

Taylor County Community Improvement Strategy: Tourism and Economic Development

With 28.2% of its citizens living below the poverty level and unemployment at 12.5%, Taylor County seek to increase the county's economic development activities to include renewed and focused efforts to expand their tourism and workforce development efforts countywide. The county will pursue these goals by expanding existing tourism products and develop new ones complementary to the county's resources, as well as increasing community awareness and understanding of the importance of economic development. The county will also increase the number of residents who have taken the Work Ready Assessment and will strengthen efforts to increase its high school graduation rate. County leaders believe that these concerted efforts will serve to attract new industries to the county, create new jobs, and increase the standard of living for residents of Taylor County. The county also believes it is important to promote youth leadership development for its young people, as these will be the future leaders of Taylor County.

The community will measure their success at the end of two years, by:

1. Increasing high school graduation rate from 73% (2009) to 75% by 2012.
2. Continue meeting the Work Ready Program’s required level of participation of 5% in the number of Work Ready Assessments taken
3. Attracting a hotel/motel chain or bed & breakfast to the county
4. updating the county website
5. getting county brochures into Georgia Visitor’s Centers

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Issue Addressed	Action Item	Responsible Local Partners	Responsible State Partners	Cost Estimate	Possible Funding Sources	Starting and ending dates for completion of action item
Tourism Product Development	Conduct inventory or existing products	Lea Spell, Taylor Co. Chamber of Commerce	Jo Childers, DCA, Maggie Potter, Presidential Pathways Tourism Representative, Tourism Division, Dept of Economic Development	n/a	n/a	March 2010

Tourism Product Development	Develop ideas for new products and marketing ideas	Lea Spell, Taylor Co. Chamber of Commerce	Jo Childers, DCA, Maggie Potter, Presidential Pathways Tourism Representative, Tourism Division, Dept of Economic Development	n/a	n/a	April 2010
Tourism Product Development	Research how other communities have marketed similar products	Lea Spell, Taylor Co. Chamber of Commerce	Jo Childers, DCA, Maggie Potter, Presidential Pathways Tourism Representative, Tourism Division, Dept of Economic Development	n/a	n/a	May – July 2010
Tourism Marketing	Update county website	Darrell Bentley, Taylor Co. Chamber of Commerce	Jo Childers, DCA, Maggie Potter, Presidential Pathways Tourism Representative, Tourism Division, Dept of Economic Development	To be determined	Chamber member donations	March 2010 – January 2011
Tourism Marketing	Utilize television, Facebook, radio, billboards and newspaper ads (including Americus Radio, public access channel 14) to advertise Taylor County sites, festivals, etc.	Darrell Bentley, Taylor Co. Chamber of Commerce	Maggie Potter, Presidential Pathways Tourism Representative, Tourism Division, Dept of Economic Development	To be determined	Local governments	March 2010
Tourism Marketing	Participate in the US 19 Magnolia Highway website www.magnoliahighway.com and the and Presidential Pathways and Georgia	Darrell Bentley, Taylor Co. Chamber of Commerce	Maggie Potter, Presidential Pathways Tourism Representative, Tourism Division,	To be determined	Local governments	April 2010

	Made/Georgia Grown marketing efforts		Dept of Economic Development			
Tourism Marketing	Work to get county brochures into welcome centers around the state by obtaining a copy of the Georgia Visitor Information Centers Brochure Distribution Policy by calling Pam Cain at the Georgia Tourism Division at 770-574-2621 or e-mail her at tallapoosa@georgia.org or go to www.marketgeorgia.org	Darrell Bentley, Taylor Co. Chamber of Commerce	Maggie Potter, Presidential Pathways Tourism Representative, Tourism Division, Dept of Economic Development	\$0	n/a	April 2010
Tourism Marketing	Package and mail brochures (media mail) to all the Georgia Visitor Information centers	Darrell Bentley, Taylor Co. Chamber of Commerce	Maggie Potter, Presidential Pathways Tourism Representative, Tourism Division, Dept of Economic Development	\$250	Communities of Opportunity Funds, Chamber of Commerce funds	April 2010
Tourism Infrastructure	Determine possible locations for hotels/motels	Harold Heath, Taylor County Economic Dev Authority, Taylor Co. Chamber of Commerce	DCA, Dept of Economic Development	n/a	n/a	March 2010
Tourism Infrastructure	Contact other small towns who have recruited lodging or encouraged development of B&Bs.	Harold Heath, Taylor County Economic Dev Authority, Taylor	Maggie Potter, Presidential Pathways Tourism Representative,	n/a	n/a	April 2010

