

Clark County Strategic Plan

Economic Development – Business and Job Creation

March 3, 2008 Identify Priorities

Short Term Priorities

1.

4a) Prepare high quality marketing materials that address the strengths of Clark County. Marketing material will include print and video media that will be distributed through the creation of a high quality internet site. Marketing material will be developed to blend financial and workforce reasons to locate to Clark County with the unique quality of life created in a small southern community with significant tourism/recreational opportunities and the ambiance of a university town setting.

2.

1c) Merge existing chambers of commerce together to form a county-wide chamber of commerce that operates as a division of the Economic Development Commission. The Chamber of Commerce executive will report to the executive director of the Economic Development Commission. The board of directors of the Commission will include five county residents to be appointed by the County Judge and approved by the quorum court. An advisory board of 15 county residents will be selected in similar fashion and will be responsible for advising the Commission's board of directors.

3. tie

4c) Engage a nationally recognized economic consulting firm to perform a targeted industry analysis to determine and advise the Commission on the most likely industries/types of businesses to locate to Clark County. Use the results of this study to proactively target the industries identified in the study.

9a) Develop a blue ribbon committee of university, city, county and business leaders. This organization will meet quarterly and will establish joint strategic direction and specific action items where all parties work together in a coordinated manner to achieve the strategic goal of university expansion.

4. tie

1a) Merge the Clark County Industrial Council into a newly formed countywide economic development organization, the Economic Development Commission of Clark County (“Economic Development Commission” or the “Commission”).

2a) The Commission/Chamber of Commerce will form a business advisory team to manage the business retention and expansion effort. This team will approach Entergy for inclusion into Entergy’s BRE Program.

4b) As various marketing campaigns and strategies are considered, a joint marketing campaign by the two universities and Clark County should be considered. This strategy would be substantially cost efficient allowing statewide and regional distribution through television and radio media.

Long Term Priorities

1.

1e) Construct a state of the art building, modeled after the Little Rock Chamber of Commerce facility and locate the Economic Development Commission and the county-wide chamber of commerce in this building. This building will have sufficient space to provide business/industry location teams (“Advance Teams”) confidential working space. The building will utilize state of the art technology with high speed internet connections and teleconferencing/ video conferencing capabilities.

2.

6c) Extend fiber optics to the technology park, the industrial park, the universities and the downtown business centers in Arkadelphia and Gurdon.

3. tie

4h) Complete the development of the Clark County Business Park by providing interstate access and sites for medium size office employers.

6a) Develop a comprehensive plan to provide broadband internet service throughout Clark County. This plan will detail the infrastructure requirements, capital needs, management and organizational support necessary for such services. Analyze partnering with existing digital providers (e.g. One Economy).

4. tie

3b) The following actions should be considered to improve the Highway 7 entrance into Arkadelphia:

- i. High quality signage should be developed.
- ii. Entryway landscaping, zoning or zoning reconfiguration should be implemented with the city working in partnership with existing businesses to improve the appearance of the entry corridor. Vacant and dilapidated buildings should be repaired or removed.
- iii. The university campuses of Henderson State University and Ouachita Baptist University are not well defined. Professional and image enhancing brick and iron fencing is used by the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and Delta State University in Cleveland, Mississippi to enhance and define their campuses. The aesthetic impact is significant and should be considered as an overall community improvement.
- iv. Entrances into both university campuses are not impressive. Consideration to creating main entryways into the universities should be considered. Consider renaming 10th Street to University Avenue and adding tree lined center median to the roadway in front of both universities – creating a “University Boulevard”.
- v. Maintenance facilities for the City of Arkadelphia and Henderson State University are located on Highway 7. These facilities detract from community image and should be relocated or otherwise improved.

6b) Develop a major internet hub in the County to reduce the mileage surcharge for major bandwidth customers. This hub could be located at the new technology park on Malone Drive. Lots in the technology park should be made ready for construction of technology oriented businesses.

8a) In partnership with Henderson State University seek to double enrollment (to at least 200 students) in the University’s aviation program and establish a College of Aviation and Technology. Once the College of Aviation and Technology is established, offer a masters program for the disciplines contained therein.