

EDGEFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL

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October 6, 2014

To: Steering Committee Members

From: Lynn Strom, Administrator

RE: Strategic Plan Progress Report

Edgefield County is continuing to see progress through addressing the goals that you all set forth in the County's Strategic Plan. I have included our progress on several of the goals below. Please contact me if you have any questions.

1. *Establish meetings with Edgefield County industries to determine ways to support and expand their industries and to determine skills needed from today's employees./ Establish a committee to match skills needed by local industry with high schools and technical colleges./ Determine ways to better utilize SC technical colleges to build our relationship with current Edgefield County industry.*

Chairman Dean Campbell and Will Williams, Economic Development Partnership President/CEO, meet with the local industry on a regular basis. During these meetings, they often discuss what types of skills their employees need or are lacking. Mr. Williams and I met with Greg Anderson, Superintendent for Edgefield County Schools, and discussed some of the items with him. The Career Center at Strom Thurmond has already made some changes in the types of classes offered in order to better meet the needs of industries. Also, the school is partnering with local companies to train students on the types of machinery that is utilized in the workplace. In addition, the human resource officers of the local industries meet on a regular basis with representatives from Piedmont Technical College. This gives PTC the opportunity to hear what areas are important to the industries and offer courses for students as well as training for the companies' employees. So, both the high school and the technical college are reaching out to industry to try to improve work skills of County citizens.

2. *Investigate ways to reduce our response time for Sheriff, EMS, & Fire.*

The County is working on ways to reduce response time for EMS. The County is limited to two full time EMS crews. However, there is one "third" EMS crew employee that runs twelve hours a day for five days of the week. The EMS Director monitors when the majority of the third calls take place so that he can adjust the schedule of the third crew as needed to increase coverage

of the County. In addition, many of the volunteer fire departments have first responder programs. The County EMS is working on improving policies in order to better utilize the first responders so that a patient can be reached more quickly and treated while the ambulance is in route. The County also utilizes mutual aid agreements with Saluda County, McCormick County, Aiken County and Greenwood County when Edgefield EMS is shorthanded.

The Sheriff's Office is also working to increase their response time. Since deputies have been added over the last few years, the Sheriff's Office has now been able to implement patrol zones for the deputies to offer more coverage to all parts of the County and reduce response times for the residents.

3. *Identify incentives or infrastructure to further enhance existing industries.*

Will Williams continues to work with existing industries to be sure that they are aware of the incentives that are available if they choose to expand. He also works with them any time there is a need within the industry that has not been met, and tries to find a way to provide the industry with what they need.

4. *Engage NWTF to help promote Edgefield County.*

The National Wild Turkey Federation is working on an expansion to their campus that will bring many visitors into Edgefield County all throughout the year. They are constructing a shooting range complex that will be utilized for competitions and also open to the public. County staff, County Council, and several committees have toured or plan to tour the facility. This is a great opportunity for the NWTF and for the County to work together to promote Edgefield County and what it has to offer.

5. *Update the County comprehensive plan.*

The Comprehensive Plan has been reviewed and amended by the Planning Commission, with assistance from Rick Green, Planner for Upper Savannah Council of Governments. The amendments include changes to all of the population and growth figures based on the 2010 census, updates to the future land development maps in anticipation of what may happen, and additional language in relation to the highway overlay districts. The amended plan will go before County Council for approval.

6. *Identify work projects for youth after school, on weekends, school holidays, and summer./ Identify additional internship and externship opportunities with students.*

Will Williams and I met with Greg Anderson to discuss some opportunities for students. The school offers some internship opportunities already and the three of us are exploring options that could expand that. There are several areas within the County that could utilize students during the summer. Mr. Williams is also asking industries if there are any opportunities for students.

7. *Establish tours of local industries for high school students.*

Mr. Williams is working with the STHS Career Center to organize this. The school is interested in offering tours to their students to enable students to see what the manufacturing work environment is all about.

8. *Determine the need for a common training & classroom facility./Establish a county-wide training and classroom facility.*

As part of a grant, the Emergency Management Department was able to secure a smartboard which is located in the conference room at the Emergency Operations Center. The smart board can be used by any departments within the County that need a large space with technology access. Internet access is available and the space can accommodate 20 to 30 folks depending on the specific needs of the agency.

9. *Continue building relationships with regional governmental entities to discuss common goals on development.*

I have been meeting regularly with John Hare, Edgefield County Water & Sewer Administrator, about development possibilities within the County. We have also met with Todd Glover, City of North Augusta Administrator, to see if there are any items that we can work together on in order to improve development within Edgefield County. Chairman Campbell also meets regularly with the County Council Chairmen of Aiken, Saluda and McCormick to continue to foster regional government affairs.

10. *Review zoning designations in the County to determine how property can best be utilized.*

The Planning staff has been working with Rick Green to review the zoning designations in the County. There are several areas in the ordinance that are unclear. Mr. Green has been helping the County find a better way to organize the ordinance to make it easier to understand. In addition, the Planning Commission is going to begin going through it to be sure that the ordinance meets the current needs of the citizens.

11. *Establish a reserve fund to provide incentives for new and expanding industries.*

Edgefield County passed an ordinance that takes 10% of all new fee in lieu of tax agreements and sets it aside to be used for economic development purposes. This money could have a number of uses, including improving the industrial park, offering incentives, or providing needed infrastructure for new industries. Any project funded through this money would have to be approved by County Council.

12. *Through incentives or technical colleges assistance encourage 2 or more plant expansions.*

There have been numerous business/industrial expansions in Edgefield County in the last few years, including US Fibers, Bondex, Southern Felt, Parkdale, and Carolina Covertex. Some of these industries received incentives (fee in lieu of tax) from the County, while others expanded without assistance from the County. The County is very excited about the success of our industries.

- 13. Provide an inventory of current industrial and commercial properties available for prospective businesses, including location, water and sewer capacity, electric/gas, zoning, etc.*

Mr. Williams and I have worked to compile information on all of the industrial sites in the County so that we have all of the information readily available when it is needed. The package includes all of the elements in the goal. I am currently working on a similar inventory for commercial properties.

- 14. Consider establishing a packet for commercial business and industry that contains land development requirements and building permit information in order to fast track the process.*

The Building & Planning Department has a packet of information that they provide to commercial developers with all of the permitting requirements from the different agencies in the County. This information is also available online so that developers can find everything they need more quickly and easily than in the past. Staff continues to work to improve this system. In addition, staff is working on getting all of the land development regulations for each type of zone into a user friendly format.

- 15. Work with Work Ready Communities Committee in order to get the workforce certified through work keys.*

Edgefield County has worked hard to meet all of the goals that were set as part of the Work Ready Communities initiative and have obtained or exceeded the goals that were established. The Committee is working on the last few steps to be recognized as a Work Ready Community. A special thanks to the committee and all the folks that helped to accomplish these goals!

- 16. Complete the widening of US 25.*

The County has been informed that South Carolina Department of Transportation will award the bids for construction on November 12, 2014. Construction is expected to begin in the spring of 2015.

- 17. Study the possibility of adding summer programs for youth.*

The public schools have been working to offer more camps and programs for youth of the County. This past year, the school offered camps for basketball, baseball, football, and cheerleading. These camps were a great opportunity for children to work closely with the high school and develop their skills in the different sports. The County Recreation Program assisted when requested in some of these camps. In addition, the County Recreation program also helped with the strength and agility camp given by the JoNathan foundation. The County Recreation Director is in discussion with several of the coaches at Strom Thurmond to provide additional camps next summer.