

CRAIGHEAD COUNTY ARKANSAS

Economic Development Strategic Plan



Committee Review Draft — February 2013



A Building Communities™
Strategic Plan



Craighead County, Arkansas Economic Development Strategic Plan

Adopted X X, 20XX

Prepared for
Craighead County
and
reNEW East Arkansas

Prepared by



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ABOUT reNEW East Arkansas

In the fall of 2011, The East Arkansas Planning and Development District partnered with the 12 counties in its region and several other entities to apply for funding from U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to create a 20-year Regional Plan for Sustainable Development. Each partner contributed in-kind matching funds to the effort, allowing the creation of locally based plans that will contribute to the overall Regional Plan.



The counties, along with seven colleges and universities, two regional coalitions, two Metropolitan Planning Organizations, representatives of traditionally

marginalized populations and five state agencies have combined to form reNEW East Arkansas, a consortium of interests working to diversify the regional economy and take measures to improve the overall quality of life.

The Project Support Team list at right shows the key organizations collaborating to advance the regional planning effort. The work is centered around a set of principles, the Livability Principles, being advanced by the three federal agencies directly involved with the Partnership for Sustainable Communities—HUD, the US Department of Transportation and the US Environmental Protection Agency.

This strategic planning document is one of a series of locally based (either city or county) plans that is but one of eight overall deliverables by reNEW East Arkansas. The eight planning products include: 1) an active community engagement effort; 2) locally based economic and community development strategic plans; 3) an underutilized asset inventory; 4) land use and transportation scenario plans; 5) a regional housing analysis; 6) a healthy foods initiative; 7) visioning and modeling for several key initiatives; and 8) the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development.

The development of this document was locally driven by a community-based Steering Committee formed under the leadership of a local Plan Director. The findings from this local plan will be combined with the findings of other such plans to form the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development in 2014.

PROJECT SUPPORT TEAM

East Arkansas Planning and Development District (EAPDD)

Clay County

Craighead County

Crittenden County

Cross County

Greene County

Lawrence County

Lee County

Mississippi County

Phillips County

Poinsett County

Randolph County

St. Francis County

**Arkansas State University
Delta Center for Economic Development**

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*Assistant to the County Judge
Craighead County*

Steering Committee Members

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*Chief Operations Officer
Ritter Communications*

Fred Bowers
*Justice of the Peace
Craighead County*

Leroy Burden (dec.)
*Former Mayor
City of Cash*

Harold Carter
Citizen

Dr. Charles Coleman
*Alderman
City of Jonesboro*

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Mike Hawkins
*District Manager
Craighead Electric Cooperative*

Ed Hill
*County Judge
Craighead County*

Amy Howell
*Administrator
Craighead County Health Unit*

Kevan Inboden
*Special Projects Administrator
City Water & Light*

Kenneth Jones
*Mayor
City of Brookland*

Christie Jordan
*Executive Director
Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas*

Jon Milligan
Citizen

Joe Monroe
Craighead County District Court

Nancy Nelms
*County Clerk
Craighead County*

Brian Rogers
*Director
Catalyst Innovation Accelerator
Delta Center of ASU*

Otis Spriggs
*Planning Director
City of Jonesboro*

Branon Thiesse
*CEA—Staff Chair
U of A Cooperative Extension Service*

Mark Young
*President
Jonesboro Regional Chamber of Commerce*

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Executive Summary

Executive Summary

Our Community and Vision

There's no place like home. In Craighead County, this is not just something people say – it's something we feel. We have the best of both worlds, with a booming urban area in Jonesboro and the high quality rural life in our smaller communities of Bay, Black Oak, Bono, Brookland, Caraway, Cash, Egypt, Lake City and Monette. Yet, our identities are more than simply our community names. We are bound to the land that has nurtured us, to our families that have planted deep roots, and to the future that we continue to help shape.



To us, home means that there is always a place where anyone is welcome. Growth is steady here, bringing people from around the country to be our new neighbors and friends. It's important that we embrace them with the spirit and hospitality of the South, which is not taken lightly here. Generosity is a matter of fact in Craighead County that is demonstrated by our citizens with every celebration, every crisis and every need. Our success will be measured by how well we take care of our citizens of all ages.

Instilling hometown values is done, in part, by having a well-supported school system. To that end, education plays an immense role in everything we do. We are proud to be able to offer premier quality educational services from kindergarten to a PhD, right here in Craighead County. Planning for the future of our schools will ensure that they maintain the standards of excellence that have made them some of the best in the state.

Every community in Craighead County has something special to offer to anyone who calls this area home, whether he or she is a long-time resident or a visitor. We know that by working collaboratively we can enrich the experience for everyone. Well-planned neighborhoods, transportation networks, open spaces, schools, business districts, recreational facilities, tourism destinations – all are critical to keeping our quality of life at the highest of levels. We're working for the future, and what we do today will impact future generations for years to come.

We have done many things well, yet there is still much to do. This strategic planning process has enabled us all to voice our concerns and our hopes. It has brought us together in a way that we haven't seen in recent history. We must continue to build partnerships, both internally and externally, to realize all that we dare to dream. After all, there's no place like Craighead County. Our home.

Background and Context for Planning

Craighead County, Arkansas is a participant in the East Arkansas Regional Planning Partnership (Partnership) to develop a Regional Sustainability Plan for Eastern Arkansas.

This planning effort —called reNEW East Arkansas—is funded by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in conjunction with the US Department of Transportation (DOT) and the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The participating entities (counties, cities and MPOs) are utilizing the Building Communities-based approach to economic development strategic planning first to develop a strategy for community and economic development at the local level. Information gained from this local planning process is then considered by the Partnership in the development of the Regional Sustainability Plan.

This planning process began in February, 2012 as a part of the three-year process to develop local and regional plans for development and sustainability.

Scope of Plan

This strategic plan has a three-to-five year plan horizon, and is focused on Craighead County, Arkansas. The local planning effort has been led by Craighead County and leadership from the Cities of Bay, Black Oak, Bono, Brookland, Caraway, Cash, Egypt, Lake City and Monette.

Jonesboro is the largest community in Craighead County and one of two county seats. While Jonesboro serves as the main economic driver for the county, the scope of this strategic plan focuses on our smaller communities. This was deliberately done for the following reasons:

- Due to the size of Jonesboro in relation to the rest of the communities, our leaders felt it would be best to hold two planning sessions -- one specifically for Jonesboro and the other for the smaller towns. This allowed us to recognize the individual needs of each community.
- Separate processes also gave us the opportunity to form partnerships between our smaller communities, Jonesboro and the county by identifying the desires of our towns individually and then matching those desires with existing resources.

Jonesboro completed its planning process in February of 2012. A snapshot of that plan is included as a part of this plan. Craighead County fully supports the implementation of the Jonesboro strategic plan and considers it to be a part of the overall economic development strategy for the county.

COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

JONESBORO

Arkansas

The people of Jonesboro, Arkansas, have embarked on a quest to establish our community as an unparalleled place to reside by 2030.

Jonesboro is an ideal place to live and raise a family, with forward thinking, strong and effective community leaders who challenge each other to reach new heights. Thanks to Jonesboro's strong economy, the region is one of only 54 metropolitan areas in the United States that retained its total employed work force in the period November 2007 to November 2011.

The economic pillars of nationally recognized education and health care help create and maintain a resilient economic base and form the basis for a high quality of life for current and future generations. Arkansas State University is ranked by U. S. News and World Report as one of the best regional universities in the South. Two local hospitals serve a 23-county service area framed by St. Louis, Little Rock and Memphis.

The assets and economic performance of Jonesboro have earned Craighead County the praise of Business Insider magazine, which placed it atop its 2011 list of 20 "micropolitan" areas with potential to be the next Silicon Valley. Consistent, professional economic development activities have successfully recruited Fortune 500 companies to Jonesboro during the last decade.

The Jonesboro of 2030 not only will be economically resilient, but will boast some of the finest parks, walking paths, mixed-use development living, and green spaces in the Mid-South, along with a public transit system that meets the needs of its citizens. The community will be a leader in creating a dynamic, progressive, diversified and sustainable society. Jonesboro will have a healthy economy supporting its existing generation, retaining its youth, and welcoming people from all walks of life who desire the highest standard of living.



PLAN WEEK: FEBRUARY 2012

Plan "Snapshot"

PLANNING PROJECT DIRECTORS

Otis Spriggs
Planning Director
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Grants Administrator
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ASU Delta Center for Economic
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Ann Garner
Jonesboro Citizen

Beverly Parker
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St. Bernard's Senior Health Clinic

Bill Hall
University Planner
Arkansas State University

Cari White
Chief Operations Officer
Jonesboro Chamber of Commerce

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City Engineer
City of Jonesboro

Darrel Dover
City Councilor
City of Jonesboro

Dr. Charles Coleman
Alderman
City of Jonesboro

Ed Way
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Vision 2030 Transportation Committee
Member
Jonesboro Bicycle Coalition

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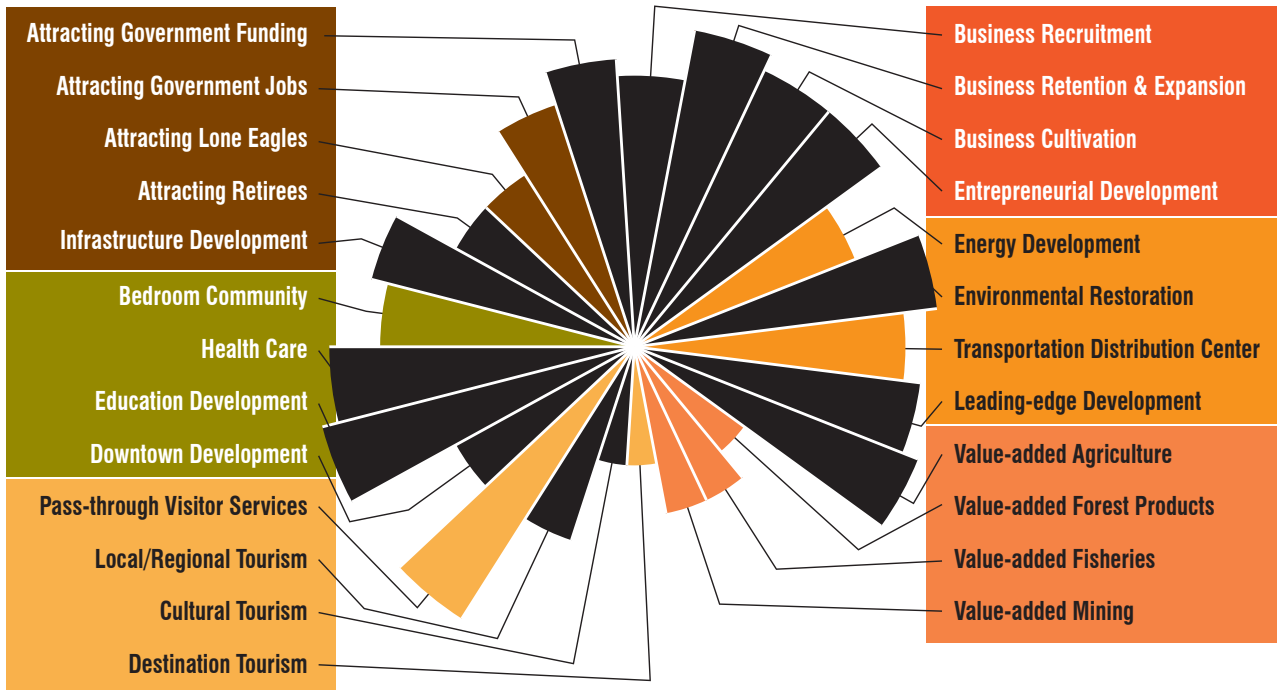
Susan Hanrahan
Dean of College of Nursing/Health
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Tony Thomas
Assistant to the County Judge
Craighead County

Travis Brooks
Assistant Planner
Jonesboro MPO

JONESBORO STRATEGY “THUMBPRINT”

The strategy “thumbprint” depicts twenty-five community and economic development strategies in terms of Jonesboro’s potential to successfully implement each of the strategies. The longer the “spoke,” the greater the likelihood that Jonesboro could see success in pursuing that strategy. Black spokes indicate strategies that have been selected for implementation by the Jonesboro Steering Committee.



SELECTED STRATEGIES & INITIATIVES

Affordable Housing Development	Development of affordable housing.
Arts and Crafts	Establishment of arts and crafts advocacy organization and plan.
Attracting Funding	Continued coordination among advocates to advance projects.
Attracting Retirees	Creation of amenities to encourage people to retire in the area.
Business Cultivation	Identification of opportunities for import substitution and clusters.
Business Recruitment	Continuation of Chamber’s recruitment plan.
Business Retention & Expansion	Continuation of Chamber’s business outreach program.
Cultural Tourism	Development of a tourism development plan for Jonesboro.
Downtown Development	Full implementation of the National Main Street Four-Point Approach.
Education Development	Expansion of Arkansas State University and other educational assets.
Energy Conservation Activities	Expansion of energy efficiency initiatives.
Entrepreneurial Development	Formation of a business coaching and mentoring program.
Environmental Restoration	Redevelopment of brownfield properties.
Forest Stewardship	Expanded use of biomass residue removed from forested areas.
Green Jobs Initiatives	Promotion of environmentally sustainable jobs.
Health Care Expansion	Continued expansion of health care providers in the area.
Infrastructure Development	Updating and implementation of capital facilities plans.
Leading Edge Development	Establishment of incubator at Arkansas Biosciences Institute.
Local/Regional Tourism	Development of tourism advocacy organization.
Mixed-use Development	Innovative zoning techniques to allow for mixed use neighborhoods.
Multi-modal Transportation	Establishment of commission to develop multi-modal projects.
Parks & Recreation	Update and implement master plan for parks and recreation.
Public Health & Wellness	Development of local policies to support healthy lifestyles.
Sustainable Local Foods Projects	Promotion of opportunities for better access to healthy foods.
Value-added Agriculture	Continued expansion of value-added agriculture industry.

Looking to the Future

For Craighead County, the future holds a great deal of promise. We are one of two counties in East Arkansas experiencing population growth. Unlike many of our neighbors, opportunities for employment and business investment exist here.

But how do we handle that growth? We have two extremes to contend with. Some of our communities are not growing at all and are facing business and school closures. Others are experiencing pressures from growth that tax existing infrastructure beyond capacity.

This strategic planning process has come at an opportune time for us. We can strengthen collaborative relationships to solve problems on a number of levels. By prioritizing our issues, we have a better understanding of what we can tackle in the short-term and what will take longer. We also realize that partnerships with our neighbors will benefit the entire region, ensuring that investments in infrastructure, housing, workforce, tourism and other assets will provide a larger return over the long run.

Community and Economic Development Strategies

- Attracting Government Funding
- Bedroom Community
- Business Cultivation
- Business Recruitment
- Business Retention and Expansion
- Education Development
- Infrastructure Development
- Pass-through Visitor Services
- Value-added Agriculture

Quality-of-Life Initiatives

- Bicycle & Pedestrian Facilities
- Communications
- Local, Healthy Foods
- Sports Complex

Section 1:

Introduction

Planning Methodology & Approach

1 - Introduction

Planning Methodology

In order to maximize community participation in the planning process, and to quickly transition the community to plan implementation, Craighead County engaged Building Communities to employ its unique strategic planning methodology in the development of this plan. The Building Communities approach to strategic planning bypasses traditionally used planning and research components—such as lengthy demographic studies, which often add little to a plan in terms of usefulness over time and focuses instead on the development of action-oriented projects and initiatives. The Building Communities planning approach is objective, comprehensive and expeditious.

