

An aerial photograph of a town, likely Lawrence, Kansas, showing a mix of green trees and buildings. The sky is a vibrant blue with a layer of white, textured clouds. The text 'EDDC' is overlaid in the top right, with the 'E' having two horizontal green bars. Below it, 'LAWRENCE-DOUGLAS COUNTY' is written in a smaller, grey font.

EDDC

LAWRENCE-DOUGLAS COUNTY

Economic Development Strategic Plan
2017-2018



LAWRENCE-DOUGLAS COUNTY

2017 - 2018 Strategic Plan

This plan focuses on the first two years of Growing Forward, our five-year strategic plan. To see the full plan, visit edclawrence.com/growingforward.

1 BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION

Strategy #1: Develop programs for businesses to interact and create opportunities for growth.

Action Steps:

- Leverage Network Kansas partnership to implement programs for small business growth:
 - Ice House Entrepreneurship Program
 - Growing Rural Business Program
 - Economic Gardening Program
 - Destination Business Bootcamp
 - Metropolitan Entrepreneurial Community Revolving Loan Fund
- Reform East Hills Business Park Consortium Board of Trustees with local representation
- Reestablish Manufacturers Council and similar roundtable groups

Strategy #2: Develop relationships to better assist existing businesses with their future needs.

Action Steps:

- Conduct regular visits and tours of existing facilities
- Regularly poll local industry leaders on current and future challenges, as well as potential growth opportunities
- Familiarize industry leaders with the suite of support services available through The Chamber and EDC, as well as local and state resources (incentives, import/export assistance, etc.)

Strategy #3: Serve as the BRE liaison between government, business, and education.

Action Steps:

- Acquire customer relationship management (CRM) software to house and aggregate relevant community data
- Create a baseline data set of critical economic development metrics by which to measure growth
- Utilize business analysis software to assess industry health and identify trends, challenges, and potential growth sectors within our region
- Conduct monthly facility tours of major community employers in conjunction with City, County, and educational officials and elected leaders

Key Measurements:

- Number of company visits per year
- Number of jobs and businesses retained
- Number of companies who receive assistance
- Impact of Network Kansas E-Community Programs
 - Number and value of revolving loans issued
 - Number of jobs and investment created through loan participants
 - Number of businesses participating in board certified programs
- New job growth and capital investment stemming from expansion projects
- Number of ribbon cuttings held for existing businesses



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2 WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Strategy #1: Implement systems and staffing to ensure the long-term viability of Peaslee Tech.

Action Steps:

- Create a \$1.5 million funding partnership to reduce debt and further renovate and expand technical training facilities and programming at Peaslee Tech
- Fund a contract grant writer for Peaslee Tech to pursue state, federal, and foundation funds available for workforce development initiatives
- Hire a program manager for Peaslee Tech to work with industry leaders and develop custom training, connect with community colleges to develop credit programming, and meet with community stakeholders to create non-credit programming
- Consistently communicate the customized training capabilities of Peaslee Tech to existing employers and prospective business relocation clients

Strategy #2: Develop workforce training programming that fulfills the stated needs of local employers and creates a competitive edge in business recruitment opportunities.

Action Steps:

- Collaborate with community partners in the ongoing renovation of Peaslee Tech to create spaces for expanded programming and enhanced customized training abilities
- Maintain a presence of the Kansas Local Area Workforce Development Board of Directors and the Peaslee Tech Board of Directors to ensure that workforce training interests are aligned with the Lawrence and Douglas County business community
- Through BRE efforts, assess the workforce needs of existing employers to develop relevant workforce training programs at Peaslee Tech

Key Measurements:

- Customized training programs offered at Peaslee Tech
- Enrollment numbers at Peaslee Tech
- Number of graduates from Peaslee Tech
- Number of attendees for customized training courses

3 BUSINESS RECRUITMENT AND MARKETING

Strategy #1: Develop and implement an in-depth strategic economic development marketing plan.

Action Steps:

- Provide accurate, up to date, and comprehensive research on demographics, regional data, and other information typically requested by site selectors
- Utilize business analytics software, BRE data, and strategic partner resources to assess regional strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats
- Enhance the understanding of the EDC initiatives and services within the business community and among the citizens of the areas it serves
- Direct marketing toward the recruitment of businesses operating within targeted industries
- Develop and/or update marketing materials promoting the area and our assets both nationally and internationally

Strategy #2: Leverage established relationships with existing employers, and community and regional partners (BTBC, KUIC, KCADC, KDOC, KUSBDC, etc.) to identify potential business recruitment opportunities.

