



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mini-vision:

In 2020 we will have a growing, vibrant, diverse regional economy that responsibly leverages the resources specific to South Central Minnesota while promoting Business Development and a high quality of life.

Goal 1:

Energy Diversification

Rationale for Addressing Energy Diversification:

It's the right thing to do. We are exhausting our resources and we need to become regionally self-reliant for our energy. We need to act as stewards of the Earth, and leave the world a better place than we found it.

Strategy 1:

Foster awareness that change is imminent. Define the problem and present solutions. Get the community to buy in and keep them updated of changes.

Action Steps:

1. Establish a unified vision about energy and environment.

Responsible Parties: Energy diversification subcommittee (Convener); regional experts

Timeline: 1-2 Months

Resource Needs/Options: Time of the parties involved

2. Gain buy-in from community leaders and citizens

Responsible Parties: City Councils; County Commissions; The Chamber of Commerce; The Regional Development Council; key farm organizations; leaders in higher education, school districts, hospitals, and non-profits; service clubs

Timeline: 3 months maximum

Resource Needs/Options: One unified presentation produced by Parties involved; Media Specialist; 8-10 Presenters; Media liaisons

3. Market and deliver the message to the public.

Responsible Parties: Energy Diversification Sub-Committee; local media; a speakers bureau; Individuals to prepare the marketing materials

Timeline: 3 months

Resource Needs/Options: Media specialist; 8-10 presenters; media liaisons

4. Find funding mechanisms to support the vision.

Responsible Parties: Media via sub-committee talking points; Go forward commitment by MSU-Center for Excellence (lead); organizations willing to give money to spread the vision; auto dealerships, ethanol plants, utilities, service clubs, MSU Mass Communications Department (in-kind donations).

Timeline: 3 months

Resource Needs/Options: Media specialist; 8-10 presenters; media liaisons

Measures of Success:

Endorsement by the community of the creation of, and funding for, an Energy Innovation Center (see Strategy 3).

Strategy 2:

Inventory our assets, both human and physical.

Action Steps:

1. Identify key businesses and business clusters, including bio-businesses.

Responsible Parties: GMED with collaborative support from MSU; Graduate Student or Technical Assistant

Timeline: 1 month

Resource Needs/Options: A good source of the technical assistance would be the MSU Geography Department. Funding of the graduate students, and the time requirements of the mentors of the graduate students, are crucial to the success of these action steps.

2. Identify key agricultural associations and business associations.

Responsible Parties: GMED; collaborative support from MSU; Graduate Student or Technical Assistant

Timeline: 1 month

Resource Needs/Options: Funding and time of MSU Graduate Students

3. Identify physical assets by tapping into existing databases and making them accessible (physical assets include our geography, climate, soils, water, and infrastructure).

Responsible Parties: Two Graduate Students or Technical Assistants; experts in the field; GMED; Rural Advantage; collaborative support from MSU

Timeline: 6 months

Resource Needs/Options: Funding and time of graduate students

Measures of Success:

The inventory lists are generated.

Strategy 3:

Work toward an emissions neutral/sustainable local economy by conserving energy, increasing energy efficiency and developing renewable energy industries that are versatile and embrace new solutions.

Action Steps:

1. Create a Center of Energy Innovation (CEI) that nurtures businesses to attain our vision.

Responsible Parties: Collaborative partnership between MSU and GMED (Primary Champions); the MSU President; the Director of the Greater Mankato Economic Development Corporation; key business leaders; funders

Timeline: 2 – 3 years for creation

Resource Needs/Options: The center would require an executive director and a budget. It would apply for grants to the Department of Energy and to energy supporters' foundations. It would facilitate Research & Development and be a clearinghouse of information, and provide information on protection of intellectual property. It would provide information on applying for grants to innovators, and would provide some start-up funds. The center could look to Minnesota Technology Inc., for guidance. Competitions and encouragement of best practices would be done under its auspices. A quasi-permanent income source would be essential for its success.

2. Sponsor competitions to encourage innovation and emergency planning

Responsible Parties: Collaborative partnership between MSU and GMED; standards setting groups (Building codes, ASHRAE, MPCA, etc.); local institutions, business and governmental; Local citizens

Timeline: A major competition within a year; two or more competitions a year after that (one or more of which may be in elementary schools).

