



Huron County's LINK to Economic Development

2012 ANNUAL REPORT

2012 was a busy and exciting year for economic development in Huron County! The county saw increased activity with new facilities, expansions, and milestone celebrations.

WILLARD—“ON THE RIGHT TRACK”

Willard was definitely “*on the right track*” in 2012! O’Reilly’s joined the Willard community in the first quarter of 2012 with their new retail store. Mercy Willard Hospital opened its new \$40.5 million facility in April. The hospital continued their investment in the community by converting their charting system to the newest state-of-the-art technology available! They didn’t stop there—in collaboration with Christie Lane, the hospital is in the process of building a coffee shop within the hospital—“Higher Grounds by Christie Lane” is scheduled to open in January 2013. The Willows at Willard moved into their new facility in June. On a shared campus with Mercy Willard Hospital the beautiful new facility offers assisted living and quality long-term care to its residents. Willard City Schools also started construction of their new facilities in 2012 and the Board of Education moved into their new home on Myrtle Avenue. Not all is new in Willard, however. In October, Pepperidge Farm celebrated its 35th anniversary! CONGRATULATIONS! New facilities aren’t the only sign of progress. In 2012, the old Willard City Hall on Myrtle Avenue was demolished. Beautiful in its day, the building served the citizens of Willard for a long, long time.

NORWALK—A YEAR TO CELEBRATE

A number of new retail businesses opened in Uptown Norwalk in 2012. We congratulate Kristie Wert, Ellen Heinz, Mayor Duncan, and the Norwalk business community for their successes! Fisher Titus Medical Center opened their new Emergency Department and is continuing with additional hospital improvements. Rural King purchased the previous Big Lots facility with plans to be operational in early 2013. Norwalk attracted a number of dignitaries from the local, county, regional, and state level to Norwalk Furniture to celebrate the opening of their new international showroom.

MONROEVILLE GROWS

Firelands Federal Credit Union was among the growing businesses in 2012 with the building of their new facility in Monroeville. Monroeville also announced plans for a Dollar General facility.

The Huron County Development Council congratulates all of our Huron County businesses for their investments in our communities!

COLLABOR18 AND MORE

The Huron County Development Council has been actively engaged in collaboration efforts throughout the county and beyond! We have increased our outreach throughout the communities in Huron County and strengthened our collaboration with our WEST Sub-Region partners in Erie and Lorain counties. As Huron County's designated representative with Team NEO/JobsOhio, we are actively involved with our 18-county regional partners as well as with the Team NEO/JobsOhio and the ODSA (Ohio Development Services Agency) staffs.

HCDC has maintained its membership in and involvement with NCORDA (North Central Ohio Regional Development Alliance). NCORCDA is comprised of economic development entities in the nine-county region representing three of the six newly defined economic development regions under JobsOhio. To expand its knowledge of its economic development partners and determine best practices, NCORDA decided to have travelling meetings once a quarter. Huron County was asked to host the first traveling meeting and from feedback with our partner organizations, set the bar high for future travelling meetings.

Local collaboration continues to be very important to our county's economic development efforts. The Huron County Development Council is a member of and regularly attends New London CIC and Willard Area Economic Development Corporation (WAEDC) meetings and is a member of the Huron County Chamber of Commerce and Willard Area Chamber of Commerce. In 2012, HCDC joined the Huron County Township Association and Regional Manufacturing Coalition. Attending the Celeryville Muck Farmers breakfast meetings has strengthened our working relationship with our agricultural community.

Collabor18 was developed in 2012 to market Team NEO's 18-county economic development region. The marketing piece highlights economic development in Northeast Ohio as well as each county's assets and economic development services. The Huron County Development Council was actively involved in the development of the WEST Sub-Region's (Erie, Lorain, and Huron Counties) 12-page focus card portion of this new marketing piece.

The Huron County Development Council is also a member of OEDA (Ohio Economic Development Association) and IEDC (International Economic Development Corporation). HCDC Director Carol Knapp received her Economic Development Finance Professional certification from the National Development Council in 2004. The OEDA and IEDC provide educational, networking, and legislative opportunities to our organization.

