

# Ocala/Marion County Economic Action Team Key Initiatives Status Update October 2009

At the October 29<sup>th</sup> Economic Growth Summit which convened nearly 100 business executives, community leaders and elected officials, a twelve-point plan was activated to help stimulate growth in our economy. The Ocala/Marion County Economic Action Team is aggressively implementing this plan and has attached a status update on their activities.

1. Expand Dislocated Worker Funding, Workforce Board Funding and Training Grants
2. Provide Training and Educational Resources for Dislocated Workers
3. Infrastructure Improvement, Creation of New Business Parks including Ocala International Airport
4. Impact Fee & Permit Mitigation Relief for Economic Development Projects
5. Define Specific Areas in the Community for Redevelopment for Business Improvement Zones and Pass State Legislation for an Enterprise Zone
6. Expedited Permitting by State and Local Governments
7. Competitive Rates and Policies for Ocala Utility Services
8. Intensify the EDC's Business Recruitment and Marketing Efforts
9. Strengthen Business Retention Programs
10. Support the Chamber's "Buy Local" Initiative
11. Improve Small Business Assistance Delivery System and Entrepreneurial Development Capability
12. Explore "Green" Industry Attraction as a Possible Target Industry

Initiative	Description	Lead Organization (s)	Status Updates
Expand Dislocated Worker Funding, Workforce Board Funding and Training Grants	Provide immediate safety net for dislocated workers and pursue avenues for training to help them secure new jobs/career paths	Workforce Connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workforce Connection has expanded “safety net” services for dislocated workers in conjunction with the monthly job fairs to include many community resource organizations, partnering with the County and Dept. of Financial Services on an upcoming Housing Help event on October 10, and distributing health, mental health and public insurance resources to the community.</li> <li>• Workforce Connection has recently submitted five retraining grant applications for a total of \$5 million. These grants will be used to re-train and up skill our unemployed workforce and to provide much needed assistance with support services.</li> <li>• Marion County’s Participation in the Subsidized Employment program as developed in conjunction with Workforce Connection committed a minimum of \$500,000 in matching funds to meet the criteria for a 20% match as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Tax Act of 2009.</li> </ul> <p><b>October Update:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The City is contributing \$200,000 in matching funds for subsidized job creation.</li> <li>• The County completed a list of jobs, which qualify for the Subsidized Employment Program for Commissioners to review. Once approved the County will contract with Workforce Connection for reimbursement of \$.80 on the \$1 up to \$40,000 for up to three months for each job created.</li> <li>• Workforce has funded CFCC courses for dislocated workers in Green Construction, Green Electrical Crafts, LEED certification, Solar Installation and Weatherization/Retrofitting.</li> </ul>

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Provide Training and Educational Resources for Dislocated Workers	Access and availability for training to pursue new career paths	Workforce Connection/CFCC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workforce Connection has enrolled 1,665 individuals in training for \$1.1 million and projects to award another \$1.8 million by December 2009.</li> <li>• CFCC has accommodated all students who have wanted to enroll, increasing its enrollment 20% this term and 40% since fall, 2006. Special financial provisions are available for dislocated workers and many are enrolled at the college.</li> <li>• CFCC is partnering with Workforce Connection on various short-term training programs and support for dislocated workers seeking new opportunities.</li> <li>• CFCC is seeking grant support to initiate several new degree programs for which there is a high job demand.</li> </ul> <p><b>October Update:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workforce Connection assisted with an expansion of a DCF Call Center that has created 75 jobs in Ocala. Those positions have been filled and training at CFCC and CTAE will begin October 12th with a proposed date to open the facility in mid-November.</li> <li>• CFCC is working closely with Workforce Connection on training for Green Jobs. Their BA degree application will be submitted for approval the next of October 12th.</li> </ul>
Infrastructure Improvement, Creation of New Business Parks Including Ocala International Airport	Become more competitive with other communities by creating “shovel-ready” sites	City of Ocala/Marion County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moving forward with positioning the Magna project to a shovel-ready condition. The City and County held a joint workshop on September 22nd to provide input on the next steps as identified by staff. (Continues)</li> </ul>

