



Strategic Plan 2009

Committee Members

Steering Committee

Frank Festi, REA & Associates
Gary Hallman, Medina General Hospital
William Koran, Medina County Schools' ESC
George Paidas, Embros LLC

Ron Paydo, FirstMerit Bank
James Ruhlin, The Ruhlin Company
Dan Sondles, Westfield Group

Port Authority Relations Committee

Tom Steinke, Steinke Vertal Langdon & Drum, Inc. (Chair)
Jim Gerspacher, Gerspacher Real Estate Group
Ryan Rose, Dorman-Farrell, LLC
Jim Doutt, Medina County Economic Development Corporation

Funding Committee

Russ Gregory, The Ruhlin Company (Chair)
Joe Bilinovich, FirstMerit Bank
Keith Hughes, Dyer, Hughes, Roche & Wilson, Inc.
Kurt Kappa, Westfield Bank
Chip Moll, MTD Products, Inc.
Jeff Stevenson, Campbell Construction, Inc.
Tom Steinke, Steinke, Vertal, Langdon & Drum, Inc.

Organizational Relationships Committee

Chris Easton, City of Wadsworth (Chair)
Rob Peters, City of Wadsworth

Dan Selby, Wadsworth Rittman Hospital Foundation
Lucy Sondles, Leadership Medina County

Business Retention and Expansion Committee

Bill Hanigan, Medina Works (Chair)
Melissa Krebs, Brunswick Area Chamber of Commerce
Tom Krueger, City of Medina
Terry Mazzone, Lorain-Medina Rural Electric Cooperative
Debra Lynn Schmitz, Greater Medina Chamber of Commerce
Tim Smith, City of Brunswick

Workforce Development Committee

Jim Boyes, Medina County University Center
(Chair)
Melissa Krebs, Brunswick Area Chamber of
Commerce
Tim Smith, City of Brunswick
Tom Krueger, City of Medina
Rob Peters, City of Wadsworth

Debra Lynn Schmitz, Greater Medina Chamber of
Commerce
Kate Heil, Lodi and Seville Chambers of Commerce
Gary Searle, Medina County Career Center
Sue Louscher, Medina County University Center
Bill Hanigan, Medina Works
Michelle Masica, Wadsworth Chamber of Commerce

Centers of Excellence

Thomas Whelan, Lodi Community Hospital (Chair)
Bill Allman, AllVentures
Erich Hetzel, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services
Brian Fisher, FirstMerit Bank
Sue Louscher, Medina County University Center
Ex officio: Jim Doutt, Medina County Economic Development Corporation

Executive Summary

The Medina County Economic Development Corporation (MCEDC) began the task of updating its Strategic Plan by convening a series of committee meetings in the spring and summer of 2008, overseen by a Steering Committee consisting of past MCEDC presidents. The partners in this process were guided by our continuing mission statement:

It is the mission of the Medina County Economic Development Corporation to enhance the quality of life in the county through economic development.

The committees focused on six primary areas, with the first three serving as internal guides for the organization and future operations of MCEDC and the last three serving as an external plan for the economic development priorities and strategies of the organization:

1. Port Authority Relations
2. Funding
3. Organizational Relationships
4. Business Retention and Expansion
5. Workforce Development
6. Centers of Excellence

The Steering Committee took the recommendations and suggested tactics from the committees and crafted strategic visions that would ensure the long-term sustainability of Medina County's economic development program, to both internal partners and external customers.

To ensure that our local efforts work in concert with those of regional and state partners, the strategic plan for the Medina County Economic Development Corporation echoes similar themes from the recently released Ohio Department of Development strategic plan.

MCEDC's goals are organized into the following categories, with the work of each committee folded into one or more goal areas:

1. Invest in our County Assets
2. Focus on our Partners and Prospects
3. Share the Medina County Story
4. Cultivate Top Talent through Workforce Development
5. Strengthen our Strengths with Centers of Excellence
6. Ensure MCEDC's Organizational Sustainability

Goal: Invest in our County Assets

Strategic Vision

Ensure the continuous development of Medina County's infrastructure to meet the twenty-first century needs of the business and residential community.

Tactic 1. Support the Growth of Medina County Port Authority

One of the recent core initiatives undertaken by MCEDC was to create the Medina County Port Authority (MCPA), one of Medina County's most valuable economic development tools. Currently, the MCEDC handles the administrative duties for the Port Authority. Revenues from its projects will ensure the sustainability of the Port Authority to be able to invest in the long-term infrastructure and business development needs of Medina County.

