

ECIEDD Developments

Quarterly Newsletter for the East Central Illinois Economic Development District



CEDS...What is it and What Does it Mean For You?

Every year, ECIEDD staff create a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs). The document highlights regional data and trends, sets goals for the District, and offers an action plan for economic development initiatives and projects in our area.

CEDS Nuts and Bolts

CEDS 2010 has the following elements:

- Existing conditions and trends about geography, demographics, socioeconomics, infrastructure, environment and natural resources
- Economic development analysis including employment rates and structure, projections, economic clusters, job growth, and wages
- Competitive advantages and disadvantages of our location
- Goals and objectives
- Implementation plan
- Proposed future projects
- Potential funding sources
- Cooperating and coordinating with the State
- Evaluating progress and performance measures

CEDS 2010 Goals

1. The six-county region will have strong, collaborative networks both within and outside the region.
2. The six-county region will have a growing workforce that enhances our economic strengths, attracts high-wage employment centers, and takes advantage of new learning experiences to fortify our communities.
3. The six-county region will have jobs that pay well, are high quality and stable for local residents.
4. The six-county region will have active participants in the global market.
5. The six-county region will understand its limitations and will establish methods for managing and addressing those limitations.
6. The six-county region will complete economic development projects that maximize use of local funds.
7. The six-county region will account for the stability of systems and elements of our natural environment

during planning, design, and implementation of economic development initiatives.

8. The six-county region will respond to economic stress created by natural disasters and will have a comprehensive toolbox that can proactively aid recovery.

What can the CEDs do for us?

An Economic Development Administration (EDA) approved CEDs makes a District eligible for EDA grant funding for infrastructure and other economic development projects, as well as continued planning assistance for our area.

Next Steps

The draft ECIEDD 2010 CEDs will be available for public review from July 29th through August 27th at www.eciedd.org. Comments can be sent to schavarr@ccrpc.org or to our mailing address for consideration by the Board.

Once the ECIEDD Board approves the document in September, it will be sent to EDA for final approval.



ECIEDD Counties

**Champaign
Douglas
Ford
Iroquois
Piatt
Vermilion**

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Vermilion Advantage and ECIEDD Welcome Linda Bolton

Contributions from Commercial-News, May 15, 2010, by April Evans and vermilionadvantage.com

Vermilion Advantage, an organization whose mission is to strengthen and grow Vermilion County's economy, has named Linda Bolton to replace Todd Lee as the organization's Director of Business Development & Government Relations. Bolton will also take Lee's place as a proxy for the ECIEDD Board.

Bolton is both familiar to and with the county in her previous role as the Coordinator of Community Relations for the Community Health Education Program at the Vermilion County Health Department, where she had served since 1996.

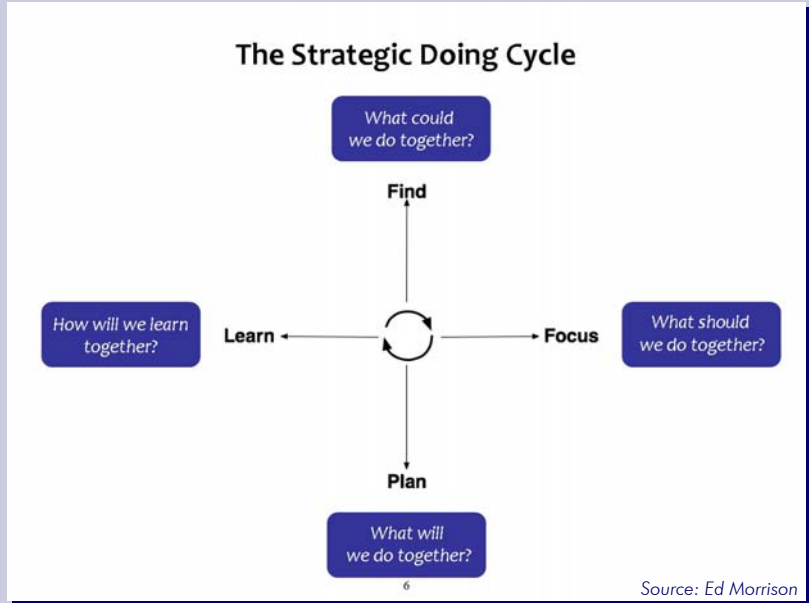
Bolton began work with Vermilion Advantage in June. Her role includes responsibilities with new prospect development, local industrial development, the Intergovernmental Planning Council, the Mayor's Council, legislative information, and the Ag & Natural Resources Council.

