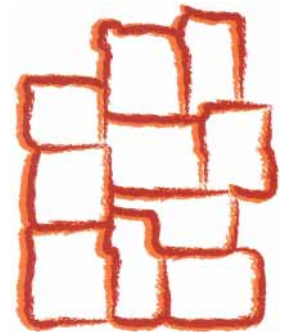




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COUNTING



2004 Annual Report
Five-Year Perspective

Chairman's Message

Not many organizations can look back over the course of a year and discover goals met and objectives exceeded. But the Ozarks Regional Economic Partnership can do just that in 2004.

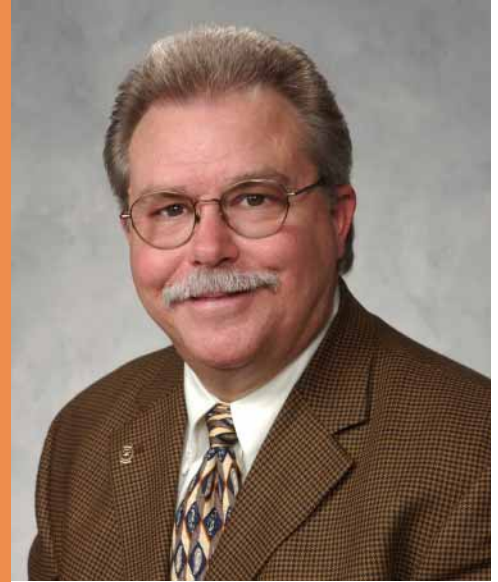
As I reflected on the past year, I quickly discovered we are accomplishing our targets and moving forward. Of course, this would not be possible without you, the partners and supporters of this organization.

This report is a special summary of 2004 activities, as well as a reflection on the first five years of our organization. The Partnership grew from 35 to 53 members in its first year and continues to grow each year. Current membership is now 67 cities, counties and chambers of commerce.

I also take pride in the fact that our region has become a model for other regions interested in creating their own economic development programs. I would like to thank the advisory council, our members, our investors, and staff for making our organization such a successful model.

As we reflect on the first five years and begin to look toward the next five years, we must continue to address the needs of our membership. We need to know what you, our members, want to see accomplished. We will be seeking more information to better meet your goals and help our region continue to prosper.

Please take time to look over this report and review our accomplishments. I am honored to continue my service as chairman in 2005. Your ideas and suggestions are always welcome.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cy Murray".

Cy Murray, 2004 Chairman
White River Valley Electric Cooperative

Business Investment



Investing in our communities and small businesses is key to sustaining our region's economic momentum. The Ozarks Regional Community Development Corporation this year closed on its first loan to Downhill Bikes & Accessories in Branson.

The bicycle shop serving the Tri-Lakes area since 1996 will use the gap financing to expand marketing efforts and build inventory to accommodate demand.



"The bicycling community is growing in the Ozarks and represents the desire for greater access to outdoor activities for all ages," owner Craig Erickson said. "There are many things happening in this community and surrounding area that support a growth in this market."

The ORCDC provides gap-financing loans up to \$50,000 for small businesses in the 10-county region. Thanks to the commitment and vision of 11 investors, the corporation was formed in coordination with the Ozarks Regional Economic Partnership, which is responsible for marketing and coordination of the program.

Business Development

The Partnership provided assistance on a variety of business development projects in 2004. For example, Hoods Propane Company became the first tenant in the Sparta Industrial Park. The project will not only create four new jobs, but will add another utility to the park.

Superior Equipment, Inc. (Super Lifts) moved and expanded its business from Kansas to Aurora, creating 35 new jobs. Super Lifts specializes in commercial and residential hydraulic auto lift, car lift, truck lift and parking lift equipment featuring two post lifts and four post lifts.

The City of Ozark celebrated success in late 2004 with the announcement that two companies would occupy the former Fasco facility. A Colorado catalog business, Direct Retailing, Inc., purchased half of the building to operate its call center, distribution, and outlet store, which will create 150 jobs. A growing local company, SLS Loudspeakers, is leasing the other half to expand its production line and will create 100 new jobs.



Ozark Mountain Underground Vault and Storage has become a tremendous asset to Taney County's long-term economy. This former rock quarry is now a 250,000 square foot state-of-the-art secure record and media storage, warehousing and logistic services facility with an additional six million square feet available for expansion. This project was made possible through a cooperative agreement between White River Valley Electric Cooperative and USDA Rural Development.



