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## DETAILED STRATEGIC PLAN

MISSION STATEMENT: DCEDC is a public/private partnership working to facilitate sustainable economic growth within DeKalb County.

### **GOAL 1 - Attract New Business and Industry that Capitalizes on Distinct Advantages and Strengths of DeKalb County**

Objective 1.1- Prepare Marketing Plan Promoting Assets and Opportunities.

- Identify and promote attributes that distinguish DeKalb County within the Chicago world trade node.
- Identify, evaluate and select the most effective channels and mediums to market DeKalb County to site selectors, investors and decision-makers.
- Incorporate DeKalb County labor market information (Objective 3.3) into business attraction activities to attract firms that can benefit from the skills and occupations of county residents.
- Identify and promote NIU research specialties and academic strengths to attract businesses and professionals.
- Prepare Targeted Industry Analysis to identify and focus on the most productive business sectors.
  - Identify high growth/emerging industrial sectors and their site location criteria.
  - Compare high growth sectors with DeKalb County Location Quotient results to identify opportunities and select targeted industries.

**Outcomes:** Increased Inquiries Resulting from Greater Awareness of Advantages and Attributes  
Recruiting Success Resulting from Targeted Attraction and Interaction with Site Selectors

Objective 1.2 - Execute Economic Development Marketing Plan

- Promote DeKalb County to site selectors through participation in business and industrial real estate trade organizations including MEGA, I-39 Logistics Corridor Association, Industrial Asset Management Council, CoreNet Global and Association of Industrial Real Estate (AIRE).
- Promote the development of a Technology Business Park with amenities and infrastructure (i.e. heavy power, fiber optic capacity, infrastructure and utilities) to support research and development and advanced manufacturing.
- Identify and participate in target industry trade associations, conferences and trade shows where possible.
- Develop and execute systematic and ongoing electronic prospect and site selector marketing and communication capabilities (e-marketing).
- Continue public relations program to promote success stories and development opportunities.
- Continue to enhance DCEDC website to provide easily accessible information on assets and distinct advantages afforded to targeted industries and thriving industry clusters.
  - Update and maintain target industry profile PDF files.
  - Maintain and enhance inventories of availability sites and buildings.
- Continue to maintain economic profile database of required information to fulfill prospect and site selector inquiries.

**Outcomes:** Increased commercial property tax base  
Job creation  
Attraction of anchor to Technology Park/DeKalb Business Center  
Updated Target Industry Profiles  
Updated Economic Profile

Objective 1.3 - Assist DeKalb County communities in marketing their assets and opportunities.

- Assist member communities and developers in preparing and executing marketing strategies for available sites and buildings.
- Promote development opportunities in member communities through DCEDC Web Site and electronic (email) marketing.
- Engage DeKalb County communities in public relations program. Assist communities in developing messages and distributing press releases to media on a regular basis.
- Assist communities in organizing cooperative participation in trade shows.

**Outcomes:** Press releases, interviews and article placements  
Increased exposure for individual communities as well as county  
Increased inquiries by firms in DeKalb County communities  
Increased building occupancy and commercial/industrial construction

Objective 1.4 - Assist Firms by Identifying and Communicating Import/Export Resources.

- Research and understand global trade, the Metropolitan Chicago node and DeKalb County's international trade functions within the region.
  - Inventory local companies to identify foreign ownership, foreign markets served, potential new markets and existing or potential global alliances.
  - Identify global trade assets and international business resources available at Northern Illinois University, Kishwaukee College and throughout the region.
  - Inventory and establish relationships with international trade and business development organizations.
- Identify international business training and marketing resources and communicate their availability to county businesses.
  - Promote import/export training resources for business.
  - Identify and sponsor/co-sponsor international trade development missions.
  - Host/co-sponsor Global Trade Conference/Workshop.