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<p>Infrastructure Improvement, Creation of New Business Parks Including Ocala International Airport</p>	<p>Become more competitive with other communities by creating “shovel-ready” sites</p>	<p>City of Ocala/Marion County</p>	<p>(Continued)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The City of Ocala is working to establish new business parks at the Ocala International Airport and the Magna property (NE section of I-75 and US 27) which will provide “shovel ready” sites for new prospect companies leading to significant short and long term job creation.</li> <li>• Also, the City has received a grant from the Economic Development Administration to construct a portion of NW 44th Avenue that will allow several businesses to expand creating over 70 new jobs.</li> </ul> <p><b>October Update:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The City and County approved a joint resolution to become engaged partners on infrastructure planning for the Magna property.</li> <li>• The County approved the EGFIG grant for the Rasmussen expansion on SR 200 next to West Marion Community Hospital.</li> <li>• The City will begin infrastructure improvements to the Airport property in February 2010.</li> </ul>
<p>Impact Fee &amp; Permit Mitigation Relief for Economic Development Projects</p>	<p>Remove barriers that impede the process for companies that would create jobs in our community</p>	<p>City of Ocala/Marion County</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The City of Ocala through its “Economic Investment Program” creates economic growth within the Ocala city limits and utility service areas through both the attraction of new business and encouragement of existing business to grow. The City may, on a case-by-case basis, provide financial assistance to or on behalf of a company where a positive return on investment to the City and/or the community can be determined.</li> <li>• Marion County is revising the EDFIG program to include provisions for payment of Impact Fees and Utility connection Fees and Capital Improvement charges on behalf of qualified applicants. (Continues)</li> </ul>

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Impact Fee & Permit Mitigation Relief for Economic Development Projects	Remove barriers that impede the process for companies that would create jobs in our community	City of Ocala/Marion County	<p>(Continued)</p> <p><b>October Update:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marion County is drafting a proposed revision to the EDFIG program which would create the option for projects to apply for some or all of their impact fees to be paid on their behalf for projects of economic significance.</li> <li>• The City of Ocala will be considering impact fee mitigation for water and sewer for infill and environmental projects.</li> <li>• The City will begin the bid process for the 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue expansion project in December.</li> </ul>
Define Specific Areas in the Community for Redevelopment for Business Improvement Zones and Pass State Legislation for an Enterprise Zone	Generate incentives to entice companies to expand/locate to Ocala	City of Ocala/Marion County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governor Crist signed Enterprise Zone legislation at Lockheed Martin in May</li> <li>• Adoption of the Recovery Zone designation. This gives the County the opportunity to qualify for additional bonding opportunities under the American Recovery and (Continues)</li> </ul>
Define Specific Areas in the Community for Redevelopment for Business Improvement Zones and Pass State Legislation for an Enterprise Zone (Continued)	Generate incentives to entice companies to expand/locate to Ocala (Continued)	City of Ocala/Marion County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reinvestment Tax Act of 2009. These opportunities include tax-exempt private activity Recovery Zone Facility Bonds and Recovery Zone Economic Development Bonds which provide a 45% tax credit of interest for public issuance.</li> <li>• Seeking expansion of the zone to include the airport development</li> <li>• The City of Ocala is working with the Office of Tourism, Trade and Economic Development to designate an Enterprise Zone in West Ocala through which a variety of special state incentives are available to businesses created new jobs.</li> </ul>

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Define Specific Areas in the Community for Redevelopment for Business Improvement Zones and Pass State Legislation for an Enterprise Zone (Continued)	Generate incentives to entice companies to expand/locate to Ocala (Continued)	City of Ocala/Marion County	<p>(Continued)</p> <p><b>October Update:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The City is satisfied with response from the Governor's office (OTTED) regarding assistance with the Governor's Closing Fund for business attraction.</li> <li>The State has approved the waiver to allow the Airport to be included in the boundaries of the Enterprise Zone.</li> </ul>
Expedited Permitting by State and Local Governments	Remove barriers that would impede the process for companies that would create jobs in our community	City of Ocala/Marion County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revising Marion County's EDFIG program to include provisions for payment of Impact Fees and Utility connection Fees and Capital Improvement charges on behalf of qualified applicants.</li> </ul> <p><b>October Update:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marion County is working on a plan to create and expedite the permitting structure for economically significant projects in Marion County. Presentation of an Ordinance to the BCC is anticipated by the end of the year.</li> </ul>
Federal Legislative Support	Determine availability of Federal programs to assist with local recovery efforts	Congressman Cliff Stearns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assisting Marion County, City of Ocala, CFCC, Workforce Connection and others to receive timely federal funding including several recent successful grants related to our economy.</li> <li>Cutting the red tape - with the Federal Aviation Administration to get quicker siting and funding to complete the City of Ocala's Air Traffic Control Tower and with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to have the Heart of Florida Medical Center designated a Federally Qualified Health Center.</li> </ul>

