

# *Strategic Plan for Starke County*

## Introduction

Since its inception, the Starke County Development Foundation has assumed the duties of caring for the county's economic future. Previous studies and plans have helped to guide the organizations efforts toward maintaining employment, tax base and wealth producing assets.

Finding itself at a crossroad for growth, the Starke County Development Foundation (SCDF) engaged the services of DeSCo in the Fall of 2005 to create a strategic plan for the organization. This plan of action was to be developed not from a point of isolation but from an interactive process involving substantial community input.

DeSCo began the Strategic Planning process by interviewing 23 key leaders in the county in a phone survey. This survey was designed to gather the leadership's perspective on what issues were impacting Starke County. From this process we were able to determine that:

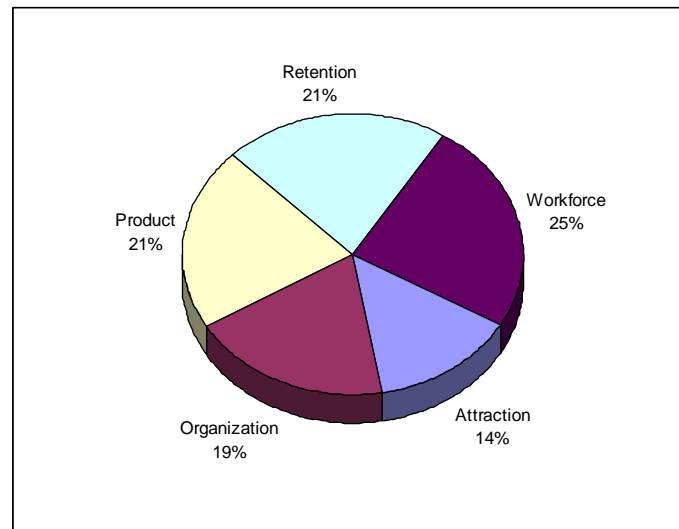
- Fully 87% of those interviewed saw the economy as stable or improving.
- There was consensus amongst the leadership that the role of agriculture would decline over time. Most of those interviewed felt that it was not prudent to try to alter the course of the agriculture decline
- The SCDF was well recognized as the leader in community and economic development
- The need for living wage jobs in the county was emphasized repeatedly

After getting guidance from the input and insights of these individuals, DeSCo then prepared a questionnaire about pertinent economic development issues and submitted it to the community. 300 individuals who were selected by the SCDF received a mailing of the questionnaire. A digital copy of the questionnaire was displayed on the SCDF's web page for anyone in Starke County to provide their input into the future of economic development. Press releases notified everyone in the county of their opportunity to provide input on the plan. An additional 106 responses were received as a result of this input.

The final stage of our engagement resulted in the development of this strategic plan. The plan is segmented to address the five cornerstones of economic development:

- The Organization
- The Product
- Business Retention & Expansion
- Workforce Development
- Marketing the Product (Attraction)

Every economic development organization is pressed with deciding how many of these five cornerstones their budget and staffing will allow them to address. Once they determine which cornerstones they can approach they are then faced with determining the relative emphasis to be placed on each cornerstone. In the formulative stages of the organization, much more work is required in the first three cornerstones: Organization, Product and Business Retention & Expansion. At a strategic planning retreat, the board shared their priorities for the organization. Individual members ranked the five cornerstones according their perception of emphasis. Their respective priorities are identified in the following pie chart. As a result of those priorities, we have organized the strategic plan according to this input from the board.



The final issue pertaining to the organization's success is the matter of funding. In the summer of 2005 the Starke County Commissioners voted to terminate funding for the SCDF. Without this support, the SCDF will be unable to meet most, if not all, of the goals identified in this plan. The irony of this move is that the Foundation has been told that it needs to consider a more aggressive level of support in order for it optimize its productivity.

As a result of this chain of events, we have written the plan at three different levels. The first is one where funding is not restored to the Foundation (diminished funding), the second is where it is restored (sustained funding) and the third is what could happen with increased financial support (enhanced funding).

Regardless of the level of funding support achieved, we stand ready to assist the SCDF with the implementation of this plan of action as they use it to guide economic development in Starke County for the next five years.

Respectfully Submitted,

*- Jim Mooney*

DeSCo - 219.548.9999

## Workforce Development

The SCDF board placed this cornerstone with the highest weight at 25% priority. In discussions with the board, priority came from the realization of how important a productive and skilled is in and economic development program. This realization was born out in the interviews and survey responses for the county as well. Feedback received during the interview process indicated a high degree of concern about workforce productivity and worker attitudes in the county. The biggest issues were (in descending order of priority (the smaller the number, the higher the priority)):

Dependability and work skills (2.52)  
Training and Education (2.62)  
Employee Attitude, dedication and commitment (3.01)  
Skill development of the worker (3.32)  
Drug usage (4.52)  
Start-up of new businesses from entrepreneurs (4,86)

There are many opportunities for workforce enhancement, the degree of support is proportionate to funding. Much of the SCDF's success in Workforce Development will result in partnering with The Center for Workforce Innovations (CWI) and/or KV Works in this area. Those responsibilities will be primarily:

- Advocacy
- Service Brokering
- Linkage between needs and solutions

CWI is networked into a statewide system of education and training that prepares people for high-skill jobs and assures employers of a skilled flexible workforce in the future. This comprehensive program is designed to improve the productivity level of the workers and allow companies to grow in the future.

