



2007 Economic Development Strategic Plan

Economic Development
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Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	1
Introduction	3
2004 Strategic Plan Review.....	5
Business Development	5
Goal 1.....	5
Goal 2.....	5
Goal 3.....	5
Goal 4.....	6
Goal 5.....	6
Infrastructure.....	7
Goal 1.....	7
Goal 2.....	7
Goal 3.....	7
Goal 4.....	8
Goal 5.....	8
Goal 6.....	8
Education and Training	9
Goal 1.....	9
Goal 2.....	9
Goal 3.....	9
Cooperation and Coordination	11
Goal 1.....	11
Goal 2.....	11
Housing.....	12
Goal 1.....	12
2007 Strategic Plan.....	13
Department Summary	13
2007 Strategic Issues:	13
Tier One	13
Tier Two	14
Gathering Input	14
Tier One Strategic Action Items	14
Relationship Building.....	14
Economic Data Collection and Resources.....	15
Infrastructure.....	16
New business identification and recruitment.....	17
Existing business retention and expansion	19
Tier Two Strategic Action Items	20
Workforce Training and Education.....	20
Housing.....	20
Tourism	21
Appendix A - Contact Data Sheet.....	22
Appendix B - List of Incorporated Cities.....	23
Appendix C - Miami County Resolution of Support.....	24
Appendix D - Articles of Incorporation for Greater Miami County Economic Development Corporation	25

Appendix E - By-Laws for Greater Miami County Economic Development Corporation.....26

Appendix F - Statement of Purpose for Greater Miami County Economic Development Corporation27

Appendix G - Operating Guidelines for Greater Miami County Economic Development Corporation28

Appendix H - Community Resolutions of Support.....29

Appendix I - Opinion Letter from Miami County30

Appendix J - Schedule for Plan Revisions and Reviews31

Appendix K - Strategic Plan Update Participants.....32

Appendix L - Miami County Statistical Profile33

Appendix M - Miami County Comprehensive Plan Summary34

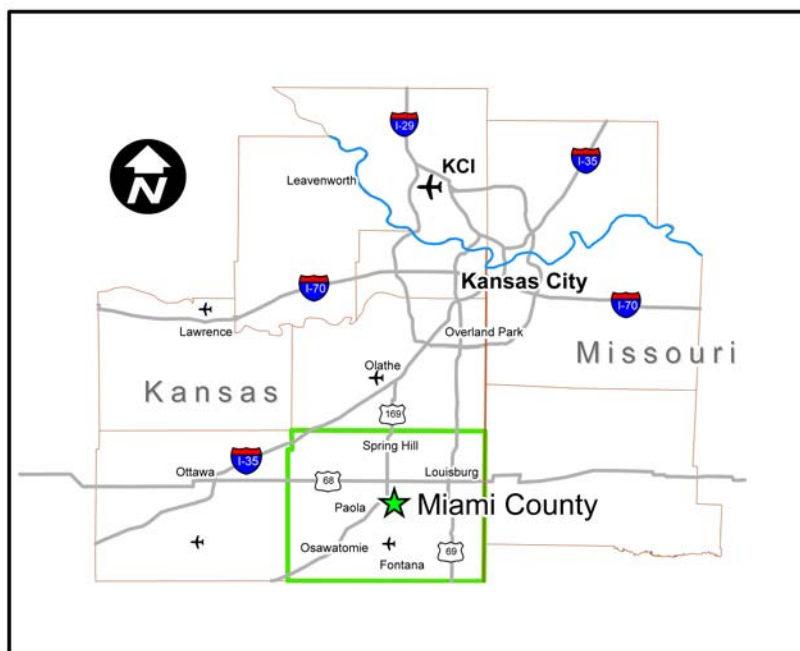
Appendix N - Miami County Incentives Procedures.....35

Introduction

The Miami County Economic Development Department is funded fully by the county's general fund. Leaders of Miami County have identified economic development as a vital component of sustaining and improving the rural county's quality of life.

