

**Ocala/Marion County Economic Development Corporation
Economic Development Strategic Plan
FY2010-2011
DRAFT - For Discussion Only**

Mission Statement: Improve the economic vitality of our community by increasing quality employment opportunities.

Vision Statement: Through further economic diversification and high quality job creation Marion County will reach full employment by 2015.

Goal 1: The EDC will conduct a broad based campaign to assist in the economic recovery process through the creation of quality jobs in Ocala/Marion County during the years (2010 - 2015)

Objective 1.1: Further strengthen the EDC's prospect development, business recruitment and expansion initiatives through a comprehensive marketing strategy.

- **Action Step 1.1.1:** Further refine the community brand supported by the City and County to aggressively recruit new industries and support expanding companies to create quality jobs.
- **Action Step 1.1.2:** Utilize the EDC's website and *LocateOcala.com* to improve the community's business intelligence platform.
- **Action Step 1.1.3:** Utilize Applied Market Research to expand and update information on Targeted Industries Sectors which include: Aviation/Aerospace, Green Technologies, Life Sciences, and other various studies indicated in Moran, Stahl & Boyer study. Target and communicate with prospective companies and close the deal with outstanding customer service.
- **Action Step 1.1.4:** Hire an economic development professional for the Business Recruitment & Retention (BR&E) position at the EDC.
- **Action Step 1.1.5:** Engage in the growing of a technology-enabled industry base to support the case for economic diversification. Create a Technology, Entrepreneurship & Capital (TEC) Accelerator Program with a Technology Advisory Council with support of UF, UCF, EDC, FHTCC, State and Federal agencies. Apply for EDA Technical Assistance Grant
- **Action Step 1.1.6:** Enhance on-going relationship with Enterprise Florida and participate in EFI's business recruitment activities, site consultants' events and cooperative marketing programs identified in MS&B study.
- **Action Step 1.1.7:** The EDC along with its partners will explore various options to promote and foster regional economic development efforts via the "Heart of Florida." Conduct Site Consultants Event.

Objective 1.2: Develop a specific plan to prepare the Ocala Business Park at Ocala International Airport and the Magna Property to become Certified Site Ready industrial parks.

- **Action Step 1.2.1:** Support the current City/County Economic Strategy.
- **Action Step 1.2.2:** Reconvene a Business Park Advisory Group to provide expertise and oversight in the development of future business/commerce parks.
- **Action Step 1.2.3:** Execute the recommendations in MS&B study in Objective 1.1 to analyze appropriate target industries and current market conditions for available business park locations; examine level of readiness and timing of park development and address park layouts, appropriate buildings, infrastructure (includes I-75 capacity and rail spur capability) and other necessary amenities.
- **Action Step 1.2.4:** Create and implement a marketing plan to promote Ocala/Marion County, the Airport Business Park, and any other business parks that become available.
- **Action Step 1.2.5:** Support and assist in the implementation of a systematic approach to bring the Airport Business Park to a shovel ready, ready-to-market site, as well as other potential business parks in the community. This includes the development of a “Virtual Building Concept.”
- **Action Step 1.2.6:** Prepare a position paper outlining specific recommendations on the effectiveness of speculative buildings and local building inventory in the Ocala/Marion County market.

Objective 1.3: Accelerate new and ongoing economic programs to assist new and expanding businesses.

Business Retention & Expansion

- **Action Step 1.3.1:** Conduct joint survey of our local existing industry base comprised of all manufacturers, wholesale distributors, small businesses, and professional and business service providers in Marion County to determine those at risk, those poised for expansion and those most likely to partner with the EDC to identify potential relocation prospects.
- **Action Step 1.3.2:** Conduct up to 100 follow-up visits to existing businesses identified by the survey in each category to determine individual needs and provide information on EDC services.
- **Action Step 1.3.3:** Implement 2011 service agreement of the Marion Regional Manufacturers Association (MRMA).
- **Action Step 1.3.4:** Explore the creation of a special industrial electrical rate classification for major Ocala Utilities power users.
- **Action Step 1.3.5:** Reconvene EAT (Economic Action Team) on a quarterly basis to assess economic recovery efforts and implement new strategies aligned with the EDC's 2010/2011 Strategic Plan.
- **Action Step 1.3.6:** Utilize EAT to introduce special state economic development legislation entitled “Florida Economically Distressed Communities Recovery Act” to Florida Legislature in 2011 Session.

