

**OneAthens RED Meeting**  
**6/15/07**  
**Chamber of Commerce**

Discussion: Oconee Economic Development Initiative

Q/A: Rusty Haygood, Oconee County's Economic Development Director

Interview – not to market or brand

Find out what folks are in favor of and what resources to make it happen

There was confusion about what was sent out

It's a fact finding Mission; willing to share info they get

Ed: What about after 6 months completed?

Rusty: Will share with appropriate folks in counties

Specific components of how it's implemented

200 business/academics being interviewed

Joe: What questions were asked, 3 categories?

Rusty: Document with letters, generic scope

How you feel?

What to change?

? major players

? leadership roles

? funding

? resources from individuals: time? Money?

What should be included and funding issues

Ed: Our objective is to form a Regional Economic Development organization by July '08 or disband. After we wrap up our meetings with experts on state of the art and their recommendations we will take time to summarize what we have learned and define the RED organization form and function. If we can't do that (define a form) then we need to develop next steps needed to reduce our questions and concerns. We need to contact the 316-Bio-Tech Authority chair and explore possibilities of joining them. I will do that and ask some of you to join in that discussion.

Sean McMillian from GA Dept. of Economic Development:

Recruit new business; Fitting them with communities; Quality jobs; Competitive, want to win; Work with existing companies and help them; Small business and entrepreneurs

Many assets and resources in Athens

Research @UGA – enticing for businesses

Technical college system – Laura Meadows, ombudsman

Quick Start Program – we have and other regions don't

Business/local govts. – need seamless approach; all players on same page; what to look like to go forward; integrated approach to growth plans; leadership agreeing – set aside differences; not air in public, work together for good of region

Sandy Springs – good model

Things are getting better; Land planning – growth from Atlanta, land use  
Intergovernmental cooperation needed, companies want low risk and unified front

316 corridor: a lot of power for Econ. Dev.;

Ed: is it worth meeting with the 316/Bio-Tech Authority?

Sean: Yes

Development encroaching on area – community wants to control growth – may not be 1 size fits all

Partner with private developers – quality product

Life sciences/cluster – makes sense

Take advantage of UGA companies before they leave

Sean: UGA is big draw, no congestion, easy to get around

Ed: The Novartis deal, + & -?

Sean: Learning process for local and state; good things to come out of these 2 deals: rethink policy issues, dealing with workforce, needing to be addressed. How do we train mass of people for particular industry?

Broad terms – if we as a state & region want to be #5 (In the USA) in Life Sciences, changes needed at local and state level.

Airport owns some property – Hartsfield-Jackson, existing cap maxed 2017, even with 5<sup>th</sup> runway.

Talk of new airport? South? West? Huge amount of land needed for a new airport.

Sean: Learn from experiences, try to position GA & GA Power to draw lifescience industry. Optimistic we'll land one of those deals, we just need 1 big hit.

Ed: About a dozen life science companies in incubator & Emory, 3 important drivers to focus on to get them to stay.

Sean: Develop relationships early on, sell them on staying here, from the beginning. Make them feel wanted, what is important to them? What to keep them here?

Planned development to build that mass.

Sean: We've begun to address issues with start up companies, making right things with lifesciences, loans, etc.. Incentives important and expected in economic development.

Sykes: Ga historically not into incentives

Sean: Right, but making steps in right direction, policy decision higher up need to be made.

Ed: Texas, 2 Chambers worked together to build resources

Ed: Lack of workforce? Hard to understand

Sean: Moving in right direction to address

Ed: maybe meet with Sean's people to understand why we lost Novartis, maybe Bamboo, etc..

316 Bio-tech authority – talked earlier about

Wes Clarke & Tom Tanner from CVIOG: Economic Tool; Tanner – economist modeler  
Presentation/data: Regional impacts of Novartis deal

Oconee, Athens MSA impacted by losing Novartis deal  
Tom: went over the model they ran for Oconee/Novartis

Impact on total jobs:

~400 jobs: Oconee

~600 jobs: Athens MSA

~620: jobs statewide

Surrounding counties also were impacted: Barrow, Jackson, Madison, Oglethorpe, etc..

If Norvartis comes, more would have come, attract more business

Factors of transportation costs and land prices.

Industry can grow on its own if it gets to a certain point, ie. Silicon Valley

Impact on total wages:

Oconee: \$32M, 2009; \$48M, 2039

Athens MSA: \$37M, 2009

(talked about commuter patterns)

State: .5M

Impacts positive across board

Construction phase – spread out 50 miles to other counties

GA is good at sending census data, partner with them to collect better data

More wage \$ mean more \$ (taxes, property taxes, etc...) for each county

Transportation links

Flora: baseline employment, not using graduate info right now; placement, DOL codes are issues we're dealing with.

Total cost to have self-sustaining industry – what are inputs?

Trained workers

Abatements

How to close gap?

Airport? In Athens or Gwinnett?

Commuter patterns: disposable income, where you live, not where you work

Oconee: \$25M

Athens MSA: \$48M

GA: \$50M

Madison County – a lot of commuters  
Place of work vs. place of living  
Output – gross sales  
Oconee: \$140-190M  
Athens MSA: \$150-210M

Ed: Bamboo project mentioned; Noramco, Merial already here, bring in more

Don: Each county lost something in losing Novartis. What is exact money, jobs, sales, (taxes) homes not built, stores not open, etc... - hard to understand \$36M loss; elected officials need to understand

Jim Dove: NEGA Service Air Transportation Commission  
Authority created many years ago but not currently meeting or doing anything  
Use to help purchase land for new airport  
Serving 12 counties, not in RDC region and some cities because of size

Delta interested in sending reps. – wary of local press to say what they really wanted, didn't get anywhere

Commuter rail mentioned

Jackson Co. blown out of proportion, wanted input but Delta didn't want input

Marvin: Sen. Broun, put on his committee to vote; approved, needs re-appropriation of committee

Barrow Creek reservoir – treatment plant for surrounding counties. No state, govt., Fed funding – paid by local. Model of cooperation because everyone wanted water.

Joe: not an easy task

Jim: long task, keeping everyone at table with shared views

NEGA solid waste task force: 11 counties – regional landfill  
Still meeting monthly  
Madison/Oglethorpe running out of space

Elbert Co. – didn't participate, didn't want to give up tax breaks

Jim Sykes: gave report on economic development  
How you get there  
Planning  
What to utilize

E-mail definition of economic development to folks and have time to digest for the next meeting.

**NEXT MEETING: FRIDAY, JULY 20, 10:00AM, ATHENS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

Added by Ed Graham (7.03.07): since this meeting I have become aware that some members of the original Airport/Transportation Authority have initiated a revitalization effort. Interestingly, they are aware of our effort and wanted to assure me that they wanted to work with us. I will keep you aware of their activity.