

Northwest Tennessee Development District
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

2017

Prepared for the Economic Development Agency

By the Northwest Tennessee Development District

Northwest Tennessee Development District
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Summary Background:

S.W.O.T. (Strengths Weakness Opportunities Threats)

Evaluation Framework

Strategic Direction / Action Plan

Concepts of Economic Resilience

Appendix A: NADO's peer standards of excellence

Appendix B: 10 defining noteworthy elements

Acronyms

Northwest Tennessee Development District	NWTDD
Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development	TDECD
Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation	TDEC
Tennessee Housing and Development Agency	THDA
United States Department of Agriculture	USDA
Bureau of Labor Statistics	BLS
Area Agency on Aging and Disability	AAA&D
Tennessee Advisory Council on Intergovernmental Relations	TACIR
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy	CEDS
Community Development Block Grant	CDBG
Community Development Block Grant-Industrial Loan Program	CDBG-ILP
Economic Development Administration	EDA
Tennessee Department of Transportation	TDOT
Tennessee Industrial Infrastructure Program	TIIP
Northwest Tennessee Certified Development Corporation	CDC
Tennessee Arts Commission	TAC
Tennessee Commission on Aging	TCA
Strengths Weaknesses opportunities threats	SWOT
National Association of Development Organization	NADO
West Tennessee Industrial Association	WTIA

Background:

Northwest Tennessee Development District is an association of forty-seven municipalities and nine counties organized to advocate and promote economic and community development in the region. Founded in 1971 to provide planning, technical assistance, staff support and to help its local governments develop projects and activities to benefit the communities and citizens. Currently the district employs 30 full-time and 5 part-time persons in the office and many other persons full-time and part-time through the Area Agency on Aging administered contracts. A sixty-three member Board of Directors composed of nine county mayors and forty-seven city/town mayors in our district and four members-at-large governs the District. The Executive Committee is comprised of the nine County Mayors and six Members-At-Large. The primary goals are to assist local governments in researching, obtaining, and administering state and federal funding; to enhance the quality of life in Northwest Tennessee; and to identify needs and advocate services for the elderly population of the region. The District concerns itself with the total social, economic, and environmental well-being of this area.

The planning department staff works closely with local governments in providing research, grant-writing and grant-administration services for State and Federal grant funds; technical expertise; preparing studies in support of local infrastructure improvement projects; providing timely input to the state's multi model transportation planning process; providing comprehensive planning and GIS assistance; and providing assistance to local governments on several different environmental issues. The community and economic development activities in our district are designed to foster the orderly

development of individual communities as well as promote the development of the region as a whole. The district planning office is the only source most counties and communities have available for technical assistance or planning.

We not only educate, but also help apply for grants, loans, and private investment dollars to make things happen in this area of the state. The district planning office is the one source most of the counties and communities have to use for technical assistance or planning.

A S.W.O.T. analysis was compiled with members of the planning team. The following list and detail of the analysis was completed. The Team input was critical to the completion of this analysis. The expertise in housing grant writing transportation and planning is highlighted in the detailed analysis.

S.W.O.T. Analysis: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

An in-depth analysis of our regions strengths weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Strengths:

Central Location, Low taxes, State incentives, Public transportation NWTDD, Water Supply, Transportation, (roads, rail, and four lane highways, NWTDD leader in securing grants for development, Tennessee Valley Authority, available industrial property, Three schools of higher education, educated work force, West Star Leadership, Agricultural strengths, Tourism

Weaknesses:

Transportation (no interstate), Youth flight, Limited to state incentives, No major cities in district, No commercial Air service, Declining population, Aging population, Recent hospital closing, High poverty rate, Low education level, Lack of high paying jobs, Limited high speed broadband, prevalence of cost-burdened home owners, lack of adequate / quality affordable rental housing.

Opportunities:

Complete interstate highway, Funding of I69, Training workforce, Port of Cates, advanced Manufacturing

Threats:

Other locations, domestic and foreign competition for same industries, Earth quake zone, Tornado threat, flooding, youth flight, aging population,

Strength

Northwest Tennessee is located in the central section east of the Mississippi river. The proposed interstate 69 corridor will pass through Obion and Dyer counties in northwest Tennessee. Forty percent of US manufacturing occurs along the interstate 69 corridor. Northwest Tennessee is within Northwest Tennessee is the halfway point of the new 2,600-mile, I-69 superhighway connecting Canada to Mexico currently under construction. Tennessee's newest port sits in the center of a multistate agricultural region and opens up markets that demand cotton, grain and meat.

The Port of Cates landing is located on the Mississippi River in northwest Tennessee near Tiptonville.

The port is built on the only developable site on the Mississippi River above the 100-year flood plain between Memphis and Cairo, Ill. And its surrounding areas are highly agricultural. The port sites on 150 acres with 350 acres available in the Lake County industrial park. Northwest Tennessee is rich in agriculture. The port will provide a future distribution hub for the whole area.

The taxes in Tennessee are low. Tennessee has no income tax and many incentives for companies to locate in Tennessee. There are **FastTrack grant for infrastructure**. The **FastTrack program** is used to attract jobs and capital investment. These grants are used for job training and relocating new employees. There are three **FastTrack programs**: **FastTrack Job Training Assistance**, **FastTrack Infrastructure Development** and the **FastTrack Economic Development Fund**.

The Northwest Tennessee Human Resource agency provides public transportation for the nine county area of northwest Tennessee. This service is provided by the Federal Transit Authority and the Tennessee Department of Transportation.

West Tennessee has an ample water supply. West Tennessee is situated in the Memphis water Aquifer between the Mississippi and the Tennessee rivers. The Memphis aquifer is fed by these rivers. There is an immense quantity of water available for industrial growth.

Northwest Tennessee has highway rail service and an available water port on the Mississippi. There are four lane highways 45 running from South Fulton thru Gibson County and highway 51 running from Dyersburg and Dyer County to South Fulton. There are three short rail lines in our district. West Tennessee R.R. has 41.9 miles of rail, TnKen has 43.7 miles, and K.W.T. RR has 51.5 miles. West Tennessee R.R. connects with Norfolk Southern, CN, CSX, Kansas City Southern, and Canadian National. TNKEN R.R. Connects with CN and K.W.T. R.R. connects with CSX. Our district is near Memphis the third largest rail center in the U.S.

Northwest Tennessee development district has led the state in securing grants for industries. The planning staff has secured over 23 grant exceeding 11 million dollars for our district. There were seven FastTrack infrastructure and training grants, 9 Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), and 5 Delta Regional Authority Grants (DRA).

The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) supplies lower cost power to our district as compared to other regions of the country. TVA has a long history of working with industries to customize their power needs. TVA work with local power distributors

to attract industries to the area. In 2015 TVA has invested over 5.5 Billion dollars in Tennessee which created or retained over 57,150 jobs.

There are over nine certified industrial properties available in northwest Tennessee. A certified site has a minimum of 20 developable acres, has utilities in place or a formal extension plan in place, has a boundaries surveyed and topography maps already in place, has documented environmental conditions and geotechnical analysis, has minimized development risk factors, and is certified by Austin Consulting.

Northwest Tennessee has three institution of higher learning. The University of Tennessee at Martin, Bethel University in McKenzie, And Dyersburg State Community College. Also in northwest Tennessee there are two technical training colleges in McKenzie and Newbern. UT Martin serves over 6800 students and has an economic impact of over \$10,000 per year per student to the district. Bethel University is located in McKenzie and has an enrollment of 7,600 students. Bethel was founded in 1842 as a Presbyterian seminary. Dyersburg State Community College open in 1969. DSCC has improved the quality education in the district. It provides lower cost higher education for those who cannot afford to improve their skills. The two technical training colleges in McKenzie and Newbern have the following mission to provide workforce development throughout the district. They provide competence based instruction through traditional and distance learning instructional delivery systems that will qualify individuals for employment or job advancement. The training colleges training that is economical and accessible to all. This contributes to the community and economic development of the district.

West Star is a leadership group that puts together leaders from all over west Tennessee. They interact with other class member and with people that shape the

future of west Tennessee. West Star benefits the people of west Tennessee as a result of knowledge and commitment. The participants gain from the knowledge and skills they learn from the seminar. They gain new friendship and contact with recognized state leaders

Over eighty percent workforce of the northwest Tennessee development district has a high school diploma. Over Sixteen percent of the workforce has a college degree. Education is an important part of the growth of the district. Our workforce education level is below the national averages on both high school graduates and college graduates.

Northwest Tennessee is rich in agricultural commerce. We have recently assisted a major grain operator with an infrastructure grant. We also have the port that could facilitate another distribution point for agriculture products.

There are many points of interest in northwest Tennessee that attract tourist dollars. Seasonal hunting and fishing from Kentucky Lake to Reelfoot and the Mississippi river. Several attraction draw dollars to our area like the newest point of interest Discovery Park in Union City. The park has many themed events throughout the year that draw participants from a wide area. There are two notable museums in the district. The West Tennessee Arts museum in Humboldt that has a wide display of art year round. The West Tennessee Agriculture Museum host the No Till day each year. There several festivals that dot the area throughout the year. The Strawberry Festival in Humboldt witch is the longest running festival in the area. Other festival are the Teapot Festival in Trenton, the Iris Festival in Dresden, the Banana Festival in South Fulton, The world's Largest Fish Fry in Paris, and The Soybean Festival in Martin. All of these festivals add to and improve the quality of life in Northwest Tennessee.

Weaknesses:

The largest are of transportation weakness is lack of interstates in our district. Interstate lack of funding has held up this project for many years. Youth flight is also a problem because of lack of good paying jobs. The youth of the area are moving to more suburban location because of better paying jobs. Incentives are limited because of local governments do not have the funds to draw industries to their towns and county. They must rely on state and federal moneys to recruit industries to their areas. There is no metropolitan area in our district. Larger populated areas have more to offer industries locating in there region. We have not commercial air service in our area. The nearest is Jackson, Memphis, and Nashville. Our population is declining because of aging and youth flight which was previously discussed. There have been several community hospital closing that make healthcare less accessible. Health care becomes more important as the population ages. Good health care is also a factor when business locate or relocate to a region. One of the counties is our district has the highest poverty rate in the state. They also have the lowest level of college degrees in the state. There is limited access to high- speed internet in the district. Housing also provides issues for residents in the district. Home ownership is a cost burden because of income levels and lack of quality affordable rental housing is also an issue.

Opportunities:

Our district opportunities are improving transportation, training workforce in advance manufacturing technologies and Developing the Port of Cates in Lake County. There is a need to move forward with the construction of interstate 69 through our district. This has been a slow process but it is much needed for the development of our district. Continually training the workforce has always been a priority. Tennessee leads the nation in Advance manufacturing. At the present time advance manufacturing is concentrated on other parts of the state. We see this as possible growth potential for our district.

