



Champaign County EDC Strategic Plan December 2013 – December 2015

MISSION:

The Champaign County Economic Development Corporation acts through public-private partnerships to continually grow the local economy by supporting local business and driving expansion and attraction.

OUR VALUE:

The Champaign County EDC brings together community leaders to support Champaign County economic development by aligning interests through productive relationships, open dialogue, and advocacy that supports primary employer job growth and retention. Our partners include: local and state government; education leaders including the University of Illinois, Parkland College, and K-12 schools; utilities; business leaders and other organizations that play an important part in the development and growth of our community.

2015 EXPECTED COMMUNITY IMPACT:

1. Increase private non-farm employment in Champaign County from 63,000 to 66,000 by the end of 2015. ¹
2. Attract new private investment of \$225 million.
3. Increase per capita income from \$23,700 to exceed \$26,000. ²
4. Increase private sector influence in EDC by doubling the number of private investors.

¹ The source for comparison is the U.S. Census American Community Survey.

² The source for comparison is the Illinois Department of Employment Security's quarterly release of per capita income by county. It is the quickest and most reliable source with a three calendar quarter data time lag. This benchmark is based on a comparison of peer communities in the Midwest among whom Champaign County falls in the bottom third for per capita income. \$26,000 per capita will put Champaign County above the average and into the top third of the peer group.

PRIORITIES 2013-2015

1. Business and Job Growth

EDC influences the creation and retention of jobs by assisting new employers to locate in Champaign County and by actively supporting those employers already located here to help ensure that they stay and grow in our community. We highlight local business success by telling their stories, which also delivers a powerful message to any company considering an investment in our community. We ensure that our efforts will benefit the community by prioritizing our assistance to companies that provide sustainable wages for local employees.³

Priority will be given to manufacturing, logistics, agribusiness, and technology including medical, information technology and life science companies with regional, national and international market presence.

RECIPE for SUCCESS

1.1 Business Retention and Expansion

EDC staff, Board and partners will visit 60 companies annually with more than 100 employees within our priority industries, or emerging growth businesses referred by EDC Board members and stakeholders, to identify significant expansion opportunities, threats to current and future employment and business partnership possibilities. These conversations will provide EDC with strategic information and insights that will be used to:

- Prioritize active expansion and retention leads
- Involve other partners as requested and strategically appropriate
- Connect company leaders to local service partners, business opportunities
- Conduct industry roundtables that create peer-to-peer relationships and establish dialogue leading to collaborative efforts
- Establish a foundation of local business success that will help attract new investment and employers

1.2 Business Attraction

EDC will conduct an analytical and resource efficient program to attract new employers to Champaign County consistent with our community values, interests and capabilities. This will be accomplished utilizing the following resources and strategies:

- Analyze market trends to guide attraction efforts
- Nurture relationships with national site selection consultants to educate them about the strengths of Champaign County and assist them in finding the “right” location for their client companies
- Leverage existing international business relations through the University of Illinois, Parkland College and local business to identify and engage with growing businesses that can benefit from locating in Champaign County

³ According to the U.S. Census Bureau, average household size is 2.31 people. According to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology sustainable wage calculator, the sustainable wage for this family size in Champaign County is \$19.97. This is based on available cost of living information and cost of purchase for goods and services needed to support a family of this size.

- Identify University of Illinois corporate relationships to create a pipeline for business attraction.
- Attend industry trade shows related to our priority industries to build relationships, understand industry trends and needs, and promote Champaign County with a goal of having growing companies visit Champaign County
 - Identify 3 trade shows to attend yearly for 2014 and 2015.
- Partner with local stakeholders to host an event targeted to one or more of our priority industries with an industry leader in the community as the keynote
 - Getting companies to visit Champaign County can be a challenge but by providing a reason for them to come, we can create a captive audience and use the opportunity to market the community as a great location.

1.3 EDC Direct and Referral Services

Because we are an entrepreneurial community, part of our economic growth will come from local business growth and new business start-ups. EDC will nurture this entrepreneurial spirit by connecting them to the extensive resources that exist at EDC and within Champaign County:

- Include Small Business Development Center staff on company visits and/or actively make referrals to the SBDC
- Provide counseling services to expand exports via the International Trade Center
- Provide counseling and educational services for entrepreneurs to increase business acumen through SCORE and/or other community resources
- Build and maintain relationships with all potential community partners who may be called upon to assist with business start-up or expansion opportunities
- Explore establishment of an EB-5 regional center in Champaign County as a tool to attract foreign direct investment

1.4 Showcase Employers

The success of local companies is certainly important to them and the community. However it is also important to our ability to attract new employers. For any employer considering investing in our community there is no better sales pitch than the success of companies in their industry that are already here. We will showcase the success of local businesses by:

