

Strategies to Bolster Economic Resilience

County Leadership in Action



About the National Association of Counties

The National Association of Counties (NACo) is the only national organization that represents county governments in the United States. Founded in 1935, NACo provides essential services to the nation's 3,069 counties. NACo advances issues with a unified voice before the federal government, improves the public's understanding of county government, assists counties in finding and sharing innovative solutions through education and research, and provides value-added services to save counties and taxpayers money. For more information about NACo, visit www.naco.org.



About the Capacity Building for Sustainable Communities Program

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Cover:

(Left) A researcher utilizes lab equipment at the Research Park at South Dakota State University in Brookings County, South Dakota.

(Right) Augusta-Richmond County, Georgia counts community quality of life as a key factor in business attraction.





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Strategies to Bolster Economic Resilience: County Leadership in Action

Contents

Executive Summary	5
Introduction	7
Long-Range Planning	9
Support for Targeted Industries, Local Businesses and Entrepreneurs	21
Workforce Development and Education	35
Conclusion	42
Further Resources	43
Endnotes	44



Executive Summary

National and global economic dynamics have shifted dramatically in recent decades.

Counties, regions and communities that can foresee, adapt to and leverage changing conditions to their advantage are best positioned to attract and grow new businesses, retain skilled workers and families and promote a high quality of life.

This publication highlights eight counties that are applying innovative approaches to economic development to bolster economic growth and improve community quality of life. The case studies from this research effort indicate how some counties across the country are pursuing creative and innovative policies, partnerships and initiatives for economic growth. Although not exhaustive, the purpose of this document is to highlight compelling examples and open a dialogue with county leaders about approaches to creating healthy, safe, vibrant and economically resilient communities.

FEATURED COUNTIES

- Augusta-Richmond, Georgia
- Brookings, South Dakota
- Cuyahoga, Ohio
- Garrett, Maryland
- King, Washington
- Maui, Hawaii
- Prince George, Virginia
- Rutherford, North Carolina

Based on a series of interviews with county leaders and key partners, three common themes emerged:

- Long-Range Planning
- Support for Targeted Industries, Local Businesses and Entrepreneurs
- Workforce Development and Education

The publication is divided into sections that explore each theme; within each section is a brief introduction and examples of how several counties have put these concepts into action. The three main topic areas are summarized here:

Theme One: Long-Range Planning

Counties can utilize long-range planning to identify strengths and weaknesses and build capacity to bolster county resilience to changing economic conditions.

- **Maui County, Hawaii** pursued a long-range planning effort in the early 1980s that laid the groundwork for a substantial economic diversification effort focused on science and technology industries.
- **Augusta-Richmond County, Georgia** prioritized long-term planning and infrastructure development to breathe life into its urban center. As a result, Augusta-Richmond was able to withstand the recession and attract new investments and improve regional quality of life.
- **Brookings County, South Dakota** formed a public-private partnership to help realize the visions set forth in a strategic economic development plan. County leaders view such partnership activities as a key strategy to growing and diversifying their economic base, creating more jobs and increase the county's overall competitive advantage in the global economy.
- **Garrett County, Maryland** saw the loss of a major employer in the 1990s as an opportunity to develop a long-term economic development plan to diversify the economic base and bolster resilience to future economic stressors.

Although each county pursued long-range planning with varying motivations and methods, a common outcome exists in each case: long-range plans for economic development help county leaders position their communities for ongoing economic growth and lasting resilience to changing economic conditions.

Strategies to Bolster
Economic Resilience:
County Leadership
in Action

Theme Two: Support for Targeted Industries, Local Businesses and Entrepreneurs

Counties can facilitate economic growth by evaluating local strengths and opportunities, becoming knowledgeable about industry trends and cultivating relationships with business leaders to ensure mutual support for both industry and community needs.

- **Maui County, Hawaii** capitalized on its natural physical advantages to attract space research and green energy-related firms.
- **Augusta-Richmond County, Georgia** and **Prince George County, Virginia** leveraged their transportation and infrastructure assets and created partnerships with major firms in the manufacturing sector.
- **King County, Washington** and **Brookings County, South Dakota** invested in programs to encourage growth in targeted knowledge and innovation-based sectors.

Additionally, counties can build stronger local economies that are more resilient to changing conditions by assisting existing businesses and growing local entrepreneurs.

- **Cuyahoga County, Ohio; Garrett County, Maryland; and Brookings County, South Dakota** have funded business training programs, developed business incubators and formed collaborative partnerships to support business development and entrepreneurship.

Theme Three: Workforce Development and Education

Counties can align their economic development activities with workforce development initiatives to meet sector-specific demands. Workforce development initiatives developed in tandem with economic strategies mean that employers can utilize a ready labor supply while counties can retain skilled workers in the community by linking job training with job creation.

- **Maui County, Hawaii** invested in initiatives that educate its young people from an early age in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM)-related fields. For county leaders, this is as much about growing a strong workforce to meet industry needs as it is about investing in the community's future.
- **Garrett County, Maryland** prioritized building a highly educated, technologically advanced and innovative workforce through incentives and partnerships with local training institutions.
- Both **Augusta-Richmond County, Georgia** and **Prince George County, Virginia** invested in workforce training programs and partnerships with local universities to develop a more advanced workforce and attract and retain growing businesses.



National and global economic dynamics have shifted dramatically in recent decades.

Introduction

National and global economic dynamics have shifted dramatically in recent decades. The rapid volume and flow of information, labor and goods around the world has transformed business operations. Talented workers are increasingly mobile, meaning that firms place a high premium on quality of place when making location decisions. High unemployment rates among young Americans coupled with the growing demand for workers with specialized skills means that communities need to invest in human capital to be attractive to employers.¹

To create healthy, safe, vibrant and economically resilient communities, counties must think creatively about their local and regional strengths and how to translate those assets into economic growth. Places that are economically resilient are better able to withstand catastrophe, recover quickly and thrive amid changing circumstances.² Counties, regions and communities that can foresee, adapt to and leverage change to their advantage are best positioned to attract and grow new businesses, retain skilled workers and families and promote a high quality of life.

Each year, counties invest \$25 billion in economic development efforts. They spend \$106 billion annually to build, maintain and operate roads, bridges, transit, water systems and other public facilities, and they own 45 percent of the nation's roadways.³ Through such investments and policy decisions, counties can facilitate private sector growth, by accelerating economic development through public investments in infrastructure, workforce training and business assistance programs, and by convening decision-makers in public agencies, private firms and regional and state institutions.

Additionally, counties operate hospitals and health facilities, run law enforcement and criminal justice systems, build and operate parks and recreation facilities, oversee elections and maintain records, and provide a host of other social and administrative services that indirectly provide support for the local economy. Counties cannot continue to deliver these services without a healthy revenue base; robust economic development efforts are essential to ensuring that a county can operate these vital community services.

Strategies to Bolster
Economic Resilience:
County Leadership
in Action

This publication intends to spark conversation among county leaders by highlighting eight counties that are applying innovative approaches to bolster economic growth and improve community quality of life. From crafting economic visions and supporting new business ventures, to training local workers and assisting entrepreneurs, county leaders and their partners are approaching economic development in compelling new ways. This research effort cannot capture all of the innovative things that counties are pursuing, and many more examples abound. The purpose of this guide is to share examples and case studies to contribute to the dialogue and offer ideas for county leaders to apply in their communities.

Through a series of interviews with county leaders and key partners, the following three themes emerged:

- Long-Range Planning
- Support for Targeted Industries, Local Businesses and Entrepreneurs
- Workforce Development and Education

The publication is organized around those themes. Within each section, you'll find examples of how several different counties have put these concepts into action.

TABLE 1. FEATURED COUNTY OVERVIEWS.

County	State	Population (2012)	Land Area (square miles, 2010)
Augusta-Richmond	Georgia	202,600	324
Brookings	South Dakota	32,600	792
Cuyahoga	Ohio	1.3 million	457
Garrett	Maryland	29,900	647
King	Washington	2.0 million	2,116
Maui	Hawaii	158,200	1,162
Prince George	Virginia	36,900	265
Rutherford	North Carolina	67,300	564

Information from United States Census Bureau • www.census.gov



Planners and economic developers discuss a downtown development strategy for Biloxi, Miss.

Source: Wikimedia Commons

Long-Range Planning

County leaders know the importance of investing time and resources in creating strategies for a community's future.

Through resident and stakeholder engagement, consensus-building and data analysis, county leaders and their local and regional partners are better equipped to position their communities for quality growth.

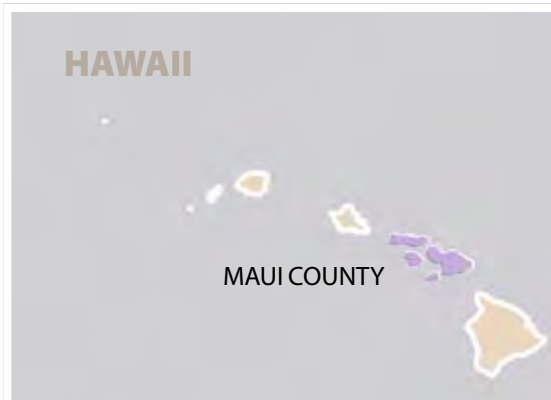
In some counties, conversations about long-term planning for economic resilience have led to discussions about diversifying the economic base. Places that are economically resilient are not only better prepared to cope with changing circumstances, but are also able to seize the opportunities that come with change. Many places – particularly in rural areas – historically found themselves reliant on one or two industries, such as agriculture, manufacturing, resource extraction or tourism, leaving them vulnerable to industry downturns. Through long-term strategic planning, counties can identify strengths and weaknesses and build capacity to bolster county resilience to changing economic conditions.

