

Alliance Meeting Highlights Opportunities For Regional Growth With Defense Investment Briefing From Senator Todd Young And Plans For Expansion At WestGate@Crane Technology Park

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(ODON) — Indiana Senator Todd Young and Tina Peterson, president and CEO of Regional Opportunity Initiatives, highlighted opportunities for growth for NSA Crane and the south-central Indiana region as a result of the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) and plans for expansion at WestGate@Crane Technology Park during the Alliance’s third-quarter meeting.

Young briefed the Alliance on the senate version of the 2020 NDAA, which authorizes \$740 billion for defense spending with the goal of implementing national defense strategy through modernization, readiness, and policies to strengthen the country’s position against terrorism.



Senator Todd Young

“Indiana is essential, and your region of Indiana is particularly essential, as we look to address these threats,” Young said. “Our office is continuing to work with the Department of Defense’s Research and Engineering office to advocate for Crane and Indiana’s leadership over a joint hypersonic office.”

The opportunities that the NDAA allows include:

- **Research and development:** A \$300 million investment above the original budget request for Research and Development, including hypersonic weapons, basic Navy research, Navy conventional strike, and the improvement of ground-based test facilities.

- **Department of Defense Readiness and Environmental Protection Program:** Support for an investment of \$25 million that would allow the DOD to fight the encroachments and land use conflicts near military installations. This would permit military conservationists and state and local governments to enter into agreements that share the cost of land acquisition for easements, make local property owners aware of installation needs, and permit a smooth expansion of installations to need.
- **Improved electronic warfare exercises:** Because NSA Crane is an electronic warfare center of excellence, it may play a role in preparing the country in the joint force for hostile electronic warfare practices. The NDAA directed the DOD to better facilitate electronic warfare exercises.

Young also spoke about his call, made with New York Senator Chuck Schumer, for a \$120 billion investment over 5 years through the National Science Foundation to increase the country's investment in 21st century R&D technologies. They want to see 10-12 regional technology hubs established around the country to explore technologies like artificial intelligence, battery storage, quantum computing, and advanced manufacturing.

WestGate@Crane Technology Park

Peterson provided an update on the WestGate@Crane Technology Park master plan. The park, which is located approximately one mile west of the NSA Crane Gate, was established in 2006 as a tri-county initiative between Daviess, Greene, and Martin counties to increase local job opportunities and populations.

Today, the park is home to more than 40 companies supporting NSA Crane and the region's defense supply chain in 17 buildings.

As NSWC Crane becomes more valued throughout the country and grows its research and development capabilities, the opportunity to develop the WestGate@Crane Technology Park also increases, Peterson said. Specific science and technology areas within NSWC Crane that provide opportunities include:

- Big data analytics, artificial intelligence and machine learning
- Modernization of strategic electronics
- Trusted microelectronics
- Hypersonics

“The opportunity to advance the defense sector in our region has never been greater,” Peterson said. “We have many of the key pieces in place to evolve our ecosystem in a transformative way, and we have great collaboration and partnerships to help us to do so. We have challenges to face but many organizations are working collaboratively on them.”

A final version of a masterplan for the technology park will be completed at the end of the month, Peterson said.

The Alliance's next quarterly meeting will be held in November.