



*"Success Available...Inquire Within!"*

# **PONCA CITY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

## **Strategic Plan**

**Approved  
June 13, 2008**

## **Executive Summary**

The strategic plan for the Ponca City Development Authority, (PCDA) is designed to guide the organization for the five year period ending December 31, 2013. It is recognized that the voter approved sales tax measure which funds PCDA and this elements of this plan is set to expire January 31. 2009.

For planning purposes, this document assumes that the voters of Ponca City will extend the sales tax for another five years. Since the economic development needs of any community are dynamic, continuous attention and a commitment of resources, including the potential extension of the current sales tax measure or the use of city general fund revenues, will be required in order to remain an economically competitive community well into the future.

The plan is built around the following Mission statement. The PCDA Board of Trustees, at their retreats of August 17, 2007 and March 21, 2008, reviewed and reaffirmed this statement.

## **Mission Statement**

**“The mission of the Ponca City Development Authority is to facilitate job growth in wealth producing industries in Ponca City, Oklahoma.”**

It should be noted that while virtually everything has an economic development component or impact, the policy direction guiding this document is job creation. As such, all goals, strategies and objectives will be measured by their ability to contribute directly to this mission. The specific strategies included in the plan are limited to those areas where PCDA has a mission driven role, as defined by board policy, and can make a significant impact.

The plan continues to recognize the many areas of community life that contribute directly to economic vitality. Those elements, specifically discussed during the development of the original plan and the subsequent updates, are attached to the plan as an appendix.

The plan itself sets out six specific objectives over the next five years. Included in those goals are strategies for achieving the goals and objectives to be included in the work program to achieve the desired results. It is important, however, to keep in mind that this plan is designed to be dynamic and that change to the plan may require some strategies, objectives and potentially even goals to be altered along the way. It should also be noted that several key strategies are already part of the organization’s program of work.

It is not anticipated that every change to the plan will require an action of the Board of Trustees as this would greatly restrict the responsiveness of the organization. Rather, it is expected that the plan will be reviewed at least yearly in a board retreat or similar format to determine the progress of the plan, any necessary changes that may have occurred that might require an official revision to the plan or other such amendments, additions, etc. that may be appropriate.

## **Plan Development**

The development of the plan was guided by the Ponca City Development Authority Board of Trustees. Plan formulation considered the input of the Board of Trustees at retreats held in August of 2007 and March of 2008. It also includes input from the public at a Town Hall held in February of 2008. Additionally, the plan includes elements of an earlier strategic plan that guided the organization from the spring of 2005 through the present.

The plan is broken down into four sections and an appendix. The first is this introductory section that includes a summary and overview of the plan, its development, the organization, the economic context in which the plan was developed.

Following this section, the plan defines the nine values used to drive this plan. Values are a very important part of the plan in that they also drive those opportunities that may develop subsequent to the adoption of the plan. The next section includes the five specific goals of the plan. As with the values, these goals will guide those opportunities that arise in the operation of the organization which cannot be foreseen as of the writing of this plan. Unlike the values, however, the goals can be specifically measured.

Following the goals are the objectives. Unlike traditional strategic plans, this plan does not list specific objectives under each goal. This is not a disconnect between the goals and objectives but rather a recognition that the achievement of the goals will occur if all of the objectives are met through the strategies outlined. The objectives are linked to the goals but would require a significant amount of redundancy to list each applicable objective under each corresponding goal.

The final section is an appendix which is included to recognize numerous comments received during the development of the plan. While these comments have a significant impact on economic development, they are not within the scope of the Ponca City Development Authority. These comments will not be acted upon by PCDA and will be reported to the appropriate agencies and parties in order to provide them with the benefit of this input.

It is the intent of the plan that an annual review, presumed to take place at a retreat of the PCDA Board of Trustees will evaluate the progress of the goals and the implementation of the objectives and strategies identified.

## **Organization**

The Ponca City Development Authority is a Public Trust, incorporated in the State of Oklahoma. The Trust was formed on July 1, 2003 to benefit Ponca City, an incorporated Oklahoma city. The specific actions, responsibilities and organizations framework are documented in the Authority's Trust Indenture.

PCDA is funded by a one half cent sales tax measure approved by the voters of Ponca City in 1994 and extended in October, 2003. This measure is set to expire on January 31, 2009, unless extended by the voters. As of the writing of this plan, the City Commission of Ponca City has called for a Special Election on July 29, 2008, for the purpose of considering

the extension of this tax. Should the tax not be extended, the organization will revisit the plan and adopt a significantly revised plan that will reduce the scope of the goals and strategies the organization plans to pursue.

The Authority currently employs four full time employees, (FTE's) with a physical office under lease in the Ponca City Chamber of Commerce building. In addition, the Authority holds leases for the purposes of leasing back to job producing companies, as well as ownership of real estate in three buildings.

One of the key questions taken into account during the original formation of this plan was the extent to which PCDA should strive for self-sufficiency through real estate sales, lease payments or other enterprising activities. This plan operates under guidance provided by the Board of Trustees to move PCDA in that direction but not to make this an underlying goal for the organization, since the fundamental mission should remain job creation.

## **Economic Context**

Since the inception of the Ponca City Development Authority and the adoption of the original PCDA strategic plan in the spring of 2005, there have been significant changes in the economy of Ponca City and the larger economic context in which PCDA must operate in order to fulfill its mission.

As a starting point, as of the writing of this plan, the Ponca City Micropolitan Area has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the State of Oklahoma at 3.0%. Unemployment in Ponca City proper is estimated at less than half that rate. This is a dramatic reversal from the first day of PCDA operation on July 1, 2003 when the rate was 7.8%, one of the highest rates in the State of Oklahoma. As of July 1, 2007, four years into a five year goal of working 1,500 jobs, PCDA had already worked 1,506 jobs, hitting the goal one year early. As of this writing, that number is 1,742 jobs.

The attraction and expansion of jobs in Ponca City in 2006 and 2007 has been among the strongest growth rates in the nation. In 2006, jobs grew at a rate of 5.1 in Ponca City as opposed to a national rate of slightly over 1.0 percent. The Oklahoma growth rate in 2006 was 1.7%. In 2007, the job growth rate jumped an additional 4.4 percent. Between the two years, Ponca City added over 1,800 net new jobs.

