



2011 ANNUAL REPORT

Carol Knapp, Executive Director

Officers:

President: Gary Mortus, First Energy/Ohio Edison
Vice President: Brian Humphress, City of Willard
Secretary: Trisha Summers, Village of Wakeman
Treasurer: Jerry Shoemaker, Greenwich Chamber of Commerce

Huron County Commissioners:

Gary Bauer, Joe Hintz and Larry Silcox

City of Norwalk

Rob Duncan
Mayor
38 Whittlesey Ave.
Norwalk, OH 44857

City of Willard

Brian Humphress
City Manager
631 Myrtle Ave.
Willard, OH 44890

PLATINUM PARTNERS



Fisher-Titus Medical Center

Tomorrow's Technology.
Today's Personal Care.

Fisher-Titus Medical Center

Duane Woods
272 Benedict Avenue, Norwalk, OH 44857

Northern Ohio Rural Water

Tom Reese
P.O. Box 96, Collins, OH 44826



Cities and Villages

City of Bellevue

Donald Berkey, Mayor
3000 Seneca Ind. Parkway
Bellevue, OH 44811

Village of Greenwich

Lowell Etzler, Mayor
45 E. Main Street
Greenwich, OH 44837

Village of Wakeman

Chris Hipp, Mayor
Trisha Summers, Fiscal
59 Hyde Street
Wakeman, OH 44839

Village of New London

Darwin Anderson, Mayor
Shawn Pickworth, Administrator
115 E. Main Street
New London, OH 44851

Village of Monroeville

Mike Adelman, Mayor
Mike Goodwin, Administrator
2 S. Main Street
Monroeville, OH 44847

Village of Plymouth

Tim Redden, Mayor
Bill Sexton, Administrator
48 W. Broadway
Plymouth, OH 44865

Private Partners

Firelands Electric Cooperative

April Bordas
One Energy Place
New London, OH 44851

Janotta & Herner

Ted Kastor
P.O. Box 307
Monroeville, OH 44847

PNC Bank

Rita Jackson/Derek Newell
9 E. Main Street
Norwalk, OH 44857

Sutton Bank

Bill Alford
301 E. Walton St.
Willard, OH 44890-9111

First Energy/Ohio Edison

Gary Mortus
2508 W. Perkins Avenue
Sandusky, OH 44870

Mercy-Willard Hospital

Lynn Detterman/Cindy Dennison
110 E. Howard Street
Willard, OH 44890

Star Design-Build Contractors

Craig Trick
46405 Telegraph Road
Amherst, OH 44001

Tusing Builders, Ltd.

Jason Tusing
2596 U.S. Hwy. 20 West
Monroeville, OH 44846

Non-Profit Partners

EHOVE Career Center

Heather Horowitz/Viki Kaszonyi
316 W. Mason Rd.
Milan, OH 44846

Huron County Chamber of Commerce

Melissa James
10 1/2 W. Main Street
Norwalk, OH 44857

Norwalk Economic Development Corp.

Ellen Heinz
10 W. Main Street
Norwalk, OH 44857

Willard Area Chamber of Commerce

Ricky Branham
P.O. Box 73
Willard, OH 44890

WSOS-CAC

Ben Kenny
109 S. Front Street
Fremont, OH 43430

Greenwich Chamber of Commerce

Jerry Shoemaker
82 New Road
Greenwich, OH 44837

Huron County Job & Family Services

Jill Nolan, Interim Director
185 Shady Lane Drive
Norwalk, OH 44857

Norma Schaechterle

Mike Myers Realty-Century 21
92 E. Main Street
Norwalk, OH 44857

Willard Area Economic Dev. Corp.

Don Graham
631 Myrtle Ave., P.O. Box 367
Willard, OH 44890

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COLLABORATION

The restructuring of Ohio's economic development efforts and realignment of economic development regions has resulted in enhanced local and regional collaboration. Huron County is now a part of the 18-county northeast region represented by Team NEO/JobsOhio. Our partnership with Team NEO/ JobsOhio has allowed us to meet and establish working relationships with the economic development professionals in multiple counties. HCDC's Executive Director regularly attends Team NEO/JobsOhio monthly partner meetings to represent Huron County's economic development interests. Meeting information is then shared with our local economic development partners and community representatives.

Huron County Development Council has maintained its membership in and involvement with NCORDA (North Central Ohio Regional Development Alliance). NCORDA is comprised of economic development entities in a nine-county region representing three of the six new state-defined economic development regions.

