

# Top Ten Ways to Make Your County More Business Friendly

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“ It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while **daring greatly** . . . . ”

— THEODORE ROOSEVELT

# Introduction

- What is economic development?
  - **Economic development** is a process of targeted activities and programs that work to improve the **economic** wellbeing and quality of life in a community by building local wealth, diversifying the **economy**, creating and retaining jobs and building the local tax base.
  - Economic development is inherently collaborative.
  - **Economic development is about creating places where people want to invest, work and live.**
- County Role
- Statutory Authority

# Statutory Authority

Do County's have authority to "economically develop?" See Title 29 & 30.

29-20 Local Government Regulation of Land Use

30-28 County Planning & Building Codes

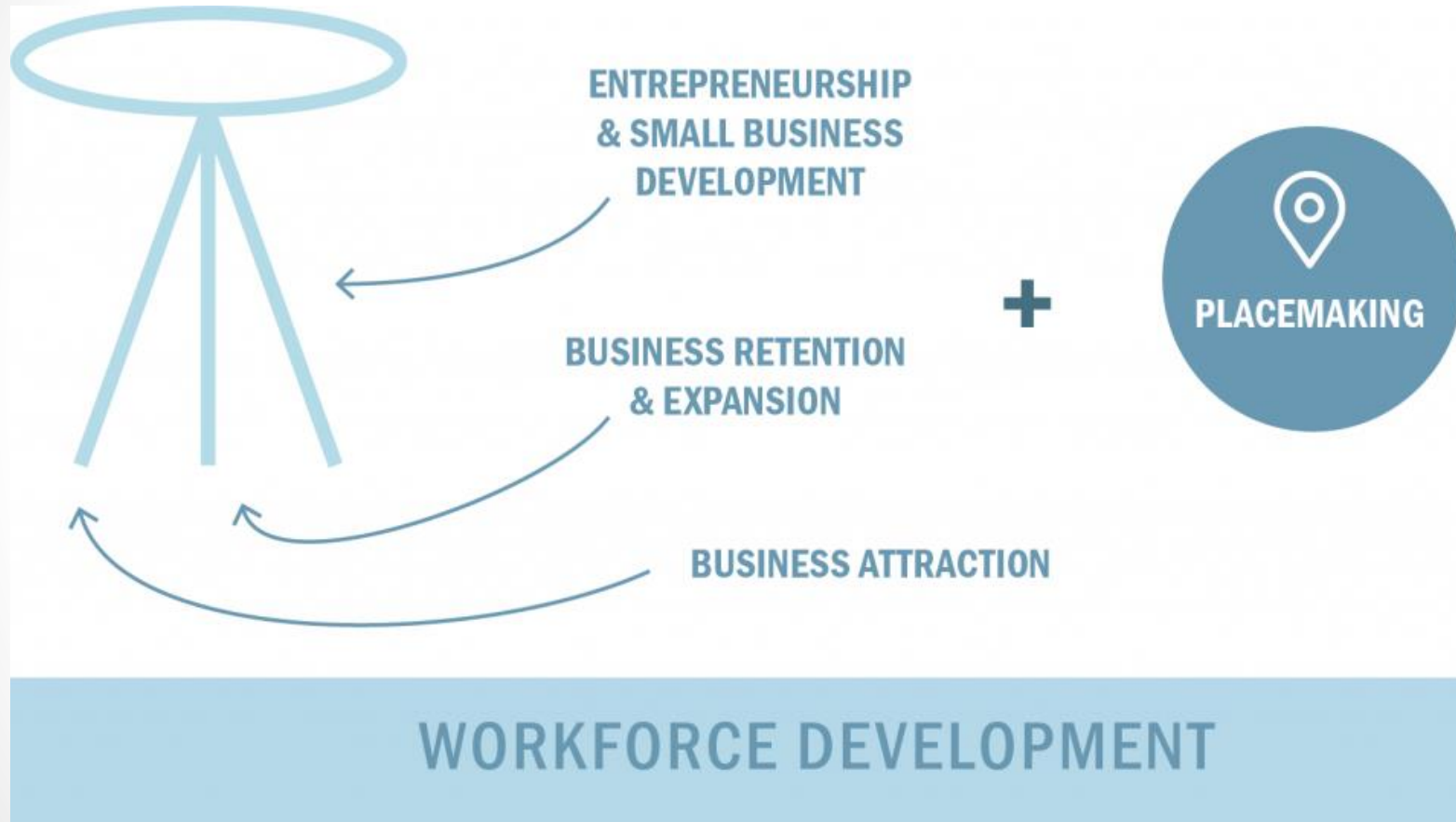
30-11-123 Business Incentives

30-11-126 Workforce development

30-11-601 Telecommunication Research  
Facilities

30-28-301 Subdivision Exemption Plats

# Standard Economic Development Model



# How is your county supporting business, today?

- What framework are you using?

# 1. Make ED a priority

- Elected Officials set policy through public process
  - DECLARE business support & development a priority!
    - Support the declaration with goals
      - Address auxiliary supports (related issues)
  - Be realistic in expectations
  - Incorporate partners in planning
  - Equip employees (organizational culture)
  - Think incrementally & small
    - Entrepreneurs – 1-2 jobs at a time
    - Grow and support existing businesses
    - Define a win as ONE job at a time

# Master Plan Outtakes

## GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Goal 2.0 – Continue to expand and diversify agriculture as an economic base.

Strategy 2.0.0 – Encourage value-added agricultural enterprises.

Strategy 2.0.1 – Encourage the use of agricultural lands to support agritourism, research, education and local foods industries.

Strategy 2.0.2 – Explore new options for transporting harvested crops to markets.

Strategy 2.0.3 – Generate innovative agricultural opportunities throughout the county by supporting existing agricultural educational organizations, such as the Colorado State University (CSU) extension office.