The additional jobs, however, have only marginally grown the population. Reports from employers and prospective job seekers are that people are choosing to live in other communities, largely due to the lack of available, affordable and appropriate housing opportunities in Ponca City.

While there has been some recent population growth, the population of Ponca City has remained relatively flat. This is occurring at a time when the global economy is squeezing retail margins and forcing businesses to make up margins with volume, something problematic without population growth. This has created economic difficulties for some retail and service businesses which must cut costs but cannot increase their customer base.

The growth in jobs without the growth in population has also led to a significant labor shortage. While this has had the beneficial impact of raising wages, it has made some Ponca City businesses less competitive than their counterparts elsewhere. It has also made the recruitment of large industrial operations interested in the quantity of workers virtually impossible. This, however, is becoming less relevant as operations that seek large numbers of unskilled or semi skilled labor is, by and large, going overseas.

This has created an illusion of a poor economy which has been exacerbated by a very tight labor market. The difficulty for businesses to add customers and employees has led some to make the decision to close.

PCDA believes that the ultimate growth of Ponca City will come when the community is recognized as a location of choice for location neutral people and young families. In short, recent experience has strongly indicated that it will take far more than job creation to grow Ponca City. It will require the attraction of additional population to the community. For this to happen, new housing development will be critical. It will also require the creation of numerous community assets beyond the scope of this plan. A community of choice, however, requires a variety of economic opportunities and that is the overall focus of this plan.

# PCDA Strategic Plan Values

## Values

The following values have been established to guide the economic development program of the Ponca City Development Authority. Other than the first value, no priority should be assumed from this list:

### Fiscal responsibility

PCDA operates as a public trust with public funds. The organization has a moral, ethical and legal duty to be good stewards of those funds. From a purely practical standpoint as well, if the citizens of Ponca City do not have faith in the financial management of PCDA, the organization will lose the public mandate provided by the voters when the economic development sales tax was approved in 1994 and reauthorized in 2003.

### Excellence

The objectives in the plan make bold statements relative to PCDA's desire to simply be the best. It is recognized that there is significant competition in this regard and the criteria for being the best in any one area is, at best, subjective. This value is not intended to suggest that PCDA is focused on anything but the mission statement. It is intended to drive the organization to be the very best we can be in these areas as a means of better serving our customers and making Ponca City the very best community in the United States for business.

### Reinvention not recovery

It is not the goal of PCDA's economic development programs to return the economy of Ponca City to an era of what was essentially a company town. It is the view of PCDA that not only is such a goal unwise in the context of the global economy and past economic experiences, it is also impossible given changing realities. Company towns, as they existed in Ponca City and other American communities during the Twentieth century, were historical anomalies and not possible to replicate.

### Partnerships

Economic development relies heavily on many other disciplines including workforce training, employment services, education, universities, state agencies, federal agencies, other local organizations and the business community itself. PCDA must continue to build and strengthen these partnerships. It is critical and PCDA recognizes that the development of collaboratives necessitates that all partners accommodate each other through compromise, creative thinking and mutual assistance. Successful partnerships cannot be built if one party insists that everything be done to comply with their mandates. Implicit in many of the goals, strategies and objective of the plan are programs that rely on partnering organizations to take the lead or to do certain things. While PCDA recognizes that we do not control these functions, the plan assumes that a method of partnership can be developed to achieve these objectives or strategies and is not sympathetic to non-performance in this regard.

### **Regionalism**

The economy of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is dramatically different than that of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Companies no longer choose communities locations from within the United States. Location choices are world wide with routine jobs typically going to low cost areas. As such, a regional approach to economic development is the only way for Ponca City to leverage the larger regional workforce that exists in North Central Oklahoma. It is also the only way to leverage the resources at Northern Oklahoma College in Tonkawa, Oklahoma State University in Stillwater and other regional assets. This plan is not a North Central Oklahoma strategic plan but it does encourage Ponca City and other nearby communities to work together since the forces that used to make neighboring communities compete are no longer relevant.

### **Existing and new industry jobs**

The plan is based upon the mission of PCDA to create jobs. Two important values are present throughout all elements of this plan. The first is that taking care of Ponca City companies is the very best way to build and create the type of business climate in the community that is conducive to growth and attractive to outside industry. The second is that, by far, most job creation in the United States comes from existing industry. Working with local industry to continue to grow in Ponca City is the most effective way to achieve the mission of PCDA.

### **Influential not enabling**

Economic incentives, to the extent that they are available, should be influential, not enabling. The use of economic incentives, therefore, is targeted to influence the decision of company officials relative to where they will grow jobs. This value is based upon the practical recognition that PCDA wishes to expand and attract strong companies to Ponca City, not those with marginal balance sheets. It is also further recognized that a company that relies upon economic help from PCDA may simply not be strong enough to continue once PCDA resources cease to be available. This value is not in any way an indication that PCDA will not assist other companies but rather it provides guidance on how economic incentives, a minor part of economic development, will be used.

### **Pay scales above the county average**

The jobs targeted by PCDA are those that exceed the county median wage, presently \$15.50 per hour, (2007 figures from the Oklahoma Department of Commerce). PCDA wishes to remain flexible to assist companies that may be creating jobs at levels below this rate for a variety of reasons. PCDA is emphatic, however, that it is not an economic development goal of Ponca City to become a low cost labor location.

### **Tangible, measurable and relevant outcomes**

The plan has been developed to identify goals, objectives and strategies that make a true difference in the Ponca City economy, can be measured relative to their effectiveness and are relevant to the mission of PCDA.

# PCDA Strategic Plan Goals

As noted above, the mission of the Ponca City Development Authority is to facilitate job growth in wealth producing industries in Ponca City, Oklahoma. More specifically, the mission is defined as follows:

## **Primary Job creation**

“Wealth producing industries” for the purposes of this plan refers to industries that import funds into Ponca City and export products outside the community. This could include manufacturing, business services, government contracting and more. It does not include industries that generally trade within Ponca City nor does it include tourism. PCDA recognizes that those industries are vital to the local economy. This is purely a division of labor selection, not a priority of importance.