Located in the southern tier of the Kansas City Metropolitan Statistical Area, the region is experiencing pressure from all sides. Bordering counties include Johnson, Douglas, Franklin and Linn in Kansas along with Cass and Bates in Missouri.

The county once faced the challenges of a declining population but has not begun facing the new challenges created by a growing economy. The 18th largest county in Kansas, Miami County has been the third fastest growing for each of the past two years. Based on Kansas' certified population counts, the county has grown at twice the rate of the entire state. Only Johnson and Douglas counties have grown at a faster pace.



The county remains rural in character with many new residents selecting the county as their new home based on quality of life factors. These intangible traits were supported by lower land costs that allowed residents to move from suburban settings to a more spacious area for a comparable investment. As Miami County landowners begin investing the capital needed to fund infrastructure improvements to their property, those land price differentials are likely to lessen.

As a regional hub for development, Miami County's Economic Strategic Plan is an effort to responsibly plan for the future while providing guidance to the volunteers and staff responsible for improving the county's economic climate.

Miami County's economic development efforts first took seed in 1991. Then known as the Miami County Economic Development Corporation, the group worked with what was then known as the Kansas Department of Commerce and Housing. The plan initially created in 1993 was later reviewed and updated in 1997. The Kansas Center for Community Economic Development assisted the organization with its 1999 review. During those years, the non-profit entity was funded jointly by donations and by local governmental entities.

During December of 2000, the organization dissolved and became a function of county government. The Greater Miami County Economic Development Corporation was created as

an arm of the Miami County's Economic Development Department. The governing board established for the corporation also functions as an advisory board for the county department's staff.

This plan is the result of many hours volunteered by local leaders dedicated to sustain and expanding their community's economic base. It is an update to the 2004 plan submitted to the Kansas Department of Commerce.

2004 Strategic Plan Review

As an update to the 2004 plan, it is important to first note the plan's successes and challenges. The hard work of the local leaders, volunteers and county staff members resulted in progress in several areas.

In 2004, strategic issues included business development, infrastructure, education and training, cooperation and coordination, and housing.

Business Development

Five goals with related action strategies were developed in this area. Timeframes and responsibilities were assigned.

Goal 1

Support, retain and expand existing businesses in Miami County.

These strategies included developing a system for business retention and expansion and providing seminars to educate business owners about how to operate more efficiently.

A Community Development Block Grant micro-loan was received to administer in the county. However, due to lack of interest, a majority of the funds were returned to the state. One

business remains a participant in the program. Courses have been offered utilizing resources provided by a USDA grant.



Goal 2

Facilitate the development of business, technology and industrial parks in Miami County.

These strategies related to assisting firms seeking zoning changes, assisting local government with infrastructure needs and working with developers interested in securing Miami County sites as an investment.

These efforts were successful and remain a priority for the department. An additional Area of Regional Significance was designated bringing the total to 13 areas. Each of the county's cities invested significant dollars in

utility and street extensions.

Goal 3

Attract new companies and businesses to Miami County.

These strategies included targeting industries suitable for the region, expanding local incentive policies, marketing the region to potential firms and serving as a central clearinghouse for business assistance.

Improvements were made in this area by working with the Kansas Department of Commerce and the Kansas City Area Development Council. These groups have allowed the county to reach out to a broader marketplace. Changes in Kansas' statutes have also provided a wider range of incentive opportunities for the local communities to consider.

Goal 4

Protect the areas of regional significance for future commercial, technological, industrial and business development.

These strategies included prioritizing the Areas of Regional Significance, working with regional planning boards to obtain proper zoning and conducting local meetings to discuss potential uses for the various sites.

Although the Areas of Regional Significance were designated, only a limited amount of research has been completed on their specific site characteristics. Members of the Board of County Commissioners opted to let the real estate market drive development at these sites.

Goal 5

Monitor agriculture in Miami County.

These strategies included providing input as needed to comprehensive plan updates and offering alternative product information to Miami County producers.

Economic development staff members provided support, as needed, to the county's planners and planning commission as issues arose within the county. The organization also provided information to area producers about programs available through the State. As a new project, a countywide farm tour was created to help promote agriculture as a vibrant part of the county's quality of life.

