Rural Economic Development

THE TIME IS NOW

Overview

1. Think positive
2. Create that vision
3. Be willing to expand the possibilities
4. Get started

Think positive:
Challenges create opportunities

➤ Charles City had a problem: Cedar River

Create that vision

➢ If everyone is rowing in the same direction (or, at least, in the same general direction), many more opportunities arise

➢ Prioritize

➢ Support each other

➢ Let people gravitate toward their passions

➢ Celebrate together

Be willing to expand the possibilities

➢ Don't get tunnel vision!

Get started!

➢Momentum starts with one step…

➢Now is the time!
  ➢Significant attention from the state directed toward rural areas – Empower Rural Iowa Initiative, Iowa Rural Development Council

➢Recognize that there will be setbacks & unforeseen obstacles.

Jefferson & Greene County

➢Challenge #1: Aging infrastructure with schools
  ➢Two failed bond attempts
  ➢Recent consolidation
  ➢Declining enrollment

➢Challenge #2: Significant skilled workforce needs
  ➢Major manufacturers
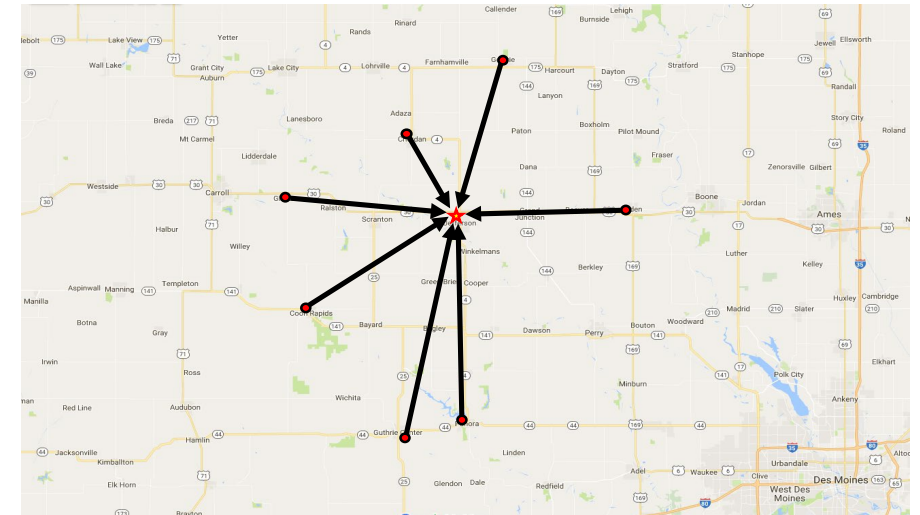 ➢Next generation of farmers

Jefferson & Greene County

➤ Opportunity: Implement a career academy / regional center

➤ Vision: Use schools as a form of economic development

➤ Tracts ("strands") of study:
  ➤ Advanced Manufacturing
  ➤ Agricultural IT/Data Systems
  ➤ IT/Software Development
  ➤ Hospitality/Catering
  ➤ Nursing/Healthcare Sciences
  ➤ Others TBD…

Greene County CSD
Home Of The Rams
Providing A Foundation For Lifelong Learning

IOWA CENTRAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Greene County High School & Career Academy

Greene County High School & Career Academy

Be open to additional possibilities

➤ The Forge by Pillar Technology

➤ Wanted to create a new training pipeline for software development.

➤ Needed a K-12 partner & a community college partner

➤ Needed a rural location

Jefferson Forge: Rehab of historic building into office

Jefferson Forge: Computer Science training program

Jefferson Forge: 25-30 new full-time software development jobs

Get started

- Start with a core group & expand
  - Over 100 individuals helped with the school bond referendum

- Find partner organizations

- Expect unforeseen challenges
  - It won't be easy – persistence & creativity will pay off
  - A few of the Jefferson/Greene County challenges:
    - Financing – 40% more than originally expected
    - Today's Ag economy
    - Consolidation
    - The appraisal gap

Key Factors to Success

➢Multiple stakeholders

➢Learned from previous attempts

➢Public/Private partnerships

➢Persistence/Resilience

➢An existing sense of momentum

Get started!

➢ Momentum starts with one step…

➢ Now is the time!
  ➢ Rural Iowa & Rural America are receiving significant attention
  ➢ There are programs out there & new ones are coming

➢ Small wins set the stage for the next step…

➢ Ideas
  ➢ Public art
  ➢ Streetscaping
  ➢ Mini-grants for signs/painting
  ➢ Local organizations – create or reinforce

Thank you!

Financing

- "Money is never the problem" – Zach Mannheimer

- Be resourceful
  - Public - Local, state, federal
  - Private
  - In-kind
  - Volunteers

- Programs to consider
  - Main Street
    - Challenge Grants
    - CDBG Downtown Revitalization Fund
  - Iowa Economic Development Authority
    - Community Catalyst Building Remediation Program
    - Enhance Iowa
  - Tax Credits
    - Historic Rehabilitation (State)
    - Historic Rehabilitation (Federal)
    - Brownfield/Grayfield Redevelopment (State)
    - Workforce Housing (State)

- More Programs to consider
- Local
  - TIF (City & County)
  - Tax Abatement
  - Non-profit development entities
  - Standalone housing funds
  - Local Banks
- Regional
  - Council of Government (COG) Low-interest loans
- Other State Programs
  - Historic Resource Development Program (IDCA)
  - Derelict Building Program (DNR)
- Other Federal
  - USDA Rural Economic Development Loans & Grants
  - Small Business Association loans
- Utility rebates