This goal shall be measured and reported annually by utilizing the annual economic assessment contracted through Oklahoma State University.

## **Rising personal income**

PCDA mission statement implies wealth producing industries because those industries tend to provide higher incomes. It is therefore an implicit part of PCDA’s mission, and one discussed as an important value, that PCDA strives to raise the personal income of people working in the Ponca City area through the creation of better paying jobs, a more competitive labor market relative to the job seeker, and the growth of emerging industries that seek the talent that is in Ponca City or that can be attracted to Ponca City.

This goal shall be measured and reported annually by utilizing the annual economic assessment contracted through Oklahoma State University.

## **Diversification**

Ponca City’s history has been focused on a single industry and a single company. In 1985, 35% of all paychecks written in Ponca City came from one company. The majority of paychecks in the community at that time relied upon that company for their economic success. That company no longer exists and its successor is an important company in the global marketplace, unable to provide the type of community attention it did when the United States economy was more or less self sustaining.

An important goal of PCDA is to continue to diversify the Ponca City economy to insure sustainability for the future. As of this writing, (2008) seven percent of Ponca City paychecks come from a single company and a majority of Ponca City business no longer rely on the oil and gas industry for their revenues. The additional of emerging industries such as business services, sensor testing, the commercialization of non oil and gas research and development and more have all occurred in Ponca City in the last three years and this is seen as extremely beneficial to the long term health of the local economy. The goal of diversification is not intended to minimize the importance of the successors company to Conoco Oil. Indeed, ConocoPhillips has strongly encouraged the community to diversify.

This goal shall be measured and reported annually by utilizing PCDA project results and the annual economic assessment contracted through Oklahoma State University.

**New economy growth**

Diversification implies that new industries are attracted, grown and developed in Ponca City. It is the goal of PCDA that new industry targets be primarily but not exclusively emerging industries, as opposed to mature industries. This is not to say that PCDA will not work with or potentially incentivize mature industries such as the oil and gas industry, as it is a core strength of the area. PCDA, however, in order to further diversify the community and prepare for a future where oil and gas is not the primary economic driver of the state, will actively seek out and potentially place more value on emerging industries.

This goal shall be measured and reported annually by utilizing PCDA project results and the annual economic assessment contracted through Oklahoma State University.

**Attract Investment**

The attraction of private capital to Ponca City is second only to the need to attract people, (and perhaps a symbiotic relationship exists). Whether it is for industrial development, housing, downtown revitalization or more, a vital goal of this plan is to attract investment to Ponca City.

This goal shall be measured and reported annually by utilizing PCDA project results and the reports of companies.

**Population Attraction**

The attraction of population is an emerging field in itself. There is no industry standard yet communities throughout the nation are beginning to focus on this need in order to truly grow and thrive. This plan does not specifically include any objectives or strategies exclusive to population attraction. It does intend to include population attraction in other objective notably the marketing section and the business attraction section. It is anticipated that as best practices become recognized in this field, and as PCDA identifies methods of population attraction that are consistent with the values of this plan, that additional objectives and or strategies may be developed and included in future plan updates and work plans.

This goal shall be measured and reported annually by credible demographic reports and the 2010 census.

## Prioritized Objectives

### **OBJECTIVE #1: OPERATE THE FINEST BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION PROGRAM IN THE UNITED STATES;**

#### Strategies

- 1) Stay connected to local primary industries and employers to identify opportunities for expanding jobs, encouraging local investment and retaining business.
  - 1-1: Continue to employ an economic development professional focused on BRE;
  - 1-2: Continue to visit every manufacturer with at least ten employees no less than once per year;
  - 1-3: Continue to visit every manufacturer with at least 20 employees every six months;
  - 1-4: Continue to maintain an in-house industry database of primary employers and share the information with the local business assistance team.
  
- 2) Make incentives equally available to existing businesses and new businesses.
  - 1-5: Continue to budget an appropriate amount of incentives specifically for local expansion and/or retention;
  - 1-6: Continue to budget to support businesses through mechanisms such as trade shows, conferences, etc.;
  - 1-7: Continue to maintain an equitable criterion for support that can be provided to businesses.
  
- 3) Work with local industry to help them adapt to changing economic opportunities and conditions.
  - 1-8: Market PCDA's business intelligence resource to assist businesses in performing basic market research;
  - 1-9: Present issues to employers to assist them in staying informed and competitive in the global economy;
  - 1-10: Launch a program to assist innovative companies in meeting the changing demands of their industries before their competition;

## **OBJECTIVE #2: OPERATE THE FINEST WORKFORCE TRAINING AND RECRUITMENT PROGRAMS IN THE UNITED STATES;**

### **Strategies**

- 1) **Develop or continue to develop partnerships among workforce providers at the leadership level:**
  - 2-1: **Continue the presence of Pioneer Technology Center on the PCDA Board of Trustees;**
  - 2-2: **Develop a method of representation on or to the PCDA Board for the Ponca City School District;**
  - 2-3: **Develop a method of representation on or to the PCDA Board for Northern Oklahoma College;**
  - 2-4: **Develop a method of representation on or to the PCDA Board for the local Workforce Investment Board and OESC;**
  - 2-5: **Continue to maintain the business assistance team at the staff level with the above mentioned organizations and agencies.**
  
- 2) **Align Education and Employment opportunities in Ponca City by facilitating programs that match up people with present and future jobs:**
  - 2-6: **Work with educational agencies on the development of anchor programs that align with local industries including:**
    - a) **Welding**
    - b) **Metal work**
    - c) **Ethanol (cellulosic and corn based)**
    - d) **Sensor Industry**
    - e) **Digital Technology**
    - f) **Technicians**
  - 2-7: **Sponsor and/or co-sponsor career fairs for youth to promote future career paths in Ponca City;**
  
- 3) **Become a workforce ready community as designated by the Oklahoma Department of Commerce;**
  
