



# Economic Development Consortium

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The completion of the 2004 Business Retention and Business Expansion Survey of Jefferson County has provided the Consortium with much needed current information about Jefferson County. A successful Economic Development Program is a mixture of many factors. It calls for an in-depth understanding of the local community. It entails assessment of numerous facts about the area in which it operates. It involves up-to-date knowledge of all aspects of the community, as well as regional, national and international trends. It requires good communication and the art of persuasion. It involves thorough research and the ability to anticipate opportunities. It demands patience.

A well-designed program involves all aspects of the community. It is designed to promote the components that positively affect the ability of businesses to remain profitable, recruit qualified employees and expand operations, to support start-up businesses, recruit new companies and to curtail, in so far as it can, the factors that weaken the local economy.

This survey was undertaken to:

- Identify the key challenges Jefferson County businesses (agricultural, commercial, industrial, and tourism) face in remaining competitive and sustainable.

- Discover commonalities among businesses
- Explore how area organizations can assist in business growth
- Assess the business climate within Jefferson County
- Gather information about the perceived strengths and weaknesses of local government efforts from local business leaders
- Provide information necessary to assist JCEDC in its efforts for planning for the benefit of Jefferson County and its quality of life for the citizens of Jefferson County

The recommendations that resulted from interviews and the survey can be categorized into five areas:

1. Communication and Business Networking
2. Marketing
3. Support a Positive Business Climate
4. Workforce Development, Training and Education
5. Facilitation and Coordination

Information gathered from the survey questionnaires and interviews enabled the Survey Committee and the Jefferson County Economic Development Consortium (JCEDC) Board of Directors to identify a pattern of

common concerns and suggestions and then to develop a general action plan. Many of the common concerns are areas that have been a component of the work plan implemented during the JCEDC's first year of operations as its programs of resources and services. The first year of operations saw the JCEDC's participation in the following:

## **Program of Resources & Services**

### **JCEDC participation....**

#### **Workforce Development**

Works closely with the other agencies and organizations to insure that Jefferson County employers have access to a quality workforce.

- Education
- Skills enhancement
- Human resource networking
- Workforce stabilization

#### **Business Sites**

Maintains a list of business sites, industrial parks, and buildings available in Jefferson County and works with businesses that are looking for expansion or relocation sites.

- Available sites
- Available buildings
- County demographic information

#### **Business Community**

Supports the business community and maintains a positive business climate along with promoting the "entrepreneurial spirit"

- Startup
- First step
- Entrepreneurial training
- Entrepreneur's & Inventor's Connection
- Financing
- Department of Commerce Programs
- Technology Zone Tax Credit Program
- Revolving Loan Programs
- Business Summit and Business Networking

#### **Tourism**

Works with the State of Wisconsin and Jefferson County Area Tourism Organizations to:

- Market Jefferson County as a place to visit
- Assist tourism and tourism related businesses
- Tourism Council
- Chambers of Commerce

#### **Home Consortium**

Utilizes the Home Consortium's resources to enhance the quality of life for citizens of Jefferson County.

- Down Payment Assistance Program
- Homebuyer Counseling
- Home Rehab Assistance

#### **Agribusiness**

Works to promote agribusiness and the farming community.

- Financing
- Marketing of agribusiness
- Rural policy alternatives
- Farm related Services

#### **Economic Development Coordinates and Facilitates**

Assists local government in its economic development endeavors.

- Local Government
  - Community infrastructure
  - County infrastructure
- State Initiatives
- Federal Initiatives

#### **Marketing**

Actively promotes the many benefits and advantages of the county to local business interested in expanding, to entrepreneurs anticipating the startup of a new business, and to those companies considering a move to Jefferson County.