## Workforce Development Cornerstone – Diminished Funding

Issues	Goals and Strategies					
<p>#1. Foster Workforce Training Initiatives. Through the BRE effort, help to bring new training opportunities to the attention of key partners such as CWI.</p>	<p>Goal: Strategy: Action: Targets:</p>	<p>Get local employers to value a trained workforce. Through BRE efforts, facilitate training programs that meet local needs. Created in response to BRE inputs.</p>				
		2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
	<p>Developed and implemented in response to local needs</p>	<p>Developed and implemented in response to local needs</p>	<p>Developed and implemented in response to local needs</p>	<p>Developed and implemented in response to local needs</p>	<p>Developed and implemented in response to local needs</p>	

## Workforce Development Cornerstone – Sustained Funding

Issues	Goals and Strategies					
<p>#1 Education. The quality of the local school system and the work ethic it instills in the students may be the most valuable asset in the overall economic development resource base.</p>	<p>Goal: Encourage an educated workforce.</p> <p>Strategy: Work closely with schools to create an awareness and emphasis on the importance of education.</p> <p>Action: Support the local schools for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Work-based learning</li> <li>2. School-based learning</li> <li>3. School to work transitions</li> </ol>					
	<p>Targets:</p>	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
	Ongoing Support	Ongoing Support	Ongoing Support	Ongoing Support	Ongoing Support	
<p>#2. Foster Workforce Training Initiatives. Through the BRE effort, help to bring new training opportunities to the attention of key partners such as CWI.</p>	<p>Goal: Get local employers to value a trained workforce.</p> <p>Strategy: Through BRE efforts, facilitate training programs that meet local needs.</p> <p>Action: Created in response to BRE inputs.</p>					
	<p>Targets:</p>	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
	Developed and implemented in response to local needs	Developed and implemented in response to local needs	Developed and implemented in response to local needs	Developed and implemented in response to local needs	Developed and implemented in response to local needs	

## Workforce Development Cornerstone – Enhanced Funding

Issues	Goals and Strategies					
<p>#1 Education. The quality of the local school system and the work ethic it instills in the students may be the most valuable asset in the overall economic development resource base.</p>	<p>Goal: Encourage an educated workforce.</p> <p>Strategy: Work closely with schools to create an awareness and emphasis on the importance of education.</p> <p>Action: Support the local schools for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Work-based learning</li> <li>5. School-based learning</li> <li>6. School to work transitions</li> </ul>					
	<p>Targets:</p>	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
	Ongoing Support	Ongoing Support	Ongoing Support	Ongoing Support	Ongoing Support	
<p>#2. Foster Workforce Training Initiatives. Through the BRE effort, help to bring new training opportunities to the attention of key partners such as CWI.</p>	<p>Goal: Get local employers to value a trained workforce.</p> <p>Strategy: Through BRE efforts, facilitate training programs that meet local needs.</p> <p>Action: Created in response to BRE inputs.</p>					
	<p>Targets:</p>	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
	Developed and implemented in response to local needs	Developed and implemented in response to local needs	Developed and implemented in response to local needs	Developed and implemented in response to local needs	Developed and implemented in response to local needs	

<p>#3. Data Collection. Collect and disseminate valuable labor information not readily attainable in other areas.</p>	<p>Goal: Strategy: Action: Targets:</p>	<p>The SCDF becomes the central source for labor information. Through BRE effort, gather information not available from other sources. Place this workforce information in a secure area of web page.</p>				
		2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
		Integrate with BRE	Add to new web page	Continue data assimilation	Update web page	Repeat
<p>#4. Certified Worker Program. In order to increase the value of the workforce in the county, a certified worker program that promotes a qualified worker should be considered.</p>	<p>Goal: Strategy: Action: Targets:</p>	<p>Increase the marketability of the workforce in the county. Establish a certified worker program. Implement through WorkOne Certified worker program via service providers such as Rick Streepy.</p>				
		2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
		Develop	Implement	Implement	Implement	Implement

## *Business Retention and Expansion*

Business development through retention and expansion services now represents the core activities of any economic development program. Over time, the importance of a successful retention and expansion program has risen over that of the traditional attraction efforts. The most effective economic development dollars are those spent working with existing businesses since most of the economic growth in a community is the result of established businesses.

In the interviews and surveys conducted in the community, the following feedback was obtained:

- Respondents seem to clearly understand the fundamental change in our economies as they strongly acknowledged the understanding that job creating opportunities will come from areas other than manufacturing. They encouraged the SCDF to pursue job creating opportunities in areas other than their traditional industrial approach (82% of the respondents).
- Respondents put the highest priority on retention of existing businesses (2.19 on a five point scale where the lower the number the higher the priority )
- Business Attraction received the second highest rating (2.22 on a five point scale where the lower the number the higher the priority).
- Business expansion and/or start-ups received the lowest priority from respondents (2.52 and 3.06, respectively).
- The SCDF is encouraged to promote the county in partnership with similar counties to attract new investment (63% approval rating).
- The SCDF is encouraged to continue its emphasis on tourism development (67% approval rating) and they are slightly more encouraged to act as a single county tourism agency as opposed to a regional agency (49.4% disagree with regional tourism as opposed to 48.3% who would prefer it).

Based upon this input, the following plan of action was assembled for business development activities.