The county's zoning regulations were redefined to permit retail sales of raw and unprocessed agricultural products in certain zoning districts.



Infrastructure

Six goals with related action strategies were developed in this area. Time frames and responsibilities were assigned.

Goal 1

Help forge partnerships for affordable infrastructure in Miami County.

These strategies included a countywide perspective on water and sanitary sewer studies to encourage joint projects.

The communities themselves have largely undertaken this task. Although some local utilities and units of government successfully joint ventured improvements, others struggled over issues related to service areas.

Goal 2

Recommend infrastructure improvements of specific sites based upon the Areas of Regional Significance and endorse pre-zoning of future commercial and industrial development areas.

These strategies included analyzing and prioritizing needs for each site along with soliciting interest from developers.

Although the areas were designated, only a limited amount of research has been completed on their specific site characteristics. Members of the Board of County Commissioners have opted to let the real estate market drive development at these sites. No additional work on “pre-zoning” the sites has taken place.

Goal 3

Advocate for the improvement of telecommunications and technology infrastructure in Miami County.

These strategies included quantifying the impact of telecommunications services on business decisions regarding development. A plan was to be drafted outlining the county’s needs and seeking ways to fill those needs.

Technology and local utility providers have made significant strides in this area. As an example, free public access to high speed Internet is now offered in a section of the City of Paola. Proposals are on the table for similar service in Louisburg and Spring Hill. High speed Internet has become available over the phone lines through cable connections and via line-of-sight service providers. To provide an indicator of the region’s service area, it should be noted that various high-speed Internet providers currently service all of the county’s educational and municipal facilities.

The county’s zoning regulations were revised allowing the location of telecommunication towers and similar devices along highways, arterial road and collector roads in certain zoning districts. Applicable standards must be met.

Goal 4

Advocate for sanitation capacity improvement in Miami County.

The strategy for this goal relied on strong communication with the Miami County Environmental Health Director.

Miami County has reviewed site requests on their individual merits. Systems have been approved ranging from individual septic systems to benefit districts.

Goal 5

Advocate for water distribution system improvements in Miami County.

The strategy for this goal relied on communication with the county's Rural Water Districts and City Water Systems.

As mentioned earlier, several joint water projects have begun in Miami County. These joint ventures will increase capacity for production. The financial burden of physically extending lines into portions of the county continues to create challenges in this area. To assist with commercial and industrial development, the Board of County Commissioners has allocated funds through the Economic Development Department to provide gap funding for a project needing infrastructure improvements.



Goal 6

Recommend and encourage the preservation of open space throughout Miami County.

These strategies included creating an active open space plan for the county.

Miami County's Comprehensive Plan is reviewed annually and includes provisions for maintaining and preserving open space throughout the county's residential zoning districts.

Education and Training

Three goals with related action strategies were developed in this area. Time frames and responsibilities were assigned.

Goal 1

Create partnerships that provide training opportunities in Miami County.

These strategies included partnerships with Johnson County Community College and Fort Scott Community College to provide outreach programs to the county's business community and to enhance workforce development.

Significant improvements have been made during the past three years. In partnership with Miami County, Fort Scott Community College began operation of a local campus based in a former county-owned hospital building. This allowed operations and courses to expand. Funds from the Economic Development

Department's budget assisted with the transition of a former county hospital into a local community college campus. Currently, about 200 students utilize the campus where they can receive an associate's degree via classes taught on site or made available through satellite learning. A special emphasis is provided in the allied health arena to support the region's health care employers.



Goal 2

Promote an entrepreneurial culture in Miami County.

These strategies included offering a series of workshops designed to promote entrepreneurial efforts in the agricultural community.

A series of classes have been made available through private consultants, and Fort Scott Community College. A USDA Rural Development grant has funded these programs. While some sessions have only attracted a few participants, organizers have continued to consider input from participants offering a variety of courses at various locations and alternative times. In addition, meals are also being offered in conjunction with some sessions. These changes continue to make the courses flexible and attractive to participants.

