

The \$1.1 billion Indianapolis International Airport is one of several major reinvestment projects offering businesses a competitive advantage.



A COMMUNITY

REINVESTING

IN ITSELF

Successful businesses are built on a solid plan of reinvestment—so are successful cities. The Indianapolis Region is in the middle of a public/private building boom that will reach nearly \$3 billion when complete.

When visitors, clients or prospects deplane at the gorgeous new \$1.1 billion Indianapolis International Airport and take the 15-minute ride downtown, they pass the mammoth new \$720 million Lucas Oil Stadium with its retractable roof and capacity to seat 70,000 fans for a Colts game, the Super Bowl, the NCAA Final Four and whatever else might come its way.

The Colts' former home, the RCA Dome, was recently demolished to make way for a \$300 million expansion of the city's convention center. When that facility is completed in 2011, Indianapolis will be the 16th-largest destination in terms of conventions and meetings. "We'll go from booking 42-45 citywide conventions a year to 75-77," says Don Welsh, president and CEO of the Indianapolis Convention and Visitors Association.

Also under construction is the JW Marriott Indianapolis,

a spacious hotel complex that will serve as the premier convention headquarters hotel in Indianapolis. The \$450 million, privately financed 34-story tower will change the skyline dramatically. It's being built next door to the Indiana Convention Center and will be connected via a skybridge to the existing 622-room Indianapolis Marriott Downtown, just blocks from the new Lucas Oil Stadium.

The Indiana Convention Center and Lucas Oil Stadium also will be connected via a climate-controlled walkway. In fact, skywalks will connect the complex to more hotel rooms (4,700) than any other convention center in the United States.

"We're doing more in a compressed period than most cities will do in one or two decades," Welsh says. "Think about it. To open a billion-dollar airport, \$720 million stadium, \$300 million convention center expansion and a \$450 million privately financed hotel project—right now, in this economy. No other city is doing what we're doing. We now have a product that can compete with anybody."

Welsh, of course, sells the city to prospective conventions. He predicts that tourism income will jump from \$3.6 billion in 2006 to \$4 billion in 2009. "Those numbers will grow substantially starting in 2011 and 2012," he says. "I believe once the city is totally built out and all the projects are completed, which will be no later than the Super Bowl of 2012, we're going to be shifting into consistent high gear. That's when you're going to start seeing high-performance Indianapolis."

But what makes the city attractive to conventioners also appeals to prospective employers, customers and associates. You can be sure that when clients or guests visit your company in the Indianapolis Region, there'll be no shortage of first-class accommodations, entertainment or hospitality.

Indianapolis. It's not just easy to get to. It's an easy place to stay. •

