



NEWS RELEASE

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ECD-FUNDED STUDY RESULTS IN PERRY COUNTY PLAN OF ACTION

Site Selection Firm Strategic Development Group Makes Targeted Recommendations

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Commissioner Matt Kisber of the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development announced today the release of an economic review of Perry County, which was commissioned by ECD in conjunction with a local job creation initiative launched by Governor Phil Bredesen this summer.

“We launched the jobs initiative in Perry County to help ease some of the immediate strain brought on by the economic downturn,” Bredesen said. “The program also included this analysis, which identifies the steps that can be taken to put this community on a stable path in the long term. These recommendations will help establish a solid foundation for Perry County’s future economic growth and stability.”

The review, conducted by site selection consulting firm Strategic Development Group, Inc., evaluates Perry County’s current economy and offers key initiatives, critical next steps and targeted recommendations related to job creation and sustainable economic growth. Unemployment in Perry County reached 27 percent in spring 2009, the highest rate in Tennessee and one of the highest in the country. Governor Bredesen rolled out an initiative in July that used federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act dollars to create 460 public- and private-sector jobs in the county, where one in five employable citizens was without a job.

“Governor Bredesen’s initiative has put hundreds of Perry County residents to work and helped the community get back on its feet,” Commissioner Kisber said. “This report by Strategic Development Group lays out the framework for growth in the long-term, sustaining recent job growth. I appreciate the recommendations offered and look forward to working with Perry County to see them carried out with far-reaching, lasting benefits.”

The review’s recommendations are broken into eight categories:

- **Industrial Assets and Infrastructure**, which encourages the evaluation and development of industrial park and port facilities.
- **Educational Opportunities**, which calls for increased access to high-speed broadband.
- **Potential Benefits of Teaming with Neighboring Counties to Conduct Economic Development Activities**, which suggests exploring joint economic development efforts with other counties and encourages increased use of state and federal development resources.
- **Industrial Recruiting**, which lays out a strategy for marketing the county to companies and site selection firms.

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- **Other Economic Development Opportunities**, which explores options ranging from prisons and government offices to tourism and retail outlets for growing the local economy.
- **Recommended NAICS Codes for Targeted Business Development**, which raises the possibility of leveraging local springs to attract beverage distillers and local forests to attract wood product companies.
- **Expansion of Regional Clusters and Existing Industry**, which recommends aggressively encouraging local businesses in existing industry clusters to expand.
- **Leadership and Implementation**, which explains the need for committees and staff.

“We were honored to be selected to conduct this critical analysis for Perry County, Tennessee and are confident that rural communities such as Perry County can succeed in today’s global economy through implementation of strategies designed to maximize economic success in rural counties,” said Mark Williams, president of Strategic Development Group.

“We appreciate the continued support of Governor Bredesen and the recommendations of the Strategic Development Group during this challenging economy,” Perry County Mayor John Carroll said. “The action items identified are vital to achieving long-term, sustainable economic progress for our community. We look forward to working with the State, local partners and other entities to gather the resources necessary for their successful implementation.”

For more information about Strategic Development Group, Inc., visit their Web site, <http://www.strategicdev.com/>.

About the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development

The Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development’s mission is to create higher skilled, better paying jobs for all Tennesseans. The department seeks to attract new corporate investment in Tennessee and works with Tennessee companies to facilitate expansion and economic growth. To find out more, go to www.tnecd.gov.