

# KEARNEY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ROADMAP TO SUCCESS

A COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

April 18, 2009

PREPARED BY

SMART  
**SOLUTIONS**  
GROUP

P.O. Box 1245  
Warsaw, MO 65355  
660.438.2090

[www.smartsolutionsgroup.net](http://www.smartsolutionsgroup.net)

## INTRODUCTION

The planning approach for developing the Kearney Economic Development Roadmap to Success was based on the Kearney Area Development Corporation's desire to build consensus on the direction and focus for their efforts.

The collaborative, team-building process involved:

- An assessment of the current economic development situation including a demographic/economic profile and analysis of the competitiveness of the “product”—Kearney—as a business prospect/site location consultant would analyze a location’s assets, strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for an investment opportunity.
- An outline of specific roles and responsibilities for the community economic development function.
- Development of a comprehensive, brand-building strategic marketing plan including goals and objectives, target audiences, brand position statement/key messages, strategies and tactics, measurements of success, budget, and an action plan/timeline.

Smart Solutions Group conducted primary research including surveys with Steering Team members and stakeholders/influencers, analyzed secondary data and worked with the Kearney Development Steering Committee to reach consensus on the features and benefits of the product—Kearney—and on the approach to branding and marketing the product to generate economic development results.

The key to building an effective brand communications program is the positioning statement—it is the “core message” you want to deliver consistently in every medium. To achieve success, it will be important for Kearney to stay focused on the goals/objectives and the core message.

## SECTION I

### A VIEW OF THE CURRENT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SITUATION

The following is the summary of the results of the community economic development survey recently undertaken by the Kearney Area Development Council Planning Team. The survey responses from **twelve (67%) Steering Team respondents and nineteen (8%) Community Leaders** are included in this summary. Of the nineteen, nine were tallied as "late arrivals" for the purpose of this survey.

#### Defining the Business of Economic Development

Respondents from both groups indicated a broad interpretation of economic development. The most consistent way to describe economic development was...**business growth**.

- Economic development is the strengthening and building of the business base and employment availability of the community.
- S Creation of jobs, businesses and infrastructure that benefit the Kearney Community by improving the tax base, creating employment opportunities, and increasing commerce that takes place in the community.
- S I think economic development for Kearney should focus on retaining and growing our present business and attracting additional small business owners.
- Bringing business to Kearney to provide jobs and an additional tax base for the City and Schools as well as opportunities to provide jobs for the citizens of Kearney.

Some, however, had a broader interpretation of economic development:

- To make Kearney a destination and event, a happening.
- The development and management of the income and expenditures of the community. Anything that has to do with the development of the community.
- Economic development is the creation of jobs, businesses and manufacturing in the community. It is also quality of life, schools, recreation, etc.
- S Creating and expanding commerce occurring within the City limits, increasing jobs, expanding the assessed valuation, creating a traffic flow into the community, enhancing the viability and desirability of living environment by attracting new retail businesses, entertainment including parks & recreation, health care, education, improved water sewer and street infrastructure, improved and expanded public safety, increasing housing units and population.

And one even mentioned a higher aspiration for economic development:

- The goals should include bringing the entire business and City Government community together as one...

However it was clear that throughout all responses, economic development is seen as a very positive tool which touches on a wide variety of community issues, needs and resources. This broad platform creates a positive basis for a continued and expanded dialogue concerning the nature, rationale and extent of economic development activities.

## **Image and Current Perceptions of Kearney**

Two strong and consistent themes were present in the first word associated with “the product”...Kearney.

The words “friendly and home” were mentioned in nine of the comments concerning this question.

- Very friendly. Down home. A great place to raise a family.
- S Hometown friendly
- S A friendly, small town that needs to effectively manage and promote growth in order to become a desired residential, and business destination of the Clay County Northland Area.

Additionally first impressions included community, proximity to Kansas City (S Close to Kansas City but far enough away.) “Great Place” was also mentioned several times.

The interesting aspect of this question was that no respondent, not a single one, provided any negative first impression of the community. This is highly unusual for this survey. Typically some respondents hold a negative or neutral impression, but not in this instrument.

When asked to find other words to describe Kearney more of the same positive images arouse from the all respondents:

- Small town, families, growing.
- Loyal customers. Simply the best.
- Small town where you feel welcome. A place where when you go into a business they can call you by name and say thank you.
- Warm, inviting, friendly community.
- S Good Schools, Safe, Friendly
- S Good Schools, Churches and Safe Environment
- S Great schools. Close commute to KC
- S Good schools, safe place to live, a welcoming place

There was agreement by both groups concerning what they would like to hear people say about Kearney today...it could be summarized as more of the same.


- Safe, friendly community in which to raise a family.
- Great place to live, I wish I lived there.
- A great place to come home to.
- S Great place to live and raise a family with good access to the city.
- S That's where I want to live.


## Demographic and Economic Profile

Population in July 2007: 8,214. Population change since 2000: +44.7%

Males: 3,973  (48.4%)

Females: 4,241  (51.6%)

Median resident age:  31.1 years

Missouri median age:  36.1 years

Estimated median household income in 2007: \$68,176 (it was \$56,603 in 2000)

Kearney:  \$68,176

Missouri:  \$45,114

Estimated median house or condo value in 2007: \$170,057 (it was \$114,100 in 2000)

Kearney:  \$170,057

Missouri:  \$138,600

2008 cost of living index in Kearney: 76.7 (low, U.S. average is 100)

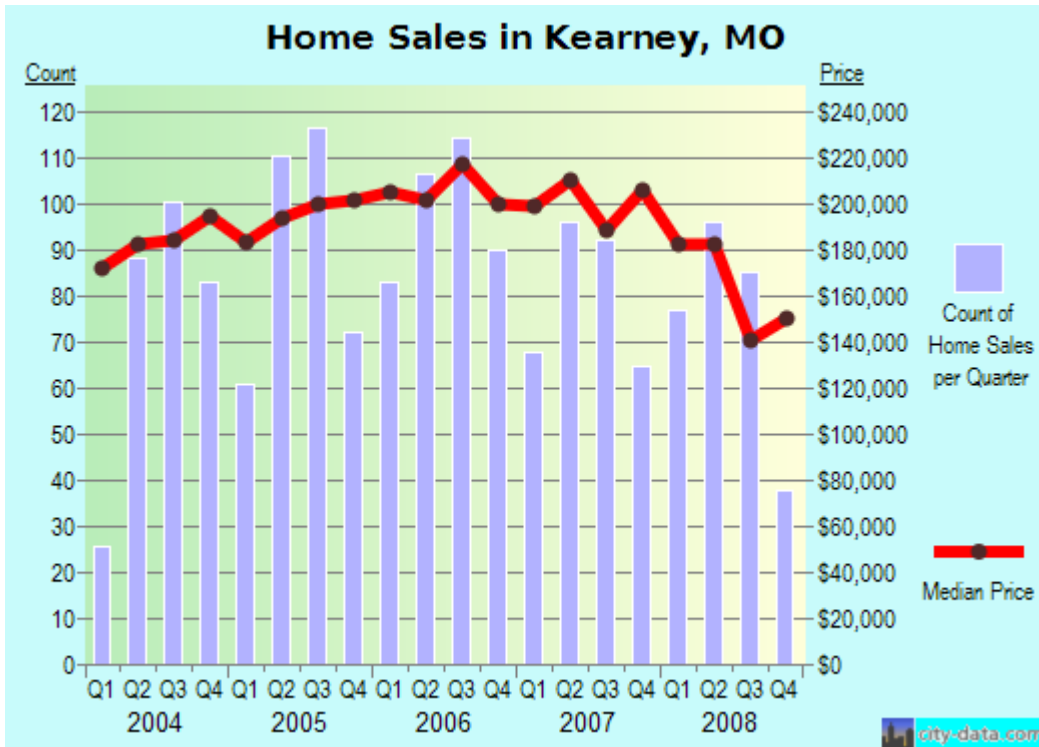
For population 25 years and over in Kearney

