

Wyandot County

Building a Stronger Community

Economic Development

Recent Court Rulings Limit Prevailing Wage Requirements

WCOED Dashboard

ODOD Procure Leads	22
WCOED Leads	13
Website Visits	980
New Prospect Site Visits	9
Grant Dollars Submitted	\$972,500
Grant Dollars Approved	\$2,500
Outside Investment brought into the community	\$ 40,000,000
Assisted Manufactures with Equipment Investment Projects	\$11,000,000
Jobs Created or Retained	38
Business Retention & Expansion Visits	65
Business Attraction Marketing Packets Distributed	206

Note - numbers are cumulative estimates from the organizations inception intended to give board members a snapshot of the overall impact.

Dates & Events

- 12/02/09 Using Federal Tax Incentives To Finance Projects
- 12/14/09 [Recovery and Reinvestment Bond Finance Seminar](#)

For details on these programs please visit the [WCOED website Programs, Events, & Dates section](#).



The Ohio Supreme Court recently ruled on two cases which have a substantial impact on Ohio's prevailing wage laws. The first, *Northwestern Ohio Bldg. & Constr. Trades Council v. Ottawa Cty. Improvement Corp.*,¹ held that the use of public funds in a private development project does not make the project subject to prevailing wage merely because public funds are being used for one aspect of it. The second, *Sheet Metal Workers' Internatl. Assn., Local Union No. 33 v. Gene's Refrigeration, Heating & Air Conditioning, Inc.*,² held that Ohio's prevailing wage law applies only to persons who work on the site of a public improvement project. Off site support work for a public works project does not require payment of prevailing wage (<http://www.peck-shaffer.com>).

Ohio Economic Development Association (OEDA) recently conducted a survey to their economic development professional members regarding the impacts of prevailing wage on development projects and job creation. Results of OEDA Prevailing Wage Survey showed the most frequent problem cited was the loss of projects and jobs to other States because prevailing wage requirements made Ohio and local incentives uncompetitive compared to other States not requiring prevailing wages. In addition, it was identified that often companies chose not to undertake new investments and expansions because the costs of prevailing wages on construction were greater than the benefits of the incentives that could be provided. When asked "Do you believe the requirement that companies pay prevailing wages on all aspects of a project if they receive assistance through State and local economic development incentives would be a deterrent to job creation and retention in Ohio?", 96.6 % of the respondents stated that it would be a deterrent to job creation and retention."

As a result of the recent court rulings, the following language has been approved for use in commitment letters and similar correspondence in which prevailing wage requirements are brought to the attention of prospective recipients of state-funded financial assistance. This language has been reviewed with the Department of Commerce.

"In general, prevailing wage shall apply when the Department of Development provides loans and grants to businesses. Prevailing wage will not necessarily apply to the entire project. Prevailing wage shall apply to the categories of construction activities for which public assistance is provided, e.g., site preparation, building construction and renovation, purchase and installation of machinery and equipment. The Ohio Department of Commerce, Division of Labor & Worker Safety, makes all determinations about the specific application of prevailing wage. You may request a prevailing wage determination from the Division of Labor & Worker Safety by completing Prevailing Wage Request Form available at <http://www.com.ohio.gov/laws/> and submitting it as directed on the form."

Director's Column

\$7 Million Allocated for Project Hire.

Project Hometown Investment in Regional Economies (HIRE) and Ohio Learning Accounts (OLA) is collaboration among the Ohio Department of Development (ODOD), Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), the Ohio Board of Regents (OBOR) University System of Ohio, and the local Workforce Investment Boards (WIB)/local One-Stop Systems. Project HIRE is a statewide initiative with funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) to assist dislocated workers in finding employment. Hiring fairs will be held throughout Ohio as part of the annual Workforce Services Month activities to kick off the Project HIRE initiative. Ohio Learning Accounts can be used to provide dislocated workers short-term, on-the-job-training, or a combination of both.

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services will provide lists of both businesses and dislocated workers through systems they currently maintain. ODOD Business Services Representatives will contact targeted industry businesses to find job openings and local One-Stops will identify dislocated job seekers. Employers will interview those dislocated workers that match their needs, with one-on-one interviews conducted at the local One-Stop (or where convenient for the employers) as part of the Hiring Fair.

Ohio Learning Accounts bolster pre-qualified job seekers' existing skills with additional training, making these candidates more attractive to prospective employers, beyond what the job seeker could have accomplished on his or her own. The job training will be funded through the use of Ohio Learning Accounts (OLA), which will provide dislocated workers up to \$6,000 for short-term training which may include classroom training resulting in an industry-recognized, portable credential and/or on-the-job training (OJT) in concert with the hiring employer.

Total funding of up to \$7 million will be issued to Workforce Investment Areas to serve 1,200 to 2,000 job seekers, on a first come, first serve basis, who have lost their primary source of income. All training must be completed by December 31, 2010. OLA draft policy will be forthcoming. The employer may also be eligible for tax credits, such as the Work Opportunity Tax Credit.