Local collaboration is extremely important to our county's economic development efforts as the state transitions from the Ohio Department of Development to JobsOhio and the Ohio Development Services Agency. The Huron County Development Council is a member of and regularly attends New London CIC and Willard Area Economic Development Corporation (WAEDC) meetings and is a member of the Huron County Chamber of Commerce and Willard Area Chamber of Commerce. Over the last year, HCDC has worked to establish relationships with the Huron County Township Association, Celeryville Muck Farmers, and Erie Basin RC&D.

BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION

In 2011, the Huron County Development Council completed the groundwork for a county-wide business retention and expansion program and significantly increased the number of business visits throughout the county. HCDC Board Members and the Executive Director participated in Norwalk's Business Appreciation Week in April.

The state's newly formed JobsOhio agency has determined that the county economic development organizations should take the lead in the local business retention and expansion efforts. Team NEO/JobsOhio has awarded a grant for \$2 million to assist with this effort throughout northeast Ohio. All 18 counties in the northeast region will benefit from the shared resources that this grant makes possible. Huron County will be working closely with Team Lorain in this regional effort.

LEAD MANAGEMENT

The Huron County Development Council is responsible for the management of state-generated economic development leads for Huron County. HCDC maintains the state database of available buildings and sites for industrial development within the county. Working with our local economic development organizations and communities, we obtain the specific information on available properties and enter it into the database system.

Leads are generated at the state level through the Ohio Department of Development or Team NEO/ JobsOhio. The Huron County Development Council receives the leads and distributes the project criteria to our economic development partners and communities. Leads have very specific criteria that must be met before a building or site can be submitted for consideration. ODOD leads are “connected” to the Ohio One database which has an automatic match system in place. To assure that all economic development opportunities for the county are submitted, HCDC staff double checks the results of the automatic match with a manual search to determine if any properties in the system match the project specifics.

When a property or properties meet the project specifics, the Huron County Development Council contacts the community’s designated economic development representative and asks if they would like the property submitted on their behalf. This procedure assures that all viable properties are submitted for consideration. As the county’s administrator, HCDC is the only agency designated to respond to state-generated leads for Huron County.

Often times, a RFI (Request for Information) is requested to provide additional information to the prospect about the community and/or property. HCDC assists communities in preparing the RFI which accompanies the lead response.

It is critical that building and site information on the Ohio One database is complete and accurate. Before a property can be submitted, it must be “green lighted” indicating that all property information has been provided. HCDC staff takes a proactive approach to maintaining the database so that “green light” status exists for 90% or more of our county’s properties. With short lead response times, this approach assures that we can dedicate time to preparing RFIs and submit properties well within the project’s response deadline.

Presently, Huron County has 35 properties listed on the Ohio One database. Seventeen properties are land, and eighteen properties are buildings. The 35 properties are located in the following communities within the county:

Norwalk	10 properties
Willard	10 properties
Bellevue	6 properties
Plymouth	4 properties
Monroeville	3 properties
New London	2 properties

In 2011, twenty-two leads were received from the Ohio Department of Development. Six of the leads were for land with 16 building projects. Huron County was in the position to respond to six of the 22 projects and submitted 13 properties on behalf of our communities. The City of Willard made the “short list” on a building project, “Project Twisted Breeze”. HCDC’s Executive Director traveled to Texas with Willard City Manager Brian Humphress to make a presentation to the prospect. Unfortunately, the project was lost to another state.

Since our affiliation with Team NEO/JobsOhio in June, we have received sixteen leads. Eleven of the leads were for buildings, three for land, and two not specified (informational only at time of distribution). Huron County properties have not met lead criteria for any of these projects.

HURON COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The Huron County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) completed in June 2010 provides considerable guidance for county-wide economic development and allows the county to maintain its status as a “redevelopment area” as defined by the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA). As a working document, the CEDS consists of 14 goals with 79 action plans and 68 responsible parties identified. Timeframes defined in the original CEDS range from ongoing (61), short term (12), short & medium term (1), medium term (5), and long term (1). Twenty-four of the action plans had some level of activity in 2011.

