

## Economic Development

### Workforce Investment Board Focus Group – 11/9/10

- **Economic Development Approach.**

- **Type** of Economic Development desired:
  - High tech Research & Development
  - Entrepreneurial development
  - Number of existing community members with these skill sets is increasing
- **Skill set** necessary for business development in R&D enterprises
  - Training:
    - NAU College of Engineering, biosciences and environmental sciences
    - SBDC at CCC – workshops and seminars
  - Clustering of like businesses to share knowledge and training resources. Local example: Southwest could cluster with similar industry
  - Venue “A one stop” (Existing County ‘One Stop’ is training for GED/beginning work force, not necessarily training for research and technologies). Could this be Community College?
- **Location:** Where do small businesses locate?
  - Where there are resources (NACET) and/or **shared facilities with like industries**
  - **Clustering? For ex: use the Mesa to cluster all high-tech environmental industry**
  - Expansion challenges (infrastructure, ownership) – when small business is ready to expand.
  - **Need more of necessary flexible building space type to lease initially, space that can expand – Consider: Airport, Mesa, Belmont**
- **Finance:** Small businesses may want to move, invest or expand, but lacking investors.
  - Need Micro lending program for \$5,000 to \$35,000 loans
  - Need mini-micro loan program of \$500 – 5,000 for very small investments for permits/legal/register incorporate business
- **Incentives:** What are the best incentives for small businesses
  - Access to capital – micro-loan program; business loan education
  - Offset labor costs, reduce overhead: example, low rents for start-ups, shared resources (loading docks, storage space, office amenities, etc.)
  - Free Education for what it means to ‘be in business’ – as a responsive program
  - Not a semester long program, better for evening workshop or one weekend

- **Existing business and Industry**

- Manufacturing issues:
  - Turnover
  - Recruiter issue
  - Even entry level
    - Attendance – people call in sick right away
    - Don’t want to do overtime
  - High tech goes through military recruiting
  - Is there a way to shares labor pools?

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- Needs are unique but can accommodate programs for Non-Traditional jobs  
“Boot camp before job”
- Housing costs, even for those getting paid \$17-18/per hour, difficult to afford home (apartment yes, but most have families)
- Bandwidth – currently slow and expensive. For increased technologies, need faster and less expensive. This is a major impediment for growth for example – North Country telemedicine; web-based home businesses; telecommuting.
- Issues In terms of location:
  - Childcare challenges
  - Transportation > Public transportation – the bus does not go to all businesses
  - Can jobs be clustered around bus stops?
  - Home business limit – zoning, outlined ‘standards’ for different home-based businesses, allowing and even encouraging live-work
- Buildings
  - Buildings are there; owners are not interested in bringing up to modern standards, or even maintaining. Owners are not interested in selling. Expansion is difficult.
- **Transportation Infrastructure**
  - Park N Ride Opportunities
    - From Outlying communities – commuters from Kachina, Mountaineer, Doney Park, Belmont
    - Flagstaff to PHX – for business at ASU, Capital, Finance downtown, etc.
    - How reliable due to weather?
- **Tourism** (*What is missing? How to really excel?*)
  - Cultural tourism. It exists and could be a bigger draw.
    - NAU Elder Hostel is largest type in nation – good model
    - Culture – Native American, Route 66, Northern Arizona Environment, outdoor lifestyle
    - Workforce – lower pay, but consistent pay. If only housing existed = pay, it would be easier for many of the population
  - Snowplay
    - Winter play transportation – park-n-ride opportunities;
    - Ski bus similar to “Other Resorts” – free, easy to use, parking NAU and/or downtown
    - School-Age bus (ski) bus from high schools and middle schools. Try to reduce multiple cars taking many friends. Make it free/inexpensive and easy to use.
    - snowplay that is NOT skiing at other areas to relieve Ft. Valley Rd. bottle neck
    - Signage – BRANDING – instead of a bunch of different signs everywhere, need a cohesive sign ‘package’ with a particular look for the whole community, can alter look from one area of town to the other. Way finding part of this package.

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- “Work/live/play” Brand sign
- Hotels
  - Twin Arrows Casino > proposed opening 4/2012 with many jobs
  - Commute from Flag to other areas
  - 800 permanent jobs in the Hotel and Restaurant Management sector
  - Hotel Quantity > Have
  - Hotel Quality
    - Plenty of no or one star
    - Mid-star/less
    - Do not have a destination resort, ranch or eco-ranch option
  - Not a high paying industry w/ high turnover of employees
  - Want employees to understand customer service – basic training for this?  
Could the hotel industry share basic training package for all new starts?
  - Investing in employees and future employees doesn’t materialize.
  - Literacy training needed for employees (English skills/training)
  - Perhaps gap is facility need for training and money for training.