

Valley Vision, Inc. – Work Plan 2010

“The main goal of economic development is improving the economic well being of a community through efforts that entail job creation, job retention, tax base enhancements and quality of life. As there is no single definition for economic development, there is no single strategy, policy, or program for achieving successful economic development. Communities differ in their geographic and political strengths and weaknesses. Each community, therefore, will have a unique set of challenges for economic development.”⁰

Much of our Work Plan from the last year will be repeated and continue to be executed with emphasis still on Business Recruitment, Business Retention and Expansion and Business Climate, however several of our approaches will be modified this year. Because of the economic conditions more and more companies are relying on the internet to make contacts and to do their research. We believe that a redevelopment of our web site and involvement in the social media will be to our benefit while keeping our overall operation costs down.

Business Recruitment:

As stated in the 2009 Work Plan “companies are telling us they are trying to keep their heads above water just to survive”. We have been working to convince them that the Lewis-Clark Valley is the place for them and we are doing that through our Business Recruitment program. Valley Vision still looks at the economy as a challenge rather than a setback.

Objective of a Recruitment program:

Seek out desirable prospective of our choice.

Stimulate the imagination of each prospect . . . offer them one of the most desirable locations in the country.

- Lower utility expenses

- Lower workman’s comp

- Inter-modal with 3 Inland Sea Ports, Trucking and Rail.

- No traffic congestion (short commute times)

- Educational opportunities. (2 Universities, 1 four year College and a Community College”

 - Personal

 - Job training

- Quality of Life

 - Rated as number 1 outdoor recreation area in the nation.

 - Low cost of housing

- Other

 - Direct attention to the Cities Economic Development Adjustment Plan (EDAP) and target markets identified in the plan

Once we have interest, offer them a superior site less than or equal to what they are already paying. This can be done through the Ports, Urban Renewal Agency (URA) and the private sector.

Furthermore, let’s assume some of the responsibility for their move to the area and other costs associated with a relocation.(may have to be limited)

Offer infrastructure upgrades without cost to the tenant; employ creative architects, engineers and designers to help meet their needs. Take advantage of the URA as it was meant to be used.

Update our web site to make it easier for site selectors and clients to identify with the Lewis-Clark Valley.

Become more involved with social media.

Huge cash and other incentives are offered by many communities, however in the new economy, we should be able overcome any impact. That’s the old way--short term discounts. We will need a universal approach that gives a business a longer term horizon with regards to growth potential (#2 above, Stimulate the imagination).

Target markets have always been a part of economic development. Targets can be one of many things; manufacturing (can be broken down to size, volume, employees, or a variety of many things). We have looked at small manufacturers in both north and south California. Through the INEA, The Washington Trade group and our own direct programs, we have visited with many companies to encourage them to relocate or

expand into the L-C Valley. I believe our target markets are still viable and fitting for our location. Our recruitment methods need to be reevaluated and more emphasis placed on technology.

Companies - Industries to be included:

Forest/Wood Products

- Mills - Lumber
- Furniture Manufacturing
- Cabinets

Tourism

Assist Hells Canyon Visitors Bureau. Currently, the only source of sustainable revenue is through Asotin and the City of Clarkston. Those funds are only committed to March 2010. We will be working with HCVB to identify other sources of funds.

Marine

- Boat building
- Boat Trailers
- Other Marine needs
 - Heaters, showers, interiors, motors, etc

Outdoor/Recreation

- Guns/rifles/parts and ammunition
- Fishing gear and equipment
- Archery products.

Other

Continue involvement in Corporate Real Estate Networking (CORENET)

Includes

- Call Centers
- Insurance processing
- Data Centers
- Other Corporate needs.

We are going to focus on wind energy/renewable energy as was discussed with other communities. Hundreds of windmills are scheduled into Garfield, County. We are looking for opportunities for our local manufacturers.

Although each of the above has an impact in the Valley and requires our attention on a regular basis, we will continue to place a heavy emphasis on Marine and the Outdoor/Recreation business, specifically rifles, guns and ammunition. We have nine (9) boat manufactures in the Valley and several support industries. In addition, we have at least four companies in the business of supporting firearms whether it is ammunition or components of the unit. Most of the firearm companies have had a significant increase in business the past year and have been told by other gun manufactures that Idaho is attractive because of their position on fire arms. Apparently Idaho does not have the regulations that are in place in many of the other states.

Our recruitment will include many of the approaches we have taken in the past.