Threats:

We are competing with domestic and foreign competition for industrial development. Part of our district is in the mew Madrid earth quake zone. Our district bordered by the Tennessee River and the Mississippi River some areas are prone to flooding.

**Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
(CEDS)**

This Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is a compilation of data, information and economic development priorities for the Northwest Tennessee Development District (NWTDD) (Benton, Carroll, Crockett, Dyer, Gibson, Henry, Lake, Obion, and Weakley counties). The purpose of the CEDS is to provide a detailed profile of the district's vision for the region. The CEDS will serve as a reference guide to the community in times of economic downturn and expansion and will facilitate regional discussion concerning coordination, cooperation, and development of comprehensive regional actions to improve and/or sustain growth. The

development of the CEDS and the region's vision for the future is one step toward the development of this regionally cooperative process.

The development of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy is a multi-faceted process, involving input from the CEDS steering committee members representing the communities, the financial sector, government, education, and businesses in an effort to identify this region's priorities. The CEDS must contain the following information as part of this multi-faceted process:

1. **Background:** describes the current status of the NWTDD region.
2. **Analysis** of economic development problems and opportunities includes an in-depth analysis of the economic development problems and opportunities that identifies strengths and weaknesses in the regional makeup of human and economic assets. This section will also contain analysis of economic clusters that dominate the area. The CEDS report serves as a mechanism for improving economic development activities, and can be used as a key tool in bringing attention to the planning and developmental efforts of persons and organizations within the region. This report will serve as the successor and update to the Overall Economic Development Plan (OEDP) submitted by the NWTDD in 1992 and the subsequent CEDS Reports of 2001 and 2008. This updated CEDS report will serve as a long-term Guide for the political and development communities and will provide a template

For economic growth in the region.

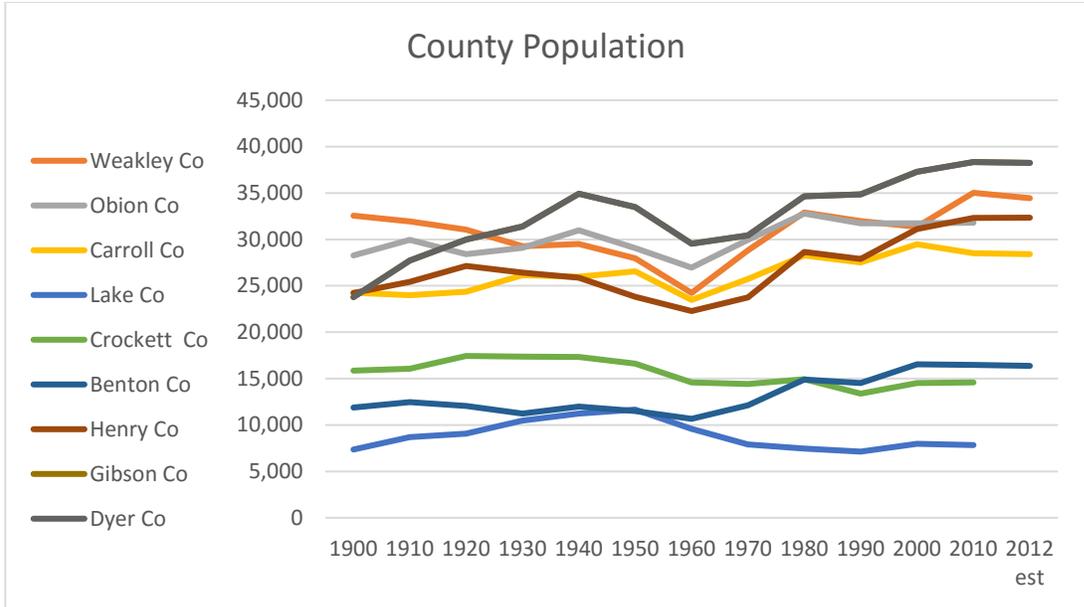
Since June of 2011 the state has funded a full time regional director of economic development as the main point of contact for our nine county region. They work full time recruiting and assisting industries to locate and expand in

our region. The regional director coordinates with the state and local government business prospects and major business expansions.

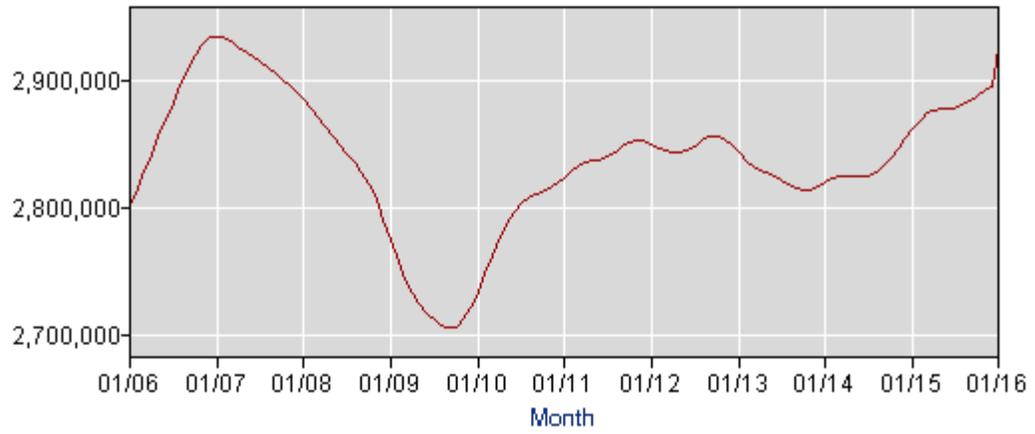
There have been several plant expansion in the nine county area of northwest Tennessee. The regional director of economic development has been involved in the negotiation and implementation of the projects.

The Tennessee Labor force has been on as upward trend since early 2014. The graph below labor force history from January 2006 the January 2016.

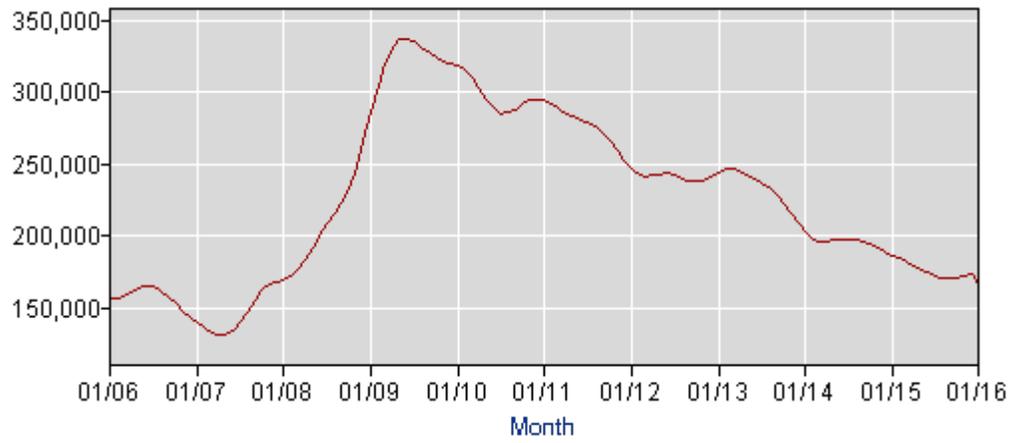




employment



unemployment



Source: US Department of Labor

3. **Goals and Objectives:** describes the actions necessary to remedy the economic development problems and weaknesses set forth in the analysis section.
4. **Community and Private Sector Participation:** a discussion of the relationship between the community in general and the private sector and the development of the CEDS.
5. **Strategic Projects, Programs and Activities:** identifies regional projects, programs and activities designed to implement the Goals and Objectives of the CEDS. This section will also contain a Suggested Projects and Vital Projects list.
6. **Economic Clusters:** will identify the economic clusters within the region.
7. **CEDS Plan of Action:** this section will show implementation of the goals and objectives of the CEDS in a manner that promotes economic development and opportunity, fosters effective transportation access, enhances and protects the environment, promotes the use of technology in economic development, and balances resources through sound management of physical development.
8. **Performance Measures:** describes the performance measures that will be used to evaluate the planning organization's successful development of the CEDS.

The data and other information found in the CEDS comes from sources such as the U.S. Census Bureau, The US Department of Labor, county planning commissions, The West Tennessee Industrial Association, the Department of Natural Resources, ERS/USDA, and other public agencies.

Until about 1940 Tennessee's economy was predominantly agricultural, with cotton, tobacco, and livestock as the principal cash products. Textile and iron-manufacturing plants were built, mainly in East Tennessee, in the 1800s, but industry did not grow significantly until the 1930s and '40s. This growth was propelled to a considerable degree by the construction of hydroelectric dams and power plants by the federally owned [Tennessee Valley Authority](#) (TVA) and by [World War II](#), which catalyzed industrial activity in virtually all areas. Since the mid-20th century, Tennessee's economy has grown mainly in the service sector. However, development of information and high-technology services has not been as rapid in Tennessee as it has been elsewhere in the region, despite the ongoing activities of the federal government in association with the TVA and the U.S. Department of Energy.(1)

Workforce Background

Total rural population is estimated at 252,000 with an average county population at 28,000. This compares to the statewide rural county average population of 34,000 and a statewide county average of 60,000. The average Northwest Tennessee Development District County 35,600. The number of individuals per square mile, or population density, is 58 for NWTN, 69 across all rural counties, and 138 statewide.

The overall median age is 38.2, compared to a statewide average of 35.9, but three counties-Benton, Carroll, and Henry have median ages of 39 or greater. This would tend to point to a lack of economic opportunity and corresponding out migration of young adults. The percentage of the population with a high school degree stands at 67.1, compared to 67% of the state's rural counties and

76% statewide. Gibson, Henry, Obion, and Weakley have high school graduation rates of 70%. The graduation rate from college with a BA or BS degree, though, is about half of the statewide rate.