## Business Development Cornerstone – Diminished Funding

Issues	Goals and Strategies					
<p>Issue #1. Business Retention Program. It has been consistently proven that a business retention program focused on the base (those businesses that bring money into the county) and the largest companies is the most successful economic development strategy a community can design and implement. The center piece of this program is the business leader meetings. These should be conducted annually and focused on removing the obstacles hampering business success. Based upon the input received in these meetings, a series of business services can be provided. Since they need to be directly responsive to the needs presented during the interviews we can only offer suggestions of programs that other communities have used successfully in the past. (Ranked as the highest priority in the countywide survey.)</p>	<p>Goal: Make Business Retention a center focus of the work program.</p>					
	<p>Strategy: Target time and resources to those companies already in the county.</p>					
	<p>Action: Sample actions might include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Business Roundtable Meetings for CEO's (ONLY!)</li> <li>2. Bi-monthly meetings for HR directors to discuss personnel issues</li> <li>3. Business Finance Training for Accountants and Comptrollers.</li> <li>4. New Market Opportunity Briefings</li> <li>5. Resource Presentations That Inform of Basic Economic Development Services</li> </ol>					
	Targets:	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
		Largest Fast Growth At Risk	Largest Fast Growth At Risk	Largest Fast Growth At Risk	Largest Fast Growth At Risk	Largest Fast Growth At Risk

## Business Development Cornerstone – Sustained Funding

Issues	Goals and Strategies					
<p>Issue #1. Business Retention Program. It has been consistently proven that a business retention program focused on the base (those businesses that bring money into the county) and the largest companies is the most successful economic development strategy a community can design and implement. The center piece of this program is the business leader meetings. These should be conducted annually and focused on removing the obstacles hampering business success. Based upon the input received in these meetings, a series of business services can be provided. Since they need to be directly responsive to the needs presented during the interviews we can only offer suggestions of programs that other communities have used successfully in the past. (Ranked as the highest priority in the countywide survey.)</p>	<p>Goal: Make Business Retention a center focus of the work program.</p>					
	<p>Strategy: Target time and resources to those companies already in the county.</p>					
	<p>Action: Sample actions might include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Business Roundtable Meetings for CEO's (ONLY!)</li> <li>7. Bi-monthly meetings for HR directors to discuss personnel issues</li> <li>8. Business Finance Training for Accountants and Comptrollers.</li> <li>9. New Market Opportunity Briefings</li> <li>10. Resource Presentations That Inform of Basic Economic Development Services</li> </ol>					
	<p>Targets:</p>	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
		Largest Fast Growth At Risk	Largest Fast Growth At Risk	Largest Fast Growth At Risk	Largest Fast Growth At Risk	Largest Fast Growth At Risk

<p>#2. Entrepreneurial Development. A grow-your-own strategy would benefit the county well. Our research continues to support that there are a number of people who have business ideas and aspirations; all they need is some support with making them happen. The entrepreneurship program can be that catalyst.</p>	<p>Goal: Increase the capacity to facilitate new investment</p>					
	<p>Strategy: In partnership with the communities begin Capital Improvement</p>					
	<p>Action: Planning</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. An incubator, physical or virtual, program would benefit new entrepreneurs</li> <li>2. Conduct a market needs assessment for new business development opportunities</li> <li>3. Develop a support network of public non-profit, (SCORE, SBA, etc), and private individuals (accountants, attorneys) who are willing to assist entrepreneurs with start-up issues.</li> </ol>					
<p>Targets:</p>	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	
	#1, #2	#3	Update #1, #2	#3	Continue	

## Business Development Cornerstone – Enhanced Funding

Issues	Goals and Strategies					
<p>Issue #1. Business Retention Program. It has been consistently proven that a business retention program focused on the base (those businesses that bring money into the county) and the largest companies is the most successful economic development strategy a community can design and implement. The center piece of this program is the business leader meetings. These should be conducted annually and focused on removing the obstacles hampering business success. Based upon the input received in these meetings, a series of business services can be provided. Since they need to be directly responsive to the needs presented during the interviews we can only offer suggestions of programs that other communities have used successfully in the past. (Ranked as the highest priority in the countywide survey.)</p>	<p>Goal: Make Business Retention a center focus of the work program.</p>					
	<p>Strategy: Target time and resources to those companies already in the county.</p>					
	<p>Action: Sample actions might include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. Business Roundtable Meetings for CEO's (ONLY!)</li> <li>12. Bi-monthly meetings for HR directors to discuss personnel issues</li> <li>13. Business Finance Training for Accountants and Comptrollers.</li> <li>14. New Market Opportunity Briefings</li> <li>15. Resource Presentations That Inform of Basic Economic Development Services</li> </ol>					
	<p>Targets:</p>	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
		Largest Fast Growth At Risk	Largest Fast Growth At Risk	Largest Fast Growth At Risk	Largest Fast Growth At Risk	Largest Fast Growth At Risk

<p>#2. Entrepreneurial Development. A grow-your-own strategy would benefit the county well. Our research continues to support that there are a number of people who have business ideas and aspirations; all they need is some support with making them happen. The entrepreneurship program can be that catalyst.</p>	<p>Goal: Strategy: Action:</p>	<p>Increase the capacity to facilitate new investment In partnership with the communities begin Capital Improvement Planning</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. An incubator, physical or virtual, program would benefit new entrepreneurs</li> <li>5. Conduct a market needs assessment for new business development opportunities</li> <li>6. Develop a support network of public non-profit, (SCORE, SBA, etc), and private individuals (accountants, attorneys) who are willing to assist entrepreneurs with start-up issues.</li> </ol>				
<p>#3. Resource Database. Throughout the process of gaining competency in economic development, the successful practitioner soon knows when and where a myriad of funding a support services exists. The challenge is getting this information to those that will use it, the existing business base. The Internet creates a ready made solution for this problem that not only helps the economic development practitioner organize their information; it makes it easier for their customers to access it as well.</p>	<p>Goal: Strategy: Action: Targets:</p>	<p>Make information readily available to entrepreneurs Compile data on an ongoing basis for access to existing companies on the web page Redesign web page Create resource database</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Populate database in an on-going basis</li> </ol>				
		2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
		#1, #2	#3	Update #1, #2	#3	Continue
		2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
		Web Page Redesign	Resource Database Completed	Population	Population	Population

## Product Development (essentially Community Development)

In any successful economic development program, a certain amount of effort needs to be directed toward the creation of the product, i.e. community development. In Starke County, a certain portion of that product is physical, i.e. industrial parks, main streets, infrastructure, etc. In most communities product development refers to roads, water, sewer, energy etc. In others, it can mean residential and recreational development. Yet in others, it can mean technology infrastructure. What is important for a county wide program like the SCDF is that they provide the product development solutions targeted for the needs of the recipient community. Planning for economic development occurs within the context of ongoing capital improvement planning that jurisdictions are required to do, so it is important to continually coordinate infrastructure planning with local officials. The construction of infrastructure usually requires capital outlays and use of debt financing, which is repaid from user fees and charges and tax revenues.