- **Objective:** Communities select community and economic development strategies and initiatives based on a logical analysis of the factors most relevant to community advancement
- **Comprehensive:** Communities consider a host of possible strategies and initiatives to improve local economic conditions, and to sustain and advance overall quality of life
- **Expeditious:** The process is fast-paced (typically 13 hours total) and excludes discussion unrelated to the development and implementation of the strategic plan

Vision and Mission

The development of vision and mission statements has long been “standard procedure” in traditional community and economic development strategic planning processes. These statements are crafted to inspire, convey core values, and to indicate the direction communities desire to head as they implement their plans. These are all important ingredients in any strategic plan. In the Building Communities planning methodology, vision and mission statements assume a different form. In fact, vision and mission statements appear to be absent in the planning process and final plan, at least as traditionally seen. But they are anything but missing.

The Building Communities methodology recognizes that communities embrace similar values, missions, objectives and visions for the future—leadership, integrity, health, quality services, safe environments, responsible use of resources, economic growth and quality living, to name a few. Fully recognizing that these values and ideals are both common to, and important in, nearly all communities (if not all!), the Building Communities methodology integrates vision and mission statements seamlessly into the strategic plan, both expanding their content and application, and making them unique to the community.

As part of the Building Communities planning approach, Craighead County’s vision—“what we aim to become based on who and where we are”—is presented in a lengthier format than just a sentence or two. It is found under the header “Our Community and Vision” in the Executive Summary. The plan itself can also be considered an extension of Craighead County’s vision—a palpable manifestation of its values and desires—while the strategies and initiatives which constitute the bulk of the plan define Craighead County’s mission—“what we want to do to enact our vision.”

Defining a community’s vision and mission is at the core of the Building Communities planning approach. For Craighead County, these elements emerged as participants were guided through a planning process that had two over arching objectives—improving local economic conditions and enhancing quality of life in the community.

Objectives of Methodology

The Building Communities approach is firmly grounded in the belief that the objectives of community and economic development strategic planning (like the values and aims of visions and missions) are also common among communities—*improving economic condition* and *enhancing quality of life*. These two high-level objectives can be directly related, indirectly related, or almost completely insulated from one another, depending on the development projects being pursued by the community. For example, development of value-added projects offers the potential for significant improvement to a community's economic condition, but may only indirectly improve the quality of life enjoyed by its citizens. In like manner, strategic positioning as a bedroom community can dramatically improve general community conditions for residents in the form of residential amenities and aesthetic elements, but may only indirectly contribute to the economy. And some initiatives, such as well-developed tourism campaigns, may result in enhancements to both quality of life and the local economy.

The relationship between these two objectives works in both directions. That is, while improvements in one category may have a positive effect on the other, neglect in one—or overemphasis on it—may have a drag-down effect on the other. In order to maximize the benefit of community projects and initiatives, the Building Communities methodology emphasized analysis and planning in both of these categories during the planning process.

Major Components of Planning Approach

The Building Communities planning approach brings together three important components to produce a strategic plan—people, analysis and action. These components were carefully combined and organized for Craighead County in order to minimize time spent on relatively fruitless planning activities, while maximizing the power that each of the components brings to the process:

- **People:** The Plan Director, Plan Facilitator, Building Communities Support Staff, Steering Committee—and the Community at large
- **Analysis and Action:** Plan Week, which included these analyses and action-assignment sessions:
 - Key Success Factor Analysis
 - Quality-of-Life Initiatives (QOLIs) Session
 - Community Organizer Assessment
 - Voice of the Community Meeting
 - Strategy & QOLIs Selection Session
 - Assigning Essential Action Steps
 - Elevator Speech Session

The People

Communities are people. And, this strategic plan is a road map to better the individual and collective lives of its people. As such, the Building Communities methodology places high value on involvement of the people. In fact, perhaps more than any other strategic planning process currently in use, the Building Communities approach invites—no, requires!—community members themselves to do the analyses and evaluations, determine the strategic projects and initiatives to be pursued, develop the content which constitutes the “meat” of the completed strategic plan and conduct follow-up activities to ensure that it is implemented, with Building Communities guiding the process.

Contrast this to traditional approaches in which often “detached” hired consultants do most or all of the analyses, interpret local conditions, write the plan, and community members accept the resulting plan as “their own.” Though this is the common formula, it in many cases leads to strategic plans being little more

than expensive dust collectors. This is no future, and the Building Communities methodology does not use this model.

The Building Communities methodology employed the services of the following people:

- **Plan Director:** Tony Thompson, Assistant to the County Judge for Craighead County- Serves as the liaison between Building Communities and Craighead County; oversees community outreach efforts; assists in creating the Steering Committee; coordinates all planning and implementation efforts over the life of the plan.
- **Plan Facilitator:** Jennifer Watkins, Building Communities Inc. - Deploys the Building Communities Strategic Planning methodology, tools and software; provides guidance and assistance to the Plan Director; conducts planning, analysis and content-development sessions; delivers the plan in its various drafts and forms.
- **Building Communities Support Staff:** Though never visible to the community, Building Communities' support staff works behind the scenes to provide communities with effective and efficient planning tools, and to deliver a polished plan they can be proud of and use effectively.
- **Steering Committee:** Includes the Plan Director and represents the interests of Craighead County in the planning process; participates in all Plan Week work sessions; invites community participation in the planning process; weighs all community input; selects strategies and initiatives for implementation; reviews and provides feedback on the draft final plan; leads implementation efforts during the life of the plan. Craighead County Steering Committee members:
 - David Adams
 - Fred Bowers
 - Leroy Burden
 - Harold Carter
 - Dr. Charles Coleman
 - Shunqetta Cunningham
 - Brian Duncan
 - Rasheda Hamilton
 - Mike Hawkins
 - Ed Hill
 - Amy Howell
 - Kevan Inboden
 - Kenneth Jones
 - Christie Jordan
 - Jon Milligan
 - Joe Monroe
 - Nancy Nelms
 - Brian Rogers
 - Otis Spriggs
 - Branon Thiesse
 - Mark Young
- **Citizens of Craighead County:** Includes all citizens and elected officials; provides crucial input during the Voice of Community Meeting and during plan review and adoption proceedings; assists and supports the Steering Committee during planning and implementation.

Overview of Plan Week

The bulk of the analysis and data gathering needed to build the strategic plan were accomplished during Plan Week—a term actually coined by a Building Communities client to describe the series of rapid-fire Building Communities planning sessions. For Craighead County, Plan Week consisted of the seven sessions listed previously and was conducted October 24-26, 2012.

Data-gathering and analysis sessions were first in the process. They drew on the knowledge and experience of Steering Committee members and community members. Evaluation sessions followed, in which collected data and information were assessed and weighed. Next were decision-making sessions during which Steering Committee members determined the strategies and initiatives which would define Craighead County’s mission during the life of the plan. Initial plan implementation steps were also determined by the Steering Committee in the later sessions, and finalization of these “Essential Action Steps” is underway. In the final session of Plan Week, Steering Committee members were invited to reflect on the results of the preceding sessions, and to merge these with Craighead County’s identity and aspirations to create an expanded statement of its vision and direction.

The seven sessions of Plan Week are designed to capture the “full body” of community and economic development considerations:

- A logical assessment of what the community should do based on the likelihood of success (the “mind”)
- The passion the community has to advance in a desired direction, or what it **wants to do** (the “heart”)
- The capacity of the community to advance based on its human, financial and technical resources, or what it **can do** (the “muscle”)

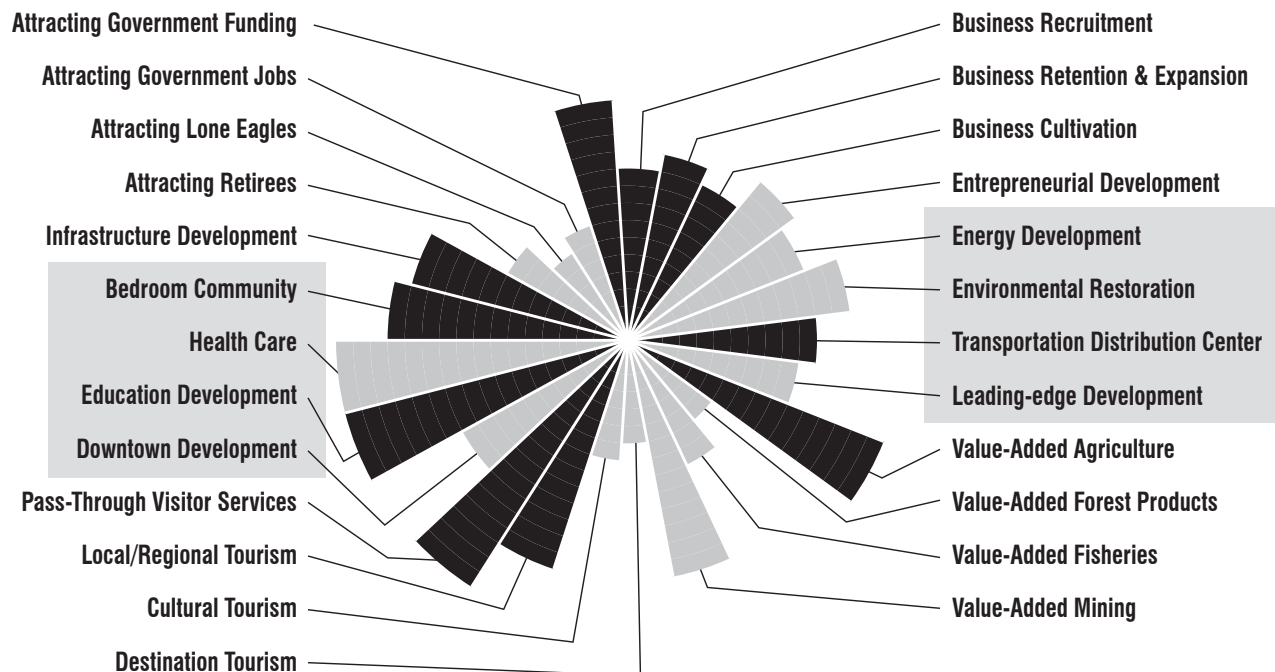
Session 1: Key Success Factor Analysis



Plan Week began with a fast-paced analysis of Craighead County’s comparative advantage for a host of *Key Success Factors*—conditions, assets, abilities, etc. possessed by the community—related to 25 community and economic development strategies the community could pursue to improve

economic condition and enhance quality of life.

The graphic on the next page shows in “thumbprint” showing all the strategies the Steering Committee considered in this first session, and that the broader community also considered in a later session. Strategies ultimately selected appear as dark spokes, with the length of the spoke indicating the strategy’s potential for successful implementation.



The input from this session yielded Craighead County's *Prioritized Strategy Report*—a ranking of the 25 strategies on a scale of 0 to 100 based on the likelihood of successful implementation. This report, along with a more detailed explanation of its content, can be found in Section 2 of this plan.

Session 2: Quality-of-Life Initiatives



Unlike the 25 strategies, which are presented as a finite list, *Quality-of-life Initiatives* are an “open book” whose main purpose is to address quality-of-life issues of concern to the community. In Session 2 members of the Steering Committee were asked the question, “What would improve the quality of life in your community?” and invited to consider major issues or concerns they have about the livability in Craighead County. In addition to the addressing specific issues, *Quality-of-life Initiatives* are also designed to capture development and sustainability elements consistent with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD)'s Livability Principles:

1. Providing more transportation choices
2. Promoting equitable and affordable housing
3. Enhancing economic competitiveness
4. Supporting existing communities
5. Coordinating and leveraging federal policy and investments
6. Valuing communities and neighborhoods.

Many topics were brought forward by the Steering Committee, including but not limited to:

- Bicycle/Pedestrian Facilities
- Local, Healthy Foods
- Communications
- Sports Complex Facilities

These initiatives were presented to the broader community in a later session for their consideration and input, before the final selection of initiatives to pursue was completed by the Steering Committee. A more detailed treatment of the *Quality-of-life Initiatives* follows in Section 4 of this plan.

Session 3: Community Organizer Assessment



One part of community and economic development strategic planning often ignored is determining the capacity of the community to implement its plan. *Capacity* relates to the human, financial and technical resources needed to generally engage in community and economic development activities, and considers such things as unity of vision, land-use policy, community attitude

and organizational stability.

The Building Communities planning approach addressed this critical element in Session 3—the *Community Organizer Assessment*—in which were presented a series of questions specific to the community and business development development aspirations of the community. This yielded a report detailing specific recommendations about how Craighead County can increase its capacity in order to successfully implement its strategic plan. The results of the *Community Organizer Assessment* can be found in Section 5 of this plan.

Session 4: Voice of the Community Meeting



The entire community was invited to Session 4, a town-hall-style meeting carefully designed to receive broader input about the same strategies and initiatives being considered by the Steering Committee. During this meeting, two overall objectives were met.

First, the community was asked to consider the 25 strategies earlier presented to the Steering Committee and answer the following questions in relation to each:

- Would you like to see this strategy implemented in Craighead County?
- Do you believe that Craighead County can successfully implement this strategy?

The second objective was to present the results of the Steering Committee’s work on Quality-of-life Initiatives (from Session 2) and to receive feedback and other input on these topics. The results of the Voice of the Community Meeting were added to those of the Key Success Factor Session and presented to the Steering Committee in a later session as the *Enhanced Strategy Report*. This report can be found in Section 2 in this plan.

Session 5: Strategy and Quality-of-Life Initiatives Selection



After the Steering Committee considered the “full body” of community and economic development considerations it made a final selection of strategies and *Quality-of-life Initiatives* in Session 5. For the strategies, this was accomplished during a detailed review of all strategy-related information from previous sessions. Where consensus could not immediately be reached about how to treat specific strategies, they were “held” and reviewed again later. This pattern continued until an acceptable subset of “selected” strategies was complete.

Additionally, the Steering Committee reviewed all previously considered *Quality-of-life Initiatives*, along with all related information collected in previous sessions. From the original list of topics, the Committee chose to “act on,” “write about” or “ignore” the concern or issue. Topics selected for action became full-fledged initiatives and were slated, along with the selected strategies, for further development in Session 6.

Session 6: Assigning Essential Action Steps



Deciding *what* to do is almost always easier than determining how to get things done. Making decisions about how to begin implementation of selected strategies and initiatives, about who will lead these efforts for each strategy/initiative and determining exactly what steps need to be taken along the way is challenging

work in the Building Communities methodology. And, equally important (perhaps even more so) is community members assuming ownership of making these implementation decisions. The “Achilles heel” of many strategic plans is the disconnect between community members and their plan when implementation consists of little more than “the consultant says this is what we should do.”

With these points in mind, during Session 6, each selected strategy and initiative was individually assigned to Steering Committee members or community organizations to act as “lead.” Committee members were then introduced to an online tool designed by Building Communities to help them identify *Essential Action Steps* (EASs) for each strategy/initiative and “Tasks” for each EAS. Essentially, designated Steering Committee members were assigned to detail “who will do what by when, and with what resources” for each strategy and initiative. This was no small task, and the Steering Committee’s work, together with all their input earlier in Plan Week (and that of the broader community) constitute the bulk—and certainly the “meat”—of this strategic plan. Building Communities takes great pride in being able to work with and engage great people in accomplishing such a huge task. We applaud you all!

Session 7: Elevator Speech



The final session returned to the heart of the matter: why are we doing strategic planning in the first place? Steering Committee members were asked to reflect on why they care about their community and what they desire for the future. During this time, the group explored and discussed what is unique about Craighead County and what they expect as a result of conducting the strategic planning process. The result of this last session became the opening message in the plan and makes a unique statement about the heart of the community and what to expect in the plan—and during the years to come.

