



News Release
For Immediate Release
Monday, April 06, 2015
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NIIC's "IDEAS @ WORK" LUNCHEON EVENT TO FEATURE PROMINENT INDIANA ENTREPRENEUR

Luncheon Speaker Chuck Surack. It's a celebration of Northeast Indiana's entrepreneurs.

Northeast Indiana Innovation Center (NIIC) to unveil interactive timeline celebrating 15 years of entrepreneurial success.

Fort Wayne—One of the nation's premier business incubators and technology parks announced today that the Second Annual "Ideas @ Work" – 15 Years of Entrepreneurial Successes Luncheon will be held at the Parkview Mirro Center for Research and Innovation on Tuesday, April 21, 2015. Over 500 people are expected to attend. A limited number of tickets for the event are still available and can be secured by going to www.niic.net/ideasatwork.

Northeast Indiana Innovation Center (NIIC) President and CEO Karl R. LaPan issued the following statement:

"It is entirely fitting that we are holding our second annual entrepreneurship celebration event in the new Parkview Mirro Center for Research and Innovation. Dr. Mike Mirro, as our founding board chair, was, and continues to be, a driving force in entrepreneurship and innovation in Northeast Indiana. The new center named in his family's honor personifies his lifelong dedication to excellence in health care innovation and entrepreneurship."

"It is also special for all of us that Chuck Surack of Sweetwater Sound is our keynote speaker. He has been a huge personal and corporate supporter of the non-profit community including the entrepreneurial endeavors in Northeast Indiana. Chuck is one of Northeast Indiana's best stories on how entrepreneurship is really done and will be a great day for celebrating regional entrepreneurship"

"To celebrate a sampling of the many clients at the Innovation Center who have launched businesses, hired employees and secured millions of dollars in financing, we are unveiling an interactive timeline at the event to highlight our 15 years in business. You will be able to see a sampling of success stories of the Innovation Center, from clients including BioPoly's Herb and Sheila Schwartz, Allied Payment Network's Ralph Marcucculli and Aptera Software's TK Herman and Conrad Ehinger.

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"Today, the NIIC is home to Fort Wayne's innovators and its growing rosters of employees who daily commute from counties all over northeast Indiana and northwest Ohio in order to leverage the resources of this nationally-recognized business incubator. This luncheon demonstrates their regional, national and even international impact."

Calling all seasoned entrepreneurs and community leaders

This gathering is not only about raising funds and awareness to help entrepreneurs, but it's about celebrating entrepreneurs who have been in the emerging growth and scaling businesses trenches. "The NIIC is enormously appreciative for the financial and strategic partnerships with area corporations, government leaders, foundations and entrepreneurs," said Karl LaPan, "but this luncheon is much more than that. Entrepreneurs need mentors, advisory boards, personal coaching, access to financing and the wealth of experience that northeast Indiana has aplenty. At this gathering, the region's business community will have an opportunity to meet and interact with some of NIIC's actual clientele and catch a vision for what we can all accomplish together."

Media

Interviews with NIIC staff leadership, members of the board of directors, NIIC clients and Churck Surack are available before and after the event. To schedule an interview contact Mike Fritsch at (260) 407-6442 or mfritsch@niic.net. During day of event contact preferably by email.

EMBARGOED until Tuesday April 21 at 9:00 a.m.: Special Event Media, Handouts and Materials

The NIIC has created an interactive timeline to highlight its 15 years in business and celebrate clients at the Innovation Center who have launched businesses, hired employees and secured millions of dollars in financing. **Members of the media can access that interactive timeline via our website at www.niic.net/ideasatwork along with other video, images and material but are asked to respect a rebroadcasting embargo until 9:00 a.m. on the day of the luncheon.** The event media link will be made operational on Monday, April 20 at Noon.

NIIC Leadership

About Karl LaPan

President and CEO

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Karl LaPan is the first professional staff member of the Innovation Center, having served as its President and CEO, since the Innovation Center's was launched as a non-profit, community based business incubator and technology park. The Innovation Center is the only ISO 9001:2008 certified business incubation and acceleration services program in North America. In addition, in August 2013, the Innovation Center was recognized by Entrepreneur Magazine as one of the "four best under the radar" business incubators in the United States. Under Karl's leadership, the Innovation Center has grown from \$273,000 in net assets to over \$13 Million; expanded its client portfolio from offering just business incubation services to a portfolio of over 51 ventures involved in all different aspects of the entrepreneurial ecosystem, and obtained the State of Indiana certified technology park designation for Northeast Indiana. In addition, Karl was also recognized as a global entrepreneurship thought leader when he was elected in October 2013 as the Board Chair of the global voice on business incubation, the National Business Incubation Association (www.NBIA.org).