Product Development Cornerstone – Diminished Funding						
Issues	Goals and Strategies					
<p>#1. Parcel Based Development. Construction ready sites targeted to specific development needs that comply with community goals and the master plan are needed. There is no cookie cutter solution here. In some communities, i.e. Knox and Hamlet business park should be the best solution. It is very important that the SCDF spend its money wisely focusing in on development opportunities that will bring near term paybacks</p>	Goal:	Optimize physical assets				
	Strategy:	Target assets toward the best use for the community				
	Action:	1. Continue promotion of development of industrial parks in Knox and Hamlet.				
	Targets:	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
		#1	#1	#1	#1	#1

<p>#2 North Judson. Approximately 10 years ago the SCDF has created an industrial park in North Judson. This park has been repeatedly shown to numerous potential investors and it has been rejected for any one of a number of reasons. Recent studies have indicated that this parcel may be better developed in the near term as a residential project. Although site planning has not been completed, preliminary indications seem to point to somewhere between 70 and 90 lots that could be developed on this parcel.</p>	<p>Goal:</p>	<p>Bring a non-producing asset into production for North Judson.</p>				
	<p>Strategy:</p>	<p>Identify a non-industrial use for that site.</p>				
	<p>Action:</p>	<p>Partner with a qualified developer to produce a redevelopment effort that produces lots, residents and investment capital for this community.</p>				
	<p>Targets:</p>	<p>2006</p>	<p>2007</p>	<p>2008</p>	<p>2009</p>	<p>2010</p>
		<p>Finalize redevelopment strategy</p>	<p>Implement</p>	<p>Implement</p>	<p>Implement</p>	<p>Implement</p>

## Product Development Cornerstone – Sustained Funding

Issues	Goals and Strategies					
<p>#1. Parcel Based Development. Construction ready sites targeted to specific development needs that comply with community goals and the master plan are needed. There is no cookie cutter solution here. In come communities, i.e. Knox and Hamlet business park should be the best solution. It is very important that the SCDF spend its money wisely focusing in on development opportunities that will bring near term paybacks</p>	<p>Goal: Optimize physical assets</p> <p>Strategy: Target assets toward the best use for the community</p> <p>Action: 2. Continue promotion of development of industrial parks in Knox and Hamlet.</p>					
	<p>Targets:</p>	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
	#1	#1	#1	#1	#1	
<p>#2. Optimizing Infrastructure Financing Resources. Although the roads in the county appear to be in relatively good shape, other forms of infrastructure such as water and sewer systems appear to be missing or inadequate. In order to foster quality growth these are essential elements in the county's overall growth plan. We recommend that the SCDF</p>	<p>Goal: Increase the capacity to facilitate new investment</p> <p>Strategy: In partnership with the communities begin Capital Improvement Planning</p> <p>Action: 1. Create Capital Improvement Planning Groups 2. Develop Two Year Improvement Plans 3. Get Projects Listed on EDA Program 4. Share Needs with State of Indiana 5. Create Cum-Cap Budgets at Local Level</p>					
	<p>Targets:</p>	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010

<p>conduct meetings with key county leaders to help to identify the needs of each community and then work to prioritize those capital investment projects on a bi-annual basis. Once a countywide listing is completed, these projects can become finance eligible by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting projects listed on EDA priority list</li> <li>• Getting projects listed with State of Indiana Agencies</li> <li>• Work closely with the most aggressive communities to be sure that their projects come to fruition. When working with these communities, we continue to stress that they need to allocate funds for capital improvement projects into the Cum-Cap fund as discussed in our meeting during December.</li> </ul>		#1, #2	#3, #4, #5	Update #1, #2	#3, #4, #5	Continue					
<p>#3 North Judson. Along the way, the SCDF has created an industrial park in North Judson. This park has been repeatedly shown to numerous potential investors and it has been rejected for any one of a number of reasons. Recent studies</p>	<p>Goal: Strategy: Action:  Targets:</p>	<p>Bring a non-producing asset into production for North Judson. Identify a non-industrial use for that site. Partner with a qualified developer to produce a redevelopment effort that produces lots, residents and investment capital for this community.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1037 1149 1917 1187"> <tr> <td>2006</td> <td>2007</td> <td>2008</td> <td>2009</td> <td>2010</td> </tr> </table>					2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
2006	2007	2008	2009	2010							

<p>have indicated that this parcel may be better developed in the near term as a residential project. Although site planning has not been completed, preliminary indications seem to point to somewhere between 70 and 90 lots that could be developed on this parcel.</p>		<p>Finalize redevelopment strategy</p>	<p>Implement</p>	<p>Implement</p>	<p>Implement</p>	<p>Implement</p>
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## Product Development Cornerstone – Enhanced Funding

