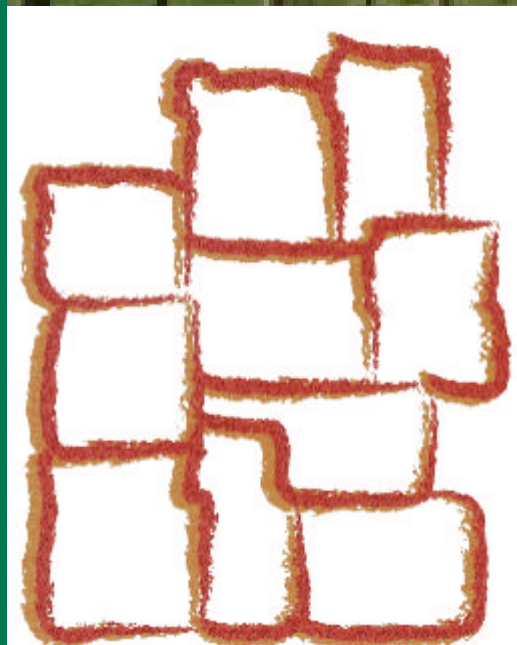


“To promote sustainable economic development opportunities for our partner members.”

OZARKS REGIONAL ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP



2001
ANNUAL REPORT

Strength In Numbers



2001 Chairman
Steve Vaught
Springfield Trust Company

At the end of a year that has passed so quickly, I find myself reflecting on our mission and accomplishments. What I discovered is that we are meeting and exceeding these goals each day. This report highlights some of our accomplishments over the past year. In 2001, six new organizations joined the Partnership, increasing the membership to 59 cities, counties, and chambers. This growth reinforces the need for cooperation in addressing issues that affect our region.

Workforce was a significant issue in 2001 and will continue to be a leading factor affecting business development efforts in the region. I foresee the Partnership continuing to grow and becoming even stronger by fostering communication among our members and addressing key issues that affect us all. By working together, we can create a comprehensive approach to regional economic development.

My term as chairman has come to an end but I plan to continue to be very involved in the Partnership and to communicate our mission to our membership. I want to thank each of you for your support over the past year. I would also like to thank Associated Electric Cooperative, Inc. and the Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce for providing the financial resources and commitment that have made this regional effort possible.

Please take time to review this annual report that details our 2001 accomplishments and provides insights to our regional efforts. I encourage each of you to continue your support of the Ozarks Regional Economic Partnership and its purpose because regional cooperation benefits us all.

Steve Vaught
2001 Chairman

2001 Highlights

In just its second year, the Ozarks Regional Economic Partnership continued to demonstrate leadership and garner support. Through cooperation and hard work, 2001 proved to be a successful year. The following are samples of the accomplishments we were able to achieve together.

- Increased organization to 59 members
- Received second regional marketing grant
- Facilitated new industrial park development
- Assisted members with various development activities
- Commissioned labor availability analysis
- Sponsored meetings on priority issues of workforce challenges and business development
- Supported members with business retention projects
- Worked with area leaders on transportation corridor
- Joined regional legislative coalition to communicate issues to lawmakers
- Gained recognition as 2000 Chairman Todd Parnell was named Missouri Economic Development Council's Volunteer of the Year
- Improved web site as information and marketing resource
- Published quarterly newsletter as communication tool
- Fostered relationships and trust among partner members



Community, business, and education leaders identify and prioritize critical regional issues.

Area Leaders Strategize On Regional Issues

Members and supporters of the Ozarks Regional Economic Partnership focused on priority issues at two regional meetings in 2001. In April, approximately 100 area lead-

ers met in Ozark for the second annual Regional Summit, which focused on workforce challenges - availability, growth, development, and retention. Although these challenges continue today, the regional labor analysis was a first step in addressing this long-term issue (see story, next page).

More than 85 attendees heard about a regional approach to business development during the Fall Partnership Meeting held in Republic in October. "A regional approach to economic development is very important and very effective," said Steve Johnson, Kansas City Area Development Council. "Communication and trust are the foundation to a successful and sustainable regional effort."

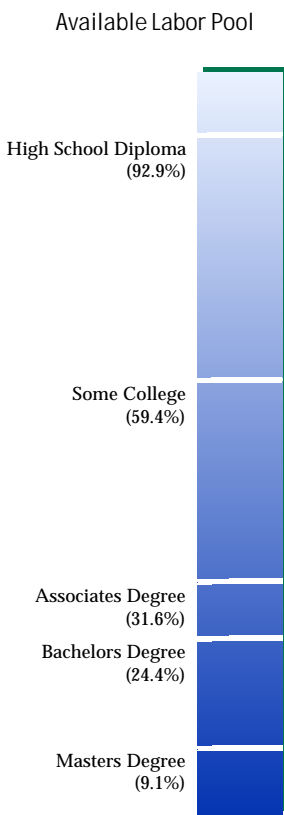
Both meetings included small group discussions of issues affecting the region. Two elements most critical to economic prosperity in the region were identified as infrastructure, including telecommunications, and workforce, with a strong emphasis on education. These issues will be priority issues for the Partnership in 2002.

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Labor Analysis Reveals Quality Workforce

Labor availability continues to be a significant challenge for economic development in the region. To better understand the current characteristics of the labor force in southwest Missouri, the Partnership commissioned a regional labor availability analysis.



The labor analysis, conducted by the Docking Institute of Public Affairs at Fort Hays (Kan.) State University, will assist both existing and new businesses in assessing their ability to tap into the current labor supply. The results of the analysis reveal a high quality workforce in southwest Missouri.