**Outcomes:** Identification of successful global trade development practices  
Increased international business relationships with local industries  
Increased exports/imports by DeKalb County companies  
Attraction of foreign/domestic firms engaged in or supporting global trade

## **GOAL 2 - Retain and Expand Existing Industry**

Objective 2.1 - Implement process of ongoing systematic business retention visits, data collection, follow-up and reporting (e.g. Synchronist).

- Identify local business growth potential.
- Identify and quantify early stage industry or business climate problems.
- Collect information to identify common needs and opportunities for our strong industrial sectors.
- Qualify and quantify market and locational strengths to facilitate business expansion and to support target industry attraction.
- Document retention/expansion results and the knowledge gained to use in ongoing strategic activities.
- Report to local industry on findings, actions and results.

**Outcomes:** Conduct industry visits  
Save companies in danger of closing or relocating  
Report on industry visits, information collection and follow-up actions  
Maintain industrial and commercial equalized assessed valuation (EAV)  
Maintain/increase percentage industrial/commercial valuation of total EAV

Objective 2.2 - Support industry clusters by organizing committees and convening meetings to facilitate networking, information exchange and the early stage identification of problems and opportunities.

- Identify viable committee groups/industrial sector; compliment and reinforce target industry analysis (e.g. Manufacturers, Technology Committee, Logistics and Distribution, Downtown Redevelopment, Small Business, etc.).
- Convene meetings/guide and empower committee to identify needs, issues and opportunities.
- Promote DCEDC Membership Investments through these industry initiatives.

**Outcomes:** Committee initiatives and accomplishments  
Business growth/expansion due to committee/DCEDC initiatives  
Increased DCEDC membership and investment revenue

Objective 2.3 - Promote business development and expansion with DeKalb County businesses and institutions.

- Cosponsor "High Speed Business Dating" networking and local business development event (with Kishwaukee College BID Center, Chambers of Commerce).
- Promote local purchasing and business development among County businesses and units of government
- Benchmark other communities to identify innovative, best practice approaches to local business development.

**Outcomes:** Increased business revenue due to new local transactions

### **GOAL 3 – Provide Leadership and Support for Workforce Development Initiatives**

Objective 3.1 – Identify Needed Occupations, Workplace Skills and Competencies.

- Compile information on workforce requirements from local industry identified in business retention visits.
- Incorporate skills and occupation needs into DCEDC Wage and Benefits Survey.

**Outcomes:** Current local information about specific workforce requirements

Objective 3.2 – Communicate Workforce Requirements to Educational Institutions and Training Providers.

- Prepare reports documenting workforce requirements.
- Convene meetings/forums as needed to enable business, educators and training providers to identify and address workforce needs.

**Outcomes:** Increased number of applicants for local employment openings  
Increased productivity and reduced industry recruiting/training costs  
Increased understanding of career opportunities and education requirements

Objective 3.3 – Promote Labor Market Skills and Occupations

- Promote the occupations and skills of the DeKalb County labor market to serve as a resource for local business recruiting and business attraction.
- Refine, focus or adjust Targeted Industry Analysis and targeted marketing as needed based on labor resources.

**Outcomes:** Increased number of DeKalb County residents working within the county

Objective 3.4 – Strengthen Relationships between Business, Education and Training Providers to facilitate collaboration, internships and recruiting.

- Work through River Valley WIB Board to ensure appropriate programming and equitable funding for DeKalb County industry training needs.
- Facilitate business use of NIU and Kishwaukee College internship and recruiting resources.

- Encourage business participation in Kishwaukee Educational Consortium (KEC) and Indian Valley Vocational Center (IVVC) and Kishwaukee Education to Careers Partnership (KETCP).

**Outcomes:** More qualified applicants for available positions  
Improved performance by trained personnel  
Increase number of interns and students placed in County firms

Objective 3.5 – Promote business efforts to inspire and assist youth, including at risk groups.

- Promote participation in programs like KEYS, Kishwaukee Education Consortium and Junior Achievement to encourage careers, entrepreneurship, creativity, and to provide role models to future work force.