Resource Needs/Options: Staffing, program budget

3. Encourage best energy and environmental practices (LEED standards, EPA standards, geothermal, energy audits, etc.)

Responsible Parties: Collaborative partnership between MSU and GMED; Energy Industry: Excel, Minnegasco, Calpine, Waste Management

Timeline: Ongoing

Resource Needs/Options: Staffing; Funding for the program budget

4. Set CO₂ emission reduction targets for the region, then monitor and publicize progress towards a carbon-neutral economy.

Responsible Parties: Local experts, to set and monitor targets; city councils, county commissions; local newspapers, TV and radio stations

Timeline: 6 months to establish targets, then ongoing

Resource Needs/Options: Time of local experts; cost of monitoring; outreach to media

5. Develop a regional emergency plan for energy shortfalls

Responsible Parties: Local experts, to develop the plan; Xcel, Benco Electric, CenterPoint Energy, city councils and county boards

Timeline: 6 months

Resource Needs/Options: The Tompkins County Relocalization Plan (available on the internet) is an example of such a plan.

Measures of Success:

The establishment and financial support of the center for energy innovation (CEI); the development of CO₂ emission reduction targets; and the development of a regional energy shortfall emergency plan.

Goal 2:

Optimize our existing resources/businesses to support a livable, sustainable, and regional economy that supports controlled growth.

Rationale for Optimizing Existing Resources:

Optimize our role and resource as a wholesale distribution, industrial, retail, and service-providing center that best serves our region and ultimately results in economic growth in our region.

Strategy 1:

Optimize our role and resources pertaining to distribution outlets and services.

Action Steps:

1. Inventory and measure economic impact of what we distribute.

Responsible Parties: GMED with additional support by representatives of cities and counties in the region (primary champions); Chamber of Commerce, MSU/SCC/Bethany/Rasmussen/Gustavus, Mary Lou Kudela, Diversity Council, Old Towne Association/City of Mankato, Region 9, City of Mankato, Planning & Zoning, North Mankato, Port Authority, other city economic development personnel in the region

Timeline: Create Taskforce Team (1 month); Inventory (2 months)

Resource Needs/Options: Region 9 Reports

2. Identify gaps and conduct needs analysis by:

- Performing a supply chain analysis
- Assessing space availability
- Identifying appropriate projects to fill gaps & fulfill needs
- Identifying resources to implement strategies
- Prioritizing strategies
- Facilitating an initial kick off
- Developing a report of findings and strategies

Responsible Parties: Primary champions - GMED with additional support from cities and counties in the region

Timeline: Gap Analysis (3 months); Test ENS Tool (4 months); Report & Recommendations (5 months)

Resource Needs/Options: ENS Tool

3. Use gaps and needs analysis to determine real estate Renovation-Reuse-Remodel possibilities by:

- Conducting an inventory
- Assessing current uses
- Providing incentives to businesses for renovations

Responsible Parties: Primary champions - GMED with additional support from cities and counties in the region; Association of Realtors, developers

Timeline: Report & Recommendations (5 months) NOTE: Update inventory and gap analysis every 5 years

Resource Needs/Options: Expertise in land use, property conversions, etc.

Measures of Success:

Specific Actions/Projects are embedded in the cities' master plans and GMED plans. The region has a Controlled Urban Development Plan.

Strategy 2:

Optimize our role and resources as a health care center.

Action Steps:

1. Inventory regional health related resources by answering the following questions:

- What do we have?
- What do we need?
- What future needs can we predict?
- What gaps exist with respect to future needs?

Responsible Parties: Health Care Council (primary champion); ISJ, Mankato Clinic, Outpatient service providers, Open Door Health Center, Third party payers such as BCBSM, YWCA, YMCA, VINE, Social Services, MSU – Center on Aging, ISJ-Mayo Health Systems, Mankato Clinic.