This section describes the long-range planning efforts of four counties. Stakeholders in Maui County, Hawaii initiated conversations about the county's economic future in the early 1980s, resulting in a major economic diversification effort and the growth of optical, space surveillance and renewable energy industries. Augusta-Richmond County, Georgia invested in long-term planning and infrastructure development to ensure economic growth and support downtown revitalization. Public and private-sector leaders in Brookings County, South Dakota came together to develop a vision to support expanding industries. Finally, Garrett County, Maryland conducted a strategic planning process in response to the loss of a major employer, allowing county leaders to broaden the economic base by capitalizing on local assets.

Strategies to Bolster
Economic Resilience:
County Leadership
in Action

Maui County

With a population of about 158,000, Maui is the third largest of Hawaii's five counties and includes the islands of Maui, Lana'i and Moloka'i.⁴ Once almost exclusively reliant on tourism and agriculture, Maui has worked since the 1980s to diversify and revitalize its economy.



Maui's present-day economic initiatives were set in motion in 1981 when community leaders held a conference to discuss Maui's economic future. The meeting was prompted by the need to address the region's economic disadvantages at the time: namely, a high dependence on agriculture and tourism, two industries that were extremely vulnerable to forces outside of Maui's control. The conference attendees concluded that in order to stabilize and grow the economy, their best strategy was to increase

economic diversification by investing in science and technology-related industries, motivated by several reasons.

First, Maui possesses physical advantages for science and space industries. Maui's Haleakala Volcano is one of the most ideal sites in the world for space observation, and the county is also bountiful in clean energy resources such as solar, wind and geothermal energy. Second, community leaders believed investments in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) training could provide stable employment opportunities and a variety of professions, creating more career options for Maui's students and young professionals.

To achieve this vision, local leaders established the Maui Economic Development Board (MEDB) in 1982. This group was tasked with organizing and overseeing the transition from reliance on agriculture and tourism to a technology and science-based workforce. A 501 (c)(3) nonprofit, MEDB acts as a liaison between the county and the private sector. MEDB also provides a robust set of education, training and networking programs to support business development and innovation. Through key partnerships with targeted industries and substantial workforce training programs (detailed later in this report), MEDB has supported growth in the research and science industries, with a corresponding employment increase in STEM fields. Especially notable is the growth in educational and alternative energy sectors, which have

U.S. Department of Defense located their largest optical telescope at the Maui Space Surveillance Complex, located at the summit of the Haleakala Volcano.

Source: U.S. Air Force Research Laboratory



helped maintain sustainable economic expansion since MEDB's inception.

MEDB faced some early challenges, including the task of convincing Maui's citizens and outsiders alike that the area was not only a tourist destination, but also a serious player in the high-tech world. However, after several successes, including the establishment of the Maui Research and Technology Park (where the U.S. Department of Defense opted to house one of the country's few supercomputing centers), Maui County has emerged as a leader in growing space surveillance and technology industries and supporting STEM careers and workforce development.⁵ MEDB President and CEO Jeanne Skog noted: "Our founders showed great wisdom in forming a nonprofit to lead diversification. It's allowed us—and therefore our community—to remain focused on diversification regardless of who was leading in the public or private sector."

Because Maui's leaders had the foresight to invest in long-term planning, the community has reaped the benefits of a more resilient economy. Skog estimates that "at the time MEDB was formed, there were about 175 people employed in technology sectors. Our best estimate now is over 3,000 people employed in STEM fields." Furthermore, Maui has seen an increase in the number of Hawaii high school graduates holding technical jobs, from less than one percent in the early 2000s to 25 percent now.⁶ Additionally, more than 160 technology companies were located in Maui County by 2007; in 2010 alone, MEDB helped over 250 tech-related entities establish, expand, or consolidate their presence in the county.⁷

"Do your long range planning. Get it rolling now, don't wait. Plan big."

— WALTER SPROUSE,
AUGUSTA-RICHMOND COUNTY



Augusta-Richmond County

Similarly, Augusta-Richmond County, Georgia, attributes much of its current success in business attraction and strategic downtown revitalization to long-term planning. Located on the Savannah River about 150 miles east of Atlanta, the area is served by a joint city-county government that encompasses the city of Augusta and the area that was formerly Richmond County, with a total population of 202,000 citizens.⁸ After an economic downturn in the late 20th century, Augusta-Richmond has experienced a revival in more recent years and was able to withstand the recession and simultaneously attract new investment in the county. Businesses have opened branches in the county, the region's educational institutions have increased programming, and community leaders have encouraged investment in historic preservation and downtown development.

The county's focus on expanding economic prospects was in part a response to past economic distress. In the 1970s and 1980s, Augusta's residents began relocating to the suburbs; the ensuing mass movement away from the city resulted in a declining urban center, echoing a trend taking place in many American towns and cities at this time.⁹ This trend began to reverse in Augusta in the early 1990s, when the city was designated a national Main Street by the National Main Street Center, a program funded by the National Trust for Historic Preservation that supports local towns and cities with downtown revitalization efforts. The launch of the Main Street program

Strategies to Bolster
Economic Resilience:
County Leadership
in Action

Downtown Revitalization in Augusta-Richmond County

Augusta-Richmond County is currently executing a thorough downtown development and rejuvenation program. An important goal of this effort is to promote the region's quality of life, a factor which also helps attract new business. For example, local leaders found that community development activities helped to encourage Starbucks to locate a large manufacturing facility in the county in 2012 (described later in this report). Augusta Mayor Deke Copenhaver observed: "[the fact] that we had a vibrant arts community is one of the things that sold Starbucks on Augusta."

Augusta-Richmond is abundant in arts and culture offerings—especially music—and community leaders identify accessible transportation, excellent healthcare and a reputation for a high quality of life at a low cost as local assets. The appeal of the city has continued to rise since the introduction of the city's new Trade, Exhibit and Events

(TEE) convention center, which opened on the riverfront in February 2013. Mayor Copenhaver noted that "there's really a halo effect with the new convention center. It's become a source of civic pride." The center has also led to significant growth in the city's hospitality industry. Efforts to finance the TEE center are linked to investments in historic preservation, with a funding plan mandating that earnings from a 50-year, one dollar per night hotel fee be split between the convention center and downtown preservation efforts.¹⁰

Historic preservation and adaptive reuse programs are an ongoing county priority, including initiatives that highlight the city's history and architecture while refurbishing old structures for new purposes such as residential and mixed-use space. Through the Laney Walker/Bethlehem Revitalization initiative, Augusta currently aims to restore almost 1,100 acres of the city, providing enough new or updated residences to accommodate 10,000 additional people to the area and covering as much as a quarter of that area in green space.¹¹

(Left) Dilapidated and abandoned homes in the historic African-American neighborhood on Pine Street before Augusta's Laney Walker/Bethlehem Revitalization initiative. (Right) Pine Street 'after' images of new mixed-income, mixed-tenure housing options at Heritage Pine, the initiative's flagship development.





A local citizen shows her thanks and neighbors participate at the Blocks are Beautiful annual celebration of community heritage and neighborhood revitalization in Augusta's Laney Walker/Bethlehem neighborhood.

Source: Augusta-Richmond County

"The environmental aspect is huge," said Mayor Copenhaver. "There's an emphasis on green and healthier living." Augusta-Richmond is providing incentives for private investment in these projects, such as low-interest loans and assistance to commercial property owners. Mayor Copenhaver added that private investment now matches public investment seven times over, and that the city "basically can't build houses fast enough in the neighborhood." Additional development is expected when a newly consolidated university (formed from merging Georgia Health

Sciences University and Augusta State University) builds on property near downtown Augusta. Suggestions for using the property include a biotechnology research park and recreational facilities, and county officials' intention is that whatever is built will add to community economic growth.¹² One possibility for university expansion is moving part of the university into two hydroelectric power-producing mills. Mayor Copenhaver said of the possible move: "if we're able to do it, you could potentially have the first carbon-negative campus in the world."

Source: Augusta-Richmond County



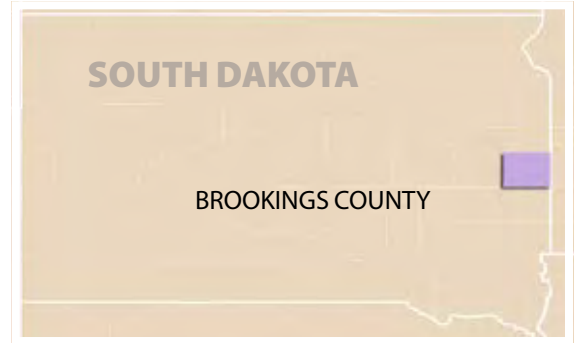
in Augusta provided local leaders with the support and assistance necessary to pursue long-term planning efforts to attract residents and businesses back to Augusta's downtown district.

For example, these early planning efforts provided a means to allow local arts and culture groups to initiate events such as a First Friday art walk and a farmers and artisans market in downtown. According to Augusta Economic Development Authority Executive Director Walter Sprouse, the community identified a need for proper wastewater capacities and subsequently put a new system in place, effectively planning 20 to 30 years in advance for long-term economic security. Sprouse explained that Augusta's foresight in infrastructure improvements has made a big difference in attracting companies; now when businesses consider locating in Augusta, their basic infrastructure needs can be met. "Do your long range planning. Get it rolling now, don't wait. Plan big," he advised.

Augusta-Richmond's leaders point to other benefits of investing in long-range planning. For example, the community now has the foundation of a diverse economic base. Sprouse remarked, "When the recession hit, Augusta was not affected the way some communities were, such as areas with one type of industry. The good thing about Augusta is we have a great diversification of employees here. A lot of segments of our economy stayed strong, even after the recession." Sprouse credits the strength of the region's medical, service and manufacturing industries with keeping the county on solid ground. Augusta-Richmond is also home to Fort Gordon, a leading military base in technology training. The result, Sprouse indicated, is a varied economy with both large and small companies contributing to Augusta's economic stability.

