

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION WORKSHEET

(Draft 11/10/2006)

Learning(s) that this recommendation is addressing:

Regional economic development efforts are inconsistent.

Committee Recommendation:

Athens-Clarke County should partner with other area counties (beginning with Oconee County) to create a regional economic development entity responsible for proactively marketing the region to prospects interested in establishing new operations in the region.

Research/information used to validate this recommendation:

Discussions with local and statewide economic development professionals.
Review of selected new industry prospects who chose not to locate in Athens-Clarke County.
Observations of other areas where this strategy seems to be working well (i.e., "Research Triangle.")

Additional information/research needed:

1. What role or responsibility does the Northeast Georgia Regional Development Corporation have in this regard?
2. Does the region have a market niche?
3. What are possible niches that would be practical for this new entity to pursue? Can a niche be developed for bio-tech and "culture industries," retirement industry,
4. Is there public and/or private sector support for a "focused business park" for the high tech or bio-tech industry?
5. Is the "retirement industry" an obvious opportunity? If so, do strategies need to be developed and implemented to address additional medical service needs and housing needs?
6. Detailed strategy/implementation documents from other areas who have implemented a regional economic program. Should especially address financial issues.
7. How would Oconee County react to this idea?
8. Are there other regions with similar characteristics to the Athens area where this is working?

Input from groups/people to help clarify this recommendation:

- Drew Page, Athens-Clarke County Economic Development Foundation
- Georgia Power Company Economic Development staff.
- Georgia Department of Economic Development staff
- 316 Joint Bio-Tech Authority
- Oconee Co economic development representative

- Local medical service providers and persons familiar with communities who have successfully developed a strategy for attracting retirees.

Actions and Resources Necessary to Implement:

Political buy-in and funding from participating counties.

Financial support from private sector.

Anticipated Reactions -

- **In Support:** General public; some elected officials; ACCEDF; statewide economic developers; GA Department of Economic Development; University of Georgia; Athens Technical College
- **In Opposition:** Some elected officials; some existing industry;

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(Draft 10/23/2006)

Learning(s) that this recommendation is addressing:

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.
- Insure that local entities have the support and resources needed to nurture existing businesses.
- Identify specific barriers to new business startups or business expansion and work cooperatively with appropriate entities to remove as many of these as practical. Inform the public that these real or perceived barriers are being removed.
- Develop a formal “in-person” calling program by selected community leaders on corporate offices of major existing industries inviting them to expand operations here.

Research/information used to validate this recommendation:

Who are the responsible parties and what strategies do they use?
What community resources exist that are underutilized?

Additional information/research needed:

- Survey 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 on supplement individual interviews with businesses.

Input from groups/people to help clarify this recommendation:

- Athens Area Chamber of Commerce (Rich Cary)
- Athens-Clarke County Economic Development Foundation
- Local business and industry representatives who have expanded recently or are considering expanding.
- Katherine Hogue re grant finding?
- Charles Grimes (Head of Oconee Chamber of Commerce)
- Jim Dove (RDC)
- Jim Sykes from GA Power
- Don Nelson or someone else from ABH

Actions and Resources Necessary to Implement:

Providing consultants in particular instances to aid in specialized sectors/ industries
Create bonds –series of small bonds (<\$1m) to help existing businesses expand (eg for businesses needing R&D)
Consider a region-wide “investors club” to provide capital.
Regularly recognize successful small businesses in the media and in the public arena.

Anticipated Reactions -

- **In Support:**

- **In Opposition:**

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Learning(s) that this recommendation is addressing:

Athens' economy is not diverse enough.

Committee Recommendation:

Encourage/develop bartering network and local economy trade systems

Research/information used to validate this recommendation:

Additional information/research needed:

Basic information and research from other communities

Input from groups/people to help clarify this recommendation:

Actions and Resources Necessary to Implement:

Anticipated Reactions -

- **In Support:**

- **In Opposition:**