The education and skill levels of the available labor pool are very high. Approximately 60 percent have at least some college education and 93 percent have a high school diploma. When this high level of education is combined with our well-known work ethic, the Ozarks labor pool is a tremendous economic development asset.

Because of these high education and skill levels, approximately 35 percent of the available labor pool is considered "underemployed," meaning that an individual possesses skills and/or training that exceed the responsibilities of their current job. These underemployed persons tend to be currently employed in areas of strong demand.

Underemployment is not unique to the Ozarks. The commitment to education and training has improved the quality of the workforce. However, job creation has not kept pace with the growth in education and training. Through effective regional economic development efforts, we can strive to create higher paying, high quality job opportunities that will improve the quality of life for many Ozarkers.

Sparta Develops Industrial Park

Less than two years after Sparta community leaders first decided to find a way to create jobs for area residents, the development of a 60-acre industrial park is becoming a reality. Thanks to the assistance of Senator Kit Bond, Sparta will receive \$250,000 in federal funds to help develop the park. "Sparta residents have joined together, working hard to ensure that their community continues to thrive," said Bond at a visit to Sparta on Dec. 8.



Senator Kit Bond recognizes Sparta leaders for their commitment to economic development.

The Ozarks Regional Economic Partnership has been working with the Sparta community for more than a year and played an important role in securing these funds. The Sparta Community Development Organization made a commitment to creating jobs, growth, and increased business opportunities. The

industrial park will be a tremendous asset for the community in achieving its goals. The federal funds will be used for road-way, water and sewer improvements for the park.

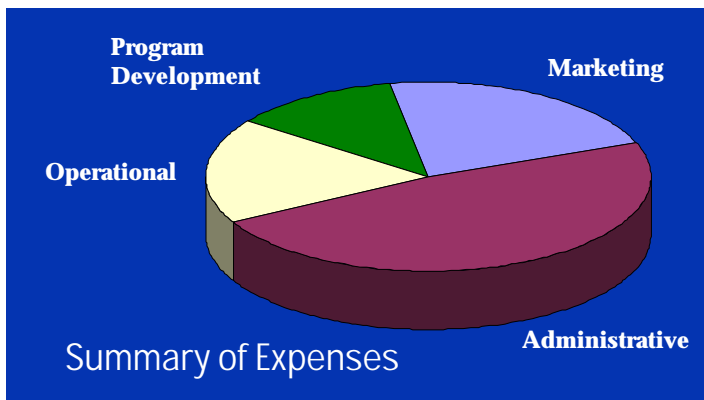
It's About Commitment

"If we want to protect our future economic well-being, we must foster the development of regional efforts today. The Ozarks Regional Economic Partnership is committed to the promotion of economic development on a regional level. Republic and other member organizations have directly benefited from staff assistance and networking opportunities provided by the Partnership."

Dean Thompson
Republic City Administrator

2002 Priorities

- Engage area leaders on issues impacting economic prosperity in the region -- infrastructure, including telecommunications, and workforce, with an emphasis on education.
- 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.



Our 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 Everton *
 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
 Marshfield Area Chamber of Commerce *
 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
 City of Purdy *
 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 Sparta *
 City of Springfield
 Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce
 Stone County
 City of Strafford
 Strafford Area Chamber of Commerce
 Table Rock Lake Chamber of Commerce *
 Taney County
 City of Walnut Grove
 Webster County
 City of Willard *
 Willard Area Chamber of Commerce

(* Joined in 2001)



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 Email: allen@springfieldchamber.com
 Web Site: www.ozarkspartnership.com

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.



The Regional Advisory Council is made up of one representative from each of the ten counties, and 16 additional at-large members representing regional interests in the Ozarks. The advisory group provides direction and oversight for the activities carried out on behalf of the Ozarks Regional Economic Partnership.

2001 Regional Advisory Council

BARRY COUNTY

Mark Pry
 Barry Electric Cooperative

CHRISTIAN COUNTY

Keith Roberts
 Empire Realtors

DADE COUNTY

Rex Wilkinson
 Dade County Commission

DALLAS COUNTY

Susan James
 Dallas County Economic Development Division

GREENE COUNTY

Dean Thompson
 City of Republic

LAWRENCE COUNTY

Bill Lee
 First National Bank

POLK COUNTY

James Ashworth
 Southwest Electric Cooperative

STONE COUNTY

Ray Jones
 Stone County Economic Development

TANEY COUNTY

Mike Rankin
 Branson Regional Economic Development Association

WEBSTER COUNTY

Bill Dudley
 Webster Electric Cooperative

AT-LARGE

Bill Adams
 Conco Companies

Tom Carlson
 Carlson Gardner, Inc.

Jane Hood
 Missouri Department of Economic Development

Jon Horner
 Commerce Bank

Carl Keiser
 Total Marketing Services, Inc.

Stephen Kleinsmith
 Nixa R-II School District

Ron Locke
 Dallas County Betterment Association

Diane May
 Southwest Missouri Council of Governments

Cy Murray
 White River Valley Electric Cooperative

Howard Neeley
 Republic R-III School District

Lee Orth
 Branson R-IV School District

Todd Parnell
 THE BANK

Pat Prewitt
 Ozark Electric Cooperative

Jim Tice
 Center for Scientific Research & Education, SMSU

Steve Vaught
 Springfield Trust Company

Mark Woodson
 Associated Electric Cooperative, Inc.

STAFF

Allen Kunkel
 Manager of Regional Development
 Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce

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.

