



# IMPROVE REGIONAL IMAGE

## ***Benefit to the Community***

Improving the public image of Central Arkansas will encourage economic growth, spur investment and improve the quality of life for District residents.

## ***Issue***

The District's public image has handicapped efforts to recruit businesses, industry and public and private investment needed for sustainable economic growth.

## ***Strategy***

Establish a systematic, collaborative and regional approach to reshaping the region's image that conveys a positive investment climate and a unique and desirable quality of life.

## ***Action Steps:***

- Work with public and private businesses, chambers of commerce, local and county governments, and non-profit organizations to create a collaborative region wide approach to reshaping the area's public image.
- Systematically encourage websites focused on economic growth and investment and recruiting new businesses and industry to include more information on the positive aspects of the Region's economic and community life.
- Work with consulting company Development Consultants Incorporated (DCI) hired by Metro Little Rock Alliance (MLRA) to build a positive image of Little Rock Metro area.
- Locate and publicize economic success stories from cities, towns and local communities.
- Insure that the information and stories designed to reshape the image of the region reflect the concerns and interests of GenX, Millennials and Gen Z.
- Make systematic use of social media outlets to highlight economic success stories.
- Work with small businesses, local companies and industries interested in community profile stories that highlight economic growth and community development.

## ***Responsible Parties:***

- CAPDD staff
- City and county government officials and elected leaders
- DCI

## ***Resources Needed:***

- MLRA, chambers of commerce
- Selected innovative businesses and industries
- DCI
- Non-profit organizations that promote a positive image for the District

## ***Estimated Completion Date:***

- On-going

# 2

# IMPROVE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

## ***Benefit to the Community***

Improving transportation will result in a better working environment for business and industry, increased job opportunities, a more stable workforce and a better quality of life.

## ***Issue***

A lack of effective and reliable transportation options limits the effectiveness of area business and industry and negatively affects job opportunities and work attendance.

## ***Strategy***

Increase transportation options for business, industry and area residents.

## ***Action Steps:***

- Explore regional mass transit options with Rock Region METRO.
- Extend Rock Region METRO's innovative Van Pool program to rural areas of the region.
- Work with area employers to encourage them to provide low cost transportation options for transporting their employees to work.
- Publicize the number and nature of existing direct flights out of Little Rock Airport
- Encourage the airlines to establish more direct flights out of Little Rock Airport.

## ***Responsible Parties:***

- CAPDD staff
- State and local public officials

## ***Resources:***

- CAPDD staff
- Rock Region METRO
- Little Rock Airport Commission
- Airlines

## ***Estimated Completion Date:***

- On-going

# 3

## IMPROVE HEALTH CARE AVAILABILITY TO AREA RESIDENTS

### ***Benefit to the Community***

Improving health care will result in a healthier and more productive population with an improved quality of life.

### ***Issue***

Lack of access to effective health care outside more populated urban areas has resulted in a less productive workforce and a diminished quality of life for residents in many areas of central Arkansas.

### ***Strategy***

Improve access to effective health care.

### ***Action Steps:***

- Encourage the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) to place more medical residents into local area clinics.
- Increase the number of nurses and doctors in area medical facilities.
- Determine if the DRA's "Delta Doctors" program can address medical personnel shortages.
- Increase access to mental health treatment for area residents.
- Promote use of new technologies that improve patient access to medical personnel and treatments.

### ***Responsible Parties:***

- CAPDD staff
- DRA

### ***Resources:***

- Area Hospitals
- Area universities and colleges
- DRA
- Medical clinics
- Medicaid insurance

### ***Estimated Completion Date:***

- On-going

# 4

# ACQUIRE MORE POTENTIAL INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT SITES

## ***Benefit to the Community***

Increasing responsible and sustainable industrial development creates good paying jobs.

## ***Issue***

Lack of identifiable potential industrial sites with appropriate resources hampers attempts to recruit both large and small-scale industrial businesses.

## ***Strategy***

Work across jurisdictional lines and boundaries to acquire potential sites that could benefit residents in large segments of the region.

## ***Action Steps:***

- Identify and catalogue potential development sites within the region.
- Support and encourage the development of Brownfield sites.
- Educate local and county officials about the advantages of regional cooperation and investing in sites that lie outside their immediate jurisdiction.
- Acquaint city, local and county officials with the terms of Amendment 82 to encourage regional approaches to site development that require collaboration between cities, towns and counties.
- Convene community meetings to explain the benefits of regional economic cooperation to area residents.
- Make local officials aware of the need for public-private partnerships.
- Convince private property owners of the need to establish suitable development sites to attract industry.
- Establish a pool of state funds to help communities and regions develop suitable sites for industrial development.

## ***Responsible Parties:***

- CAPDD staff
- Arkansas Economic Development Commission (AEDC)
- Local city and county officials
- County Economic Development Directors

## ***Resources:***

- Public and private utilities
- County economic development directors
- Relevant state legislators and senators

## ***Estimated Completion Date:***

- On-going



# CREATE A MORE EMPLOYABLE WORKFORCE

## ***Benefit to the Community***

Increased employment will encourage economic and community development, decrease out migration and improve the quality of life for District residents.

## ***Issue***

Many District employers consistently complain that a significant number of local residents lack the skills and motivation to succeed in the existing job market.

## ***Strategy***

Work with employers and educators to develop training programs and job placement strategies that reflect the rapidly changing job market of the region.