Delta County's authority over water resources is limited, but the county does have authority over land use which interfaces with water resource management agencies and water providers. C.R.S. 30-28-133(6)(a) requires that any subdivision has "a water supply that is sufficient in terms of quantity, dependability and quality to provide an appropriate supply of water". It is incumbent that Delta County work closely with water providers and the State Engineer to evaluate the adequacy of water supply plans for subdivisions.



# Master Plan Outtakes

Goal 4.1 – Align land use and development policies and regulations with core values for economic development by defining where business and industry may locate as a permitted land use.

Goal 4.2 – Continue working with economic development partners county-wide and regionally to refine economic strategies that build on the diversity within the county and on the strengths of its communities.

# Self Assessment

## 2. Land Use

- Are your processes business friendly? Really?
- Streamline
- Evaluate
  - Do your regulations / master plan reflect your priorities?
  - Do they support the desired community character?
  - Do they help preserve/expand existing businesses and attract new businesses?
  - The dreaded Z word
  - Delta County example – stifled without guidelines
  - Support mechanisms: building permits/inspections

Goal 4.1 – Align land use and development policies and regulations with core values for economic development by defining where business and industry may locate as a permitted land use.

# Self Assessment

When was your most recent land use update?

What is your most frequent complaint?

Where do you end up in lawsuits most frequently?

# 3. Engage with your partners

- Think regionally
- Who is working on what? (COG)
  - Communication
  - Duplication
  - Planning
- Do we have all the right people here?
  - Who does what?
  - Where is the overlap?
  - Where is the gap?
- West End Montrose County & Telluride Foundation (WEEDC)

“The choice to not cooperate is merely a passive method to make certain the failure of your community.” (Doug Griffiths)

# Self Assessment

# 4. Are you willing to invest?

- Attitude-driven (leadership-dependent)
  - Not hot potato
- Invest: time, resources, support, technical assistance, infrastructure development, advocacy, fairgrounds
- Incentives, when equipped and directed by leadership
  - Leverage these with partners to carry out day-to-day ED activity
  - Know your state/regional incentives

# 4. Are you willing to invest?

- CAPACITY (everywhere rural)
- Recipe for failure: private sector-dependence/pay-to-play models
- Right answer?