Timeline: Create Taskforce Team (1 month), Inventory (5 months), Assessment (7 months)

Resource Needs/Options: MSU / SCC / MnSCU HEIP staff; State Dept. of Health; county / regional government; Center for Aging / AgeWell Network; Partners for Livable Communities; health care providers; state and regional agencies

2. Encourage health care providers to create extended regional amenities through the following steps:

- Develop a report of current and projected resources
- Promote available resources and increase awareness of the region as a health care center
- Identify resources and services that may need to be obtained or imported to the community to address needs

Responsible Parties: Health Care Council (primary champion); ISJ, Mankato Clinic, Outpatient service providers, Open Door Health Center, Third party payers such as BCBSM, YWCA, YMCA, VINE, Social Services, MSU – Center on Aging, ISJ-Mayo Health Systems, Mankato Clinic. Orthopedic and Fracture Clinic, Open Door Clinic, Alternative Options Representatives

Timeline: Report (10 months)

Resource Needs/Options: Health care providers; state and regional agencies

3. Identify opportunities to leverage the region's graduates at all educational levels (high school, college, university) toward health care and related needs.

Responsible Parties: Health Care Council (primary champion); ISJ, Mankato Clinic, Outpatient service providers, Open Door Health Center, Third party payers such as BCBSM, YWCA, YMCA, VINE, Social Services, MSU – Center on Aging, ISJ-Mayo Health Systems, Mankato Clinic. Orthopedic and Fracture Clinic, Open Door Clinic, Alternative Options Representatives

Timeline: Ongoing

Resource Needs/Options: ALL educational institutions, health care employers, related businesses

Measures of Success:

The region enjoys a medical services environment that meets the needs of a diverse and aging population and offers employment opportunities that encourage our graduates to remain in the region to work in health care and related businesses and services.

Strategy 3:

Optimize our region's human resources.

Action Steps:

1. Utilize our existing and predicted workforce demographic information from the following sources to identify potential available workers by classification:

- Higher education
- Technical and other post-secondary schools
- Elder population
- Inexperienced workers

Responsible Parties: Primary Champion: Cities and Colleges Group (Higher Education, GMED, Chamber, Cities/Colleges); MSU, SCC, MNSCU, Gustavus, Bethany, Rasmussen, K-12 schools, Workforce Center, MNRAAA, Chamber

Timeline: Create Taskforce Team (1 month); Inventory (2-3 months), Develop stakeholders/focus group (2 months)

Resource Needs/Options: Time of all the parties involved.

2. Strengthen and connect with regional industry.

- Link businesses
- Link schools
- Link business & schools & natural resources
- Identify opportunities

Responsible Parties: Cities and Colleges Group; Business Stakeholders (current businesses connected with education)

Timeline: Research programs and identify new opportunities (180 days)

Resource Needs/Options: Current Businesses programs with colleges (use as examples to foster more programs)

3. Foster connections between schools and with regional businesses through the completion of the following steps:

- Inventory programs that link businesses to schools.
- Establish on-going communication with regional businesses to determine needed skills and match with educational programs

Responsible Parties: Cities and Colleges Group: Academic Leaders, Strategic Business Associates, Chamber

Timeline: Ongoing monthly meetings (first year), Quarterly meetings after first year.

Resource Needs/Options: The Business Portal; Business Accelerator

4. Identify future trends and business needs by:

- Conducting research on ways to maximize opportunities for older workers and retain/attract a younger workforce.
- Reporting findings and recommended strategies

Measures of Success:

The region hosts a research park and GMED implements an Executive Education Program. The region implements an Education Plan that considers the needs of a diverse and aging population as well as the region's employers.

Strategy 4:

Optimize our role and resources pertaining to Natural Resources (e.g., agriculture, food production, mining, soil, wind, water).

Action Steps:

1. Inventory the region's natural resources by:
 - Determining resource utilization
 - Identifying opportunities for existing resources available
 - Identifying resources available that aren't being utilized
 - Aligning resources with businesses and/or educational institutions

Responsible Parties: University of Minnesota Extension Office (primary lead); DNR; Natural Resource Services Providers; Ron Kibble/Agricultural Cooperatives; Quarries (Sand/Gravel, SMC/Unimen); Vetter Stone; Coughlan Companies; New Ulm Quartzite; BEC & Surrounding Counties; MSU Geography Department; Rural Advantage

Timeline: Create Taskforce Team (1 month); Inventory resources (5 months); Assessment (7 months);

Resource Needs/Options: City / county documentation of surrounding environment; DNR; Agricultural knowledge (e.g., farmers, cooperatives, agricultural businesses, University of Minnesota Extension); MSU; SCC; Bio-Science Symposium

2. Develop strategy to utilize resources to create an economic impact.

Responsible Parties: University of Minnesota Extension Office (primary champion); stakeholders from Action Step 1

Timeline: Report (10 months)

Resource Needs/Options: Time of stakeholders

3. Align resources in the community, region, and outside the region to promote economic development.

Responsible Parties: University of Minnesota Extension Office (primary champion); stakeholders from Action Step 1

Timeline: Review inventory and action plans every 5 years

Resource Needs/Options: Time of stakeholders

Measures of Success:

Master Region AUAR (Alternative Urban Area-Wide Review) is completed, Strategy increases economic impact in our community, optimizing available resources while maintaining green space.