Brookings County

Brookings County, South Dakota illustrates how innovative public-private partnerships can help realize a county-wide economic development vision and target investments to support growth industries. County leaders view this as an opportunity to grow and diversify their economic base, create more jobs and increase the county's overall competitive advantage in the global economy. Situated in the



eastern portion of South Dakota at the intersection of Interstate 29 and Highway 14, Brookings County is home to 32,600 people.¹³

Over the past ten years, Brookings County has experienced a population growth of 20.1 percent.¹⁴ Brookings County prides itself on having a number of amenities to support successful business development and entrepreneurship, including its location along a major transportation corridor in eastern South Dakota, the presence of South Dakota State University—a land grant research university—and various tax benefits.

The Brookings Economic Development Corporation (Brookings EDC) is the primary agency responsible for economic development in Brookings County. Brookings EDC works closely with Brookings County staff, along with other local government agencies and organizations, to retain and expand local businesses, attract new businesses and industries, enhance entrepreneurial growth and retain and recruit a highly skilled and diverse workforce.

In 2005, Brookings EDC, the Brookings Area Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Brookings, Inc. organized a series of meetings to discuss the county's major economic development issues. Out of these initial meetings arose a common understanding that private-sector investments were vital for the successful implementation of the county's economic development goals related to workforce development and economic diversification. The meetings led to the establishment of the Vision Brookings Coalition, a partnership of the Brookings EDC, the Brookings Area Chamber of Commerce and Downtown



Brookings County promotes its downtown as an exciting place to live, work and play.

Source: Brookings County

Brookings, Inc. The Coalition established objectives to leverage funding to attract more advanced manufacturing and science and technology industries, address downtown revitalization efforts, retain and attract a solid workforce and encourage and accelerate entrepreneurship.¹⁵

That same year, the Coalition launched Vision Brookings 2010, a five-year community and economic development fund-raising campaign that provided an economic development action plan for Brookings County to support local workforce and entrepreneurial needs and create collective wealth. Over the next five years, the campaign raised \$4.1 million in cash and in-kind pledges that were used to leverage additional public and private funds. Most notably, Vision Brookings 2010 provided \$1.5 million in seed capital to help leverage various local, state and federal funding for the construction of the Innovation Campus. Also, the campaign invested \$369,150 of support for new business start-ups in the county, and invested \$100,165 in various workforce development training programs and studies. According to analysis completed by the Vision Brookings Coalition, the short-term impacts of these investments include over 1,500 net new jobs created from 2006 to 2009; 25 new retail establishments; construction of the Innovation Campus; and construction of over 700 new housing units.¹⁶

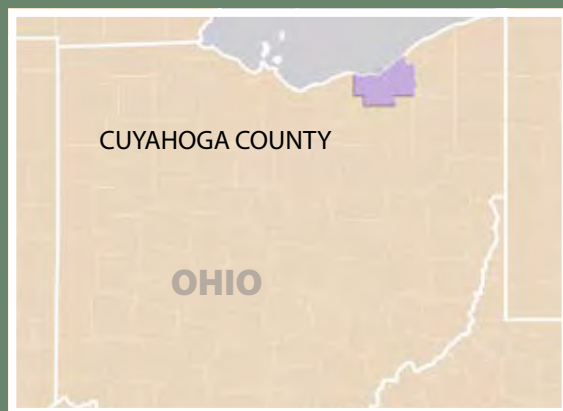
Building on the efforts of the first round of Vision Brookings, a second fundraising initiative was formed in 2011, designated Vision Brookings II. This second

campaign was aligned with the vision, goals and initiatives laid out in the Brookings County's economic development plan, which was born from a 2007 visioning event that brought together more than 100 community, political and private sector leaders to create an economic development framework for the county. The county plan established measurable goals and initiatives related to the vision of pursuing smart and balanced growth, ensuring economic prosperity, fostering competitive business environment and advancing community and leadership collaboration. For example, one of the primary goals of the plan was to build an economic environment that supports employment alternatives in emerging industry clusters.

To achieve this, Vision Brookings II invested \$250,000 and leveraged \$1.75 million in grant and loan money to develop the Agriculture Technology Center for Rural Enterprise, a business incubator that provides technology and research opportunities to scale up new inventions and products in the agricultural sector. The facility provides entrepreneurs with an opportunity to franchise their innovations for use in other rural communities and regions of South Dakota. Furthermore, to support the plan's vision for advancing community and leadership collaboration, Vision Brookings II invested \$10,000 to market and recruit prospective businesses to the Research Park at South Dakota State University (described later in this report). The \$10,000 is being used to develop a recruitment strategy, participate in events and develop a website for the Research Park.

Intergovernmental Collaboration in Economic Development

Cuyahoga County, Ohio demonstrates how counties can foster an environment of cooperation instead of competition with their local and regional neighbors. With a population of about 1.2 million, Cuyahoga County contains the city of Cleveland and is Ohio's most populous county.¹⁷ It is one of 16 counties involved with the Fund for Our Economic Future, a consortium of northeastern Ohio counties that collaborate on economic development projects. Cuyahoga's activities are set against this backdrop of regional economic initiatives, taking part in such programs as Advance Northeast Ohio (the area's economic plan), the Manufacturing Advocacy and Growth Network (the advocate for northeast Ohio's manufacturing sector) and the Partnership for Regional Innovation Services to Manufacturers initiative (a program to help manufacturers evolve into knowledge-based companies specializing in modern industries like clean energy).



Cuyahoga County is an active player in northeast Ohio's development efforts, and has gone through significant structural changes to boost local and regional collaboration. In 2008, the county shifted from a three-person commissioner board to a single elected county executive. This county executive works with a newly established 11-person council to run county affairs. The first county executive, Edward Fitzgerald, assumed office in 2010 and has been working to not only increase efficiency in a county long impaired by corrupt behavior, but to make Cuyahoga one of the most economically progressive counties in the state.

A key county-led initiative is Cuyahoga's Business Attraction and Anti-Poaching Protocol. Initially announced in September 2011, the protocol calls for Cuyahoga's communities to cooperate, rather than compete, when it comes to business development in the region. The Anti-Poaching Protocol thus echoes the region-wide economic collaboration of Northeast Ohio. The name of the protocol comes from one of its four main tenets: that communities not seek to attract, or "poach," businesses from other communities who have not expressed an interest in relocating. The protocol's other main principles request that communities:

- assign an economic development liaison person whose information will be entered into a county-wide database;
- if approached by a business wishing to relocate, contact the business's current community unless confidentiality is preferred;
- consider a revenue sharing arrangement with the original community, though an arrangement would not be mandatory.¹⁸

In addition to these four principles, the county established a Business Retention and Expansion Advisory Council in conjunction with the protocol. The Council, composed of local economic development directors, provides an opportunity for different communities' leaders to share ideas and best practices, learn about each other's business needs and discuss other local and state programs. Ed Jerse, the county's Director of Regional Collaboration, addressed the county's overall vision for the project: "Our hope is that through this protocol, communities will try to grow by attracting businesses outside the area or encouraging growth inside their borders." The ultimate goal of the protocol is thus to reform the region's approach to economic expansion.

The county encountered several hurdles when first outlining and implementing the protocol. One of these was the need to appeal to all of Cuyahoga's 59 communities, which include wealthy suburban areas, less affluent suburbs and poorer urban neighborhoods, and convince them of the benefits of signing the protocol. While at times even county officials weren't sure it was possible, Cuyahoga's



Cuyahoga County, Ohio is seeking to foster economic collaboration across jurisdictions.

Source: Wikimedia Commons

government was ultimately able to celebrate on January 24, 2013, when the final 59th community signed the anti-poaching agreement.¹⁹

Though officials agree that the protocol is the first of many steps to be taken, it represents an important moment in the effort to foster the spirit of collaboration. Jerse noted that “this has been an unprecedented step in bringing communities together, and we’re getting them to recognize we need to grow together as a county.” Such county-wide cooperation is un-heard of in Cuyahoga, and officials hope that more regional collaboration will follow. In an article written for the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, Executive FitzGerald explores these larger implications, explaining that the protocol “sends a message to the business community that there is a new approach to economic development in Cuyahoga County and our communities can work together to maximize our attractiveness to business.”

Other efforts to reduce costs include plans for a relocation of county offices from an unnecessarily large number of buildings to more appropriately-sized premises in downtown Cleveland, a move which will increase efficiency while simultaneously

attracting development to a rundown part of the city. Additionally, Executive FitzGerald intends to centralize services such as the county’s emergency response system, planning to decrease Cuyahoga’s number of emergency dispatch centers from over 40 to four. He also oversaw the final stages of the new convention center in Cleveland, which came in under budget at its June 2013 opening and is part of a large complex including a retail space, the Global Center for Health Innovation and a planned convention center hotel. The county’s efforts demonstrate how a single strategy can have far-reaching effects, as efforts to improve efficiency and organization, save money and inspire business development have been addressed simultaneously.

Evidence of the success of Cuyahoga County’s economic development overhaul can be seen everywhere. Jerse reported: “We’ve received calls from local officials seeking to make sure they are properly following the protocol,” a phenomenon revealing that collaboration and respect are beginning to permeate the county. Jerse added that “communities now have a greater sensitivity about relationships with their neighbors and their need to interact with their neighbors.”

Garrett County

By creating strategies focused on existing assets, counties can broaden the local economic base, as demonstrated by Garrett County, Maryland. Known for its attractive natural landscape and preserved rural character, Garrett County shares a border with both Pennsylvania and West Virginia and is the westernmost county in the state of Maryland. With a modest population of approximately 30,000, Garrett is the most sparsely populated county in the state and boasts over 76,000 acres of publicly owned parks, rivers and lakes, making it a popular destination for regional outdoor enthusiasts.²⁰ These amenities have contributed to an influx of visitors and second-homeowners from the Washington, DC metro area. Although the tourism industry serves as an integral piece of Garrett County's economy, the county has made strides to diversify its business base by strengthening and capitalizing on its existing assets – talented and dedicated residents, scenic landscapes and abundant natural resources.