- 4) **Develop and execute innovative workforce recruitment and training programs to help fill local jobs;**
  - 2-8: **Continue to implement the workforce recovery program and provide a 12 month assessment by December, 2008;**
  - 2-9: **Fully implement the veteran's recovery program and provide a 12 month assessment by April 1, 2009;**
  - 2-10: **Develop at least one additional workforce recruitment program by the end of 2009 to attract people into the Ponca City workforce.**

**3) Identify the emerging workforce:**

**3-7: Identify the skill sets of graduates of schools, universities and colleges within 100 miles of Ponca City and market that information on the web site;**

**3-8: Use the above information to further refine industry targets:**

### **OBJECTIVE #3: OPERATE THE FINEST BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE PROGRAM IN THE UNITED STATES;**

- 1) **Be the “go to” organization in Ponca City for credible, accurate and current data in order to promote standardized data that promotes Ponca City;**
  - 3-1: **Identify and subscribe to data sources that provide accurate data for demographics and economic data;**
  - 3-2: **Continue to maintain a GIS data base on the PCDA website that makes Ponca City information available worldwide on a 24/7 basis;**
  - 3-3: **Develop a plan to disseminate the data to local and national web sites to insure that Ponca City data is consistent and accurate;**
  
- 2) **Provide business intelligence services to business and entrepreneurs that assist them in growing their business:**
  - 3-4: **Subscribe to and maintain data bases that allow PCDA to provide information on markets, trends, suppliers, potential customers and more, free of charge to local businesses;**
  - 3-5: **Identify potential sources of funding for entrepreneurs and start-ups including banks, angel groups, venture funds, state organizations and more;**
  - 3-6: **Identify local entrepreneurs and their industries in order to promote mentorship programs among start-up businesses;**
  
- 3) **Develop a business marketing program to assist new and expanding industries;**
  - 3-7: **Develop an inventory of industry clusters and industry strengths in the region;**
  - 3-8: **Market this inventory to existing Ponca City industries through the industry visits described under strategy one;**
  - 3-9: **Host a marketing/customer identification seminar annually;**
  - 3-10: **Follow-up from the above seminar by hosting a smaller workshop with individual companies to help them develop a customer identification program.**

## **OBJECTIVE #4: DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN A PREMIER ATTRACTION PROGRAM**

### **Strategies:**

- 1. Maintain confidentiality on all prospects;**
- 2. Maintain and update guidelines for the provision of local incentives that are equitable and mission driven. Review these guidelines with Trustees annually;**
- 3. Respond to all appropriate leads within one business day;**
- 4. Target growing and potential spin-off companies in the following industries, focusing on companies that employ between 20-200 people:**
  - a) Sensor companies**
  - b) High tech manufacturing**
  - c) Business Services**
  - d) Green industry-biosciences**
  - e) Energy-Alternative fuels (hydrogen/lithium/cellulosic)**
  - f) Wind industry manufacturing**
- 5. Specifically target companies in the above industries that attract their own workforce or bring a workforce with them.**
- 6. Leverage the University Multispectral Lab to expand and attract spin-off businesses.**
  - 4-1: Meet with legislators in Oklahoma City and Washington D.C. at least annually to encourage federal support for FFRDC designation and state funding;**
  - 4-2: Utilize the UML as a focal point for contacting sensor related companies and measure the effectiveness of those efforts;**
  - 4-3: Identify buildings and sites suitable for sensor companies and other spin-off companies.**
- 7. Aggressively market Ponca City to targeted industries;**
  - 4-4: Select two annual trade shows in a targeted industry for a PCDA booth and attend annually;**
  - 4-5: Target at least 60 companies a year for direct marketing through emails, calls, mailings, etc.;**
  - 4-6: Identify site consultants who specialize in targeted industries, put them on the weekly update list and meet with them every 24 months;**
  - 4-7: Make two company/site consultant call trips each fiscal year;**
- 8. Follow-up and communicate with all prospects on a regular basis;**

9. **Maintain strong contact with the state to insure that Ponca City receives consideration for every state generated lead:**
  - 4-8: **Maintain regular membership and participation on the Governor's team.**
  - 4-9: **Maintain regular membership in the Oklahoma Professional Economic Development Council.**
  - 4-10: **Participate in at least two call trips or co-sponsored trade shows with ODOC or GEDT per year.**
  - 4-11: **Co-sponsor, as appropriate, or state or regionally sponsored call trips and trade shows.**
  - 4-12: **Respond to every appropriate ODOC lead. Refer to regional partners if inappropriate for Ponca City.**
10. **Plan and implement a "Golden Triangle" (Oklahoma City/ Tulsa/Wichita) marketing campaign.**
11. **Develop the physical assets necessary to attract industry to Ponca City:**
  - 4-13: **Develop a third spec building;**
  - 4-14: **Add forty acres of industrial land to the Airport Industrial Park or another Ponca City location.**
  - 4-15: **Install the necessary infrastructure in the expanded area to facilitate the development of the land and achieve certified, site ready status.**
  - 4-16: **Work with the UML to develop a building needs plan for future sensor companies.**
12. **Develop a virtual spec building program to expedite build to suit or build opportunities.**
13. **Actively support the development of physical assets that promote job growth.**
  - 4-17: **Advocate for the improvement of highways including but not limited to the widening of US 177 between Stillwater and Ponca City, US 77 north of Newkirk, US 60 east of Ponca City, industrial access roads and improvements to the I-35/U.S. 60 interchange;**
  - 4-18: **Support improvements to Ponca City Airport such as an improved east/west taxi way and hanger facilities;**
  - 4-19: **Identify and be prepared to submit CDBG or similar applications to complete infrastructure on a project by project basis.**