At \$29,800, the median annual household income is below the average for rural counties (\$31,000) and well below the statewide average of more than \$36,000. This, once again, probably points to the economic challenges evident in NWTN. However, one should also note that lower annual incomes are also associated with aging populations. Moreover, this does not necessarily indicate that the standard of living is lower for older residents. Instead, older residents (rich and poor alike) tend to consume out savings more regularly than do younger inhabitants. Still, the labor force participation rate of 56.9% is slightly below the rate for all rural counties and well below the statewide rate of 63.5%. While discussion thus far has centered on our nine county region in general, there is considerable variation across the nine counties. Toward the positive, Dyer and Obion counties have median family incomes of \$32,700 as Northwest Tennessee Development District compared to the rural county average income level of \$31,100 and the statewide average of \$36,400. Both counties have labor force participation rates greater than 61%. Four other counties have median incomes greater than \$30,000. Toward the other extreme, Lake County has a median family income of \$22,000 and a labor force participation rate of 37.8%. Interestingly enough, the difference in median income between rural counties and statewide (~\$5,300) is similar to the median increase required for respondents in the WTIA survey to change jobs within the region. This similarity may explain the exodus of young workers in NWTN to other locales within the state, namely metropolitan areas.

Lake County stands out as an anomaly in comparison to other rural counties in terms of labor force and income. One causal factor is the presence of the Northwest Correctional Facility with a prison population of 2,293. When compared with the 2015 population base of 7,690, 30% of the county's population is incarcerated in the prison. The prison population is, of course, not counted in the labor force, artificially depressing the labor force participation rate. But the prison population is not calculated in the calculation of median family income, the number presented above. However, prison population is counted in the population base used to estimate per capita income which is often used as a measure of affluence. This is discussed in the article "Too Big to Ignore: How Counting People in Prisons Distorted Census 2000". Lake County ranks last in poverty (as measured by per capita income) in the State of Tennessee due in part to the disproportionate number of prisoners housed there. According to a WTIA labor force data survey, respondents did wish for better economic opportunities if they were made available. Of those surveyed, 86% stated that they work full time year-round while 13.5% are employed part time year-round, and .6% are employed part time on a seasonal basis. In comparison, the statewide responses were 88%, 11.3%, and .6% respectively. Of those surveyed, 40% of part time employed respondents stated that they would prefer full time employment. Retail trade and manufacturing were the two biggest employers with 21.9% employed with the former and 20.2% employed with the latter. Respondents (46.3%) indicated a desire for new job skill training. Basic computer training (14.9%), Medical field (11.8%) were the top choices with those desiring "any" training (11.2%) rounding out the top three selections. This roughly corresponds with the responses to "two jobs for which you would most like training" in which computer (8.8%) and medical

field training (11.8%) were the top picks followed closely by business administration (8.8%) and social services (8.8%).

Of those not currently employed, 25.7% stated that they were unable to work due to raising a family. 22.9% were unemployed due to attending school/place of higher education. A more telling statistic is that fully 20% of respondents were unemployed due to retirement, this is certainly indicative of a rising median age within our region. According to WTIA survey data, 22% indicated Skilled labor/Production as the last job held, followed by retail sales, financial services, and unskilled labor (all 9.8%).

The desire to work among Northwest Tennessee's unemployed is quite high with 63% of the respondents stating a desire to be employed. Of those, 55.2% seek full-time employment with a requested annual median income of just \$15,600. 79.3% of unemployed respondents stated that they are interested in receiving new job skills training. 33.3% of NWTN's unemployed desired basic computer job skills training. Over 57% stated they would be willing to commute 15-29 minutes one way just to find employment. With the rising cost of fuel, this particular statistic cannot be ignored.

Unemployment rates are a significant component in an analysis of the labor market. Historically speaking, northwest Tennessee has had higher unemployment rates than the statewide average. Northwest Tennessee's unemployment and labor force fluctuations roughly coincide with those of the state. Since January of 2000, Northwest Tennessee has seen a decline in available civilian labor force numbers, the lowest occurring in February '05 (111,710) and the highest in August '00 (122,320). Northwest Tennessee's unemployment numbers reach their highest in July '03 when some 11,480 citizens were unable to find work. Unemployment numbers have never been

lower than they were in May '00 (5,850). Our current unemployment rate of 6% is the result of a sustained slow growth in the civilian labor force, albeit some 6% lower than in March '00, coupled with sustained slow growth in employment since February '05 (again, some 7% lower than in June '00). Northwest Tennessee has seen sustained loss in manufacturing and textile industry employment since June '02. Much of this can be attributed to the large textile and manufacturing industry that comprised a considerable portion of the industry located in the region. Since the signing of NAFTA, fewer such industries remain in the region.

Poverty

From 1990 to 2000, Carroll, Crockett, Dyer, and Weakley Counties' poverty rate rose. Benton, Gibson, Henry, and Lake Counties had a decrease in their poverty rate.

In 2013 Lake County had the highest poverty rate (31.7%) while Dyer County had the lowest poverty rate (17.8%). In 2000, Lake County had the highest poverty rate (23.6%) while Gibson County had the lowest poverty rate (12.8%). Lake County had the highest increase in poverty levels with a 1.4% increase.

Education

For the 2013 Census periods, the entire northwestern Tennessee area had a higher percentage of people not having a high school diploma or equivalent than the nation and Tennessee. Weakley County had the highest percentage (16.2%) of people who had not graduated from high school during the 1990 Census and Lake County had the highest percentage (29.4%) of people who

had not graduated from high school during the 2013 census. Weakley County had the lowest percentage (16.2%) of people who had not graduated from high school during the 2013 census period while Gibson County had the lowest percentage (17.4%) of people who had not graduated high school during the 2000 census period. Lake County also had the fewest residents with advanced degrees (1.4%) during the 2013 census period. Although Lake County continues to hold that distinction, the figure had risen to 1.7% according to the 2013 census.

Health

Heart disease and cancer continue to be the top two causes of death for Northwest Tennessee with cerebrovascular disease being third in 80% of the documented cases. The next highest causes of death are COPD, accidents, pneumonia, and influenza. Accidents and COPD vied for fourth and fifth places, but accidents were usually more numerous.

Geographical Information

The Northwest Tennessee Development, an agricultural area with abundant streams and forests, is composed of nine counties and 47 municipalities; the area covers approximately 4,260 square miles. The area, approximately 61.6% agricultural use, is bordered on the west by the Mississippi River, on the east by the Tennessee River, on the north by Kentucky, and the southern boundaries are Lauderdale County, Tennessee, Henderson County, Tennessee, and Decatur County Tennessee. The NWTDD is approximately 55 miles from

Jackson, 138 miles from Memphis, and 150 miles from Nashville. There are no metropolitan statistical areas in northwest Tennessee.

Agricultural production in northwest Tennessee is varied and diversified. Corn, soybeans, wheat, cattle, pork, alfalfa, apples, peaches, and strawberries are the principal commodities produced in the area. Natural resources include sand, gravel, chert, stone, limestone, and timber which is the second largest land use—approximately 1,193 square miles. Northwest Tennessee ranked first among rural regions in the state for agricultural sales (\$360 million in 2002 dollars). Farm income in the Northwest covered the costs of farming, leaving farm income's share of total personal income in the region to be 1.03%. Government payments were \$16.7 million in 2002. Businesses in northwest Tennessee also produce a wide variety of products that range for example, from textiles to munitions to plastics.

Geographically speaking, northwest Tennessee supports a variety of ecoregions:

Mississippi Alluvial Plain—These soils tend to be poorly drained, although some sandy soil are well-drained. Winters are mild and summers are hot with temperatures and humidity increasing from north to south. Bottomland deciduous forest vegetation covered the region before clearance for cultivation.

Mississippi Valley Loess Plains:

The Bluff Hills—These soil types are mainly sand, clay, silt, and lignite, and are capped by loess greater than 60 feet deep.

The Loess Plains—These soil types are characterized as Alfisol soils, and silty Entisols.

Demographics

The United States Census 2000 reports the 2001 population estimate for the NWTDD area at 251,690 reflecting a population decrease of 699 people from the Census 2000 area population of 252,389. Of the nine counties in the area, five show an actual population decrease from 2000 to 2005. Lake County showed the largest population decrease of -4.7%. Of the four counties that reported an increase population count, Dyer County showed the largest with a 1.5% increase in population. The population of the nine county area according to the ERS/USDA in 2005 was 251,199, a decrease of 7.1% from the 2000 census figure of 252,389. Gibson County, comprised of 606 square miles and a population of 48,152, is the largest county in the district according to the 2000 Census.

In 2000, Lake County (31.2%) had the largest African American population while Benton County (2.1%) had the smallest African American population. Benton County had the highest percentage Caucasian population at 96.4%. Lake County (66.6%) had the lowest percentage Caucasian population. Crockett County had the highest percentage of people in the “Other” category (3.7%). Population distribution according to sex reveals that all counties, with the exception of Lake County, had between 51.5% and 52% female person populations. The only exception is Lake County, which has a female population of only 39.8%; that figure may be somewhat skewed by the inclusion of the prison population in Lake County

Racial diversity has increased in the area’s population since 1990. The African American population has increased by more than 2.8% on average, a slight increase in the Asian population has been noted, with the Hispanic population more than doubling.

When considering the population of persons over age 65 in northwest Tennessee, it is interesting to note that the population has a 4.9% span throughout the nine county region. For example, Henry County has a 18.2% population of persons over age 65, while Lake County has a 13.3% population of person over age 65. It is significant that Lake County, Dyer County, and Weakley County have smaller populations of persons over the age of 65; 13.3%, 13.4%, and 14.5% respectively. The locations of Dyersburg State Community College and the University of Tennessee at Martin are contributing factors to these percentages. However, generally speaking, the populations of persons over the age of 65 in northwest Tennessee is increasing.

Transportation

Northwest Tennessee has widely varied transportation infrastructures.

Interstate 155, intersecting with Interstate 55, passes through Dyer County and terminates in Obion County just below Troy, Tennessee. Interstate 40 crosses the very most southeast corner of Benton County. Otherwise the region has fairly limited interstate access. There are, however, a variety of relatively high capacity two-lane and sub-interstate four-lane roads that provide substantial highway capacity. These include, but are not limited to US51 between Union City and Memphis, US412 between Jackson and Dyersburg, US79 between Clarksville, Dover, Paris, and, ultimately, Memphis, US45W and 45E (purely north/south through the center of the region), US70 and 70A which parallel I40 to the north, and a large number of state roads.

Northwest Tennessee has no commercially served airports, but has seven general aviation airports with runway lengths ranging from 5,001' (Benton County) to 6,500' (Union City Everett Stuart airport). NWTN has 352 miles of railroad tracks. The Canadian National Memphis- Chicago main-line lies along

the western edge of the region, providing both freight and passenger services to Dyersburg. The CSX Memphis- Nashville main-line runs east-west through the southern tier of NWTN counties, and the region is served by three relatively substantial short-lines. This service appears to be of value to the region.

Indeed, six of the nine are, at least, modest originators of rail traffic. To the east, Henry and Benton counties about the navigable Tennessee River and to the west, Lake and Dyer counties about the Mississippi River. Thus, at both ends of the region, available commercial navigation stands as a significant source of reserve freight capacity.

