

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING**

### **2015 WC IDA ACTIVITIES**

**Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E):** The Wayne County Industrial Development Agency (WC IDA) operates an active Business Retention and Expansion [BR&E] program using a computerized tracking system. Execupulse is a Customer Relations Management (CRM) system for economic development. Economic growth in any community primarily occurs with the retention and expansion of existing industry. In fact this number is as high as 80%. Thus, it is in the community's best interest to see our local companies prosper and grow. During 2015 approximately 110 visits were conducted with existing businesses.

**World Economic Development Alliance (WEDA):** The WCIDA contracted with the World Economic Development Alliance (WEDA) to assist in achieving our marketing and outreach goals. Staff provided site information to approximately 12 out of state companies looking for either facilities or land that had been sent by WEDA. Development of marketing materials is an on-going part of the contract. To date, new material folders, a logo, business cards and key cards are being developed. Writing and editing are in progress. Trade shows, social media and public relations are being considered as other mechanisms as ways to reach out to expanding companies.

**Specific Projects:** Following are several specific economic development activities conducted by the staff during 2015:

- Staff worked with the Western Finger Lakes BOCES on future development of a P-TECH school.
- Staff worked with several companies, commercial/industrial realtors and developers to find industrial buyers for properties that they vacated. For example, staff assisted the Brady Corporation to find a purchaser for the Electromark facility in the Town/Village of Wolcott.
- Staff worked with a national furniture manufacturer from California and tried to bring them to the Town of Ontario. Greater Rochester Enterprise (GRE) and the company's site selector initially introduced them to the County. While the company decided to postpone the project, it would have created approximately 700 jobs over a five year period and constructed a 200,000 to 500,000 square foot building.

**Agricultural Economic Development Projects:** Several local farmers approached the Department with a new food processing concept, identifying the need in the region. Also staff attended NY Loves Food Conference convened by Senator Nozzolio and the Geneva Experiment Station. The agriculture and related business sector in this region is well established. This Industry is in a position to build upon 150 years of university research, product development, manufacturing and marketing that started with the resources and production capacity of the region's farms. The staff also responded to a RFP for a peach production operation.

**Funding Pools:** Staff is working with the Genesee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (GFLRPC) to develop program criteria and operating documents for the new Regional Ag Loan Program (GAIN). The expectation is that the program will begin accepting applications in the first quarter of 2016.

Additionally, the IDA has assorted Business, Main Street and Ag micro loan pools along with a larger loan program providing up to \$300,000. Companies and individuals come to the IDA to apply for a variety of funds as follows: a larger Revolving Loan Fund providing up to \$300,000; the Main Street microenterprise fund providing \$5000 to \$25,000; the Ag Micro Program, providing up to \$60,000; and the HUD Micro Program providing \$25,000. During 2015, the IDA Board approved three loans. They are ready to close in early 2016. Companies and individuals must meet the agency and resource requirements to qualify for a loan.

**Economic Transformation Program (ETP):** With the closure of the Butler Correctional Facility, expanding businesses within 15 miles of the Prison are eligible to receive ETP grants. The purpose is to offset job losses resulting from the closure. One example is the \$500,000 we obtained for the Advanced Atomization Technologies project in Clyde, NY which created nearly 90 new jobs. Another ETP grant was obtained for a Savannah company, however, they did not accept it.

**IDA Projects:** After a year in construction, the Walworth Tops project opened. It would not have been initiated without the financing assistance provided by the WCIDA and the Town of Walworth. The project provided approximately 120 jobs, filling a need for both entry level and management opportunities.

The IDA extended the sales tax exemption for Advanced Atomization Technology (AAT) as they completed their major expansion in the Village of Clyde. It included new offices and manufacturing space.

The IDA authorized a PILOT on a property at 1675 Wayneport Road in Macedon to encourage small manufacturers to either lease or buy this facility. The owner has made the inside a ready-to-occupy building.

At the request of the company, the WCIDA removed the PILOT on the Jindal facility which they had purchased from Mobil Chemical approximately 18 months ago. Jindal's plan to use the facility as R&D headquarters was abandoned, as they will move the operation to Georgia.

The IDA staff continued work with Headwaters Foods and their consultant on a feasibility study for the relocation and expansion of a regional food hub and processing facility in the Town of Ontario. It is being funded by a USDA RBEG grant prepared by the IDA staff.

The Wayne County Business Builders had success in convening direct counseling services for small businesses and individuals initiating new business start-ups.

The IDA meets regularly on the fourth Friday of each month, with special meetings when necessary. Staff submitted all Public Authority Accountability Act reports on time. And independent audits of all four entities were completed on time for the PAAA reporting. Audits were exceptional and received high marks.

**Workforce Development Training:** The Deputy Director of ED/Planning is a member of the reorganized regional Workforce Investment Board. Following the new Federal guidelines established under WIOA, the board was downsized. Under the new regulations, economic development entities must work closely with workforce development agencies and entities to receive Federal funding. As part of this focus, an additional committee has been established, consisting of economic developers and workforce developers.

The Deputy Director of ED/Planning is also member of the Finger Lakes Advanced Manufacturing Entity's (FAME) executive committee. FAME continues to work with educators on the need for STEM training and basic communication skills in order to fill numerous job openings in advanced manufacturing.

The WCIDA, in conjunction with FAME, held the first "Soft Skills Summit" in September at the Young Sommer Winery in Williamson.

Staff attended several meetings of the Wayne County Finger Lakes Community College Campus Advisory Committee. The College is a significant asset to workforce development.

**Job Fair:** The WCIDA hosted and organized the annual Wayne County Job Fair in Palmyra in November. Approximately 175 job seekers attended. Over thirty companies participated. Feedback indicated that companies found it very positive and plan to attend next year's event.

**Beh Industrial Park Expansion:** Working with the Town of Ontario and Wayne County, the WCIDA continues to pursue expanding the Beh and Commerce Way Industrial Park. With the additional phase of Timothy Lane completed, new acreage can now be accessed. The next large property owner has cleared approximately 70 acres and completed engineering so that the property is shovel-ready.

**Silver Hill Facility Sale and Property Gifting:** The Sarah Coventry building and its 12 acres has been sold and is now owned by Don Lasher of Capstone Real Estate Development LLC. The facility houses the Wayne County Campus of Finger Lakes Community College. Eldercare is developing a separate portion of the facility

The remaining 64 acres of the Silver Hill Technology Park was gifted by the owners to the Wayne Industrial Sustainability Development Corporation. The corporation plans to utilize the property to create a corporate campus-like setting.

**Building and Sites Inventory:** Staff continued to develop an inventory of available buildings and sites that could be used to attract expanding companies. At this time the entire County has been surveyed, however, records are now out of date and need to be updated.