



Economic Development Council December 2012 Report

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
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COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

Robert Jones
Sole Commissioner
Pickens County

John Weaver
Mayor
City of Jasper

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Robert Jones
Pickens County

John Weaver
City of Jasper

Denise Duncan
Executive President
Chamber of Commerce

Tom Lindsey
Pickens County
Development Authority

Mike Denson
City of Jasper
Development Authority

Ken Pint
Chairman
Economic
Development Council

Charles Gibson
Private Sector
Representative

Gary Copeland
Private Sector
Representative

Mike Setser
Private Sector
Representative

Who is Responsible for Economic Development?

Economic Development is an area that most people do not spend a great deal of time pondering, but when the subject does come up the conversation tends to center on business growth (or possibly lack of) with little thought given to who is all involved with the work going on behind the scenes. And although an important topic is the creation of jobs, it is also important not to overlook the organizations that are focused on creating opportunities as well as the many individuals who donate their time and are dedicated to improving economic conditions in the community.

One key organization is The Pickens County and City of Jasper Economic Development Council. This is an independent body governed by bylaws and was created to provide direction and oversight. Section 103 of the bylaws state the purpose as "...seeking new industry and assisting existing industry to expand as well as improve the economic well being of Pickens County through the attraction and expansion of business; commercial and industrial."

This Council supersedes all other Economic Development Councils and is governed by a nine member Board of Directors consisting of five permanent position members and four private sector members. Although the individuals holding the permanent positions may change, the positions will not without amending the bylaws. Each permanent position member, with the exception of the Chamber President, selects one private sector representative. Committees may be formed for specific written purposes and members are not required to be members of the EDC.

The permanent position EDC Board Members are:
Pickens County Commission Chairman- Robert Jones
City of Jasper Mayor- John Weaver
Chamber of Commerce President- Denise Duncan
Pickens County Development Authority Chairman- Tom Lindsey
Jasper Downtown Development Authority Chairman- Mike Denson

The private sector members and the companies they represent are:
Ken Pint (Current EDC Chairman) - North Georgia Capital Consultants
Charles Gibson- Amicalola EMC
Gary Copeland- Mountainside Medical Developers
Mike Setser- Formerly Jasper Banking Company

The many duties of the Economic Development Council include providing guidance and oversight to the Community Economic Development Director, directing the focus of economic development efforts, and approving specific actions relating to activities and projects.

The Pickens County Chamber of Commerce led by Executive President, Denise Duncan, takes the lead role in economic development by supporting existing businesses, organizations, and even individuals, in a wide variety of ways that include educational seminars, networking events, and promotional opportunities. Through e-mail, Facebook, and the website, the Chamber is a reliable source for community and business information. The Pickens Chamber of Commerce operates on funding from membership dues and income from sponsored events that bolster business and the community such as the annual Georgia Marble Festival.

The Pickens County Development Authority and the Jasper Downtown Development Authority, Chaired by Tom Lindsey and Mike Denson respectively, have similar purposes which are legally defined as the development of trade, commerce, industry, and employment opportunities in their authorized areas of operation. It is achieved primarily through the funding, acquisition, or construction of buildings, equipment, or land. These governmental Authorities also provide the mechanism for local abatement incentives in addition to having the ability to levy taxes in order to generate resources.

The Pickens County and City of Jasper Economic Development Council, the Pickens County Chamber of Commerce, the Pickens County Development Authority, and the Jasper Downtown Development authority collaborate and work closely with the Community Economic Development Director in devising strategy, working projects, and making decisions. The disclosure of details about new opportunities are typically bound by non-disclosure agreements, but should you like further information relating to Economic Development, please contact the Chamber and ask for Gerry Nechvatal, Community Economic Development Director.

Website Improvements Enhance Marketing Efforts

Through a generous grant by Amicalola EMC, the Economic Development tab on the Chamber website is being improved to enhance marketing efforts. Although Facebook tends to be in the media spotlight, companies still turn to business websites for factual information so a site with a modern look and feel in addition to having relevant data is extremely important in order to be competitive.

The first of the improvements is an up-grade to the page format with a move away from links to PDF pages, to pages that open when clicked. Next is a font and page layout that mirrors the other sections on the Chamber site. Third is an up-date of the data using the most recently available Census data along with more detailed demographic information.

Improved content has been added such as a Welcome from the Director, the Monthly Economic Development Report, and Demographic Data for County and Municipalities. More is planned with additions like an Entertainment and Film tab that is targeted to the needs of the entertainment industry as well as a new Available Industrial Sites and Buildings section. Because all changes to the website are "live", there will be a mix of new and old pages until the initiative is complete.