

Industrial Park Planned

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The News-Dispatch

LaPORTE - An industrial park is planned for the corner of Indiana 39 and the Indiana Toll Road that developers hope will mean new manufacturing jobs for LaPorte County.

The Chicago **SouthShore** & **South** Bend Railroad, the privately held freight line, has announced plans for an industrial park on the north side of LaPorte. The freight line, which uses the same tracks at the publicly owned and operated commuter line, will service the property.

"We're bringing in rail service to industry," said Jay Pouzar of CB Richard Ellis, a real estate and development company from **South** Bend. "If you need rail, we have a spot for you."

Pouzar has partnered with Chicago **SouthShore** & **South** Bend Railroad to market land in the new Chicago **SouthShore** Railroad 39 Industrial Park on the **south**west corner of the Indiana Toll Road and Indiana 39. The two companies are working together to attract industrial rail users to the new park.

"Right now we're soliciting companies," Pouzar said. "We're doing a direct marketing campaign to rail users in the Midwest. We have a number of industries we're working with."

Pouzar said by the end of the year development should be underway at the site.

"They're doing some engineering," Pouzar said. "You can't put rail down without doing a lot of back ground work."

CSS provides service from **South** Bend to Chicago and from Michigan City **south** to Kingsbury. The railroad hauls between 50,000 and 60,000 car loads of freight a year and connects with larger railroads either directly or through a connecting carrier in Chicago.

At the end of March, CSS closed on the parcel of land, which is on the CSS branch line serving Kingsbury Industrial Park.

"Their parent company was able to buy the land," Pouzar said.

The 105-acre industrial park located at Exit 49 on the Toll Road is geared towards distribution and manufacturing companies requiring Toll Road access and rail spurs to their operation. The site is fully visible from the Toll Road and it's already zoned Industrial. Pouzar said the land is being marketed exclusively to rail users, adding that major selling points are that the land has city water and sewer and utilities from both NIPSCO and AEP.

Logistics - adequate access to highways and railroads - is one of a business's top concerns when it chooses a location, said Pouzar. Rail service and the close proximity to the Toll Road are both benefits for companies looking at LaPorte County.

"It's difficult to get rail close to many companies," Pouzar said.

With increased costs of fuel, many companies have looked to rail to ship their products. Pouzar said one rail car can hold the equivalent of three trucks.



The future home of the Chicago SouthShore Railroad Industrial Park on Indiana 39 in LaPorte. Photo by Elizabeth Hogge

"It's a lot cheaper to haul freight (on rail) than on a truck," Pouzar said. "Also it keeps a lot of traffic off the road."

Pouzar said the new industrial park will be a plus for LaPorte County's economy. "Definitely it will add jobs. We're looking at light manufacturing companies, which are good paying jobs."

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