



CONNECT. ENGAGE. INNOVATE.

OUR VISION: A global leader in helping advanced regions achieve sustainable economic growth.

We will leave to future generations a regional economy that is creative, innovative and sustainable with opportunities for any individual prepared to grasp them.

OUR MISSION: Provide civic leaders with the best practices and tools for transforming advanced regional economies and promoting sustainable growth. I-Open will help facilitate the transformation already underway in our region. We will teach and share the best ideas we can find to build open innovation networks on our region.

OUR STRATEGY: Brainpower matters. Our region will be transformed by open networks of innovation and collaboration with colleges, universities, libraries and schools as nodes in these networks.

Research: Create and grow a portfolio of actionable hypotheses about open innovation systems in regional economies

Networks: Develop collaborative networks that accelerate regional economic development

Products: Create and market products and services that generate revenues from regional economic development initiatives

Education: Penetrate business and public policy schools with advanced regional economic development curriculum and activities

OUR CREDO: We will prosper by treating each other in ways that build respect.



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What is I-Open?

I-Open (The Institute for Open Economic Networks), accelerates innovation and economic transformation in local and regional economies. I-Open's approach is founded on open source development, an effective innovation engine developed in the software industry. Open source economic development is based on voluntary communities of people contributing to common products.

Open Source and I-Open

Innovation drives productivity and prosperity. Increasingly, innovation depends on relationships that form outside of the four walls of any organization.

In economic development, Michael Porter of Harvard University has pointed to the importance of "clusters", open innovation systems, to generate innovation and productive investment. Research shows that regions characterized by thick networks of trusted relationships learn faster, spot opportunities faster and align resources faster.

I-Open develops and deploys practical approaches to creating open innovation networks and neighborhoods, counties and regions.

I-Open creates communities of innovation based on open networks with colleges and universities and libraries as nodes in these networks.

These "clusters of activity" provide the engine to move an economy forward.

Who drives I-Open?

We all do, based on the open source economic development model. This new kind of civic engagement was first developed by Ed Morrison, Betsey Merkel and Susan Altshuler at the Case Center for Regional Economic Issues (REI).

In this neutral convening ground for public opinion and expert knowledge, they penetrated academic silos, gathered feedback and connected theoretical research with practitioner knowledge. Each session concluded with a discussion of "next steps." Joined by Dennis Coughlin in early 2005,

our team continued at Case until mid 2005 when the four left Case and founded I-Open. As a result of the positive work, response and collaborations formed at REI coupled with open leadership, I-Open has launched a wide range of new collaborations.

The I-Open Leadership Team

Ed Morrison, Director I-Open / Economic Policy Advisor, Purdue Center for Regional Development

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Co-founder of the Institute for Open Economic Networks. The Institute for Open Economic Networks (I-Open) was established to promote a new model of regional economic development: Open Source Economic Development. This model generates strategy maps for community and regional leaders to accelerate innovation. Projects are currently underway in Northeast Ohio, Indiana, and Lexington, KY.

Economic Policy Advisor, Purdue Center for Regional Development at Purdue University. He is working as the Economic Policy Advisor on the WIRED (Workforce Innovation for Regional Economic Development) grant for North Central Indiana and with the Governor's office in Indiana on the regional implementation of the new state strategy, Accelerating Indiana.

Betsey Merkel, Director / Network Development & Programs

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Betsey, co-founder of I-Open, the Institute for Open Economic Networks, brings twenty years of business development experience, designing community residencies and ongoing project management in the non-profit sector. Areas of focus include the creative industries, land conservation and water management, the performing arts industry, and architectural restoration. Working with Ed Morrison and the I-Open Team, her approach to network design has created I-Open Civic Forums, catalyzing many diverse projects, proposals and businesses. She designs process to support community engagement and entrepreneurial innovation initiatives. Betsey co-authored "Artist to Artist", a business development seminar supported by the State of Ohio Office of the Governor and the Ohio Arts Council. Betsey earned a Master of Music from the Cleveland Institute of Music and Case Western Reserve University.

Susan Altshuler, Director / Finance & Grants Administration

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Susan, co-founder of I-Open, the Institute for Open Economic Networks has over 25 years of office and financial management experience in both the

corporate and nonprofit environments. From 1998-2002, Susan worked as Special Assistant under Richard Shatten, Director of REI at Case Western Reserve University and then under Ed Morrison, Director of REI from 2003 to 2005. Under her management, Susan worked on special projects, programs, and events; led fundraising efforts with the Director to ensure long-term funding by developing funding proposals, identifying significant prospects and managing the flow of relationships with donors; coordinated day-to-day activities for the REI professional staff; supervised Department staff and student researchers; responsible for grants and contract administration; assisted Director in the hiring and evaluation of staff and researchers.

Dennis Coughlin, Director / Administration & Operations

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Dennis, co-founder of I-Open, the Institute for Open Economic Networks, has significant experience in operations management with non-profit organizations creating budget proposals, managing staff, developing programs, and analyzing systems. In his positions, he was accountable for all financial operations, including preparing budgets, approving purchases, general accounting, preparation, analyzing and presenting financial statements. He previously worked as a consultant at REI under Ed Morrison's stewardship.



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I-OPEN AND CIVIC FORUMS

- Civic Forums build open economic networks and stimulate innovation and entrepreneurship
- Civic Forums encourage new civic collaborations build on trust and accountability
- I-Open promotes civic behaviors that overcome fragmentation by focusing on mutual interests, realistic business development opportunities and pragmatic “next steps.”

Civic Forums accelerate trusted connections among the region’s extensive research, information and civic communities. I-Open removes the barriers that stifle “open innovation systems” within regional economies. These innovation systems – sometimes called “clusters” - drive regional prosperity. Civic Forums are not isolated events; they are part of a continuous process of reshaping civic leadership and behavior.

What Are Civic Forums?

I-Open Civic Forums represent a new kind of civic engagement, developed by Ed Morrison, Susan Altshuler, Betsey Merkel and Dennis Coughlin at the Case Center for Regional Economic Issues (REI). Civic entrepreneurs from throughout the region gathered for the weekly forums. Called REI.Tuesdays, each session, explored a particular dimension of the region’s economic transformation.

REI civic forums created a low-cost and effective process to penetrate the academic hierarchies and connect theoretical research with practitioner knowledge. Free and open to the public, REI.Tuesdays became known as a neutral convening ground for the exchange of public opinion and expert knowledge from Northeast Ohio’s academic, civic, government and business communities.

These sessions launched a wide number of self-organized works groups, roundtables, focus groups and communities of commitment. Their work

produced specific action plans with “next steps”. For example the forums gave rise to a new biodiesel distribution company in East Cleveland, a new collaboration among small component manufacturers and a new company to promote collaborative computing in Cleveland’s neighborhoods.

Using well-designed Civic Forums, we replaced “strategic planning” with “strategic doing.”