Objectivity of Planning Methodology

Great care was taken during Plan Week to avoid traditional strategic planning pitfalls. One of the most common of these pitfalls is the tendency in communities for the “loudest voice” or “most important person in the community” to dominate discussions and to silence (intentionally or otherwise) those who might disagree or, quite frankly, have better ideas. The Building Communities methodology used by Craighead County employed a system which collected participants’ public responses to important questions anonymously in real-time. Because initial responses were given privately and silently, results were very likely genuine and representative of participants’ true positions. This ensured that discussions were fruitful, and that the issues, initiatives and concerns discussed were representative of the group rather than reflective of the opinion of one or two people. In other words, this provision for anonymity made what is, by its nature, very subjective work as objective as possible.

Conclusion

Craighead County has fully embraced this strategic planning process as a unique opportunity to build bridges and work together to overcome challenges. We have pulled together leaders from across this diverse county to generate new ideas and innovative solutions. This plan is only the beginning for us.

Section 2:

Plan Week Results

Plan Week Results

Overview

To gather the information from which to begin formulating Craighead County's strategic plan, the Steering Committee participated in a multi-session planning process called Plan Week, which is outlined in detail in Section 1 of this plan. During these sessions, the Steering Committee considered 25 specific community and economic development strategies and a community-generated list of initiatives to improve Craighead County's quality of life. The community at large was also invited to consider and provide input about these same strategies and initiatives. At the conclusion of Plan Week, the Steering Committee selected the following strategies for implementation in Craighead County:

- Attracting Government Funding
- Bedroom Community
- Business Cultivation
- Business Recruitment
- Business Retention and Expansion
- Education Development
- Infrastructure Development
- Pass-through Visitor Services
- Value-added Agriculture

In addition, these Quality-of-life Initiatives were selected for advancement:

- Bicycle & Pedestrian Facilities
- Communications
- Local, Healthy Foods
- Sports Complex

Strategy Selection Process

As mentioned briefly in Section 1, the Craighead County Steering Committee participated in an objective assessment of the most viable economic development strategies for a given community—the *Key Success Factor Analysis*. Using this rating and scoring system, the Steering Committee considered a host of strategy-specific *Key Success Factors*, rating Craighead County’s comparative advantage for each factor, relative to communities of a similar size.

Each of the *Key Success Factors* was scored on a scale of ‘0’ to ‘4’. Where the Steering Committee determined that Craighead County has a significant comparative advantage relative to its competition, that factor was scored a ‘4’. Where a particular Key Success Factor was determined to be relatively absent in Craighead County, it was given a score of ‘0’. Intermediate scores from ‘1’ to ‘3’ were given for factors in the middle of the range.

The scores provided by the Steering Committee were then integrated with each of the 25 strategies on a weighted basis. The result is the *Prioritized Strategy Report* to the right, which presents all 25 strategies, ranked by Building Communities according to the likelihood of successful implementation.

Prioritized Strategy Report

STRATEGY	SCORE	STRATEGY GROUP
Pass-through Visitor Services	85	Tourism
Education Development	85	Community Development
Health Care Expansion	83	Community Development
Value-added Agriculture	78	Value-added
Attracting Funding	70	Other
Entrepreneurial Development	68	General Business
Local/Regional Tourism	68	Tourism
Bedroom Community Development	68	Community Development
Value-added Mining	64	Value-added
Environmental Restoration	63	Sector-specific
Infrastructure Development	63	Other
Downtown Development	55	Community Development
Business Retention and Expansion	54	General Business
Energy Development	53	Sector-specific
Leading-edge Development	51	Sector-specific
Business Recruitment	49	General Business
Logistics Centers	48	Sector-specific
Business Cultivation	47	General Business
Attracting Lone Eagles	43	Other
Attracting Retirees	41	Other
Value-added Fisheries	35	Value-added
Cultural Tourism	35	Tourism
Attracting Government Jobs	33	Other
Destination Tourism	31	Tourism
Value-added Forest Products	27	Value-added

This initial *Prioritized Strategy Report* provided the Steering Committee with a solid foundation from which it could begin considering which of the 25 strategies the community should ultimately pursue. As the Building Communities approach recognizes that making wise choices in representative government requires not only capable leaders but an involved citizenry, the views of the community were also sought, in order that the collective voice of the community could be heard and given weight in the decision-making process. This began in the *Voice of the Community Meeting* in which the community at large was asked whether or not it would like to see the community advance each of the 25 strategies, and whether or not it believes the community could successfully do so.

The results of the *Voice of the Community Meeting* were then weighed, factored and combined with the results of the *Key Success Factor Analysis* to produce the *Enhanced Strategy Report*. This report provided the Steering Committee with a more complete view about the desires and confidence level of both leaders and citizens with respect to each of the 25 potential strategies. This information, along with the *Prioritized Strategy Report*, served as the foundation for the final strategy selection process. In addition, before strategies were actually selected, the Steering Committee was asked to assess the capacity of the community to carry out both general and specific community and economic development activities. This was done during the *Community Organizer Assessment* session during *Plan Week*. The recommendations that resulted from that session will help the community refine and increase its capacity to work together and succeed as it begins implementing the strategic plan.

Enhanced Strategy Report

STRATEGY	SCORE	WANT	CAN	STRATEGY GROUP
✓ Value-added Agriculture	234	91%	87%	Value-added
✓ Attracting Funding	226	95%	83%	Other
Entrepreneurial Development	206	88%	81%	General Business
✓ Pass-through Visitor Services	203	80%	79%	Tourism
Health Care Expansion	197	81%	76%	Community Development
✓ Bedroom Community Development	192	87%	75%	Community Development
✓ Business Recruitment	187	91%	78%	General Business
✓ Business Retention and Expansion	184	89%	76%	General Business
✓ Education Development	179	82%	65%	Community Development
✓ Business Cultivation	177	86%	79%	General Business
✓ Infrastructure Development	169	88%	65%	Other
Attracting Retirees	145	80%	72%	Other
Attracting Lone Eagles	137	80%	67%	Other
Downtown Development	107	68%	58%	Community Development
Leading-edge Development	104	63%	64%	Sector-specific
Logistics Centers	98	65%	60%	Sector-specific
Local/Regional Tourism	86	59%	50%	Tourism
Environmental Restoration	75	53%	53%	Sector-specific
Energy Development	49	53%	45%	Sector-specific
Attracting Government Jobs	21	50%	44%	Other
Cultural Tourism	-41	37%	25%	Tourism
Destination Tourism	-61	32%	22%	Tourism
Value-added Fisheries	-85	20%	20%	Value-added
Value-added Forest Products	-105	14%	20%	Value-added
Value-added Mining	-108	7%	7%	Value-added

With these various analyses and assessments in place, the Steering Committee's task was to choose the strategies which the community would ultimately advance. Consideration of the Prioritized Strategy Report yielded an initial selection of the "most viable" strategies. The Enhanced Strategy Report was then considered and, in general, the strategies initially identified persisted through the "first cut." The Steering Committee reviewed the second list, and nine of the 25 strategies were ultimately chosen to be integrated into the strategic plan. For each of these strategies, the Steering Committee assigned one or more organizations to play a lead role in implementation.

Importance of Recommendations

The Building Communities methodology results in two types of recommendations: 1) *Essential Action Steps* associated with the selected community and economic development strategies and *Quality-of-life Initiatives*; and 2) organizational capacity recommendations generated by the *Community Organizer Assessment*.

Combined, these two elements generate a substantial number of recommendations and actions the community should take in order to successfully implement its selected strategies.

However, the results of the *Community Organizer Assessment* should be seen as supporting recommendations. In other words, it is the *Essential Action Steps* that should be the primary focus, with the recommendations provided through the *Community Organizer Assessment* viewed more as a “tune-up” for the assigned organizations—and the community as a whole—to get the work done. The recommendations of the Community Organizer follow the Selected Strategies section of this plan.

While it is recommended that the Steering Committee review the *Essential Action Steps* on a monthly basis, it may only be necessary to review the *Community Organizer Assessment* recommendations on a quarterly or semi-annual basis.

SWOT Analysis

Overall SWOT Summary

The Building Communities economic development strategic planning approach does not utilize a conventional strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis as a starting point for the process. Instead, it presents *Key Success Factors* for community and economic development.

The local assessment of the relative comparative advantage of each of the *Key Success Factors*, in effect, yields a SWOT analysis based on these seven categories:

- Assets
- Capital
- Expertise
- Government
- Infrastructure
- Labor
- Location



The table below presents a brief description of each category and the average score of the community in each of those categories.

For Craighead County, the scores in each Key Success Factor category vary from a low of 1.8 for Capital to a high of 3.4 for Location. This is an excellent representation of the county's assets. Because the scope of the plan is based on those areas outside of Jonesboro (the largest community in the county), the scores show results that reflect the nature of the small communities here. Funding and staffing are consistent concerns for rural communities, as demonstrated by the scores. The availability of labor is also typical, as small communities struggle to attract and retain a skilled workforce.

Key Success Factor Categories		AVG SCORE
Assets	Industry-specific or activity-specific conditions or dynamics critical to certain strategies.	2.5
Capital	Business debt and equity funding as well as consistent funding for development organizations to succeed.	1.8
Expertise	The skills, connections and abilities of local professionals.	1.9
Government	The citizenry and government agencies/committees, whose decisions and opinions shape the community's actions.	2.1
Infrastructure	The land, buildings and infrastructure necessary to advance many of the business development strategies.	2.4
Labor	The labor force of a community.	2.0
Location	The relative proximity of the community to the marketplace.	3.4
Scores reflect the community's relative capacity in each category on a scale from 0 to 4.		

There are other scores that are above average for Craighead County. Infrastructure and assets such as land, water, sewer, power and housing are readily available in many areas of the county, items that are very important to the strategies chosen. Location is the strongest category, which certainly makes sense when one looks at the access via highway, rail and air that is available here. Craighead County is located in a prime position for many of the strategies selected for implementation.

Assets

The “Assets” category generally presents *Key Success Factors* unique to particular strategies. For example, the “availability of energy resources” is a unique Key Success Factor to the Energy Development strategy.

Assets for Craighead County are extremely strong, especially those related to the targeted strategies. Our county serves as the hub of educational and health care services in Northeast Arkansas, giving us the tools attract new residents, visitors and businesses. The population of our county is growing, and many people are looking to areas outside of Jonesboro for new opportunities. We have access to commodities, transportation routes, urban centers and attractions that many counties in our region do not.

Of course, there are areas that need improvement. While housing is available, it is not abundant in every community. This is a very important factor for our future success. Many of our towns could serve as bedroom communities, and better housing will be a necessity in order to attract new residents. We also need more businesses, especially those started by entrepreneurs.

Key Success Factors - Assets

Expandable educational institution	4
Financially sound existing health care facility	4
Local recreational and visitor attractions	4
Proximity to large volumes of agricultural commodities	4
Proximity to travel routes	4
Proximity to urban population and workforce centers	4
Recognizable central business district/downtown	4
Quality residential neighborhoods	3
Accurate, long-term analysis of infrastructure needs and costs	3
High availability of urban services	3
Proximity to raw materials and minerals	3
Available, desirable housing	2
Desirable climate	2
Existing or prospective cultural attraction	2
Sufficient base of local businesses	2
Sufficient local entrepreneurial base	2
Insulation from industrial business annoyances	2
Availability of energy resources	1
Existence of recreational amenities	1
Proximity and access to forests and forest products	0
Proximity to fisheries commodities	0
Proximity to nationally recognized attractions	0

Capital

Access to—and consistent availability of—capital is significant in two general respects. First, businesses must be able to secure sufficient debt and/or equity capital for their formation, operations, retention and expansion. Second, development organizations must have reliable sources of funding in order to regularly engage in activities consistent with their mission.

For businesses, access to capital is the lifeblood of the business itself. For small businesses that can demonstrate loan repayment capability, programs to provide such capital can be very traditional (bank and credit union lending), or they can be government-supported loan, loan guarantee or credit enhancement measures designed to supplement traditional lending.

Key Success Factors - Capital

Ability to secure power-purchase agreements	4
Access to small business financing	3
Access to large-scale capital	3
Access to long-term infrastructure loans and grants	2
Availability of appropriated funds	2
Competitive recruitment incentives	2
Dedicated local financial resources for staffing recruiters	1
Local funding for downtown development	1
Ability to secure long-term contracts for forest materials	0
Sufficient marketing, promotion, or public relations budget	0

For development organizations, reliable funding is necessary so the board and staff can engage primarily in activities consistent with the organizational mission, rather than regularly chasing funding sources for the preservation of the organization itself.

Access to capital is an area where some work will have to be done for Craighead County to make the most of its targeted strategies. We can certainly capitalize on the experience of our local officials and staff to secure grant and loan funds for infrastructure projects, something that we've successfully done in the past. Other issues, such as funding for recruitment and incentive programs, could be resolved by establishing a better relationship with the Jonesboro Regional Chamber of Commerce and its economic development program. However, some areas will take a bit of creative thinking, especially when looking at funding for tourism, promotions and downtown development initiatives.

Expertise

In this information age, it should be no surprise that one of the broadest and most important categories of Key Success Factors is expertise. The successful implementation of virtually every strategy requires expertise from a broad array of professionals in any community.

Not only must sufficient expertise be possessed by the individuals on the front lines of community and business development, but such capability is also important in various professional sectors of the local economy, for the advancement of targeted tourism and downtown development strategies and in the professionals backing up the front-line community and business developers (city managers, public works directors, county commissioners, etc.).

Scores in the Expertise category are broadly spread for Craighead County. We have excellent resources in health care and education. Our agricultural producers and local businesses are very savvy marketers of their goods and services both within the U.S. and abroad. Local officials are experienced and successful at advancing projects.

There are other areas where we struggle. The smaller communities within the county don't have funding to hire economic and community development staffing. Work in these areas must be done by either volunteers or local officials that are already carrying a heavy load. Some of these issues may be resolved through the formation of a better partnership with the Jonesboro Regional Chamber of Commerce. Others may need to be dealt with on a local or county level. The strategies chosen by Craighead County will help us identify where expertise is needed.

Key Success Factors - Expertise

Competent, strategic-minded hospital and health-care executives	4
Existing excellence in local health care	4
Support from local education professionals at all levels	4
Supportive post-secondary education training program	4
Ability to compete in a global market	3
Ability to successfully market materials	3
Local ability to identify and advance a funding proposal	3
Ability to build a team comprised of energy-development experts	2
Ability to identify product and service gaps	2
Ability to network and attend relevant trade shows	2
Ability to understand industry trends and opportunities	2
Cooperation of economic development staff and educational community	2
Dedicated business coaching staff	2
Relationship with site selectors	2
Relative sophistication in coordinating and marketing local events	2
Capable, experienced economic development professionals	1
Cultural development and advocacy organization	1
Team approach to infrastructure finance	1
Downtown organization and staff	0
Implementation of national Main Street Four-Point Approach™	0
Sophisticated tourism development & promotion	0
Sophisticated use of the internet for marketing	0

Government

Increasingly people argue that “if only government would get out of the way” our communities and businesses would thrive. In reality, however, it is through government (federal, state and especially local) that key strategies are envisioned, defined and implemented.

Governmental bodies not only establish policies and funding programs, but establish cultures and attitudes that are either pro-development or anti-development. Strong collaboration between government and the private and volunteer sectors is an essential ingredient for success.

Government is an area where Craighead County has many strengths. Our communities have provided a great deal of support for business and community projects by approving rate increases and special sales tax initiatives for local issues. We have strong relationships between our community and government, whether local, state or national. Businesses receive support from the community and government, and they return that support to the community.

While there are some weaknesses in this category, there are only a few that relate to the strategies we’ve chosen. We’ll need to work on connecting the economic development professionals from the Jonesboro Regional Chamber of Commerce to our local businesses through better outreach. We also need to find a way to engage our downtown business owners in a collaborative process. Tourism is an important strategy for us, so we’ll need to educate our citizens about its benefits to our area.