Goal 3:

Business Development

Rationale:

If we wish to sustain ourselves as a vibrant community and be a place that people choose to live in, then it is crucial that we focus on development of existing and future business.

Strategy 1: Identify existing examples and create additional innovative economic development products and practices.

Action Steps:

1. Mobilize the “equity community”. Expand on the inventory list of region-wide assets that has already been created by GMED.

Responsible Parties: GMED (champion), attorney, accountant, banker, financial investors. A leader from the group needs to emerge from this group to carry the project beyond GMED.

Timeline: Up to 18 months

Resource Options:

2. Research the Angel Network model, as well as other innovative models.

Responsible Parties: GMED can facilitate the research.

Timeline: Up to 18 months

Resource Options:

3. Identify a team of leaders to move the model forward.

Responsible Parties: GMED

Timeline: Up to 18 months

Resource Options:

4. Identify what the service area is for the region.

Responsible Parties: GMED

Timeline: Up to 18 months

Resource Options:

5. Support, cultivate and nurture regional development efforts by coming together with other communities and develop pro-active steps to collaborate on projects and pooling resources. Explore whether GMED’s Business Accelerator program can be linked with local resources including community development organizations. (Examples of these efforts would be demonstrated in Fairmont and Owatonna.)

Responsible Parties: RCEF, MSU, Region 9 Development Commission, South Central College, SBDC, GMED and various community representatives from non-profit and civic organizations

Timeline: Up to 18 months

Resource Options:

6. Identify business and industries that would best compliment the region’s current portfolio.

Responsible Parties: GMED

Timeline: Up to 18 months

Resource Options:

Measures of Success:

A functioning network of resources by the end of 2007.

Strategy 2:

Enhance the ease of doing business in the region.

Action Steps:

1. Converse with municipalities re: zoning, infrastructure etc...for the purpose of self-educating & promoting cooperation for existing business & new business development.

Responsible Parties: GMED

Timeline: 60 days from final Envision 2020 session to make contacts and schedule meetings.

Resource Needs/Options: None required

2. Encourage resource partners in the Business Accelerator to help embed the model into the community by making several presentations, establishing a promotions plan. Possibly co-locate physical space.

Responsible Parties: GMED

Timeline: Working agreement by July 2007

Resource Needs/Options: None

3. Inventory other resources and more efficiently/effectively make them available for emerging & start-up & entrepreneurial support.

Responsible Parties: GMED

Timeline: August/September 2006

Resource Needs/Options: GMED time

4. Promote municipal collaboration, same access to this information at all locations.⁵

Responsible Parties: GMED

Timeline: Ongoing

Resource Needs/Options: GMED time

5. Movement of information - the pipeline for moving data & information (i.e., broadband access, a "portal").⁶

Responsible Parties: GMED

Timeline: The Business Portal is set to launch by September 2006

Resource Needs/Options: None

Measures of Success:

A better sense of what local municipalities zoning & other regulations issues are as they pertain to doing business; A well-known, well-used model that has ownership by members of the "pipeline"; and A working agreement established and accepted that advances the ACT 2000 model.

⁵ Following through with the ACT 2000 Vision for Regional Cooperation.

⁶ This issue is also addressed in the Livability KPA

Strategy 3:

Identify what a balanced business portfolio is for this region/area.

Action Steps:

7. Develop an economic profile (trends 10 years +) including the most current demographics on specific communities in our region. Identifying “clusters” to build on.

Responsible Parties: GMED (champion) and MSU

Timeline: Up to 18 months

Resource Needs/Options: Connect with Optimizing Resources task force and collaborate on research.

Measures of Success:

A better sense of where we are now, where we are going and how we can get there using these tools. This will provide one more critical tool for the much needed tool box.