Examining proposals for infrastructure improvement, nearly every county desires upgrades to existing roads or the construction of new roads. In the Northwest counties, there is a desire to upgrade SR22 and SR78 to support the Cates Landing Port and tourism in the area of Reelfoot Lake. Obion County would also like to see US highway 45 expanded to four lanes. Crockett, Dyer, and Obion Counties would like to see I69 constructed. Benton County would like to see a truck lane constructed on Interstate 40 and improvements made to US641 and 70. Concerning the general aviation airfields, Obion County would like to see the airport runway extended with a new hanger. They would also like to see a four lane highway constructed to the airport and the terminal designated as a regional airport.

Regional Analysis

Overview of Analysis

- Current economic structure
- Strengths and Weaknesses
- Preparedness to Grow

Research Methods

- Analysis of population, employment, income, and wage trends
- Survey of local employers as conducted by the West Tennessee Industrial Association
- Survey of Workforce professionals as conducted by the West Tennessee Industrial Association

Context

- Important trends
 - Increasing importance of trade
 - Foreign-made goods more in demand
 - Exports also growing quickly
 - International trade share of GDP on the rise
- Information technology revolution
 - IT sector responsible for large share of recent growth
 - Widespread usage of IT has reduced production costs, increased productivity
- Consequences
 - Competition much more intense than ten or twenty years ago.
 - Companies have little pricing power
- Implications
 - Pressure to increase productivity will continue
 - Pressure to reduce production costs will continue
- Results
 - More consolidations, downsizing, outsourcing

- Productivity will be a critical factor; can be enhanced with continuing education, training.
- Reducing turnover and cutting fixed costs is also helpful in increasing productivity.
- Current Structure ○ Among other Tennessee workforce areas, per capita income is one of the lowest (\$22,436 vs. \$28,641) and unemployment rate one of the highest (~7% vs. 5%).
- Growth of population and labor force is flat and lags the state growth rate. ○ Personal income growth also lags state growth rate.

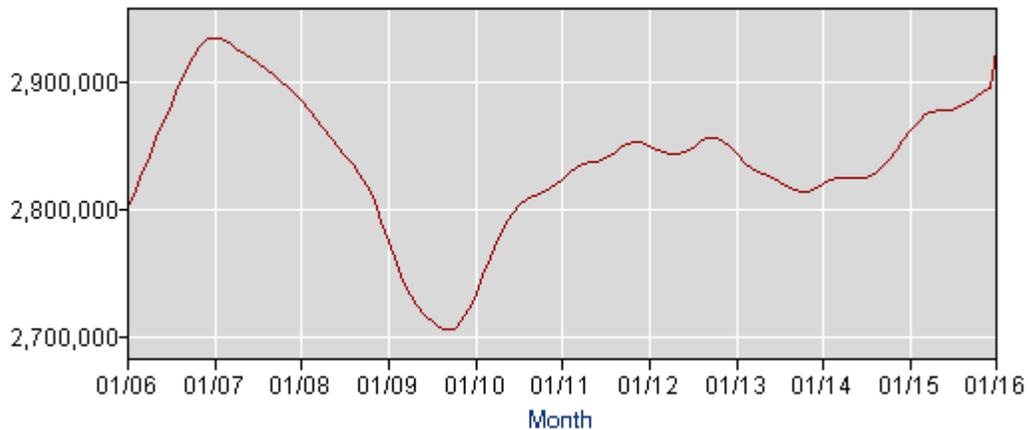
Current Employment Trends

- Impacts on payroll employment vary by region of state
- Tennessee down 2.5% from peak in January '06 to June '07
- Northwest counties down 8.2% from January '07 peak

Industrial Distribution

- Much more dependent on manufacturing as a source of employment and payroll than the rest of the state, about as twice as important as for Tennessee

employment



Industrial Analysis

There were 78,342 jobs by occupation in northwest Tennessee for 2015; the largest occupational groups were production occupations (23,910), office and administrative support occupations (11,380), and transportation and material moving occupations (10,040). These three occupational groups accounted for 53 percent of all employment in the study area. The three smallest occupational groups were farming, fishing, and forestry occupations (1,250), construction and extraction occupations (2,760), and installation, maintenance, and repair occupations (3,650). Three of these occupations accounted for an additional 9 percent of total employment. The remaining 38 percent of employment was distributed across four occupations: management, business, and financial occupations (9.5 percent), professional and related occupations (10.8 percent), service occupations (10.8 percent), and sales and related occupations (6.9 percent). The share of managerial, business, and financial occupations in northwest Tennessee was 9.6 percent less than the share of the same occupations in LWIA 7. The share of the northwest Tennessee professional and related occupations was almost 39 percent less than the share of the same occupations in region LWIA 7. The share of these two occupational categories in the selected regions was larger than their share in the study area.

Based on these data, we can draw three general conclusions for the

study area. The first observation has to do with occupations that are under-represented in the study area; we have mentioned two of these above. The third is service occupations. The share of service occupations in the state, the United States, and the metro LWIAs was more than 30 percent higher than the share of this occupation in northwest Tennessee. The second observation is that production occupations and transportation and material moving occupations are over-represented in the study area occupational mix. The share of production occupations in the study area, for example, was 382 percent higher than the share of the same occupations in the Memphis area occupational mix.

Industries sought in the past were comprised almost wholly of general manufacturing and low-skill type employment that subsequently provided relative low pay. Textiles, metal fabrication, and production provided employment, but did nothing to increase northwest Tennessee's standard of living. Low pay combined with sought-after low skill levels contributed heavily to the out-migration of the 18-65 yr. old demographic necessary for increased industrial relocation. This trend continues to this day although steps are being taken to attract and retain the college-educated graduates provided by Dyersburg State, Bethel, University of Tennessee at Martin, and Jackson State.

New work being conducted by the West Tennessee Industrial Board, Workforce Development, Southern Growth Policies Board, and the Northwest Tennessee Development District is providing much needed data and funding avenues to support necessary paradigm shifts to attract new

types of employment opportunities. As the federal government continues to explore alternative sources, it has found ethanol-petrol combinations to be very promising. Northwest Tennessee, comprised of 61% farm land, is attractive to Ethanol Production Facilities that promise higher-than-average wages and a need for college-educated employees. Ethanol Grain Processors LLC (EGP LLC) has completed work on the largest Ethanol Production facility ever to be built in the continental United States. With ample rail access (CSX rail), an abundance of corn for production, and large numbers of college graduates seeking employment; EGP promises to fulfill a large void. In the future, cellulosic ethanol production brings even more promise to northwest Tennessee. Studies continue on this new form of cellulose production in Oak Ridge Tennessee. Cellulosic ethanol production promises to make even more use of northwest Tennessee's natural crop (soybean, switchgrass).

“Employment for employment's sake” could have been a northwest Tennessee mantra years ago; which resulted in low-skill and equally low pay scales. The dramatic employment and labor force loss seen in northwest Tennessee between 1987 and 1990 can be attributed to overseas outsourcing and NAFTA agreements that supported such. Northwest Tennessee saw much of its contracted general manufacturing for automotive production, agricultural machine parts, metal fabrication, and the textile industry move to overseas contractors who could do it cheaper even with the added transportation costs. In an effort to fill the vacuum, the region looked to other general manufacturing plants that could provide employment regardless of future repercussions. Fortunately, with the help of

organizations such as the Southern Growth Policy Board, Workforce Development, West Tennessee Industrial Association, USDA Rural Development, ECD, and various other organizations the northwest Tennessee region saw fit to reform its educational system, provide training opportunities to unskilled workers, increase awareness of technological benefits, and look to more innovative solutions for its employment and economic problems.

Educational Analysis

A region's educational attainment level is closely associated with occupational mix, quality of life, industrial composition, and wage rates. Census 2000 data indicate that educational attainment in the study area is low compared to that of the United States and Tennessee. The percent of population over 25 with less than a high school education is highest in Lauderdale (36 percent), Crockett (35 percent), Lake (34 percent), and Dyer (34 percent) counties. "No skill" refers to the level of educational attainment with less than high school. Only Tipton County had a semi-skilled population percentage that was higher than the state average and closer to the U.S. average.

Industries supplying low-skill jobs bring commensurate relative low pay resulting in northwest Tennessee's continued lower median wage numbers. According to WTIA's workforce development surveys approximately 70% of those working desired increased job skills training. Of those, fully 1/3 desired basic computer skills training which could

certainly lead to less general manufacturing with better pay levels and working environment.

Unfortunately yet another boundary northwest Tennessee must remove are its citizens' stark lack of both "hard" and "soft" skills. According to a recent "Northwest Tennessee Workforce Study" 26.79% of large employers found reading skills for applicants to be a moderate problem. Large employers also found northwest Tennessee applicants lacking in math skills with 32.73% finding it a moderate problem; over 37% responded that basic writing skills posed a moderate problem for employment in the area.

Most alarmingly though were the results found in areas considered soft skills such as showing up for work on time, dressing appropriately, and effective communication. 30.48% of small employers considered soft skills to be a moderate problem, 14.29% found it to be of high severity, and nearly 6% (5.71%) found it to be a critical problem. A majority of large northwest Tennessee employers reported soft skills needed improvement with 32.15% reporting a low problem, 32.14% reporting a moderate problem, and 30.36% reported a high problem, while 1.79% found it to be a critical problem.

Vocational schools in northwest Tennessee have traditionally focused on trades such as welding, metal fabrication, and agriculture. In the past, these trades represented all, if not most, of what was available to students desiring not to attend college in northwest Tennessee. Fortunately school systems such as Weakley County's have made the necessary changes to provide the students with a viable and lucrative employment future. Classes

such as web design, integrated systems technology (CAD et al), interactive multimedia design, and A+ certification computer repair provide students with technical skills necessary in today's workplace. Virtual Enterprises is a new venture in business education undertaken by Weakley County schools. The class includes business, marketing, and economics material geared toward "real world" applications that include the class running its own "Business". Interview techniques, the importance of appearance, and customer service necessities are covered as well as other requirements to succeed in the business world. This particular program was the second such program implemented in the state. Weakley County Vo-Tech schools now also offer dual path classes in which students receive college credit for classes taken in high school. These particular changes are occurring in other counties such as Henry and Dyer as the need for soft and hard skills improvements become apparent.

Post-secondary education is being made more accessible to northwest Tennessee's population through satellite school programs in McKenzie where the only requirements are a valid driver's license and proof of Tennessee residence. The courses offered are taught by accredited professors from the University of Tennessee at Martin. These programs are essentially paid for through grants and students rarely if ever are required to pay out of pocket. Recent Tennessee lottery scholarships insure that a 4 year Bachelor's and beyond are obtainable even by those from low to moderate income families.