- High school or higher: 91.3%
- Bachelor's degree or higher: 24.2%
- Graduate or professional degree: 6.6%
- Unemployed: 4.1%
- Mean travel time to work: 24.3 minutes

For population 15 years and over in Kearney city

- Never married: 17.1%
- Now married: 65.5%
- Separated: 1.5%
- Widowed: 5.8%
- Divorced: 10.1%

Total housing units	1,995		
Occupied housing units	1,910	95.7	91.0%
Owner-occupied housing units	1,408	73.7	66.2%
Renter-occupied housing units	502	26.3	33.8%
Vacant housing units	85	4.3	9.0%



## The Product—Kearney

Following is an assessment of the competitiveness of Kearney’s “product features and benefits” based on perceptions of the internal and external leaders interviewed.

**Additional product information has been gathered from secondary sources.** The leaders interviewed were asked to rate the competitiveness of Kearney on a scale of 1-10 (1=lowest, 10=highest) on six critical foundation factors for business development growth: access to skilled, educated workers; advanced efficient infrastructure; business climate; access to business resources; access to capital; and quality of living. This data is reflected in the labeled charts below.

## Access to Skilled Workers

<i>Access to Skilled Workers</i>	<i>Steering Average Rating (12)</i>	<i>Community Leaders Average Rating (10)</i>	<i>Late Arrivals Average Rating (9)</i>
Skilled Workers Available	5.7	5.8	6.4
Technical/Professional Workers Available	6.0	5.8	6.7
Workforce Preparedness/Skills Training Programs	3.8	4.5	4.9
Good Higher Education Opportunities Available	3.8	4.3	3.6
Diverse Job/Career Opportunities	3.4	3.3	3.3
Ability to Attract Talent	5.4	4.3	4.4

## Area Educational and Training Resources

### *Kearney R-1 School District*

- Approximately 3400 students
- Accredited
- Higher average attendance than Missouri average
- Significantly higher graduation rate than Missouri average (93.9 compared to 85.2)
- Almost 45% go on the 4-year college or university (MO average 39.9%)
- Higher placement rates for Career Technical Education students than MO average

- More experienced, more advanced degree and certified staff than average
- Higher composite score on ACT than state averages

***Higher Education and Training***

Within a two-hour drive of Kearney are several higher education institutions for professional development and skills training including MCC Business and Technology College, University of Kansas, University of Missouri and Kansas State University. Within minutes of Kearney are the University of Missouri at Kansas City, Rockhurst College, Washburn University, Columbia College of Missouri at Kansas City and William Jewell College.

**Physical Infrastructure to Support Growth Including Transportation, Telecommunications, Utilities and Available Sites and Buildings**

<i>Advanced, Efficient Infrastructure</i>	<i>Steering Average Rating</i>	<i>Community Leaders Average Rating</i>	<i>Late Arrivals Average Rating</i>
Proximity to Markets	6.5	7.4	6.6
Interstate/Highway Access	7.6	8.6	9.0
Rail Access	5.0	5.1	5.4
Air Access	6.2	6.8	5.0
Advanced Telecommunications Available	6.4	7.0	6.8
Capacity/Cost of Utilities—Electric, Gas and Water	7.0	6.9	7.3
Available Industrial/Office Buildings and Sites	5.8	7.1	7.0

## **Physical Infrastructure Attributes:**

Overall, Kearney is perceived to be well positioned in terms of its proximity to markets and infrastructure to support growth.



***Proximity to Markets:*** Kearney is located within a 500-mile radius of major business/population centers throughout the Midwest.

- Kansas City                      Borders
- St. Louis                            268 miles
- Omaha                              184 miles
- Des Moines                        171 miles
- Twin Cities                        414 miles
- Chicago                              488 miles

### ***Waterways:***

- 13 miles to the Missouri River

### ***Highways:***

- I-29, I-35, I-435
- 24 miles from I-70
- US-69, US-169

- MO-152, MO-210, MO-291

***Air Transportation:***

- 23 miles from Kansas City International Airport (KCI)
- Kansas City Downtown Airport
- Roosterville Airport
- Clay County Regional Airport

***Rail Transportation:***

- Burlington Northern Santa Fe
- Norfolk Southern
- Union Pacific
- I & M Rail Link

***Telecommunications:***

- Embarq

***Utilities:***

- Platte City Electric Cooperative
- Ameren

***Industrial Parks and Available Buildings:***

Kearney Innovation:  
A Planned Business Community

The Kearney Area Development Council acquired property for light industrial commercial development several years ago in order to maintain stable land prices in a high growth market. This property is located near the intersection of I-35 and MO-92. Phase I completely sold out in the three year period from 1999 to 2001; Phase II contains 17 acres and is now fully developed and ready for sale. Phase III contains 12-acres and Phase IV contains 20-acres and either phase can be served with minimal infrastructure extensions. The property sells for \$1.75 and \$1.85 per square foot. Our greatest attributes include favorable electric rates, advanced telecommunication capabilities, and excellent transportation access.

**Competitively Balanced Business Climate including a Demonstrated Friendly Cooperative Environment to Do Business**

<i>Business Climate</i>	<i>Steering Average Rating</i>	<i>Community Leaders Average Rating</i>	<i>Late Arrivals Average Ratings</i>
Pro-Business Attitude	7.0	6.3	5.9
Competitive Overall Operating Costs	7.0	6.6	5.8
Fair Tax/Regulatory System	7.4	5.8	6.2

### **Access to Capital for Growth**

<i>Access to Capital for Growth</i>	<i>Steering Average Rating</i>	<i>Community Leaders Average Ratings</i>	<i>Late Arrivals Average Rating</i>
Competitive Financial Incentive Programs	6.1	3.7	5.7
Venture Capital Funds	4.5	3.6	4.8

### **Quality of Living**

<i>Quality of Life</i>	<i>Steering Average Rating</i>	<i>Community Leaders Average Rating</i>	<i>Late Arrivals Average Rating</i>
K-12 Education	8.2	8.8	8.1
Housing	5.9	7.2	6.4
Healthcare Services	5.2	6.2	6.2
Retail/Commercial Vibrancy	5.1	4.2	4.9
Safe Environment to Live and Work	8.1	9.1	8.3

<i>Quality of Life</i>	<i>Steering Average Rating</i>	<i>Community Leaders Average Rating</i>	<i>Late Arrivals Average Rating</i>
Recreational Opportunities	6.0	6.0	6.0
Cultural Opportunities	4.9	4.8	3.8

