

**Sabine County Economic Development Progress Report**  
**August 1-August 31, 2016**  
**Prepared by Charlie Dromgoole**

- Attended the Sabine County Economic Development meeting on August 18, 2016 and presented group with short-term goals for economic development and a draft for an existing business economic development survey.
- Working on getting the Business Retention Survey set up to send electronically to local businesses to learn of their needs. Copy of the survey is attached to this report.
- A copy of short-term goals is also attached to this report.
- Followed up with Governor's Office on the Tourism Assessment of Sabine County.
- Worked with Roger Gray to develop a hotel occupancy contract with the Sabine County Chamber of Commerce to be presented to Sabine County Commissioner's Court.
- Did research and design work on a push card (information piece) on Sabine County for use at the International Council of Shopping Centers Deal Making Show in Dallas October 3-5, 2016. Will have draft to Judge Melton and Don Iles first week of September.
- Visited with John Toliver of Toledo Bend Lake Association on ways to promote the designation of the Best Bass Fishing Lake in the US in 2015 and 2016 as well as needs that the TBLA sees for the area. Mr. Toliver also provided the photo to be used on the push card.
- Made a proposal to Ann Galasi with the Sabine River Authority to assist in the funding of the Hotel Feasibility Study. Should receive a response during the first week of September
- Have placed calls to the Director of Real Estate for Shopko to learn of their current expansion plans for Texas. Have not been able to connect.
- Attended a seminar by Port of Houston Authority on Foreign Trade Zones to learn about the actions needed for the development of a Foreign Trade Zone in Sabine County.
- Continuing to conduct research on and making phone calls to companies that operate call centers to learn what Sabine County needs to do to attract a call center.
- Making calls to various contacts around the state to let them know of my involvement with Sabine County.
- Discussed potential available to Sabine County with Governor's Office of Economic Development & Tourism.
- Will attend the SET program final meeting in Center on September 14, 2016

**SABINE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
PROGRAM OF WORK  
Prepared by Charlie Dromgoole**

**I. Build / Strengthen / Leverage Trade Ally Relationships**

- ☐ Establish relationships and meet with the DETCOG, Sabine River Authority, Texas Forest Country Partnership, state and federal elected officials and economic development agencies and other key partners on behalf of Sabine County.
- ☐ Establish relationships with real estate professionals; civic and business leaders; utilities, banks, educational institutions, architect & engineering firms, contractors on behalf of Sabine County.
- ☐ Help to define and create a Sabine County Economic Development Advisory Council (SCEDAC) to assist with ED strategy development and identification of opportunities.
- ☐ Communicate and coordinate with all economic development partners and leverage those relationships to create opportunities.
- ☐ **Consultant's role is to advocate for ED, serve as initial contact BUT, most importantly, facilitate a collaborative team approach.**

**II. Economic Development Advocacy.**

- ☐ Work with trade allies and SCEDAC to assess County's economic development strengths and weaknesses.
- ☐ Review the development project approval and permitting process for opportunities to streamline, improve efficiency and increase customer satisfaction
- ☐ Stay current on all relevant state and local laws, regulations and ordinances and recommend changes, or new legislation, necessary to encourage development.
- ☐ **Help to build a positive and competitive business environment / Strengthen the Public -Private Partnership / and grow County's reputation as a "Good Place to do Business".**

**III. Economic Profiling**

- ☐ Research the cost to create a Business and Economic Development section for County's website to include data and information useful to business attraction.
- ☐ List the inventory of buildings and sites in appropriate local, regional and state databases.
- ☐ Research the cost to create a "Sabine County" E-brochure and basic community profile.

**IV. Economic Development Planning, Strategies and Execution**

- ☐ Work with the SCEDAC to develop and recommend, a mix of both **short and longer term** actionable strategies culminating in a comprehensive 5 Year ED Plan that will enhance:

**A. Business Retention and Expansion/Small Business Development**

- 1) Create a "business assessment survey", to be completed by local businesses in order to identify issues or needs and facilitate access to assistance and resources that can help.
- 2) Collaborate with assistance and resource providers like Deep East Texas Workforce Solutions, Angelina College Small Business Development Center and others to hold workshops or offer one-on-one assistance (technical, business advisory, financial etc.)