## ***Action Steps:***

- Foster incumbent worker training for occupations that are rapidly innovating or at increased risk for automation.
- Increase non-traditional and accelerated study programs for adults.
- Work closely with area community colleges and technical schools to develop training focused on skill-based certificates.
- Educate area business about Office of Skills Development (OSD) grants and the opportunities they provide for workforce training.
- Promote North Little Rock School District's (NLRSD) 'Center of Excellence' as a potential model for career-based training for area high schools.
- Work with the new Saline County Technical Education Center to help area business see the Center as a valuable resource for training and recruiting future employees.
- Collaborate with the Arkansas Apprenticeship Pathway Initiative (AAPI) to help promote the 600 plus new apprenticeships available under the grant AAPI received from the Department of Labor.
- Collaborate with the Department of Workforce Services (ADWS) to develop and implement a survey of area businesses to determine their workforce needs.

## ***Responsible Parties:***

- CAPDD staff
- Local city and county officials

## ***Resources:***

- NLRSD
- Chambers of commerce
- Area technical schools, community colleges and universities
- Arkansas Department of Career Education (ACE), OSD
- ADWS
- AAPI

## ***Estimated Completion Date:***

- On-going

# 6

# INCREASE AFFORDABLE HOUSING

## ***Benefit to the Community***

More affordable housing will encourage economic and community development, decrease out migration and improve the quality of life for District residents.

## ***Issue***

A lack of affordable housing outside more populated urban areas makes it more difficult for new businesses or industries to locate in the region.

## ***Strategy***

Help communities understand affordable housing and the need for building more of it.

## ***Action Steps:***

- Develop a working definition of affordable housing linked to the housing market in each community.
- Meet with Rausch Coleman Homes to explore their approach to building low cost affordable housing.
- Compile a list of reliable builders and developers interested in providing low cost affordable housing, particularly multi-family and single family dwellings in rural areas.
- Work with area banks to raise awareness of the need for affordable housing and develop new and innovative methods for securing financing.
- Work with non-profit organizations, public schools and community colleges to establish (or enhance existing) financial education programs for area residents.
- Assist local housing authorities with pursuing resources and funding through the Arkansas Development Finance Authority (ADFA) and other agencies

## ***Responsible Parties:***

- CAPDD staff
- Local city and county officials
- Local housing authorities

## ***Resources:***

- Rausch Coleman Homes
- Arkansas Home Builders Association (AHBA)
- Area bankers
- Area title companies
- Area realtors
- Area high schools and community colleges
- Local city and county officials
- Relevant non-profit organizations
- Local housing authorities

## ***Estimated Completion Date:***

- On-going



# IMPROVE PUBLIC SAFETY

## ***Benefit to the Community***

Greater safety enhances quality of life and improves community image.

### ***Issue 1***

Safety services, particularly in rural areas, need to be upgraded and modernized.

### ***Strategy***

Raise awareness of the need for towns and communities to assess and improve the effectiveness of their emergency services including police, fire and 911.

### ***Action Steps:***

- Research ‘best practices’ used by states that provide effective and comprehensive 911 services.
- Explore the options provided by new state legislation focused on establishing ‘Next Generation’ wireless/internet based 911 services.
- Secure funding for new 911 technologies.
- Secure funding for updating rural 911 services.
- Provide training support for rural police and fire departments.

### ***Issue 2***

Many area communities must be better prepared to respond and recover from natural disasters.

### ***Strategy***

Increase the availability and effectiveness of Emergency Management services.

### ***Action Steps:***

- Raise awareness of the need for towns and communities to improve their Disaster Recovery Preparedness plans and procedures.
- Work with County Emergency Directors and the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management (ADEM) to update or create Disaster Response and Recovery plans at the county and municipal level.
- Assist local communities with locating resources to pay for training of critically needed Emergency Management personnel.

### ***Responsible Parties:***

- CAPDD staff
- County Emergency Directors
- ADEM
- Local county, city and municipal officials

### ***Resources:***

- ADEM
- Local county, city and municipal officials
- AEDC Division of Rural Services

### ***Estimated Completion Date:***

- On-going

# 8

# IMPROVE REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

## ***Benefit to the Community***

Economic growth, enhanced safety, increased mobility and an improved quality of life.

## ***Issue***

Critical aspects of the District's essential infrastructure need repair, updating or rebuilding.

## ***Strategy***

Improve water, sewer, transportation and industrial infrastructure and extend broadband coverage.

## ***Action Steps:***

- Conduct an inventory of potential traditional and non-traditional funding for infrastructural needs available from state and federal sources.
- Convene all local, state and federal infrastructural professionals and policy leaders to identify priorities and develop a cost effective short term and long term approach to strengthening and expanding the district's infrastructure.
- Extend utilities and improve roads to existing industrial sites, especially ports.
- Provide more rail sites.
- Educate county and local officials to the difficulty of convincing a company or industry to invest in a site without adequate infrastructure.
- Meet with region's telecommunication providers to explore options for extending broadband coverage to underserved rural areas.
- Explore the feasibility of creating logistics parks.

## ***Responsible Parties:***

- CAPDD staff
- Local county, city and municipal officials
- District, state and federal infrastructure professionals
- Telecommunication providers

## ***Resources:***

- CAPDD staff
- Local county, city and municipal officials
- District, state and federal infrastructure professionals
- Telecommunication providers

## ***Estimated Completion Date:***

- On-going