### **Retail Considerations**

<i>Retail Environment</i>	<i>Steering Average Rating</i>	<i>Community Leaders Average Rating</i>	<i>Late Arrivals Average Rating</i>
Good Location for Retail Growth	6.0	7.7	6.6
Variety of Retail Choices	4.7	3.9	4.8
Convenience of retail environment	5.5	5.3	6.4
Atmosphere of retail environment	5.7	5.7	7.4

### **Tourism Considerations**

<i>Tourism</i>	<i>Steering Average Rating</i>	<i>Community Leaders Average Rating</i>	<i>Late Arrivals Average Rating</i>
Tourism attractions	4.9	5.8	6.3
Tourism potential for growth	6.0	5.8	6.9
Tourist related businesses and services	4.6	4.0	4.5

Following is a summary of the ratings of the competitiveness of the product “features and benefits” ranked by respondents:

<i>Product Features/Benefits</i>	<i>Steering Average Rating (12)</i>	<i>Leaders Average Rating (10)</i>	<i>Late Arrivals Average Rating (9)</i>
K-12 Education	8.2	8.8 (2)	8.1 (3)
Safe Environment	8.1	9.1 (1)	8.3 (2)
Interstate Highway Access	7.6	8.6 (3)	9.0 (1)
Fair Tax/Regulatory System	7.4	<b>5.8</b>	6.2
Pro-Business Attitude	7.0	6.3	5.9
Competitive Overall Operating Costs	7.0	6.6	5.8
Capacity/Cost of Utilities	7.0	6.9	7.3 (5)
Proximity to Markets	6.5	<b>7.4 (5)</b>	6.6
Advanced Telecommunications	6.4	7.0	6.8
Air Access	6.2	6.8	5.0
Competitive Incentive Programs	6.1	<b>3.7</b>	<b>5.7</b>
Technical/Professional Workers Availability	6.0	5.8	6.7
Recreational Opportunities	6.0	6.0	6.0
Retail – Good Location	6.0	<b>7.7 (4)</b>	6.6
Tourism Potential for Growth	6.0	5.8	6.9
Housing - reasonable choices	5.9	<b>7.2</b>	6.4
Available Industrial/ Buildings	5.8	<b>7.1 (6)</b>	7.0 (6)
Skilled Workers Available	5.7	5.8	6.4
Retail - Atmosphere	5.7	5.7	7.4 (4)
Ability to Attract Talent	5.4	4.3	4.4
Retail - Convenience	5.5	5.3	6.4
Health Care Services	5.2	6.2	6.2
Retail/Commercial Vibrancy	5.1	4.2	4.9
Rail	5.0	5.1	5.4
Cultural Opportunities	4.9	4.8	<b>3.8</b>
Tourism Attractions	4.9	5.8	6.3
Retail – Variety of Choices	4.7	<b>3.9</b>	4.8
Tourism Related Businesses/	4.6	4.0	4.5
Venture Capital	4.5	<b>3.6</b>	4.8
Workforce Preparedness/Skills Training Programs	3.8	4.5	4.9
Good Higher Education Opportunities	3.8	4.3	<b>3.6</b>
Diverse Job/Career Opportunities	3.4	<b>3.3</b>	<b>3.3</b>

## Kearney's Most Marketable Assets/Strengths

The most marketable assets or strengths of Kearney included the following key components:

- Location
  - KC/Airport/Interstate
  - Access
- School System
- High per capita income/buying power
- Land to buy/Room to grow
- Friendly people
- Family friendly
- Open to opportunity

As a place to **live and work** both indicated that the community has some unique quality of life aspects. And they had a lot to say about the reasons for that quality of life...

- Friendly neighbors/people
- Excellent/great/good/superb schools
- Upper middle class
- Family oriented
- Safe place to raise family
- Close proximity to large city.
- Recreational facilities for adults and youth/Parks and Rec/ green space
- Price of homes
- Quiet – Close to the City but Country attitude

## Key Challenges/Barriers to Growth

Some felt the challenges were based on **infrastructure**.

- Bad traffic I-35 and 92 highways, first thing you see! Better job opportunities. Bank to start making loans again!
- Roads. Infrastructure.
- Access to I-35
- S Can infrastructure to handle rapid growth?
- Lack of easy access and entrance to highway during peak traffic periods.
- Developing the land along the Interstate to attract businesses.
- S Lack of rail access. Congested access to Interstate/Single exit. Price of land. Lack of low wage workforce in Kearney

Some felt the challenges were based on **attitude and willingness**.

- Tax incentives. Open minded to new business. Businesses that close due to lack of plan.

- Existing in Liberty's shadow. Empty car lot by highway - black mark. No large commercial business draw.
- Older businesses not wanting to see new growth. Wanting to keep the community a small town.
- Local governments ability to attract willing development partners....by putting restrictions and additional cost burdens on developers
- Being a bedroom community, people stop in the city for better selection of products and price. Price of land for businesses is excessive. City Hall is anti-business growth unless it meets their personal expectations.

And some felt the challenges related to specific “**lacks**” on the part of the city.

- S Proximity to the KC metropolitan area. Lack of rail. Perception that we are too far out of the KC area
- S Limited retail and entertainment. Limited housing options. Limited infrastructure revenue (a component of low property tax base and limited sales tax).

## **Potential Opportunities for Growth and Development**

Respondents had a long wish list for retail, including:

- Nice restaurant, not just fast food. Target or Walmart. Large grocery store such as Hy-Vee.
- Grocery store. Restaurants. Broad based retailer.
- Famous retail business. Service businesses. Elder care. Manufacturing. Large Distributor.
- Quality restaurant, not fast food.
- A good restaurant or two. Not fast food. A new gun store, Bass Pro Shop or other big name! Walmart.
- A bowling alley with go carts and games for children
- Restaurants (if an outer road was along the Interstate)
- S Restaurants. 40 to 60,000 sq. Ft. Grocery. Bowling
- S Indoor Recreational Facility of Some Sort: Basketball Courts, Soccer Fields, Batting Cage, Practice Fields, Volleyball...Bowling Alley, Swimming Pool

Only a few mentioned manufacturing but only in general terms or in the concept of small business development.

- Manufacturing facilities
- More manufacturing industry. Family restaurant. Clothing store.
- S Small business be it retail or small production/manufacturing. Call centers
- S Small business – service industry
- S Small business growing from startup business

The not desirable businesses in Kearney include the basic “adult” businesses, heavy industry, bars and special requirement (rail) manufacturing made the list of least desirable business targets. One suggested a rule of thumb for any business development consideration:

- Yes, keep Kearney business, family oriented.

### Potential for Development

Participants were asked to rate several development potentials for their ability to provide the greatest immediate growth opportunity for Kearney. A lower score (on a scale of 1 to 5) meant the most immediate growth opportunity for Kearney.

	<b>Steering</b>	<b>Leaders</b>
Commercial/Service Industry Development	2.3	1.6
Industrial/Manufacturing Development	3.2	1.6
Multi-family Residential Development	3.3	3.6
Single-family Residential Development	3.6	3.6
Retail Development	1.4	2.0

To the respondents, Multi-family Residential holds the least potential for immediate growth. However, they are fairly well split over which other direction provides opportunities.

### The Competition for Economic Development Opportunities

Respondents see competition from one primary and a number of “also ran” areas.