LEADING TO...

As the county's designated state lead management agency, HCDC maintains the state database of available buildings and sites in Huron County. We distribute state-generated economic development leads to the local economic development organizations and municipalities; determine eligibility to respond; assist with RFIs (Request for Information); and submit all documentation in response to each lead to the state.

In 2012, Huron County received 73 leads from the State of Ohio—55 for buildings and 18 for land sites. Huron County was able to respond to 17 of these leads with a total of 40 properties. The 40 properties submitted for the 17 leads represent:

- Bellevue—3
- Monroeville—10
- New London—2
- Norwalk—15
- Willard—10

To be able to respond to a state-generated economic development lead, the property must be listed on Ohio One, the state's database of available properties and meet all lead criteria. Presently, Huron County has 36 properties included on the database:

- Bellevue—7
 - 1 Building
 - 6 Land Sites
- Norwalk—10
 - 6 Buildings
 - 4 Land Sites
- Willard—10
 - 5 Buildings
 - 5 Land Sites
- Monroeville—3
 - 2 Buildings
 - 1 Land Site
- New London—2
 - 1 Building
 - 1 Land Site
- Plymouth—4
 - 2 Buildings
 - 2 Land Sites

Inclusion of properties on the Ohio One systems provides free marketing of Huron County properties. Properties can be added to the system by contacting the Huron County Development Council office.

The Huron County Development Council receives economic development leads from other sources besides the State of Ohio. Those leads come from direct company contact, utility companies, railroads, and municipalities. We respond to those leads in the appropriate manner based on lead criteria and service or targeted area of interest.

PROJECTS

2012 was indeed a very busy year. The Huron County Development Council was directly involved in working with more than 15 business clients on various projects throughout the county. These projects range from new business startups, relocations, expansions, attraction, and retention efforts.

Economic development activities generally take a long period of time and are of an extremely confidential nature. The 15 projects we are presently involved with are continuing into 2013 and hopefully will be announced in the near future!

BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION

Over 80% of job creation comes from existing business. It is critical that we take care of the businesses we have in Huron County and assist them to grow, expand, and create jobs. In April, the Huron County Development Council kicked off their business retention and expansion program, *HCDC R & E*. HCDC's Executive Director made 56 business visits in 2012. The data from these business visits allowed us to identify business trends, evaluate workforce issues, identify assistance our business needed, identify supplier chains, and help our businesses with the challenges they are facing. Fifteen projects were identified during this process and we continue to work with those business clients.

In November, JobsOhio kicked off their statewide business retention and expansion initiative. This is the first ever statewide business retention and expansion effort. Information from the *HCDC R & E* business visits has been entered into Salesforce (the state's economic development software program) which provides the state with more data for analysis in business trends.

In April 2013, Huron, Erie, and Lorain counties plan to have a tri-county Business Appreciation Week. This collaborative event will allow us to share data on a regional basis and provide us with the opportunity to identify a regional supplier chain and provide our businesses with additional opportunities.

MOVING OHIO & HURON COUNTY FORWARD

In May, the Huron County commissioners requested that HCDC apply for and administer Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine's Moving Ohio Forward Demolition Program grant. Through this program, the county received \$338,804 for demolition of residential properties in Huron County. Over 40 applications were received for inclusion in the program. Using an equality of county determination, the first 15 properties were prioritized for demolition. Properties in Bellevue, Bronson Township, Fitchville Township, Monroeville, Norwalk, Norwich Township, Ripley Township, Townsend Township, Wakeman, and Willard will be demolished in the first-round of funding. Demolition costs can increase significantly if the asbestos inspection determines that an asbestos abatement is needed. It is anticipated that there will be sufficient funding for additional demolitions following this first round.

WORKFORCE IS A PRIORITY

Huron County has faced considerably high unemployment over the last several years. Despite this fact, many of our employers are not able to find skilled workers to fill the positions they have available in their businesses. To assist our employers and potential employees, the Huron County Development Council worked with the Huron County Department of Job & Family Services to hold a Job Fair in Norwalk in September. Over 30 vendors representing employers and educational entities participated in the event with over 250 job seekers attending.