Key Success Factors - Government

Community support for needed infrastructure rate increases	4
Local government support	4
Local focus on revenues from visitors	3
Local pro-business climate	3
Strong community support	3
Strong state and/or federal legislative delegation	3
Local policies and ordinances supporting quality neighborhood development	3
Community acceptance of the visitor industry	2
Support for attracting retirees	2
Projected growth in government budgets	1
Strong relations between economic development organization and local businesses	1
Support from local businesses	1
Supportive state energy policies and incentives	1
Active engagement of downtown building and business owners	0
Favorable state policies with respect to office locations	0

Infrastructure

In order for communities to be attractive and appropriate for the implementation of many strategies, they must possess sufficient land, infrastructure, buildings and housing. Building Communities uses the term infrastructure in a very broad sense in this context (beyond just sewer, water and power facilities).

Infrastructure is a strength for Craighead County in many important areas. We have land, water, sewer, housing, power and high-speed Internet throughout much of the county. We’ll want to do a better job of designating those areas where industrial development would be appropriate. We also do not have existing buildings that are available; however, this is a long-term concern that could be addressed, if needed.

Key Success Factors - Infrastructure

Land/Buildings/Campus for education development	4
Adequate housing for labor force	3
Adequate telecommunications infrastructure	3
Availability of land for business prospects	3
Availability of local infrastructure	3
High-speed internet	3
Proximity to transmission lines with excess capacity	3
Availability of brownfield sites	2
Availability of industrial-zoned land for industrial park development	1
Excess water and sewer infrastructure capacity	1
Availability of local buildings	0

Labor

It takes a deeper bench than simply the “experts” to successfully implement many strategies. The availability and skills of the local labor force are critical to the implementation of many strategies.

Key Success Factors - Labor

Local, available, low-skill labor pool	2
Local, available, high-skill labor pool	2

Labor in Craighead County is not as much of a challenge as it is in other areas of East Arkansas. Because of our close proximity to Arkansas State University, we have the ability to attract skilled labor. The county is also growing, bringing folks of all skill levels to our communities. When an opportunity arises, we can meet the needs of virtually any employer.

Location

The location of the community is of great significance to many strategies. For example, communities strategically located to provide access to markets have a comparative advantage versus relatively isolated communities.

Key Success Factors - Location

Prospect of an expanded geographic market for health care	4
Proximity and access to markets	4
Advantageous location for government or education expansion	3
Proximity to scheduled air service	3
Strategic location for distribution centers	3

The location of Craighead County gives us a distinct advantage, as shown by our scores in this category. The transportation system is superb, with U.S. Highways 63, 67 and 49 all traversing our county. Interstate 555 is planned for the area as well, which will give us even better highway access. We’re only an hour away from Memphis, Tennessee and the major transportation hubs that stem from this metropolitan area, including world class international air and freight service. Health care and education have already shown significant growth in our county. There is simply not an area of weakness in this category.

Section 3:

Selected Strategies

Attracting Funding

Bedroom Community Development

Business Cultivation

Business Recruitment

Business Retention and Expansion

Education Development

Infrastructure Development

Pass-through Visitor Services

Value-added Agriculture

Selected Strategies

Craighead County's Selected Strategies

Ultimately, the Steering Committee recommended the advancement of nine strategies to enhance the economic condition and overall quality of life for Craighead County.

On the following pages, each strategy is listed and described. In addition, the overall objective of the strategy is presented as well as the strategy-specific results of the Key Success Factor Analysis. The Essential Action Steps associated with each strategy are also listed.

Two figures lead out on each strategy's page—"Score" and "Rank."

Score - This represents each strategy's overall score on a basis of 100 points, and is the result of the Steering Committee's collective responses to the Key Success Factor Analysis in the first session of Plan Week. A score of 85 or higher indicates a strategy that is highly recommended for advancement. A score of 70 to 84 indicates a strategy that should be seriously considered for advancement. A score below 70 indicates that there likely exist serious impediments to successful implementation of the strategy.

Rank - This represents the position of each strategy among all the strategies, based on its score.

The strategies selected by the Craighead County Steering Committee are:

- Attracting Government Funding
- Bedroom Community
- Business Cultivation
- Business Recruitment
- Business Retention and Expansion
- Education Development
- Infrastructure Development
- Pass-through Visitor Services
- Value-added Agriculture

Strategies not selected include:

- Attracting Government Jobs
- Attracting Lone Eagles
- Attracting Retirees
- Cultural Tourism
- Destination Tourism
- Downtown Development
- Energy Development
- Entrepreneurial Development
- Environmental Restoration
- Health Care
- Leading-edge Development
- Local/Regional Tourism
- Transportation Distribution Center
- Value-added Fisheries
- Value-added Forest Products
- Value-added Mining

While Local/Regional Tourism was not selected as a specific strategy, we will combine many of its elements in our Pass-through Visitor Services Tourism strategy. Our goal is to make Craighead County more of a destination for tourists from around the region, building upon existing visitor attractions by adding tourism products of our own.

Recommendations for Implementation

Craighead County has formed a very engaged Steering Committee and subcommittees for the purposes of identifying its viable strategies and assigning its Essential Action Steps. It is strongly recommended that the Steering Committee and subcommittees remain functional for at least three years to implement the selected strategies. As discussed by the group, these meetings could take place during the regular Mayors Meetings held throughout the county.

In general, the Steering Committee should meet monthly and hear reports from its members about the progress in advancing the Essential Action Steps for each strategy.

In addition to the monthly meeting, the Steering Committee should hold a meeting approximately every nine months to consider every Essential Action Step in a systematic fashion. For each step: 1) completion of the step should be noted; 2) progress should be noted; 3) efforts to restart the effort should be planned; or 4) the particular step should be recognized as no longer relevant. This systematic approach will ensure that nothing falls through the cracks during strategy implementation.

Attracting Government Funding





Attracting Government Funding

SCORE: 70

RANK: 6

Strategy Summary

Communities can create jobs and improve their overall quality of life through either a onetime or consistent approach of attracting government appropriations and grants.

Hundreds of state and federal agencies manage grant programming and/or legislative earmarks (funding directives) which can be utilized to complete projects for a wide variety of purposes. States or localities with congressman/legislators participating on powerful appropriations committees are particularly well positioned to benefit from this strategy.

While the vast majority of such funding either goes to formula-based entitlement programs or for competitive grant processes, a small percentage of the funding is directed by state and federal appropriators, thus bypassing the formula or competitive approach.

Often maligned as “pork barrel spending”, this strategy may face local opposition by individuals that are principled against such redistribution of government funding.

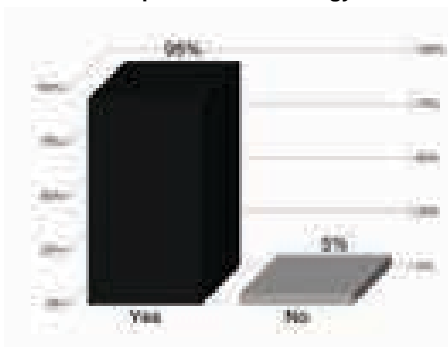
Voice of the Community Survey Results

During the Voice of the Community Meeting the community at large was asked to weigh in on:

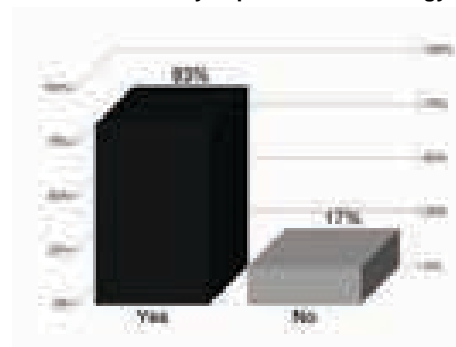
- whether or not they wanted to see Craighead County implement this strategy, and
- whether or not they believed Craighead County could successfully implement it.

Below is a summary of community responses:

Would you like to see Craighead County implement this strategy?



Do you believe that Craighead County can successfully implement this strategy?



Objectives of Strategy Implementation

For Craighead County, an Attracting Government Funding strategy primarily means better coordination and collaboration for all grant requests. The priority projects will be derived from the other chosen strategies and initiatives, updated regularly by each lead point of contact. Our committee will serve as the repository of information, collecting project updates and disseminating them as needed to the right resources. We will work closely with EAPDD and other grant writing experts to formulate competitive applications. At regular meetings of our Steering Committee, we will enhance project information that can then be used to advance projects through state and federal programs.

Findings from the Key Success Factor Analysis

We have continually seen success in advancing projects and programs that are important to Craighead County. Our local officials are experienced and highly skilled in this realm, and the results of their efforts are demonstrated in strong support from the community. State and federal legislators and staff are tuned in to what is happening here, giving us the opportunity to seek funding from outside sources. While appropriated funds are becoming increasingly scarce, there are still possibilities for acquiring competitive grants that can help us achieve our goals.

Key Success Factor Report - Attracting Government Funding

STRENGTHS TO BUILD UPON	
Major Comparative Advantages	Slight Comparative Advantages
No Entries	Local ability to identify and advance a funding proposal Strong community support Strong state and/or federal legislative delegation
CHALLENGES TO OVERCOME	
Slight Comparative Disadvantages	Major Comparative Disadvantages
No Entries	No Entries

Selected Strategy:

Bedroom Community





Bedroom Community

SCORE: 68

RANK: 8

Strategy Summary

Many communities, particularly suburbs, have established themselves—intentionally or not—as bedroom communities.

A “bedroom community” refers to a city that is largely void of industrial and other basic industry activity. “Basic industry” refers to businesses that sell their goods and services largely outside of the local market area. Basic industry businesses are typically pursued by economic development professionals because they do more than simply exchange money and income within a community.

Urban areas and their suburbs have outperformed the rest of the nation economically over the past three decades. Consequently, many communities proximate to urban centers have experienced extraordinary housing construction and residential growth. As these communities get established and grow, frequently public opinion forms that commercial and residential development is welcomed but industrial development is not. A not-in-my-backyard (NIMBY) attitude forms.

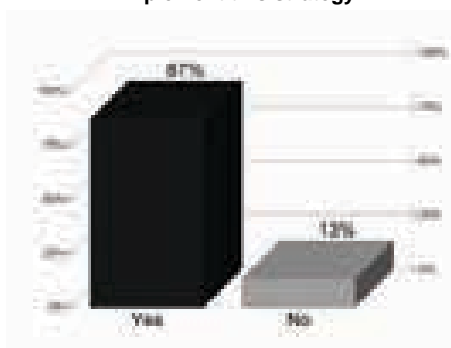
A “bedroom community” strategy is unlike virtually all of the other strategies in that it excludes the pursuit of some of the other strategies. For example, bedroom communities are unlikely to pursue business recruitment, distribution centers, value-added industry activity, and possibly even business retention and expansion strategies.

While a bedroom community strategy might optimize real estate values, there are relatively few other economic benefits other than the preservation and enhancement of local quality of life.

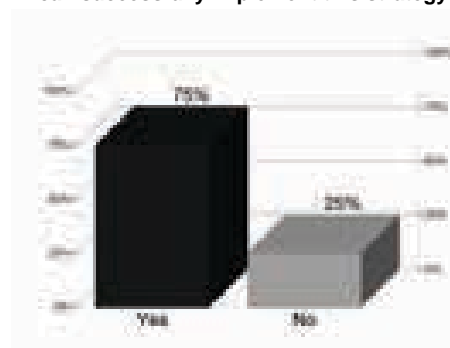
Voice of the Community Survey Results

During the Voice of the Community Meeting the community at large was asked to weigh in on 1) whether or not they wanted to see Craighead County implement this strategy and 2) whether or not they believed Craighead County could successfully implement it. Below is a summary of community responses:

Would you like to see Craighead County implement this strategy?



Do you believe that Craighead County can successfully implement this strategy?



Objectives of Strategy Implementation

Craighead County is unique in East Arkansas. Unlike many of our counterparts in the region, we're seeing steady growth in population and industry. Jonesboro, one of two county seats, has a strong economy that has continued to make progress in industrial, retail and housing development. As a result, people are considering locating outside of Jonesboro in order to have the quality of life often found in a smaller community. Many of our communities in Craighead County wish to capture that market and have excellent amenities to do so. Our school districts are some of the top-performing systems in the state. Low property taxes and easy access to population centers make our communities attractive alternatives to urban living.

Findings from the Key Success Factor Analysis

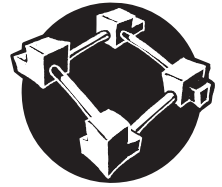
A Bedroom Community strategy makes a great deal of sense for much of Craighead County. Many of our communities already provide homes for people who wish to reside in smaller, rural towns while working in the larger workforce centers of the region. Our success factors are strong for the most part. While we do want to enhance our policies to protect residential properties and open space, we also want to determine the best way to promote ourselves. With limited resources, we will have to be creative to attract new residents to the area.

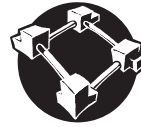
Key Success Factor Report - Bedroom Community

STRENGTHS TO BUILD UPON	
Major Comparative Advantages	Slight Comparative Advantages
Proximity to urban population and workforce centers	Quality residential neighborhoods Supportive local government policy and focus
CHALLENGES TO OVERCOME	
Slight Comparative Disadvantages	Major Comparative Disadvantages
No Entries	Sufficient marketing, promotion, or public relations budget

Selected Strategy:

Business Cultivation





Business Cultivation

SCORE: 47

RANK: 18

Strategy Summary

Opportunities for business expansion and business recruitment can evolve from the concept and methodology of import substitution. Import substitution is the process of identifying goods and services that are “imported” into the city/county/region that have the potential to be produced/provided locally.

One example would be the provision of cabinetry for the recreational vehicle industry. If a community has one or more recreational vehicle manufacturers that are purchasing cabinetry out of the county/region in large quantities, there may be a business case for an existing or new company to fill that need. Many other examples exist in other industries.

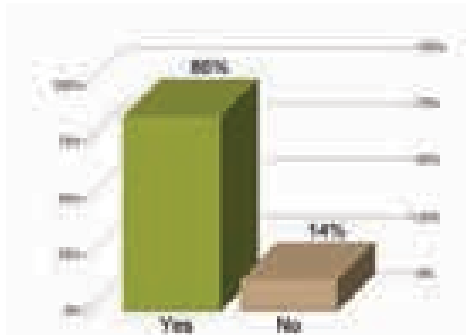
By identifying products and services imported into the area in large volumes, business development strategies can be created. Similarly, industrial clustering recognizes that many communities have a variety of businesses that operate within the same industry (or serve as suppliers to a common industry). By bringing together the cluster of businesses within an industry, many opportunities and benefits present themselves:

- Efficiencies can be gained by understanding and advancing the needs of an entire industry rather than simply one business at a time;
- Frequently new business relationships between individuals in the same community generate advantages simply by getting to know one another;
- Communities can “adopt an issue.” That is, a group of business leaders can identify a problem or issue that can best be addressed and advanced by local government or economic development organizations. Goodwill is built and jobs can be retained or created;
- Import substitution opportunities can be realized. A group of similar businesses may be able to identify new business opportunities (suppliers, professional services, etc.) that may generate business activity and create jobs by producing locally what has been “imported” into the county/region.

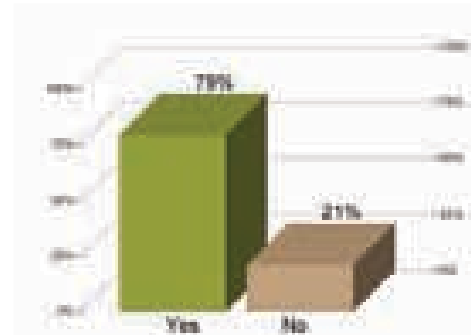
Voice of the Community Survey Results

During the Voice of the Community Meeting the community at large was asked to weigh in on 1) whether or not they wanted to see Craighead County implement this strategy and 2) whether or not they believed Craighead County could successfully implement it. Below is a summary of community responses:

Would you like to see Craighead County implement this strategy?



