



Member Spotlight

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The Blue Springs Economic Development Corporation (BSEDC) is a non profit organization in Blue Springs, Missouri, that was founded in 2006 and opened for business on January 1, 2007. Under the direction of Sher Lopez, Investor and Business Relations Manager, BREP, the first Business Retention Program was launched in Blue Springs.

Through the "Grow Blue Springs" business visitation program in 2009 – 2010, the following were completed: 46 Synchronist visits, 91 business assists, 8 forums, 1 corridor study and 1 workforce development survey. Beginning in 2006 through June 2010, \$65,000 has been awarded through state and federal grants for business retention activities.

While we had plenty of success in our organization, we could have not done it without our regional partnership with the Eastern Jackson County Development Alliance. This partnership, built over the last 3 years, has picked up enough momentum through regional opportunities and partnering that the alliance is currently undergoing a branding/marketing exercise as well as developing a strategic work plan to accelerate our regional exposure. The most beneficial tool to-date from this partnership has been our OneConnect program.

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Joint Conference 2010

Building the Future: Strategies for Business Retention, Expansion and Attraction

by Melinda Cox

The Crescent City will host the 2010 Annual Joint Conference for BREI and SEDC on August 14-17. Business Retention Expansion International and the Southern Economic Development Council will bring economic developers from all parts of the world to New Orleans, LA, to collaborate on

maintaining and galvanizing our most vital assets – our local existing business partners. Conference headquarters will be the Sheraton Hotel New Orleans located at 500 Canal Street near the French Quarter.

Building the Future: Strategies for Business Retention, Expansion and Attraction will serve as our mantra as we assess and reflect on the recent economic hardships to prepare for an economic recovery in our communities worldwide.

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This program is a one-stop shop for the region in finding business resources available to local companies (www.oneconnectejc.com). Under this umbrella we maximize training sessions, educational sessions, realtors roundtables, business outreach, workforce outreach and networking opportunities for the 9 communities in the region. By maximizing our resources, we can ensure the region grows and ultimately benefits each individual community.

The Business Retention Council has also played a key part in the success of Blue Springs and the Eastern Jackson County Region. The council is comprised of communities that received the grant awards from 2006-2010 that come together to share best practices, host speaking/education opportunities from surrounding resources, begin dialogue with the educational entities, and focus on workforce issues and opportunities. The council also provides a platform to track regional movement and report back to the state and federal government regarding what we know and what we see as issues and opportunities for our part of the state. As the 2010 grant comes to a close, we feel very strongly that this group will continue to meet monthly and make recommendations for our region of the state.

What does the future hold for Blue Springs? As in many businesses and companies, the future holds many challenges for our organization. With a 3 person staff, we are always looking to work smarter and be more efficient. Recognizing that our organization is a public/private partnership, I will begin to work hand-in-hand with our investors to ensure everything we have learned from our business retention activities will be translated to investor retention. Our theory behind the same individual retaining investors and businesses is that the process seems to be seamless. Already recognized in the community as an advocate for businesses, we can translate those tools and mentalities to build our relationship with our investor base and bring our value add to their needs back to the forefront. Recognizing the need to communicate, educate and assist our rapidly growing investor base, will help us proceed with our largest attraction/retention/development strategies in our business plan (246% increase in investors from 2006-2010).

In the retention area, we will continue our outreach to the local business community but refine our visits and focus on our revisits and major employees. Under the Eastern Jackson County Development Alliance banner we will maximize our workforce, education, training and networking opportunities for our community. We will begin working with our Chamber of Commerce as they begin to ramp up their business presence as well by introducing them to Synchronist CRTS and our site and building locator tool, Location One, for commercial and retail inventory. As we work to help our community partners become stronger, Blue Springs as a whole becomes a stronger, more business-attractive environment.

In the redevelopment strategy for Blue Springs, a task force has been formed to strategically look at areas of the community that could be redeveloped for light to medium industrial parks. The task force is in the early stages of identifying those opportunities and corridors into and out of the city that could be done in phases.

For attraction involvement, Blue Springs is focused on the Animal Health Corridor, working to close the well known area to the east of that designated corridor! The announcement of the Missouri Innovation Park (www.MissouriInnovationPark.com) and the potential jobs it would bring to our community has excited the entire community. The Missouri Innovation Park will be anchored by a long-term collaboration with the University of Missouri (MU), as its anchor research tenant. MU will establish a Mizzou Innovation Center at the Missouri Innovation Park to consolidate MU's various activities in the region. The park offers a business and research park within a planned park environment, featuring walking and biking trails incorporated into the existing golf course and pedestrian friendly environment.

In closing, I look forward to the changing business dynamic in our community and what the next 12 – 18 months will bring as it makes me stronger in my economic development specialty and pushes my skills to their limits!

Election Reminder

Have you voted for the new Board Members for 2010-2011?

This year, in keeping with sustainability, the BREI elections are being done electronically. If you have misplaced the link, please contact [Connie](#) and she will resend it to you.