GOAL	ACTION PLAN	ACTIVITY
Goal 1-A Retain & Expand Current Business & Industry	Action Plan 1 Continue the established R & E efforts including structured and informal business visitations.	Groundwork in place for expanded county-wide retention & expansion program. Development of regional R & E effort and funding through JobsOhio/Team NEO. Increased business visits in communities. Participation in Norwalk’s Business Appreciation Week.
Goal 1-B Attract New Industry	Action Plan 1 Educate property owners on the opportunity to market viable industrial buildings & sites and information REQUIRED for inclusion in this free marketing opportunity	Development of Site Information Sheet; discussions with various commercial real estate agents; discussion with railroad representative.
	Action Plan 2 Refine the database of available buildings/sites to be as responsive as possible to prospective leads.	Proactive approach to maintaining database; 90% of sites “green lighted”
Goal 1-C Increase employment base within the county	Action Plan 1 Monitor county’s unemployment rate in comparison with surrounding counties and state. Analyze possible causes for unemployment rates and business assistance needed to address situation.	Consistently monitor unemployment information. Weekly accumulation of data of available jobs in Huron County through Ohio Means Business website. Discussions at WIA Board meetings.
	Action Plan 2 Determine workforce development needs of existing business in Huron County. Work with educational entities to provide training needed by businesses.	Business visits include discussions on workforce needs and opportunities available to employers. Referrals to HCDJFS; WIA discussions; EHOVE Business Advisory Committee
	Action Plan 3 Assist Huron County businesses in addressing worker shortage crisis. Develop program/plan to connect employers with needed workers.	Meeting with economic development partners in Huron County to develop impactful program. Discussions with NCORDA members and possible collaboration on AREA Jobs Fair.
Goal 2-A Continue the collaborative economic development efforts in Huron County	Action Plan 1 Continue to coordinate with multi-county and regional organizations to raise the profile of Huron County in north-central Ohio.	Regularly attend New London CIC, WAEDC, NCORDA, Team NEO/ JobsOhio, NEO Ag Breakfasts, Muck Growers Breakfasts. Attend training opportunities through OEDA and NorTech. Establishing working relationships with numerous county economic development directors.
	Action Plan 2A Create or update a business-to-business directory.	Obtained updated list of Huron County business establishments from Team NEO’s Research Department.

	<p>Action Plan 4 Consistently monitor the impact of county and external regulatory processes on business and take steps to minimize negative effects.</p>	<p>Follow local, regional, state, and national news daily. Provided testimony at Ohio House of Representatives Workforce Committee hearing relative to unemployment crisis and worker shortage crisis our agricultural and industrial business communities are facing.</p>
<p>Goal 3 Improve the employability of Huron County's labor force</p>	<p>Action Plan 1 Continually work to match employers' existing and projected needs with training programs and curricula.</p>	<p>Communication with HCDJFS and regional educational entities.</p>
	<p>Action Plan 1B Develop business advisory councils with EHOVE, local school districts, higher education entities to provide open-ended communication between business and education.</p>	<p>Participate on EHOVE Business Advisory Committee.</p>
<p>Goal 5 Ensure orderly arrangement of land uses</p>	<p>Action Plan 1 Maintain database of suitable and developable "shovel ready" sites for industrial and business development.</p>	<p>State database of available properties include all known industrial and business sites with 90% "green light" status.</p>
	<p>Action Plan 2B Adhere to the goals and objectives of the Huron County Comprehensive Plan.</p>	<p>Utilizing CEDS as working document to provide direction.</p>
<p>Goal 6 Maximize the use and enjoyment of the county's natural resources</p>	<p>Action Plan 1 Promote and facilitate niche agricultural crops and locally grown foods.</p>	<p>Participate in monthly NEO Ag Breakfasts, Muck Growers Breakfasts; received Master Gardeners Training</p>
	<p>Action Plan 3 Apply principles of sustainable and "smart" growth promoting development sites within proximity of municipalities, growth areas, and available utilities.</p>	<p>Development sites included on Ohio One database have appropriate infrastructure in place. Established working relationship with electric providers and Northern Ohio Rural Water.</p>
	<p>Action Plan 4 Take steps to preserve Huron County's farmland and minimize its loss.</p>	<p>Establishing relationship with agricultural businesses in county.</p>
	<p>Action Plan 2 Advocate for uniformly satisfactory Broadband Internet access and cell phone reception throughout the county</p>	<p>Communication with Connect Ohio.</p>
	<p>Action Plan 3 Develop strategically located rail spurs to assist local business with freight logistics for their inputs and outputs.</p>	<p>Working with railroad and community on potential project.</p>
	<p>Action Plan 4 Ensure that the County's Public Transit system is providing a service that is responsive to residents' and employees' needs.</p>	<p>Conversations with HCDJFS, Senior Enrichment Services, various communities and business leaders regarding transit system.</p>
<p>Goal 9 Identify and assist in development of the appropriate business niches, clusters, and business opportunities</p>	<p>Action Plan 1 Advocate for local businesses to become involved in federal military and civilian procurement programs including taking advantage of Huron County's HUB Zone status.</p>	<p>Discussed HUB Zone with various businesses during visits.</p>