About Chuck Surack

Founder and President, Sweetwater Sound

Keynote Speaker, Ideas @ Work 2015



Founder and President

Sweetwater Sound's founder and president Chuck Surack was an entrepreneur from an early age. As a child he made and sold pot holders by the hundreds and managed an extensive paper route. After graduating high school, his love of music led him to become a professional saxophonist and keyboard player in touring bands. In 1979, he combined that love of music with his entrepreneurial talents and founded Sweetwater Sound as a 4-track recording studio in the back of his VW bus. Sweetwater Sound quickly grew into a leading studio in the Fort Wayne area. Chuck also turned his technical skills to programming the K250, the revolutionary sampling keyboard from Kurzweil. He gained a national

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reputation for his skills, and provided custom sound design and recording studio consulting to artists such as Stevie Wonder, Kenny Rogers, Dolly Parton, Aerosmith, and many others. In working with these artists, he recognized a need for a music and pro audio retailer that was different from the standard music store. The retail division of Sweetwater arose from his idea to provide unmatched customer service and support — two things he found lacking in the retailers he dealt with when purchasing gear for his own studio. Under his leadership, Sweetwater has experienced explosive growth and has become one of the most respected companies in the industry.

Chuck is very involved in community service and strongly believes in giving back. He serves numerous professional and nonprofit organizations, including the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo, Lutheran Hospital, Easter Seals Arc, NAMM, the University of St. Francis, and many others. Chuck is an active musician, playing saxophone and keyboards at about 70 gigs each year. He loves flying and can often be found at the helm of a helicopter. He and his wife, Lisa, have two sons and a daughter.

About the NIIC luncheon

The Ideas @ Work Luncheon is the second luncheon of its kind sponsored by the NIIC and is an annual event. Sponsorship levels break down per the following (as of April 07, 2015):

Event Sponsor: \$10,000

Sponsors: Lutheran Health Network, Parkview Health, Best One Tire, Sweetwater Music Instruments & Pro Audio

Lead Sponsor: \$5,000

Sponsors: Ambassador Enterprises, IAB Financial Bank, PHP, Steel Dynamics

Program Sponsor: \$3,500

Sponsors: Fort Wayne Metals, MKS Michael Kinder & Sons

Luncheon sponsors: \$2,000

Sponsors: 1st Source Bank, BKD CPAs & Advisors, Carson Boxberger, Current Mechanical, Daryl Yost, Do It Best, GAI Consultants, Lake City Bank, Markey's Rental & Staging, Northwestern Mutual, Performance Trucking, and The DeHayes Group.

Table sponsors: \$750 per table

Sponsors: Barrett & McNagny, Bishop Dwenger, Bose Public Affairs, Engine Research Associates, Georgetown PLUS & EXIT 25 Open Networking Groups, Huntington University, Indiana Stamp, Olive B. Cole Foundation, Orthopaedics NorthEast, Paragon Medical, Pensionmark Retirement Group, PNC Bank, Questa Foundation, SearchLite, Taylor University, True North Strategic Advisors, and Votaw Electric.



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Special Events Committee

Chris Rush (chair), Mike Altendorf, Otto Chang, Joe Eenigenburg, Mike Fritsch, Karl LaPan, Tammy Sipe, Daryl Yost.

Summary Logistics for NIIC Luncheon

Where: Parkview Mirro Center for Research and Innovation, 10622 Parkview Plaza Drive, Fort Wayne, Ind. 46845

When: Tuesday, April 21, 2015. Media interviews arranged by appointment Monday morning by contacting Mike Fritsch at 260-407-6442 or mfritsch@niic.net (day of event by email). Registration begins at 11:00 a.m. Program begins at 11:30 a.m. and concludes at 1:00 p.m.

Event URL: www.NIIC.net/IdeasatWork

About the NIIC

Northeast Indiana Innovation Center (NIIC) - NIIC is a non-profit, community-based business incubator and accelerator that catalyzes the growth and development of technology-based companies in Northeast Indiana. Formed in 1999 by a consortium of community and government leaders and organizations, In October 2013, NIIC was recognized by Entrepreneur magazine as one of the top four under-the-radar incubators in the country. The Innovation Center, Northeast Indiana's only ISO9001:2008 certified business incubation & acceleration program, serves entrepreneurs, business owners, and existing businesses who want to launch (or expand, or re-invent) a company. For more information about the NIIC, contact the NIIC Entrepreneur-In-Residence, Mike Fritsch at (260) 407-6442 or mfritsch@niic.net.

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