Goal 3

Promote partnerships that provide leadership training and education in Miami County.

Strategies for this goal included promoting a countywide leadership program and supporting a youth leadership program.

To date, more than 100 Miami County leaders have graduated from the program. This group has spun off into its own committee and is currently beginning its Leadership VII Class. Participants are recruited from throughout the county and each pay \$250 for tuition. The sessions include six daylong sessions focused on Servant Leadership. Each class selects and completes a group project to fulfill a need they identify within the county.

The volunteers who organize the event include area students in the curriculum.

Cooperation and Coordination

Two goals with related action strategies were developed in this area. Time frames and responsibilities were assigned.

Goal 1

Improve cooperation and coordination of economic development efforts between the department, communities and the chambers of commerce in Miami County.

Strategies for this goal included identifying individual community needs regarding economic development and providing support to those needs.

Each community had representation on the advisory board and various subcommittees. Staff members met with each community's economic development representative. Their input was gathered and integrated into the department's work plan.

Goal 2

Encourage networking of cities, chambers and the county for economic development.

Strategies for this goal included participating in interlocal government meetings to provide community leadership with updates on economic development activities and utilizing advisory board members as community liaisons.

County staff members regularly participated in the region's interlocal government meetings and participate as a member of each community's economic development group. Advisory board members reported monthly on activities in their community.

Data purchased by the county from the County Economic Research Institute is shared with each of the communities.

Housing

One goal with related action strategies was developed in this area. Time frames and responsibilities were assigned.



Goal 1

Encourage the development of affordable housing in the county.

Strategies for this goal included identifying available resources for assistance and distributing that information to potential investors.

Research about the need for affordable housing was compiled and maintained by the Economic Development Department. This information was relayed to potential investors and the county's communities.

2007 Strategic Plan

The 2007 Economic Development Strategic Plan has been crafted with input from a variety of sources. Community volunteers, elected officials, advisory board members and county employees all assisted with its development.

The plan's creation comes at an opportune time for the region. Staffing changes along with tremendous new pressures from surrounding counties made 2007 a great time to evaluate what has worked, and what could work better, in the area of economic development.

During the next three years, Miami County will face significant opportunities in light of an intermodal rail facility planned in southwest Johnson County. If the project develops as projected, it will impact all areas of the county's economic climate.

Members of the advisory board and the county commission kicked off the update process by reviewing the 2004 plan and clarifying issues for 2007. Those discussions included creating a tiered approach to the designated issues to help prioritize both time and resources. Input from each community's city staff, elected officials and civic leaders were sought to determine what tasks should be tackled and which entity should be made responsible for progress. This process allowed the group to start with a clean slate.

Department Summary

To focus the county's definition of economic development, members of the Miami County Commission concurred with a definition of economic development offered by members of the advisory board. That overall goal reads: *Economic development involves activities that stimulate a long-term improvement in the county's tax base and employment level.*

2007 Strategic Issues:

Following meetings with each community's economic development representative, a list of strategic issues was compiled for inclusion in the 2007 Plan. Members of the advisory board and Miami County Commissioners grouped the strategic issues into priority tiers as a way to help allocate resources and time.

Tier One

- *Relationship Building* -- Build relationships between community leaders representing Miami County's economic interests on a regional, state and national level
- *Economic Data Collection and Resources* -- Gather and maintain economic data providing crucial information for businesses considering an expansion or new location including a retail and commercial analysis to assist with identifying potential opportunities
- *Infrastructure* -- Aid communities facing infrastructure challenges that limit economic development opportunities including utilities and transportation networks
- *New business identification and recruitment* -- Assist communities with their business recruitment efforts
- *Existing business retention and expansion* -- Assist communities with their business retention efforts

Tier Two

- *Workforce Training and Education* -- Monitor workforce trends while identifying opportunities and resources for training
- *Housing* -- Aid communities utilizing economic development tools to revitalize existing neighborhoods and develop new housing stock
- *Tourism* -- Promote Miami County's successes and tourism opportunities

Gathering Input

With the strategic issues identified, members of the advisory board and staff turned to the local leaders for input on what activities should be undertaken in each area. Members of chambers of commerce, county economic development committees, elected officials; county staff and city staff members were polled for ideas that would shape the region's future.