Downtown and West Ocala

- **Action Step 1.3.6:** Encourage new and expanding firms to pursue infill and redevelopment opportunities for their facilities needs. Provide support to City Council with downtown development initiative.
- **Action Step 1.3.7:** Play a leading role in soliciting new and expanding businesses to locate in the Enterprise Zone.
- **Action Step 1.3.8.:** Investigate re-activation of Ocala's FTZ #217.

Customer Service

- **Action Step 1.3.9.:** Substantiate excellent customer service to new and expanding businesses.
- **Action Step 1.3.10:** Utilize the EDC Customer Service Task Force to identify real pilot projects. Use current retention, expansion and re-location projects to learn and measure responsiveness.
- **Action Step 1.3.11:** Utilize the Customer Service Matrix to measure excellent customer service for all businesses, including but not limited to expedited permitting and impact fee reductions. Seek and assess customer feedback.

Workforce Development

- **Action Step 1.3.11:** Execute 2010-2011 Agreement with Workforce connection. Partner with Workforce Connection and play a supporting role in out-placement, training and retraining services and support workforce resources and funding to help put Ocala/Marion County citizens back to work.
- **Action Step 1.3.12:** Utilize the Business Solutions Partners to provide support for the expansion of dislocated worker funding and training grants to provide outreach programs for training and retraining displaced workers and job placement.
- **Action Step 1.3.13:** Assist the Marion Technical Institute (MTI) and its students with internship placements. Continue marketing efforts for student recruitment.
- **Action Step 1.3.14:** Work with the College of Central Florida to develop a "white paper" on Marion County educational challenges

Goal 2: The EDC will expand and enhance effective methods to communicate the activities of the organization to its key investors and partners.

Objective: 2.1: Retain and grow the EDC's investment base.

- **Action Step 2.1.1:** Utilize the EDC Communications Task Force to provide consistent and accurate information to new and potential investors, and the community about the EDC's economic recovery efforts. Continue a regularly scheduled investor visitation program.
- **Action Step 2.1.2:** Prepare and submit periodic reports to the City, County, Star Banner Editorial Board, and EDC investors.
- **Action Step 2.1.3:** Staff, Executive Committee and Board members will continue to initiate one-on-one meetings with City Council and County Commission.
- **Action Step 2.1.4:** Expand EDC's community outreach and organization's positive impact on residents and community utilizing partnerships with the Ocala/Marion County Chamber of Commerce and other key business groups, i.e. Buy Local, and Small Business and Entrepreneur Development programs.

Objective: 2.2: Provide on-going accountability to EDC investors and other stakeholders.

- **Action Step 2.2.1:** Verify net new job creation through third party.
- **Action Step 2.2.2:** Provide periodical reports within the calendar year that include: statistical increase in annual wages adjusted for inflation, job creation numbers utilizing a new benchmark year, jobs and payroll reporting for targeted NAICS codes, definition for "contributing jobs" of targeted industries, new jobs anticipated from companies assisted by the EDC as well as actual jobs created, and specific progress made on action plan items. i.e., Annual POLICOM Progress Report. Provide a series of metrics for Ocala's "post-recession economy."
- **Action Step 2.2.3:** Provide financial reports to investors through distribution of the Quarterly Economic Updates.

Goal 3: The EDC will obtain public/private financial support to sustain the planned activities in the annual strategic plan.

Objective 3.1.1: The EDC will raise additional public and private sector funds to assist with the operational aspects of the EDC.

- **Action Step 3.1.1:** Collect 95% of existing EDC investor pledges.
- **Action Step 3.1.2:** Develop a plan to secure an additional \$80,000 in private sector funding for 2010-2011.