Do you believe that Craighead County can successfully implement this strategy?



Objectives of Strategy Implementation

Craighead County has a distinct advantage for a Business Cultivation strategy. Our communities are located close to Jonesboro, the region's fastest growing city and a hub for industrial activity in East Arkansas. With a number of Fortune 500 and 100 companies located here, there is tremendous opportunity to cultivate a strong import substitution strategy. We will work closely with our local industries and small business owners to identify products and services that can be produced locally.

Findings from the Key Success Factor Analysis

Business Cultivation will be an excellent strategy for us because of the advantages we have. We are in the right place, having excellent access to large companies that import goods and services from around the world. The communities in Craighead County have land and infrastructure to serve the needs of expanding companies. We will have to develop this strategy by working with local businesses to accommodate the needs of larger industries. Additionally, forming stronger partnerships with the economic development professionals at the Jonesboro Regional Chamber of Commerce and Delta Center for Economic Development at ASU will be crucial to our success.

Key Success Factor Report - Business Cultivation

STRENGTHS TO BUILD UPON	
Major Comparative Advantages	Slight Comparative Advantages
Proximity and access to markets	Access to small business financing Availability of land for business prospects Local pro-business climate Availability of local infrastructure
CHALLENGES TO OVERCOME	
Slight Comparative Disadvantages	Major Comparative Disadvantages
Capable, experienced economic development professionals Strong relations between economic development organization and local businesses	Availability of local buildings

Selected Strategy:

Business Recruitment





Business Recruitment

SCORE: 49

RANK: 16

Strategy Summary

Perhaps the most widely recognized economic development strategy is business recruitment, which is the act of proactively soliciting existing businesses located out-of-region to expand or relocate into a community.

Business recruitment can be very advantageous for local communities desiring to establish new jobs, focus on family wage jobs, expand the local tax base—and generally enhance community vitality.

However, business recruitment can have drawbacks. Communities that do not have the desire or infrastructure capacity for growth may view business recruitment negatively.

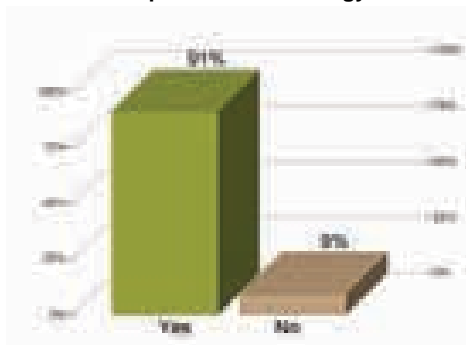
Communities that rely on business recruitment as a substantial component of their economic development strategy should view their effort as a long-term endeavor. Frequently, communities can go months (even years) without tangible results. This does not necessarily mean their efforts are poorly planned or executed. The fact is, there are far more communities chasing new businesses than there are businesses looking for new communities.

Business recruitment activity can also be costly. Advertising, public relations, attendance at industry trade shows, website development and maintenance, and informational and promotional materials are expensive.

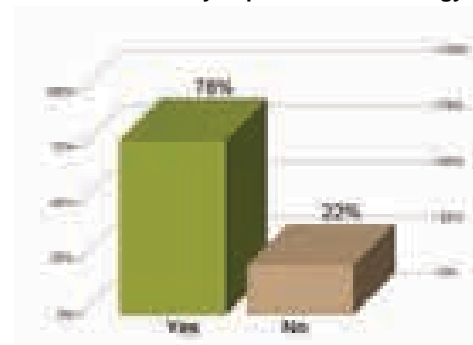
Voice of the Community Survey Results

During the Voice of the Community Meeting the community at large was asked to weigh in on 1) whether or not they wanted to see Craighead County implement this strategy and 2) whether or not they believed Craighead County could successfully implement it. Below is a summary of community responses:

Would you like to see Craighead County implement this strategy?



Do you believe that Craighead County can successfully implement this strategy?



Objectives of Strategy Implementation

In Craighead County, we realize that we have different needs for Business Recruitment than others. While luring a large manufacturer is certainly appealing, the small size of our communities outside of Jonesboro makes this a difficult task. However, with the growth we're seeing in our area, we want to be ready for industrial development, especially smaller manufacturers or those businesses who support industry throughout the region. To do so, we will inventory available lands in our county to pinpoint the optimal places for development.

Findings from the Key Success Factor Analysis

There are many pluses to a Business Recruitment strategy for Craighead County, especially if pursued on a small scale. We want to protect the quality of life our residents enjoy, while expanding the opportunities they have for employment. Our location, infrastructure assets and community support for this strategy are strong. We also have wonderful resources through the Delta Center of ASU and Jonesboro Regional Chamber of Commerce that include expertise in recruitment practices. Locally, we need to identify areas where industrial development should occur and prepare sites for that use. We also need assistance with marketing, and we will again form partnerships with other entities to better promote ourselves to take advantage of business opportunities.

Key Success Factor Report - Business Recruitment

STRENGTHS TO BUILD UPON	
Major Comparative Advantages	Slight Comparative Advantages
Proximity and access to markets Local government support	Access to large-scale capital Proximity to scheduled air service Ability to compete in a global market Availability of land for business prospects Strong community support Availability of local infrastructure
CHALLENGES TO OVERCOME	
Slight Comparative Disadvantages	Major Comparative Disadvantages
Dedicated local financial resources for staffing recruiters Capable, experienced economic development professionals Support from local businesses	Sophisticated use of the internet for marketing Availability of local buildings

Business Retention & Expansion





Business Retention & Expansion

SCORE: 54

RANK: 13

Strategy Summary

It is widely agreed by most economic development professionals that opportunities for job retention and job expansion with existing companies exceed the number of opportunities for recruiting new businesses to their communities.

Communities can employ a variety of approaches to foster the expansion of existing companies. One of these methods is to conduct a Business Retention & Expansion (BR&E) program. The BR&E approach utilizes a systematic outreach to existing companies to identify their needs, challenges and opportunities. Several programs are available that can be adapted for the specific needs of a particular community.

Benefits of the BR&E approach include:

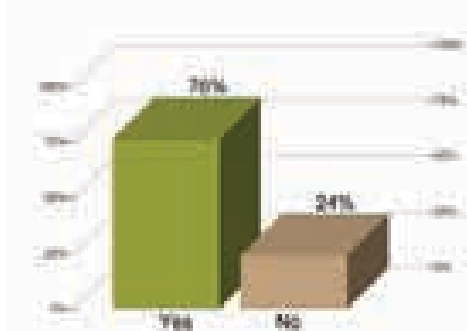
- Identifying opportunities to encourage the expansion of new companies;
- Identifying opportunities to avert pending job losses or business closures;
- Ability to take a community-wide approach to addressing business needs;
- A systematic way to collect information;
- Ability to immediately identify solutions for businesses;
- Opportunity to engage civic groups or volunteers to partner in the work;
- Building good public relations for municipalities and economic development organizations;
- and
- Identifying vendor and subcontractor business networking opportunities.

By meeting the needs of existing businesses, the stage is also better set for successful business recruitment efforts. Potential new businesses to a new community may investigate the satisfaction of existing businesses, and base a portion of their business location decision on such satisfaction levels.

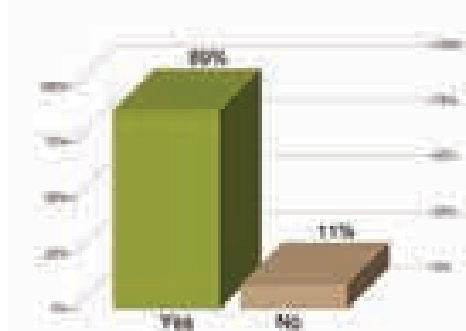
Voice of the Community Survey Results

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Do you believe that Craighead County can successfully implement this strategy?



Would you like to see Craighead County implement this strategy?



Objectives of Strategy Implementation

There is a well-organized and successful Business Retention & Expansion program already in place in Craighead County through the Jonesboro Regional Chamber of Commerce. Each of the 96 industrial companies are visited on a rotational basis. There is, however, a need to expand this program countywide, as well as to include businesses that may not be on the radar. Chamber staff will work closely with each mayor to identify a business response team and provide outreach training. Businesses will be identified locally and regular visits established. Follow-up will be coordinated by the mayors and the Chamber staff to ensure timely response.

Findings from the Key Success Factor Analysis

Key Success Factors are mostly strong for a Business Retention & Expansion strategy. We have excellent educational resources, access to financing, savvy local business owners, land and infrastructure, and strong support from the community. While our weaknesses relate to the expertise needed to conduct such a program, we do have access to experts. In order to develop this strategy, we need to strengthen our partnership with the Chamber and the Delta Center to capitalize on the programs that are available. More outreach is needed to educate our small business owners about what is available and encourage them to expand.

Key Success Factor Report - Business Retention and Expansion

STRENGTHS TO BUILD UPON	
Major Comparative Advantages	Slight Comparative Advantages
Support from local education professionals at all levels	Access to small business financing Ability to compete in a global market Availability of land for business prospects Local pro-business climate Availability of local infrastructure
CHALLENGES TO OVERCOME	
Slight Comparative Disadvantages	Major Comparative Disadvantages
Capable, experienced economic development professionals Strong relations between economic development organization and local businesses	Availability of local buildings

Education Development





Education Development

SCORE: 85

RANK: 2

Strategy Summary

The provision of educational services, especially in rural communities, comprises a significant portion of the overall economy of a community. Communities that are home to community colleges, and especially four-year higher education institutions, benefit from an even higher percentage of economic impact derived from provision of educational services.

More and more, the ability to derive a family-wage is dependent upon educational attainment. As such, counties, states and regions that have a more educated population tend to compete better in the 21st century marketplace.

The combination of these two dynamics may inspire a community to develop an Education Development Strategy.

By developing a community development—and a political—strategy to create or enhance provision of educational services at all levels, communities can derive economic benefit. Wages associated with the delivery of educational services tend to meet family-wage levels.

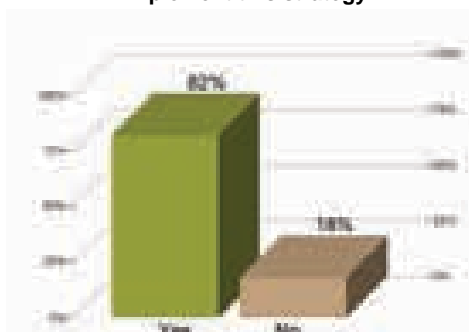
Such a strategy might simply entail the augmentation or expansion of existing post-secondary educational services. Alternatively, a strategy could be more ambitious such as the creation of an institute dedicated to researching and resolving emerging issues or perhaps the establishment of a four-year educational institution.

Communities desiring to pursue an Education Development Strategy must be cognizant of the budget dynamics and emerging educational trends associated with the educational institution they are trying to attract/expand.

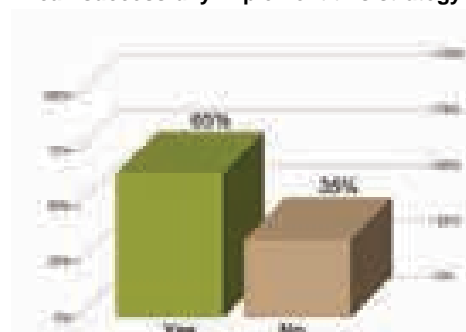
Voice of the Community Survey Results

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Would you like to see Craighead County implement this strategy?



Do you believe that Craighead County can successfully implement this strategy?



Objectives of Strategy Implementation

Craighead County is home to one of the largest and fastest growing universities in the mid-south: Arkansas State University. This resource is one of the key factors in our continued progress in the region. However, we also have other educational institutions that are responsible for our success. Our K-12 school districts are performing at a very high level, a standard that we want to sustain.

Findings from the Key Success Factor Analysis

As demonstrated by our Key Success Factor scores, Education Development is a very logical strategy for us to pursue. We are fortunate to have an abundance of progressive educational leaders at every level. Support for our educational facilities is also quite strong. For us, this strategy will focus on maintaining our superlative education system and ensuring that we are accommodating the growth we're experiencing.

Key Success Factor Report - Education Development

STRENGTHS TO BUILD UPON	
Major Comparative Advantages	Slight Comparative Advantages
Expandable educational institution Land/Buildings/Campus for education development Local government support	Advantageous location for government or education expansion
CHALLENGES TO OVERCOME	
Slight Comparative Disadvantages	Major Comparative Disadvantages
No Entries	No Entries

Infrastructure Development





Infrastructure Development

SCORE: 63

RANK: 11

Strategy Summary

The term infrastructure describes all of the basic utilities and public services needed by communities and businesses. Infrastructure includes, but is not limited to, power, water, sewer, storm sewer, street/roads, and telecommunications.

Although “infrastructure development” is an economic development strategy, it is typically viewed of a means-to-an-end in terms of providing the necessary input for other strategies to be successful.

Infrastructure development is considered an economic development strategy in-and-of-itself in that it is a long-term commitment toward the betterment of communities and the businesses that they support.

Communities need to examine the infrastructure requirements both of their current residents, as well as their projection of future residential, commercial, and industrial demands.

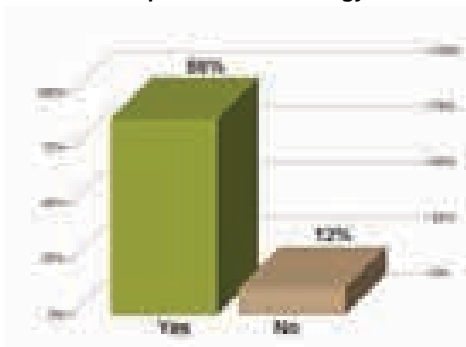
The federal government, and most state governments, provide long-term, low-interest debt financing to advance eligible infrastructure projects. At times, particularly when immediate job creation opportunities arise, grant funding is available for infrastructure development.

Communities pursuing an infrastructure development strategy should strategically assess their needs, and engineer solutions consistent with long-term projections.

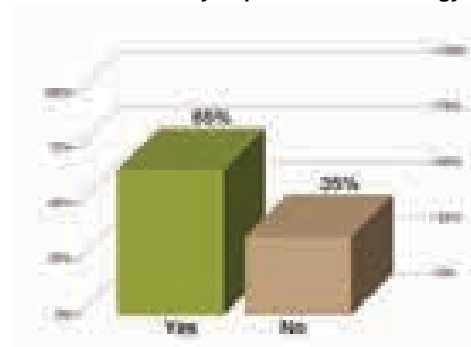
Voice of the Community Survey Results

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Do you believe that Craighead County can successfully implement this strategy?



Objectives of Strategy Implementation

With the growth we are experiencing in Craighead County, our infrastructure is stretched to capacity. This is especially true of our transportation network. Because of the interconnected relationship of streets and highways, it will be important for us to develop partners throughout the region to advance priority transportation projects. This will be a primary focus for our Infrastructure Development strategy.

Findings from the Key Success Factor Analysis

Infrastructure projects are critical to our ongoing success and growth. Our communities have been very supportive in recent years when presented with a solid, logical plan for improvements. Yet, there are some needs that go beyond the borders of our cities and county. For these large-scale projects—especially those related to transportation—we will need to develop partnerships with our neighbors in the region. Opportunities for funding exist if we work together.

Key Success Factor Report - Infrastructure Development

STRENGTHS TO BUILD UPON	
Major Comparative Advantages	Slight Comparative Advantages
Community support for needed infrastructure rate increases	Accurate, long-term analysis of infrastructure needs and costs
CHALLENGES TO OVERCOME	
Slight Comparative Disadvantages	Major Comparative Disadvantages
Team approach to infrastructure finance	No Entries

Pass-through Visitor Services





Pass-Through Visitor Services

SCORE: 85

RANK: 1

Strategy Summary

Depending on a community's proximity to major interstates, highways, scenic byways, and other significant travel routes, communities can enjoy the benefits of non-destination visitor expenditures.