Meetings were conducted one-on-one and in small groups at sites throughout the county. Members of the advisory board and Miami County Commissioners reviewed a draft copy of the plan before a final version was prepared for distribution.

Tier One Strategic Action Items

Relationship Building

Build relationships between community leaders representing Miami County's economic interests on a regional, state and national level

Task	Who should be involved	Frequency	Initiate
The county's Chambers of commerce will coordinate meetings to provide community members with legislative updates during the session.	Chambers of commerce	Monthly, January through April	Existing
County and local leaders will encourage others to participate in Leadership Miami County and will serve as resources to the organizing committee.	County and local governing boards	As needed	Existing
The countywide interlocal government meeting will include an opportunity for elected officials and their lead staff members to discuss local initiatives.	County and local governing boards	Monthly	Existing
City and county representatives will meet to discuss specific development issues.	County and local governing boards	As needed	Existing
County staff will be actively involved in organizations such as Kansas City Area Development Council and Kansas Economic Development Association.	Economic Development Director	Quarterly	Existing
County staff will actively participate in local, regional and national training programs to improve skills and network with peers.	Economic Development Director	Twice annually	Existing

Task	Who should be involved	Frequency	Initiate
Lead staff members from the county's Chambers of commerce and the Economic Development Director will meet to exchange ideas and consider joint projects.	Economic Development Director and Chambers of commerce	Quarterly	Existing
Louisburg will be assisted in the creation of an annual joint meeting between local city, school and chamber officials.	Louisburg officials and Economic Development Director	Annually	2008
Members of the Economic Development Advisory Board will regularly report to their area of representation.	Economic Development Advisory Board members	Quarterly	2008
County departments will be encouraged to form "roundtable" groups with local jurisdictions to discuss issues of common interest.	County and local governing boards	Every six months	2008
The county's Chambers of commerce and Miami County Economic Development Department will exchange newsletters and articles to keep one another informed of projects.	Economic Development Director and Chambers of commerce	Monthly	2008
Local governing boards will exchange meeting agendas to keep one another informed of pending decisions.	Local governing boards	Monthly	2008

Economic Data Collection and Resources

Gather and maintain economic data providing crucial information for businesses considering an expansion or new location including a retail and commercial analysis to assist with identifying potential opportunities

Task	Who should be involved	Frequency	Initiate
Economic indicators, costs of living and demographics will be obtained from CERI, Kansas Public Policy and Research, Docking Institute and other research sources.	Economic Development Director and Economic Development Advisory Board Members	Every six months	Existing
A mechanism will be created allowing local entities and developers to create trade area profiles.	Economic Development Director and Economic Development Advisory Board Members	Annually	2008
Refine and implement a process for each city to regularly submit and receive updated demographic data.	Economic Development Director and Economic Development Advisory Board Members	Monthly	2008
LocationOne will be used as the primary repository of data on available sites and buildings.	Economic Development Director and Economic Development Advisory Board Members	Monthly	2008

Task	Who should be involved	Frequency	Initiate
Building permit data will be tracked for each community and the county. Data generated will be shared with local jurisdictions.	County and local building officials, and Economic Development Director	Monthly	2008
Labor force availability and climate will be tracked for the region. Data generated will be shared with local jurisdictions.	Economic Development Director and Kansas Department of Labor	Annually	2008
Personal and real property assessed valuation data for each city and the county will be tracked for trends. Data generated will be shared with local jurisdictions.	Miami County Appraiser and Economic Development Director	Annually	2009
Mill levy data for each city and the county will be tracked for trends. Data generated will be shared with local jurisdictions.	Miami County Clerk and Economic Development Director	Annually	2009
Sales tax revenue for each city and the county will be tracked for trends. Data generated will be shared with local jurisdictions.	Miami County Treasurer and Economic Development Director	Every six months	2009
Crime rates will be monitored for each city and the county will be tracked for trends. Data generated will be shared with local jurisdictions.	Miami County Sheriff, local police departments and Economic Development Director	Annually	2009
Key economic climate indicators will be identified and tracked for peer counties and communities.	County and local governing boards, Economic Development Director, Economic Development Advisory Board Members and Chambers of commerce	Every six months	2009