Issues	Goals and Strategies					
<p>#1. Parcel Based Development. Construction ready sites targeted to specific development needs that comply with community goals and the master plan are needed. There is no cookie cutter solution here. In some communities, i.e. Knox and Hamlet business park should be the best solution. It is very important that the SCDF spend its money wisely focusing in on development opportunities that will bring near term paybacks</p>	<p>Goal: Optimize physical assets</p> <p>Strategy: Target assets toward the best use for the community</p> <p>Action: 3. Continue promotion of development of industrial parks in Knox and Hamlet.</p>					
	<p>Targets:</p>	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
	#1	#1	#1	#1	#1	
<p>#2. Optimizing Infrastructure Financing Resources. Although the roads in the county appear to be in relatively good shape, other forms of infrastructure such as water and sewer systems appear to be missing or inadequate. In order to foster quality growth these are essential elements in the county's overall growth plan. We recommend that the SCDF</p>	<p>Goal: Increase the capacity to facilitate new investment</p> <p>Strategy: In partnership with the communities begin Capital Improvement Planning</p> <p>Action: 6. Create Capital Improvement Planning Groups 7. Develop Two Year Improvement Plans 8. Get Projects Listed on EDA Program 9. Share Needs with State of Indiana 10. Create Cum-Cap Budgets at Local Level</p>					
	<p>Targets:</p>	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010

<p>conduct meetings with key county leaders to help to identify the needs of each community and then work to prioritize those capital investment projects on a bi-annual basis. Once a countywide listing is completed, these projects can become finance eligible by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting projects listed on EDA priority list</li> <li>• Getting projects listed with State of Indiana Agencies</li> <li>• Work closely with the most aggressive communities to be sure that their projects come to fruition. When working with these communities, we continue to stress that they need to allocate funds for capital improvement projects into the Cum-Cap fund as discussed in our meeting during December.</li> </ul>		#1, #2	#3, #4, #5	Update #1, #2	#3, #4, #5	Continue					
<p>#3. Main Street. Some of the communities need substantial help on Main Street. Consider starting a Main Street Coalition that helps to draw attention to the importance of an attractive Main Street. This coalition can be supported through</p>	<p>Goal: Strategy: Action: Targets:</p>	<p>Create and/or enhance Main Street attention in incorporated communities. Make Downtown Look as Marketable as Possible Create a Main Street Committee and Champion the Cause for Main Street Development in Starke County</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1037 1218 1917 1253"> <tr> <td>2006</td> <td>2007</td> <td>2008</td> <td>2009</td> <td>2010</td> </tr> </table>					2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
2006	2007	2008	2009	2010							

<p>the Indiana Department of Commerce and the National Main Street Program.</p>		Defined	Revisited	Revisited	Revisited	Revisited
<p>#4 North Judson. Along the way, the SCDF has created an industrial park in North Judson. This park has been repeatedly shown to numerous potential investors and it has been rejected for any one of a number of reasons. Recent studies have indicated that this parcel may be better developed in the near term as a residential project. Although site planning has not been completed, preliminary indications seem to point to somewhere between 70 and 90 lots that could be developed on this parcel.</p>	<p>Goal: Strategy: Action:  Targets:</p>	<p>Bring a non-producing asset into production for North Judson. Identify a non-industrial use for that site. Partner with a qualified developer to produce a redevelopment effort that produces lots, residents and investment capital for this community.</p>				
<p>2006                      2007                      2008                      2009                      2010</p>		<p>Finalize redevelopment strategy</p>	<p>Implement</p>	<p>Implement</p>	<p>Implement</p>	<p>Implement</p>

## Organizational Development

The core of any economic development program is the organization itself. With a solid foundation, the organization can be a productive resource of growth and change in the county. The long presence and performance of the SCDF points to a history of successful economic development in Starke County by the SCDF. There were some positives and negatives generated from the feedback systems identified earlier in the subject area of the organization itself.

### Positive Aspects

- The SCDF was consistently recognized as a leader in economic development in Starke County. Over 78% of the respondents gave the SCDF passing grades at economic development.
- The SCDF received good marks, 57% vs. 35% for its ability to integrate with other community and economic development organizations.

### Areas for Improvement

- A slight majority, 41% vs. 39% felt that the funds for economic development were inadequate in Starke County. An increase in funding may be in order.
- Many people felt uninformed about the SCDF's activities and successes.

Starke County has chosen to create a private foundation funded solely by CEDIT revenues through the county.<sup>1</sup> At this stage in the county's development, this is arguably the most productive form for the economic development organization when funding alternatives are considered. As the county grows the opportunity to share the funding burden for economic development between the public and private sectors may warrant a change to a public/private partnership. Be that as it may, there are a number of important issues that we recommend the SCDF address that will enhance the organizational characteristics of economic development in Starke County.

It is important, nay critically important that Starke County leaders understand the difference between financing a "storefront" vs. financing a productive, functional organization. It is a false positive to think that just because the doors are open that an economic development program exists. There needs to be sufficient funds to finance both an operational budget and a project budget. If only an operational budget is in existence, the program will be operational but not effective. Such a program will face continual criticism for lack of effectively impacting the Starke County economy. Starke County leaders need to fund the organization at a level that maximizes its capabilities to impact the local economy.

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<sup>1</sup> There are three basic types of economic development organizations: Private, membership driven; Public, tax funded and Public/Private Partnerships. Private groups tend to be best represented by Chambers of Commerce. Public groups are best represented by a division of government such as the SCDF and Public/Private partnerships are the more common business model for economic development where all of the beneficiaries contribute to their success in one form or another.

