

NEW STRATEGIC PLAN FOR JACKSON COUNTY INDUSTRIAL

With support from Duke Energy and the Jackson County Education Coalition, Jackson County Industrial Development contracted with Thayr Richey and Strategic Development Growth from Bloomington, IN to devise a new three-year strategic plan.

The following represents new strategies that have been proposed by SGD.

Strategy 1: Continue the excellent work in NBR, R&E & WFD/Education and increase the marketing program

Jackson County has a great reputation as a place for manufacturing and transportation. However, as the U.S. economy continues to grow, there will likely be significantly more new business locations in this country over the next three years than there were over the past three years. This is a time for JCIDC to increase its marketing efforts – both domestically and internationally.

Strategy 2: Create a new, multi-county Workforce Development program to meet the needs of Jackson County basic employers

This is also the time for the JCIDC to increase its efforts in helping basic employers find qualified workers. JCIDC is already the leader among LEDOs in Indiana on workforce development.

The lack of worker availability is a complex issue, and it is a national one. Jackson County has a regional workforce catchment area. The solution to Jackson County employers' worker availability problem will probably not be solved by Jackson County alone.

Although lack of worker availability is a national issue, it directly impacts Jackson County's ability to develop its economy. Neither established basic employers can expand, nor can new basic employers locate if there are too few workers. This is one of the top threats to the Jackson County economy.

The JCIDC should lead a new effort to help solve the lack of qualified workers.

Strategy 3: Target the Professional and Technical Services cluster

Promote Jackson County as a location for small companies in the Professional and Technical Services sector (TPS).

The PTS sector includes:

- Legal
- Accounting, Tax Preparation, Bookkeeping, and Payroll
- Architectural, Engineering, and Related
- Specialized Design
- Computer Systems Design and Related Services
- Management, Scientific, and Technical Consulting
- Scientific Research and Development
- Advertising and Related Services

The location needs of small PTS businesses are comparable to manufacturers: good location, available and qualified workforce, ability to ship services to client (broadband telecommunications and UPS), and access to intercity and international travel.

Strategy 4: Develop more Basic Employer sites

The relatively small amount of available acreage for new basic employers is Jackson County's most important economic development problem.

- Determine if the approximately 500 acres near Freeman Field will be available to new and expanding basic employers.
- If this acreage will not be available, work with the Seymour Industrial Corporation to identify and develop new employer sites in the City of Seymour with good access to I-65.
- Work with the Town of Brownstown to identify an employer site and begin to develop it.
- Continue to work with Town of Crothersville on new employer sites that will open up due to current road construction there and assist the town on infrastructure issues (waste water).

Strategy 5: Support the City of Seymour in revitalizing its downtown

A number of employers that SDG interviewed noted that lack of dining and shopping opportunities in the downtown was a problem in recruiting professional staff. Improving Quality of Life assets – especially in downtown Seymour – will also help in recruiting PTS sector employers.

- Give current residents greater opportunities for shopping and recreation
- Help local employers attract qualified workers
- Attract more small basic employers
- Attract more residents to Jackson County

Strategy 6: Over the next three years explore long-term relationship between JCEC and JCIDC workforce programs

Over the long-term it is questionable how a county with the population of Jackson can sustain two organizations working in the same general field of education and workforce development. Currently both organizations have separate programs without too much overlap. However, merging the two efforts could create a greater synergy for the whole county.

SDG recommends forming a taskforce of three board members from each organization to investigate long-term funding; best practices in education and workforce development in the U.S., and determining whether a unified program – regardless of funding issues – would be more effective.