

Missouri Innovation Park = Innovation and Collaboration in the 21st Century



Proposed land use concept, located at Adams Dairy Parkway and R.D. Mize Road

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Over the past 4 plus years the Blue Springs community has had the unique opportunity to witness and learn first-hand about growth and development drivers and opportunities that are shaping the community and the region's economic environment and future. Blue Springs, with a population nearing 57,000 and an annual growth rate of 2%, is poised to position itself in the Kansas City region and within the global economy, particularly in light of the recent favorable announcements from the University of Missouri (MU) and their future plans for Blue Springs and the Missouri Innovation Park.

Growth and prosperity operate on a continuum which both ebbs and flows through communities, states and countries. The jarring economic transition we are experiencing today makes understanding each community's place in the global marketplace more important than ever. By examining local and regional economic advantages, both local and regional assets can be strategically leveraged to a competitive advantage amongst global peers.

Competition is healthy for the economy, and its highest form is found when a concentration of a region's wealth, assets and knowledge combine through groupings of business and industry clusters, as in examples like: IT and Silicon Valley; Bio-Med and San Diego; or Financial Services and New York, London or Tokyo. Clusters are not static but constantly are changing and only remain viable if they are dynamic, which historically is driven through both public and private research linked to a knowledge-based workforce in-turn supported through all levels of K-12 and higher education and workforce training.

It is reasonable to agree that when concentrations of similar companies and their customer and supplier

chains seek to build competitive advantage by linking value-added production, pricing, access to research and development, and integration of their knowledge-based workers, the results are successful industry clusters. These clusters possess, and will produce without fail, capital attraction, new business start-ups, co-location of high-growth companies linked to the regional industry clusters, and concentrations of highly productive workers, knowledge-based jobs, and research and investment linkages tied to the region's clusters.

Over the past three years leaders from the Blue Springs City Council, the Blue Springs EDC and Blue Springs Growth Initiatives have held extensive conversations with MU to attract the university to Blue Springs as the anchor tenant of the Missouri Innovation Park (MIP). The Blue Springs Growth Initiatives, with MU's input, is developing a land use plan and master plan, identifying development opportunities, and crafting design guidelines. The "Mizzou Center," the first building planned for the Park, would offer close proximity to high-tech, life sciences businesses,

creating a unique opportunity for these businesses and MU faculty and resources to work side-by-side in a collaborative and synergistic approach.

MU plans to create a significant presence in Blue Springs by leasing office space in the very near future. MU intends to immediately lay the foundation for building corporate, civic, research and alumni outreach and collaboration that links MU more directly to the region's 2.4 million residents and 20,000 plus companies, particularly the linkages to animal health and nutrition and sustainable energy. The plans to engage area utilities, agriculture, research facilities, engineering expertise, and finally the region's historic connection to agriculture and valued added food production focus are at the forefront of global demand for our region's products which will increase over time. And, these plans strongly align with MU's strategic goals in such areas as: Translational Medicine/Animal Health, Sustainable Energy, and Food For the Future.

MU's interest in Blue Springs allows the community to integrate competitive advantages that start with the State of Missouri, extend to MU, and link our region to the global market-place. This collaborative goal is to create high-wage paying 21st century knowledge-based jobs that create value-linkages to higher education, which in turn support and reinforce area employers and their ability to prosper in the global marketplace in the years and decades ahead.

More information about the City of Blue Springs can be found at: www.ThinkBlueSprings.com. Information about the Missouri Innovation Park can be found at: www.MissouriInnovationPark.com.

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