Over the past 20 years, Garrett County's economy has expanded its traditional base of agriculture, manufacturing, forest products and mining to include tourism, commerce, construction, arts and culture and value-added agriculture. But Garrett's economic evolution did not happen overnight. Much of Gar-



rett County's success can be traced back to a dismal and uncertain time in the county's history. In 1996, Garrett suffered a major economic setback with the announcement that Bausch and Lomb, the county's single largest private employer, was going to close its Ray-Ban Sunglass manufacturing facility. Employing over 800 Garrett County residents alone, its closing singlehandedly led to a dramatic increase in county unemployment levels, soaring to 18 percent for the remaining months of 1996 and holding steady at 14 percent for all of 1997.²¹

In the midst of this economic crisis, county officials and leaders grappled with the huge task of addressing the realities of county-wide job loss and dimin-

Garrett County's Deep Creek Lake is a popular destination among recreation enthusiasts and second-home-owners.





Garrett County is home to over 600 farms.

Source: Garrett County

ished economic opportunity, while also formulating a new direction for economic development to bolster the county’s resilience to future shocks. Instead of intensifying their industrial recruiting efforts to attract another large-scale private facility to employ the majority of its workforce, county leaders began down an entirely new and different path of crafting an economic development plan focused primarily on economic diversification strategies. The closing of the Bausch and Lomb facility served as the major catalyst for the county’s decision to perform a SWOT analysis, a study to measure their economy’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The SWOT analysis findings were used to inform the county’s first strategic plan for economic development.

“As we move forward and seek to amplify these successes, we stand on the shoulders of this decades-long collaboration and rely on the creativity and strategic leadership that it generates.”

— Mike Koch, Garrett County

Garrett County’s Economic Development Assistant Director Frank Shap believes that one of the reasons the county embarked on a longer-term planning initiative was because of a shared realization that the rapidly changing global economy had implications for how rural communities could stay economically viable. “Like many rural counties in the South, we did not anticipate that the effects of globalization would make it much more difficult for us to not only attract large-scale industry but also keep them here. It wasn’t until we were faced with the challenge of losing our largest employing industry that we realized we had all of our eggs in one basket. We knew we needed to embark on a far less vulnerable, more resilient approach to economic development if we didn’t want to wind up in this similar situation in the future.”

Since the development of the initial strategic plan, Garrett County updates its economic development strategic plan every five years. Published in 2011, the most recent plan emphasizes a strategic direction focused on actionable steps to increase economic diversity by pursuing policies and initiatives related to educational attainment, environmental preservation, entrepreneurial support, alternative energy advancements and quality of life.²² Garrett County Economic Development Executive Director Mike Koch attributes the success of the county’s strategic planning process to the high degree of collaboration, communication and cooperation among county staff and elected officials, community members, the business community, non-profit organizations and school system officials. Koch notes: “Garrett County’s economic development successes are the product of a long and productive collaboration between community business, education, healthcare and government leaders. As we move forward and seek to amplify these successes, we stand on the shoulders of this decades-long collaboration and rely on the creativity and strategic leadership that it generates.”

Thanks to the foresight of its leaders, Garrett County was able to create programs that offer innovative approaches to workforce development and technology investment, support for local entrepreneurs and expansion of its traditional economic assets, detailed in the following sections.

Strategies to Bolster
Economic Resilience:
County Leadership
in Action

Diversifying the Economy through Value-Added Agriculture

Historically, Garrett County's economy was predominantly based on agricultural and coal extraction industries. Today, the county is moving beyond traditional mono-crop production to focus on value-added farming techniques, such as small-scale, organic and locally sourced farming operations. Additionally, the county has witnessed an increase in farming operations, with a recorded 650 farms in Garrett County as of 2007, up by seven percent from 2002 levels.²³ Also in 2007, there were 1,398 jobs that were directly and indirectly related to the county's agriculture industry and farms made up 22 percent of the county's total land area.²⁴

Cheryl DeBerry, Garrett County's Natural Resources Business Specialist, iterated the importance of value-added agriculture to both the county's economy and landscape: "With over 600 farms, Garrett County is pursuing a healthy mixture of farms producing food, feed, fiber and other products to help keep our productive agricultural land profitable for our farm business owners."

Garrett County's Economic Development Office prioritizes support for the county's local food movement and its farmers. DeBerry offers business support to the county's agriculture and natural resource-related businesses. In this capacity, DeBerry has helped a number of small-scale farming operations develop their business plans, navigate permitting and regulatory processes and develop their marketing and advertising efforts. DeBerry also works closely with the University of Maryland Extension Office on the Garrett Growers Cooperative, which is a fresh produce farmer cooperative that sells to local and regional restaurants and grocers.

In 2013, the Cooperative was composed of 13 farmers who planned and marketed their produce to new outlets, including the Garrett County Health Department's Head Start Program.²⁵ The Garrett County Economic Development office also prepared the "Local Food and Farm Guide: Fresh From the Farm," a guide for residents and farmers interested in learning more about local farms, markets, vendors and other opportunities for local and regional food system engagement. "By pursuing such efforts," DeBerry notes, "Garrett County acknowledges that value-added agriculture is one of our fundamental economic diversification efforts that keeps our county growing and thriving."

Local residents visit the Garrett County Farmers Market.

Source: Garrett County



Support for Targeted Industries, Local Businesses and Entrepreneurs

Many counties and localities across the nation have experienced some form of economic structural change.

The counties highlighted in this section are facilitating economic growth by evaluating local strengths and opportunities, becoming knowledgeable about industry trends and cultivating relationships with business leaders to ensure mutual support for both industry and community needs. For example, Maui County has capitalized on its natural physical advantages to attract space-related industries, while Augusta-Richmond County and Prince George County are leveraging transportation and infrastructure assets and creating partnerships with major firms in the manufacturing sector. Additionally, King County and Brookings County are aligning business support efforts to encourage growth in targeted knowledge and innovation-based sectors.

However, successful county leaders do not focus solely on recruiting new firms and industries. Counties can build stronger local economies that are more resilient to changing conditions by assisting existing businesses and growing local entrepreneurs. For instance, Cuyahoga County, Garrett County and Brookings County have funded business training programs, developed business incubators and formed collaborative partnerships to foster a network of entrepreneurial support.

Augusta-Richmond County

One of Augusta-Richmond County's strengths lies in its ability to attract businesses and large corporations. The county has targeted the manufacturing industry by leveraging the county's proximity to Interstate 20, the Port of Savannah and Augusta Regional Airport (providing access to Atlanta, Charlotte, NC and Washington, DC), and ensuring the avail-

ability of suitable industrial sites. A major acquisition, announced in 2012, is a new Starbucks plant to be located in the Augusta Corporate Park. In order to support the new plant, the Augusta Economic Development Authority provided crucial funding in the form of a \$200 million industrial bond.²⁶ The plant, opening in 2014, will create 140 jobs and has been instrumental in helping the county attract additional companies to the park. As Augusta's mayor, Deke Copenhagen, said: "When you can share with other businesses that you're bringing Starbucks, it's a huge feather in your cap."

Since Starbucks signed on with the county, the region's Development Authority has landed another business, Rockwood Color Pigment and Services, which will bring an estimated 80 to 100 jobs to the

GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY IN ACTION

County leaders in Augusta-Richmond County, Georgia, point to government efficiency as a factor in the county's economic success. In 1996, Richmond County and the city of Augusta united to form a single government. This consolidation has enabled more coordinated action on the part of the area's leaders to stimulate economic regeneration in Augusta-Richmond County. The region is now a model for economic diversification, boasting strong presence in health care, education, nuclear power, military and manufacturing.

Strategies to Bolster
Economic Resilience:
County Leadership
in Action

community. Starbucks and Rockwood Pigments join other big-name companies with branches in Augusta, such as Kellogg's, T-Mobile, FedEx and Procter & Gamble. Between Starbucks and Rockwood Pigment, over 200 new jobs will be created in the Augusta Corporate Park over the next few years.²⁷

Walter Sprouse, Executive Director of the Augusta Economic Development Authority, recalled the process of wooing Starbucks. "They had narrowed it down to two communities, and they told us that while our quality of life was excellent and our industrial site was good, the other community had an excellent industrial site. I told them that in a short period of time, I could make our good site excellent, which meant they'd have an excellent site *and* an excellent quality of life." Sprouse concluded, "I think that's when they decided Augusta was a good spot."

Prince George County

Prince George County, Virginia, counts partnerships with the private sector, several universities and federal agencies as critical factors in the county's emergence as an important player in the manufacturing sector. The county of about 36,900 residents, located 25 miles south of Richmond, is making headlines for its effective business development efforts, as it devotes resources to growing local companies while attracting new investment to the area.²⁸

In 2012, Prince George County and Rolls-Royce announced a partnership bridging education, manufacturing research, workforce development, production and economic expansion. The process began in 2006 when several states began to compete to attract the automotive giant to their region. Jeffrey Stoke, Prince George's Deputy County Administrator, described the county's role in these initial stages. "We took the lead in assembling the 1,000 acres for the site," he explained. This site, called the Crosspointe Centre, will be the focal point of Rolls-Royce's presence in Prince George, housing a research facility and several manufacturing buildings for the production of Rolls-Royce equipment.