## **OBJECTIVE #5: MARKET PONCA CITY TO BUSINESSES AND INDIVIDUALS**

### **Strategies:**

- 1. Maintain accurate data on Ponca City as noted under objective three;**
- 2. Develop a plan to coordinate a census outreach program for Ponca City to maximize the 2010 census count;**
- 3. Develop a community message that differentiates Ponca City from other communities and develop a marketing plan that is funded;**
- 4. Develop a plan that incorporates population attraction into PCDA marketing campaigns, with a specific audience to include:
  - a) Young families**
  - b) Alumni**
  - c) Retirees****
- 5. Staff a booth, in connection with the Chamber of Commerce, at the International Council of Shopping Centers Conference each year to promote Ponca City to retailers and developers;**
- 6. Provide technical assistance for existing and potential retailers, as requested, and maintain demographic information suitable to attract retailers to the community;**
- 7. Develop and implement an internal marketing program:
  - a) Sponsor an annual economic development conference to provide accurate, verifiable economic information;**
  - b) Fund an annual economic analysis to provide credible data on the Ponca City economy;**
  - c) Utilize new media, (Facebook, I-Pods, etc.) to disseminate information both internally and externally to Ponca City;****
- 7. Maintain a state of the art web site that serves to attract and interest both companies and individuals in Ponca City;**
- 8. Define and promote Ponca City's access to higher educational opportunities and quantify degrees and graduate information for the web site and lead response.**
- 9. Produce high quality marketing materials.
  - 5-16: Develop and implement a distribution plan for all promotional materials;**
  - 5-17: Produce an electronic version of all hard copy materials for web posting or electronic distribution;**
  - 5-18: Publish an annual demographic report;**
  - 5-19: Produce and distribute a weekly eblog, (the "Weekly Update") as a method of staying in touch with stakeholders and prospects.****

## **OBJECTIVE #6: DEVELOP AND OPERATE A PREMIER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION**

### **Strategies:**

- 1. Maintain appropriate fiduciary controls.**
  - 6-1: Submit monthly financial statements and warrant requests to the board of trustees.**
  - 6-2: Report investments to the board monthly.**
  - 6-3: Continue to maintain expert guidance through a C.P.A. or financial professional.**
  - 6-4: Contract for an independent audit annually.**
- 3. Strictly adhere to all open meeting/open record laws.**
- 4. Maintain the standards of a professional organization.**
  - 6-5: Maintain a policy of equal opportunity in all aspects of the organization's operations;**
  - 6-6: Maintain consistent, reliable, office hours;**
  - 6-7: Maintain appropriate office technology;**
  - 6-8: Maintain appropriate personnel policies;**
  - 6-9: Develop job descriptions for each approved position;**
  - 6-10: Submit monthly activity reports of outreach staff to the board of trustees;**
  - 6-11: Support and budget an appropriate amount for continuing education and professional development of the staff.**
- 5. Become an accredited economic development organization through the International Economic Development Council.**
- 6. Maintain written policies on the use of incentives and review with the board annually.**
- 7. Develop an economic impact analysis for any proposed use of incentive funding and provide to the board prior to a public vote.**
- 8. Meet with the City Commission quarterly to provide an update on activities and projects;**
- 10. Develop sustainable income for the future of the organization.**
  - 6-16: As appropriate, structure lease and purchase agreements to provide for future income streams;**
  - 6-17: Identify enterprise activities (i.e. Tonkawa contract) that provide income to the Authority;**
  - 6-18: Insure that bank accounts receive competitive returns;**
  - 6-19: Cooperate with any economic development sales tax campaign to insure that the public has complete and accurate information;**

**OBJECTIVE #7: IF DIRECTED BY THE CITY COMMISSION, DEVELOP A HOUSING STRATEGY TO MEET THE COMMUNITY'S HOUSING NEEDS**

**Strategies:**

1. Conduct primary housing assessment internally
  - 7-1: Define ratio of homes to population;
  - 7-2: Develop and identify a general inventory of the age and condition of existing Ponca City homes relative to other areas;
  - 7-3: Based upon job growth and demographics, provide a projection of housing needs, including affordability forecasts for a five year period and potential absorption rates;
  - 7-4: Develop a matrix of Ponca City housing prices and availability relative to comparable markets;
  
2. Based upon the above objectives, develop a housing development strategy for Ponca City
  - 7-5: Identify best practices in other communities;
  - 7-2: Identify specific methods to reduce housing costs. Develop and identify a general inventory of the age and condition of existing Ponca City homes relative to other areas;
  - 7-3: Based upon job growth and demographics, provide a projection of housing needs, including affordability forecasts for a five year period and potential absorption rates;
  - 7-4: Develop a matrix of Ponca City housing prices and availability relative to comparable markets;

## **PCDA 2008 STRATEGIC PLAN APPENDIX**

### **ENHANCED CODE ENFORCEMENT**

Code enforcement emerged as a significant concern among contributors to the plan. Specific comments related to housing issues generally in the southwest section of the city. In particular, trash cleanup, home improvements, vehicle parking and condition, landscaping, painting and more. An aggressive code enforcement initiative was reportedly in the works for the Spring of 2008 and PCDA wholeheartedly supports this initiative.

### **RETAIL DEVELOPMENT**

Based upon the opinion of the Trust Authority's legal counsel, PCDA cannot offer or make available financial incentives to a business engaged in retail trade. In addition, PCDA is mindful of the equity arguments relative to assisting one retailer and not another. While this argument could be made relative to industrial and business service companies, it must be underscored that PCDA provides incentives only to those companies that provide an overall community need, as discussed in the goals section of this plan. It is not PCDA's mission per se to see that businesses start nor is it our mission to provide a plethora of retail services to the community. As noted above, this is a division of labor issue, not a value judgment on the part of PCDA.

Nevertheless, PCDA sees the attraction of retail to Ponca City an important part of population attraction and retention. While the Authority cannot legally incentivize a business, PCDA can assist in marketing to potential retailers and provide technical assistance to retailers and those, such as the Chamber of Commerce, who are the front line for this effort.

The plan includes a strategy to co host and staff a booth at the International Council of Shopping Centers. In addition, the Authority has funded studies in the past that are designed to attract retailers. PCDA is also active in supporting the Chamber in this effort by providing demographic information and data as part of the PCDA business intelligence program.