- Develop business success case studies to engage the community and promote Champaign County as a place where you can experience business success
- Create marketing videos to highlight success stories from each priority industry to use for company attraction and to celebrate companies at the annual meeting and publicize on the web
 - Identify “rock star” companies and write profiles on each of them
 - Include product and services sold by the company, brief company history in Champaign County, innovations developed locally, community resources used by the company (i.e. CMI, Parkland, recruiting from UIUC), why Champaign County has been a good location for them, what types of people they employ by sector, growth job areas for them, etc.
 - Focus on successes and innovative processes and uses across all priority industries in Champaign County
- Spotlight campaign showcases 4 companies per year with increased marketing and recognition

- Identify an employer/innovator of the year, awarded at the EDC annual meeting, that has made a significant positive impact in the county

1.5 Build and Implement a Marketing Strategy

We must tell the exciting and compelling story of Champaign County to help retain and encourage current employers to invest in our community, and to attract new companies. To accomplish this goal we will develop and market a unifying theme that inspires the community and becomes a focal point for local economic development which will include the following elements:

- Build the "Innovation Made Here" branding campaign around local companies
- Create a branding package and economic cheerleader message that is associated with the EDC demonstrating why Champaign County is the innovative choice for business growth
 - Establish a unified marketing message with partner organizations
 - Promote EDC as a trusted source of information for job growth and development
 - Promote EDC and Champaign County via electronic and social media
 - Maintain a dynamic "news feed" and "project feed" on the EDC web site to promote economic development activity
- Marketing: conduct monthly presentations of market intelligence in public forums in Champaign County
 - Service organizations
 - City Council and Village Board meetings
 - Community developer forums
 - EDC investor networking events
 - Conduct targeted presentations to audiences outside Champaign County
 - Sponsored trade events
 - Site consultant forums
 - Private meetings with consultants and prospects

UNIQUE STRATEGIES FOR PRIORITY INDUSTRIES

In addition to the general strategies detailed above (Recipe for Success), EDC will employ strategies unique to each of our priority industries; Manufacturing, Logistics, Technology (medical, life sciences & information technology), and Agribusiness.

1.6 Manufacturing and Logistics Strategies

- Recruit manufacturing companies currently off-shore to take advantage of on-shoring production momentum
- Recruit logistics and distribution firms that would benefit from inter-industry linkages in Champaign County, market proximity and transportation infrastructure
- Recruit companies to utilize existing logistics and distribution firms and networks (FedEx, UPS, CAT Logistics, Associated Transfer & Storage, etc.)
- Explore inter-industry linkages during business retention visits and industry roundtables
- Provide support for foreign trade zone access for local companies

1.7 Technology Strategy: IT, Medtech and Life Sciences

- Connect and coordinate support with tech commercialization at the University of Illinois

- Work on retention and growth of successful startups emerging from the University of Illinois after incubation
- Host Innovation Celebration with community partners including the University of Illinois and Parkland College
- Provide information about loan, angel investment, and venture capital sources
 - Operate and expand the Urbana-Champaign Angel Network (UCAN)
- Unite entrepreneurs and technology innovators to create synergy via TechMix! and other networking events
- Provide support for local life science firms via SBDC counseling services and roundtable engagements
 - Provide information on clinical trials, contract research organizations, regulatory and reimbursement assistance and lab space for companies
- Highlight biomedical research newsletters on the EDC web site, via social media and stakeholder newsletters
- Collaborate with the University of Illinois, Institute of Genomic Biology to identify opportunities with the most potential for patent interest or commercialization
 - Match them with local and national business partners to fund research and create/attract businesses
 - Work with the "bridge-builders" at local medical and research institutions to identify collaborations
- Work with local partners and advisory groups to identify companies for attraction
 - Communicate and cooperate regularly with U of I Office of Corporate Relations, Enterprise Works and the Champaign Organization of Developers and Engineers
 - Identify large data users that can benefit from close proximity to UC2B
 - Deliver proposals and invite companies to Champaign County

1.8 Agri-Business Strategy

- Identify value added agricultural processing companies that depend on regionally available resources and recruit them to locate in Champaign County
- Identify agricultural market trends to help target companies with growth potential
- Work with local partners such as the Champaign County Farm Bureau, University of Illinois, College of ACES and local farmer networks to assist in the attraction process

2. Champaign County Business Market Intelligence Experts

Aggressively market local assets and partnerships to current and prospective companies by connecting existing employers with our local partners and assets and provide targeted business counseling services to businesses and entrepreneurs in the region.

