

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION WORKSHEET

(Draft 12/04/2006)

Learning(s) that this recommendation is addressing:

Retention and expansion of existing business and industry is the most effective and efficient method to create new jobs. There are inadequate strategies in place to encourage retention and expansion of existing businesses.

Committee Recommendation:

Develop adequate strategies and funding alternatives to encourage retention and expansion of existing businesses. Action steps:

- Survey existing businesses to determine gaps in desired services and barriers (real and perceived) to expansion. Utilize the resources of SBDC and EDF for existing information.
- Establish a council group (such as a coalition of area Chambers of Commerce) to meet regularly and work cooperatively to develop programs to nurture existing businesses. Athens Area Chamber of Commerce should take the lead in organizing this council.
- Establish a function in Athens-Clarke County government to serve as a central resource for new businesses startups and expansions. This entity would provide information and technical assistance for issues such as permitting, licensing, process, etc.
- Develop and execute a formal program for community leaders to make in-person visits to corporate offices of every major business or industry in ACC, inviting them to expand their operations.
- Explore possibilities of new business capital through “bond funds” or “investors clubs.”
- Widely publicize the removal of barriers to new business expansion or creation.
- Encourage ACC citizens to support the local economy through “buying local.”
- Enhance recognition programs for ACC businesses through the media and existing organizations.

Research/information used to validate this recommendation:

Input from committee members in business or familiar with business practices.

Additional information/research needed:

- Formal survey of existing businesses to determine present and future needs and to identify barriers that may cause them not to expand here.
- Briefing from Small Business Development Center to supplement individual interviews with businesses.

Input from groups/people to help clarify this recommendation:

Ongoing input should be received from:

- Athens Area Chamber of Commerce (Rich Cary)
- Athens-Clarke County Economic Development Foundation (Drew Page)
- Local business and industry representatives who have expanded recently or are considering expanding.
- ACC Department of Human and Economic Development (Katherine Hogue)
- Oconee Chamber of Commerce (Charles Grimes)
- Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center (Jim Dove)
- Georgia Power Company (Jim Sykes)

Actions and Resources Necessary to Implement:

Commitment of entities listed above to create and implement these recommendations.

Anticipated Reactions -

- **In Support:** Business community.
- **In Opposition:** Those required to change processes or to create new processes.