Transportation Analysis

Within northwest Tennessee most transportation projects were developed with a 3-5 year planning horizon. These projects were often developed and implemented without regional consensus and were of primary benefit of the host county. Most of these projects consisted of road widening, the development of 4lane rural routes, and basic repair and repaving. Industrial Access Roads were of primary concern as northwest Tennessee became highly dependent on the manufacturing sector for employment. The northwest Tennessee Rural Planning Organization is currently meeting once a quarter to develop regional rapport and consensus regarding future roads projects in order to make commercial and citizen travel more efficient and safe across the region. The Tennessee Department of Transportation is working with local officials to better develop future roads projects on a “needs based” approach. The future Interstate 69, which will transverse the entire state and the proposed route will include direct access in Obion, Dyer, and Crockett counties with indirect access available to the entire region. The Rural Planning Organization is currently considering future roads projects within the region to handle increased traffic flow from the interstate.

There are seven general aviation airports within the region, but no commercially served examples. Runways within northwest Tennessee are unable to serve freight aircraft or commercial jets due to their short length. A 7,000’ runway is required for heavy aircraft (freight craft) to land and can accommodate approximately 90% of all aircraft flying today. Unfortunately, the longest runway in the region (Everett-Stewart Airport/Union City)

available to such aircraft is 6,500' and Dyersburg Dyer County Airport is 5,698'.

Current use, as determined by the FAA, is not at capacity and therefore not suitable for funding through FHWA. Northwest Tennessee Rural Planning Organization (NWTNRPO) members are currently working with TDOT and FAA officials to secure funding for a runway expansion based on projected use as determined through private sector surveys.

Northwest Tennessee is currently well-served by rail transportation and freight. Very much an essential part of trade and commerce in the region, it is expected to grow in order to better serve to large projects within northwest Tennessee. The Ethanol Plant was located in Obion County will require approximately 1.5 miles of new track to accommodate the 100 car train necessary for grain and ethanol export. CSX-Memphis will provide main-line access, but will require new track in order for loading and unloading. In Lake County, the 3,500acre Cates Landing Port Project currently has access to Tenn-Kenn rail, a substantial short line railroad that terminates in Kentucky. In order to sustain the large amount of raw and finished products being unloaded off of commercial barges, approximately 1.2 to 2 miles of "side line" rail will need to be constructed. Cates Landing engineers are currently designing the necessary rail line to better serve all industry located within the park.

Conclusions

From analysis gathered of northwest Tennessee's socioeconomic structure, several necessary changes for the area can be deducted. First, population growth is to some extent stagnant compared to adjoining areas. This stagnation is due in large part to the lack of employment opportunities in the region. Increased economic opportunities and relatively high wage rates attract economic migrants to a region from other counties and states. Unfortunately, northwest Tennessee may lack certain dynamics to grow at the same rate as metropolitan areas or other rural regions. The percentage ratio of dependent-age population (0-17 and 65+) is higher in the study area than in the Memphis area, the Nashville area, and Tennessee.

Disproportional population growth within the area is a large concern. Although some of this may be attributed to an increase in retiree migration, there is much to do in order to attract a working age demographic. Increases in standard wage rates, employment opportunities, and a focus on new innovative industries will help retain and curb the out migration of 18-25 labor force demographic. The increase in retirees and the elderly within northwest Tennessee will result in a direct need for more service industry jobs and nursing staff. According to a Northwest Tennessee Workforce study, nurses will comprise the top three occupations in shortest supply in the next 10 years; Workforce Development intends to implement a nursing "step" program designed to provide increasing levels of training for those wishing to gain employment in the field.

Northwest Tennessee's racial make-up is close to the racial make-up of Tennessee's population as well as the Nashville area population. The

region is lacking certain racial demographics including Asian and Hispanic which may point to lack of economic opportunity in the region.

Traditionally Hispanic migrants have sought out low-skill/un-skilled labor for employment, whereas in northwest Tennessee, those positions are filled by rural citizens. Second, labor force quality is ultimately driven by the population aged 25 and over with at least a high school education. Study area counties are lagging behind Tennessee and the United States in this area. On average, at least one in every three persons in the study area is without a high school diploma.

Of further concern is the level of adult literacy in the northwest Tennessee. According to BLS estimates, Level 1 or 2 adult literacy is very high in the study area relative to Tennessee. Workforce Development has recently undertaken a program to bring together stake holders in northwest Tennessee to better understand the needs and requirements of employers. As a result of this program public schools are shaping their curriculum accordingly. Proactive policies are being incorporated to break the vicious cycle northwest Tennessee was hampered with.

The study area skill supply as measured by educational attainment may create serious impediments for companies considering expanding in or relocating to northwest Tennessee. Workforce Development analysis indicates that the supply of skills in the study region matches only a few sectors closely. Future job trends in the United States are moving toward more professional and related services. The local skill level does not match the skill demand of the study area's highly concentrated manufacturing

sector. A regional emphasis on skill supply and demand issues is necessary in order for the study area to prepare skilled labor across the sectors.

Third, northwest Tennessee per capita income is well below the state and national averages. Over the years, the gap between per capita income for northwest Tennessee and that of the state and the United States is growing rather than converging. This widening gap has a lot to do with the structure and level of economic activity in the study area. The unemployment rate is high, the civilian labor force is not growing at a level comparable to other parts of Tennessee, and the occupational mix is tilted toward low-skilled and low-paying jobs.

Fourth, it is projected that one in every three new occupations in the United States will be in the professional and related services occupations. These occupations require a high skill level and pay relatively high wages. In the study area, one in 10 new jobs is expected to be in this category. Currently northwest Tennessee is not equipped to handle the national trend, but has the necessary educational paradigm shifts in place to ensure that future employees will graduate with the required skill-set to perform in professional and technical employment positions.

Fifth, total wages in the study area are highly concentrated in the manufacturing sector. Almost 60% of every dollar in northwest Tennessee wages is generated in manufacturing. This wage concentration in the manufacturing sector creates potential instability. In the Memphis area for example, the manufacturing share in total wages is only about 15 percent. A

need for skills training is being addressed within the region, although it is slow to be adopted by more rural counties due to costs associated with startup and operation. Lack of tax base may figure heavily in the inability of more rural counties to adopt such programs.

Finally, study area payroll employment growth is stagnant compared to Tennessee regions. Payroll employment is highly concentrated in the manufacturing sector, unlike the Memphis area, Nashville area, and Tennessee economies, where payroll employment is more concentrated in the services sector. The region should look to become more dynamic and versatile in an effort to attract innovative industry and professional level employment. Satellite training centers, revamping of public school curriculum to meet today's employer needs, and funding sources for post-secondary education are currently being implemented.

Fortunately, many counties are looking toward the future for significant economic gain. Henry County, once a haven for production and general manufacturing has since began focusing on its retiree and tourist industry and has plans to build significant numbers of condominiums along the Kentucky Lake. Dyer County continues to diversify and expand its service and retail sector and while continuing to expand upon its already significant manufacturing sector. Obion County will welcome the largest Ethanol Production facility in the United States and has recently completed a new industrial park along the I69 proposed route. Lake County is in the process of building a slack water port facility to make use of more efficient transportation methods such as barge traffic along the Mississippi. Lake

County's proximity to Tenn-Kenn railroad, the Mississippi River, affordable land for industrial park use, and the future construction of I69 make the construction of a river port a natural choice. Benton County continues infrastructure buildup and expansion along interstate 40 in order to increase travel and tourism and sales tax dollars along the Tennessee River. Parts of Gibson County continue to grow at an exponential rate. Jackson, Tennessee professionals continue to move into neighboring areas such as Milan and Medina to escape the urban sprawl. This influx of middle to high income families have resulted in a ~200% population growth in Medina within the last 6 years.

Advanced manufacturing is the new growth area for Tennessee as a whole. Several firms have located in other parts of the state. Our team will be actively pursuing manufacturing in this area.

Industrial diversification, increased employment opportunities, improved school curriculum, and the utilization of geographic benefits will converge to better prepare northwest Tennessee for potential nation-wide economic downturn. Communication and planning between counties continues to improve in all aspects of economic development. Inter-county financial and planning cooperation on regional projects continues to improve as leaders recognize the need for regional economic stability as a key component of county development. Various Delta region economic development entities are being utilized to help restructure, improve, and plan in stagnant counties as well as to secure funding for future projects.

Evaluation Framework

- Foster cross-county consensus on regional transportation projects leading to more efficient, cost effective, and safer tourism and trade.

Objectives:

- Continue to support the Rural Transportation Planning Organization as effective means of reaching region-wide consensus on all transportation projects.
- Continue to prioritize all projects within the region utilizing traffic accident data, geometric issues, capacity requirements, and potential economic development

Performance Measures: Obtain discretionary funds from state and federal government, through which the Rural Planning Organization may use for transportation projects within the nine county region.

Work to extend county planning horizon to a 7 to 10 year time frame.

Build region-wide consensus regarding all transportation projects.

- Increase viability of air and water freight within the region

Objectives:

- Provide necessary runway lengths to accommodate commercial and freight aircraft
- Market air and water accessibility to interested industries as a viable means of freight import/export
- Build the necessary infrastructure to accommodate new industry, including increased runway lengths and river ports
Performance Measures: Extend at least one runway in Northwest Tennessee to 7,000' in order to support commercial aircraft.

Build a water port with access to the Mississippi River able to sustain river, rail, and truck containerized freight.

Construct necessary rail infrastructure to support ethanol production facility and Mississippi river port at Cates Landing. Identify and attract major freight industry that desire air and water freight accessibility.

- Increase retail and accommodations along major interstates

Objectives:

- Utilize proximity to interstate as means to increase sales tax and generate revenue for the county
- Fund and build necessary infrastructure to accommodate new business
- Attract increased tourism through available lodging, restaurants, and retail

Performance Measures: Fund signage and infrastructure builds along I40 in bordering counties to better support tourism and increased retail trade.

Fund signage and infrastructure builds along the proposed I69 corridor in bordering counties to support increased commercial and tourism traffic.

- Increase variety of employment sector opportunities

Objectives:

- Reduce dependence on Manufacturing sector for employment
- Support and fund service sector employment opportunities within the region
- Utilize effective land use management
- Research and plan for future technological improvements and work to bring them to the area
- Increase regional tourism by supporting accommodation sector construction
- Develop and implement skills training centers and post-secondary education opportunities for region-wide use. Encourage and promote secondary education and funding avenues.
- Continue to improve the image of the area for more effective recruitment of business and industry
- Form a synergy with local industry, economic and workforce development agencies, and the public school system to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of local workforce.
- Promote and support a nursing “Step” program that will provide

while-you-work training for nurses

- Attract younger labor force to area with more park and recreational facilities for young families.
- Promote PILOT programs, federal/state funding avenues to decrease startup costs associated with relocating industry.

