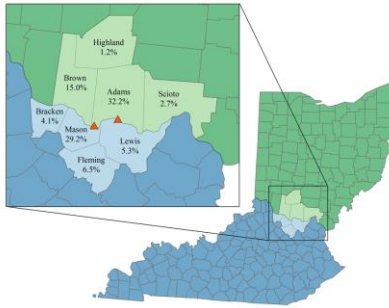


Building Opportunities Beyond Coal Accelerating Transition (BOBCAT) Network

Background:

Ohio University's Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs and the Ohio Valley Regional Development Commission (OVRDC) have partnered to assist communities in the OVRDC region that have been impacted by the decline in the coal economy. The BOBCAT Network is a two year, \$2 million project. The project received 1.6M from the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) Assistance to Coal Communities (ACC) Grant and 400K in state funding from the Appalachian New Economy Partnership (ANEP). The BOBCAT Network aims to accelerate the region's transition out of the coal economy via entrepreneurial growth, workforce development, cluster expansion, opportunity zone enhancement, and identification of infrastructure investment needs.



Power plant locations in Adams County

This project was precipitated by several factors. First, in 2017 the Voinovich School had conducted an EDA funded "Skillshed Analysis" to map occupational skills for displaced coal economy workers to emerging occupations in Appalachian Ohio. Secondly, two Dayton Power & Light (DP&L) coal-fired power plants in Adams County were retired in 2018 at the end of May. The closure resulted in 1131 total job losses, including 370 direct job losses. The 2017 "Skillshed Analysis" showed that immediate job opportunities for the workers who lost their jobs would pay substantially lower wages unless the workers were retrained for new careers. Finally, it has been shown that Lawrence and Scioto Counties have experienced the impacts of the coal economy's decline, especially for companies using ports on the Ohio River

to ship coal or coal economy related items. Therefore, the BOBCAT Network focuses specifically on Adams County and on Lawrence and Scioto Counties before looking more generally at the OVRDC region.

Adams County:

Mitigating Impact, Transition, and Recovery

Adams County, OVRDC, and Ohio University identified multiple study needs that are critical to preparing the county for investment and future growth. Adams County lacks a comprehensive economic development strategic plan to mitigate the closure of the DP&L facilities, capitalize on the skills of the displaced workers, and identify strategies to enhance the county industrial clusters. A brief breakdown of tasks is listed below.

1. Economic Development Scan

Establish a solid informational foundation on key economic and demographic descriptors of Adams County

2. SWOT Analysis/Asset Mapping

Identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats and complete an asset map for Adams County

3. Community Engagement in Economic Development Priorities

Present the information from the tasks above at a series of public meetings to Adams County's citizenry and leadership and receive feedback on and determine the community's priorities for economic development

4. Targeted Industry Cluster Characterization

Compare characteristics of industry clusters with the attributes of Adams County to identify those clusters most appropriate for a targeted industry cluster strategy

5. Existing Industry Needs/Opportunities Assessment

Determine the needs of existing entrepreneurial firms and other businesses and assess traditional sectors, emerging sectors, and the state of Adams County's entrepreneurial economy

6. Comparable Communities Assessment

Examine the development experiences of three counties and/or communities comparable to Adams County to identify applicable lessons for economic recovery

7. Industrial Park Demand and Finance Analysis

Complete an industrial park feasibility study with an analysis focusing on the demand side of industrial park users and potential financing options

8. Assessment of the Social Sector and its Ability to Advance Economic Development Strategies

Identify the "social determinants" of economic development (education, workforce, health, etc.) in Adams County and determine the ability of private sector social enterprises to deliver traditionally public services, mitigate the loss of tax revenue, and advance economic development strategies



Site for potential industrial park in Adams County off of SR-32

9. Economic Development Vision Plan

Compile priorities for use in developing the overall economic development plan and meet with officials on a frequent basis throughout the project term and upon its completion to ensure the project's success

Lawrence and Scioto Counties:

Mitigating Laborshed and Supply Chain Impacts

In partnership with Ohio University Southern, the Voinovich School will assist Scioto and Lawrence Counties with several tasks to address the coal supply chain and logistics impacts of the decline in the coal economy in this region. A brief breakdown of tasks is listed below.

1. Economic Development Scan

Establish a solid informational foundation on key economic and demographic descriptors in the region

2. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis/Asset Mapping

Identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats and complete an asset map for the region

3. Community Engagement in Economic Development Priorities

Present the information from the tasks above at a series of public meetings to Lawrence and Scioto Counties' citizenry and leadership and receive feedback on and determine the community's priorities for economic development

4. Coal Supply Chain Impacts

Determine the impact of the coal economy decline on the supply chain businesses and transportation sector using the Ohio River

5. Core Competencies Assessment of Coal Supply Chain

Assess the core competencies of the coal supply chain to determine their best fit for transitioning to non-coal related opportunities

6. Skillshed Analysis and Workforce Training Center Feasibility Study

Replicate the "Skillshed Analysis" for Lawrence and Scioto Counties and conduct a feasibility study for a Workforce Training Center in Lawrence County to retrain coal economy and other displaced workers to meet emerging occupations

OVRDC Region:

Economic Diversification and Preparing for Investment

Additional efforts are proposed to assist the entire OVRDC region with the coal economy declines, pursue economic diversification, and prepare for investment. Additionally, the creation of a website and other dissemination of the project will occur in this focus area. A brief breakdown of tasks is listed below.

1. Comprehensive Workforce Inventory

Perform an inventory of the OVRDC resident labor resources to provide an accurate assessment of the labor force as an essential asset for economic development planning and industrial retention, expansion, and recruitment

2. Industry Cluster Enhancement

Engage existing OVRDC firms in the region's industry clusters to determine their industry needs and identify and serve expanding cluster businesses in the OVRDC region seeking to relocate or expand

3. Entrepreneurial Economy Assessment and Enhancement

Assess the state of the OVRDC entrepreneurial economy and identify market opportunities for firm growth, supply chain enhancement, and capital needs

4. Creating Investment Ready Communities/Opportunity Zones

Leverage expertise in venture capital, angel investment, and entrepreneurship support to help communities become investment ready, identify best strategies for attracting investment, and identify patient capital targets that may invest in these Opportunity Zones

5. Report Development, Website Creation, and Dissemination

Develop a report, create a website, conduct webinars, and disseminate the findings from this study and develop a best practices white paper to share with the EDA and Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) network



The OVRDC Region

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