	Possible contacts would be Connie Tabor in Toccoa, Ann Arnold in Rome, the SBDC, and Monica Callahan in Madison	Co. Chamber of Commerce	Tourism Division, Dept of Economic Development , Jo Childers, DCA			
Tourism Infrastructure	Determine what current occupancy rate of local motels is	Harold Heath, Taylor County Economic Dev Authority, Taylor Co. Chamber of Commerce	n/a	n/a	n/a	April 2010
Tourism Infrastructure	Contact potential hotel/motel chains to determine interest and what specifications they have for their sites	Harold Heath, Taylor County Economic Dev Authority, Taylor Co. Chamber of Commerce	n/a	n/a	n/a	May 2010
Tourism Infrastructure	Once hotel/motel chains have expressed interest, call on other communities where these chains exist to ask their opinion of the chains to determine what is the best fit for Taylor County	Harold Heath, Taylor County Economic Dev Authority, Taylor Co. Chamber of Commerce	Jo Childers, DCA	n/a	n/a	May 2010
Economic Development	Continue working with Georgia Power on marketing to specific industries and developing marketing materials	Taylor County Development Authority, Patsy Brunson	n/a	n/a	n/a	March 2010 – July 2010
Economic Development	Develop community awareness and education campaign on the importance of economic development for Taylor County Residents (articles in	Taylor County Development Authority	Jo Childers, DCA, Candice Scott, Existing Industry and Regional Recruitment Project Manager, Dept of	n/a	n/a	May 2010

	newspaper, speakers at local civic organizations)		Economic Development			
Economic Development	Add quality of life information to the website	Taylor Co. Chamber of Commerce	Jo Childers, DCA, Candice Scott, Existing Industry and Regional Recruitment Project Manager, Dept of Economic Development	n/a	n/a	March 2010 - ongoing
Economic Development	Obtain money from county to development promotional and marketing materials	Taylor Co Chamber of Commerce and Development Authority	Jo Childers, DCA, Candice Scott, Existing Industry and Regional Recruitment Project Manager, Dept of Economic Development	To be determined	To be determined	June 2010
Economic Development	Work with Dept of Economic Development to develop idea of marketing Taylor County to military facilities as the county is located between Warner Robins AFB and Fort Benning	Taylor County Development Authority, Patsy Brunson	Candice Scott, Dept of Economic Development	n/a	n/a	May 2010- May 2011
Workforce Development	Increase vocational or technical training at local high school	Taylor County Board of Education, Workforce Development Center	Georgia Dept of Education, Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education	To be determined	To be determined	February 2010 - ongoing

Workforce Development	Develop dual-enrollment program between high school and nearby colleges (such as Columbus State, Fort Valley University, Georgia Southwestern)	Taylor County Board of Education	Georgia Dept of Education, Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education	n/a	n/a	February 2010-ongoing
Workforce Development	Continue to use Work Ready Grant funding to improve High School Graduation Rate	Taylor County Board of Education, Taylor County Development Authority	Governor's Office of Workforce Development, Dept of Labor	n/a	n/a	February 2010-ongoing
Workforce Development	Offer SAT/ACT prep classes for high school students starting in the 9 th grade	Taylor County Board of Education	Georgia Department of Education	To be determined	To be determined	August 2010 - ongoing
Workforce Development	Continue to use Work Ready Grant funding to increase the number of citizens who have taken the Work Ready Assessment	Taylor County Development Authority	Governor's Office of Workforce Development, Dept of Labor	n/a	n/a	ongoing
Youth Leadership Development	Organize site visits and provide transportation for upcoming juniors and seniors to nearby universities	Patty Bentley, Taylor County Chamber of Commerce, Taylor County Board of Education	Board of Regents, Georgia Department of Education	To be determined	To be determined	August 2010 - ongoing
Youth Leadership Development	Investigate starting a Boys and Girls Club in Taylor County	Patty Bentley, Taylor County Chamber of Commerce	Boys and Girls Club of America	n/a	n/a	April 2010
Youth Leadership Development	Encourage high school students to participate in Project Achievement program	Patty Bentley, Taylor County Board of Education, 4-H	4-H	n/a	n/a	April 2010 - ongoing

Youth Leadership Development	Develop a better communication system between Taylor County Board of Education, Taylor County Chamber of Commerce, teachers, parents, and students	Patty Bentley, Taylor County Board of Education, Taylor County Chamber of Commerce, PTA, students	n/a	To be determined	To be determined	April 2010 - ongoing
Youth Leadership Development	Develop educational programming for the High School Seniors' 30-minute period known as Viking Advance (consider having community leaders come speak to the seniors)	Patty Bentley, Taylor County Chamber of Commerce, student leaders	n/a	n/a	n/a	March 2010 - ongoing

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto agree to adopt the Taylor County Community Improvement Strategy.

FOR THE RECIPIENT

FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

By: _____
Chair, County

By: _____

By: _____
Mayor, City

By: _____
Mayor, City