Spotlight on Success: I-Open Workshop with Ed Morrison

Over thirty economic development professionals and others attended the ECIEDD-sponsored I-Open Workshop with Ed Morrison on April 27th.

The focus of the half-day event was to show how open networks can create useful discussion and progress in economic development as well as other topics. Inside a network for our District, we could have the ECIEDD Board be at the core. Outside that core of dedicated people could be engaged volunteers who bring new ideas and help make initiatives work better. Supportive residents can flesh out the network. To quote Ed, "Networks work most effectively when we have strong cores and expanding, porous boundaries. The strong core enables us to get complex projects done. The porous boundary helps us continue to learn and gain insights from new, diverse sources and perspectives."

Ed also talked about the Strategic Doing Cycle, illustrated at right. The four questions of what could we do together, what should we do together, what will we do together



and how will we learn together frame the discussion for open networks. The product of such a discussion is an action plan for the network, in our case centering on economic development.

Next steps for ECIEDD include creating forums for discussion throughout the region and taking on projects identified in those discussions that help us achieve our goals.

EDA's Proposed Grant Improvement Process

From <http://www.eda.gov/InvestmentsGrants/Grant%20Process.xml>, accessed July 20, 2010

For 45 years, the U.S. Economic Development Administration has partnered with distressed communities throughout the US to foster job creation, collaboration and regional innovation. The agency's mission is to lead the federal economic development agenda by promoting competitiveness and preparing American regions for growth and success in the worldwide economy.

Just as economic development practitioners must adapt to changes in the economic environment, so must the federal government's only agency solely devoted to economic development. The challenges posed by a severe global recession and immense economic, social and environmental changes require the agency to improve the way it does business to continue to meet the needs of American communities.

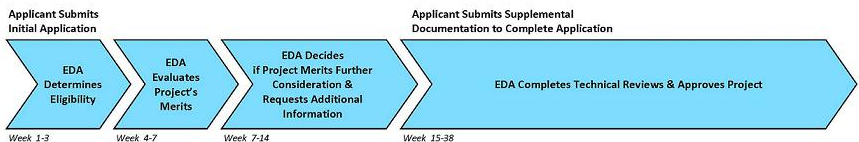
EDA's new process is designed to build on its record of excellent customer service, flexibility and strong performance measures.

We are proposing a new process that is:

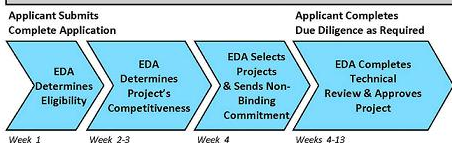
- Open and accessible.
- Responsive - Applicants will receive an answer in less than 90 days.
- Transparent - Decisions based on standardized competitive assessment tools.

U.S. Economic Development Administration Process Improvement

The Current Approval Process takes 38 weeks (9.5 months)



The Proposed Approval Process takes 13 weeks (3 months)



Specifically, EDA is improving its grant approval process so that it is more competitive, transparent and efficient. In order to create a system that works best for its stakeholders, **EDA is inviting comments and suggestions on the proposed new process. Email your comments to: grantimprovement@eda.doc.gov.**

One issue we have heard about through the ECIEDD Board is that EDA funding is generally not used because economic development moves faster than the EDA grant process. Will these changes open opportunities for your community?

