

# Q U E S T A

FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATION

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **MEDIA ALERT**

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### **Questa Foundation Announces Initiative to Boost College Attainment, Talent Retention**

Monday, March 14, 2011, Fort Wayne, Indiana – Questa Foundation for Education will host a news conference with several community foundation partners and investors to announce a significant expansion of its Questa Scholars Program to increase college attainment and talent retention in northeast Indiana.

**Wednesday, March 16, 2011**

**11:00 a.m.**

**Indiana Tech**

**Andorfer Commons**

**Paul Seitz Conference Center, Room A207**

**1600 E. Washington Blvd.**

**Fort Wayne, Indiana**

**(Parking in Lot C off Washington Blvd. Use Cinema Center entrance)**

Indiana's college degree attainment rates rank an abysmal 46 out of 50 states. Hoosiers graduate from college with the nation's 13<sup>th</sup> highest debt loads. What efforts are Questa Foundation and regional community foundations undertaking to help a greater number of northeast Indiana students achieve a college degree *and* graduate with less debt? How are these regional partnerships serving to prepare and retain the talent needed to fuel northeast Indiana's future economic growth?

Christina K. Smith, executive director of Questa Foundation, will be joined by September McConnell, executive director of Whitley County Community Foundation, Suzanne Light, executive director of Kosciusko County Community Foundation, Wendy Oberlin, executive director of DeKalb County Community Foundation, and Troy Irick of Huntington University Foundation, to address these questions. Maclyn Parker, president of Olive B. Cole Foundation, and Ben Eisbart, vice president of human resources at Steel Dynamics, Inc., will announce significant new investments in Questa Foundation's efforts to increase college attainment and talent retention in northeast Indiana.

This announcement is a core component of Questa Foundation's ***Northeast Indiana College Attainment and Talent Retention Initiative***.

For media inquiries about the news conference, please contact Christina K. Smith, executive director of Questa Foundation, at 260.407.6494.

***About Questa Foundation for Education:*** Questa Foundation for Education assists young people with financial need to attain a college education, graduate with less debt and become contributing members of northeast Indiana's workforce. The Questa Scholars Program is the nation's only college loan forgiveness program tied to regional talent retention. In 2010, Questa Foundation adopted a strategic goal to increase college attainment rates in northeast Indiana from 26.5% to 60% of 22-26 year olds by 2025. For more information, visit [www.questafoundation.org](http://www.questafoundation.org).