**Outcomes:** More qualified applicants for available positions  
Improved performance by trained personnel  
Increase number of interns and students placed in County firms

#### **GOAL 4 – Enhance and Promote DeKalb County Business Climate to Support Business Growth and New Business Formation**

Objective 4.1 - Engage DeKalb County businesses and government in the process of innovation and technology commercialization with Northern Illinois University.

- Facilitate communication and interaction among business leaders and NIU educators, researchers and students to promote relationships, idea exchange and the creation of new business ventures.
- Identify mutually beneficial opportunities for cooperative efforts, partnerships and alliances among business and university professionals.

**Outcomes:** New NIU / business partnerships and ventures  
New businesses and technologies

Objective 4.2 - Assist in the formation of new business and wealth generation by promoting and supporting business success stories and entrepreneurship.

- Create/publish Business Development Resource Kit online including expert contacts, organizations, angel/venture capital sources, finance programs and management training.
- Promote entrepreneurship education and training offered by Waubesa Community College, Kishwaukee College BID Center, SCORE, SBA and other organizations.
- Benchmark successful entrepreneurship development programs like economic gardening.
- Organize special workshops or speaker series focusing on education, development and support of management and entrepreneurial skills (e.g. Business Success Stories Speaker Series).
- Cosponsor Business Plan Competition with NIU Outreach and Kishwaukee BID Center.
- Recognize and promote entrepreneurship through special events and publicity.
- Create Business Mentoring Group and plan events/activities to promote sharing of ideas and skills among seasoned business owners and new entrepreneurs.
- Assist in the creation and promotion of a not-for-profit patenting assistance organization to support local and attract new inventors and entrepreneurs.
- Promote business management and entrepreneurship education in County high schools.
- Promote the creation of a Center for Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Technology Development in DeKalb County.

**Outcomes:** Increased number of new business starts  
Increased number of small businesses counseled in DeKalb County  
Recognition of entrepreneurship and innovation achievements  
Adoption of entrepreneurship initiatives in County high schools  
Increased number of DeKalb County patents applied for / pending

Objective 4.3 – Promote establishment of Business Incubator to nurture business creation and expansion.

- Evaluate the feasibility of developing and operating a small business technology or manufacturing incubator or shared office facility.

- Research market for size and scope of market for business incubator or shared space/services facility.
- Identify viable space and development partners for incubator/shared space facility.

**Outcomes:** Incubator/Shared Space Feasibility Analysis  
 Identification of development partners and site for Incubator/Shared Space facility  
 Small businesses served by Incubator/Shared Space facility

Objective 4.4 - Promote emerging business opportunities including technology based industry, alternative/renewable energy and sustainable “green” business development.

- Work with DeKalb County to promote alternative and renewable energy development initiatives.
- Assist with the County in identifying sustainable “green” business development applications.

**Outcomes:** New business development opportunities  
 Progressive energy policy and sustainable business development

Objective 4.5 – Assist in the development of business and industrial parks and the identification of strategies to secure infrastructure (e.g. roads, water, sewer, fiber optic lines, rail spurs, and DeKalb Taylor Municipal Airport expansion) required to serve business and community development needs.

- Assist communities in the development of business and industrial sites and parks.
- Convene workshop with member civil engineers to assist communities in identification of infrastructure needs and financing options.
- Support, encourage and expand opportunities like those in Genoa in bringing intercity and commuter rail to DeKalb County to strengthen and diversify transportation and connectivity throughout the Metropolitan Chicago and Northern Illinois region.
- Develop and prioritize a list of critical economic development infrastructure needs for use by legislators and legislative delegations for capital planning.

**Outcomes:** Unified approach to business and community infrastructure needs  
 Increased ability to secure/arrange for funding for critical infrastructure  
 New business and industrial park sites

Objective 4.6 - Promote amenities to attract and retain talented professionals, spouses and families to DeKalb County.

