

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

INTRODUCTION TO PROJECT EXPERIENCE

These are EKA studies in which the client was a regional economic development agency, entity, or partnership and the focus was a comprehensive regional economic strategy—rather than university-centric strategies or strategies entirely focused on innovation. Some were for state-defined economic development partnership regions. One was a community development organization. One was a university-city partnership, but focused on general economic development.

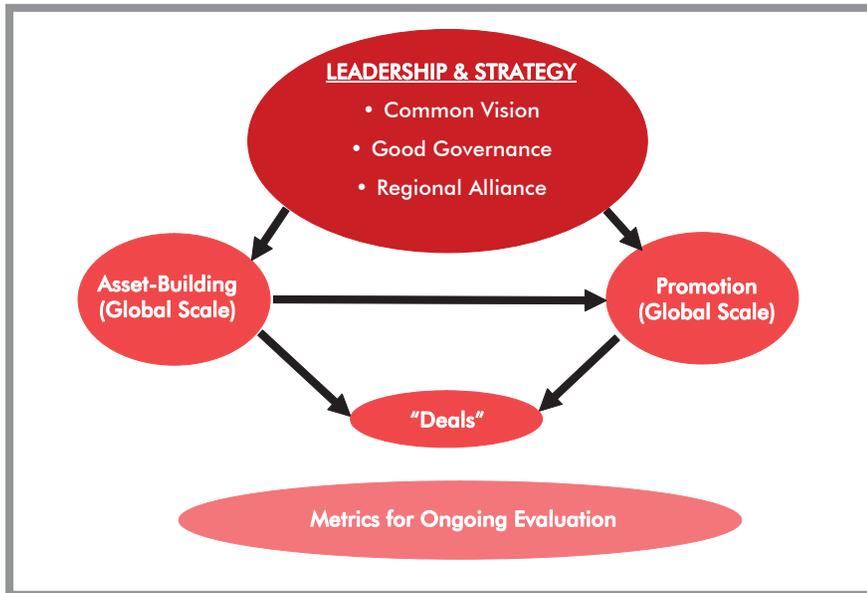
All these involve very complex processes with multiple stakeholder organizations; extensive interviewing; economic data; assessments of education and workforce assets and needs; and market strategies.



Examples of projects follow.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS AT FAYETTEVILLE AND CITY OF FAYETTEVILLE, ARKANSAS



Client Contact Information:
Mr. Dan Coody, Mayor Emeritus
479.443.6758
dcoody@swbell.net

Mr. Phillip S. Stafford
President, The University of
Arkansas Technology
Development Foundation
479.575.8411
psstaff@uark.edu

Highlights:

Comprehensive Urban Economic
Development Strategy

Exceedingly Complex Stakeholder
Process

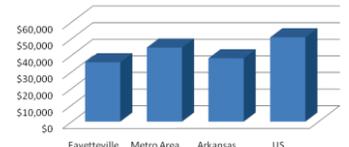
Community College and Key Businesses
were Major Players

City tax and development policies were
major issues

Fayetteville, Arkansas is a college town in NW Arkansas, with a population of about 70,000. Under an initiative led by the then-Mayor and with the University of Arkansas as the City’s partner, EKA was selected in a national competitive process to provide planning process design and facilitation for Phase 1 of an *Economic Development Strategy* for the City of Fayetteville, Arkansas. EKA worked with senior City staff to design the process, which included:

- Interviews with more than 200 stakeholders from local governments, business organizations, utilities, major employers, small/tech businesses, school systems, community college, arts organizations, higher education, civic and community foundations
- An extensive SWOT analysis and report
- A facilitated full-day planning session with about 100 participants, the outcome of which was the six framework goals / strategies for Fayetteville (and NW Arkansas).
- A Plan Framework deliverable outlining the six goal / strategy areas:

Figure 3. Median Household Income, 2007



Six Success Factors / Areas for Strategy
Niches of Competence
Infrastructure for Innovation
Human Capital
Regional Promotion
Smart Community Places
City Development and Finance