- Liberty - 11 mentions
- Kansas City in general – 6 mentions
- Smithville – 4 mentions
- Excelsior Springs – 3 mentions

One summed it up in broad but important terms:

- Other communities of like size and location to infrastructure

### Does Kearney compete effectively?

Fifteen responded with word “no” in their answer. Typical responses included:

- No! Competing development. Have lots of tax breaks and TIFs.
  - No- not enough has been done to commercially market the city
  - S The Kansas side of the metro area can offer some incentives that the Missouri side cannot. This fact and the fact that we are perceived to be a small market community and to close or to far (depending on the reasoning) from Kansas City makes it hard to compete.
- 
- Closed minds if you're not part of the good old boy network.
  - No....not developer friendly....too restrictive
  - No. City planning and zoning committees and ordinances are not business friendly. It has nothing to do with requirements, it is attitude.
  - S No, Kearney does not advertise and promote its pro-business attitude enough and has not yet capitalized on the historical theme as it relates the down town.

### **Is Kearney organized to compete?**

Of the respondents seven immediate responded “no” to the question of whether Kearney was organized to compete effectively for economic development opportunities. Only three said “yes.”

- In no way are organized to bring in industrial/manufacturing to Kearney at this time! Not even close!
- S Kearney Area Development Council is active and reflective.
- S Yes, however I believe the focus should be on the commercial sector rather than Industrial/ Manufacturing due to Kearney’s demographics, transportation opportunities, and strong telecommunications profile.

### **Ideas on Raising Awareness**

Respondents provided a wide range of answers concerning ways to raise awareness and promote the features and benefits of the community to others.

Responses fell into two categories – tactics and concepts. Under tactics a number of items were mentioned including:

- KC Business Journal, East Coast business journals.
- S Highway billboards  
Internet
- S Direct targeted mailing. Small and developing business moving from home operations to larger facilities
- K.C. area business developers.....let them know that Kearney wants their business!
- Hire a professional marketer.

In the area of concepts, they respondents mentioned some key messages which would be the most effective conveying the Kearney difference.

- S Promote the schools.
- S Promote the city being closer to downtown KC than everyone thinks  
Promote Kearney schools high test scores  
Promote low property tax rate  
Promote low utility rates with superior telecommunications capabilities
- Target the local resident and local communities to promote shopping Kearney first. Communities need to support their local business.
- City/citizens/businesses need to work together to develop a vision for the community and then begin to accomplish the tasks identified in the vision. The region will take note of this and you are actually changing the product to make it more worthwhile to take note of
- Dwell on the positive not the negative

## Measuring Success

Consideration of success measures depends on the economic development perspective of the individual respondent. Some are interested in bringing more economic diversity to Kearney via manufacturing, service groups or light industry.

- Some type of manufacturing plant or a place that would provide jobs
- The relocation or creation of a manufacturing company in Kearney
- S Land a manufacturing plant and commercial retail with restaurants, restore the home building
- S Get one major professional employer (50 plus employees) located in Kearney by 2010.

Others view success based on retail development.

- I would like to see a larger variety of retail stores.
- More large stores in order to bring in other areas close to Kearney for shopping and eating. Something to draw people.

Still others point to success being measured in very pragmatic and systematic fashion.

- S Attracting residential and business growth by developing reasonable, but aggressive, plans and goals for and with the City.
- More business that offers jobs to people that live in Kearney and the surrounding communities.
- S Success would be an increase in business and residential population creating an increase in Tax Revenues.

- Success would bring more jobs to Kearney. Success would be to keep jobs we have!

One offered some simple but reflective thinking on the base line measurement of success.

- S 1. Will it bring businesses to Kearney that will bring jobs to Kearney.
- 2. Will it bring families to Kearney.
- 3. Will it not change the attitude of a great place to live.

## **Roles of the Organizations in Economic Development**

Survey participants were asked to evaluate several local groups who are involved in or influence economic development. For each they provided their thoughts on the various **roles/functions/activities** of the groups and the **strengths/weaknesses of each**.

### **Kearney Area Development Council**

- Lead organization to development.
- Research and communication.
- Attract business to Kearney
- S Marketing the City and working with potential businesses. This study and follow-through is the right direction.
- S I'm unsure I know the KADC current responsibilities.
- S Our weaknesses are lack of a full time employee to market, market, market and funding. Our strength is in our membership and their efforts to promote growth.
- S This organization along with the City and Chamber need to come up with a better, more focused and combined effort to search out new opportunities. It is not enough to wait for someone to come searching for us.
- S Commercial development
- S Continue to promote industrial/commercial development
- S Vision and Development Ideas. Advertisement of the Community
- S Promote, market, make proposals to attract commercial business growth
- S Coordinate economic incentive programs available
- Evaluate businesses as to their "contribution" to community goals
- Make "cheap" land available through development as a non-profit
- All I see is weakness! No real work being done!

### **City of Kearney**

- Making strides to work with residents.
- Kearney needs to do this in house. Administer five days a week to be successful you need a full time effort not part time by the other agencies.
- Stop being mean! Act like they want business. Tax breaks for new business.

- More positive response from City Managers office...as much as he may think he does... he does not speak for the majority of residents...time for a fresh face in that position.
- Maintain and promote that city officials are public servants.
- Govern and stay out of development.
- Provide a strong City government and attract business to Kearney
- S Pass the laws to make it happen. Build the City government through means made available by the State and Federal governments. I like the way the City is managed and stays within a budget.
- S Liaison on Government affairs necessary. Funding / Grants Support. Infrastructure support. Guidance and Counsel
- S Lack of a set policy on what incentives they will offer. Lack of search person for new growth. The mayor's vision and dreams for Kearney are a great way to get people thinking of what could be.
- S Infrastructure
- S Promote housing market/industry/market Kearney
- S Be prepared to offer programs and incentives to attract business; expand infrastructure to support growth
- S Promote Kearney's attributes through a marketing campaign geared at raising Kansas City and regional awareness of Kearney.
- S Implementing the Vision

### **Kearney Chamber of Commerce**

- Continue to gain new members and promote networking.
- S Promote the existing businesses and family friendly place to live. I do not know everything the Chamber has done, but it seems to not be a full-time process. The Chamber monthly meetings need to be more than just a free lunch. There should be more things done to get the businesses to work with each other and refer business to the businesses in town. I don't want to be too critical since I do not know what they have done or are doing, but it seems they could be doing more.
- Do more to promote Kearney...lunch together once a month is not a promotion!
- Promote more involvement within the business community.
- S Market Kearney/Interface with Business Community
- Promote businesses.
- Keep up what doing. Market Kearney to more areas. Johnson County, KS is doing very good job of taking KCMO we could do the same!
- S The chamber needs to be more proactive. They have a part time staff person that is good at what she does. Their efforts need to go beyond what they currently do. They need to talk to members and non-members to see about business retention and development of new business.
- S Networking and seeking business support and feedback of future development.
- S Retail Development
- S Support of the Vision / Business. Advertisement of the Community

- S Search for methods to improve the retail businesses located in Kearney
- Provide a networking environment for the businesses and attract visitors and businesses to Kearney.

