

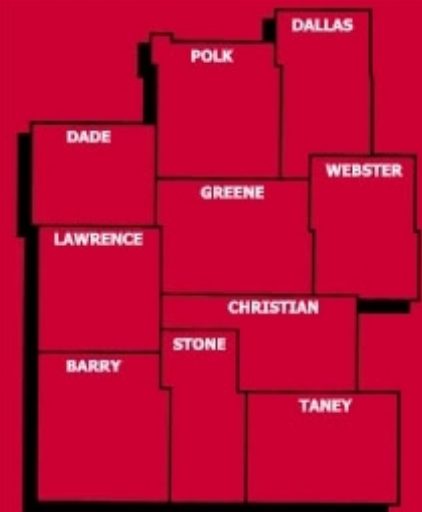
"To promote sustainable economic development opportunities for our partner members."

OZARKS REGIONAL ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

2000 ANNUAL REPORT

Our Organization

The Ozarks Regional Economic Partnership is a voluntary organization comprised of cities, counties, and chambers of commerce representing local community and business leaders from a ten-county area. This area includes Barry, Christian, Dade, Dallas, Greene, Lawrence, Polk, Stone, Taney, and Webster Counties. The partnership is committed to regional economic development, believing it to be critical to the long-term economic and social well-being of the Ozarks. This commitment is built on protecting and reinforcing individual identities through regional cooperation.





2000 Chairman
Todd Parnell
THE BANK

The year 2000 was an active and productive year for the Ozarks Regional Economic Partnership. This report illustrates some of our accomplishments over the past year. What is more important from my perspective is that we have become a factor in the region. It's remarkable to think that 53 organizations have agreed on a framework for regional cooperation, have reached consensus on priority issues, and have realized specific "wins" for the region.

This is not to say we've got it made. The challenges we face in the foreseeable future are formidable, but they are the ones of a growing and prosperous region. The Partnership has selected workforce challenges as its priority issue for 2001. This issue has different aspects which are critical to our economic vitality. We also will seek to become engaged over time in additional key issues facing the area, such as transportation, water quality, community heritage, and communication, among others. We will do so because regionalism makes sense.

As I end my term as Chairman and turn those duties over to my capable successor, Steve Vaught, I want to express my sincere thanks. First, to each of you for your patience and commitment as we have given life to the concept and philosophy of regionalism. Second, to Associated Electric Cooperative, Inc. and the Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce who committed to the vision of regional economic development long ago and have generously provided financial resources to get it off the ground.

I encourage you to review the enclosed activity report, which details the accomplishments in the context of our 2000 Action Plan. These accomplishments are possible because of your commitment to regional cooperation and the belief in our purpose.

Todd Parnell
2000 Chairman

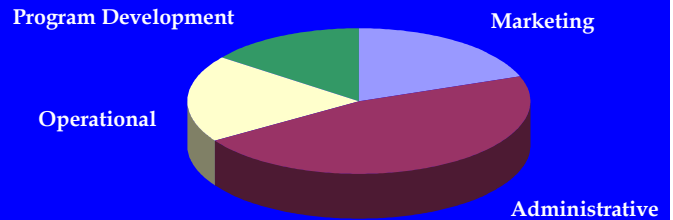


2000 Accomplishments

For a new organization like the Ozarks Regional Economic Partnership, the 2000 work plan was very ambitious. However, through regional cooperation and hard work we achieved great success. Following is a sample of the accomplishments we were able to achieve together.

- Proven success grew organization to 53 members
- Received state marketing grant for region
- Facilitated new company location, creating 250 jobs
- Conducted regional workforce survey
- Established priorities at first annual Regional Summit
- Implemented action plan to address "communication"
- Created comprehensive web site as information resource
- Published quarterly newsletter as communication tool
- Held Fall Partnership Meeting on regional priority issues
- Hosted networking event during Ozarks Open
- Assisted members with various development issues
- Built relationships and trust among partner members
- Increased recognition of the Ozarks region

Summary of Expenses



Area Leaders Use 'Communication' to Address Regional Issues

Representatives of the Partnership discussed issues facing the region at the first annual Regional Summit in April. Over 70 area leaders discussed many important issues such as economic development planning, tourism, infrastructure development, and workforce development. However one issue was clearly the priority for 2000 – enhanced communication among members. Area leaders felt that developing communication and trust is necessary before we can effectively address other regional issues. The Regional Advisory Council approved and implemented an action plan to address this ongoing issue. These actions included conducting semi-annual partnership meetings, developing subgroups on common interests, providing a membership directory and Q/A network, and developing the newsletter and web site as communication tools.



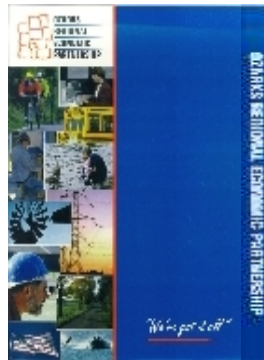
The Ozarks Regional Economic Partnership is a program of the Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce in association with Associated Electric Cooperative, Inc. and partner members throughout the Ozarks region.



Marketing the Ozarks to the World



The regional marketing program of the Ozarks Regional Economic Partnership received a boost thanks to a grant from the Missouri Department of Economic Development. The marketing message is "We've got it all. The future of your business is here." The message emphasizes the region's quality workers and work ethic, quality training and educational institutions, and quality of life. The marketing program included advertising in targeted regional markets, a direct mail campaign to targeted industry clusters, and development of informational materials.