Performance Measures: Encourage each county to utilize the Parks and Recreation grant program. The Northwest Tennessee Development District will begin holding region-wide meetings with elected officials to make to outline the capabilities of such a funding avenue.

The Northwest Tennessee Development District will hold region-wide meetings to educate elected officials on the use and guidelines concerning the Community Development Block Grant.

Promote technology-based curriculum at local vocational centers and at local high schools.

Foster professional-level jobs by attracting types of industry such as Ethanol Production plants or industrial technology centers with high median salaries and Bachelor's level education requirements.

- Utilize long-term planning to improve conditions, strategies and problem solving capabilities in our region to stay economically competitive with other regions.

Objectives:

- The Northwest Tennessee Development District will assist communities with preparation of community plans.
 - Encourage each county chamber to develop a strategic plan for its yearly activities.
 - Maintain regular contact with those communities that have started the planning process.
 - Encourage the sharing of successful planning of communities in our region to serve as examples for other communities.
- Continue to provide a Regional CEDS Update to illustrate the economic progress of Northwest Tennessee.

Performance Measures: Each annual report should stress economic development.

A list of Community Plans will be published annually.

- Assist in the improvement of community infrastructure to provide for new economic growth, as well as to support existing businesses.

Objectives:

- The CEDS steering committee will be informed of all TACIR requests as compiled by county and local governments.
- The Northwest Tennessee Development District will assist communities and employers with utilization of existing federal, state, and local technical/financial assistance.
- The Northwest Tennessee Development District will assemble and maintain specific data pertaining to funding and assistance

options from local, state, and federal levels.

Performance Measures: Grant and loan information should be obtained and updated from state and federal programs such as CDBG, FEMA, Tennessee Arts Commission, USDA Rural Development, TDEC, EDA, and other appropriate programs on an annual basis. This information will be maintained and available to all communities within the district on an as-needed basis.

The Northwest Tennessee Development District and staff will serve on various committees throughout the region as requested by the primary parties involved. These committees should be in step with the CEDS and the mission of the Northwest Tennessee Development District.

- Encourage the importance of land use planning in stimulating and directing economic development.

Objectives:

- Identify a list of existing land use planning and zoning resources and have that list available for decision makers.
- Promote instructional and informational events, materials, and resources on land use planning.

Performance Measures: Overall reduction in environmental and historical issues when planning future industrial, recreational, or transportation development.

Maintain contacts and memberships with professional associations and agencies that can provide technical assistance to clients on an annual basis.

- Work with and assist economic development professionals in our region.

Objectives:

- Host annual meetings with professional economic developers in the region to form a closer partnership.
 - Establish and strengthen the regional network of professional economic developers.
 - Encourage communities to recognize and utilize private sector professional developers as a tool to improve development in the public sector.
- Encourage local economic and community development initiatives by providing technical support, offering facilitative services, and coordinating resources for individual communities, groups, and projects.

Objectives:

- Promote the services the Development District offers through various media, as well as through outreach efforts and personal invitations.
- Maintain a list of private sector, state, regional, and national program resources

Performance Measures: A 5% increase in the number of grant applicants throughout the region and a subsequent percentage increase in number of approved applicants.

*Identification of new measures passed by the Northwest Tennessee Development District Council on an annual basis.
Completion of active projects related specifically to economic development.*

- Facilitate and participate in regional networking activities in an effort to foster public/private relations.

Objectives:

- Partner with communities and organizations outside our district, when appropriate, to help promote regional economic development efforts.
- Provide technical assistance to “high priority” regional economic development projects that might cross jurisdictional boundaries.
- Increase interactions with the private sector, manufacturers, small businesses, farmers, service sector, and accommodations sector to encourage those participants to become involved in local economic development policy-making.
- The Northwest Tennessee Development District will act as the primary interface between state and federal economic development agencies and the local level.

Performance Measures: Work with County Mayors and City Mayors to facilitate projects that are determined to have a regional impact.

Participate in and maintain contact with the organizations of private sector businesses in order to promote the services offered by the Economic Development District.

Consistent, continued contact with agencies including EDA, USDA, EPA, TDOT, USCEE, and other agencies, as deemed appropriate by the Northwest Tennessee Development District.

- Maintain the most current and relevant demographic and economic data available, and inform communities that this information is available.

Objectives:

- Maintain contact with academic and professional institutions and agencies that collect and process pertinent information.
- Continue to obtain references, such as the Tennessee Statistical Abstract, on a regular basis.
- Promote and increase the use of information via the internet.
- Continue to provide the most recent information about our area including available grants, where to locate the most recent area statistics, and contact information at the various agencies that provide such information.

Performance Measures: Unemployment levels within the District will be tracked, using monthly TDES reports. The

information will be available to communities and economic development professionals as needed.

Workforce Development and Labor related internet websites will be kept on file and promoted throughout the district.

A community survey will be conducted on an “as necessary” basis.

Community and Private Sector Participation

Northwest Tennessee’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy was compiled with both public and private sector input. The CEDS steering committee, comprised of both public and private representation, helped to determine through discussion and research what direction the northwest Tennessee region should take in order to improve economic conditions in the area. The committee ensured that the citizens and elected officials best interests were observed and guaranteed.

The Tennessee Advisory Council on Intergovernmental Relations (TACIR) survey results was utilized for compiling the “all projects” list as were individual meetings with government officials. These particular surveys are returned each year after being completed by chamber officials, city elected officials, school officials, and county elected officials and provide a complete and thorough composite of all infrastructure and technological project requests throughout that specific county. These surveys are conducted annually and represent the most up to date requests for funding in the region.

Transportation requests and information were obtained through the Northwest Tennessee Rural Planning Organization technical and executive

committee meetings. This organization is comprised of private sector and public officials who meet quarterly to discuss transportation and economic development related issues. Through much discussion and with the help of TDOT reports, these committee members determine and prioritize county and region-wide transportation projects.

The northwest Tennessee CEDS is also available for public comment at each of the nine county's Mayor's offices. All comments made by the public regarding the CEDS will be taken under consideration and if feasible, the CEDS will be amended with new information. Sign-in sheets and note taking paper will be provided at these locations in an effort to ease the process. The report and all pertinent information are available for public viewing and comment for 30 days, after which the report is submitted to EDA for further evaluation.

The Northwest Tennessee Development District has included three vital projects to the region that will address the economic development barriers within the region. Northwest Tennessee's lack of interstate access will be remedied with the completion of I69 through Crockett, Dyer, and Obion counties. The ethanol production facility located in Obion County will bring high-skill level and relatively high wage jobs to an area desperately in need of such as well as provide increased demand for locally produced corn. The Cates Landing River Port located in Lake County will provide the region with a slack water port facility and a scheduled industrial park build-out of approximately 3,500 acres. A variety of industries have expressed great interest in the area for location, as PILOT programs, tax incentives, low cost of living, and impressive access to rail, water, and other modes of transportation become apparent.

Interstate access will be greatly improved with the construction of I69. This particular project will promote more efficient freight export and import throughout Tennessee and Eastern United States. With strong support at both the state and federal levels, the completion of I69 is assured and will provide northwest Tennessee with much-needed visibility and viability. The project will begin in Obion County at the Kentucky state line, will generally follow a route parallel to the western state boundary, and eventually terminate in southwestern Shelby County. Funding for the project will come directly from legislation contained within federal SAFETEA-LU bill and supported by a state match. In Obion County, the project has been broken into 5 separate segments, each with separate funding. Currently the project is in Right-of-Way phase where title searches and land acquisition occur. This particular phase of development has received approximately \$16,700,000 of funding through federal and state agencies. The total project cost in Obion County is \$127,900,000. Preliminary engineering is occurring in Dyer and Crockett Counties with right-of-way phase scheduled to begin within the next 5-7 years.

All manner of funding sources will be utilized post I-69 construction as increased retail and industry relocations are expected. Community Development Block Grants, USDA Rural Development, EDA, ECD, and various other sources will be necessary to ensure that the proper infrastructure is in place to support these additions. The Northwest Tennessee Development District will aid the region in seeking out and preparing loan and grant applications for communities seeking economic

development along I-69.

The Cates Landing Port Project located in Lake County (Tiptonville) offers reserve freight capacity and increased employment opportunities for residents across the region. Funding for engineering and design, materials, legal fees, and consulting work has been sought through various agencies including ECD (FastTrack), USDA Rural Development, Economic Development Agency, Delta Regional Authority, Tennessee Department of Transportation, and the Tennessee Valley Authority. Bonds issued by the Northwest Tennessee Port Authority have also been purchased by citizens.

The port promises a slack water port facility that will include substantial docking facilities, rail access, industrial access roads, all appropriate infrastructures, and a 3,500 acre industrial park. The port is an excellent example of proper land-use management as geographical and infrastructure assets (Mississippi River, flat land, rail access, future interstate access) in Lake County are being utilized to their greatest potential. Lake County's proximity to the state line ensures that the necessary labor force is available to migrating industries. The location of training centers in Dyer and Henry County in addition to the University of Tennessee at Martin, Dyersburg State Community College, and Bethel College guarantees a skill match for new industry. Various industries have expressed interest in the port including grain and raw materials shipping, ethanol production, distribution centers, and a range of manufacturing facilities. Approximately 1.5 miles of rail will be needed in the near future to serve the industrial park, as well as the necessary water/sewage and electrical relocations. The

Northwest Tennessee Development anticipates fund requests for dredge work, engineering, legal fees, and some small construction within the next 5 years.

The Northwest Tennessee Development District will work closely with the Northwest Tennessee Port Authority and all other state agencies to provide the funding avenues necessary for continued development and guarantee future sustainability. The NWTDD will actively seek out all modes of funding for this project until the projects' completion.

Ethanol Grain Processors LLC. ethanol plant constructed in Obion, Tennessee is the first of its kind in the region. Furthermore the plant will be one of the largest of its kind in the United States. The new ethanol production facility represents a \$170 million private investment in the region. EGP LLC has provided more than 50 new jobs with 40 of those jobs paying a median wage of \$45,000. These professional-level jobs are attractive to a highly skilled and post-secondary educated labor force much needed and under-represented in the region. Northwest Tennessee's abundant crop land, stable climate, and multi-modal transportation access make it a natural candidate for ethanol and bio-fuels production now and in the future.

