

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT 101 INITIATIVE

E.D. 101's Mission:

to increase regional communication, cooperation and collaboration among community leaders to improve economic development in Columbia County and ultimately south central WI.

E.D. 101's Objectives:

Participants (public officials and business leaders) will learn more regarding:

- the purpose and importance of ED 101;
- how regional approaches to economic development contribute and enhance our rural quality of life;
- how to improve communications and strengthen relationships between business representatives and public officials; and,
- availability of economic development resources and services.

E.D. 101's three-phase implementation plan:

PHASE I

Assessment phase—The main objective of Phase I was to assess community leaders' understanding of their role in economic development and their knowledge curve. Fifty-seven face-to-face interviews were conducted with community leaders.

On September 19, 2002, 60 participants attended a Multi-Community Meeting. At the September 19, 2002, meeting the participants also completed a S.W.O.T. analysis. Here are some of the findings from the S.W.O.T. exercise:

- Strengths: transportation infrastructure, tourism and natural resources and agriculture
- Weaknesses: intergovernmental & business planning and vision, improved business and community relations
- Opportunities: adjacent to newly declared technology zone and metro area, agriculture and tourism industry expansion
- Threats: inertia & apathy and downturn in the economy

PHASE II

Educational phase—The following educational sessions are a result of the information gathered from the face-to-face interviews and SWOT analysis:

- *What Are Developers Looking For: It takes a regional approach* presented on February 6, 2003;
- *The State of WI's and Columbia County's Labor Market* presented on March 4, 2003;
- *Business Retention and Expansion Study Report & It's in the Vision: One Communities Approach* presented on May 20, 2003;
- *Sharing the Good News with the Media Establishing and Improving your relationships with the media* presented on September 11, 2003;
- *Regional Interdependencies: The interrelationship between Columbia, Sauk and Dane County*, TBA;
- *Overcoming the Economic Development Challenges and Issues*, TBA, and;
- *Rural Quality of Life: The Role of Economic Development* TBA

PHASE III

Multi-County Economic Development Summit—counties located in the south central region of WI will be invited to participate in formulating a regional economic development approach (define regional successes, create a regional identity, vision, and identify the regions assets & interdependence). The approach will be available for use as a foundation to formulate county and local community E.D. plans/actions; aid in the development of the County Economic Development Corporations' annual plans; and, help define the counties' Smart Growth Plans.