Inland Northwest Economic Alliance: We are starting our sixth year with this program. The alliance is made up of eleven economic development organizations in Northern Idaho and Eastern Washington. With major support from the private sector we have Bob Potter (formally Jobs Plus) assisting us in our recruitment efforts into Southern California. All leads generated are shared with the entire group when the time is right. Our annual cost is approximately \$6,000 plus one to two recruitment trips to California. I serve as Co-Chairman of the organization. INEA has contracts with Hill and Knowlton for branding and PR and EMSI for demographic and site specific comparable information. Both of these services are available to the individual members. We have used and will use both on a continuing basis.

Internal Valley Vision Pro-Active Approach:

Direct Mail: Each year we renew our subscription with Harris Infosource for the West, which gives us lists of all of the manufacturing companies in thirteen states. We will not be renewing this year but plan to use the information gathered from past years.

Trade Shows, Seminars, and Summits: We will attend at least 2 trade or industry shows this year to promote the Valley. Shows will fall into our target markets or give us opportunities to meet and talk to site selection consultants and other economic development professionals. Contacts are

important and opportunities may be available at trade shows.

Shows will include:

Idaho Department of Commerce
Shot Show – Las Vegas

Industrial Prospecting Sources: The second method of prospecting is on trade missions with Bob Potter into Southern California, which I mentioned above. Prior to each trip, 10 target companies are identified, usually with fewer than 100 employees that are ideal for the Inland Northwest. We meet with the owners or executives of each company; provide them information about the Northwest and the Valley and why they need to consider our area. Each of these prospects will be pre-qualified prior to the trip. They will know our purpose is recruitment. We went twice during the past year and will hold off during the 2010 season. There may be one trip this year depending on the economic conditions.

Advertising: Has been used sparingly for the past three years and other than Directories, joint ventures with other valley organizations. This past year we placed one ad in the special Idaho issue of Horizon Airlines in-flight magazine. We can identify two leads as a result of this ad and neither looks promising, so we will not renew the in-flight magazine ad. We have an opportunity to highlight specific segments of our community through Hill and Knowlton, the advertising firm for the INEA; therefore we will use that source of printed media sharing the cost with other regional organizations. Another area that may be considered might include existing outdoor industries that have clustered here for various reasons.

Other: Many of the walk-ins, referrals, telephone inquiries and others end up being on our prospect list. When companies contact us they are already showing an interest in our community and we believe that these clients should be given a top priority. We will continue to react to these prospects by providing the information requested, setting up a contact folder and following up with the client. Direct mail will be used to attract companies to the area.

Web site Valley Vision's web site was developed almost 10 years ago and has had many upgrades and changes over the years. Although we receive many complements on the site we believe it is time to upgrade and bring it into the modern era. This can be a costly project and a portion of our marketing budget will be devoted to the upgrade plan. We will use consultants that have experience in the creation of Economic Development Web Sites.

In addition, social media is becoming a large factor when companies are looking outside of their areas. Social media outlets are a great way to promote your region and stay connected to key decision makers. We expect to evaluate the opportunities and use these means to expose the L-C Valley to the general populations.

Business Development Goals:

Redesign and develop a new web site for Valley Vision

Connect us to the social media sites to help promote the Valley through this venue

Use direct mail as initial contact with those companies in the outdoor/recreation business and Marine industry

Attend at least 2 trade and industry shows

Present proposals to prospective companies

Host several companies for site visits into the Valley

Outdoor recreation businesses have unique needs such as archery or gun range. This may be an issue we need to address for the potential manufacturer.

Business Retention and Expansion:

Business Retention and Expansion will continue to have emphasis placed on it through this Work Plan. Retention of a firm means keeping people employed and continued support of the community. Expansion of a firm in a community does not always equate to *bricks and mortar*, but often means an increase in employees, payroll, capital or an improvement in the bottom line. All of these will have a positive impact on the business atmosphere in the Valley. Establishing outreach activities to assist in the growth and promotion of existing companies will enhance the formula for business vitality and growth.

During the past year we organized a group of service providers interested in or responsible for a business retention and expansion program. Since its inception the group has been working on a program to retain and encourage expansion and growth of existing businesses placing a significant emphasis on creating a business environment for stable, successful companies. It also provides a resource to go to when there are community questions that can affect the vitality of the existing business. So that we could reach as many people as fast as possible, the program has

been oriented toward the use of the internet and email contacts, with direct client intervention when requested.