Travel expenditures can be categorized as destination travel expenditures or pass-through travel expenditures. Unlike destination travel, pass-through travel simply represents the activity that a traveler conducts on the way to their destination. These expenditures are typically fuel, meals, and sometimes lodging.

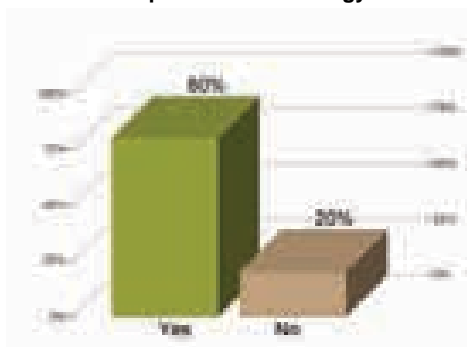
Generally, these expenditures happen regardless of efforts made by local communities. Certain targeted efforts, however, can have a modest impact on pass-through visitor expenditure patterns:

- Signage on travel routes (freeways, highways, etc.)
- Community entrance beautification efforts
- Low-frequency AM Radio transmitters
- Hospitality training educating front-line workers about local visitor destinations

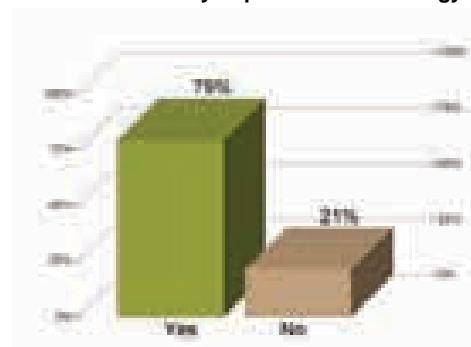
Voice of the Community Survey Results

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Would you like to see Craighead County implement this strategy?



Do you believe that Craighead County can successfully implement this strategy?



Objectives of Strategy Implementation

Tourism is an industry we would like to expand in Craighead County. Although we have attractions that bring people to our area, we want to add opportunities for them to stay and play. East Arkansas has a great deal to offer to any visitor. As tourists travel from one place to another, we want them to stop in our communities and see what we have to offer.

In order to make this happen, we first need to develop places for them to stay. We'll examine the best ways to do this, including overnight RV campgrounds. Our plans to develop Bono Lake are also in the works, and we want to make this a destination for travelers.

As our tourism industry grows, we will expand this strategy to create more products, such as a convention center, experience-based tourism projects and agri-tourism attractions. These are long-term initiatives that will require careful planning. In order to make it all work, we'll have to develop funding streams for marketing and promotions, as well as tie into the larger regional tourism industry that is ramping up in Eastern Arkansas.

Findings from the Key Success Factor Analysis

We have ample opportunity to expand our tourism industry in Craighead County. Our location is superior, thanks to the many major highways that crisscross our county. We've also set up good systems to receive local funding from visitors through sales tax initiatives. However, most of our revenues have gone to infrastructure improvement projects. We may need to consider ways to generate funding for marketing, promotions and tourism product development.

Key Success Factor Report - Pass-through Visitor Services

STRENGTHS TO BUILD UPON	
Major Comparative Advantages	Slight Comparative Advantages
Proximity to travel routes	Local focus on revenues from visitors
CHALLENGES TO OVERCOME	
Slight Comparative Disadvantages	Major Comparative Disadvantages
No Entries	No Entries

Value-added Agriculture





Value-added Agriculture

SCORE: 78

RANK: 4

Strategy Summary

Counties—and frequently clusters of counties—may produce an inordinate amount of one or more agricultural products based upon competitive advantages such as soil types, climate, and elevation.

If sufficient volumes of individual raw materials are produced, communities may have an opportunity to “add value” to the raw commodities through processing. Examples include producing french fries from potatoes, sugar from sugar beets/sugar cane, steaks from cattle, and wine from grapes.

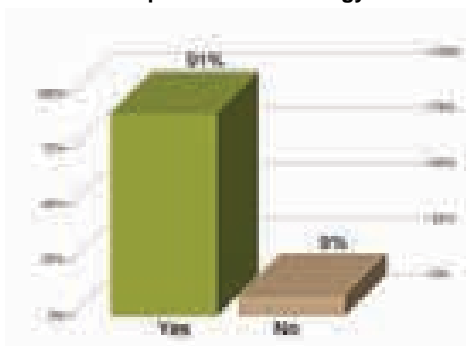
Advantages from value-added agricultural business include retaining profits and job-creation opportunities locally, providing jobs consistent with skill levels of the local labor force, and reinforcing the culture and economy of local communities.

Drawbacks from a value-added agriculture strategy typically include a high demand on local utilities (typically water, sewer, and power), frequently below-to-average wage levels, and sometimes undesirable wastewater and air emissions.

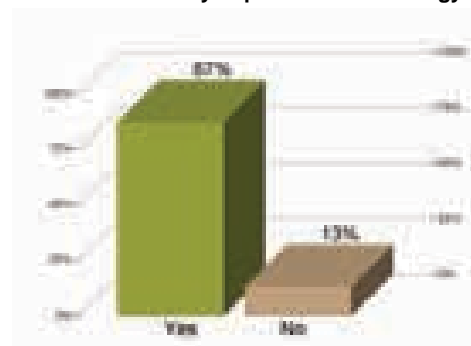
Voice of the Community Survey Results

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Would you like to see Craighead County implement this strategy?



Do you believe that Craighead County can successfully implement this strategy?



Objectives of Strategy Implementation

Agricultural development is all around us. Craighead County, along with the rest of the East Arkansas Delta, is world renowned for the quality of commodities grown here. Value-added Agriculture is a strategy we’ve been focusing on for years, and it has paid off. We have a number of international companies located in our county that utilize our crops for their products.

This strategy will build on what we've already done. We'll consider at new products, like peanuts and biofuel, to see what possibilities exist. Furthermore, we'll work closely with the Business Cultivation Committee to develop local businesses that utilize the commodities we grow.

Findings from the Key Success Factor Analysis

Our Key Success Factors demonstrate our proven ability to implement a Value-added Agriculture strategy. We have abundant commodities and excellent market access. Our agri-businesses are very knowledgeable and experienced. Land and infrastructure are available for development and expansion in many areas of the county. There is very little that we will need to work on to advance this strategy except to stay on course and seek new opportunities.

Key Success Factor Report - Value-added Agriculture

STRENGTHS TO BUILD UPON	
Major Comparative Advantages	Slight Comparative Advantages
Proximity to large volumes of agricultural commodities Proximity and access to markets	Access to large-scale capital Ability to successfully market materials Availability of land for business prospects Availability of local infrastructure
CHALLENGES TO OVERCOME	
Slight Comparative Disadvantages	Major Comparative Disadvantages
Excess water and sewer infrastructure capacity	Availability of local buildings

Section 4:

Quality-of-Life Initiatives

Quality-of-life initiatives

Summary

Although *Quality-of-life Initiatives* are not regarded as Building Communities strategies in traditional economic development strategic planning, the broadening of objectives from “economic development” to “quality-of-life” brings a new set of considerations for communities.

Quality-of-life Initiatives have been added to the traditional Building Communities approach and include the additional *Key Success Factors* and *Essential Action Steps* that this broader approach requires.

These initiatives are included, in part, to surface considerations encompassed in the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Livability Principles (see table above).

Quality-of-life Initiatives differ from the traditional 25 strategies in that they encompass a critical set of disciplines and values (housing, transportation, and environmental quality). Discussions related to *Quality-of-life Initiatives* will be widely divergent from one community to the next, based upon the specific interests and opportunities of the communities themselves.

These broader considerations will help each community identify issues, challenges, opportunities, and potential development projects that can be supported by programs aimed at improving quality of life, as well as those that promote community and economic development.

Housing and Urban Development’s Livability Principles	
Provide more transportation choices	Develop safe, reliable, and economical transportation choices to decrease household transportation costs, reduce our nation’s dependence on foreign oil, improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and promote public health.
Promote equitable, affordable housing	Expand location- and energy-efficient housing choices for people of all ages, incomes, races, and ethnicities to increase mobility and lower the combined cost of housing and transportation.
Enhance economic competitiveness	Improve economic competitiveness through reliable and timely access to employment centers, educational opportunities, services and other basic needs of workers, as well as expanded business access to markets.
Support existing communities	Target federal funding toward existing communities—through strategies like transit oriented, mixed-use development, and land recycling—to increase community revitalization and the efficiency of public works investments and safeguard rural landscapes.
Coordinate and leverage federal policies and investment	Align federal policies and funding to remove barriers to collaboration, leverage funding, and increase the accountability and effectiveness of all levels of government to plan for future growth, including making smart energy choices such as locally generated renewable energy.
Value communities and neighborhoods	Enhance the unique characteristics of all communities by investing in healthy, safe, and walkable neighborhoods—rural, urban, or suburban.

Example Projects and Initiatives

- New or expanded transit services connecting housing to jobs and services
- Affordable housing development strategically situated to minimize traditional transportation time and costs
- Mixed-use development projects combining housing, services, and work opportunities
- Proactive zoning to facilitate growth
- Health and fitness walking path systems/promotional campaigns urging pedestrian and bicycle transportation activity
- Sustainable local foods initiatives Forest stewardship initiatives

- Energy conservation activities
- Establishment of arts and crafts coops
- Green jobs initiatives
- Strategic use of treated wastewater
- Development of Parks and Recreational Facilities

Potential Advantages to Implementing these Initiatives

- Improve local quality of life
- Long-term perspective on infrastructure investments
- Reduction of traffic congestion
- Upgrading historically blighted areas
- Air quality improvement
- Short-term job creation from development projects
- Forest sustainability
- Support for local farmers and growers
- Engagement of cross-section of local population focused on sustainability
- Support for other strategies related to community livability

Potential Drawbacks to Implementing these Initiatives

- Effort-to-visible-benefit ratio sometimes challenging
- Perception that local resources are being redirected to benign initiatives

Brief Overview of Selected Initiatives

Craighead County thoroughly evaluated the Quality-of-life Initiatives and found them to be in line with what we want for our community. Additionally, the community input received during the Voice of the Community session was substantially focused on these quality-of-life initiatives.

Both the Steering Committee and the community participants acknowledged that in order to achieve our vision for Craighead County, the focus needs to be on more than just the economy. Many issues were brought up for discussion and consideration during Plan Week. There were several topics dealing with support for our youth, such as improved academic support through tutoring and after-school programs, as well as the development of a facility to take care of foster children. A need for more regional services that are currently available only in Little Rock was also discussed. Beautification and preservation of greenspace were two items that could be developed further in the future.

Four initiatives were selected for implementation in this plan. These are described below:

Bicycle & Pedestrian Facilities

There is a growing interest in cycling and walking in Craighead County. In Jonesboro, new projects are adding bike paths, walking trails and sidewalks that connect throughout the community. We want to build on that work and extend these systems throughout the county. We'll start by identifying where the paths are needed and wanted, working with each community's leaders to develop a plan.

Communications

There is a lot happening in Craighead County, and we need to get the word out. For this initiative, we'll develop a campaign to inform and educate the public about our communities, our goals and our progress. We'll consider several possibilities, including Quorum Court meetings, websites, newsletters, public service announcements and other tools to involve more people in projects and public discussions.

Local, Healthy Foods

Even though our county and region grows an astronomical amount of crops, there are many people who have difficulty accessing healthy food. Obesity and the health risks associated with it are serious problems in Eastern Arkansas. We can reverse these negative trends by giving our citizens healthier options through efforts like community gardens and farmers' markets.

Sports Complex Facilities

In Brookland, we're seeing our population and school enrollment grow. This has put pressure on our recreational facilities. In order to accommodate this surge in demand, we need to develop a new Sports Complex Facility for our youth programs. We'll work with our EAST Lab to develop conceptual designs and then promote this project to the community.

Key Considerations

With ever-increasing focus and attention being placed on livability and environmental issues, communities that proactively address quality-of-life projects are riding a popular wave. State and federal agencies, as well as foundations, are redirecting funding and technical resources toward these initiatives.

Quality-of-life initiatives may be viewed by traditional community and (especially) business development activists as peripheral to the essential development activity needed by the community. Alternatively, many communities advance these initiatives as a central cornerstone to their economic development program.

Section 5:

Community Organizer Results

Community Organizer Results

Overview

Recognizing that the successful implementation of an economic development strategic plan takes more than simply selecting the right strategies, Building Communities presents the Community Organizer tool. This tool helps Steering Committee members to ask and answer the right questions with respect to the identification of the current and desired levels of capacity to implement business and community development strategies. The Craighead County Steering Committee met to consider both the business development and community development approaches to the Community Organizer tool.

The tool presents a series of scenarios that describe alternate levels of capacity with respect to seven elements relevant to business development and community development. The Steering Committee was asked to consider each scenario and to reach a consensus about which one best describes the current capacity of their community. Each of the members were also asked to identify their desired level of capacity. The tables below present the results of the Community Organizer tool for Business and Community Development Capacities.

Business Development Capacity Report

ELEMENT	SCENARIO SCORES										ASSESSED CAPACITY	PRESCRIBED CAPACITY
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J		
Business Development Strategy	7	7	3	7	—	—	—	—	—	—	24 / 37	37 / 37
Local Staff and Team Development	0	0	7	0	0	—	—	—	—	—	7 / 37	37 / 37
Industrial Land and Infrastructure	0	1	3	5	2	0	3	8	2	2	26 / 68	68 / 68
Targeted Industries	2	2	0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4 / 19	19 / 19
Marketing	0	0	0	0	2	—	—	—	—	—	2 / 33	33 / 33
Prospect and Lead Management	3	0	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	6 / 27	27 / 27
Closing the Deal	0	4	6	3	2	—	—	—	—	—	15 / 26	26 / 26
TOTAL POINTS											84 / 247	247 / 247

Community Development Capacity Report

ELEMENT	SCENARIO SCORES					ASSESSED CAPACITY	PRESCRIBED CAPACITY
	A	B	C	D	E		
Strategic Plan/Vision	10	3	2	7	0	22 / 32	32 / 32
Project and Issue Development	2	2	1	3	2	10 / 16	16 / 16
Organizational Capacity	2	0	0	3	1	6 / 38	38 / 38
Staffing	8	1	0	1	—	10 / 23	23 / 23
Civic Volunteerism	3	0	—	—	—	3 / 8	8 / 8
Community Attitude	3	3	—	—	—	6 / 13	13 / 13
Maintaining Community as the Goal	0	0	—	—	—	0 / 9	9 / 9
TOTAL POINTS						57 / 139	139 / 139

The *Community Organizer Assessment* not only presents a description of the current level of capacity, but also prescribes the steps necessary in order for the county to achieve its desired level of business and community development capacity.

Business Development Capacity

The information below itemizes the specific “capacity building action steps” needed in order for the community to reach its desired level of capacity for both business development and community development activities.

1 - Business Development Strategy

ASSESSED SCORE: **24 / 37**

PRESCRIBED SCORE: **37 / 37**

Definition

A business development strategy, which can be viewed as a subset of a community and economic development strategy, should be very clear in its scope. In addition to answering the question “What types of business development activities should we engage in?”, the strategy should be equally clear in identifying “What business development activities are beyond the scope of our community?” That is, many communities, due to limitations in factors such as labor force, proximity to markets, and available infrastructure, ought to conclude that the recruitment of large-scale business development opportunities is beyond the realistic grasp of the community.

Business development strategies should also assess the desirability of business growth for a community. Many urban and suburban cities experienced such dramatic growth in the 1990s that they became very selective about new job creating possibilities. Times of economic recession cause communities to rethink these policies.

