Economic Development in a Rural Community Action Agency

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WSOS Mission Statement

“We create partnerships and opportunities to help individuals, families and communities thrive”
WSOS by Department

- Child Development ($11.7 million)
- Adult and Youth Development ($5.2 million)
- Community Development ($4.8 million)
- Housing and Energy ($3.1 million)
- Seniors and Transportation ($2.8 million)
- Total revenue 2016: $31.5 million
  - Federal $23.5 million
  - State and Local $3.1 million
  - Program Income $3.6 million
  - In kind and Misc. $1.4 million
Rural Community Assistance Program (RCAP):

- Water/Wastewater Technical Assistance to small, low-income, rural communities
  - Seeking funding sources, grants/loans
  - Training for operators
  - Utility rate analysis
  - Asset Management Plans
  - Assistance in improving operations
  - GIS mapping
Evolution of Community Development

- Early 1980’s
- Small Cities CDBG Administration
- CDBG–capitalized Revolving Loan Funds
- EDA Public Works Grant Applications
- Other Economic Development Resources
WSOS Business Loan Funds

- Gap financing, micro-enterprise loan fund, daycare loan fund – LMI Jobs
- Sources: HUD/State of Ohio (CDBG), USDA Rural Development, State daycare funds
- Over $5.1 million to 188 borrowers
  - 2 daycare loans of $25,000
  - 2 microloans of $10,000
  - 3 business loans totaling $115,750
Community Planning

- Comprehensive plans (City, Township, County)
- Downtown Revitalization plans
Planning background/experience led us to assist with:

- Coordinated Public Transportation Plans
- Emergency Management Plans
- Housing Needs Plans
- Analyses of Impediments to Fair Housing
- Organizational Strategic Strategic Planning
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (EDA) and other economic development plans...
Our small town issue prioritization and planning process – over 50 communities in 5 states
Project Good Start components

- Steering Committee
- Household survey
- Business survey
- Key informant interviews
- Student survey (high schoolers)
- Community Forum
- Report
Morgan County

- Technical Assistance for community development projects: fair housing, transportation, workforce, economic dev’t., infrastructure

- Economic Development Strategy

- “Toward an Entrepreneurial Community”
Hometown Competitiveness

- Four Pillars
  - Entrepreneurship
  - Leadership
  - Youth Engagement
  - Philanthropy

Center for Rural Entrepreneurship
www.energizingentrepreneurs.org
Asset Based Community Development

“Communities can no longer be thought of as complex masses of needs and problems, but rather diverse and potent webs of gifts and assets. Each community has a unique set of skills and capacities to channel for community development.”
Asset Based Community Development

Five key assets in ABCD
- Individuals
- Associations
- Institutions
- Physical Assets
- Connections
Wealth building is taking action to increase:

- The quality and quantity of wealth—embodied in eight types of capital.
- Local ownership and control of that wealth by a region’s people, places or firms.
- The livelihoods of people, places and firms in the region, including moving those on the economic margins toward the mainstream.

www.wealthworks.org
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The capital</th>
<th>The definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>The existing stock of skills, understanding, physical health and mental wellness in a region’s people.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intellectual</td>
<td>The existing stock of knowledge, resourcefulness, creativity and innovation in a region’s people, institutions, organizations and sectors.</td>
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<td>Social</td>
<td>The existing stock of trust, relationships and networks in a region’s population.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td>The existing stock of traditions, customs, ways of doing, and world views in a region’s population.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Natural</td>
<td>The existing stock of natural resources—for example, water, land, air, plants and animals—in a region’s places.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Built</td>
<td>The existing stock of constructed infrastructure—for example, buildings, sewer systems, broadband, roads—in a region’s places.</td>
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<td>Political</td>
<td>The existing stock of goodwill, influence and power that people, organizations and institutions in the region can exercise in decision-making.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>The existing stock of monetary resources available in the region for investment in the region.</td>
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Ice House Training: Entrepreneurial Mindset Education

- to inspire and engage participants in the fundamental aspects of an entrepreneurial mindset as an essential life skill.
Eight Life Lessons

1. Power of Choice
2. Recognizing Opportunity
3. Ideas into Action
4. Pursuit of Knowledge
5. Creating Wealth
6. Building Your Brand
7. Creating Community
8. Power of Persistence

http://elimindset.com
Ten Keys to Economic Success

–Don Macke, Center for Rural Entrepreneurship

1. Local Responsibility
2. Smart Game Plan
3. Robust Investment
4. Entrepreneurial Development Systems
5. Sustained Efforts
6. Growth Entrepreneurs
Ten Keys to Economic Success

7. Attributes of an Entrepreneurial Economy: Diversity, Resilience, Prosperity
8. Immigrants and New Residents
9. Real Regional Collaboration
10. Civic (government) and Social (nonprofits) Entrepreneurs

www.energizingentrepreneurs.org
WSOS Building Rural Prosperity Project

- USDA Rural Community Development Initiative (RCDI) Grant
- 8 communities, mostly NE Ohio
- 2017–2019
- Goal: Build on local Entrepreneurial Development Systems, common goals
- Core Team (town managers, local Chambers)
- Diverse Steering Committee
Eight Communities

Carrollton, Columbiana, Fostoria, Lodi, Minerva, Sebring, Toronto, Wellsville
Components

- Steering Committee
- Data Collection
- On-Line Community Survey, SWOT
- Identify the Big Issues – Consensus
- Asset and Resource Mapping
- All-Community Meetings
- Action Plans
- Implement – Do Stuff!
The Big Issues

- Business Outreach
- Downtown/Retail/Entrepreneurial Development
- Engagement and Communication
- Community Image, Branding, Placemaking...Quality of Life
- Networks, Linkages, Peer-to-Peer
- Sustaining the Effort
Some Community Specifics

- Arts and Creativity
- River-Based Business
- History and Heritage
- Regional Tourism
- Match Workforce & Job Opportunity
- Sustainable, Resilient Economies
- Parks, Recreation, Activities, Events
Anticipated Outcomes

- New networks, new linkages
- Increased knowledge of resources
- Stronger business base – counseling
- Improved communication
- Improved economic health – jobs, income, tax base, business success
- Exposure to new tools and options
  - Example: Maker Spaces
Outcomes (continued)

- Entrepreneurial opportunities
  - Example: Ice House Training, Roundtables
- Entrepreneurial communities
  - Alignment around common issues, solutions
- Enhanced, Networked Leadership
- Exposure to entrepreneurial principles
- Improved avenues and opportunity for success, building on local assets
Thank you!

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“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

“Always remember that you are absolutely unique. Just like everyone else.”

–Margaret Mead