Dislocated workers employed through Project HIRE on-the-job training must remain employed with the business for a minimum of six months after they training is completed with the employer. The local Workforce Investment Board (WIB) will document the success rate and make a final Project HIRE program report to ODOD. In addition, a final OLA fiscal report will be made to ODJFS. Thanks to this collaboration, employers will find people with the skills they need and Ohio's economy will improve.

For more information [click here](#).

Welcome New Members!

- **AEP Ohio**
- **National Lime & Stone**
- **Double K Sanitation**
- **Kohler Surveying**

Business Attraction Program Update

Wyandot County Economic Development is committed to a proactive approach to economic growth and community development. We are continually exploring opportunities to match potential business attraction efforts with existing supply chains in our local economy. As a result, we are constantly researching products and services coming into Wyandot County and what products and services are being sent out of the community.

Using this systematic approach, a number of local companies already supplying products and services to the solar industry were identified. Working closely with these companies WCOED developed a comprehensive marketing package highlighting the "value added" our community has to offer the solar industry. Since, this package has been distributed to approximately 200 contacts including manufactures, research and development, site selectors, and the ODOD Energy Office. We are already receiving feedback and have plans to research and implement a second phase of target marketing. It is WCOED's goal to continue pursuing opportunities that will result in added investments into the local economy, while strengthening existing businesses in our community.

How Did We Get Here: From BR&E to WCOED

Economic development in Wyandot County has evolved over the years as the county has shifted from an agrarian to a manufacturing orientation. Today we face another shift, this time from manufacturing to technology. These shifts have been anticipated by the business leaders in the community as they have formed various development organizations to pool their ideas and resources, both personal and community.

One of these early organizations was Upper United Development Corporation (UUDC) which was formed in 1969 by a group of ten Upper Sandusky businessmen. This organization established one of the county's first industrial parks on the north side of Upper. Unfortunately, this effort was seen by many as an individual financial opportunity rather than a community wide economic development effort.

As the fortunes of the county ebbed and flowed with those of the country in general, emphasis on local economic development did the same. As an outgrowth of the leadership provided by Ohio State Extension Service, the community leaders became aware of the need for more broadly based economic development. While growth was occurring around Wyandot County, growth within the county was stagnant. During the decades of 1970 and 1980, many, small, locally owned businesses began downsizing and others ceased doing business.

Based on this profile of the county, the OSU Extension Service assembled a group of volunteers from across Wyandot County who were interested in the economic survival of the county and created the Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) taskforce in 1987. The goals of the taskforce were twofold: (1) to develop ways to keep and grow the businesses currently operating and (2) to bring new businesses to Wyandot County. The taskforce received a grant to conduct an economic survey of the county and in 1990 produced a comprehensive report on the economy of Wyandot County.

Concurrent with BR&E, the Pioneer (Seed Corn) Foundation sponsored a rural community economic development program. Upper Sandusky was one of 12 small rural communities in the mid west selected to participate in this program. Twelve individuals representing a wide segment of the community, including elected officials, volunteered to participate. The 12 communities met together three times over a period of a year for a total of twelve days to share development ideas with one another and with a panel of experts. The local members also met bi-monthly. The result of this program was the development of a strategy for economic development geared toward the greater Upper Sandusky community.

With these programs in place and with the collaboration of many others across the county and state, we had some success in the early 1990's with the expansion and attraction of auto suppliers like Bridgestone, M-Tek, Tower, Defiance Precision Products, and Guardian. Unfortunately, much of this expansion was tied to a single sector of the economy, the automobile industry, and as that industry has declined, the county has suffered from the fallout.

How Did We Get Here: From BR&E to WCOED (Cont.)

The BR&E taskforce became dormant during the mid-1990's as the local economy improved only to be revived in 2004 under the auspices of the OSU Extension Office and its Extension Agent, Chris Bruynis, when the economy started slowing and manufacturing moved south to Mexico and offshore to China. The goals were the same as before, but this time the emphasis was placed on establishing a focused effort on sustained and diversified economic development throughout the county and providing continuity to those efforts. Initial work was done by volunteers who met monthly. The volunteers quickly came to the conclusion that there was more to do than they had time for.

Information solicited from the local business community by means of questionnaires and face-to-face interviews also indicated that there was a need for a sustained economic development activity in Wyandot County led by a full time Economic Development Director. Different models (private, public, public/private partnership) for a full time Economic Development Office were investigated. After multiple meetings with both private business and public officials on potential organizational structures and financial support, the BR&E decided a public/private partnership was the preferred path and began an active, community-wide information and fund raising campaign. After approximately six months, sufficient monies were committed to pursue the next steps of filing for incorporation as a 501(c)(6) non-profit organization and hiring a full time Director. The Wyandot County Office of Economic Development, Inc. (WCOED) was established in October 2008 and all activities of the BR&E Taskforce were formally handed over to WCOED and its new Executive Director, Eric Romich.

As we look back over the past year since the Wyandot County Office of Economic Development, Inc 2 was established, we are convinced that we have chosen the best path for the continued growth and prosperity of Wyandot County. The seeds we have sown have already begun to bear fruit! The organization continues to grow and we currently have 25 active members supporting the efforts.

Doug Frisch and Gary Ward