EDC is the recognized business market intelligence expert for Champaign County and will regularly present information to audiences across the county. This will provide valuable insights into business priorities, challenges, successes, and growth opportunities for the benefit of decision makers inside and outside our area.

2.1 Know the businesses and market dynamics in Champaign County

- Gather testimonials regarding things that are groundbreaking and innovative in our community in each of these sectors and feed it back into marketing effort
- Know and understand the criteria needed to advance our priority industries

- Examples include: workforce quality, occupational pay, utility cost and availability, ready real estate, industry clusters, supply chains and more
- Know the innovation in our major employers, what is best in class nationally (i.e. electronic medical records at Carle)
- Benchmark Champaign County using available data tools and industry feedback
 - Conduct Input/Output analysis to understand industry growth opportunities
 - Analyze input from industry roundtables advisory committees
 - Establish dream teams in target sectors as experts to assist in closing deals
 - Collect data quarterly to participate in the ACCRA Cost of Living Index (COLI)

2.2 Site Development and Building Inventory

- Compile and update an inventory of available properties, sites and buildings
 - Focus on existing buildings with complete facility & site information
- Assess development readiness for "shovel ready" sites, infrastructure and site characteristics
- Identify undeveloped land for future pre-development investment (roads, utilities, etc.)
- Maintain and provide community profile information for the county and municipal investors
- Organize developer information and facilitate a roundtable for communication
- Lead county responses to inquiries regarding site selection criteria

3. Workforce Development

Our connections to the local business community during the past several years has highlighted workforce as a significant concern for local employers. EDC is the connection to local education and training providers that create the skilled workforce needed to advance local employers. The EDC nurtures relationships between private business and public institutions for mutual benefit.

3.1 Workforce Development General Strategies

- Share best practices by sector: recruiting and incentive practices for retention, incumbent worker training and successes working with local educational resources
- Match make for companies and resources
- Gather testimonials to capture and convey the "aha" moment companies have when working with workforce development partners
- Rally workforce partners in a summit bringing together human resource professionals, company employees, local resources, educational partners, and students to talk about the workforce development ecosystem in Champaign County
 - Recognize (by way of Workforce Excellence Awards) the best public-private collaborations helping to make the workforce great

3.2 Logistics/Manufacturing Unique Strategies

- Unify human resource professionals, training providers and schools to achieve employer defined outcomes
 - Collaborate with workforce development partners to measure and understand employer needs and workforce shortcomings

- Survey employers about the quality of the workforce
- Provide feedback to K-12, higher education and trainers about employer needs and experiences
- Support the efforts of the Workforce Investment Board of East Central Illinois and Illinois Department of Employment Security
- Market technical skill programs while supporting best practices in the sector (i.e. Computer Numeric Control machining, welding/automotive/controls, lean manufacturing, Six Sigma, etc.)
 - Inform employers of these programs
 - Support the effort of the Employment for Education (EFE) Office #330
- Accelerate school district implementation of career pathways programs within the county, partnering with the EFE #330 office to extend this implementation to districts in surrounding counties
 - Coordinate counselor and instructor summer externships with local companies
 - Facilitate student career roundtables via high school career centers
 - Promote summer youth employment programs

3.3 Tech Workforce Unique Strategies

- Inform educators and training partners about the need to implement programs for information technology
- Connect with University of Illinois Career Centers to inform students about local placements as interns and recent grads
- Work with the Champaign Organization of Developers and Engineers (CODE) to support content on the Champaign County Tech portal
- Explore development of a revenue supported community based job board for the Tech portal and EDC web site for highly skilled and technical jobs
- Explore collaborating with the University of Illinois to attract alumni back to the community for open jobs
- Partner with local tech employers on their talent recruitment trips to other universities

4. Issue Advocacy

The EDC will be an advocate for projects and policies important to the economic health of the county on a case-by-case basis. Once a critical project or policy has been identified, EDC will partner with allies in Champaign County on the message delivery and implementation.

4.1 Identification of Advocacy Activities

- Identify business growth opportunities and impediments from company retention visits and partner with other community stakeholders to address them through advocacy or community collaborative projects. This could include issues such as:
- Infrastructure and transportation advocacy
 - Olympian Drive
 - Improvements to broadband: UC2B
 - Municipal road maintenance

- Additional rail sidings from Champaign to Chicago for traffic management
 - Power reliability and capacity
 - I-57 and I-74 corridor improvements
- Regular train service to Chicago (EDC strategy to increase frequency)
 - High-speed rail could transform our future if linked to Chicago
- Increased air service connections and frequency critical for tech company growth

4.2 Tech

- Support efforts for major new research operations at the University of Illinois that offer expanded employment and national attention
- Advocate for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) curriculum
- Advocate for new partnerships between researchers and local stakeholders