- A. Increase the Port's capacity for financing**
- B. Construct and market the Medina County Fiber Network**
- C. Market and develop Innovation Park**

Tactic 2. Support for Targeted Transportation Systems

Industrial and commercial developments are unable to attract and retain entry level and lower skill level employees due to the high cost of transportation. A business need exists to provide mass transit on a fixed schedule and affordable basis for low wage workers. MCEDC should strive to support a targeted transit system for the purpose of providing affordable transportation to and from major industrial and commercial locations and high density populations.

- A. Encourage access to employment centers**
- B. Champion a County Transportation Plan**

Tactic 3. Advocate for Utility Access and Competitive Rates

Utility infrastructure is an essential component of economic development growth, and MCEDC's role will be to serve as an advocate on behalf of business for affordable and accessible utilities. MCEDC should also explore alternative costing structures which would reduce initial sewer tie in rates.

Tactic 4. Support Development of Comprehensive Land Use Policy

MCEDC should advocate for a comprehensive land use policy which provides an effective balance of industrial, commercial, agricultural and residential growth. As business expands, the need will continue to grow for workers at all levels of skill; MCEDC recommends that the county address in a more systematic manner the needs for affordable housing for the various skill/earnings levels, as well as identify industrial developments which will also accommodate a mass transit system, eateries for workers, and highway access for product and services.

- A. Advocate for balanced comprehensive land use policies**
- B. Advocate and educate on affordable housing issues**

Goal 2: Focus on our Partners and Prospects

Strategic Vision

Improve the business climate and grow the economy of Medina County by nurturing the organizational relationships with strategic partners throughout the county, region and state.

Tactic 1. Advocate for Development in Partnership with Local Governments of Medina County

- A. Facilitate development opportunities throughout Medina County**
- B. Support local communities through outreach and education**
- C. Enhance relationships with local economic development offices**

Tactic 2. Maintain Rigorous Business Retention & Expansion Efforts

One of the most important components of economic development is business retention and expansion (BRE) since most new capital investment and the majority of new jobs created come from companies already doing business in the area. The best marketing tool MCEDC enjoys is the stories of success that occur throughout the county every day by the businesses that have already chosen Medina County. The key to maintaining this tool is a rigorous outreach program which will establish MCEDC as a crucial linkage between business and resources for growth.

- A. Implement an aggressive policy of outreach and direct business contacts**
- B. Utilize a consistent survey methodology and prioritized schedule of retention visits**
- C. Organize and host workshops to meet the needs of specific industry clusters**
- D. Ensure stability in Medina County's business base through succession planning**

Tactic 3. Establish Rapid Response Teams Regarding Economic Development Matters

In an era where the quickest response by an economic development advocate to businesses in crisis can mean the difference between a plant-shut down and a successful retention effort, MCEDC should create a team of the most effective partners to carry out "rapid response" activities. This early warning system will tie actionable information to timely business intervention.

- A. Identify appropriate team members**
- B. Establish regular meeting schedule of the team to review current projects**

Tactic 4. Maintain Participation in Local and Regional Economic Development Organizations

Building positive working relationships with federal, state, regional and local entities is a daily undertaking at MCEDC and serves a crucial role in our economic development efforts.

- A. Partner with the Chambers of Commerce organizations**
- B. Establish membership in Team Neo and other regional organizations**
- C. Serve as a catalyst for improving workforce development**
- D. Play a pro-active advisory role with the Medina County University Center**

Tactic 5. Establish Strong Relationships with State and Federal Government Officials

MCEDC's efforts to maintain a solid economic foundation in Medina County would not be possible without partnerships at the state and federal government level. Continuing to build strong relationships with elected officials is paramount.

- A. Interact with state elected officials through visitations and outreach programs**
- B. Nurture relationships with State agencies involved in economic development**
- C. Establish strong relationships with federal officials, elected and agency personnel**

Goal 3: Share the Medina County Story

Strategic Vision

Employ a comprehensive outreach and communications strategy to facilitate interaction among stakeholders and garner internal and external recognition for Medina County as a place for businesses to grow.

Tactic 1. Create a Strategic Marketing Plan for Business Attraction

MCEDC has a variety of audiences for its communications, including organizational partners and existing businesses within the county and those clients we seek to focus on Medina County, such as site selection consultants and other prospective business location decision-makers.