Action Steps:

- Convene City, County, Chamber, EDC, and University officials monthly to discuss pertinent efforts and potential economic development projects
- Work closely with BTBC partners on tech and bioscience-related recruitment and expansion efforts
- Maintain consistent visibility and involvement with strategic partner organizations and industry-related events (Kansas Research Nexus, KC Animal Health Corridor, KCADC, Network Kansas, KDOC, etc.)
- Reestablish communication and engagement with other community economic development partners in Baldwin, Eudora, and Lecompton

Strategy #3: Capitalize on the assets and resources of the University of Kansas and other educational institutions.

Action Steps:

- Maintain an active and vocal presence on the Bioscience & Technology Business Center and KU Center for Research boards of directors
- Work with the KU Alumni Association to design and distribute a targeted survey to KU alumni assessing the key deciding factors in business relocation decisions
- Maintain a sponsored presence at KU Alumni Association events held in strategic out-of-state markets throughout the year
- Identify targeted industry overlap with key research and educational programming at KU

Key Measurements:

- New job growth and capital investment stemming from attraction projects
- Identification of target industries
- Increase in tax revenue resulting from attraction projects
- Number of ribbon cuttings held for new businesses

4 ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND STARTUPS

Strategy #1: Support existing entities, organizations, and programs that foster an entrepreneurial ecosystem within Lawrence and Douglas County.

Action Steps:

- Promote and support collaborations between industry and local universities for innovation
- Provided financial and administrative support to the KU Small Business Development Center to ensure assistance with product development, business plan creation, and marketing strategy implementation
- Provide business research support to the local library
- Work with youth education partners to encourage business and entrepreneurial programming
- Maintain consistent presence within local entrepreneurial development circles (1 Million Cups, BTBC Tech Tuesdays, KU tech community, etc.)
- Explore out-of-market tech-related marketing opportunities via event attendance and/or sponsorships (South by Southwest, LaunchKC, KCADC events, etc.)
- Support a network of business mentors for entrepreneurs

Strategy #2: Accelerate local enterprises through the implementation of a range of resources, education, and funding support.

Action Steps:

- Leverage Network Kansas partnership to implement programs for small business growth:
 - Ice House Entrepreneurship Program
 - Growing Rural Business Program
 - Economic Gardening Program
 - Destination Business Bootcamp
 - Metropolitan Entrepreneurial Community Revolving Loan Fund
- Develop relationships with existing venture capital resources through which to connect local entrepreneurs
- Survey entrepreneur-led and startup businesses to gain knowledge about their market, employment, workforce needs, and growth potential

Key Measurements:

- New job growth and capital investment resulting from entrepreneurial ventures
- Number of entrepreneur-led companies started
- Impact of Network Kansas E-Community Programs
 - Number and value of revolving loans issued
 - Number of jobs and investment created through loan participants
 - Number of businesses participating in board certified programs



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5 SITE AND INFRASTRUCTURE CAPACITY

Strategy #1: Partner with the City of Lawrence and Douglas County to encourage development of additional site and building inventory.

Action Steps:

- Explore public infrastructure funding opportunities
- Work with City leadership to develop a streamlined permitting and incentive process to spur private investment in Lawrence VenturePark and East Hills

Strategy #2: Develop a long-term site and building inventory plan.

Action Steps:

- Explore site certification programs for existing industrial sites
- Complete an industrial site assessment and continue future site planning
- Maintain an up-to-date database of existing sites and buildings located throughout Douglas County and ensure its accessibility to developers, site selectors, and existing business leaders

Strategy #3: Enhance existing infrastructure at Lawrence VenturePark.

Action Steps:

- Conduct an in-depth cost analysis of existing rail retrofit and new rail construction
- Evaluate structural stability and renovation costs of existing 120,000 square foot warehouse
- Commission conceptual renderings of transload facility (parking, loading docks, street infrastructure)
- Pursue local and state funding opportunities to offset development costs
- Conduct national outreach to preferred transload operators to seek private facility investment, development, and operation

Key Measurements:

- Availability of shovel ready sites (number of sites, acreage)
- Availability of industrial buildings (number of buildings, square footage)
- Status of development plans