Stoke credits the solid infrastructure already in place at the company's future site as one reason Rolls-Royce chose to locate in the county. In addition to the Crosspointe Centre where Rolls-Royce will operate, the company is also embarking on an innovative collaboration with three Virginia universities. Though the Crosspointe Centre is still under construction, the impact of Rolls-Royce can already be felt in Prince George County. Rolls-Royce expects 140 new jobs to be added at an already operational airplane engine disc production building, in addition to the 150 high tech manufacturing jobs already created.²⁹ President

"I don't know who said manufacturing is dead ... but manufacturing is not dead in Prince George County."

**— JEFF STOKE,
PRINCE GEORGE COUNTY**



Rolls-Royce at Crosspointe Centre houses a research facility and several manufacturing buildings.

Source: Prince George County

Obama's frequent visits to the region show the national importance of the partnership: the President has noted the need for similar programs across the country.³⁰

In response to the county's successes growing the industry, Stoke explained one of Prince George's strengths. "Have product available for businesses," he said. "Have the site ready: the land and buildings must have infrastructure in place. If you have the product ready, the businesses will follow." Having 1,000 acres of land prepared for the Rolls-Royce facility is one reason Stoke believes the company was attracted to Prince George. The county's planning abilities and support of local and new business alike show its capacity for manufacturing and economic development. "I don't know who said manufacturing is dead," Stoke said, "but manufacturing is not dead in Prince George County." If the success of Rolls-Royce and Service Center Metals are any indication, then manufacturing is certainly alive and well in Prince George, Virginia.

In addition to successfully attracting Rolls-Royce to the county, Prince George has demonstrated its

capacity in helping local businesses develop. One of the county's home grown companies, the aluminum manufacturer Service Center Metals, announced in August 2013 that they are planning an expansion. The expansion will take the form of a new facility, adjacent to the company's current building, which will house a compact re-melt plant. Rather than outsourcing their scrap for processing, Service Center Metals will be able to treat it themselves. "They're creating a facility to take their aluminum scrap next door and reuse it to manufacture a new product," Stoke explained. "It's an exciting recycling project." In addition to increasing efficiency, the new facility will necessitate an increase in personnel. The company's president and CEO, R. Scott Kelley, noted that the state and the county are partners in the expansion, which received support via Department of Environmental Quality tax credits, real property investment credits, grants through the Virginia Department of Business Assistance, and the Governor's Opportunity Fund. Kelley stated that in the first phase of the project, "the company will add 20 new jobs with an investment of \$17.5 million." The second phase of the project, Kelley continued will "consist of 15 new jobs and another \$17.5 million investment."

Leveraging Infrastructure Assets to Attract Private Investment

Rutherford County leaders used the decline of the local manufacturing sector as an opportunity to diversify and strengthen the economic base. They did this by treating vacant industrial buildings, a robust electric power and water network, and broadband expansion as marketing tools to attract data centers to the county.

Situated in western North Carolina, Rutherford County is a rural county featuring acres of open space, thick deciduous forests, plentiful natural lakes and abundant farmland. Home to eight municipalities, Rutherford County is 563 square miles, of which 101 square miles are in agricultural production.³¹ As of 2010, 12 percent of Rutherford's 67,810 residents were unemployed, which is the highest unemployment rate in the state of North Carolina.³² Rutherford County's current unemployment rate can be traced back to the late 1990s when the county's once-thriving manufacturing industry experienced facility shutdowns and relocations, with the greatest losses occurring in the textile and furniture product sectors.



Despite occurring over ten years ago, the impact of these industrial losses is reflected in the county's economic conditions today.

To address these challenges, Rutherford County is capitalizing on existing infrastructure assets as a tool for economic growth. To better understand their business attraction opportunities, the Rutherford County Board of County Commissioners initially hired Greenfield Development, an economic development firm based in Wilmington, NC, to analyze

Visitors attend a Rutherfordton downtown festival.

Source: Rutherford County





The Facebook data center site in Rutherford County

Source: Rutherford County

local strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to economic growth. Above all, Greenfield Development found that Rutherford's most impressive asset was its existing infrastructure – including affordable access to electricity, fiber optic Internet access and a broad water and sewer system. Further, the county houses existing buildings and sites that can be repurposed for a number of industry types in a timely and cost-effective manner.

Specifically, Rutherford County leaders used their infrastructure assets to take advantage of the recent boon in new data center facilities locating in the western North Carolina region (the land area composed of the 23 western counties in the state). Given its proximity to major cities and access to abundant and affordable electricity and land, the southeast region of the United States as a whole has emerged as a major data center corridor, with seven new data centers located in the area. In 2010, Rutherford County successfully recruited Facebook to invest over \$900 million in two new data centers. Because data centers require access to a massive and reliable energy source along with a large supply of water to serve as a coolant, county leaders were able to make the case that locating in Rutherford County was the most affordable option for Facebook.

Further, Rutherford's broadband network served as an additional infrastructure asset to attract Facebook. However, Rutherford's access to a dependable fiber optic network is a relatively new asset to the county. In fact, just before 2007, fewer than 50 percent of Rutherford County homes, businesses and schools

had access to high speed Internet. In 2007 the Foothills Connect Business and Technology Center (a local organization that provides small business entrepreneurial assistance) convened 70 public and private leaders at a countywide symposium on Internet connectivity. The meeting jolted momentum to fund initial fiber infrastructure expansion; within a year a partnership emerged among county leaders and staff, Golden LEAF (a foundation created by the North Carolina legislature to provide funds and assistance to tobacco-dependent regions of the state) and PANGAEA and Foothills Connect (two local non-profits). In 2008, the partnership officially became the Rutherford County Broadband Advisory Committee, whose first task was to oversee a \$1.45 million grant from Golden LEAF to build county-wide fiber optic infrastructure.

Completed in 2009, the fiber route was engineered to serve Rutherford County schools and fire, police and emergency services departments, with a number of factories, businesses and residential subdivisions along the route. To complement these expansion efforts, both PANGAEA and Foothills Connect have been involved in industry recruitment efforts to help frame broadband utilization as a useful economic development tool to attract data centers and other high tech firms. Not only is the story of Rutherford County's broadband expansion effort an example of a successful local and regional-level partnership to address community need, but it also shows how physical infrastructure improvements can be used as an economic development tool to attract and support high-tech industry.

Maui County

A cornerstone of Maui's STEM initiatives is its space industry, which grew out of Maui's natural advantages in space observation. Maui's Haleakala Volcano, 10,000 feet above sea level, is an ideal site for viewing the sky for several reasons.³³ First, Hawaii's isolated location translates to minimal light pollution during nighttime study and observation. Second, the volcano's elevation sets it above atmospheric disturbances (like clouds and weather events), ensuring a clear view of the sky. Scientists have taken full advantage of these environmental assets: several research complexes on Haleakala contain some of the world's most advanced telescopes and technologies for space observation.

The Maui Economic Development Board (MEDB) supports Maui's space industry in a variety of ways. One of these was MEDB's role in the founding of the Maui Research and Technology Center and its con-

tinued support for both the Center and the Maui Research and Technology Park. The Park houses and supports companies in a variety of scientific fields including space surveillance/situational awareness. MEDB also hosts the Advanced Maui Optical and Space Surveillance Technologies (AMOS) conference annually. The AMOS conference attracts hundreds of scientists and researchers from around the globe (in 2010, the conference brought over 600 attendees to Maui), and represents the wide variety of academic, contractor and military groups with interests in space surveillance.³⁴

MEDB also supports business development in green energy sectors by engaging in several sustainable energy programs at the state and local level.³⁵ For example, MEDB is a member of the Maui County Energy Alliance, a partnership among Maui County, MEDB and Maui Community College to address county-level formulation of policies and actions to lessen fossil fuel dependence. Along

As part of the JUMPSmartMaui launch festivities, Maui Mayor, Alan Arakawa and other program partners demonstrate the charging of the Nissan LEAF vehicles.

Source: MEDB





(Left) Boeing telescope, Advanced Electro-Optical System (AEOS); (Right) AMOS Conference 2011

Source: MEDB

with hosting partnership events, MEDB serves on a working group to research, analyze and provide recommendations for renewable-sourced energy and transportation infrastructure improvements. Specifically, MEDB contributes to the working group by supporting innovative financing programs for small-scale energy projects.

In addition, MEDB serves as a member of the state of Hawaii's Clean Energy Initiative Steering Committee, a coalition of state, local, environmental and clean energy industry representatives rallied around the common goal of meeting 70 percent of Hawaii's energy needs with clean energy by 2030.³⁶ Maui is perfectly poised to lead the nation's sustainable energy efforts for two reasons. For one, Maui's citizens are eager to develop clean energies as a way to combat the high expense of traditional fuels. Skog noted the high price of energy in Hawaii, stating that "the cost of living here is one of the highest in the nation." Leslie Wilkins, Vice President of MEDB, spoke about the second reason, Maui's natural resources: "Our big strength here is positioning Maui as a test bed for clean energy solutions. We have wind and geothermal, we have solar with sunshine almost every day of the year, we have smart growth, and we have a perfect environment for testing electric vehicles."

One exciting green energy initiative in Maui is JUMPSmart Maui, a renewable energy demonstration project organized by partner organizations in Japan and Maui. In Maui, these partners include MEDB, Maui County, the State of Hawaii and the Maui Electric Company. Riki Hokama, Maui County Council Member and NACo's First Vice President, explained that Japan's New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organization (NEDO) is "funding this \$30 million demonstration project to improve the integration of renewable energy resources into Maui's Smart Grid and prepare our power system for efficient use by all electric vehicles." Hokama further explained NEDO's role in choosing three additional Japanese companies to develop the demonstration: the engineering and electronics company Hitachi, Ltd., the Cyber Defense Institute and Mizuho Corporate Bank. The demonstration project organized by these Japanese organizations and the Maui-based partners will explore solutions to Maui's energy challenges, including best practices for sustainable energy, the impact of increased photovoltaic power and electric vehicle use, and the development of a stable supply of clean energy.