Regional Partnership Meeting

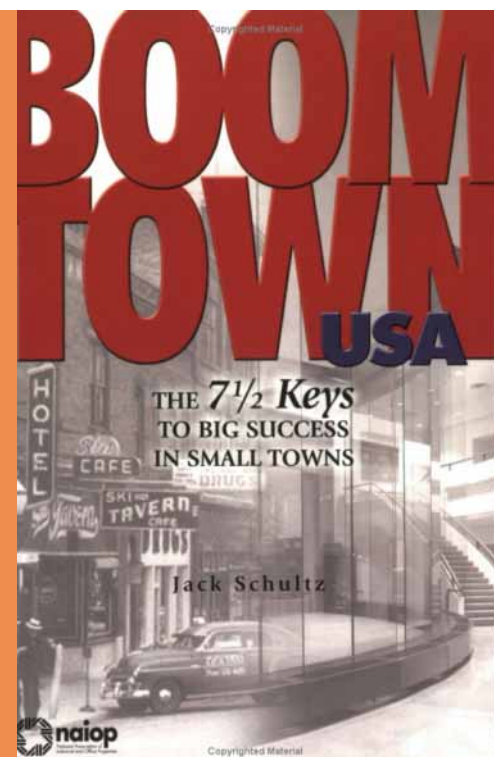
Jack Schultz, author of *Boom Town USA*, told about 120 participants in the fifth annual Ozarks Regional Economic Partnership Fall Meeting that a "can do" attitude is one of seven and a half "keys to success" in small towns.

Schultz, the featured speaker at the meeting, includes both Branson and Kimberling City as examples of prospering "agurbs," that is, rural towns with a tie to agriculture and a location outside a Metropolitan Statistical Area.

The partnership meeting, held on October 26th at the new Keeter Center on the campus of College of the Ozarks, also heard from Irv Jensen of Smart Solutions Group who described best practices in Midwest communities. "Fight history," Jensen said.

Organizations such as regional partnerships find success by placing a high premium on redirecting their group when needed. "They're not afraid to attack sacred cows," Jensen explained.

Dennis Robinson of the Community Policy Analysis Center at the University of Missouri-Columbia described factors that impact the entrepreneurial climate in rural communities. Aurora was one of the cities included in the study.



Ozarks Regional Economic Partnership: A Five-Year Perspective

Our Beginning – What Is Regional Development All About?

The formation of the Ozarks Regional Economic Partnership was a direct result of ideas that came from Community Leadership Visits sponsored by the Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce. The philosophy of a regional program was implemented thanks to leaders from around the region who shared their vision of what such a program could be. The committee laid the groundwork by talking about regionalism, what it is, and more importantly, what it is not.

The time spent cultivating relationships by these steering committee members is one of the reasons this model has been so successful.

“The region has embraced our vision of cooperation. Having so many organizations share this philosophy is evidence that partnering is critical to the long-term economic vitality of southwest Missouri.”

Todd Parnell
The Signature Bank

As with all new activities, funding this new regional program was a challenge. Thanks to the leadership and vision of Associated Electric Cooperative, Inc., a partnership with the Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce was formed and plans started to grow. This partnership allowed AECI to commit seed money for a three-year period. The success of the program during the first three years



allowed the Chamber and the Springfield Business Development Corporation to continue the regional program under the Partnership for Prosperity, a five-year economic development capital campaign.

The Partnership is indebted to the vision and leadership of many individuals and organizations.

It's About Cooperation On Regional Issues.

Membership meetings foster involvement and cooperation. Early on, the Partnership scheduled semi-annual meetings, each bringing together community, business, and education leaders to discuss priority issues.

Over the past five years, these 10 events have focused on themes such as Selling Your Community, Workforce Challenges, Managing Growth,

Business Development, and Economic Prosperity. Speakers have included “Boomtown” author Jack Schultz, Bluegrass Tomorrow director Steve Austin, and Missouri University research associate Daryl Hobbs. Each meeting provided sessions for members and attendees to learn, share information, and network. The Partnership is all about cooperation and providing a platform to bring organizations in the region together to communicate with each other and discuss common issues.



It's About Our Members.

The Partnership has harnessed its strength from the continued growth of its membership. The organization began in November, 1999 with 35 members. Each

year, the organization has continued to grow and currently has 67 cities, counties and chambers of commerce as members. The Partnership does not actively recruit additional members, but its reputation has demonstrated leadership and consequently garners attention in the 10 southwest Missouri counties and beyond.

It's About Commitment And Communication.

“If we want to protect our future economic well-being, we must foster the development of regional efforts today,” states Republic City Administrator Dean Thompson.

The Partnership is committed to the promotion of economic development on a regional level. Members and leaders of the organization are also dedicated to this regional concept. Once the commitment is

there, success can only be sustained by effective communication. Communication continues to be the foundation of the Partnership, critical to formulating trust and strategic alliances among members. This framework has broadened into to discussion forums among members of similar interests and responsibilities.

It's About Results.

As with any organization, success is measured by its results. The purpose of the Partnership is to promote sustainable economic development opportunities for our partner members. We live in a diverse and prosperous

region that continues to experience growth. With this diversity, each community and organization may define economic development in different ways.

