



STRATEGIC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Centre County, Pennsylvania

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The Challenge

The Chamber of Business and Industry of Centre County (CBICC) is the leading economic development organization for Centre County, Pennsylvania. Penn State University's University Park campus is located in the heart of Centre County and is the primary economic driver in the Centre Region. In the early 2000s, Centre County suffered job losses through the closing of two large manufacturing facilities. As a result, the CBICC charged Delta with the task of developing a strategic economic development plan that would proactively enable countywide collaboration between both the "town" and "gown" communities. This collaboration would provide an opportunity to attract new businesses, explore opportunities for existing business expansions, and , promote technology-based economic development initiatives associated with the I-99 Corridor Keystone Innovation Zone (KIZ), by leveraging the technology and research of Penn State.

The Solution

Delta began the process by convening a group of stakeholders to help guide the development of the economic development road map. The stakeholders were representatives of businesses and organizations that would be influential in implementing Centre County's future economic development strategic plan. A combination of statistical research, data extrapolation and analysis, stakeholder interviews, review of existing studies, and benchmarking comparisons was used to develop the elements in the plan. The Centre County Strategic Economic Development Plan includes recommendations to bolster workforce development, increase two-year technical training, provide venture capital fuel for new business start-ups, facilitate technology transfer, and streamline economic development services. Plan elements were prioritized with input from community leaders regarding their perceptions of both the potential economic impact and level of immediacy.