The Huron County Development Council serves on the WIA (Workforce Investment Act) Board. This board meets monthly to discuss the issues facing employers and job seekers in our county and offer suggestions and/or potential solutions to the difficulties facing our county. HCDC is also a part of Huron County's Rapid Response Team. The Rapid Response Team meets with employers and employees facing layoff situations and explains the services that are available to assist them through this confusing and difficult time.

Huron County Development Council Executive Director Carol Knapp participated in South Central High School's College & Career Exploration Day. Knapp was asked to present on Work Ethic and What Employers Want. Pat Carter with the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services joined Knapp for these presentations.

HCDC—ON THE MOVE

To accommodate the Huron County Board of Election's need for additional space, HCDC was asked to relocate their office within the County Administration Building. The Ohio State University Extension office worked with the county commissioners to provide a new office location for HCDC. In July, HCDC moved into the new office. The move has proved very beneficial by providing a more conducive work environment and closer proximity to Administrative Assistant Kathy Phillips whom we share with the OSU Extension Office.

PROJECT LEADERSHIP— A WORTHWHILE PROGRAM

HCDC Director Carol Knapp graduated from Project Leadership of Huron County in June 2012. Carol Knapp was chosen class speaker by the 2012 Project Leadership graduating class to reflect on the year's program. She strongly encourages anyone that has the opportunity to participate in this worthwhile program.

HCDC RECEIVES AEP 2012 LEAP GRANT

The Huron County Development Council is pleased to announce their receipt of a \$5,000 grant award from AEP Ohio. The grant funds are dedicated to HCDC's business retention and expansion efforts in the AEP service area.

COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT CORPORATION (CIC) ACTIVITIES

The Huron County Development Council serves as the Community Improvement Corporation for Huron County as well as the municipalities within the county. A Community Improvement Corporation is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit corporation organized for the development purposes described in the Ohio Revised Code Section 1724. Utilizing the services of a CIC simplifies processes for a municipality.

In 2012, the Huron County Development Council assisted the City of Norwalk with a land transfer to the Huron County Humane Society for development of a dog park. The City of Willard has requested HCDC assistance with the transfer of two properties on their behalf. One land transfer occurred in late December with the second planned for mid-January 2013.

REVOLVING LOAN FUNDS

The Huron County Revolving Loan Fund and the New London CIC Revolving Loan Fund are two financial assistance programs available in designated areas of Huron County. Revolving loan funds are utilized for projects that cannot be fully funded through conventional private lending. The RLF provides the "gap financing" for these projects. Bellevue and Norwalk have their own revolving loan fund programs and are therefore not eligible to participate in the Huron County RLF program. New London's RLF Program is for New London based economic development projects. WSOS CAC, Inc. administers both revolving loan funds working in partnership with HCDC.

ENTERPRISE ZONE PROGRAM

There are six designated enterprise zones in Huron County: City of Norwalk, City of Willard, City of Bellevue, Village of Monroeville, Village of Plymouth, and Village of New London. The Huron County Development Council administers the Monroeville and Plymouth Enterprise Zone Programs. Enterprise Zone Agreements are negotiated between the company and affected governmental entities. The State of Ohio Enterprise Zone Program allows for up to 75% tax abatement for ten years for businesses locating or expanding in cities and villages. Businesses locating or expanding in unincorporated areas are granted up to 60% tax abatement for ten years. Abatements in excess of 75%/60% require approval of the affected Boards of Education.

Tax Incentive Review Committee interviews are conducted annually with the businesses receiving tax abatements under the Ohio Enterprise Zone Program. HCDC coordinates these committee interviews and prepares the necessary reports for the County Auditor and State of Ohio. In 2012, all enterprise zone agreements in Huron County were in compliance and reports submitted.