Brookings County

One of the five vision components of the Brookings County Strategic Economic Development Plan was to foster a more competitive business environment.³⁷ To achieve this goal, Brookings County supports a number of initiatives and programs to help its labor force obtain necessary skills for pursuing jobs in the agricultural technology and advanced manufacturing sectors.

In 2004, leaders from Brookings County, the City of Brookings, South Dakota state agencies, Brookings Economic Development Corporation, South Dakota State University (SDSU) and several private sector representatives formed a partnership, coined the SDSU Growth Partnership, a 501 (c)(3) non-profit corporation to coordinate efforts to drive knowledge and innovation-based economic growth in Brookings County. Brookings County provides funding for the Partnership's director and staff positions. The SDSU Growth Partnership initially focused on developing the county's first research park, the Research

Park at SDSU. The Research Park at SDSU is the state of South Dakota's first university-affiliated research park, and it was established to provide businesses with access to research, incubation, mentoring and entrepreneurial resources.

The first building of the Innovation Campus, located at the Research Park, was completed in 2008. The Innovation Campus includes a 27,000-square foot business incubator, the only one in Brookings County, and serves start-up companies and entrepreneurs.³⁸ The Campus offers rentable space, laboratories, conference rooms and greenhouse facilities that are customizable to meet a specific business' needs, and also provides start-up companies with consultant services and benefits related to business development, marketing and investment options. Dwaine Chapel, the Executive Director of the Research Park at SDSU, notes that one of the top goals of the Innovation Campus is to match young businesses up with established businesses at the Campus, referred to as "resident tenants." Resident tenants act as mentors to aid

Brookings County played an integral role in securing federal and state funding for the development of the SDSU Innovation Campus.

Source: South Dakota State University





Leaders in King County, Washington apply a regional approach to linking economic development and workforce development.

newer businesses with finding early stage investors, developing trademarks and copyrights and better understanding their target market and end users. Currently, the Campus has eight resident tenants serving 20 businesses that are in the early stages of business development. As of 2013, approximately 75 employees have been hired by the nearly 30 companies operating at the Innovation Campus.³⁹

Brookings County played an integral role in securing federal and state funding for the development of the Innovation Campus. Don Larson, a Brookings County Commissioner, states that the Innovation Campus “combines experience of university, business and industry and government in an environment that uses innovation and critical thinking to generate new ideas, promote research, entrepreneurship and business mentoring.”

King County

King County, Washington and its partners have concentrated their business growth and workforce development efforts on the burgeoning aerospace sector. Located in the northwest corner of the United States, King County is host to roughly 1.9 million people, with the city of Seattle serving as its county seat and over 35 other cities and unincorporated areas located in the county.⁴⁰ From its densely populated and urban area of Seattle to its west, to the unpopulated and preserved natural landscape of the Cascade Mountain Range to its

east, King County possesses a diverse range of built and natural landscapes.

To ensure future economic prosperity, King County officials have acknowledged the importance of a regional approach to collaboration and coordination of economic development and workforce development strategies. Along these lines, Marlena Sessions, the CEO of the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County, states that “the partnership between workforce development, economic development and private business is crucial in any community. As workforce development and economic development community leaders we must first listen to industry acutely to meet their specific needs with skilled human capital in order to remain competitive and



attract and retain businesses to our communities. This simple concept of letting industry lead cannot be overstated.”

Throughout the latter part of the 20th century, King County was highly dependent on both the aerospace and financial services industry clusters. In 2011, there were over 650 aerospace-related companies in the state of Washington that directly supported 84,000 jobs in the Puget Sound Region alone.⁴¹ King County’s largest employer is Boeing Commercial Airplanes, which is headquartered in the city of Renton, 15 miles south of Seattle.

In 2011 King County Executive Dow Constantine launched the King County Aerospace Alliance as a regional effort to ensure the global competitiveness of the local aerospace industry. King County boasts the largest aerospace sector in the country, with over 45,000 industry employees and 400 aerospace companies.⁴² The Alliance was developed to support the creation of new aerospace firms and technologies, remove barriers to new investments, develop a pipe-

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The Alliance has worked with the aerospace industry to understand their sector-specific labor force needs to then translate those needs into targeted programs to prepare students and workers with the skills needed to secure jobs in the aerospace industry.

.....



Executive Dow Constantine launches the King County Aerospace Alliance.

Source: King County, Washington

line of a trained aerospace workforce and strengthen the existing aerospace sector to retain and create new jobs.

The Alliance includes 16 members representing King County government, municipal governments in the county, the Economic Development Council of Seattle and King County, the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County, local chambers of commerce, school districts, universities and community colleges.⁴³ A driving force for forming the Alliance was King County’s interest in becoming the main supplier for Boeing’s 737 MAX and future Boeing lines. Executive Dow Constantine saw King County’s 85 years of partnering with Boeing as a huge opportunity to make the Puget Sound region the best place to do aerospace-related business in the country. However, in order to do this, Executive Constantine acknowledged that a regional approach to collaboration that united local governments, public sector entities, school systems and businesses was the only way for King County to effectively support Boeing, its suppliers and the aerospace industry as a whole.

Currently, the Alliance has no direct funding stream, so decision-making about its involvement in programs and initiatives that support the aerospace industry are made on an ad-hoc basis. However, King County Economic Policy Advisor Ray Moser suggests that despite its lack of funding, members of the Aerospace Alliance agree that having a consolidated partnership ensures much more coordinated, complementary and inclusive efforts to meet the needs of aerospace industry in King County. The Alliance has worked

Resilient King County

In September of 2013, King County Executive Dow Constantine launched the “Resilient King County” initiative, a two-year planning process to devise a long-term regional plan of recovery for King County following a large-scale disaster. Executive Constantine believes that this partnership will help make King County and the region more resilient to the potential for economic hardship and diminished quality of life following a catastrophic natural event, such as a major earthquake.

King County’s recovery planning process will be aligned with local and state-level efforts for recovery. For example, the county’s recovery plan will follow the specific recommendations outlined in the “Resilient Washington State Report,” developed by the Washington State Seismic Safety Committee Emergency Management Council, which is a state-wide assessment that provides recommendations to encourage pre-disaster planning, mitigation and adaptation in the face of natural disasters.

King County’s recovery planning process was kicked off with a “Disaster Recovery – CEO Leadership Summit,” the first of a number of planning events to solicit feedback, buy-in and consensus of common values from representatives from the public and private sectors. The CEO Leadership Summit brought together key community leaders from the corporate and non-profit sectors to discuss the potential economic impacts following a natural catastrophe and brainstorm specific planning measures that would make the region more resilient to such impacts.

Resilient King County is one of the first regional planning efforts in the nation to focus specifically on disaster recovery planning, with a concentration on the capabilities necessary to rebuild infrastructure systems, restore health and social services, promote economic development and provide long-term housing.⁴⁶ In this way, recovery planning can help King County align policy and investment decisions to facilitate speedier recovery efforts in the face of a potential natural catastrophe.

with the aerospace industry to understand their sector-specific labor force needs to then translate those needs into targeted programs to prepare students and workers with the skills needed to secure jobs in the aerospace industry. The Alliance supports the development of next generation machinists and engineers by working with Washington State University, also a member of the Alliance, to create internships and apprenticeships for students in engineering and related fields. In 2012 alone, the Workforce Development Council of Seattle and King County provided over \$1 million to train 209 students in aerospace manufacturing, composite technology and aircraft

assembly, with 139 of those students already finding employment in the county.⁴⁴

The Alliance has also developed unique training programs for veterans with little to no experience in the advanced manufacturing field. King County provided \$1.85 million to fund a two-year Aerospace and Veterans Employment and Training Program to help veterans transfer their military skills into access to aerospace jobs and other advanced manufacturing positions. In 2012, thirteen veterans started the training program and King County set the goal to place 200-250 veterans in the aerospace industry annually.⁴⁵



NSL Analytical Services expanded and consolidated their testing operations in Cuyahoga County.

Source: Western Reserve Fund

Cuyahoga County

Another piece of Cuyahoga County's efficiency campaign involves securing financing for a new county-wide Economic Development Fund. The fund, approved in January 2012, will provide \$100 million to support workforce growth and business development in Cuyahoga County and represents an effort that is larger than the comparable funds of all other Ohio counties combined.⁴⁷

To finance the \$100 million Economic Development Fund, also known as the Western Reserve Fund, the county will allocate 10 percent of sales tax revenue, plus additional financing through collaborations with philanthropies, nonprofit organizations and banks. Once in motion the fund will partly pay for itself: as businesses benefit from loans and begin to grow, they will repay their loans, setting in motion a cycle of repayment that will contribute funds for awarding new loans to other businesses.⁴⁸ Additionally, Cuyahoga aims to apply savings that stem from the county's efficiency campaign to support the fund. For instance, \$8 million per year were acquired by eliminating redundant positions, money that can now be diverted to growing business via the development fund.⁴⁹ Other efficiency-improving moves, such as consolidation of county offices, will also contribute revenue: as county-owned buildings that are no longer needed are sold, the earnings from those sales will be donated to the fund.

As of March 2013, about \$30 million had already been awarded, mostly in the form of loans.⁵⁰ Loan applications are judged on a variety of criteria, such as number of jobs to be created, financial practicality and access to public transportation.⁵¹ Organizations of all sizes are benefitting from the loans; AmTrust Financial, a large company, was motivated by the economic fund to expand into Cleveland and created 800 jobs in the process.⁵² Small businesses have also profited, receiving loans to grow their operations

“... the county government has been able to partner with our cities at the beginning of a transaction, and we're now more competitive in attracting business to the region.”