The Northwest Tennessee Development District has assisted Ethanol Grain Producers LLC with State Industrial Access Road grants through TDOT, a FIDP loan for the town of Obion through ECD, and a DRA grant for Obion County. Anticipated needs include some infrastructure relocation and the construction of a 1.5 mile rail line for the loading and unloading of

raw and finished materials.

The education needs in northwest Tennessee are great as indicated by WTIA surveys, Workforce Development studies, and school needs submissions presented in the CEDS. All counties requested basic structural needs such as new HVAC equipment, new roofing, new flooring, new wiring, and new classroom construction. These needs were surpassed only by the requests for technology updates such as new computers, expanded computer labs, networking devices, projection devices, wireless service, laptops for student instruction, and computers for teachers.

This CEDS document underscores the necessity of an education founded in current and future technological industrial needs. Industrial site locators continue to pass over the northwest Tennessee region citing post-secondary, soft skills, and other educational deficiencies. The “No Child Left behind Act” implemented mandates without providing adequate funding to meet those milestones. Fortunately, northwest Tennessee Schools are doing everything possible under their significant budget constraints.

The Tennessee Department of Education received \$17,371,541 in 2001 for school renovation, IDEA, and technology grants. TSLA grants are made available to qualifying public libraries who desire technology improvements. Technology grants made available to public schools through Tech Prep have been and are being utilized in northwest Tennessee. Vocational schools throughout the region continue to improve and modify their curriculum to better prepare students for current technology in industry.

Dual-path curriculum provides students with an opportunity to gain college –level class credit while attending high school.

Adult education and job training centers continue to operate in 8 of the 9 counties in the region. GED and technology training programs continue to be offered at these sites. Higher-level training needs will be provided at “satellite centers” where accredited professors offer college classes to participants wishing to get their bachelor’s level degree. The cost to students is minimal and oftentimes tuition is paid for by the Tennessee Lottery for Education grant money or through the use of Pell Grants. These services continue to be advertised throughout the region. Northwest Tennessee has recognized a need for education quality improvements and will continue to make the necessary adjustments to remain contemporary.

Northwest Tennessee’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy was compiled with the state’s economic development priorities in mind. All vital projects discussed herein have received federal and state funding and meet the requisite goals set forth. Higher skilled jobs with commensurately higher pay will be provided by the location of an Ethanol Plant within the region. Employment opportunities such as these are necessary to attract and retain a younger, technology savvy and higher educated labor force. The ethanol plant will make use of our naturally abundant crop, ensuring a competitive market for corn within the region. The construction of I-69 was funded through the federal SAFETEA-LU legislation and is recognized by TDOT in their Long Range Plan. The Cates Landing Port Project currently under development has received funding from state and federal sources and will constitute the only slack water port

facility in the state. Barge transportation represents the most cost-effective means of large freight transport currently available. The construction of the port and subsequent industrial location will provide much-needed economic development to Lake County.

Our goals for the C.E.D.S. must be measurable and results oriented within a specific timeline. The goals should be laser focused that improves the regions wealth and quality of life. It should not be just getting more funding from federal and state projects.

Vital Projects

1.) Cates Landing Water Port

Brief description: A 150 acre slack water port facility that will include a 3,500 acre industrial park as part of the master build-out. The harbor will be 8,850 lineal feet in length. The topography of the site varies from around elevation 305 to 315 placing it not only above the 100-year flood plain, but above the 500-year level. The port will contain infrastructure for direct rail to water transfer of commodities. All essential utilities will be available on site.

Funding: Funding has been acquired through Tennessee Valley Authority, Economic Community Development, Delta Regional Authority, High Priority Project earmarks, Economic Development Agency, and the Tennessee Department of Transportation with the assistance of the Northwest Tennessee Development District.

Project Elements

Roads: Improvements to the existing highway, state route 22 and an existing county road would be required. The route begins approximately one mile north of Tiptonville on existing highway, state route 78. From there, the route to the industrial park will be west approximately ½ mile of an existing county road requiring weight carrying capacity improvements. This will then intersect existing highway, state route 22, and will continue north requiring

approximately 3 miles of minor improvements to the existing highway, state route 22. Two new transitional radii will be constructed. In addition, there will be a new road constructed approximately one mile in length which will connect the port site to the industrial park road. This road will be constructed over the existing levee and will require both widening and paving necessary for a two lane road.

Railroad: A rail spur is proposed beginning with two turnouts (delta intersection) at the main line located just north of the planned access road. The rail will run perpendicular from the main line intersection approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ mile in a northwest direction then curve north and continue north to the industrial park and port site. The route proposed to the industrial site is approximately $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles in length from the Tenn.-Ken short line to the port site.

Utilities: Initially the only need for water and wastewater will be the port office. There is presently a 4" water line which serves the port area. The waste water will be treated with a septic system. Any additional water or wastewater treatment required for the industrial park prospects will be for "bird in hand" users. There is a 10" water line within $1\frac{3}{4}$ miles of the industrial site. There is presently a sewer connection approximately 2.5 miles from the site. Power will be supplied by a TVA furnished electric substation. Three phase power will be required for the facility operation.

Berthing Area/Port Facility: The public port will have loading and unloading capabilities for various raw and finished products onto and off barges with direct access to the barge berthing area. A 300' turn-a-round for the tugboats will be provided at the end of the harbor. The 44 acres adjacent to the General Purpose Terminal will be constructed to an average elevation of around 312, which is 4' above the 100 year flood elevation. The port bulkhead will be constructed of interlocking steel pilings. The backfill behind the pilings will be select fill open grade stone and sand to allow for proper drainage. The select compacted fill will be capped off with both 15" and 9" thick reinforced concrete slab. Rail will be embedded into the concrete for rail access while also allowing for truck access.

Loading and Offloading Equipment: The public port will have loading and unloading capabilities for various raw and finished products onto and off barges utilizing the features of the slack water port with direct access to the barge berthing area. Ample truck and equipment maneuvering space will allow for circulation around the general purpose port and trucks can be directly loaded from the barge. The proposed rail spur will also allow direct rail-car loading and unloading at the port. A 100 ton mobile crane would be utilized to load and unload trucks and rail cars at this general purpose barge terminal.

Administrative Building: There will be a need for an Administrative/Office building with two offices equipped with

telephone, fax, and computer hook-up. A modular building will be used until expansion and growth drive the need for a more permanent office facility.

Parking Areas: An asphalt paved parking area for ten cars would be placed adjacent to the Port Office. In addition, there will be a gravel road for trailer truck circulation, staging and parking located near the general purpose terminal.

Warehouse, Storage Tanks, Storage areas: The warehouse and storage tanks will not be required in the initial port construction. There will be a 100,000 square foot laydown gravel storage yard. This year will be used to temporarily stage and store unloaded products.

2.) Construction of Interstate 69

Brief Description: I-69 is an integral part of High Priority Corridor 18 across mid-America. Corridor 18 originated with the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) where the U.S. Congress designated certain highway corridors of national significance to be included in the National Highway System. The corridor now has been defined by Congress to extend from Port Huron, Michigan at the Canadian border.

Corridor 18 incorporates the following elements:

- Existing I-69 from Port Huron, Michigan/Sarnia, Ontario, Canada to Indianapolis.
- Existing I-94 from Port Huron through Detroit (including the Ambassador Bridge interchange) to Chicago, Illinois.
- A new Interstate route (I-69) from Indianapolis to the Lower Rio Grande Valley (LRGV) serving the following:
 - Evansville, Indiana
 - Memphis, Tennessee
 - Shreveport/Bossier City, Louisiana
 - Houston, Texas
- The Southeast Arkansas I-69 Connector from Pine Bluff, Arkansas to the I-69 Corridor identified in the vicinity of Monticello, Arkansas.
- In the Lower Rio Grande Valley:
 - US 77 from the Mexican border at Brownsville to US 59 in Victoria, Texas.
 - US 281 from the Mexican border at McAllen to I-37, then following US 59 to Victoria, Texas.
 - The Corpus Christi Northside Highway and Rail Corridor from the intersection of US 77 and I-37 to US 181.
- FM 511 from US 77 to the Port of Brownsville

SIU7, which comprises the segment which passes through the northwest Tennessee region is approximately 46 miles in length and has an estimated construction cost of \$167 million. The I69 project is comprised of the 3 segments in the state of Tennessee. The total construction costs vary and exclude the third segment due to the possibility of alternate routes, but preliminary estimates of \$750 million to \$1billion have been made.

Funding: All funding for this project has come from NCPD funding and federal legislation.

3) Ethanol Grain Processors LLC *Completed*

Brief Description: Ethanol Grain Processors LLC is located on a 230 acre green field plant site that is adjacent to Canadian National Railroad's main line in Obion, Tennessee. The plant is also being constructed less than 5 miles from the proposed I69 project, providing multi-modal transportation access. The construction of this plant represents a \$170 million private investment in a county declared as distressed by the Delta Regional Authority. The plant will produce ethanol primarily with CO2 produced as a byproduct of the process. Direct employment estimates for the plant are 43- 50 jobs with a relatively high median wage. From this plant alone, some 25 new jobs are expected to be created in the shipping, driving, and loading industry. Indirect employment is projected to provide 1,600 new jobs to the local economy.

Project Elements

Roads: Existing roads around the site location are sufficient for the plant's freight needs. A State Industrial Access Road grant from TDOT was applied for through the Northwest Tennessee Development District. A railroad crossing, utility relocation, engineering, and construction were approved by TDOT at a cost of \$481,310.

Rail: A new rail switch was recently funded by a DRA grant at the facility that will allow Canadian National cars access to the Ethanol Plant rail yard. There is currently a need for a 1.5 mile rail loop that would allow access to the 100 rail cars necessary for daily operations at the plant. This new loop would put the ethanol plant in compliance with Canadian National's user policy.

Production Facility: The ethanol production facility will span approximately 100 acres and will house all manufacturing necessities as well as 50+ employees. The facility is being constructed entirely from private investment.

Funding: Funding, with assistance from the Northwest Tennessee Development District, was provided by the Delta Regional Authority, Economic and Community Development (FastTrack program), Tennessee Department of Transportation (SIAR grant program). Funding for future related projects will be sought from the Economic Development Agency.