This plan does not enhance the role of PCDA in retail development. It represents a maintenance of effort approach to retail recruitment in that PCDA plans to continue to do what the Authority has been doing in this area. Nevertheless, several comments were received relative to retail that are worth noting:

- 1) Work to attract a cafeteria style restaurant, (buffet) to the community;
- 2) Insure that the city annexes any property that the Wal Mart Super Center may move to insure the continuation of this sales tax revenue and city services;
- 3) Encourage the owners of shopping centers to maintain their property and to market vacant spaces at a realistic price, relative to the market;
- 4) Recognize that on line buying and buyer behavior is changing the way consumers spend. Insure that retail development reflects changes in consumer behavior.
- 5) Attract a state of the art movie theater to Ponca City to avoid the slippage that is now occurring due to an inadequate theater and a very small theater that are not meeting the needs of the community.

## **DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION**

General comments regarding downtown area have been generally positive relative to improvements made in recent years. The activity of Ponca City Mainstreet has made a considerable difference in the appearance of the area according to contributors to this plan.

Nevertheless, downtown continues to be an area of significant concern in Ponca City, as it is in virtually every community that is more than fifty years old. Many buildings on Grand Avenue remain underutilized. Other buildings off Grand along other downtown streets remain vacant and the cost for revitalization is high.

In addition, the *main* retail market has clearly and irrevocably moved away from Grand Avenue. While the downtown market continues to have a significant potential for retail, that retail will not be general in nature and it needs to find its niche in this very competitive marketplace. The advent of cheap goods, along with e-commerce and category killer stores offering massive economies of scale makes the establishment of small, general purpose retailers problematic, particularly in the downtown area. In addition, it is considerably cheaper for many large companies to build a new building on the outskirts of town than to renovate some older buildings nor can those older buildings be built to brand the business the way a new one can.

There are a number of points upon which contributors to this plan agreed including the removal, or at least the painting, of the grain elevator; the removal of the building next to the grain elevator; the clean up and utilization of properties next to the railroad tracks from Highland to South street; the continued streetscape improvements along Grand; and the expansion of the use of second floor areas as either loft apartments or professional offices.

The funding for these improvements will come from either the owners of the property, by far the most common method of property improvement in the nation, likely in concert with some form of very specialized government assistance such as a city sponsored and owner supported tax increment finance district, (TIF). Government programs, it should be recognized, are almost exclusively limited to some form of financing program and do not provide significant grants to individual property owners.

The continued rehabilitation of downtown and the removal of obsolete, dilapidated structures would be a significant boost to the ability of the community to keep and attract new business. It is recognized that the Mainstreet Authority does not have the resources to complete the work described above and the community must allocate the responsibility for these actions as it deems appropriate.

## **EDUCATION**

Education remains the most critical factor for those weighing business or personal relocation. This becomes more important each day as the need to remain literate in a growing number of knowledge bases increases exponentially. Ponca City has made significant improvements to the physical infrastructure of its school system. This has received very favorable comments from contributors to this plan, as well as business prospects who have toured the community. Test scores and educational statistics, however, have fallen in recent

years causing some concern over the quality of local education, as reported by local citizens and business leaders who provided input into this plan.

It is not uncommon for local schools to be judged more harshly by local people. This is a phenomenon that is repeated in most communities throughout the nation. People are more familiar and deeply personally invested in the actual operation of their own schools. Comparisons are often made with other areas based upon perceptions or images of schools and educational services rather than the personal experience.

Anecdotal evidence provided by several people who have relocated to Ponca City recently has included high praise for the K-12 school system, particularly relative to their former areas. The uncrowded facilities and increased individual attention afforded students in Ponca City is attractive to incoming families and the parents of students in schools. This remains a challenge, however, to school administrators as many local schools are well under capacity in enrollment. The system needs to find a balance. Ponca City is fortunate to have talented professionals in the educational community trying to accomplish this difficult task.

It should also be noted that many of the areas of need identified are influenced by forces external to the school system. Shifting demographics have national correlations with lower student performance. In addition, certain types of behaviors consistent with the changing demographics contribute to certain identified social problems within the schools.

With test scores at local schools at or below the average of Kay County, however, the measurement most universally accepted for judging schools systems is in need of improvement. This is a critical component for economic growth since potential employers view test scores as objective measurements when making location decisions.

It should also be noted that local employers and others providing input into the plan had high praise for the Pioneer Technology Center, Northern Oklahoma College, the University Learning Center and Oklahoma State University. These institutions also seek to improve their service delivery. This continued focus on improvement is very important in the context of economic development since average schools do not attract commerce. Above average schools do attract commerce.

Finally, one of the prime drivers of economic development in Ponca City has long been to provide opportunities for Ponca City youth to stay and be successful in the economy. The growth in local manufacturing and the attraction of the UML, in addition to several successful recruitments of information technology companies seem to provide additional opportunities in this regard.

In order to fully exploit the opportunities mentioned above, the education of Ponca City youth should offer an opportunity to align itself with the demand occupations of the future as discussed elsewhere in this plan. Ponca City graduates at all levels of the educational system continue to return to the community with degrees and certifications that are not in high demand in the community. This has the obvious impact of driving young Ponca Citizens to larger urban areas where the occupational opportunities, both entry level and horizontal, are more extensive and diverse

Specific comments and recommendations can be summarized as follows:

- 1) Reduce the drop-out rate;
- 2) Eliminate the stigma of vocational education and work with local K-12 officials to embrace the opportunity and dignity of non-degreed occupations;
- 3) Promote the need in K-12 for students to obtain skills, certificates and/or degrees needed to success in demand occupations. Insure that student know that unskilled labor has extremely limited options for future employment;
- 4) Encourage graduating seniors to take the Workkeys assessment test as an end of instruction exam;
- 5) Enhance or develop necessary program to reduce violence (fist fights, bullies, etc.) in the schools, particularly the middle school;
- 6) Focus more attention and resources on the needs of advanced students;
- 7) Improve test scores relative to other districts in the county;
- 8) Improve emphasis on vocational education;
- 9) Improve math programs beginning in the earliest years;
- 10) Promote a standard of excellence in math and science no later than the seventh grade;
- 11) Promote third grade reading and comprehension
- 12) Support and celebrate students who do not choose college as a preferred career path;
- 13) Expose high school counselors to vocational and skilled occupations in the community and the training programs available for students who prefer to pursue these career paths;
- 14) Promote life long education as a staple for the future and insure that opportunities are available, accessible and affordable;
- 15) Promote Workkeys as a viable end of instruction evaluation, in addition to other programs;

## **GATEWAYS**

Respondents noted that the gateways or entrances to Ponca City are not attractive in most instances. In general, approaching the community through the refinery can mask the beauty hiding within.