ECIEDD Benefits - Available to all communities in the six-county area

- ✓ **Free labor hours:** Each ECIEDD county has been allocated 60 free labor hours per fiscal year (October 1 through September 30). Municipalities and agencies within the counties can petition their County Board chair for use of the hours. These hours can be used for grant research, grant writing, data acquisition and analysis, and creating marketing materials, among other activities.
- ✓ **EDA grant application research and writing:** ECIEDD staff will research whether a potential project qualifies for Economic Development Administration funding, write the application, and maintain communications with EDA about the project at no charge to the community. This benefit is in addition to the 60 free labor hours.
- ✓ **Revolving loan fund for six-county area:** Champaign County Regional Planning Commission CCRPC) recently provided a \$250,000 match to a \$750,000 USDA loan that allows for up to \$1 million in business and municipal loans in the six-county District for those areas with 25,000 or fewer population. Low interest loans may be awarded, depending on the project.
- ✓ **Economic Impact Model:** If your community has a potential development project, ECIEDD staff can model the economic and fiscal impact of construction and operations at the county, regional, and state levels. Potential developers and the community alike want to know how the project can impact the area.
- ✓ **Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy:** this federally mandated document details our region's economic goals and needs; thereby enabling opportunities for funding projects, and allowing for continued planning grant funds from EDA. Projects cannot receive EDA funding in our District unless they are listed in the CEDS.
- ✓ **Educational and Information Sharing Opportunities:** In 2009, ECIEDD staff held a Wind Energy forum with speakers from Midwest Energy and Illinois Wind Working Group. Staff collected 18 county ordinances for sharing with participants in anticipation of the forum. In 2010, staff coordinated a Business Retention Workshop with presenter Eric Canada, which was well received by 20 economic development professionals from the six-county area. More workshops and educational opportunities will be offered in the future.
- ✓ **Employer data for the six-county area:** ECIEDD staff have worked with the Champaign County Economic Development Corporation to acquire employer data for the six county area that is available to economic development professionals in the ECIEDD. At this time, it is anticipated that the data will be updated annually.



ECIEDD benefits are available to counties, municipalities and economic development agencies in the District.

Labor Survey Underway in the District

Champaign, Douglas, Ford, Iroquois and Piatt Counties are working on a labor survey for the District (Vermilion County recently completed its own labor study). With assistance from Ameren and the Eastern Illini Electric Coop, this effort will look at workforce quality, availability and costs in our District.

The purpose of the study is to provide employers with definitive labor information necessary to make better informed decisions and minimize risks for workforce hiring, retention, and development needs. Another objective of this study is to provide a fair and balanced report for the community and its employers to assess and determine long-term strategic planning for improving the community's area labor market.



ECIEDD Board 2010**Champaign County**

- Chris Kaler, Rantoul Chamber of Commerce
- Seamus Reilly, Parkland College
- Barb Wysocki, County Board

Douglas County

- Rachael Crane, Arcola Chamber of Commerce
- Brian Moody, Tuscola Economic Development
- Lloyd Murphy, Tuscola National Bank

Ford County

- Rick Bowen, County Board
- Randy Ferguson, County Board
- Diane Johnson, Gibson City Chamber

Iroquois County

- Ken Barragree, Iroquois Development Assoc.
- Roger Dittrich, T & D Metal Products
- Jim McCray, County Board

Piatt County

- Steve Gaines, Village of Mansfield
- Joe Streit, Parkland College Business Training
- Mike Wileaver, County Board

Vermilion County

- Bill Donahue, Vermilion County
- Vicki Haugen, Vermilion Advantage
- Jim McMahon, County Board

Craig Walker Talks Bonds with ECIEDD Board Members

Craig Walker, Senior Vice President in Public Finance for Blaylock Robert Van LLC, spoke to the ECIEDD Board at its June meeting about three American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) tools available for use in financing municipal and economic development needs.

- **Build America Bonds (BABs)** – State and local governments can issue taxable bonds at a lower borrowing cost since the interest is federally subsidized by 35%.
- **Recovery Zone Bonds (RZBs)** – A type of BAB that targets communities with populations greater than 100,000. The Economic Development RZBs are for local government use and have a 45% federal interest subsidy. The Facility RZB is a tax-exempt private activity bond issuing authority to companies that finance certain kinds of business facilities in recovery zones.

- **Qualified Energy Conservation Bonds (QECBs)** – Tax credit bonds issued by states and large local governments to finance a variety of clean energy projects with a federal subsidy of 70% of interest cost.

Walker also discussed Senate Bill 3474, which would allow the Illinois Finance Authority to re-allocate unused recovery zone bond allocations and qualified energy bond allocations from the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act if they are not used by a certain deadline.

SB3474 was signed into law by Governor Quinn as Public Act 96-1020 in early July. "Signing this bill helps maximize use of the ARRA bonding authority. Consolidating remaining bonding authority gives us an especially valuable tool, as it generates economic impact without requiring the use of state funds," said Governor Quinn.



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We're on the Web!
www.eciedd.org

Go paperless!

If you would like to receive this newsletter via email, please contact Susan Chavarria at schavarr@ccrpc.org or (217) 328-3313.