Regional Businesses Participate in Workforce Survey

The Ozarks Regional Economic Partnership teamed up with the Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce Workforce Development Council and the Missouri Division of Workforce Development to conduct a regional workforce survey. In November, the survey was randomly sent to a cross section of businesses within the 10-county area. The questions focused on labor needs, hiring practices, skill level, training needs, and organizational culture. This survey is the first step in a long-range process of addressing area workforce challenges. Results will be used to help guide the Partnership as we work together to address this regional issue in 2001.



Members Take a 'Swing' at Cooperation

Southwest Missouri Electric Cooperatives and the Ozarks Regional Economic Partnership joined efforts to host a networking event during the Buy.Com Ozarks Open golf tournament. Over 40 representatives braved the heat to enjoy lunch and visit with other members in a relaxing atmosphere. The hospitality tent also provided great exposure for the Partnership during the four-day tournament.

Tai Shin Foods Locates in Polk County

The Ozarks Regional Economic Partnership worked with Pleasant Hope city leaders, Polk County officials, the Missouri Department of Agriculture, and the Missouri Department of Economic Development to help coordinate the location of Tai Shin Foods. On November 1, the company purchased an idle beef packing plant and will convert the facility to a pork processing operation. Once the facility is renovated and expanded, Tai Shin Foods will employ 250 area workers and process 800 hogs per day. The company will export about 90 percent of the product to Asian markets.



"Bolivar is a big supporter of this regional effort, and the benefits for our community are already taking place. Because southwest Missouri is such a dynamic area, formation of the Ozarks Regional Economic Partnership is long overdue."

Jeff Hancock
Bolivar City Administrator



Priority Issues Discussed at Fall Meeting

Members and supporters of the Partnership attended the Fall Partnership Meeting, which focused on two priority issues identified during the Regional Summit – economic development planning and tourism. More than 70 attendees learned about the impact of wise decision-making regarding development in the region and how important collaboration is to economic prosperity. In addition, tourism is an important part of economic development and has a substantial impact on the region. Experts believe that tourism will double by 2020 due to the aging population, which is more likely to travel. The meeting concluded with a discussion of priority issues for 2001. The consensus was to address workforce challenges – availability, retention, growth, and development.



<http://www.ozarkspartnership.com>



Partnership Members

City of Ash Grove
City of Aurora
Aurora Chamber of Commerce
Barry County
City of Bolivar
Bolivar Area Chamber of Commerce
City of Branson
Branson Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce
City of Branson West
Buffalo Area Chamber of Commerce
Cassville Area Chamber of Commerce
City of Cassville
Christian County
City of Crane
Dade County
Dallas County
City of Fair Grove
Fair Grove Area Chamber of Commerce
City of Forsyth
Greene County
City of Greenfield
Greenfield Area Chamber of Commerce
City of Hollister
Hollister Area Chamber of Commerce
City of Humansville
Humansville Chamber of Commerce
City of Kimberling City
Lawrence County
City of Lockwood
City of Marshfield
Monett Chamber of Commerce
City of Mount Vernon
Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce
City of Nixa
Nixa Area Chamber of Commerce
City of Ozark
Ozark Area Chamber of Commerce
Polk County
City of Reeds Spring
City of Republic
Republic Area Chamber of Commerce
City of Rockaway Beach
Rogersville Area Chamber of Commerce
Shell Knob Chamber of Commerce
City of Springfield
Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce
Stone County
City of Strafford
Strafford Area Chamber of Commerce
Taney County
City of Walnut Grove
Webster County
Willard Area Chamber of Commerce



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Membership Grows Over 50 Percent

The Ozarks Regional Economic Partnership was launched in the fall of 1999 with 35 members. As the organization established a solid work plan and delivered success, the number of members has grown to 53. This shows that the region has embraced our vision of cooperation. This growth in membership is evidence that partnering is critical to the long-term economic vitality of south-west Missouri.

"The strength of this partnership is its members. By continuing to work together we can accomplish great things in 2001."

Steve Vaught
2001 Chairman

2001 Priorities

- Engage regional leaders on workforce challenges – availability, retention, growth, and development
- Assist members with retaining, expanding and attracting business, creating new jobs and investment.
- Provide leadership and support to members on specific development issues and goals.
- Continue to foster cooperation, communication, and trust among partner organizations.

2000 Regional Advisory Council

BARRY COUNTY

Mark Pry
Barry Electric Cooperative

CHRISTIAN COUNTY

Keith Roberts
Empire Realtors

DADE COUNTY

Ray Wilkinson
Dade County Commission

DALLAS COUNTY

Ron Locke
Dallas County Betterment Association

GREENE COUNTY

Christy Hermansen
City of Republic

LAWRENCE COUNTY

Bill Lee
First National Bank

POLK COUNTY

Byron Dudley
Southwest Electric Cooperative

STONE COUNTY

Ray Jones
Stone County Economic Development

TANEY COUNTY

Mike Rankin
Branson Regional Economic Development Association

WEBSTER COUNTY

Tom Houston
Webster Electric Cooperative

AT-LARGE

Pauline Gage
Missouri Department of Economic Development

Jane Hood
Missouri Department of Economic Development

Brian Malkmus
Blackwell Sanders Peper Martin LLP

Diane May
Southwest Missouri Council of Governments

Cy Murray
White River Valley Electric Cooperative

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Jim Tice
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