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Federal Legislative Support	Determine availability of Federal programs to assist with local recovery efforts	Congressman Cliff Stearns	<p><b>(Continued)</b></p> <p><b>October Update:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marion County federal funding requests submitted include: Marion County road and other construction, Florida Institute for Human and Machine Cognition, CFCC, Devereux Kids.</li> <li>• Federal grant work with Marion County community includes: Ft. King and the National Park Service, Well Florida Council - HRSA, Builders Association of North Central Florida - Dept. of Labor, CLM Workforce - Dept. of Labor. Federal grants recently awarded: City of Ocala and CFCC.</li> <li>• Working to bring the Department of Commerce International Trade Specialist to assist the Marion County Chamber of Commerce and our businesses break into the export market.</li> <li>• As Ranking Member of the U.S. House of Representatives Communications, Technology &amp; the Internet Subcommittee working to keep the Internet free of government mandates -- including those that would harm small business, consumers, competition and our local economy -- by opposing the Federal Communications Commission's "net neutrality" plan.</li> </ul>
State Financial Services	Determine availability of State finance programs and initiative for local displaced workers	CFO Alex Sink  For updates on recovery efforts through <a href="#">CFO Sink</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CFO Sink has made herself available to the economic response team and has made staff available to the team as well.</li> <li>• On Wednesday, September 2, DFS partnered with Workforce Connection to hold an Access to Health Care Workshop for the Unemployed and the Uninsured.</li> </ul>

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State Financial Services	Determine availability of State finance programs and initiative for local displaced workers	CFO Alex Sink	<p>(Continued)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On Tuesday, September 15, DFS took part in a Workforce Connection's Job and Community Resource Fair to discuss insurance and retirement issues with consumers.</li> <li>On Saturday, October 10, DFS will hold a Florida Housing Help workshop to allow consumers to meet directly with lenders and HUD counselors to discuss options for avoiding foreclosure.</li> </ul>
State Legislative Support	Support local initiatives for economic recovery	<p>Representative Kurt Kelly</p> <p>For updates on recovery efforts through <a href="#">Representative Kelly</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the members of the economic action team with all legislative and state matters in working with the Governor's office and OTTED.</li> <li>Expand state agencies to bring outsourced work to Marion County citizens.</li> <li>Continue to show leadership, encourage citizen support and provide resources to all levels of government.</li> <li>Work to find regional jobs for Marion County citizens.</li> </ul>
Competitive Rates and Policies for Ocala Utility Services	Remove barriers that impede the process for companies seeking to create jobs in our community	City of Ocala	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The city remains diligent in offering competitive utility services at competitive rates. For example, the city recently passed an ordinance extending the period of time before an account is considered late and allowing security deposit extensions. The city is currently performing separate electric and water-sewer rate studies which will consider revisions to how impact fees are charged and whether reductions, waivers, or suspensions should be offered. Also, the city is in the process of hiring a consultant to perform an efficiency study of the electric utility. In addition, the city has established a volunteer Electric Oversight Committee comprised of local business representatives serving in an advisory capacity to the utility and City Council.</li> </ul>

Initiative	Description	Lead Organization (s)	Status Updates
Intensify the EDC's Business Recruitment & Marketing efforts	Recruit solid companies to expand and/or move to the community, creating quality jobs	EDC/Workforce Connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In an unprecedented collaboration with Dept. of Children and Families, City of Ocala and Marion County. The EDC &amp; Workforce Connection was successful in locating a new DCF call center in Ocala with 75 new subsidized jobs in the County. Workforce will also be the first in Florida to roll out a subsidized work project in Citrus, Levy and Marion Counties offering hundreds of temporary jobs. This process is slated to be replicated throughout the State.</li> <li>• The EDC is working closely with Enterprise Florida, SLC's and other business influencers to develop more prospect lead generation.</li> <li>• The EDC Prospect Development Program utilizes marketing research to identify and contact business prospects and encourage them to consider Ocala/Marion County as a business destination for expansion or relocation.</li> <li>• The EDC developed new community branding to communicate our strengths/assets.</li> <li>• The EDC is coordinating community participation in industry trade shows to scout potential business prospects and get Ocala/Marion County on their radar.</li> </ul> <p><b>October Update:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The EDC is currently working 18 new and 7 existing projects with the City and County to create jobs for our residents.</li> <li>• The EDC is pursuing options for designated improvement zones layered with the Enterprise zones to assist companies that are willing to create jobs within certain areas.</li> <li>• Recent site location consultant's event was successful. A possible project in the next few months is likely as a result.</li> </ul>