## Organizational Cornerstone – Diminished Funding

Issues	Goals and Strategies					
<p>#1. Mission Statement. We would recommend that a new mission statement be drafted that targets the goals of the organization toward the five cornerstones of economic development. We would also recommend that the mission statement acknowledge that the SCDF deals with non-agricultural issues and that it is not exclusively involved in industrial development. The practice of economic development has evolved to being much more than industrial recruitment. It would be wise for the SCDF to draft a mission statement that reflects these changes.</p>	Goal:	Create a more focused vision for the SCDF				
	Strategy:	Focus on a broader definition of economic development and targets more than industrial companies.				
	Action:	Clearly articulate attainable objectives for each cornerstone				
	Targets:	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
		Refocused in 2006	Retained	Retained	Revisited	Retained
<p>#2. Funding Partner Briefings. It became very evident during this project that the SCDF needs to do a better job of maintaining a close relationship with</p>	Goal:	Maximization of Communication				
	Strategy:	Keep Sources of Capital Informed of SCDF Activities				
	Action:	One on One briefings with key elected and lay officials				
	Targets:	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010

<p>their funding partners. To put it bluntly, the SCDF is getting “out lobbied” by other interests in the county. It’s not that the mission and objectives of the organization are not priorities, but the issues and outcomes of the SCDF need to be better presented to those vested partners of the organization.</p>		Defined	Revisited	Revisited	Revisited	Revisited
<p>#3. Communication. The SCDF needs to increase its communication mechanism back to the community. The need for this was clearly identified in the responses to the survey mechanism. A good “road show” that can be provided electronically or in paper format should be developed for staff and board members alike. At the same time, the web page offers a conduit for information dissemination about progress being made by the organization. Technology can significantly increase productivity in a small organization.</p>	<p>Goal: Strategy: Action:</p>	<p>Communicate Mission of SCDF More Effectively Personal Presentations and Media Releases</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish Quarterly Presentations with Key Partners</li> <li>• Consider email alerts from web page</li> <li>• Link web page alerts to all media sources</li> <li>• Engage Board Members in reporting Process</li> </ul>				
	<p>Targets:</p>	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
	<p>1. Road Show Completed 2. Key Partner Presentations 3. Board Member Participation</p>	<p>Web Page Links</p>	<p>Sustained</p>	<p>Sustained</p>	<p>Sustained</p>	

## Organizational Cornerstone – Sustained Funding

Issues	Goals and Strategies					
<p>#1. Mission Statement. We would recommend that a new mission statement be drafted that targets the goals of the organization toward the five cornerstones of economic development. We would also recommend that the mission statement acknowledge that the SCDF deals with non-agricultural issues and that it is not exclusively involved in industrial development. The practice of economic development has evolved to being much more than industrial recruitment. It would be wise for the SCDF to draft a mission statement that reflects these changes.</p>	Goal:	Create a more focused vision for the SCDF				
	Strategy:	Focus on a broader definition of economic development and targets more than industrial companies.				
	Action:	Clearly articulate attainable objectives for each cornerstone				
	Targets:	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
		Refocused in 2006	Retained	Retained	Revisited	Retained
<p>#2. Funding Partner Briefings. It became very evident during this project that the SCDF needs to do a better job of maintaining a close relationship with</p>	Goal:	Maximization of Communication				
	Strategy:	Keep Sources of Capital Informed of SCDF Activities				
	Action:	One on One briefings with key elected and lay officials				
	Targets:	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010

<p>their funding partners. To put it bluntly, the SCDF is getting “out lobbied” by other interests in the county. It’s not that the mission and objectives of the organization are not priorities, but the issues and outcomes of the SCDF need to be better presented to those vested partners of the organization.</p>		Defined	Revisited	Revisited	Revisited	Revisited
<p>#3. Develop Strategic Relationships. It is critical for Starke County to be able to open the doors of important decision makers all the way up the chain of decision making and authority. Who is your point of contact for state elected officials, Federal Representatives and yes, the Governor’s office?</p>	<p>Goal: Strategy: Action: Targets:</p>	<p>Establish access to key decision makers. Be absolutely certain the SCDF can access the key decision makers impacting their future success. Create list of top 20 most influential people in the county and statewide who can influence the success of the organization.</p>				
		2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
		Developed	Updated	Updated	Updated	Updated
<p>#4. Communication. The SCDF needs to increase its communication mechanism back to the community. The need for this was clearly identified in the responses to the survey mechanism. A good “road show” that can be provided electronically or in paper format should be developed for staff and board members alike. At the same time, the web page offers a conduit for information dissemination about progress being made by the organization. Technology can significantly increase productivity in a small organization.</p>	<p>Goal: Strategy: Action: Targets:</p>	<p>Communicate Mission of SCDF More Effectively Personal Presentations and Media Releases  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish Quarterly Presentations with Key Partners</li> <li>• Consider email alerts from web page</li> <li>• Link web page alerts to all media sources</li> <li>• Engage Board Members in reporting Process</li> </ul> </p>				
		2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
		4. Road Show Completed 5. Key Partner Presentations 6. Board Member Participation	Web Page Links	Sustained	Sustained	Sustained

## Organizational Cornerstone – Enhanced Funding

Issues	Goals and Strategies					
<p>#1. Mission Statement. We would recommend that a new mission statement be drafted that targets the goals of the organization toward the five cornerstones of economic development. We would also recommend that the mission statement acknowledge that the SCDF deals with non-agricultural issues and that it is not exclusively involved in industrial development. The practice of economic development has evolved to being much more than industrial recruitment. It would be wise for the SCDF to draft a mission statement that reflects these changes.</p>	Goal:	Create a more focused vision for the SCDF				
	Strategy:	Focus on a broader definition of economic development and targets more than industrial companies.				
	Action:	Clearly articulate attainable objectives for each cornerstone				
	Targets:	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
		Refocused in 2006	Retained	Retained	Revisited	Retained
<p>#2. Funding Partner Briefings. It became very evident during this project that the SCDF needs to do a better job of maintaining a close relationship with their funding partners. To put it bluntly, the SCDF is getting “out lobbied” by other interests in the county. It’s not that the mission and objectives of the organization are not priorities, but the issues and outcomes of the SCDF need to be better presented to those vested partners of the organization.</p>	Goal:	Maximization of Communication				
	Strategy:	Keep Sources of Capital Informed of SCDF Activities				
	Action:	One on One briefings with key elected and lay officials				
	Targets:	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
		Defined	Revisited	Revisited	Revisited	Revisited