- A Develop a brand for Medina County**
- B. Create a strategic marketing plan for use by MCEDC**

Tactic 2. Examine and Adjust Communications Strategies

- A. Conduct an audit of communications practices**
- B. Utilize more innovative communications with internal partners**
- C. Enhance MCEDC's online presence**

Tactic 3. Develop Comprehensive Sources of Data and Assistance

Regarding MCEDC's internal customers, there is a perceived need to pool resources to address the concerns and problems facing business. Issues range from general regulatory concerns and information requests and to the specific, such as providing new ways for business to secure financial assistance for expansion.

- A. Utilize MCEDC website to provide business development resources**
- B. Facilitate interaction among industries**

Goal 4: Cultivate Top Talent through Workforce Development

Strategic Vision

Ensure that Medina County businesses have access to the best talent available through the attraction of new highly-skilled and educated workers, along with the retention and development of local human capital.

Tactic 1. Serve as a Catalyst to Bring Employers Together with Workforce Development Providers

While MCEDC is not a direct provider of workforce development programming, it does have a rich history of facilitating interaction between businesses, government, education, and community groups to not only meet the needs of the business community, but also improve the quality of life in Medina County. The Medina County University Center and fiber optics project are just two examples of the corporation's ability to facilitate major efforts that meet the needs of the business community and improve the quality of life for the citizens of Medina County. The corporation will continue to use its facilitating skills to address the workforce development issues in Medina County.

- A. Utilize the Business Retention and Expansion surveys to identify current employer needs**
- B. Assist in establishing Workforce Program Committees for identified program categories**

Tactic 2: Facilitate the Effective & Efficient Delivery of Workforce Development Training

Ten years ago the Medina County Career Center was the primary workforce development provider in Medina County. To this expertise and experience new providers have been added, including the Medina County University Center (MCUC), Cuyahoga Community College, Lorain Community College, Medina Works and others interested in serving Medina County. To ensure that the workforce development needs of Medina County are met, MCEDC should partner with these workforce development training providers in a variety of areas.

- A. Partner with providers to survey and develop appropriate training programs**
- B. Advocate the sponsorship of high school intern programs**
- C. Remain an active influence in the development of MCUC curriculum**
- D. Explore other post-secondary partnerships**

Tactic 3: Market and Promote Workforce Development Training Programs

To ensure the ongoing success of Medina County's workforce development programs, a continuous stream of users flow to the training providers, including students/workers and employers who will hire the graduates. In addition to established outreach activities, newer marketing techniques must be utilized by MCEDC, its business partners such as the Chambers of Commerce of Medina County and the county's training institutions.

- A. Partner with training providers to establish unified web site**
- B. Assist training partners in researching new workforce programming**

Goal 5: Strengthen our Strengths with Centers of Excellence

Strategic Vision

Target Medina County's future economic growth on the industries that can establish local Centers of Excellence

Tactic 1. Define the Targeted Areas that Will Become Medina County Centers of Excellence

To ensure the best opportunities for future growth in Medina County, MCEDC should champion a plan to develop Centers of Excellence with which Medina County might become readily associated and widely recognized. These centers will consist of the specific business sectors that incorporate the strengths and existing resources of our area and are already established in the area, or are new areas of concentration that have the potential for significant future growth.

- A. Identify and verify target areas with rigorous research model**
- B. Define the benefit of the identified target areas**
- C. Establish a task force to develop a plan of action to create Centers of Excellence**

Tactic 2. Utilize the Medina County Centers of Excellence as a Marketing Tool

- A. Design marketing efforts around Centers of Excellence**

Goal 6: Ensure MCEDC's Organizational Sustainability

Strategic Vision

Determine a long-term funding and Port Authority administration plan to ensure the sustainability of the Medina County Economic Development Corporation.

Tactic 1. Investigate and implement progressive funding models for current organizational structure.

- A. Determine appropriate balance of participation from the private and public sectors**
- B. Diversify MCEDC's revenue streams**
- C. Adjust organizational model to funding methods**

Tactic 2. Investigate creation of affiliated 501 c(3) structure..

Tactic 3. Enhance and formalize MCEDC's administrative role with Medina County Port Authority

- A. Create a formal agreement between MCEDC and MCPA**
- B. Determine the long-term administration of the fiber network**
- C. Formalize future support from Port Authority to MCEDC**