

**VERMILION COUNTY WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD
COMMUNITY AUDIT -CHALLENGE D COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 7, 2005 MEETING
Vermilion Co. Court House Annex 6 N. Vermilion St., Danville IL**

PRESENT: Lara Conklin Jeanie Cooke Scott Eisenhauer Jeff Fauver Dave Kietzmann Jean Minick
Michelle Pride

Staff: Lori Brewster

CALL TO ORDER – Champion Jeff Fauver called the meeting to order at 3:30 PM.

REVIEW CHALLENGE D GOALS & OBJECTIVES FINAL RESULTS -- Fauver explained the format of the matrix that would be used by Challenge D and all other Challenge Committees. Fauver reviewed the committee members and the prioritized goals and objectives of Challenge D, noting that Priority #1 was to establish three incubator locations throughout the County. The Community Audit identified that Vermilion County had a high level of small business ownerships. A lot of businesses cannot work out of the home because of zoning issues. Fauver informed that the point of the Challenge D Committee is to develop the matrix and to identify funding sources to accomplish the Challenges. One Funding Source that the WIB gets each year is the Technical Assistance Training (TAT) Grant. This year the WIB can apply up to \$50,000 worth of TAT funds, and that \$39,000 has already been identified for different projects. The projects the Board is working toward to fund with the TAT grant is the WorkKeys Assessment Tests for freshmen and sophomores in the County, which developed out of Challenge B and to help fund the Vermilion Advantage Career Lab for those 14 years and older. Fauver informed that the Vermilion County Workforce Investment Board has applied for the 501 (c) 3 status and are currently going through the application process.

Fauver informed that in earlier committee discussions the sites for the three incubators considered were one to the north in the Hoopeston/Rossville area (probably Hoopeston due to the greater population base), one in the south (probably Westville/Georgetown), and one in Danville.

Keitzmann informed that DACC has an industrial incubator space already available.

Pride informed that U of I Extension would be moving to the old NCR/VASE building on Route 150, and would be renting out the back two rooms of the building, which has two large back room with bathroom, handicapped accessible, outside entrance, garage, and internet access. Pride suggested that sharing a receptionist/secretary is done in some locations, and that the Extension would consider that. There is information on the U of I Extension main web page under Community and Economic Development (CED). Pride informed that she could bring a CED person to the next meeting to share information that is available and what other communities are doing.

Fauver informed that Decatur has a successful incubator where a graduated rent scale is used, being from rent free the first month or two, minimal rent for a couple of months, then regular rent, and the renter is “graduated out” after an eighteen month period.

Keitzmann informed that the DACC incubator has been used by local businesses for training and set-up testing.

Eisenhauer suggested for Action Plan Priority #1 to “Market area to the universities”. The Incubator Committee should attempt to sell the County to the U of I, Purdue, Indianapolis schools, that the County can offer at a low cost and suggest that the other schools consider Vermilion County if they have a potential business that does not fit in their incubation situations.

It was discussed under priority #1 to show that Logistic Infrastructure already in place and that Action Plans would be broken down into 3 action plans: I. Collaborate with other regions to develop contacts with venture capital funding sources, II. Establish Venture Club for entrepreneurs and wannabes to network regularly, III. Market area to universities.

Conklin suggested that in addition to identifying buildings; identify owners that would be willing to work with the Committee.

Pride suggested that if the U of I would buy into this project, maybe the U of I would help financially or in obtaining Grants. U of I Extension funding was cut, but Pride would be willing to look at what the agency could do to help. The U of I has a Small Business Educator in Champaign and the U of I Commerce Department might be willing to spend some time in the new U of I Extension office.

Kietzmann informed that DACC has 3 buildings: #5, #9, and #10 that would be torn down due to the deteriorating condition of the buildings and that renovation would be about 2.5 times as much as new construction costs. Kietzmann informed that Ed Adrain heads the Small Business Development Center.

Pride informed that she would be working with a group in Hoopeston in the near future.

Conklin mentioned Diamond School as a possibility, and suggested a survey to identify rental property owners and possible rents. Eisenhower informed that a study has been done for the City of Danville.

Fauver suggested trying to get control and lock in space of a building by getting a lease.

Conklin informed that banks own many buildings, and that banks want to keep them occupied.

Kietzmann informed that the two upper floors of the Downtown Center are vacant.

Fauver suggested that the first step would be to identify buildings and landlords that could administer the maintenance of the building. Georgetown has the IGA store and the Georgetown Plastics building vacant. Possible buildings in the Hoopeston area would be Keith Allen's Stokely plant, Wildon building, FMC building, Schumacher building, Crest building. Fauver informed that the other item that must be considered is who is going to administer the building, and be responsible for building maintenance issues.

Fauver informed that he and Brewster would work with Vermilion Advantage, Tracy Wahlfeldt with identify buildings. Fauver would contact the Georgetown Mayor about potential buildings. Minick and Brewster were to compile a list of Hoopeston buildings. Brewster suggested inviting Mayor DeWitt to the meeting.

REVIEW ACTION PLANS AND IDENTIFY THOSE COMPLETED — Priority #1 Action Plan was changed as mentioned above.

REVIEW DUPLICATION -- Suggestion was made by Jeanie Cooke to combine Priority #6 and Priority #8.

DISCUSS BENCHMARKS, MEASUREMENTS, AND RESPONSIBILITY – Priority #1 Identify buildings and landlords.

COMMENTS – No discussion.

NEXT MEETING – Wednesday, January 11, 2006 at 3:30 PM at Annex. 3rd floor.

ADJOURNMENT – The meeting was informally adjourned.