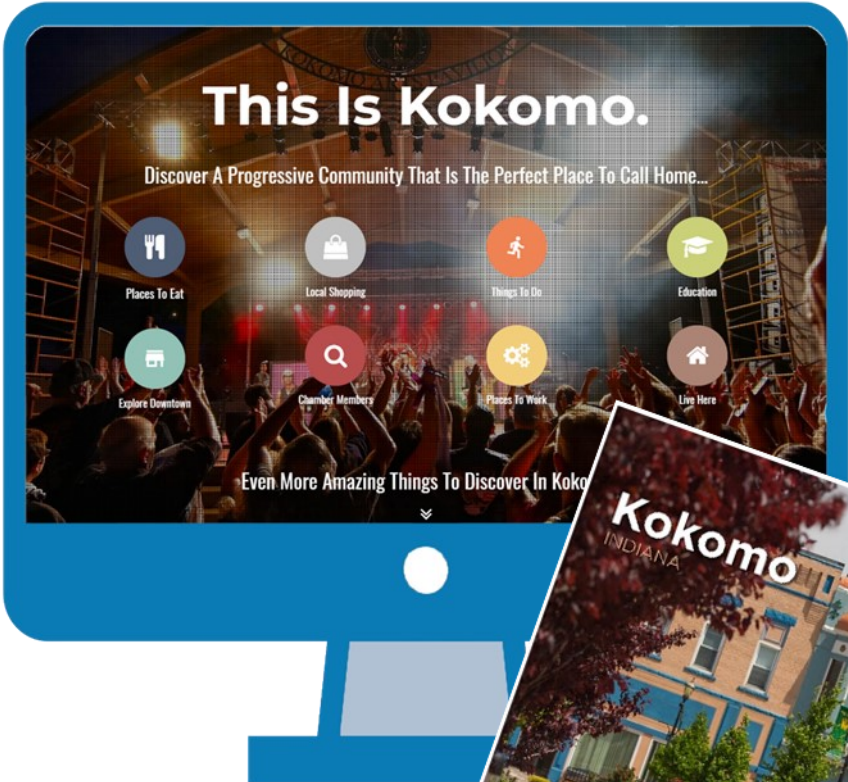
Shared Drive continues to draw entrepreneurs, new and growing businesses

The Shared Drive continued to welcome new members in 2019, with more than 20 tenants using the space and its resources to grow their businesses.

MARKETING

This is Kokomo site remains strong tool for residential attraction

Launched in 2018, the site ThisIsKokomo.com has become an important tool in marketing Kokomo. The site lists places to eat, shop and stay, as well as activities and attractions, highlighting everything our community has to offer.



4,900+

Users have viewed
ThisIsKokomo.com

760+

Users have viewed
ThisIsKokomo.com

14,500+

Pageviews for
ThisIsKokomo.com

Alliance maintains strong digital presence

The Alliance maintains four websites and 17 social media channels, creating a strong digital footprint. Its websites continue to see strong traffic, including huge increases at visitkokomo.org thanks to the website’s redesign.

Website Traffic Data for GreaterKokomo.com

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
USERS	25,019	24,733	26,744	28,365	30,334
PAGEVIEWS	76,651	79,488	81,031	82,403	79,639

Social Media Stats

1,201,909

Facebook Reach

347,366

Twitter Impressions

11,582

Total Facebook Likes

7,688

Total Twitter Followers

Follow us on Instagram!

The Alliance maintains several Instagram accounts, including @KokomoChamber, @FFKokomo, @VisitKokomo and @Shared_Drive_Kokomo. Find us on Instagram for photos of members, events and community assets.



working together for a

GREATER KOKOMO

GreaterKokomo.com