Over the past five years, the Partnership has been involved in a variety of projects, including plant closings, business expansions, new business locations, strategic planning activities, tourism programs and industrial park development, to name a few.

In terms of economic development, it's about jobs and investment. In just over the past three years, the Partnership has directly aided 550 jobs and more than \$15 million in capital investment.

Sometimes it's more than just measurable job growth and investment. In this organization, regional relationships are a primary focus. Communication, cooperation, commitment, and trust are all essential in a regional economic development program. The success of the Ozarks Regional Economic Partnership is also a reflection of these intangible components.

It's About The Future.

As we reflect on the past five years, it's important to acknowledge our successes, but also recognize areas for improvement. We have laid a solid framework, thanks to leadership, partner organizations and supporters throughout the region. However, we must continue to address the needs of our members and the needs of our region.

Our future success hinges on the same things that have become our foundation. We must continue to have the commitment to work together and communicate effectively. Our region is strong; our economy is diverse and

prosperous, and growth will continue to occur. With your help, we can make the next five years even more successful than the past five years.



IT'S ABOUT PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR PARTNER MEMBERS.

Ozarks Regional Economic Partnership

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 10-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 organization's purpose statement is "to promote sustainable economic development opportunities for our partner members."

Partnership Members

City of Ash Grove
City of Aurora
Aurora Chamber
Barry County
City of Battlefield
City of Bolivar
Bolivar Area Chamber
City of Branson
Branson Lakes Area Chamber
City of Branson West
Village of Brookline
City of Buffalo
Buffalo Area Chamber
Cassville Area Chamber
City of Cassville
Christian County
City of Crane
Dade County
Dallas County
City of Everton
City of Fair Grove
Fair Grove Area Chamber
City of Forsyth
Galena Area Chamber
Greene County
City of Greenfield
Greenfield Area Chamber
City of Hollister
Hollister Area Chamber
City of Humansville
Humansville Chamber
City of Kimberling City
Lawrence County
City of Lockwood
City of Marshfield

Marshfield Area Chamber
City of Marionville
Monett Chamber
City of Mount Vernon
Mount Vernon Chamber
City of Nixa
Nixa Area Chamber
City of Ozark
Ozark Area Chamber
Polk County
City of Purdy
City of Reeds Spring
City of Republic
Republic Area Chamber
City of Rockaway Beach
Rockaway Beach Chamber
City of Rogersville
Rogersville Area Chamber
City of Seymour
Shell Knob Chamber
City of Sparta
City of Springfield
Springfield Area Chamber
Stone County
City of Strafford
Strafford Area Chamber
Table Rock Lake Chamber
Taney County
City of Walnut Grove
Webster County
City of Willard
Willard Area Chamber

(joined in 2004)

2004 Regional Advisory Council

The Regional Advisory Council is made up of one representative from each of the 10 counties, 16 at-large members, and two ex-officio members representing regional interests in the Ozarks. The advisory group provides direction and oversight for the activities to be carried out on behalf of the Ozarks Regional Economic Partnership.

County Representatives

Cherry Warren, Barry County Commission
(Barry County)

Tim Eastin, Naught-Naught Insurance
(Christian County)

Rex Wilkinson, Dade County Commission
(Dade County)

Bill Bryant, Bryant Business Graphics
(Dallas County)

Dean Thompson, City of Republic
(Greene County)

Jane Hood, Mt. Vernon Economic Development Corp.
(Lawrence County)

Matt Hennenberg, US Bank
(Polk County)

Ray Jones, Stone County Economic Development
(Stone County)

Al Moon, Taney County Industrial Development Authority
(Taney County)

Tom Byrd, Webster County Commission
(Webster County)

Representatives At-Large

Bill Adams, Conco Companies

James Ashworth, Southwest Electric Cooperative

Steve Coller, Commercial Property Group

Bill Dudley, Webster Electric Cooperative

Conrad Griggs, Merrill Lynch

Carl Keiser, Total Marketing Services, Inc.

Ron Locke, Dallas County Betterment Association

Diane May, Southwest Missouri Council of Governments

Cy Murray, White River Valley Electric Cooperative

Pat Prewitt, Ozark Electric Cooperative

Mark Pry, Barry Electric Cooperative

Keith Roberts, Empire Realtors

Jim Tice, Center for Scientific Research & Education, SMSU

Steve Vaught, Springfield Trust Company

Mark Woodson, Associated Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Ex-Officio Members

Darrell St. Clair, Missouri Dept. of Economic Development

Vickie Umfleet, USDA Rural Development



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www.ozarkspartnership.com

The Ozarks Regional Economic Partnership is a program of the Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce in association with partner members throughout the Ozarks region.