The improvements to the southern entrance along US 77, (14<sup>th</sup> Street) have been highly praised by community members and visitors alike. This is important as many first time visitors to Ponca City come from the Stillwater area. The increased appeal of this gateway, coupled with the possible widening of US 177 between Ponca City and Stillwater, would create a high quality link and gateway from the south.

In addition, since the first development of this plan, US 60 Business has shifted north on Waverly away from the refinery. While this moves traffic away from the Conoco Museum, it does provide a more pleasing entry into the community as travelers stay clear of the refinery area.

In general, comments relative to improving the community's gateways were as follows:

- 6) Bring business prospects in from the north, even if it means taking them further north on Interstate 35;
- 7) Work with the landowners to improve the intersection of 14<sup>th</sup> Street and South Street;

- 8) Work with the State to widen and improve U.S. 60 through the refinery, (see “transportation” section)
- 9) Address the renovation or housing and housing programs in the area of community gate ways that will aid neighborhood revitalization.

## **HEALTH CARE**

Health care is an extremely important component of economic development. The presence of an attractive and diverse health care system aids economic development efforts and the lack of health care has the opposite effect. In addition, health care systems are often important economic engines as they have typically large employments bases. Health care systems also bring insurance, Medicare and other funds from outside of the area into the community that would otherwise follow patients to the point of delivery.

This plan notes that the ownership of the local hospital is still a relatively recent development. Citizens and community leaders report an improved perception of Ponca City Medical Center and the new emergency room, scheduled to be completed in late 2008.

As with other aspect of the economy, the health care field is changing rapidly and is under considerable stress. Rising health care premiums, the role of managed care and other market forces exist throughout the nation and Ponca City is not immune. These pressures are already impacting the medical community in Ponca City. While the nation as a whole must respond to this growing problem, local medical providers must also seek solutions and not simply choose to sit the debate out.

Few communities the size of Ponca City have a hospital such as the Ponca City Medical Center, (PCMC). The market forces putting pressure on the medical profession as a whole are felt most acutely by PCMC since it is part of a larger health care network. PCMC cannot serve as a fiscal shock absorber for the changes in the economics of health care in America. The local facility simply is not capable of shielding the local medical community from changing market conditions.

The recommendations relative to health care received from businesses and individuals involved in the development of this plan can be summarized as follows:

- 1) The local medical community must provide better support for the hospital;
- 2) The local hospital needs to continue its efforts to build bridges to the Native American populations;
- 3) Medical insurance options must be expanded and accepted in Ponca City;
- 4) The local hospital should continue to work to reduce the amount of outsourcing of patients.
- 5) The community, through the Chamber and PCDA, could serve as a facilitator for meetings between the hospital and the business community to insure that PCMC exploits the opportunity to retain local business.

## **HOUSING**

Housing in Ponca City reflects the change from a headquarters community to a thriving, economically diverse community. These changes are not at all necessarily negative as they reflect the realities of the market. Nevertheless, many people and institutions involved in real estate continue to focus their business models on a market that caters to upper income households. Many express pessimism at the soft market for upper income homes and assume that this is symptomatic of a declining economy. With fewer corporate executives cycling through the community, however, the market for higher end homes would not be as strong as in the past.

The Ponca City Housing Authority reports significant waiting lists for their assistance programs. In addition, many local companies are recruiting workers from outside of the area to positions that pay a living wage. Many of these potential home buyers report that they are living elsewhere and commuting into Ponca City due to the lack of appropriate housing options.

Simply put, the housing market in Ponca City is out of sync with new customers. It has been reported to PCDA that it is extremely difficult to find housing that working families can afford. It has also been reported that the homes on the market, at all price levels, are older and not necessarily attractive to new buyers who can select brand new homes in other communities. In addition, the limited stock of housing affordable to working families includes a significant number of housing units that are not desirable and cannot compete with housing in the same price range offered elsewhere, notably Stillwater.

Housing development that continues to rely upon single home construction in the higher price ranges will continue to see declines. Home shoppers today are far more conditioned to look for new or newer construction and many seek the convenience, choices, and prices offered by subdivisions that build and sell by the subdivision, not the individual house. Affordable housing and quality homes with a price under \$170,000 (2006 prices) is likely the growth market of the future.

Home construction techniques that are not new to the industry but, to some degree, are new to Ponca City should be considered including more spec home development, tract marketing, (as oppose to simply building multiple homes in a tract) downtown loft development and other best practices elsewhere. The objective directs PCDA, if approved by the City Commission, to identify many of these best practices and develop an action plan for implementation in Ponca City.

The plan includes a housing objective which outlines potential PCDA actions, if authorized by the City Commission.

## **RECREATION**

The 2007 approval of the YMCA recreation center at Waverly and Grand should prove to be a tremendous boost to the community's ability to attract population. Recreation centers of this nature are quickly becoming expected by consumers of place. This center

offers a very attractive opportunity to promote the community as well thought sports tournaments, weekend tourism and more. While bringing money into the community is one benefit from this, exposure to visitors could also help Ponca City attract population and business people who “discover the community through a visit to the new recreation center.

With the new center, there is considerable opportunity for Ponca City to serve as the regional hub for sports and recreational activities. No community in North Central Oklahoma or Southern Kansas has claimed the opportunity to become the sports or recreation center of this region. Ponca City can choose to do so. No community in the region, for that matter, has positioned itself to become a weekend retreat for the metropolitan areas of Oklahoma City, Tulsa and Wichita. Ponca City can claim this market as well and the new center could provide the launching pad for this effort.

In addition to the new recreation center, the existing recreational amenities in and around Ponca City are adequate to attract those pursuing individual and small group activities such as fishing, camping, boating, etc. The community also offers an abundance of events that appeal to a wide cross section of people and attract visitors from throughout Oklahoma and Kansas.