Often overlooked, and frequently most important, are activities to support existing businesses within a community. In the end, a large percentage of jobs created in any community will come from the expansion of existing businesses. Additionally, communities can often offset the threat of curtailment of business operations with proactive business retention efforts.

Communities must also assess the business development climate that they offer. What is the condition of the state and national economy? How competitive is the state’s business climate? How streamlined is the community’s regulatory process for businesses?

1a. Relationship with Community’s Strategic Plan

Capacity achieved. No further action necessary at this time.

1b. Desirability of Business Development

- ☐ Analyze the support for business development activities in the community, hold an open dialogue on the subject, and document strong levels of support.

1c. Appropriateness of Business Development

- ☐ Identify and advance a selection of business development strategies/activities based upon the key business development success factors available.
- ☐ While being mindful of any invitations, conduct a broad array of business development activities based upon relative strengths of the community.

1d. A Foundation of Support for Existing Businesses

- ☐ Proactively engage existing business community in business development activities; reinforce the symbiotic relationship between new and prospective businesses.

2 - Local Staff and Team Development

ASSESSED SCORE: 7 / 37	PRESCRIBED SCORE: 37 / 37
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Definition

Similar to the community development capacity requirements, business development requires strong staffing, organization, and volunteerism to succeed. Communities must be careful not to assume that simply because they have broader community development organizations in place (that advocate for community livability, tourism development, downtown development, historic preservation, arts and culture, and/or other priorities), that they have a business development organization. Business development advocacy can be coordinated through an organization with broader purposes, but in order to be effective, the specific skills and focus of business development cannot be lost.

2a. Focused Business Development Organization

- ☐ Ensure that most of the community's business development priorities are being pursued by one or more organization(s) even if such business development activities are subordinated to community development.
- ☐ Ensure that business development priorities are not subordinated to community development priorities by the respective organization(s) advancing that such activity.
- ☐ Ensure that all business development priorities are specifically being advance by one or more organization(s).
- ☐ Ensure that the business development organization has long-term staying power in terms of its organization and budgeting.

2b. Stability of Business Development Organization

- ☐ Recognize that between four and ten percent of the time of the staff and volunteers is dedication toward budgeting and fundraising.
- ☐ Ensure that no more than four percent of the time of the staff and volunteers is committed toward budgeting and fundraising.

2c. Frequency of Meetings

Capacity achieved. No further action necessary at this time.

2d. Business Development Staff

- ☐ Higher or contract for a business development staff person.
- ☐ Recognize that the lack of tenure limits the capability of the existing business development staff person.
- ☐ Recognize that the community has a capable lead economic development person but the position is hampered by the lack of administrative support.
- ☐ Ensure that the organization not only has a capable staff person, but also has adequate administrative support.

2e. Business Development Training

- ☐ Provide limited training to economic professionals and volunteers.
- ☐ Ensure access and commitment to economic development training for staff.
- ☐ Ensure not only that the lead economic development professional has adequate training, but also that board members are exposed to economic development principals and practices.

3 - Industrial Land and Infrastructure

ASSESSED SCORE: 26 / 68	PRESCRIBED SCORE: 68 / 68
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Definition

Many communities get geared up to conduct business development—and particularly business recruitment—activities without first conducting an objective analysis of the existing availability of land and infrastructure.

Frequently, communities confuse the availability of land “zoned industrial” with the true availability of such land for business expansion and business recruitment endeavors. Simply because land exists does not mean that it is for sale. It does not mean that it is for sale at a competitive price. It does not mean that the land is necessarily served by infrastructure. It does not mean that the land is served by specialized infrastructure requirements of a particular industry. And it does not mean that the land is clear from environmental constraints.

Indeed, the availability of land, or lack thereof, that is truly available, appropriate, and competitive for business development uses becomes a huge opportunity or constraint for a community.

Issues of land ownership must also be considered. Although the community may think it has land available, what really happens when the existing expanding business or the industrial prospect comes seriously knocking on the door? Will the price of the land suddenly escalate? Is the landowner truly motivated to sell? Are they legally empowered to sell?

Communities may wish to consider the public ownership of industrial land to ensure that the public interest, rather than an individual or corporation’s private interest, dominates the motivations of a future transaction.

Perhaps this public ownership is in place through a port, county, city, or other public entity. Even if the land is publicly owned, does the public body have a strategy for its ultimate use?

3a. Availability of Industrially-Zoned Land

- ☐ Ensure that the community has adequate industrially zoned land.

3b. Potential for Land

- ☐ Commit to the regulatory and development processes necessary in order to make industrial land available.

3c. Land Ownership

- ☐ Ensure that the community has control over one or more parcels of land that can be immediately made available for development.
- ☐ Ensure that publicly-controlled industrial land is competitively priced.

3d. Environmental Considerations

- ☐ Conduct an environmental assessment and conclude that industrial land has no environmental limitations.

3e. Land Price

- ☐ Ensure that the available industrial land is competitively priced.

3f. Availability of Buildings

- ☐ Inventory existing industrial (and perhaps commercial) buildings.
- ☐ Identify existing industrial and/or commercial buildings that are generally desirable and competitive for developing.
- ☐ Document existing buildings that are highly competitive for business development opportunities.
- ☐ Not only document the availability of competitive industrial buildings, but also outline the expandability of such buildings.

3g. Basic Infrastructure

- ☐ Conduct the necessary planning and engineering to ensure that comprehensive, competitive basic infrastructure is available for business development priorities.
- ☐ Document how available basic industry is already available for the majority of business. development opportunities

3h. Access Infrastructure

- ☐ Ensure the availability and document scheduled air service and/or barging services within 30 minutes of the community.

3i. Special Infrastructure

- ☐ Ensure that availability of all of the needed specialized infrastructure based upon the business development priorities being selected.

3j. Land/Target Compatibility

- ☐ Complete specialized activities ensuring that all of the unique land requirements associated with business development activities can be met by the community.

4 - Targeted Industries

ASSESSED SCORE: 4 / 19	PRESCRIBED SCORE: 19 / 19
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Definition

Similar to communities being focused on specific objectives within the context of a strategic plan, communities must also have a focus in their business development activities in order to be successful.

The concept of “targeted industries” is the most often used procedure to identify, on a selective basis, the types of industry that are consistent with the development and recruitment desires of a particular community.

Typically, businesses are targeted based on the type of industry they represent utilizing the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). This system replaced the U.S. Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) system. There are additional methods for targeting industries that can be done either in addition to, or in replacement of, the industry selection process. Communities may target industries based upon a geographic region or based upon other factors such as the size of typical companies.

Communities may wish to begin their Targeted Industry Analysis by analyzing the types of companies that could locate in their community to produce products that are typically imported into their community. That is, they can substitute the local manufacturing of goods and services that have historically been imported into the community. This is a process known as “import substitution.”

Still other communities may wish to conduct their Targeted Industry Analysis to be consistent with other objectives and priorities within a community. For example, communities that have historic strength—or current strategies—to expand the visitor industry, may wish to recruit businesses consistent with this focus.

Targeted Industry Analysis is a very sophisticated field, and communities can initiate fairly complex strategies and contract with specialized consultants to conduct such industry targeting.

4a. Import Substitution

- ☐ Conduct a full-scale import substitution analysis.

4b. Connection with Strategic Plan

- ☐ Ensure a general desirability for specific business development activities—and then engage in such activities.

4c. Targeted Industry Analysis

- ☐ Complete an informal target industry analysis.
- ☐ Engage a qualified consulting firm to develop a target industry analysis specific to the community.
- ☐ Ensure that the target industry analysis yields a series of businesses to be recruited.
- ☐ Ensure that current connect information exists for targeted businesses.
- ☐ Ensure that the target industry analysis provides sufficient background information about targeted businesses that the community has a “running start” with recruitment activities.

5 - Marketing

ASSESSED SCORE: 2 / 33	PRESCRIBED SCORE: 33 / 33
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Definition

Once the business development strategy is in place, a local development team is poised, land and infrastructure is ready, and some level of Targeted Industry Analysis has been completed, the community is only then prepared to conduct specific business development marketing activities.

The sequential nature of the elements of business development capacity must be recognized. Conducting marketing activities without land to be offered is a waste of resources. Conducting a marketing strategy without some form of targeting, or market segregation, can be very inefficient—if not completely unproductive.

The community needs to take a holistic, sophisticated approach to marketing techniques including direct mail, industry trade shows, web sites, cold calling, alliances with site selectors, and other methods.

Finally, communities may wish to conduct business development—and, in particular, business recruitment—activities in concert with other communities and counties in their region. By conducting a regional approach, costs can be shared, and the possibility of attracting a company to the region increases.

5a. Marketing Track Record

- ☐ Research and document past business recruitment marketing efforts.
- ☐ Build upon past, albeit mixed, results of business marketing efforts.
- ☐ Build upon recent successes in business marketing to launch continued successful efforts.

5b. Professional Marketing Assistance

- ☐ Engage a professional business development marketing firm.
- ☐ Identify and articulate specific business development marketing techniques and outcomes to be initiated.
- ☐ Collaborate with a business marketing consultant to ensure success.

5c. Diversification of Marketing Techniques

- ☐ Ensure that at least two business development marketing techniques are being deployed.

5d. Financial Resources

- ☐ Dedicate at least \$50,000 cash toward business marketing efforts on an annual basis.

5e. Use of the Internet

- ☐ Provide a modest amount of business development information on the community website.
- ☐ Post a complete website generally providing 100% of the relevant business development information online.
- ☐ Create a client-specific business development reporting system allowing business development prospects to download relevant community-based reports.

6 - Prospect and Lead Management

ASSESSED SCORE: 6 / 27	PRESCRIBED SCORE: 27 / 27
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Definition

All of the activities thus far in this business development capacity assessment tool are designed to ultimately generate business development leads or prospects (these terms are used interchangeably here, although prospects can refer to a more developed stage of relationship between a community and a business).

Businesses can take two years—or more—to make a business location decision after they have made preliminary contacts with cities and states for site information. Generally, however, this process takes between six and twelve months. Regardless of the duration of this period, communities must be prepared to address each and every concern and need of a prospect.

Business development—and particularly business recruitment—is a process of elimination. Companies come to their ultimate site decision through a process of eliminating other communities that have one or more significant variances from the ideal conditions being sought by the company. Given this, communities must manage prospects by addressing each and every need.

Prospect management requires a very steady, professional approach to businesses. The combination of a strong network of civic advocates and, especially, a well-trained business development professional maximizes the likelihood of business development success.

6a. Community Profile

- ☐ Collect information about the community that has been generated by government or other organizations; assemble information in a meaningful way.
- ☐ Complete a “hard copy” community profile that has a comprehensive and current display of relevant community and business development information.
- ☐ Ensure that all of the relevant business development information is readily available online.

6b. A Professional Community Response

- ☐ Assess the availability of stem and resources to develop and submit somewhat comprehensive responses to business development inquiries.
- ☐ Assemble a business development team that possesses the knowledge and skills necessary to professionally respond to business development inquiries; make business development responses a priority.
- ☐ Formalize the community's business response team and ensure that adequate training and resources are available for professional responses.

6c. Availability to Travel

- ☐ Create a standing business development account and resource team that are immediately available for proactive business recruitment.

7 - Closing the Deal

ASSESSED SCORE: 15 / 26	PRESCRIBED SCORE: 26 / 26
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Definition

All of the prior steps in this business development capacity assessment mean virtually nothing if the community is not capable of “closing the deal.” Generally, closing the deal is the process of eliminating any remaining uncertainties in the minds of the company decision makers. Almost always, these details—as well as the overall commitment by all parties (the company, the community, the state, and possibly other entities)—are formalized in a contract or memorandum of understanding.

Communities, therefore, have to be willing to put their commitment in writing. Both the company and the community may have to back up their commitment with potential penalties in the event that either party does not perform. Typically, performance from a community would be the guarantee of the delivery of land, infrastructure, and local incentives. Communities, and particularly the State, typically require a guarantee by the company to create the jobs negotiated in the site location process.

It is typical—and most preferable from the State's perspective—for the topic of incentives to be seriously discussed late in the site location process. Companies that insist upon detailed incentive commitments early in the process may have the importance of incentives out of balance with respect to other site location factors (access to markets, cost of labor, etc.). Nonetheless, incentives of some form almost always become a required provision of the memorandum of understanding.

7a. Deal Making Experience

- ☐ Document lessons learned from at least one “near miss” business development opportunity.
- ☐ Build on past success of closing successful business development deals.

7b. Expertise with Incentives

- ☐ Recognize the depth of understanding of incentives and ability to “package the deal” in concert with state and federal partners.

7c. A Winning Attitude

Capacity achieved. No further action necessary at this time.

7d. Community Sophistication

- ☐ Recognize capability of in-house attorney with expertise in negotiating business development deals.

7e. Project/Contract Monitoring

- ☐ Demonstrate technical competence to put a follow-up/compliance system in place to ensure business development agreements are in compliance.
- ☐ Develop a compliance document/system to ensure legal obligations are met.

Community Development Capacity

1 - Strategic Plan/Vision

ASSESSED SCORE: 22 / 32	PRESCRIBED SCORE: 32 / 32
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Definition

Communities are in various stages of commitment to a strategic planning process. Some communities have never engaged in such an effort to collectively envision the future and set specific projects in motion to capture that vision. Conversely, some communities not only have a strategic planning process in place, but have engaged in professional strategic planning consultants, widely participated in the development of the plan, reviewed the plan regularly, and have even engaged one or more times in updating their strategic plan.

1a. Existence of Community-wide Strategic Planning Document

Capacity achieved. No further action necessary at this time.

1b. Acceptance of Plan

Capacity achieved. No further action necessary at this time.

1c. Professional Development of Plan

☐ Gain a very high level awareness and acceptance for the specific consultant and methodology.

1d. Use of Strategic Plan

☐ Make widespread and very regular use of economic development strategic plan; recognize plan as an essential guidebook for community and economic development activities.

1e. Plan Updating

☐ Recognize that the existing strategic plan has been updated once.

☐ Recognize that the existing strategic plan has been updated twice.

☐ Recognize that the existing strategic plan has been updated on three or more occasions.

2 - Project and Issue Development

ASSESSED SCORE: 10 / 16	PRESCRIBED SCORE: 16 / 16
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Definition

Typically, a strategic planning process yields an overall vision statement and then a series of goals and objectives related to projects and issues.

For the purposes of this evaluation tool, projects and issues are separated from the strategic planning process.

Ultimately, it is the success, or lack thereof, of a community in advancing projects and issues that reinforces the community's commitment to long-term strategic planning. Communities must see this "pay-off" to reinforce a long-term outlook.

2a. Community Wish List

- ☐ Recognize that an existing “wish list” exists, and that the list is less than two years old.

2b. Identification of Strategic Issues

- ☐ Demonstrate action toward addressing key strategic issues within the community.

2c. Large Project Advocacy

- ☐ Recognize that the community has successfully advanced a relatively large-scale project within the past decade.
- ☐ Recognize that the community has a demonstrated track record of completing large-scale projects.

2d. Coordinating Projects with State and Federal Processes

Capacity achieved. No further action necessary at this time.

2e. Incorporation into Community Facilities Plan

Capacity achieved. No further action necessary at this time.

3 - Organizational Capacity

ASSESSED SCORE: **6 / 38**

PRESCRIBED SCORE: **38 / 38**

Definition

Strategic planning and project identification means very little to a community if it does not have the organizational capacity to carry out the city’s priorities. Although there is not “one correct way” to organize a community to conduct community development activities, there are some basic principles that apply. First of all, the scope of the community development activities needs to be defined. Communities may desire to implement projects and address issues that deal with the following types of community development activities: tourism development, historic preservation, arts and culture development, infrastructure improvements, and community facilities. A community’s priority list may even stretch longer than this.