Infrastructure

Aid communities facing infrastructure challenges that limit economic development opportunities including utilities and transportation networks

Task	Who should be involved	Frequency	Initiate
Information regarding grant sources and loan programs will be shared with county and local officials.	County and local governing boards, and Economic Development Director	As needed	Existing
Staff members will participate in discussions related to other regional development proposals to evaluate their countywide impact.	County and local governing boards, Miami County Engineer, Miami County Planner and Economic Development Director	As needed	Existing

Task	Who should be involved	Frequency	Initiate
Emergency medical service and police protection will be valued as a primary infrastructure component with service area and statistics monitored for potential improvements.	County and local governing boards, Director of EMS, Miami County Sheriff and Economic Development Director	As needed	Existing
The county will allocate funds for cost-share assistance for local infrastructure improvements. Application for use of these funds will be made by the local jurisdiction and considered by the county commissioners. These funds may also be used for improvements to the Areas of Regional Significance.	County and local governing boards	Annually	Existing
Staff members will participate in discussions related to K-68's study including the transportation network and land use.	Louisburg City Leaders, Paola City Leaders, Miami County Engineer and Economic Development Director	As needed	2008
Staff members and volunteers will detail and maintain site characteristics for Miami County's Areas of Regional Significance. When development within the county is considered, an emphasis will be placed on developing these sites. New sites will be instituted when appropriate.	Economic Development Director, Miami County Planning, utility providers and Economic Development Advisory Board Members	Every six months	2008

New business identification and recruitment

Assist communities with their business recruitment efforts

Task	Who should be involved	Frequency	Initiate
Retail economic indicators will be tracked and shared with local officials.	Economic Development Director and Economic Development Advisory Board Members	As needed	Existing
Information regarding potential projects will be shared with each city's identified economic development official. Assistance will be provided as needed to communities pursuing the potential project.	Local economic development representatives, Economic Development Director and Economic Development Advisory Board Members	As needed	Existing
Data regarding existing development sites and buildings will be updated.	Local economic development representatives, Economic Development Director, real estate agents and property owners, and Economic Development Advisory Board Members	Every six months	Existing

Task	Who should be involved	Frequency	Initiate
A web site will be created for the City of Fontana to promote and recruit businesses to the community.	Fontana City Council and Economic Development Director	Annually	2008
Assistance updating economic development incentive policies will be provided to communities. This will include educational efforts regarding incentive types and their application.	Local economic development representatives, Economic Development Director and Economic Development Advisory Board Members	Annually	2008
Communities will be assisted in targeting primary and supporting businesses for recruitment.	Local economic development representatives, Economic Development Director and Economic Development Advisory Board Members	Every six months	2008
Communities will be assisted in identifying service gaps for potential recruitment opportunities.	Local economic development representatives, Economic Development Director and Economic Development Advisory Board Members	Every six months	2008
A familiarization tour will be planned to help acquaint urban developers with opportunities within the county.	Local economic development representatives, Economic Development Director, real estate agents and property owners, and Economic Development Advisory Board Members	Annually	2009