Objective of a BR&E program:

- Build a foundation of trust between Valley Vision and company management
 - Develop a pro business attitude
- Make firms aware of State Development programs (assist when necessary)
 - Example-workforce development training reimbursement.
- Develop a commitment to maintain a positive business environment.
- Identify and acknowledge specific problems that may be hampering company efficiency, productivity and profitability
 - Examples – workforce training, Tech Help support, and information on other support vendors.
- Assist businesses in problem solving to avoid any negative action of the company.
 - Closing or relocation
- Provide demographic information for Economic Development
 - We have access to data through Economic Modeling Specialist, Inc. (ESMI).
- Build understanding among local leaders and the Economic Development Arena and avoid duplication of program efforts.

Companies - Industries to be included: Each company will have a unique approach to how we handle that business sector.

- Manufacturing
- Retail
- Customer Service
- Professional
- Health Care
- Others

Process:

- Update current inventory of businesses currently on file. Each of the team members may have their own proprietary list of clients. Ask that they be updated and ask that each team member contact their clients about this program.
 - Contact information
 - Latest Demographics
 - All Pertinent information.
- Continue and expand BR & E team to work with or call on businesses.
 - Identify team members
 - NIMA
 - CEDA
 - SEWEDA
 - LCSC-SBDC
 - Walla Walla Community College
 - Chamber's of Commerce (both)_
 - Hells Canyon Visitors Bureau
 - Idaho Department of Labor
 - Avista
 - Valley Vision Board members or private sector members.
 - Add companies to "sub list" as they ask to be members.
- Identify industry best suited for team member.
 - Prioritize the list of targeted companies
 - Confirm goals and objectives
 - Contact client via mail and return phone calls.

The direct benefits of a BR&E program can eliminate potential lost jobs and the detrimental effect of the lost payroll from those jobs; retained businesses may have greater potential for expansion; and employees from retained companies are ideal candidates for start-up businesses in a community. And, to reiterate, business retention projects a positive, proactive image of the community for future business attraction, and recognition of Valley Vision.

Business Retention and Expansion Goals

Focus on existing industry and businesses – maintain the front yard!
Continue with our team of local business partners to make contacts.
Address local issues when they impact the local business community
Attend community functions to give the BRE program exposure

Build networks of business, education, development and government leaders to address local issues. (quick response team)
Work on developing the supply chain through the cluster process.
Seminars i.e. Government contracting, International Sales, Workforce, etc.
Develop shared relationship with SEWEDA

Business Climate:

Many of the items talked about earlier in this plan are part of the business climate mission. Our web site upgrade, partnerships, committee involvement, and community related actions are all in this category. The Valley is our product, so as long as we are trying to improve it, we are fulfilling our mission.

Workforce development has been a major goal for Valley Vision this past year and will remain at the top of our list. Two years ago while working with LCSC, NIMA, and SEWEDA, a program was developed to train the trainer in three dimension computer design. Supported by the manufacturing industry and education, the Solidworks program is now being offered as part of their curriculum in 14 Idaho Schools and 10 Washington Schools. As a result of this program, in the future there will be young, qualified people to fill positions with our local manufacturers. Valley Vision has built a 'list serve' for communications between the educators, manufacturers and service providers. This will enable continuity of the Solidworks in high schools program and enable follow through on a regular basis.

Our Manufacturers Fair will continue to educate regional high school students of the job opportunities they have locally, given the training they have available to them. Valley Vision will continue the 2010 Manufacturers Fair with LCSC's Preview Day. Last years combined event was very successful, attracting over 400 students so we will have basically the same format in 2010. By joining with LCSC, Valley Vision has been more active in the Skill USA program through LCSC. Workforce training has been a vital arena for promoting the local economy and providing opportunities to our younger work force.

We will continue to educate local companies on government contracting opportunities, State and Federal, giving them a rough outline on how to compete, supplying them with printed materials on what steps to take, to give them a good start in implementing any government contracting opportunity that may apply to them including international.

Both Debbie and I are involved with local committees. I chair the City of Lewiston Development Advocacy/Ombudsman Commission, Co-Chair the Inland Northwest Economic Alliance (INEA) and am sitting on the Marketing Committee for Hells Canyon Visitors Bureau. We have also been and will be an active member of the Regional Collaboration Coalition of Clearwater-Palouse Renewable Energy Working Group this year and Debbie will be participating with the Workforce Development/Regional Innovation Grant Oversight Committee. The Oversight Committee will provide leadership and commitment for the development of a regional workforce strategic plan. Debbie serves on the NIMA Workforce Development committee and works as Valley Vision's liaison to any matter associated with workforce and workforce development. She is also a representative from Region II on the Idaho Economic Development Association (IEDA) board of Directors and sits on the Region II ALP (Advanced Learning Partnership) advisory committee.