**B. Business & Targeted Industry Recruitment**

- 1) Based on current market conditions, look for **immediate recruitment opportunities**. Target uses for vacant commercial and industrial spaces.
- 2) Longer-term, based on community strengths and assets, target opportunities that match up well with assets and the overall vision.
- 3) Research the cost to create an effective marketing plan using best practices to help promote Sabine County.

### **C. Tourism**

- 1) Collaborate with local businesses and governmental entities to capitalize on Toledo Bend Reservoir, area fishing tournaments, and potential lake developments.
- 2) Work with Sabine River Authority, Texas Forest Trails and Corp of Engineers to access ways to expand and market tourism.

### **D. Alternative Funding Sources**

- 1) Research the possibility of federal / state grant and incentive programs that support economic development projects (public or private) and determine applicability to Sabine County.
- 2) Research the possibility of hiring a grant writer to develop potential grant opportunities for the County that relate to economic growth.

### **V. Administration**

- ☐ Work with County Judge, Commissioners Court and the SCEDAC to establish goals and benchmarks to promote accountability.
- ☐ Provide quarterly progress/activity report to County Judge and Commissioners Court.

### **Short-Term Goals**

- A. Review the Tourism Assessment conducted by the State of Texas to determine possible courses of action that need immediate attention.
- B. Take advantage of the designation of Toledo Bend as the Best Bass Fishing Lake in the USA for the second year in a row.
- C. Participate in the International Council of Shopping Center's (ICSC) Deal Making Trade Show in Dallas, October 5-7, 2016, to promote Sabine County for retail and restaurant opportunities.
- D. In preparation for ICSC, develop a marketing piece (push card) to leave with potential businesses at the trade show, particularly the Retail Round-up.
- E. Consider whether or not Sabine County wants to undertake a hotel feasibility study with Source Strategies and how such a study (approximately \$7,000) would be funded.
- F. Continue to pursue the possibility of recruiting a Shopko Hometown store to Hemphill.
- G. Update the tax abatement policies for the County and cities as required by Chapter 312 of the Texas Tax Code.
- H. Look into the possibility establishing a Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) for all of Sabine County.
- I. Update the City of Hemphill and Sabine County websites to have an economic development tab to provide basic community data and contact information.
- J. Visit with the Governor's Office of Economic Development and Texas Department of Agriculture to learn of opportunities for rural areas and tell them about Sabine County.
- K. Compile list of available commercial properties and buildings available in Sabine County.
- L. Continue to search for possible job-producing service or manufacturing businesses that could possibly relocate to Sabine County.
- M. Conduct the Business Retention and Expansion survey of Sabine County businesses.
- N. Visit with education entities about training capabilities in Sabine County.

## **Sabine County Business Retention & Expansion Questionnaire**

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Completed By: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

# of Employees: \_\_\_\_\_

- A. What was the biggest factor in the decision to locate in Sabine County?
- B. What keeps you in Sabine County?
- C. What do you see as the strengths of Sabine County as it pertains to your business?
- D. What is the biggest weakness of Sabine County as it pertains to your business?
- E. What are the major issues impacting your business?
- F. Can you find qualified employees in the Sabine County?
- G. Please list skills lacking for your business in Sabine County.
- H. Where do the majority of your employees live?
- I. Are there any infrastructure deficits in Sabine County that are holding you back from expanding?
- J. Do you have plans to expand your business in Sabine County in the next 12/24/36 months?
- K. If so, what type of assistance would you need to expand your business?
- L. Are local governmental entities responsive to your needs?
- M. How can the governmental entities in Sabine County be of help to your business?
- N. What do you think are the 3 most important things that Sabine County could do to be more attractive to business?