Existing business retention and expansion

Assist communities with their business retention efforts

Task	Who should be involved	Frequency	Initiate
Information regarding state and local incentives will be maintained and provided to businesses.	Economic Development Director, Small Business Development Center and Kansas Department of Commerce	As needed	Existing
Sources of professional consulting will be cultivated and offered as resources to businesses.	Economic Development Director, Small Business Development Center and Kansas Department of Commerce	As needed	Existing
Local entities will encourage “shop-at-home” policy.	Local governing boards, Chambers of commerce and Economic Development Director	As needed	Existing
Training and technical assistance will be provided through group settings.	Economic Development Director, Small Business Development Center, Fort Scott Community College and Johnson County Community College	Quarterly	Existing
Data regarding existing development sites and buildings will be updated.	Local economic development representatives, Economic Development Director, real estate agents and property owners, and Economic Development Advisory Board Members	Every six months	Existing
Roundtable conversations by industry and business size will be hosted to discuss issues of common interest and the region’s economic climate.	Local economic development representatives, business owners, Chamber of Commerce staff members and Economic Development Director	Every six months	2008
Visits will be made to existing businesses to gather data about their operations and potential for expansion. Support will be offered to assist with their retention and expansion. Programs such as BREES and Synchronist will be utilized to maximize the information.	Local economic development representatives, Chamber of Commerce staff members and Economic Development Director	Monthly	2008

Tier Two Strategic Action Items

Workforce Training and Education

Monitor workforce trends while identifying opportunities and resources for training

Task	Who should be involved	Frequency	Initiate
Information regarding state and local incentives will be maintained and provided to businesses.	Economic Development Director, Small Business Development Center, USDA and Kansas Department of Commerce	As needed	Existing
Basic emergency first aid training will be provided on site to Miami County employers.	Miami County EMS and local businesses	As needed	Existing
Data regarding educational achievement and commuting patterns will be tracked and distributed to local officials.	Economic Development Director	Annually	2008
Input regarding trends in education, including vocational training will be obtained from the region's secondary and post-secondary educational institutions.	Economic Development Director, school superintendents, Fort Scott Community College and Johnson County Community College	Every six months	2008
Roundtable conversations will be hosted for firms to discuss common workforce and human resources issues.	Local economic development representatives, Kansas Department of Commerce Workforce Representative, local businesses, Chamber of Commerce staff members and Economic Development Director	Every six months	2008

Housing

Aid communities utilizing economic development tools to revitalize existing neighborhoods and develop new housing stock

Task	Who should be involved	Frequency	Initiate
Information regarding state programs and regional nonprofit groups will be maintained and provided to businesses.	Economic Development Director and Kansas Department of Commerce	As needed	Existing
Roundtable conversations will be hosted to gauge the region's housing climate.	Local economic development representatives, Chamber of Commerce staff members, builders, realtors, bankers, local planning officials and Economic Development Director	Every six months	2008

Task	Who should be involved	Frequency	Initiate
Assistance will be provided to Louisburg Chamber of Commerce in the creation of a rental-listing directory.	Louisburg Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Director	Annually	2008
Regional housing trends will be monitored and provided to local officials.	Local economic development representatives, Home Builders Association of Greater Kansas City, Kansas City Regional Association of Realtors and Economic Development Director	Annually	2008
Neighborhood revitalization programs will be explored.	Local governments, local planning officials, Miami County Clerk, Miami County Treasurer, Miami County Appraiser and Economic Development Director	As needed	2008

Tourism

Promote Miami County's successes and tourism opportunities

Task	Who should be involved	Frequency	Initiate
Brochures promoting the county's attractions will be distributed to regional outlets.	Chamber of Commerce staff members and Economic Development Director	As needed	Existing
Information regarding community events will be shared between locations to assist with cross promotion.	Local tourism committees, Chamber of Commerce staff members and Economic Development Director	Monthly	Existing
State and national tourism efforts will be monitored for potential integration into local activities.	Local tourism committees, Chamber of Commerce staff members and Economic Development Director	Monthly	Existing
Press releases noting area achievements and activities will be distributed to regional media outlets.	Local economic development representatives, Chamber of Commerce staff members, County Administrator and Economic Development Director	As needed	2008
A tracking method will be created and maintained to determine tourism's impact on the county.	Local tourism committees, Chamber of Commerce staff members and Economic Development Director	Quarterly	2008
A countywide approach to events such as the Kansas Sampler festival will be considered when feasible.	Local tourism committees, Chamber of Commerce staff members and Economic Development Director	Annually	2008
A county "brand" and shared vision will be identified for integration throughout the organization.	County Commissioners, County Administrator and Economic Development Director	Annually	2009