### **Kearney Business Community**

- Too busy trying to survive to help with community at this time.
- S If they are like me, they are doing all they can to keep their businesses from failing. I think the local businesses should be responsible for making the Chamber better and doing more to educate themselves to be more successful. I've heard comments that some of the businesses in town do not always keep their doors open during business hours. I think a lot of businesses are also afraid to come outside of their businesses to promote themselves and are just waiting for customers to come to them. Maybe some of the successful businesses in town could help the Chamber out by creating sub-committees to improve existing businesses and improve communication with the City and its' Citizens.
- I think all three groups should work together to make Kearney a vibrant community.
- S There needs to be a Kearney business coalition that provides constructive input of their ideas concerning development and their support needs.
- S Actively support Schools/step up participation in KADC
- Encourage and financially support development of businesses.
- S Offer the best services and products available to out do the competition of the other towns. Do it Better! If you don't do it better, you are not going to win.
- S Incentive program to shop locally—donations to school or other charity that benefits Kearney.
- Need more locally sponsored activities....
- Listen to its patrons to provide products and services.

### **Regional Development Partners**

- S KADC is an outstanding partner actively developing leads and prospects. Must be a member to play and KADC needs to maintain its membership. Clay County EDC limited assistance to Kearney. Focused on retail and residential development.
- Doing what? Meetings? No strengths at this time.
- Don't know that they are here to assist Kearney in any way. Have never seen anything that would indicate they have done anything for the area.
- S Besides Molly Brown with MARC, I'm not sure if these groups even look at helping Kearney.
- S They need to know that Kearney exists and is a player. They tend to overlook Kearney as it is small in comparison to the other cities in the Area.
- Somehow get more involvement and promote communication.

- S They are more for the County ~ they have just as big a tug from our competing towns...this is a very limited attention to detail for Kearney.
- Support the acquisition of companies and business and provide technical and financial assistance.
- S KCADC is primary provider of leads KC Area--Kearney needs to remain a member, City has membership in Clay County EDC, another cheerleader
- S Recognize and promote the attributes Kearney has to offer to clients that “fit” our target businesses.

**What, if any, are the “barriers to collaboration/cooperation?”**

- No real goals at this time! Everyone wants to be top dog! No real leaders to do the work.
- Get a better frame of mind on new possibilities.
- Local government....
- Too many special interest groups.
- Communication and education.
- S Communication, Cheerleading,
- S Not enough people who are enthusiastic and anxious to see this happen.
- S These groups need to somehow meet together to share ideas. So they can pool their resources of time, energy, and money to get more bang for the buck so to speak! Like some sort of Business/Development Summit.
- S Coordinating the efforts listed above. Money to fund promotion of Kearney.
- S Lack of financial help for developers.
- S Land prices/infrastructure costs
- S Maybe if there was a common place (Incubator) where businesses could start and operate with onsite mentors that would be required to meet with the businesses to help them with their growth.
- It is hard to convince some of the retail stores that they have to market themselves in some manner.
- I think I’ve mentioned most of this above where the Kearney Business Community could help.
- None, but everyone outside of City Hall is having to work twice as hard to make their own business work right now. They don't have time to donate to this effort. It's tough.
- S None.

## SECTION II

# OPERATIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

### Community Economic Development Vision

“Economic development efforts are crucial for the entire Kearney community by helping existing companies expand their operations and partnering with new businesses interested in locating in the community, thus creating new quality jobs, quality incomes, a stable tax base and a positive impression of the overall business climate in Kearney.”

A Community Development Vision is needed but is not included in this document. This intent of this document is to outline a "plan of work" for KADC. It is recommended that a community taskforce, working from the framework of this document, be established to work on a Community Development Vision.

### Roles and Responsibilities

Currently the City, Kearney Area Development Council (KADC) and Chamber operate on a collaborative basis. Primarily, the three groups focus on the **Service, Sales** and **Promotion** side of community economic development.

The **City** focuses on all business development from a “**Service**” perspective. In this way, they would be charged to ensure the "product" is prepared and managed for growth, while equally ensuring that ordinances and regulations are followed to allow for consistency of growth.

The “**Sales**” responsibility fits naturally with the current efforts of KADC. This service could be defined as the retention and support of existing businesses, attraction of new businesses and support of entrepreneurial opportunities. NOTE: This is a specific mission...it does not mean KADC doesn't support efforts to improve housing, transportation, etc. It means KADC has a specific focus for their efforts and will support others in the improvement of the product.

The **Chamber** could naturally focus on the "**Promotion**" side of the equation, working to spread the word concerning growth and development in Kearney. Additionally, the Chamber could be charged with the compilation and management of a comprehensive development information data base.

The Chamber should become a fully implementational partner to City and KADC. Efforts should be placed to assist the Chamber in completing a comprehensive planning process to "reposition" the Chamber for a broader role in community development.

The **School District**, a major positive force for the community, should also be included in development planning and, where appropriate, implementation.

Thus, **KADC** would focus on three major priority points with their development efforts:

- Business Development
  - Focused on key, pre-defined targets
- Business Support
  - Both retention and expansion assistance
- Business Catalyst
  - Focusing on entrepreneurial development and support

The primary focus points for the **City** would be:

- Implementing the service side of the community development plan
- Work to review/enhance/enforce positive business growing/friendly regulatory environment
- Continue close partnership with the KADC and Chamber to identify and pursue business and community growth options

The **Chamber** would work to:

- Promote the agreed upon position of the community in all fashions
- Maintain business information
  - Compiling and providing a wealth of needed information for the community "sales" efforts
- Demonstrate the seamless cooperative environment between the City, Chamber and KADC efforts

Together these groups would:

- review progress on the annual community development plan
- address obstacles or issues which are impeding progress
- seek to facilitate constructive dialogue among interested parties
- coordinate the direction for development efforts

## SECTION III

# STRATEGIC MARKETING PLAN

## Goal

To generate new wealth and growth in Kearney through the retention, expansion and attraction of high-value, high-growth business investment opportunities that will create quality employment opportunities, complement and add value to existing businesses and the overall economic well-being of the community.

## Target Audiences

### Internal Targets

For Kearney to be successful, stakeholders/investors and public/private partners will need to be engaged and supportive of the community's economic development strategy . . . including:

- Kearney Business Community
- Other Kearney Community Leaders
- Economic Development Partners/Allies including the County, region and state
- Public Officials and Legislators
- Kearney Residents
- Local/Regional/State Media

**Tactic:** Develop and maintain an internal target audience contact database (preferably with email addresses) to serve as a mailing list to keep your stakeholders, investors, economic development partners/allies, public officials and other key influencers informed and engaged in the economic development strategy.

### External Targets

Reaching out directly to targeted business decision-makers and site location consultants will be an important focal point of the Kearney economic development marketing strategy. Targeted business opportunities include:

- **Light Manufacturing** with an emphasis on firms that complement the existing attributes of the community including:
  - Suppliers of Products and Services which could benefit from the community access to the Metro area.
  - Light Manufacturing Entrepreneurial Firms including spin-off ventures of existing businesses.

- **Business Service Operations** with an emphasis on:
  - Administrative Service Centers with a linkage to the Greater Kansas City and St. Louis Regions
  - Technical Support/Service Centers including government processing/service centers and transportation/logistics-related processing/service centers.
  