Concept of Economic Resilience

Economic resilience is the ability of a community to bounce back from a disaster with little or no negative economic impact. In all situations fast emergency response and communication are imperative to lessen the economic impact. Disaster preparedness measures support the economic development organization's ability to effectively support economic recovery for the community following a disaster. Following a disaster, the economic development organization will have the dual challenge of recovering its own business and that of assisting the business community as a whole. In recovery efforts, the economic development organization

will need to be able to reach out to its members, communicate their needs and inform them as the status of emergence responses and programs. It may have to do this work from temporary quarters while it too is prevented from reaching its primary offices and support systems. The economic development organization, often the chamber of commerce, is the trusted representative of the business community and holds the local knowledge of business operation and will quickly understand what those businesses need to recover. An economic development organization that takes steps to prepare for a disaster, and that educates and trains local business in disaster preparedness will have the capacity to provide effective support at a very critical time for the community.

The local government will put emergency management plans into action after a crisis that are likely to have a direct impact on business recovery, such as community reentry, access to property, cleanup activity and rebuilding of infrastructure. The economic development organization is the business community's link to the emergency management response plans in advance of a major incident, and should prepare the information necessary to include business needs such as reentry and damage assessment into emergency management plans.

Small businesses are unlikely to have considered the effect of a disaster. The economic development organization can provide trainings on business continuity planning and disaster preparedness. Economic development organizations have a key role in connecting small businesses with these resources. The economic development organization can host speaking events to have local businesses hear from small business owners that have experienced a disaster. By sponsoring the conversations about disaster recovery, the economic development organization will promote valuable discussions within the community about particular risks and

mitigation strategies for their community as well as the preparedness measures that should be taken through the business community.

A business continuity program is essential for a medium to small business. The program should be designed to be simple to use, administer and implement. With this plan you can follow the same disaster planning and recovery processes used by larger companies – but without a large company budget. A Business continuity plan should be user-friendly and does not require any previous experience with or knowledge of business continuity planning.

Knowing your risks will help you evaluate the extent of your business' vulnerability to disruptions. How potential threats impact each business varies considerably because no two businesses are exactly alike. Differences in location, industry, culture, business structure, management style, work functions and business objectives affect how you choose to protect your business from threats and how you respond to and recover from a business disruption. The two biggest mistakes many small businesses make are failing to identify a potential threat, and underestimating the severity of a known potential threat. After completing the risk assessment, you will be able to determine the greatest threats to your business, the likelihood or probability for each of those threats, how severe each event could be, and the potential impact on each business function or process.

For a list of natural hazards that may affect your business' location, use the Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety's to identify hazards in your area, and generate a customized list of projects that can reduce your risk. You also should consider damage to infrastructure (e.g., roads, bridges, electric power, etc.)

that could affect your ability to resume operations, and develop possible workarounds to expedite recovery. In addition, contact your local emergency management office to obtain a copy of your community's hazards vulnerability analysis for a list of possible natural and man-made hazards that could affect your area.

Your ability to respond quickly to any type of business disruption could make the difference between survival and closure. Determine the maximum amount of time you can endure being closed after a disaster occurs by identifying your key business functions and processes, and decide how long you can go without being able to perform them.

Think about your employees and what activities they perform on a daily, weekly, monthly, and annual basis. Think about the functions and processes required to run your business in: accounting/finance; production/service delivery; sales/marketing; customer service; human resources; administration; information technology; and purchasing.

Your employees are your business' most valuable asset. Suppose an emergency prevents access to your business. • Would you know how to reach your employees? • Do you have current home and mobile telephone numbers, addresses, email addresses, and emergency contact information? • Is your employees' contact information available outside your business location?

Current employee contact information will enable you to reach employees to determine their safety and whereabouts, inform them about the status of your operations, where, when and if they should report, and what to do following a

disaster. Two-way communication with employees is critical before, during and after a disaster. Create an employee telephone calling tree and an emergency call-in voice recording telephone number, and know how to email and text your employees. Designate a telephone number where employees can leave messages. Determine what assistance is needed for employees with disabilities or special needs, such as communications difficulties, physical limitations, equipment instructions and medication procedures. Determine whether employees are caring for individuals with special needs, which could prevent them from being available during a disaster. Identify employees who are certified in First Aid and CPR, and those with special skills that could be helpful during emergencies. Employee preparedness can make the difference between whether your business is able to effectively recover from a disaster or not. Encourage employees to make personal emergency preparedness plans. The more prepared your employees are at home, the faster they will be able to return to work to help your business respond and recover from a disaster.

To maintain your communication readiness, have your employees review and update their contact information at least every six months. Create a special emergency email account using free services provided by Yahoo, Gmail, Hotmail, etc., to enable people to contact the company regarding their status. Be sure all employees know how to access the emergency account.

Preparedness planning is about being ready to manage any disruption to ensure the continuation of services to your customers. Your key customers need to know that you can provide “business as usual” even if others around you are experiencing difficulties. They will want to know that you are still in business or how soon you will be back and how the disruption will affect their operations. Maintaining up-to-

date contact information for your key customers, contacts, suppliers, and vendors is critical.

The ability to resume your business operations relies on the capability of your suppliers and vendors to deliver what you need on time. • Be sure your suppliers and vendors are not all in the same geographic location as you. • Have alternate or backup suppliers and shippers in place. • Request copies of your suppliers' business continuity plans. • Establish a notification list and procedures.

You may lose customers if you cannot meet their needs due to your own business disruption. After an event, it is important to keep customers informed about the status of your business, your product or service, delivery schedules, etc., and to develop mutually agreeable alternative arrangements.

Identify various ways to communicate with customers after a disaster, such as direct telephone calls, a designated telephone number with a recording, text, e-mail, Twitter, Facebook, or announcements on your company website, by radio or through a newspaper.

Information and information technology (IT) are the lifeblood of most businesses, and must be included in your business continuity plan. Without access to your computer hardware, software, and digital data, your business operations can come to a standstill. It is likely that you communicate with or conduct business with your customers, partners, suppliers, and vendors via the Internet, which means your business is dependent on your computer system's connectivity and data communications.

Keep a backup copy of your computer's operating system, boot files, critical software, and operations manuals. • Backup computer files, including payroll, tax, accounting and production records. • Maintain an up-to-date copy of computer and Internet login codes and passwords. • When possible, keep hard copies of critical virtual files offsite. • Make arrangements with IT vendors to replace damaged hardware and software, and/or to set-up hardware and software at a recovery location. • Request written estimates for rental or purchase of equipment, shipping costs and delivery times. Be sure to list these companies on your supplier and vendor form. • When flooding is possible, elevate computer equipment stored on the floor.

your business financially now so it is ready to respond, recover, and continue operating when a business disruption occurs is just as critical as knowing exactly what to do when disaster strikes.

It is critically important to protect your place of business, your contents and inventory, and/or your production processes with adequate insurance. • Evaluate your insurance policies and meet regularly with your insurance agent/broker to be sure you understand your coverage, deductibles and limits, and how to file a claim. • Most policies do not cover flood or earthquake damage and you may need to buy separate insurance for those events. • Consider a policy that will reimburse you for business disruptions in addition to physical losses. • Consider business income (or business interruption) and extra expense insurance. Even if you have to close your doors for a limited period, the impact on your revenue and net income can be substantial. • Consider adding contingent business income coverage to your basic policy to be sure you are covered for expenses and loss of net business income, as

well as income interruptions due to damage that occurs away from your premises, such as to your key customers, suppliers or utilities.

Your relationship with your community and outside agencies can strengthen your ability to protect your employees and property and return to normal operations. Maintain a channel of communication with community leaders, public safety organizations such as the police, fire and emergency medical services, government agencies, utility companies, and others. Working together with outside agencies can be beneficial because they can provide a wealth of information to help you recover quickly from a disaster.

APENDIX A: NADO's Peer Standards of Excellence: EDA Economic Development Districts

MISSION:

The nation's 380 economic development Districts (EDDs) share a common vision and mission of promoting economic prosperity, regional competitiveness, and quality of life through regional innovation, collaboration, and strategic investments across America.

SHARED COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE:

America's EDDs are committed to pursuing excellence and innovation in both regional economic development and organizational performance. This includes fostering a regional strategic planning and implementation framework that is results oriented, focused on aligning and leveraging resources, is inclusive of public, private and nonprofit sector leaders, and emphasizes the importance of asset-based regional economic development.

SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF CEDS STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE:

Under federal law, one of the primary functions of EDA-designated Economic Development Districts (EDDS) is to coordinate and lead a regional economic development strategy and implementation process known as the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) process. As an industry, the nation's EDDs are committed to advance seven core principles for CEDS standards of excellence:

1. Build more resilient economic and communities by focusing and targeting regional strategies on the existing and potential competitive advantages of each individual region.
2. Foster a regional collaborative framework to strategically align public sector investments for federal, state and local sources, as well as private, nonprofit and philanthropic partners.
3. Use modern scenario, data and analysis tools, and planning techniques that provide policy makers, stakeholders and the public with evidence –based and factual information.
4. Transform the CEDS process into a more strategy-driven planning process focused on regional visioning, priority setting and performance outcomes, rather than broad –based encyclopedia or narrative of the region with a laundry list of random projects and programs.
5. Promote and support peer reviews and exchanges of Economic Development District planning professionals and policy officials with the goal of increasing collaboration across EDD boundaries, enhancing organizational resources, and positioning regional CEDS as more effective building blocks for statewide and local strategies.
6. Communicate in a compelling and modern communication style, including use of executive summaries, high quality print and online media, and social media.
7. Engage the public, private, nonprofit and educational sectors, along with the general public in the development and implementation of the CEDS.

APPENDIX B: 10 Defining Elements of Noteworthy Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDs) Processes

1. **Collaboration:** Meaningful and sustainable grassroots collaboration across public, private, nonprofit and traditional political boundaries.
2. **Leadership Excellence:** Empower proactive leadership to take ownership of their economy; leaders with accountability, authority, legitimacy, and transparency.
3. **Change Management:** Adopt the steps critical to managing change that enable the region to more effectively participate and compete in the global economy.
4. **Balanced Approach:** Integrate economic development, education, and workforce development assets with the private sector to build effective knowledge based economic, human capital, and quality of place centers of excellence.
5. **Asset Based Approach:** Identify, connect, and leverage tangible and intangible assets to sustainably grow and transform the regional economy.
6. **Measurable Outcomes:** Employ measurable benchmarks, goals, and strategies that transform the region through measurable outcomes.
7. **Innovation and Entrepreneurship:** Build innovation ecosystems that create a lasting regional climate of entrepreneurship, risk-taking and innovation.
8. **Life Cycle Finance:** Provide access to a life cycle of equity and debt financing for regional public, private, and nonprofit ventures.
9. **Regional Brand Promise:** Define, create, communicate, and deliver on a clear brand promise that promotes and sustains regional competitive

advantages.

10. **Regional Transformation Mindset:** Sustain Commitment to community and economic development as a journey that is transformative not incremental.