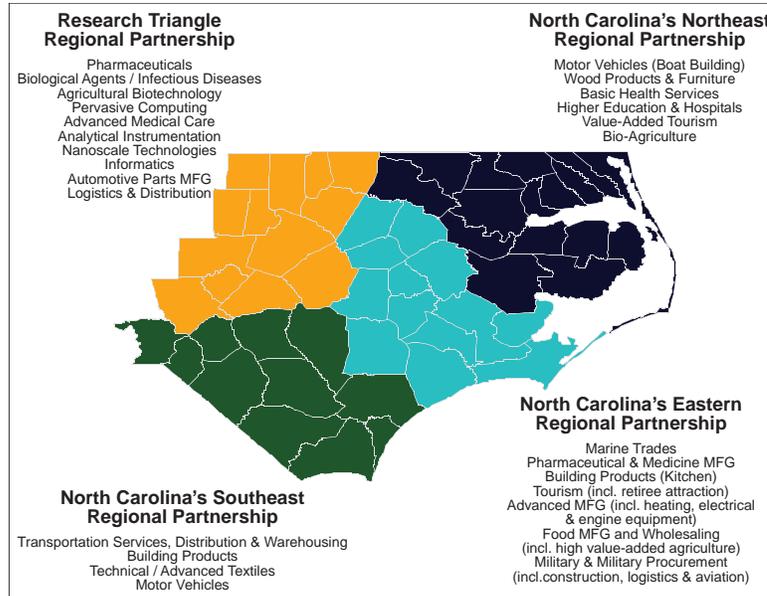
VISION PLAN FOR NORTH CAROLINA'S EASTERN REGION

NORTH CAROLINA'S EASTERN REGION COMMISSION

Client Contact Information:
Client contact no longer available

Highlights:

- Comprehensive Regional Economic Development Strategy
- 12 counties and several municipalities
- Major Process and Governance Challenge—Multiple Entities
- Exceedingly Complex Stakeholder Process
- East Carolina University, ECU Health Sciences; and Several Community Colleges = Key Assets



The eastern region of North Carolina has experienced significant economic distress as a result of loss of its traditional tobacco farming and textiles industries. The NC Eastern Region Commission is one of seven state-designated economic development partnerships in North Carolina. (The Eastern Region and three adjacent regions are shown in the map above.)

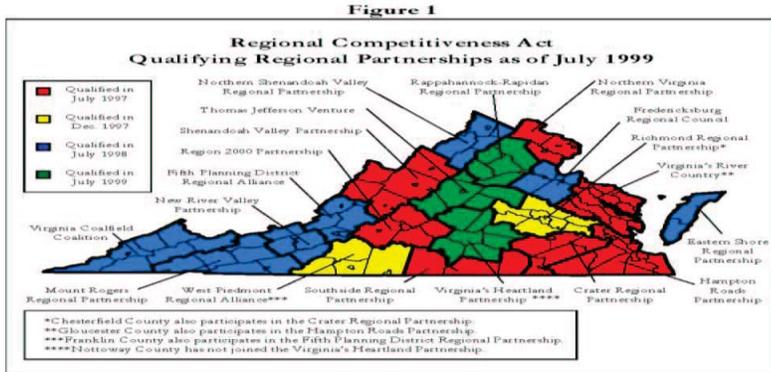
With the Center for Regional Economic Competitiveness, EKA assisted a regional strategic planning committee of more than 70 area representatives in developing a strategic vision and action plan for the region’s economic future. Stakeholders included local government, economic development agencies, East Carolina University, several liberal arts colleges and community colleges, and business organizations.

The project team gained input from more than 400 stakeholders throughout the region to help in shaping a strategic plan. The team also worked very closely with the Commission to determine its role (and roles of other organizations) in implementing the proposed regional vision. Subsequently, the Center also conducted a regional cluster analysis with an exploration of sub-regional cluster opportunities.

Among EKA’s specific assignments in this project was responsibility for determining the “human capital” strategies and the particular roles to be played by East Carolina University and the private and community colleges.

REGIONAL ECONOMIC STRATEGY

5TH PLANNING DISTRICT REGIONAL ALLIANCE, ROANOKE VALLEY, VIRGINIA



EKA developed a *Regional Economic Strategy* for this 12-county region centered around City of Roanoke. Working with public, private, and academic sector stakeholders in interviews and via a Planning Leadership Group, EKA developed strategies and related tactics and worked to support achievement of “buy-in” of all key players to a unified, focused strategy.

Major attention was devoted to the technology economy, the role of Virginia Tech and other academic institutions, transportation and connectivity issues, and entrepreneurship.

Six strategic themes were articulated, to serve as a “song sheet” that all stakeholders could understand and agree with. These were:

- Visibility
- Connectivity
- Knowledge Work Force
- Entrepreneurship
- Industry Clusters
- Quality of Life Amenities

For each of these six themes, a set of specific goals and tactics was articulated. Some are complex and long-range undertakings. Others are more immediate. Assignments of roles and responsibilities and directions for financing were included in the Strategy. The leadership group received more than 150 endorsements from local governments and various other entities, and the Regional Economic Strategy is being implemented systematically. Under the Visibility theme, a branding recommendation led to renaming of the area as “NewVA.”