- **Site Location Consultants, Corporate Real Estate Managers, Developers and Engineering Firms**
  
- **Logistics/Warehouse/Distribution** including **Packaging Services** - Assuming location and roads can accommodate needs of prospect.
  
- **Retail Services**
  - Work with major retail developers to assist where needed

**Tactic:** Develop a marketing-sales pipeline database to seamlessly track the conversion of contacts to leads/prospects to projects to visits to locations/expansion/start-up.

**Screening Potential Prospects**

The following screening criteria should be followed to further the targeted industry discussion process:

- Does the industry have a strong presence in region?
- Does it have growth potential?
- Does Kearney offer that industry competitive advantages?
  - Needed access?
  - Employee skill sets available?
  - Available resources?
- Does it bring wealth to the Kearney?
  - Capital investment, taxable/non-taxable?
  - Good/High paying jobs?
  - Use of other local businesses?
- Does it bring diversification to the local economy?

Discussion needs to take place on the available land for development and the emphasis to be placed on creating new land for future manufacturing development. The needs/opportunities of the market should dictate the designation of certain areas of the City for manufacturing/business services growth.

## **Broadly Stated Objectives**

1. **Get organized . . . get prepared . . .** to promote and market Kearney’s business location assets and to respond effectively to economic development investment opportunities.
2. **Create a positive environment for business development and improve internal perceptions/attitudes of the product . . .** to enhance Kearney’s attractiveness as a business location.
3. **Take care of your existing customers . . .** Kearney area business. . . to retain existing business investments and employment. *This remains a key priority for development efforts.*
4. **Aggressively market Kearney’s business location assets/strengths among target internal and external audiences . . .** to generate 50 investment leads/prospects on an annual basis.
5. **Develop an entrepreneurial initiative . . . to grow your own local businesses.**

## **Positioning Statement . . . The Core Business Message**

Economic development is a highly competitive business. Kearney is competing for a limited number of investments with thousands of locations throughout the U.S. and the world. To be successful marketers, it will be important Kearney leaders focus on a consistent and concise core business message that is *relevant* to the needs and wants of the targeted businesses and *different* from the competition in a way that is relevant and compelling to the targeted businesses.

Positioning is the heart of an effective communications program. A positioning statement expresses how you wish to be perceived in the minds of your customers. It is the core message you want to deliver consistently in every medium . . . the “compass” for your marketing-communications strategy.

### **Kearney Positioning Statement . . . Core Business Message**

Kearney’s key marketable assets and strengths were considered in creating the core business message for Kearney...

## Access Quality, Access Life, Access Kearney

### Narrative Description

We all desire to get a bit more out of life. A bit more family time, a bit more leisure, a bit more money, a bit more education or a bit more peace of mind. The bit more we wish for varies from person to person, family to family and depends on your stage in life.

But how do we get this "little bit more?"

It starts with being able to access those things that will add measurably to your life, both personally and professionally. Access gives you an edge on the competition. Access is your personal advantage. And more and more people are finding that unique access in Kearney, Missouri.

What can one access in Kearney?

- Access family living at its best...regardless of how you are defining a family. You'll find affordable, pleasant, clean, safe and friendly neighborhoods throughout Kearney.
- Access small town environment in Kearney with a unique downtown, state of the art Amphitheater, churches for every denomination, and over eight miles of walking trails with over 160 acres of parkland.
- Access KCI Airport in minutes if you need to travel.
- Access the busiest north/south and east/west Interstate Highway system again, within minutes of Kearney.
- Access the metro Kansas City area with all its business, culture and entertainment amenities
- Access one of the top ranked public school systems in the State of Missouri and the entire U.S
- Access to an aggressive, pro-business approach that makes doing business in Kearney easier than in your typical metro area community.

Access is a way in, an entrance, an ability to "log on" and gain entry to your future. Before you decide where to set down roots, think about your need to Access Business, Access Location and Access Life and then you'll want to find out how to **Access Kearney**. Learn more at [www.accesskearney.com](http://www.accesskearney.com).

## Strategies and Tactics with Responsible KADC Group

**S1. KADC BOARD - “Get organized...get prepared.”** Differentiate Kearney from the competition by providing outstanding customer service and being responsive and flexible to the information and location/expansion needs of the client.

T1.1 Continue to collect and catalog timely and accurate **facts and information**, employers’ testimonials and competitive comparison information to substantiate Kearney position.

T1.2 Continually update the **Location One Information System (LOIS)** to ensure information is accurate and up-to-date, no gaps exist in the data/information and the narrative is reflective of Kearney’s positioning statement/key messages.

T1.3 Develop the **marketing-sales tools** to effectively communicate the position.

T1.3.1 Utilize a consistent message. Fully integrate into all print and electronic marketing-sales materials including business cards, stationery, the Web site, signage, etc. to create a consistent “brand identity.”

T1.3.2 Develop marketing- brochure and presentation (PPT) to support Kearney’s marketing-sales strategies. The brochure and presentation should clearly and concisely communicate Kearney’s positioning statement and key messages.

T1.4 **Focus the KADC Web site** to better serve the business development prospect. Following is a brief checklist for the Kearney Web site.

- Integrate the new theme line and positioning/key messages throughout the site.
- Provide statistical data/information and testimonials in support of the position/key messages.
- Utilize maps and images to reinforce the assets/strengths and overall vibrancy of the community, e.g. name brand and entrepreneurial businesses, skilled workers, etc.
- Be easy-to-navigate and utilize key words that are relevant to the business prospect, e.g. market access/transportation, utilities/infrastructure, workforce/training, local employers.

- Be rich in data and information relevant to the target audiences including providing a link to LOIS.
- Provide links to relevant sites for additional information, e.g. utilities, education/training service providers, technology resources, etc.
- Promote the Web site address in all marketing and communications materials. Encourage stakeholders, local businesses, economic development partners . . . and others to provide a link to the site.

T1.5 Organize into KADC **taskforces** to spearhead and direct implementation efforts. It is suggested that, at least, the following taskforces be implemented:

- **Communications/Marketing** – responsible for both internal and external communications by supporting the two Development Committees.
- **Existing Business Development** – working on outreach and programs for existing businesses and entrepreneurial development in the City.
- **Targeted Business Development** – working to define, identify and direct actions against key business targets for the area.

T1.6 Demonstrate leadership in facilitating the development of **Community Development Taskforces** to address a variety of needed areas. These Taskforces should include representation from the City, KADC, Chamber, School District and other groups relevant to the topic. These groups, in effect, become a Kearney Community Development Alliance. The Alliance could follow the following operating guidelines:

“The Kearney Community Development Alliance will support development initiatives, facilitate community cooperation and assist groups and individuals in their pursuit of local development opportunities to enhance our community’s quality of life. The Alliance agrees to:

T1.6.1 Establish and operate from a collaboratively-created community development plan of work, created/reviewed on an annual basis.

T1.6.2 Support, facilitate and become active advocates for positive, constructive growth in the City of Kearney.

T1.6.2 Establish Community Development Taskforces to jointly consider and address community needs. These Taskforces goals would be to create short and long term strategies for each

assigned area. These would be small study groups of 3 or 4 members.