Recreation and Hospitality (Tourism):

Valley Vision has been instrumental in developing an overall plan for tourism in the L-C Valley. The planning process was initiated in November 2006, and was completed by April 2007. Implementation has been time consuming and has met with many hurdles. Currently the HCVB is working with the local legislators to revise the statute addressing the local hospitality tax issue. They have a committee in place. All of the major Lewiston Hotels and Motels are on board. They have had some discussion with our legislators and they have an agenda outlined on what their next steps should be. We will continue to assist whenever or wherever we can.

Another area that we will become involved will be the City of Lewiston Main Street program. As it is developing, we intend to assist when needed or when possible. Clarkston does not have a formalized group heading up their main street program. When they do it is our intention to be part of that group too.

Maintain Vital Contacts:

Idaho Commerce: The State of Idaho notifies us about companies that are interested in locating within the State. Over the past year they provided several leads that we have submitted proposals. In addition we have had several client site visits. We take each lead as a serious prospect and respond when appropriate.

Southeast Washington Economic Development Association - All Washington leads come through SEWEDA as they are the ADO for the State of Washington. SEWEDA staff knows that we are interested in the whole Valley and they share the leads with us to promote Asotin County. In addition, we share appropriate leads with them. SEWEDA has a new Executive Director and a new Managing Director for Asotin County. We expect to work close with them on any project for Asotin County.

Port of Lewiston: During the year, companies will contact the Port and ask for information. Often David refers the client to Valley Vision to develop and provide the necessary information. The port has partnered with us on many projects and we expect that to continue.

Port of Clarkston: Clarkston continues to share inquires with us. Each time a client contacts the Port, they include Valley Vision in the discussions with the client. We expect that to continue into the future. We have been working on the Port of Clarkston Advisory Committee and Waterfront Committee and we assist them with the marketing of their industrial park. In addition we will include the ports planned business park into our marketing strategy.

Port of Wilma: We have a few companies inquire about the Port of Wilma several times a year. Our normal procedure is to contact the economic development specialist at the Port and discuss the client's needs and wants.

Clearwater Economic Development Association (CEDA): We support CEDA with many of their projects with our time and often through letters of support. We also participate in the Regional Collaboration Coalition that CEDA started two years ago.

Lewis-Clark State College (LCSC): Over the past several years the SBDC located at LCSC has assisted us in several projects and we have directed several leads to them. We are also combining our Manufacturers Fair with LCSC'S Preview Day to provide a broader based venue that will reach out to twice as many students. Skills USA will be held at LCSC and will give us the opportunity to showcase some Solidworks projects that have been completed through the pilot program in the high schools that was implemented last fall 2008.

Northwest Intermountain Manufacturing Association (NIMA): Valley Vision is a member of the Northwest Intermountain Manufacturers Association and we support their activities. They have assisted us with our Business Retention Program as we work with them to develop a better workforce. NIMA was also responsible for starting the program offering Solid Works to schools. Currently we have offered our support with the Aging Systems Sustainment and Enabling Technologies (ASSET) program. This is a collaborative program designed to address the problems caused by the old, worn or obsolete parts in US air and ground systems. NIMA is working to support our local manufactures by working with the DOD and Defense Logistics Agency to provide opportunities to them through the Defense Logistics Agency.

The Inland Northwest Economic Alliance (INEA): is a regional collaborative composed of 10 economic development organizations representing 12 counties in northern Idaho and eastern Washington. Currently I serve as Co-Chairman of this organization. Several of our (VV) strategies are as a result of this organization's programs. Trade missions with Bob Potter, special magazine articles are provided promoting our area, and our contact with EMSI is also because of INEA involvement.

Business Climate Goals:

- Assist the Ports in the Marketing of their Business and Industrial Parks.
- Social media outlets are a great way to promote our region and stay connected to key decision makers
- Support community efforts in streamlining the regulation process.
- Co-Sponsor the Manufacturers Fair with LCSC for the area schools and the manufacturers.
- Serve on the LCSC Workforce Advisory Committee
- Serve on the NIMA Workforce Development Committee
- Attend URA meetings and assist in identifying viable projects
- Continue dialog with the commercial airlines
- Continue public presentations about Valley Vision and our activities.
- Participate in the creation and development of the Lewiston 2010 economic development plan.
- Increase membership and promote fund raising for Valley Vision sustainability.

