There are few better ways to learn The Bend's history than traveling the Studebaker-Bendix Trail. It highlights two companies that shaped South Bend and the surrounding area through the factories and homes they built and the churches they funded.

Emigrating from Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, via Ashland, Ohio, the Studebaker brothers constructed their first blacksmith shop and carriage factory on this site in 1856. Located in the heart of South Bend's growing business district near the St. Joseph River (look to the east), the Studebakers' business grew rapidly as a supplier of wagons during the Civil War. They remained on this site until the late 1880s. Production then moved to Studebaker's newer plant south of downtown.

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Designed by noted Chicago architect Solon Bernan, Studebaker constructed this Administration Building (corner of Bronson and Main) in 1906. The company was still manufacturing carriages and wagons but was moving into automobiles. Glad in oversize brick resembling street pavers, the building housed engineering, sales, accounting and executive offices. It provided state of the art employee perks such as a men's and women's gym, bowling alley and cafeteria.

OLIVER FACTORY SITE
318 OLIVER CT.

This is the former factory site for Oliver Chilled Plow Works, credited with the cultivation of the western prairie. The power plant you see was connected to the factory and the J.D. Oliver home. A few blocks north — the first home in South Bend to be electrically lit. The Administration Building was designed by noted Chicago architect Albert Kahn. It is a simple industrial design with exposed concrete structure and large windows to provide ample light for workers. Studebaker automobile bodies were built here before heading to the final assembly line.

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The West Washington neighborhood was home to many of South Bend's successful businessmen. Clem Studebaker constructed his family home, Tippecanoe Place, designed by Chicago architect Henry Cobbs in 1889 in the Richardson Romanesque style, it completely burned down and was rebuilt a year later. At one time it had a matching carriage house. It was destroyed by fire in the 1960s. Today it is one of South Bend's most popular restaurants.

TIPPECANOE PLACE
620 W. WASHINGTON ST. | 574.234.9277 | tippe.com

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Explore the Studebaker National Museum and The History Museum. Here you'll experience a rich collection of historic Studebaker carriages, wagons and automobiles, tour the home of J.D. Oliver and learn more about the early history of South Bend and St. Joseph County.

The 1022 Body Assembly Building west of the Administration building was designed by industrial architect Albert Kahn. It is a simple industrial design with exposed concrete structure and large windows to provide ample light for workers. Studebaker automobile bodies were built here before heading to the final assembly line.

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Established in 1832, City Cemetery is the oldest formal cemetery in South Bend. Here you can see the final resting places for many notable South Bend families including several of the Studebaker family and U.S. Vice President Schuyler Colfax. Look for the original mausoleum for Peter Studebaker (pictured) and the obelisk where he is buried. Stop by the Sexton’s Office for a map with the cemetery’s history and burial sites. Be sure to check out the location of the failed Kankakee Mill Race and its remaining stone bridge.

BENDIX FIELD/SOUTH BEND INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
4477 PROGRESS DR. | 574.282.4590 | flysbn.com

Park in the short-term lot and visit the displays upstairs in the terminal at the South Bend International Airport, where you’ll learn more about South Bend’s link to early aviation history. Vincent Bendix started constructing the airport, with its dirt runway, in 1929. Several notable early aviators visited, including Amelia Earhart. Bendix started the Bendix Trophy—a transcontinental U.S. race from Los Angeles to Cleveland— to encourage the development of efficient aircraft for commercial aviation. The race continued annually from 1931 to 1962. The first race was won at a speed of 223 miles per hour.

BENDIX WOODS COUNTY PARK
TIMOTHY RD. OFF SR 2 | 574.654.3155 | sjcparks.org

The current site of Bendix Woods County Park was first developed by the Studebaker Corporation as its automotive proving ground. It featured a clubhouse built in 1926 (today park offices at the east end of the park), a test track and a road course. Studebaker planted 8,000 pine trees to spell the company’s name in half-mile sign is still visible from the air today. When Studebaker closed, Bendix acquired the property and donated a portion in 1966 to the newly formed county park board. Part of the original proving ground is used by Navistar.