- **Housing Needs Taskforce** - examining the current and future needs
- **Business Land Development Taskforce** - exploring areas for future use.
- **Transportation Taskforce**- reviewing variety of improvement issues
- **Downtown Focus Taskforce** - outlining a vision for downtown growth, determining methods to implement and promote that vision

T1.7 Focus all efforts towards goal of successfully creating operational efficiency as demonstrated by the Missouri Betterment Council recognition for planning excellence.

**S2. EXISTING BUSINESS COMMITTEE - Address the needs of Kearney's area businesses** by developing and implementing an aggressive business outreach program to establish and maintain a two-way dialogue with Kearney's most important customers—**existing businesses**.

T2.1 Conduct executive calls on all major Kearney businesses (20 plus employees) on an annual basis or more frequently as needed and headquarter decision-makers on at least a bi-annual basis. Utilize the calls to present Kearney's position and to identify issues of concern impacting local operations, expansion plans and strategic growth plans, potential new development opportunities, e.g. buyer-supplier linkages and "outsourcing opportunities." Develop internal tracking system to track existing business contacts, results and appropriate follow-up. These efforts could be jointly undertaken in collaboration with the Chamber.

T2.2 Engage existing businesses to support Kearney's marketing-sales efforts. Ask business leaders to identify potential business investment leads/prospects and provide referrals to buyers-suppliers and other businesses. Solicit testimonials for marketing-sales tactics promoting Kearney as a prime location.

T2.3 To maintain communication and dialogue among and between business leaders facilitate and coordinate quarterly business roundtable/networking sessions involving local business leaders, industry resource experts and service providers. Utilize the sessions to discuss issues of importance to business growth/development, strategize on enhancements to Kearney and identify potential development opportunities.

T2.4 Provide **sales training** for the Kearney economic development “work team” ... comprised of the leadership from the various partners... to be conversant on the focus and direction of Kearney’s economic development strategy and to clearly and concisely articulates the key marketing-sales messages.

T2.5 **Generate enthusiasm and support** for Kearney’s economic development strategy by rallying the community around the position-driven theme line and key messages.

T2.5.1 Hold an event to launch the new theme line and to present the economic development strategy/Roadmap to Success. Invite key business leaders, community members and economic development partners/allies to the event. Maintain ongoing awareness of the brand throughout strategically targeted communications mediums directed at the residents of Kearney.

T2.5.2 Extend the reach and frequency of the Kearney brand by encouraging businesses and other public and private entities to integrate the theme line and messaging into their internal and external marketing-communications.

T2.6 Maintain support and consensus among local constituencies through an **open and transparent multi-channel communications process**.

T2.6.1 Conduct **semi-annual strategy chat sessions** for community leaders and local constituency groups focused on Kearney’s business development approach. Utilize the sessions to report progress and successes in achieving objectives and gather input from the community on economic development issues.

T2.6.2 Develop a quarterly Kearney “Business Success” story to pitch to local and regional media. Story ideas could evolve around profiles of successful area businesses/entrepreneurs that have benefited from Kearney’s “winning combination of assets, location and public education.”

T2.7 Energize **and mobilize area business and community leaders** to be your ambassadors and "sales" people. These efforts not only can help stretch your marketing budget and reach considerably, but they also increase the chances an existing business will stay in Kearney and expand operations.

T2.8 Recognize **and reward** local businesses and public and private leaders for contributing to Kearney’s business development progress and success. Hold an Annual Kearney “Business Creativity” Awards Ceremony recognizing the individual “drivers.” This is another opportunity to celebrate the renewed enthusiasm and optimism regarding Kearney’s economy and to let local leaders know their efforts are appreciated.

**S3. TARGETED BUSINESS COMMITTEE** - Aggressively market Kearney by being proactive . . . **develop and implement a marketing strategy** focused on raising awareness and generating a “buzz” that Kearney has a what it takes to build a successful business.

To meet the objective of generating 50 investment leads/prospects on an annual basis, Kearney must implement a proactive, multi-channel marketing approach. Kearney must leverage limited marketing dollars with programs of its economic development partners and allies including the utilities and the state.

T3.1 Schedule briefings with Kearney’s partners/allies in economic development to present the community’s location advantages. Explore cooperative marketing activities that will help Kearney achieve its development/marketing goals and objectives specifically related to generating targeted business investment leads. Arm the partners with the Kearney brochure and encourage them to take copies to trade shows and other industry events. Identify Web site linkage opportunities.

T3.2 Develop and implement a marketing effort targeting specific businesses within the target business sectors and site location consultants as identified through market research, existing business outreach and networking with partners/allies. Focus on a “short list” of businesses to ensure quality, timely follow-up.

T3.3 Establish an ongoing, positive working relationship with local, regional, state and business media to raise awareness of the Kearney brand and economic development activities/successes. Additionally, use this PR effort to focus on key target business influencing publications.

T3.3.1 Develop a target list of local/regional/state/business media and identify specific editors with a focus/interest in economic and business development news.

T3.3.2. Develop a media kit for use with the media including a backgrounder on the Kearney’s cooperative approach to economic development and the Kearney brand/position.

T3.3.3 Schedule one-on-one interviews with targeted media to introduce Kearney’s approach to economic development, to brief

the media on the Kearney brand/position and to establish Kearney as a resource on economic development in the region/state.

T3.3.4 On at least a semi-annual basis, present news and updates to select media on Kearney activities and successes. Personally follow-up on all news releases to identify specific information needs.

T3.3.5 Post news and information updates on the Kearney Chamber and City Web site.

T3.4 Utilize advertising to build awareness for Kearney in targeted business and regional development publications.

T3.4.1 Create a general "all purpose" space ad to be used for this purpose which conveys the primary positioning messages.

T3.4.2 Consider the use of limited Outdoor advertising along major interstate routes and transportation arteries to reinforce the key messages from the position

T.3.5 Develop and implement an **entrepreneurial initiative** to grow your own businesses. A large part of economic expansion is the retention and growth of homegrown businesses. Working closely with the resources of the area universities, colleges and community colleges could greatly assist this and other business development tactics.

T3.5.1 Develop profiles of successful area entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial businesses to document and promote Kearney's entrepreneurial spirit.

T3.5.2 Inventory local, regional and state technical and financial entrepreneurial assistance programs and identify area...package and promote the programs and mentoring assistance.

T3.5.3 Identify entrepreneurial product enhancements and develop a plan of action to enhance the competitiveness of Kearney for the entrepreneurial business, e.g. Angel Investor Fund.

T3.5.4 Develop entrepreneurial training/education workshops for area entrepreneurs. Identify a co-sponsor(s) for the workshops, e.g. local banks. Follow-up with entrepreneurs attending workshops to present Kearney's "Your Location for Entrepreneurial Success."

T3.5.5 Through the existing business outreach program, networking with local business leaders and other marketing-communications channels, newsletter, presentations, etc., promote Kearney's entrepreneurial spirit, programs and services that can help entrepreneurs turn ideas into successful businesses.

**S4. KADC BOARD** - Evaluate what's working/what's not working . . . and **be accountable**. Monitor and track business development marketing-sales activities including tracking business development prospect leads/referrals, visits and locations/expansions. Based on results, refine the plan to achieve greater effectiveness. Promote and celebrate progress and successes.

T4.1 As previously recommended, develop a marketing/sales pipeline database. Utilize the database to track the conversion of leads/contacts to prospects to visits to business locations/expansions and evaluate effectiveness of marketing strategies. Refine strategies as needed.