<p>#3. Develop Strategic Relationships. It is critical for Starke County to be able to open the doors of important decision makers all the way up the chain of decision making and authority. Who is your point of contact for state elected officials, Federal Representatives and yes, the Governor's office?</p>	<p>Goal: Strategy: Action: Targets:</p>	<p>Establish access to key decision makers. Be absolutely certain the SCDF can access the key decision makers impacting their future success. Create list of top 20 most influential people in the county and statewide who can influence the success of the organization.</p>				
<p>#4. Funding. The SCDF is marginally funded. At this time they operate on a budget which needs to be increased. A preferred goal would be \$300,000. This can be achieved by an increase in the CEDIT funding to the organization. Other sources such as forming a county Economic Development Corporation for handling tax exempt financing can produce a good revenue source. A Convention and Visitors Bureau will allow the county to issue a bed tax on hotel rooms which will generate additional operating funds as well. Other counties have produced incentive negotiating policies that produced revenue as incentives were awarded. Two professionals, one focusing on Organization and Product issues (typically the Executive Director) and one focusing on Business, Workforce and Market (Economic Development Director) issues are needed along with a support person.</p>	<p>Goal: Strategy: Action: Targets:</p>	<p>Elevate SCDF Effectiveness Increase Funding to \$300,000 Raise Additional Funds via</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased county support</li> <li>• Incorporate town support</li> <li>• Formation of an EDC</li> <li>• Formation of a CVB</li> <li>• Incentive Fee Structure</li> </ul>				
		2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
		Developed	Updated	Updated	Updated	Updated
		100,000	125,000	150,000	175,000	200,000

<p>#5. Communication. The SCDF needs to increase its communication mechanism back to the community. The need for this was clearly identified in the responses to the survey mechanism. A good “road show” that can be provided electronically or in paper format should be developed for staff and board members alike. At the same time, the web page offers a conduit for information dissemination about progress being made by the organization. Technology can significantly increase productivity in a small organization.</p>	<p>Goal: Communicate Mission of SCDF More Effectively</p>					
	<p>Strategy: Personal Presentations and Media Releases</p>					
	<p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish Quarterly Presentations with Key Partners</li> <li>• Consider email alerts from web page</li> <li>• Link web page alerts to all media sources</li> <li>• Engage Board Members in reporting Process</li> </ul>					
	Targets:	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
	7. Road Show Completed		Web Page Links	Sustained	Sustained	Sustained
	8. Key Partner Presentations					
	9. Board Member Participation					

## Marketing the Product (Attraction)

Business attraction focuses on identifying companies from outside the area and enticing them to expand or relocate into a community. The goal is simple and straightforward; to secure new jobs and investment. It is glamorous work, frequently commanding the most recognition of economic development efforts in the media. However, it is extremely expensive and it offers relatively low return on the economic development dollar. With that as a foundation and in recognition of the needs of the county the consulting team does not recommend an aggressive marketing program for Starke County at this time. We would recommend that you focus more on response capacity than lead generation.

In the interviews and surveys conducted in the community, the following feedback was obtained:

- Respondents seem to clearly understand the fundamental change in our economies as they strongly acknowledged the understanding that job creating opportunities will come from areas other than manufacturing. They encouraged the SCDF to pursue job creating opportunities in areas other than their traditional industrial approach (82% of the respondents).
- Business Attraction received the second highest rating (2.22 on a five point scale where the lower the number the higher the priority).
- The SCDF is encouraged to continue its emphasis on tourism development (67% approval rating) and they are slightly more encouraged to act as a single county tourism agency as opposed to a regional agency (49.4% disagree with regional tourism as opposed to 48.3% who would prefer it).

There are three levels to any attraction program:

1. A strong business retention program. If the existing business base cannot speak well of the community it will be very difficult to attract new businesses. It has been shown over and over that businesses thinking about locating to a community will contact the existing business base to get a “read” on the local business climate.
2. A rapid response system. It is critical that the economic development program be able to respond quickly and accurately to inquiries.
3. A lead generation system. A lead generation system that ultimately results in new investment completes the triad of levels that comprise an attraction program.

Based upon this input, the following plan of action was assembled for business development activities.

## Marketing/Attraction Cornerstone – Diminished Funding

Issues	Goals and Strategies					
<p>#1. Information Assembly and Printing. Having accurate and up to date information is critical for program success. There are two places where a community can obtain a competitive advantage in economic development; with the accuracy of their data and the speed of their responses. We would recommend that focusing on this capacity be a higher emphasis at this time as opposed to actively marketing the county.</p>	<p>Goal: Maximize the capacity of the county to sell itself.</p> <p>Strategy: Build the marketing infrastructure necessary for success.</p> <p>Action:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Update the web page to make a better presence on the digital markets.</li> <li>2. Your Community Profile is incomplete and in need of updating</li> <li>3. Secure written testimonials from private sector leaders first and then public sector leaders (schools, hospital) second.</li> <li>4. Create a low cost community brochure, folder and fact sheets.</li> </ol>					
	Targets:	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
		#1, #2, #3	#4	#1,#2,#3	#4	Repeat