— NATE KELLY,
CUYAHOGA COUNTY

via new equipment and building expansions. The county even organized a loan agreement with seven banks in the region to make \$100 million in loans to small businesses. The county will pull \$5 million from the \$100 Million Economic Development Fund to contribute toward this small business loan initiative.⁵³

Nate Kelly, Cuyahoga's Deputy Chief of Staff for Economic Development, stated: "One of our most effective outcomes of the fund has been incentivizing consolidations of multistate companies to the Cleveland Area. Or, when a company that is already in the county acquires a company elsewhere, we've worked to locate those resources in the county." Furthermore, the county now plays a more active, collaborative role in these business deals. Kelly continued: "the most significant difference in interacting with county business since the fund was established is that the county government has been able to partner with our cities at the beginning of a transaction, and we're now more competitive in attracting business to the region." Kelly also highlighted the collective impact of the fund and the anti-poaching protocol, stating that

"combined, the protocol and the fund provide both the spirit and the means for our region to compete in a way that is very attractive for businesses looking at Cuyahoga County."

Garrett County

Established in 2002, the Garrett Information Enterprise Center (GIEC) is a technology-based business incubator located on the Garrett College campus that is funded by grants from Garrett County, the Appalachian Regional Commission, the U.S. Economic Development Administration and the State of Maryland. The GIEC currently provides low-cost rental space to 11 start-ups, including technology businesses, government service contractors and even a few non-profit organizations. Garrett County leaders believe that the GIEC is providing small businesses with an opportunity to succeed and grow, while also building an entrepreneurial community that fosters creativity and innovation. Garrett County officials and department agencies have been an integral part to the development of the GIEC and its supporting

Catanese Classic Seafood is a small, family-owned business that received a Western Reserve Fund Loan to create 30 new jobs and retain over 60 jobs in Cuyahoga County.

Source: Western Reserve Fund



initiatives, by leveraging various grant opportunities and providing infrastructure support to deliver broadband Internet for the GIEC.

In 2013, the GIEC established the Garrett Center for Entrepreneurship, with the purpose of offering programmatic and technical support to build on the GIEC's efforts to provide low-cost rental space to local entrepreneurs. Specifically, the Center offers access to entrepreneurship courses, networking events, technical assistance and business coaching and counseling for people that are interested in starting their own business but have limited resources. Mike Tumbarello, GIEC's coordinator overseeing the Center states that "the plan is to provide a complete, life-cycle-driven approach to new businesses, as well as a community of practice for potential, start-up and seasoned entrepreneurs, all working with, and leveraging, the community's existing and future [entrepreneurial] ecosystem." The Garrett Center for Entrepreneurship is leading the county closer to their

goal of growing entrepreneurs and small businesses to enhance quality of life and job opportunities in the area.

Tumbarello oversees the Center and provides all of the counseling and coaching free of charge. The non-accredited course opportunities cost no more than 20 dollars. He estimates that in 2012 alone, the Center served nearly 100 entrepreneurs. Tumbarello frames the goal for the Center as "enabling entrepreneurship in the county through competency building and technical support." Tumbarello goes on to say, "We believe that just as it takes a village to raise a child, it takes an ecosystem to enable a successful start-up. We work to understand the needs of small businesses and their leaders and try to align our services and offerings to meet their needs throughout the business life-cycle, from ideation through maturity. It's not one size fits all and it takes the whole community working together."

The Garrett Information Enterprise Center

Source: Mike Tumbarello





Students and mentors participate in a STEM project.

Source: MEDB

Workforce Development and Education

In a time of substantial job loss, high unemployment rates and long-term job displacement, counties more than ever need a strong and stable workforce to attract and grow industry, support local livelihoods and foster competitive regional economies.

In an effort to attract and retain new employers, counties are aligning economic development activities with workforce development initiatives to meet sector-specific demands. Workforce development initiatives developed in tandem with economic strategies mean that employers can utilize a ready labor supply while counties can retain skilled workers in the community by linking job training with job creation. This type of approach, one that is driven by an industry's specific workforce needs, not only provides better outcomes for employers, but also increases a worker's overall talent, value and employability in the labor force.

The counties profiled here offer education and workforce training programs that directly link to strategic economic development efforts. In Maui County, young people learn from an early age about opportunities in STEM-related fields; for county leaders, this is as much about developing industry as it is about investing in the community's future. Garrett County promotes workforce training via incentives and partnerships with local training institutions. In Augusta-Richmond County, stakeholders see a skilled workforce as a business recruitment tool, and emphasize preparing students to fill local employers' needs. Similarly, Prince George County tied expansions in university research and training programs to the growth of advanced manufacturing.

Strategies to Bolster
Economic Resilience:
County Leadership
in Action

Maui County

One reason that MEDB has been so successful in growing Maui's economy is its holistic approach: the group places high importance on the path from education to careers for students and young people. Leslie Wilkins, Vice President of MEDB, reported that "since the mid to late 1990s, MEDB has invested half our resources into STEM pipelines so our students are prepared for the jobs that we're trying to grow." These pipelines include programs from kindergarten through college that focus on education in STEM fields as well as professional guidance and workforce placement.

One of the most successful of these programs is Women in Technology (WIT), an initiative to support training for STEM careers for girls and minorities. WIT was founded in 1999 in response to a workforce survey that revealed virtually no women or minorities held positions in technology fields. Wilkins explained that "we needed to create a program that connected the dots for girls and minorities that reinforced scientific interests and hands-on activities from a very early age, a program that would connect to real world problems and making the world a better place."

The Women in Technology program organizes activities such as workshops, science camps and career

fairs, and partners with organizations to provide mentorship and job placement. One recent WIT initiative was the Tech Connect Fair for girls, held at MEDB's offices in June 2013. This science fair included math and science activities, presentations from successful women in STEM fields and other components aimed to educate girls about professional opportunities in science. WIT reports that more than 20,000 students are impacted each year through these activities.⁵⁴ MEDB estimates that over 25 percent of Maui's STEM jobs are held by women and minorities, a dramatic increase over 1999 levels, when women and minorities represented less than 1 percent.⁵⁵

Additionally, MEDB has developed a green energy curriculum for Maui's schools. The curriculum, titled Island Energy Inquiry, is a program for fifth through twelfth graders and focuses students on Hawaii's energy needs and challenges. MEDB is currently expanding the program, adding sections for transportation, smart grid technology and geothermal and electric energy. The county is also negotiating with Thailand and Malaysia to pilot a version of the curriculum abroad.

Concerned with the "brain drain" to the mainland marked by Maui's college-educated adults seeking professional opportunities outside Hawaii, MEDB has focused on ensuring high-quality employment

A student engages in hands-on STEM learning in the classroom.

Source: MEDB





Students participate in the Island Energy Inquiry Program.

Source: MEDB

opportunities for the next generation. Wilkins noted, “We take very seriously our outreach capabilities and our ability to bring the community to the table. We had to work with parents and teachers to encourage children in the STEM pipeline: there are jobs at home.” Also, MEDB prides itself on supporting Maui’s homegrown businesses (such as clean energy organizations like HNU Energy and Rising Sun Solar), which perpetuate Maui’s values and provide STEM opportunities for the county’s workforce.

MEDB’s leaders credit their success to a community-driven, values-based approach to economic development. Skog explained that since MEDB began, “bringing community together, getting everyone on the same page was a really important element in our

successes.” Wilkins added: “Often what differentiates us is our values-based economic development; we’re very discerning about what we endorse. It must respect our culture and our cultural values, it must respect our beautiful environment, and it must create high paying jobs that will help our young people come home and have living wages.”

Maui’s residents are benefiting from these changes and attribute the county’s success to MEDB. One woman at a recent MEDB community fundraiser expressed her gratitude to Leslie Wilkins, telling her, “Before MEDB’s investment in our STEM education and robotics, our children really had no hope for the future. You’ve forever transformed Moloka’i and the self-esteem of our children.”⁵⁶

PREPARING A SKILLED WORKFORCE FOR NEW HIGH TECH JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Mentioned earlier in the report, Rutherford County successfully attracted Facebook to build two new data centers in the county. To meet Facebook’s workforce-related needs, Rutherford County’s Isothermal Community College established the Data Center Institute, a short-term, customized training program to provide local residents with the skills necessary for entry-level employment in the data center sector. Facebook donated equipment to the Data Center Institute, and most notably

offered a guaranteed job interview for anyone that successfully completes the training program. Matt Blackwell, director of Rutherford County’s Economic Development Commission (EDC), states: “Having the Data Center Institute allows us to not only become a regional leader in attracting data centers to Western North Carolina, but it also allows us to support and train our local residents and provide them with access to job opportunities they might not have had otherwise.”

Garrett County

Likewise, Garrett County has prioritized building a highly educated, technologically advanced and creative workforce. Frank Shap, Assistant Director of Economic Development for Garrett County, believes that the county must support and invest in workforce-related programs, “because if you don’t have that, you don’t have an economy.” Shap also noted that over the past 10 years, despite no substantial overall population growth, Garrett County has experienced a considerable expansion of its total workforce. Since 2000, Garrett County’s population has remained roughly 30,000 people, with the total employment rising from 17,470 in 2000 to 20,681 in 2010, representing a 17 percent increase.⁵⁷ Given the speed at which Garrett County’s economy is both growing and diversifying, the county has sought to train a skilled workforce to sustain its current economy and position the county to compete in a global economy.

One of Garrett County’s most successful workforce training initiatives is Garrett College’s Career Technology Training Center (CTTC). Opened in 2010, the center was created to guide students in their career development goals. Students can attend CTTC to learn about entering the job market for the first time, upgrade their skills or prepare for a new career. CTTC offers state-of-the-art labs, classroom instruction and access to advanced computer technologies to provide students with a hands-on and collaborative learning environment to help them enhance their employability and obtain the qualifications needed in the current job market.⁵⁸ Garrett County’s Economic Development Department contributed to the CTTC by overseeing the building renovation and technology upgrades of a 16,000-square foot building in the Central Garrett Industrial Park.