T4.2 Utilize Web tracking reports to monitor the Web site and track peaks in user sessions. Correlate with marketing activities to further evaluate the effectiveness of marketing strategies.

T4.3 Celebrate progress and successes with stakeholders, investors and economic development partners and the public. Promote successes throughout the community.

## **Measurements of Success**

### **Short-Term Measurements**

1. In year one, the Kearney Economic Development Roadmap is aggressively implemented resulting in progress toward achieving the marketing plan objectives. In years two through four, the plan gains momentum and Kearney is achieving the annual objectives.
2. Internal perceptions/attitudes toward the product continue to improve and support for the economic development strategy increases as measured by increased investments in the economic development programs.
3. Existing businesses are satisfied and retaining/expanding investment and jobs. Satisfaction to be measured through existing business and industry outreach one-on-one calls with decision-makers and survey data.

## **Long-Term Measurement**

As a result of implementing an aggressive, proactive marketing program over the next four years (2010-2014), Kearney maintains current investments and jobs and generates five new investments creating 300 new high wage employment opportunities. Overall, the community is achieving growth in all areas of the economy including business, service, retail and housing; school enrollment and population are increasing.

**Estimated Budget** - Kearney leaders should develop a multi-year fundraising strategy to raise the funds needed to effectively implement the economic development strategy.

## SECTION IV

### ACTION PLAN/TIMELINE

#### THE KEARNEY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

**STRATEGIES/TACTICS**

**LEAD TEAM**

**MILESTONES**

**PROGRESS**

#### **KADC Board**

- Raise the bar with outstanding **customer service and being responsive** and flexible to the business client.
- Collect and catalog **facts and information**, employers' testimonials and competitive comparison information.
- Use **Location One Information System (LOIS)**
- Develop the **marketing-sales tools**
  - Fully integrate "Access Kearney" into all marketing-sales materials

to create a consistent “brand identity.”

- Develop marketing- brochure and companion sales/information presentation to support Kearney’s marketing-sales strategies.
- **Focus the KADC Web site** to better serve the business development prospect. Following is a brief checklist for the Kearney Web site.
  - Integrate the new theme line and key messages throughout the site.
  - Provide data/information and testimonials.
  - Utilize maps and images to reinforce the assets/strengths.
  - Be easy-to-navigate and utilize key words that are relevant to the business prospect.
  - Link to LOIS.
  - Links to relevant sites, e.g. utilities, education/training service providers, technology resources, etc.
  - Promote the Web site in all marketing and communications materials.

- Organize into KADC **taskforces** to spearhead and direct implementation efforts.
  - **Communications/Marketing** – responsible for both internal and external communications by supporting the two Development Committees.
  - **Existing Business Development** – working on outreach and programs for existing businesses and entrepreneurial development in the City.
  - **Targeted Business Development** – working to define, identify and direct actions against key business targets for the area.
  
- Demonstrate leadership in facilitating the development of **Community Development Taskforces** to address a variety of needed areas. These Taskforces should include representation from the City, KADC, Chamber, School District and other groups relevant to the topic. These groups, in effect, become a Kearney Community Development Alliance. The Alliance agrees to:

- Establish and operate from a collaboratively-created community development plan of work, created/reviewed on an annual basis.
- Support, facilitate and become active advocates for positive, constructive growth in the City of Kearney.
- Establish Community Development Taskforces to jointly consider and address community needs by creating short and long term strategies for each assigned area. These would be small study groups of 3 or 4 members.
  - **Housing Needs Taskforce**
  - **Business Land Development Taskforce**
  - **Transportation Taskforce**
  - **Downtown Focus Taskforce**

## STRATEGIES/TACTICS

## LEAD TEAM

## MILESTONES

## PROGRESS

### Existing Business Committee

- Address the needs of Kearney's area businesses by developing and implementing a business outreach program with Kearney's most important customers—**existing businesses**.
- Conduct calls all major Kearney employers (20 plus employees) on an annual basis and headquarter decision-makers on at least a bi-annual basis. Utilize the calls to identify issues of concern impacting local operations, expansion plans and strategic growth plans, potential new development opportunities, These efforts could be jointly undertaken in collaboration with Chamber volunteers.
- Engage existing businesses to support Kearney's marketing-sales efforts. Solicit testimonials for marketing-sales tactics promoting Kearney.

- Coordinate quarterly business roundtable/networking sessions for local business leaders.
- Provide **sales training** for the Kearney economic development “sales team” volunteers to be used to provide "one on one" local contact with perspective business prospects.
- Hold an event to launch the new strategy and to key business leaders, community members and economic development partners/allies. .
- Encourage local businesses and other entities to integrate the theme line and messaging into their internal and external marketing-communications.
- Maintain support and consensus among local constituencies through an **open and transparent multi-channel communications process**.
- Conduct **semi-annual strategy update sessions** for select community leaders to continually freshen Kearney’s business development approach.

- Develop a quarterly Kearney “Business Success” story to pitch to local and regional media.
- Hold an Annual Kearney “Accessing Success” Business Awards Ceremony recognizing the individual “drivers.”

STRATEGIES/TACTICS	LEAD TEAM	MILESTONES	PROGRESS
--------------------	-----------	------------	----------

**Targeted Business Committee**

- To meet the objective of generating 50 investment leads/prospects on an annual basis, Kearney :
  - Schedule briefings with Kearney’s partners/allies in economic development to present the community’s plan and advantages.
  - Develop and implement a marketing effort targeting specific businesses within the target business and site location consultants. Focus on a “short list” of businesses.

- Use PR effort to focus on key target business publications. Establish relationships with local, state and business media
- Develop a target list of local/regional/state/business media.
- Develop a media kit.
- Schedule one-on-one interviews with targeted media.
- On at least a semi-annual basis, present news and updates to select media.
- Post news updates on the KADC web site.
- Use advertising to build awareness for Kearney in targeted business and regional development publications.
- Create a general "all purpose" space ad to be used for this purpose.
- Consider the use of limited Outdoor advertising along major

interstate routes and transportation  
arteries

- During the near future place the business development emphasis on **Relationship Marketing**. Develop strategic business relationships with qualified business prospects and site location consultants that will lead to both short and long-term opportunities. Follow some basic guides in this regard.
  - Keep in Touch. Phone calls . . . flag the database to remind you to call the prospect/consultant on a periodic basis.
  - Electronic in Touch as well. Include updates on programs, properties and news relevant to the prospect's business interests.
  - Touch the flesh. Visit them...as the relationship progresses; you will want to make another personal call on the decision-maker.
  - Have them Touch you. Primary objective is to get the prospect to Kearney.

- Maintain contact with all qualified prospects on at least an annual basis.
- Develop and implement an **entrepreneurial initiative** to grow your own businesses.
  - Develop profiles of successful area entrepreneurs promote Kearney's entrepreneurial spirit.
  - Inventory local, regional and state technical and financial entrepreneurial assistance programs and identify area entrepreneurs willing to serve as mentors to start-up entrepreneurial businesses.
  - Enhance the competitiveness of Kearney for the entrepreneurial business, e.g. Angel Investor Fund.
  - Develop entrepreneurial training/education workshops for area entrepreneurs.