- Promote the County’s unique combination of quality of life, residential, professional, educational, cultural, and sports and recreation in public relations and marketing programs.
  - Support and publicize efforts to recreate/enhance Downtown activity centers in DeKalb County municipalities to attract new visitors, businesses and residents to invest in county.
  - Support and encourage professional tourism promotion to attract visitors, potential new residents and businesses.
  - Promote and collaborate with Chamber professional organizations (e.g. Leadership Academy, YPO, KWN) to advance networking, professional development and retention.
- Create programs to invite NIU and Kishwaukee College graduates to return to DeKalb County to start businesses or work in local industries.

**Outcomes:** Increased and more qualified labor force available to employers  
 Stable and enhanced demand for quality housing in county

Objective 4.7 – Maximize the use of existing and new incentive programs including Foreign Trade Zones to support business and community development

- Prepare and advocate for shelf-ready infrastructure development projects (e.g. new business park infrastructure).
- Identify and promote Foreign Trade Zone benefits and consider expansion to include DeKalb Taylor Municipal Airport.

- Research existing and new incentive tools and position County and municipalities to qualify for programs (e.g. Enterprise Zone Expansion, Community Development Assistance Program (CDAP) Loans.

**Outcomes:** New or improve business site served with infrastructure  
 Increased use of airport to support and attract business  
 Increased use of incentive to expand and attract business

## **GOAL 5 – Strengthen DCEDC Public/Private Partnership to Enhance Economic Growth and Diversification**

### Objective 5.1 - Align operations of DCEDC to achieve Strategic Goals and Objectives

- Expand DCEDC committee structure to achieve Strategic Goals and Objectives.
- Engage membership in committee activities to accomplish Goals and Objectives.
- Conduct programs that advance Strategic Plan.
- Stage meetings at business and community locations throughout the county and after hours to reach out to membership.

**Outcomes:** Increased participation by Board in DCEDC initiatives and activities  
 Increased ability to accomplish objectives by leveraging participation and relationships of the Board of Directors  
 Increased interaction with county businesses and communities  
 Increased DCEDC membership and investment revenue

### Objective 5.2 - Assure sufficient funding of economic development activities required to achieve DCEDC Goals and Objectives.

- Secure cost estimates for recommended Strategic Planning activities.
- Secure cost estimates and consultant presentations on alternative fundraising approaches.
- Evaluate the advantages and risks associated with various fundraising structures to identify the most effective means of capitalizing DCEDC's strategic initiatives.
- Implementation of the preferred fundraising approach.

**Outcomes:** Increased revenue to accomplish strategic initiatives

### Objective 5.3 - Provide leadership to implement Strategic Plan and govern DCEDC.

- Ensure that the DCEDC Board of Directors and membership includes the leadership and representation required to accomplish Strategic Goals and Objectives.
- Establish committee structure required to implement strategic plan.
- Identify organizational and committee leadership and succession through the duration of the multi-year strategic planning period.

**Outcomes:** Defined, stable leadership  
 Enhanced ability to accomplish objectives

### Objective 5.4 - Conduct events or workshops to communicate and advance Strategic Plan

- Plan program of events (Business Roundtable or workshops/seminars as needed) to promote, advance and accomplish elements and outcomes associated with Strategic Plan.
- Host Special Invitation Strategic Plan Launch Event for high level investors.

**Outcomes:** Increase understanding and participation in Strategic Plan implementation by DCEDC members, the community and the media  
 Identification of new members and viable ideas/initiatives to advance elements of strategic plan

### Objective 5.5 - Define and promote the benefits of economic and community development

- Prepare presentations and support materials that illustrate the relationships between and interdependence of economic development, community development, prosperity, and quality of life amenities.
- Prepare and distribute materials which communicate elements of the DCEDC Strategic Plan and how it benefits residents and businesses throughout DeKalb County.

**Outcomes:** Increased understanding of and support for economic development initiatives