The infrastructure supporting these activities and events continues to age. Specifically, the community must keep in mind that Kaw Lake is no longer a new facility. Campgrounds and other physical amenities at that venue are deteriorating at a fairly fast pace. The completion of the Kaw Lake project was an important step in addressing this aging infrastructure and the improved roadway offers an opportunity to further develop the lake as a major tourist destination.

In addition to Kaw Lake, Lake Ponca’s facilities also continue to age. Added to a significantly underutilized Wentz Camp, this represents more of an opportunity lost, than a direct decline in current tourism. Lake Ponca provides an extremely attractive venue for events that very few cities in the United States enjoy. Improvements and new attractions at the lake such as a real trail system, a lake restaurant and new water sports facilities could provide a significant boost to the Ponca City economy.

Recreational opportunities also present themselves in the group sports area. The community already recognizes the economic importance of activities such as the motocross and 101 Rodeo. These events are important and should continue to be supported.

Specific recommendations to more fully utilize the recreation facilities in the Ponca City area include:

- 1) Fully exploit the opportunities presented by the new recreation center. This includes insuring that there is a position designated to be responsible for attracting tournaments and events to the center.
- 2) Create and master plan a vision for Wentz Camp. This could also include a quality restaurant with a view of the lake, better utilization of the Went Camp pool, potentially a retreat center catering Oklahoma and Kansas companies, organizations, etc. or an active and attractive boy scout or girl scout camp that is open to groups from throughout the Great Plains, (full lodge, activities, etc.), public campgrounds with first class facilities, an amphitheater for large, regional concerts or events, etc.;

- 3) Attract a developer to master plan the McFadden marina area. This should include outside venues including Sun and Fun and Camp McFadden. The goal would be to develop a first class resort area which attracts families and groups who do not necessarily have a direct and specific interest in current lake activities, (i.e. individual fisherman, boat owners, etc.) but do have an interest in spending time in the great outdoors and experiencing waterfront activities. The plan could include attractive amenities such as a quality restaurant at the marine, improved boating facilities, (including boat and jet sky rentals) a resort hotel, adjacent, first class recreational activities, (i.e. outdoor drama, walking and hiking trails, mountain bike paths, Fun and Sun) and more;
- 4) Create and master plan a vision for Wentz Camp. This could also include a quality restaurant with a view of the lake, better utilization of the Went Camp pool, potentially a retreat center catering Oklahoma and Kansas companies, organizations, etc. or an active and attractive boy scout or girl scout camp that is open to groups from throughout the Great Plains, (full lodge, activities, etc.), public campgrounds with first class facilities, an amphitheater for large, regional concerts or events, etc.;
- 5) Master plan Lake Ponca to provide a vision for the future of the facility. This could include public camping facilities at the lake, a trail network around the lake, an amphitheater, summer concerts, the role of private individuals in leasing or maintaining facilities, etc.;
- 6) In order to position itself as a weekend destination, Ponca City must orient activities and facilities, (the proposed Kaw Lake resort, events, local restaurants and retailers, etc.) to weekend trade. This includes remaining open on Sundays to attract the urban audiences seeking relatively close, Sunday destinations.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Transportation in and around Ponca City has, in general, limited economic growth. The lack of an interstate highway next to the community has limited opportunities in the past and may do so in the future. Ponca City can compete with communities served by the interstate but it must work harder given the 15 mile gap between the community and I-35.

In general, recent improvements to U.S. 60 west of Ponca City have provided a good highway that provides connectivity to one of the most critical North South trade interstates in the nation. The intersection of U.S. 60 and Interstate 35, however, should be enhanced or at a minimum, repaired. Indeed, the intersection itself speaks of a history gone by, not the potential for growth of population or commerce.

PCDA believes that an update of the master plan for Ponca City Municipal Airport should be developed. This plan can identify the future of the airport including potential parcels, improvements, facilities and services needed to make the airport the economic development asset it can be. The future of the airport could potentially be as a light jet hub, including expanded fixed based operations and heavier maintenance, and as an airport hub for aviation companies needing quick, close access to the aerospace hubs of Wichita, Oklahoma City and Tulsa. A true master plan will identify these opportunities to the level required.

Internal to the City, the local infrastructure receives relatively high praise. The relatively recent expansion of Waverly offers the ability to connect from the west business

park exclusively on a four lane highway, an important asset. In addition, the upkeep of the streets in the area serves business and people alike.

Rail service may become more important in the future as additional regulations on the trucking industry, coupled with the high cost of fuel, put pressure on the ability of long haul bulk carriers to cut costs. In general, Ponca City has good rail service, although a rail spur serving available parcels would provide an advantage. PCDA, however, has marketed certain parcels with the promise of spur availability, (although no commitments have been made at the time of the development of this plan). The threat to this pledge, however, is that the land upon which the spur is proposed is not under the control of PCDA or the City of Ponca City.

Finally, with rail, population growth and tourism in mind, if passenger rail service could be restored on the line between Oklahoma City and Wichita, an excellent opportunity exists for Ponca City to capitalize on this as a weekend destination. The barriers to this would be the restoration of passenger service, (national trends are to the contrary) and the acquisition of a site and the construction of a suitable, inviting train station that complements the communities desired image.

Specific recommendations made during the development of this plan relative to transportation needs can be summarized as follows:

- 1) Ponca City Municipal Airport should be master planned to create a vision for how this dynamic asset can be a major economic asset for the future;
- 2) U.S. 177 between Stillwater and Ponca City should be developed into a four lane highway and potentially a “Smart” highway;
- 3) U.S. 77 between Newkirk and the Kansas border should be expanded to four lanes;
- 4) The intersection of I-35 and U.S. 60 should be developed as a center of commerce;
- 5) Steps should be taken to increase Ponca City’s exposure along the Interstate, (i.e. billboards, changing the name of U.S. 60 to “The Ponca City/Tonkawa Expressway” between Interstate 35 and Ponca City.)
- 6) Development of passenger rail service for tourist excursions.