GRANT AND LOAN ADMINISTRATION

The Huron County Development Council acts as the administrator for economic development grants and loans received by the county. HCDC is administering the Ohio Department of Development Industrial Site Improvement Fund grant that was received in 2009 for a Norwalk Rail Spur Program for New Horizon's Baking Company. Grant administration and reporting lasts many years after a project has been completed.

HCDC REPRESENTATION

To better serve the communities, businesses, and residents of Huron County, the Huron County Development Council represents the county's economic development and workforce development interests by actively participating on a number of boards, committees, and organizations including:

- Celeryville Muck Farmers Breakfasts
- EHOVE Business Advisory Committee
- Erie Basic RC & D
- Huron County Chamber of Commerce
- Huron County Department of Job & Family Services WIA Board
- Huron County Housing Task Force
- Huron County Master Gardeners
- Huron County Rapid Response Team
- Huron County Township Association
- International Economic Development Corporation
- New London Community Improvement Corporation
- North Central Ohio Regional Development Alliance (NCORDA) Board & Executive Board
- North East Ohio Agriculture Breakfasts
- Ohio Economic Development Association (OEDA)
- Regional Manufacturing Coalition
- Team NEO/JobsOhio Partner Meetings
- Willard Area Economic Development Corporation
- Willard Area Chamber of Commerce

HURON COUNTY CEDS PROGRESS

The Huron County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) completed in June 2010 provides considerable guidance for county-wide economic development and allows the county to maintain its status as a "redevelopment area" as defined by the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA). As a working document, the CEDS consists of 14 goals with 79 action plans and 68 responsible parties identified. Timeframes defined in the original CEDS range from ongoing (61), short term (12), short & medium term (1), medium term (5), and long term (1). The Huron County Development Council continues to utilize the CEDS as a working document. An update on progress made in 2012 is available upon request.

HCDC MISSION STATEMENT

"The Corporation exists to advance, encourage, and promote industrial, economic, commercial, educational, and civic development in the County of Huron, State of Ohio, including all municipal corporations located therein."

HCDC MEMBERS

**Huron County Commissioners:
Gary Bauer, Tom Dunlap and Joe Hintz**

PLATINUM PARTNERS

Fisher-Titus Medical Center
Duane Woods



Northern Ohio Rural Water
Tom Reese

CITIES AND VILLAGES

City of Norwalk
Rob Duncan, Mayor

City of Willard
Brian Humphress, City Manager

City of Bellevue
Donald Berkey, Mayor

Village of Greenwich
Lowell Etzler, Mayor

Village of Monroeville
Mike Adelman, Mayor

Village of New London
Darwin Anderson, Mayor

Village of Plymouth
Tim Redden, Mayor

Village of Wakeman
Chris Hipp, Mayor

PRIVATE PARTNERS

Croghan Colonial Bank

Derek Newell

First Energy/Ohio Edison

Gary Mortus

Key Bank

Kelley Ritz

PNC Bank

Al Tegel

Sutton Bank

Bill Alford

Firelands Electric Cooperative

April Bordas

Janotta & Herner

Ted Kastor

Mercy-Willard Hospital

Cindy Dennison

Star Design-Build Contractors

Craig Trick

NON-PROFIT/INDIVIDUAL PARTNERS

J.B. Conglose & Associates

John Conglose

Greenwich Chamber of Commerce

Jerry Shoemaker

Huron County Dept. of Job & Family Serv.

Jill Nolan

Norwalk Economic Development Corp.

Ellen Heinz

Willard Area Chamber of Commerce

Ricky Branham

EHOVE Career Center

Heather Horowitz

Huron County Chamber of Commerce

Melissa James

New London CIC

Steve VonBehren

Norma Schaechterle

Mike Myers Realty-Century 21

WSOS-CAC

Ben Kenny

Thank you to our Executive Committee for their support!

President: Gary Mortus, First Energy/Ohio Edison

Vice President: Brian Humphress, City of Willard

Secretary: Trisha Summers, Village of Wakeman

Treasurer: Jerry Shoemaker, Greenwich Chamber of Commerce