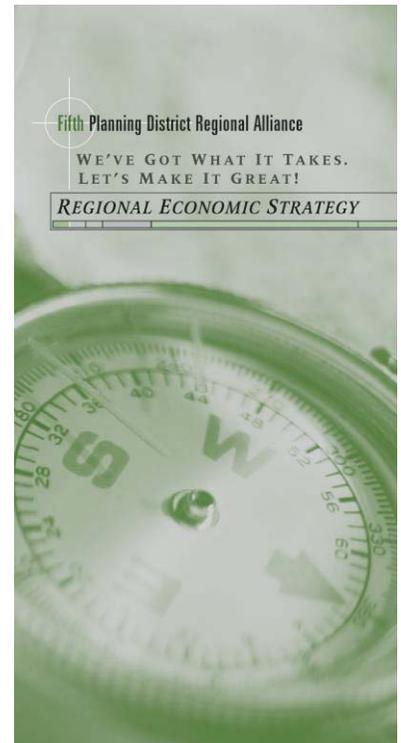
In August 2004, the NewVa leadership group published a report of accomplishments to date. Ongoing accomplishments are still described and organized according to the themes, strategies and tactics as articulated by EKA.

Client Contact Information:

Ms. Beth Doughty, Executive Director, Roanoke Regional Partnership
540.343.1550
beth@roanoke.org

Highlights:

- Comprehensive Regional Economic Development Strategy
- 12 counties and several municipalities
- Major Process and Governance Challenge—Multiple Entities
- Exceedingly Complex Stakeholder Process
- Virginia Tech University and Carillion Health System = Major Factors
- Follow-Up Implementation and Review Engagements



Client Contact Information:

Mr. R. Douglas Taylor
 Executive Director, Western
 Piedmont Council of
 Governments
 828.485.4220
rdt@wpcog.dst.nc.us

Highlights:

- Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for 12-county region
- Large, Complex Stakeholder Process
- Several University and Community College Stakeholders/Assets
- Plant Closure/Economic Distress Situation
- Major Governance Challenge—Multiple Entities



“FUTURE FORWARD” COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

10TH/11TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS, HICKORY, NORTH CAROLINA



With its partner, the Center for Regional Economic Competitiveness (CRED), EKA was co-leader of a large team that developed this comprehensive regional economic development strategy.

This initiative was conducted with a federal grant, with sponsorship of Congressman Cass Ballenger, and led by a large regional leadership committee that included public, private, and academic members.

The region was defined as a 12-county area, primarily in the 10th congressional district, and ranged from counties immediately adjacent to Charlotte-Mecklenburg, north to several of the mountain counties.

The area’s economy, formerly including strong furniture and textiles manufacturing components, and in general more manufacturing-intensive than the national average, has been in decline, and further decline is projected. Education attainment levels are below the national and North Carolina state averages.

In addition to supporting the entire effort, EKA’s specific responsibilities were to assess the higher education and work force issues, assets, and challenges. EKA produced an interim report on work force assets in the region. EKA also worked with Appalachian State University and nine community colleges in the region, to define several strategies for using the region’s knowledge assets in the economic development strategy. These included a concept for a “Learning and Innovation Network” that would unify all outreach and services for both individual learners and businesses in the region.

STRATEGIC PLAN

BOARD OF DIRECTORS, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION OF LONG ISLAND, CENTERREACH, NY



With the Center for Regional Economic Competitiveness as its partner, EKA conducted an engagement to lead a strategic planning process for the Board of Directors of this not-for-profit community development corporation. EKA was recommended to the CDC by former clients at SUNY Stony Brook, who were aware of EKA’s planning skills.

With a history that began with housing, particularly the Section 8 program, this 30-year organization had developed a broad array of housing-related programs and services, and more recently had ventured into business lending, technical assistance and other economic development activities.

The Corporation had been experiencing strains about its mission and priorities. EKA and CREC led a process that included interviews, a SWOT analysis, and a White Paper on *Strategic Decision Issues*.

The team facilitated a highly successful planning retreat, at which the diverse members of the Board and key managers achieved consensus on a new mission statement, corporate identify, program focus, process for prioritization of opportunities, and related matters.

Then, EKA prepared the Strategic Plan document.

Client Contact Information:
L. Von Kuhen, PhD
Senior Vice President and Chief
Development Officer
631.471.1215

- Highlights:**
- Strategic decision process for a multi-function community development corporation
 - Complex Board/Stakeholder Process
 - Identification of Strategic Issues Requiring Decisions