In 2006, Garrett County’s Board of County Commissioners acknowledged two important things:

that the county’s most important asset is its young people, and the county’s future economic success hinges on having a highly educated and skilled workforce. In order to retain and attract a younger, more skilled workforce, the Board established the Garrett County Scholarship Program (GCSP), a promise from Garrett County elected officials guaranteeing any high school graduate in the county two years of free tuition at Garrett College, the county’s public community college. Students who take advantage of the scholarship can enroll at Garrett College in any course of study or vocation.

In fall 2011, 189 students were awarded the GCSP, with the average award per full-time student being \$1,276.⁵⁹ Starting in 2006, the same year that the GCSP was established, Garrett College experienced a steady rise in Garrett County high school graduate enrollment numbers. Based on county-available data, the number of Garrett County students that indicated attendance at Garrett College rose from 80 in 2006 to 111 in 2010.⁶⁰ Additionally, out of the total number of high school graduates enrolled at a college or university, the percentage of graduates attending Garrett College rose from 48 percent in 2006 to 59.4 percent in 2010.⁶¹

The long-term goal of the GCSP is to empower Garrett County residents to increase their earning potential and overall quality of life by pursuing post-secondary education or workforce training. The GCSP provides a direct economic benefit as well to those households with incomes too high to qualify for additional financial aid, but who still need to borrow money to pay for their child’s college tuition. In all, the GCSP reduces the overall amount that Garrett County high school graduates and their families pay for college tuition and provides postsecondary education opportunities for Garrett County residents who traditionally would not pursue higher education.

County Support for Youth Engagement in Science and Technology

Garrett County is home to eight youth robotics teams, and over the past eight years, these teams have won over 57 state and national awards.⁶² Prior to 2006, there was no available space in the county for the robotics teams and other science and technology based programs to meet. In response, a group of community organizers requested that a portion of an unused county-owned building be used to support these current and future youth engagement programs. The county commissioners not only approved this request but also formed a partnership with the Board of Education, local businesses and community members to form the Garrett Engineering and Robotics Society, Inc. (GEARS), a non-profit umbrella organization to oversee a variety of youth robotics and technology initiatives in the

The G-FORCE Team (in yellow) and the 4-H Techno Clovers (in green) are two GEARS sponsored teams that won the Annapolis Qualifier in January 2013.

Source: Phil Malone



county. The mission of GEARS is to inspire young people to engage in mentor-based programs that: build science, engineering and technology skills; provide a safe space for youth to pursue innovative thinking and entrepreneurship at an early age; and streamline efforts with community, school and national programs for youth to access resources in Garrett County. Garrett County's Economic Development Department provides GEARS with its space and utilities at zero-cost, saving them more than \$30,000 a year. GEARS utilizes the county-owned space to provide full-sized practice fields for youth robotics teams and flexible space for summer technology camps, underwater robotics teams and other technology-based programs.. Additionally, Garrett County often provides students with travel money for national competitions.

Phil Malone, founder of GEARS, believes that through the efforts of its partners and volunteers, "GEARS has facilitated the growth of youth robotics programs in Garrett County to the point where other counties and states have used its model for their own programs." Malone goes on to suggest that the immersive environment of mentor support that GEARS fosters has led to the success of Garrett County robotics teams in state, national and international competitions. He notes: "At least one of our teams has competed at the national championship for the last eight years, and one year we even had four teams qualifying for the national championship." Just recently a middle school team, NeXT GEN, won the 2013 FIRST LEGO League Global Innovation Award, an award that recognizes young inventors that solve a problem using their creativity and innovative skills. The NeXT GEN team beat 476 teams from around the world with their invention of the "Gamma-Jamma," a hand-held gripper for senior citizens who are unable to pick up small objects.⁶³ In all, Garrett County's support for GEARS is an excellent example of the roles county leaders can play to encourage local youth engagement in science and technology.



The Commonwealth Center for Advanced Manufacturing located in Prince George County, VA.

Source: Commonwealth Center for Advanced Manufacturing

Prince George County

A unique aspect of the Rolls-Royce program in Prince George is its educational focus. The agreement between the company and the Commonwealth of Virginia resulted in a novel partnership between Rolls-Royce and three southern Virginia universities—Virginia State University, Virginia Tech and the University of Virginia—wherein part of the Crosspointe Centre will be devoted to the Commonwealth Center for Advanced Manufacturing (CCAM). CCAM, a research facility, is tasked with investigating manufacturing solutions while providing training to future workers. The partnership is mutually beneficial: Rolls-Royce gains a manufacturing plant, access to ports on the Atlantic Coast and university assistance in its research goals. Meanwhile, the universities gain research opportunities and on-the-job training for their students (further detailed later in this publication).

Furthermore, the universities and Rolls-Royce expanded their partnership to include other companies with interests in the type of research conducted at CCAM. These partners, such as Newport News Shipbuilding, Siemens and other manufacturing companies, will provide additional funds to the research center (so far, each company has pledged to provide \$400,000 a year).⁶⁴ In total, the contributing parties (the Commonwealth of Virginia, partner companies including Rolls-Royce, and the three universities) will provide \$75 million in funding over the next five years. Additionally, Prince George County

donated over 1,000 acres of land to the project, and construction is partially funded by the U.S. Economic Development Administration.⁶⁵

Virginia provided \$58 million in incentives to attract Rolls-Royce. However, most of this total did not go directly to Rolls-Royce. Instead, a majority of the incentive package went to the three founding universities to build the capacity of their engineering departments to produce skilled engineers for employment at Rolls-Royce and the Crosspointe Center and to also conduct manufacturing-related research to support manufacturing industry cluster expansion.⁶⁶

To further support CCAM, Virginia State University (VSU) will collaborate with the research center when adding new faculty who specialize in advanced manufacturing, while Virginia Tech and The University of Virginia (UVA) have pledged to hire 11 new faculty members at their engineering schools. Moreover, research goals for CCAM were developed jointly between Rolls-Royce and the universities, a collaboration that addresses the typical disconnect between a firm's development aims and a university's research programs.⁶⁷

Deputy County Administrator Stoke noted that "students can receive internships, and come back to CCAM and work on aerospace projects." In fact, when CCAM opened in March 2013, 50 students received internships at the research center.⁶⁸

“When we say skilled trades in our area, they are very sophisticated skills. And, we want to grow our own, rather than import that talent.”

— SUE PARR,
AUGUSTA METRO CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE

Augusta-Richmond County

Similarly, businesses looking to operate in Augusta-Richmond County are attracted by the county’s education and workforce development programs and place-based assets. “Our workforce in Augusta is outstanding, and Starbucks saw that,” Sprouse explained, adding, “We’re very proud that Starbucks is here, and I think they’re very proud to be here too.” Starbucks has also coordinated with Augusta Technical College to train the company’s potential employees: the college will support training sites as well as on-campus interviews for students seeking job opportunities at the new Starbucks plant.

Augusta Tech’s Nuclear Engineering Technology program is preparing students for employment at Plant Vogtle, a nearby nuclear power plant undergoing expansion. In addition to the training offered at the collegiate level, a new magnet high school, opened in 2013, will introduce technical skills to students at a younger age. Sue Parr, president and CEO of the Augusta Metro Chamber of Commerce, explained the aim of these programs to Georgia County Government Magazine: “When we say skilled trades in our area, they are very sophisticated skills. And, we want to grow our own, rather than import that talent.” The county is setting the groundwork to develop a homegrown, highly skilled workforce.



Augusta-Richmond County, Georgia is setting the groundwork to develop a highly skilled workforce.

COUNTY LEADERS IN ACTION

Mayor Copenhavor of Augusta-Richmond County stresses the importance of highlighting a community’s assets. “I have always viewed my role as being the lead salesman of the city,” the Mayor explained. “If you’re an elected official and you’re going to champion economic development, you’ve got to rely on focusing on the strengths.” Copenhavor added that knowing Augusta’s strengths makes a big difference in both attracting new business and helping local business.

Strategies to Bolster
Economic Resilience:
County Leadership
in Action

Conclusion

Shifting global economic dynamics have impacted how counties approach economic development.

To bolster economic resilience in the face of change, it has become increasingly important for counties to think creatively about their local and regional strengths and how to translate those assets into economic growth. This publication provides a number of examples of how counties are crafting long-term economic visions to support policies and initiatives that foster private-sector investment to create more economically resilient communities. County leaders can apply the innovative ideas and approaches highlighted in this report within the context of their own available assets and constraints for pursuing economic growth and promoting local quality of life.

Based on the eight case studies highlighted in the report and the three themes that emerged during the research effort, listed below are the main takeaways for county leaders:

Counties can pursue long-range planning efforts to:

- Identify strengths and weaknesses that provide opportunities and challenges for ongoing economic growth and lasting resilience to future economic stressors;
- Lay the groundwork for a substantial diversification effort;
- Target infrastructure investments and revitalization efforts to improve community quality of life;
- Craft a coordinated vision that supports new business development and meets existing business needs.

Counties can facilitate new economic growth by:

- Leveraging available natural, geographic and infrastructure assets;
- Investing in local and regional partnerships and programs that support local businesses and entrepreneurs;
- Staying knowledgeable about industry trends;
- Cultivating relationships with business leaders to ensure mutual support for both industry and community needs.

Counties can assist existing businesses and growing local entrepreneurs by:

- Funding business training programs;
- Developing business incubators;
- Forming collaborative partnerships.

Counties can align their economic development activities with workforce development initiatives to meet sector-specific demands by:

- Establishing partnerships with local training institutions;
- Investing in youth education initiatives in STEM-related fields;
- Using workforce training programs and partnerships with local universities as an effective business recruitment and retention tool;
- Pursuing workforce development programs and initiatives that link job training with job creation.

Further Resources

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Brookings County, South Dakota

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