# Self Assessment

# 5. Define & package incentives if you're going to do it

- Learn & utilize state and regional incentives
- Creative, non-cash incentives
  - Fee waivers? (Logan County & turbines)
- County Incentives?
  - Do they help? Maybe, maybe not.
  - Support local existing businesses as much as you're attracting from the outside.
  - You can structure an incentive package in a low risk, win-win situation for the county if you structure it right.

# Self Assessment

# 6. Know your product

- Values: master planning
- Assets: community asset mapping
- Demographics: who is here? Household income/types
  - Why are they coming?
  - Target markets? Local resident markets? Tourism? Regional? Mix?
- Economic/market data: gaps/surpluses to target direction
- Building & land inventories/assessments
  - How are land use regulations impacting vacant land?

# Self Assessment

# 7. Data—Know the Numbers

- Familiarize yourself with your demographic and economic data, what it means and how to track it
  - Regularly update (assign the role)
  - Don't get stuck on old data
  - Evolve your story with your data
  - Decision driving
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- State Demographer
  - <http://statsamerica.org/>
  - CSU Extension Community & Economic Development
  - Higher education
  - Council of Governments

# 7. Data—Measure

- Proven results are disappointing
- How do you measure?
  - Performance measures
  - Over time
  - Anecdotally
  - Stories – wins
  - leadership



Delta's 2013 data and today (data is 1-2 years behind)

# 7. Delta County

2013			2017		
Population Peak: 30,889	↓	Bottom ('15):	Population 29,925	↑	2017: 30,578
Jobs Peak: 12,442	↓	Bottom('14):	Jobs 12,283	↑	2017: 12,674
Wages Peak(14): \$655	↓	Bottom('15):	Wages \$638	↑	2018: \$703
Per Capita \$ 2015: \$33,982	↓	2016:	Per Capita \$ \$33,581	↑	2017: \$37,475
Poverty 2012: 14.9%	↑	2016:	Poverty 16.8%	?	2017: 16.5%



# Self-Assessment

What data are you missing?

# 8. Gardening

- TALK to business owners
- Focus on leveraging strengths; what's already working?
- Build on supply chains
- Value-added
- Support business support services
- Maximize what exists (customer-friendly practices)
- Fearing competition
- Industry diversification (share market data)
- Identify barriers to expansion in your base industries (transportation)
  - Collaborative solutions

# Self Assessment

# 9. Brand & Drive Innovation

ENGAGE: <https://engagedeltacounty.org/>

- EDA funded initiative (pilot program)
- Multi-community business competition
  - Innovation (targeted business development & location)
  - Community development
- Partnership
  - Delta County, Technical College of the Rockies, Delta County Economic Development Corporation, Delta County School District, Small Business Resource Center, Region 10 EDD, Southwest Innovation Corridor



# Self Assessment

# 10. DO SOMETHING: Streamline & focus

Paralysis by planning

Paralysis by capacity

Paralysis by fear

Synthesize + target + partner =



# 11. Housing

- Rental units support business attraction
- Housing promotes business retention
- Support by:
  - Housing needs assessments
  - Sponsor CDBG grants & revolving loan funds
  - Advocate
  - Partner!
    - Shameless plug for Habitat for Humanity Colorado:  
<https://habitatcolorado.org/>
    - Legislative Build Day: June 27<sup>th</sup>: 14 locations

# Self-Assessment



# Game Changer

- Identify what's working and leverage it
- Identify what's not working and strengthen it
- Look forward while honoring past (and not staying there)
- Accept that change is inevitable
- Leadership is finding a way to say yes

Remember why you're here, public servant.

“Public service must be more than doing a job efficiently and honestly. It must be a complete dedication to the people and to the nation.

**Margaret Chase Smith**

# Conclusion

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