	Action Plan 2 Analyze potential linkages with Summit Motorsports Park in related businesses such as the performance automotive sector.	Commissioned consultant to provide unbiased report on airport/raceway opportunities.
	Action Plan 5 Nurture and grow the county's entrepreneurial base.	Attend training sessions to learn more about opportunities for entrepreneurial assistance; joined LinkedIn Economic Development groups.
	Action Plan 5B Coordinate and publicize services and incentive programs for entrepreneurs.	Attend training sessions to learn more about opportunities for entrepreneurial assistance; joined LinkedIn Economic Development groups.
	Action Plan 5C Begin entrepreneurial training in public school systems.	Attend training sessions to learn more about opportunities for entrepreneurial assistance; joined LinkedIn Economic Development groups; suggest Junior Achievement Programs.

COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT CORPORATION (CIC)

The Huron County Development Council serves as the Community Improvement Corporation for Huron County as well as the municipalities within the county. A Community Improvement Corporation is a 501 (c)3 not-for-profit corporation organized for the development purposes described in the Ohio Revised Code Section 1724. Utilizing the services of a CIC simplifies processes for a municipality.

In 2011, HCDC serving as CIC, assisted the Village of Wakeman with a property transfer that resulted in a new business establishment in the Village. The Council was also asked to serve as the fiscal agent for a not-for-profit organization that is in the planning stages of a major project.

The CIC Annual Report to the State of Ohio is also prepared and submitted by HCDC.

REVOLVING LOAN FUNDS

The Huron County Revolving Loan Fund and the New London CIC Revolving Loan Fund are two financial assistance programs available in designated areas of Huron County. Revolving loan funds are utilized for projects that cannot be fully funded through conventional private lending. The RLF provides the "gap financing" for these projects. Bellevue and Norwalk have their own revolving loan fund programs and are therefore not eligible to participate in the Huron County RLF program. New London's RLF Program is for New London based economic development projects. WSOS CAC, Inc. administers both revolving loan funds working in partnership with HCDC.

ENTERPRISE ZONE PROGRAM

There are six designated enterprise zones in Huron County: City of Norwalk, City of Willard, City of Bellevue, Village of Monroeville, Village of Plymouth, and Village of New London. The Huron County Development Council administers the Monroeville and Plymouth Enterprise Zone Programs. Enterprise Zone Agreements are negotiated between the company and affected governmental entities. The State of Ohio Enterprise Zone Program allows for up to 75% tax abatement for ten years for businesses locating or expanding in cities and villages. Businesses locating or expanding in unincorporated areas are

granted up to 60% tax abatement for ten years. Abatements in excess of 75%/60% require approval of the affected Boards of Education.

Tax Incentive Review Committee interviews are conducted annually with the businesses receiving tax abatements under the Ohio Enterprise Zone Program. HCDC coordinates these committee interviews and prepares the necessary reports for the County Auditor and State of Ohio.

GRANT AND LOAN ADMINISTRATION

The Huron County Development Council acts as the administrator for economic development grants and loans received by the County. HCDC is administering the Ohio Department of Development Industrial Site Improvement Fund grant that was received in 2009 for a Norwalk Rail Spur Program for New Horizon's Baking Company. Grant administration and reporting lasts many years after a project has been completed.

REPRESENTATION

To better serve the communities, businesses, and residents of Huron County, the Huron County Development Council represents the county's economic development and workforce development interests by actively participating on a number of boards, committees, and organizations including:

- Celeryville Muck Farmers Breakfasts
- EHOVE Business Advisory Committee
- Erie Basin RC & D
- Huron County Chamber of Commerce
- Huron County Department of Job & Family Services WIA Board
- Huron County Housing Task Force
- Huron County Master Gardeners
- Huron County Rapid Response Team
- Huron County Township Association
- LinkedIn Professional Organizations
- New London Community Improvement Corporation
- North Central Ohio Regional Development Alliance (NCORDA) Board & Executive Board
- North East Ohio Agriculture Breakfasts
- Ohio Economic Development Association (OEDA)
- Project Leadership of Huron County
- Team NEO/JobsOhio Partner Meetings
- Willard Area Economic Development Corporation
- Willard Area Chamber of Commerce

STATE INTERACTION

The Huron County Development Council routinely meets with the Governor's Regional Liaison to discuss issues affecting Huron County. The Director was asked to provide testimony at the Ohio House of Representative Workforce Committee hearing regarding the unemployment and workforce issues in Huron County.