A community may seek to empower one organization to advance the full gamut of community development priorities. Conversely, a community may wish to have more than one organization focused on specific priorities (a visitor and convention bureau, a downtown development association, a business recruitment organization, etc.). This Continuum is designed so as not to advocate for one form of organizational structure over another, but rather to simply advance the notion that the community must be specific in the priorities that it tends to advance and to empower one or more organizations to successfully advance these priorities.

This process advances, therefore, the following specific principles with respect to a community’s “organizational structure”:

- A community must have one or more organization(s) dedicated to advancing specific priorities identified in the strategic plan.
- If a community has more than one organization serving a community development advocacy role, the organizations must avoid duplication of services and serve to reinforce each other.
- Organizations should have adequate, stable funding and dedicate a majority of their time to reaching stated objectives rather than simply keeping the organization afloat.
- Organizations must meet frequently enough to advance identified priorities.

3a. Connectedness and Focus of Organization(s)

- ☐ Recognize that an existing strategic planning process has yielded projects that are being advanced by one or more organization(s).
- ☐ Identify and assign vast majority of community development priorities to one or more community development organization(s).
- ☐ Ensure that all of the priorities identified in the local strategic planning process are assigned to one or more community development organizations.

3b. Organizational Stability

- ☐ Ensure that a modest sum of funding is dedicated to a portion of the community's community development agenda.
- ☐ Begin a regular budgeting process that, except for severe budgeting shortfalls, commits funding to community and economic development activities.
- ☐ Ensure that a long-term sustainable, adequate funding stream is committed to one or more community development organization(s).

3c. Focus on Business of Community

- ☐ Target a majority of the activities of the community development organization(s) toward priorities identified in the strategic plan.
- ☐ Ensure a complete, holistic approach to how community development is executed through completion of all of the activities identified in the strategic plan through one or more organization(s).

3d. Frequency of Meetings

- ☐ Ensure regular, monthly activity by the community development organization(s) with periodic project-based sub-committee activity.
- ☐ Commit to regular (at least monthly) activity by one or more community development organization(s) with regular sub-committee activity advancing community priorities.

3e. Organizational Board Training

- ☐ Engage in a broad, community-wide initiative to train community volunteers in leadership and project advocacy principals.

4 - Staffing

ASSESSED SCORE:	10 / 23
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PRESCRIBED SCORE:	23 / 23
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Definition

For community development organizations to reach optimal effectiveness, a professional staff person must serve them. Community development organization staffing requires a talented individual (or team of individuals), strong staff support, a connection to organizational objectives, and long-term staff training and development.

4a. Skill Level of Staff Person

- ☐ Recognize that the staff displays excellence in terms of skills, accomplishments, and credentials.

4b. Support Staff

- ☐ Recognize the effectiveness of the staff support.

4c. Staff Focused on Organizational Objectives

- ☐ Recognize that the staff spends between four and ten percent of their time on budgeting and fundraising matters.
- ☐ Recognize and ensure that the staff does not spend more than four percent of his/her time on fundraising and budgeting matters.

4d. Staff Training

- ☐ Provide consistent and comprehensive training to staff.

5 - Civic VolunteerismASSESSSED SCORE: **3 / 8**PRESCRIBED SCORE: **8 / 8****Definition**

Individuals are frequently motivated to commit time to their community because they are willing to give to a greater cause. Volunteers appreciate being a part of a “winning team” and desire to see their community succeed. Successful communities inspire civic volunteerism, and often reward volunteers for their time and service.

5a. Opportunities for Service

- ☐ Recognize that there is widespread opportunity for volunteers to serve on boards, commissions, and ad-hoc project groups.

5b. Celebration of Volunteerism

- ☐ Periodically coordinate opportunities to honor civic volunteerism.
- ☐ Maintain and consider expanding regular events to honor civic volunteerism.

6 - Community AttitudeASSESSSED SCORE: **6 / 13**PRESCRIBED SCORE: **13 / 13****Definition**

Although it is intangible, the attitude of a community is a major factor in the community’s capacity for community development. Like individuals, communities can be either proactive or reactive. They can believe that they are in charge of their destiny or be resigned to the fact that too many issues are uncontrollable.

Success is contagious. Failure is contagious. Communities that have established a track record of envisioning and completing community development projects believe that their next success is imminent. Likewise, communities that have either tried and failed—or have not tried at all—do not sense a control of their destiny. It’s all about attitude.

6a. Proactive vs. Reactive Communities

- ☐ Recognize (either formally or informally) the nucleus of forward-thinking civic volunteers that are able to “carry the day” on certain key projects and initiatives.
- ☐ Recognize that one of the hallmarks of the community is a deep and growing cadre of elected and non-elected individuals that regularly succeed with projects and initiatives.

6b. Viewing the Glass Half-Full

Capacity achieved. No further action necessary at this time.

7 - Maintaining the “Community” as the Goal

ASSESSED SCORE:	0 / 9
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PRESCRIBED SCORE:	9 / 9
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Definition

A community completes a strategic planning exercise. The exercise yields a series of community development projects. Local organizations, equipped with staff and volunteers, focus on the implementation of the strategic projects. How does the community, at that point, view the importance of the projects? Do the projects become of paramount importance over the broader, strategic direction of the community? Or do civic leaders maintain the appropriate perspective of successful projects fitting into the broader community development vision?

Ideally, civic leaders will view their efforts to advance a project in the broader context. Even the chairperson for the largest community development project should view their project as subordinate to the community’s strategic plan.

7a. Depth of Community “Vision” or “Mission Statement”

- ☐ Recognize that a select number of citizens are intimately aware of the community’s strategic plan and mission statement.
- ☐ Keep the community strategic plan and mission statement so visible to a broad array of its citizenry that the mission and vision statements are virtually memorized.

7b. Formal or Informal Subordination of Projects to Community

- ☐ Conduct one or more informal meetings amongst major project advocates for information sharing and potential “cross pollination”.
- ☐ Formalize a “teaming of projects” to ensure coordination and potential collaboration.

Appendix

Prioritized Strategy Report w/ Community Input

Strategy Recommendations

Strategies by Group

Alphabetical Listing of Strategies

Key Success Factor Report

Appendix A

Prioritized Strategy Report

STRATEGY	SCORE	WANT	CAN	STRATEGY GROUP
Pass-through Visitor Services	85	80%	79%	Tourism
Education Development	85	82%	65%	Community Development
Health Care Expansion	83	81%	76%	Community Development
Value-added Agriculture	78	91%	87%	Value-added
Attracting Funding	70	95%	83%	Other
Entrepreneurial Development	68	88%	81%	General Business
Local/Regional Tourism	68	59%	50%	Tourism
Bedroom Community Development	68	87%	75%	Community Development
Value-added Mining	64	7%	7%	Value-added
Environmental Restoration	63	53%	53%	Sector-specific
Infrastructure Development	63	88%	65%	Other
Downtown Development	55	68%	58%	Community Development
Business Retention and Expansion	54	89%	76%	General Business
Energy Development	53	53%	45%	Sector-specific
Leading-edge Development	51	63%	64%	Sector-specific
Business Recruitment	49	91%	78%	General Business
Logistics Centers	48	65%	60%	Sector-specific
Business Cultivation	47	86%	79%	General Business
Attracting Lone Eagles	43	80%	67%	Other
Attracting Retirees	41	80%	72%	Other
Value-added Fisheries	35	20%	20%	Value-added
Cultural Tourism	35	37%	25%	Tourism
Attracting Government Jobs	33	50%	44%	Other
Destination Tourism	31	32%	22%	Tourism

Appendix B

To aid communities in determining which community and economic development strategies are most viable for them, Building Communities answers three questions using input gathered from the community:

- What should we do?
- What do we want to do?
- What can we do?

The “Recommended Strategies” report is based on the findings of the Key Success Factor (KSF) Analysis and answers the question “What should we do?”

In the KSF analysis, the steering committee considered Craighead County’s comparative advantage relative to a host of specific factors in categories such as community assets, public- and private-sector expertise, access to funding, etc. Responses were run through Building Communities’ strategy-selection algorithm which returned a rank-based list of strategies—the Prioritized Strategy Report—from which the recommendations below are drawn. Recommendation thresholds used in the Prioritized Strategy Report are:

Recommended (score of 85 and above) - It is highly recommended that these strategies be considered for implementation:

- Pass-through Visitor Services
- Education Development

Borderline (score between 70 and 84) - These strategies may be pursued with a degree of confidence, although existing obstacles may make successful implementation more challenging:

- Health Care
- Value-added Agriculture
- Value-added Mining
- Attracting Government Funding

Not Recommended (score under 70) - Serious impediments exist which are likely to make successful implementation of these strategies very difficult:

- Local/Regional Tourism
- Bedroom Community
- Environmental Restoration
- Infrastructure Development
- Entrepreneurial Development
- Business Retention and Expansion
- Downtown Development
- Energy Development
- Transportation Distribution Center
- Leading-edge Development
- Business Recruitment
- Business Cultivation
- Attracting Retirees
- Value-added Fisheries
- Cultural Tourism
- Attracting Government Jobs
- Value-added Forest Products
- Destination Tourism

- Attracting Lone Eagles

As indicated, these recommendations are viewed in reference to the question, “What should we do?” Strategies are not selected on the basis of these recommendations alone, but are determined after considering the other two questions as well. Material examined and data gathered in the Voice of the Community and Community Organizer Assessment sessions of Plan Week were also considered before final selection of strategies took place.

Appendix C

Strategies by Group

STRATEGY	SCORE	STRATEGY GROUP
Business Recruitment	49	General Business
Business Retention and Expansion	54	General Business
Business Cultivation	47	General Business
Entrepreneurial Development	68	General Business
Energy Development	53	Sector-specific
Environmental Restoration	63	Sector-specific
Logistics Centers	48	Sector-specific
Leading-edge Development	51	Sector-specific
Value-added Agriculture	78	Value-added
Value-added Forest Products	27	Value-added
Value-added Fisheries	35	Value-added
Value-added Mining	64	Value-added
Destination Tourism	31	Tourism
Cultural Tourism	35	Tourism
Local/Regional Tourism	68	Tourism
Pass-through Visitor Services	85	Tourism
Downtown Development	55	Community Development
Education Development	85	Community Development
Health Care Expansion	83	Community Development
Bedroom Community Development	68	Community Development
Infrastructure Development	63	Other
Attracting Retirees	41	Other
Attracting Lone Eagles	43	Other
Attracting Government Jobs	33	Other

Appendix D

Alphabetical Listing of Strategies

STRATEGY	SCORE	STRATEGY GROUP
Attracting Funding	70	Other
Attracting Government Jobs	33	Other
Attracting Lone Eagles	43	Other
Attracting Retirees	41	Other
Bedroom Community Development	68	Community Development
Business Cultivation	47	General Business
Business Recruitment	49	General Business
Business Retention and Expansion	54	General Business
Cultural Tourism	35	Tourism
Destination Tourism	31	Tourism
Downtown Development	55	Community Development
Education Development	85	Community Development
Energy Development	53	Sector-specific
Entrepreneurial Development	68	General Business
Environmental Restoration	63	Sector-specific
Health Care Expansion	83	Community Development
Infrastructure Development	63	Other
Leading-edge Development	51	Sector-specific
Local/Regional Tourism	68	Tourism
Logistics Centers	48	Sector-specific
Pass-through Visitor Services	85	Tourism
Value-added Agriculture	78	Value-added
Value-added Fisheries	35	Value-added
Value-added Forest Products	27	Value-added

Appendix E - Key Success Factor Report

Key Success Factors with a Score of “4”:

- Expandable educational institution
- Financially-sound existing health care facility
- Local recreational and visitor attractions
- Proximity to large volumes of agricultural commodities
- Proximity to travel routes
- Proximity to urban population and workforce centers
- Recognizable central business district/downtown
- Ability to secure power-purchase agreements
- Competent, strategic-minded hospital and health-care executives
- Existing excellence in local health care
- Support from local education professionals at all levels
- Supportive post-secondary education training program
- Community support for needed infrastructure rate increases
- Local government support
- Land/Buildings/Campus for education development
- Prospect of an expanded geographic market for health care
- Proximity and access to markets

Key Success Factors with a Score of “3”:

- Quality residential neighborhoods
- Accurate, long-term analysis of infrastructure needs and costs
- High availability of urban services
- Proximity to raw materials and minerals
- Access to small business financing
- Access to large-scale capital
- Ability to compete in a global market
- Ability to successfully market materials
- Local ability to identify and advance a funding proposal
- Local focus on revenues from visitors
- Local pro-business climate
- Strong community support
- Strong state and/or federal legislative delegation
- Supportive local government policy and focus
- Adequate housing for labor force
- Adequate telecommunications infrastructure
- Availability of local land
- Availability of local infrastructure
- High-speed internet
- Proximity to transmission lines with excess capacity
- Advantageous location for government or education expansion
- Proximity to scheduled air service
- Strategic location for distribution centers

Key Success Factors with a Score of “2”:

- Available, desirable housing
- Desirable climate

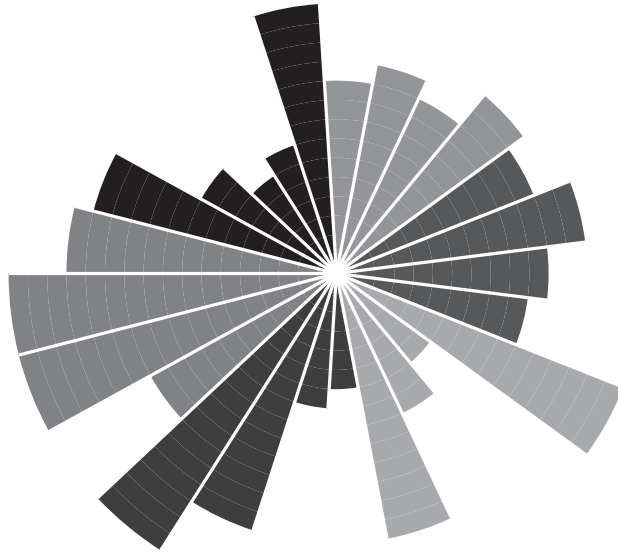
Existing or prospective cultural attraction
 Sufficient base of local businesses
 Sufficient local entrepreneurial base
 Absence of industrial business activity
 Access to long-term infrastructure loans and grants
 Availability of appropriated funds
 Competitive recruitment incentives
 Ability to build a team comprised of energy-development experts
 Ability to identify product and service gaps
 Ability to network and attend relevant trade shows
 Ability to understand industry trends and opportunities
 Cooperation of economic development staff and educational community
 Dedicated business coaching staff
 Relationship with site selectors
 Relative sophistication in coordinating and marketing local events
 Community acceptance of the visitor industry
 Support for attracting retirees
 Availability of brownfield sites
 Local, available, low-skill labor pool
 Local, available, high-skill labor pool

Key Success Factors with a Score of “1”:

Availability of energy resources
 Existence of recreational amenities
 Dedicated local financial resources for staffing recruiters
 Local funding for downtown development
 Capable, experienced economic development professionals
 Cultural development and advocacy organization
 Team approach to infrastructure finance
 Projected growth in government budgets
 Strong relations between economic development organization and local businesses
 Support from local businesses
 Supportive state energy policies and incentives
 Availability of industrial-zoned land for industrial park development
 Excess water and sewer infrastructure capacity

Key Success Factors with a Score of “0”:

Proximity and access to forests and forest products
 Proximity to fisheries commodities
 Proximity to nationally-recognized attractions
 Ability to secure long-term contracts for forest materials
 Sufficient marketing, promotion, or public relations budget
 Downtown organization and staff
 Implementation of national Main Street Four-Point Approach™
 Sophisticated tourism development & promotion
 Sophisticated use of the internet for marketing
 Staff focused on recruitment objectives
 Active engagement of downtown building and business owners
 Favorable state policies with respect to office locations
 Availability of local buildings



Craighead County

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