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Intensify the EDC's Business Recruitment & Marketing Efforts	Recruit solid companies to expand and/or move to the community, creating quality jobs	EDC/Workforce Connection	<p><b>October Update: (Continued)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The EDC and the City will be unveiling the new Ocala Business Park at the airport with a press conference and booth presence at the 2009 trade show of the National Business Aviation Association.</li> <li>The EDC will hire a VP of Business Recruitment and Expansion to help intensify business recruitment and marketing efforts.</li> <li>Workforce and EDC are partnering on a potential pilot program using federal subsidized employment funding in the private sector. Workforce CEO Rusty Skinner spoke to a legislative committee on October 6 regarding ways the process could be streamlined for the private sector.</li> </ul>
Strengthen Business Retention Programs	Effectively communicate available programs that could assist local companies with growth and job creation	EDC For updates on recovery efforts through the <a href="#">EDC</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilize existing industry program and EDC communication tools to educate local companies on EDC support services.</li> <li>EDC staff is currently reviewing 12-13 projects "in the works" to accelerate their commitments to relocate or expand in Marion County.</li> </ul> <p><b>October Update:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EDC staff completed 102 industry visits and garnered important economic intelligence concerning local business conditions.</li> </ul>
Support the Chamber's "Buy Local" Initiative	Keep money spent by local businesses and individuals in the community	ALL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Ocala/Marion County Chamber of Commerce launched a <i>Buy Local</i> campaign that spans both private (retail sales and business to business sales) as well as the public sector procurement effort by encouraging consumers, local businesses and municipal government to adopt a meaningful <i>buy local</i> strategy as a means to contribute to a strengthening our local economy.</li> </ul>

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Support the Chamber's "Buy Local" Initiative	Keep money spent by local businesses and individuals in the community	ALL	<p><b>October Update: (Continued)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chamber is working with City/County on new policies and streamlining the bid process for buy local campaign and hoping the school board and large companies will follow suit.</li> </ul>
Improve Small Business Assistance Delivery System and Entrepreneurial Development Capability	Effectively communicate available programs that could assist local small businesses and/or entrepreneurs with growth and job creation	Chamber/ Small Business Development Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and stage Small Business Recovery series: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Selling to The Government (with City, County, School Board)</li> <li>Curriculum for Small Business</li> <li>Recovery including workshops on cash flow, contract renegotiation, sales training and marketing (with CFCC)</li> <li>"Finding Financing" Workshops (with SBDC)</li> </ol> </li> <li>Use Principals of Economic Gardening to identify businesses within Enterprise Zone to expand business resulting in job expansion and increase profitability. (With City of Ocala)</li> <li>Provide education and opportunities for small businesses to identify global opportunities for their products, goods and services. Continue Buy Local Messaging and Advocacy for retail and for Government Procurement to save jobs</li> </ul> <p><b>October Update:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Chamber is coordinating an Export Best Practices Workshop in October to help companies expand business and grow jobs through international trade.</li> <li>The Chamber has hired VP to implement Entrepreneurship and Economic Gardening programs.</li> </ul>
Federal Legislative Support	Determine availability of Federal programs to assist with local recovery efforts	Congressman Cliff Stearns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs on funding the ongoing construction (current jobs) and eventually staffing (new jobs) of The Villages Outpatient Clinic -- Marion County's largest current construction project slated for completion late spring of 2010.</li> </ul>

Initiative	Description	Lead Organization (s)	Status Updates
Explore “Green” Industry Attraction as a Possible Target Industry	Research to determine our competitiveness and possible strategies to attract companies in this industry	EDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The EDC commissioned market research to determine our competitiveness and possible opportunities in this area</li> </ul>

Organization Contacts for Media/Public Information				
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