## Marketing/Attraction Cornerstone – Sustained Funding

Issues	Goals and Strategies					
<p>#1. Information Assembly and Printing. Having accurate and up to date information is critical for program success. There are two places where a community can obtain a competitive advantage in economic development; with the accuracy of their data and the speed of their responses. We would recommend that focusing on this capacity be a higher emphasis at this time as opposed to actively marketing the county.</p>	<p>Goal: Maximize the capacity of the county to sell itself.                      Strategy: Build the marketing infrastructure necessary for success.                      Action:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Update the web page to make a better presence on the digital markets.</li> <li>6. Your Community Profile is incomplete and in need of updating</li> <li>7. Secure written testimonials from private sector leaders first and then public sector leaders (schools, hospital) second.</li> <li>8. Create a low cost community brochure, folder and fact sheets.</li> </ol>					
	Targets:	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
		#1, #2, #3	#4	#1,#2,#3	#4	Repeat
<p>#3. Network Development. The development of a strong, strategic network is essential for the near term marketing success of Starke County. A substantial amount of lead generation is occurring from the State Department of Commerce. Lesser amounts of leads are generated from NIPSCO and the Northwest Indiana Forum. These three sources should be the primary source of lead generation for the county in the near future (1-3 years).</p>	<p>Goal: Recognize that leads can be earned and not bought                      Strategy: Leverage relationships to bring in investment                      Action:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Take marketing materials to strategic partners on a regular basis</li> <li>2. Take DOC partners out to lunch (in Indianapolis) semi annually for “Starke Day”</li> <li>3. Invite NIPSCO and Forum guests to the county for familiarization tours</li> <li>4. Meet with NIPSCO &amp; Forum contacts at their offices regularly</li> <li>5. Provide complimentary overnight stays at bed &amp; breakfasts or hotels</li> </ol>					
	Targets:	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
		# 1-5	# 1-5	# 1-5	# 1-5	# 1-5

## Marketing/Attraction Cornerstone – Enhanced Funding

Issues	Goals and Strategies					
<p>#1. Information Assembly and Printing. Having accurate and up to date information is critical for program success. There are two places where a community can obtain a competitive advantage in economic development; with the accuracy of their data and the speed of their responses. We would recommend that focusing on this capacity be a higher emphasis at this time as opposed to actively marketing the county.</p>	<p>Goal: Maximize the capacity of the county to sell itself.                      Strategy: Build the marketing infrastructure necessary for success.                      Action: 9. Update the web page to make a better presence on the digital markets.                      10. Your Community Profile is incomplete and in need of updating                      11. Secure written testimonials from private sector leaders first and then public sector leaders (schools, hospital) second.                      12. Create a low cost community brochure, folder and fact sheets.</p>					
	Targets:	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
		#1, #2, #3	#4	#1,#2,#3	#4	Repeat
<p>#2. Competition Analysis. Starke County Needs a better understanding of its competition and how they stack up against that competition. We would recommend that a close review of the surrounding counties (and other competing counties) be considered. Counties of similar population include Jay, Franklin, Scott, White, Decatur and Fayette.</p>	<p>Goal: Establish a competitive advantage for investment.                      Strategy: Learn the competition, sell to Starke's strengths.                      Action: 1. Identify top five counties for competition                      2. Compare Starke to competition                      3. Sell to Starke's Strengths                      4. Learn to mitigate weaknesses</p>					
	Targets:	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010

<p>Counties with similar wages include Benton, Orange, Union, Davies, Franklin &amp; Parke.</p>		#1, #2	#3, #4	#3, #4	#3, #4	#3, #4
<p>#3. Network Development. The development of a strong, strategic network is essential for the near term marketing success of Starke County. A substantial amount of lead generation is occurring from the State Department of Commerce. Lesser amounts of leads are generated from NIPSCO and the Northwest Indiana Forum. These three sources should be the primary source of lead generation for the county in the near future (1-3 years).</p>	<p>Goal: Strategy: Action:</p>	<p>Recognize that leads can be earned and not bought Leverage relationships to bring in investment 6. Take marketing materials to strategic partners on a regular basis 7. Take DOC partners out to lunch (in Indianapolis) semi annually for “Starke Day” 8. Invite NIPSCO and Forum guests to the county for familiarization tours 9. Meet with NIPSCO &amp; Forum contacts at their offices regularly 10. Provide complimentary overnight stays at bed &amp; breakfasts or hotels</p>				
Targets:		2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
		# 1-5	# 1-5	# 1-5	# 1-5	# 1-5
<p>#4. Group Marketing. The SCDF would be well served to partner with other surrounding counties in a joint marketing effort. This strategy is well supported by both internal opinions as well as emerging trends in economic development.</p>	<p>Goal: Strategy: Action:</p>	<p>Increase promotional capacity of the county. Partnership arrangement with surrounding counties with similar interests. Joint market effort.</p>				
Targets		2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
		Plan, build consensus	Implement	Implement	Implement	Implement
<p>#5. Tourism. Tourism provides the county with base revenue, i.e. revenue from outside the county economy that is realized in restaurants, hotels, gas stations and retail shops just to name a few. The support for tourism activities was made evident through both survey and anecdotal conversations</p>	<p>Goal: Strategy: Action:</p>	<p>Make information readily available to investors. Compile data on an ongoing basis for access to existing companies through the web page. Redesign web page to allow for rapid data dissemination Create resource database 1. Populate database in an on-going basis</p>				
		2006	2007	2008	2009	2010

held during the strategic planning process.	Targets:	#1 Complete	#1 Sustain	#1 Sustain	#1 Sustain	#1 Sustain
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