



## JOB GROWTH FORCE MINUTES May 22, 2008

**Members Present:** Chair Dennis Smiley, Vice Chair Mike Luttrell, , Vice Chair John Lea, Wyatt Watkins, Bob Killion, Thomas Wood, Eddie Vega, Gordon Knetzer, Chip Ates, Guillermo Rolando, Rex Bailey, Doug Sprouse, Nate Hodne Tim McFarland, Uvalde Lindsey and Joy Heuer.

After an introduction of the volunteers, Smiley provided an overview of the Job Growth Task Force's charge as it related to the prioritized items from CityFuture II. Those items, in order of priority are: high value-added jobs; 21<sup>st</sup> century high value manufacturing jobs and workforce development and training.

Smiley reminder the task force that the Job Growth Task Force was developed set up to develop and action plan to bring high tech, value added jobs to Springdale as well as enhance current workforce. Deadline for task force is December 2008.

Next three months each mini task force should work towards developing a road map for task force. Brainstorm, gather data on what is currently being done on each topic and research new ideas. Smiley requested that by the end of summer each mini task force has an end goal set and by the end of fall each mini task force should have details on how to get to that goal.

Uvalde Lindsey and Tim McFarland were in attendance to update the task force on their work thus far on the Venture Bank concept. McFarland explained that the Venture Bank concept is an early stage venture fund. With the 21<sup>st</sup> century needing an avenue to small businesses to receive funding that a tradition financial intuition cannot give, the Venture Bank Concept was born. Idea is to have 2M from bank contributions and 8M from individual investors. A tax credit incentive of 33.3% is currently available however a 50% tax credit is the in works with the Arkansas Economic Development Commission (AEDC). Lindsey pointed out that the University of Arkansas is a feeder for high tech jobs and these companies are looking for communities ready to take action in order to get them to set up headquarters. Springdale has the entrepreneurial spirit, now we need a vehicle to push the sprite into reality. Idea is to create a partnership and institution that is community based loaded with people whom have the wherewithal to make educated decisions on investments. The Venture Bank would not a traditional "bank"; there is no FDIC, no charter etc. The Venture Bank will be able to step in when and where tradition financial intuitions cannot.

Lea suggested that a list be developed to include an action plan to be used to zero in on the opportunities at the University.

Task force divided into areas of focus to meet.

High Tech Jobs: Minutes compiled and provided by John Lea: Mini task force to look at state, federal, and local monies available for upstart businesses and gaining some contact information with the state and such institutions as the University of Arkansas on how to identify and potentially contact emerging or up start companies. Lindsey was to investigate the State incentives which are part of the information he had you forward. Lea and others were to make contact with several folks about sources that could help us with the identification of these companies. Lea was to talk to some folks at Tyson who deal with such companies and who also are involved in some of the research at the U of A. Others were going to talk to their contacts directly

with the U of A and a few outside. Plan is to gather as much intelligence as possible and compile and compare that information at our next meeting. Lea has a meeting with Rick Roop, who heads Tyson's regulatory compliance and Food Safety areas the week of June 23.

Venture Bank: Mini task force is in place to help with the Venture Bank concept and make the concept a reality. McFarland suggested to start that there be three key Springdale community people indentified to invest time to get the Venture Bank off the ground. Suggested people were Rick Barrows, Dennis Smiley and John Lea. These three key people would then work to help develop the next steps which would include hiring a lawyer, file a private placement memorandum, use the SpringdaleTomorrow and foundation for any start up money, these three recruit three more people to help develop the plan, then look for a person to run the fund, this person should have a technology and fiancé background.

Workforce Training: Minutes compiled and provided by Mike Luttrell: The subcommittee members present discussed different resources which might be available for training opportunities and curriculum guides. Bob suggested making some contacts with the ABC (Association of Building Contractors) and AGC (Association of General Contractors). The committee discussed the possibility of similar types of associations within the manufacturing industry. The committee would like to see what research is already in place at the Chamber indicating the types of training needs which exist for our local industries. What data can we obtain regarding employment in Springdale – census, Chamber, City, etc. The subcommittee members present discussed different resources which might be available for training opportunities and curriculum guides. Bob suggested making some contacts with the ABC (Association of Building Contractors) and AGC (Association of General Contractors).

#### **NEXT STEPS**

Email task force members missing a mini-task force.

Get commitments from those to serve on Venture Bank Advisory committee.

#### **NEXT MEETING**

Thursday, June 19<sup>th</sup> 10-11am Chamber



## JOB GROWTH FORCE MINUTES June 19, 2008

**Members Present:** Chair Dennis Smiley, Vice Chair Mike Luttrell, Vice Chair John Lea, Wyatt Watkins, Bob Killion, Gordon Knetzer, Guillermo Rolando, Rex Bailey, Doug Sprouse, Mike Morgenthaler, Hex Bisbee and Joy Heuer.

After a welcome from Smiley task force was asked to review minutes and three focus areas for the task force: High Tech jobs, Venture Bank and Workforce Training

Next three months each mini task force should work towards developing a road map for task force. Brainstorm, gather data on what is currently being done on each topic and research new ideas. Smiley requested that by the end of summer each mini task force has an end goal set and by the end of fall each mini task force should have details on how to get to that goal.

Status reports were given for three focus areas before the task force divided into areas of focus to meet.

High Tech Jobs: Lea reported that the mini task force is gathering information regarding state tax incentives and how to best identify companies to recruit to Springdale. A packet of information was provided by Uvalde Lindsey for review. Lea is networking with food safety and compliance companies over the next few weeks. This group will meet again at the end of July.

Venture Bank: Smiley reported Tim McFarland provided a packet of information for the group to review on the Venture Bank concepts and next steps. Group also tasked with indentifying three key people to lead the charge. Mini task force will meet again in July.

Workforce Training: Luttrell declared that research is being gathered on what the current training already in place. Group will work with secondary educators for them to help promote trade opportunities as well as continued education. University of Arkansas, United Way and the Community Foundation held a meeting to indentify the needs of the region and part of the assessment will report on workforce training needs. A July meeting for this group will be set soon.

### **Mini Task Force reports:**

High Tech Jobs: Group members reviewed the packet provided by Uvalde Lindsey which outlined the current state incentives. Rolando reported he was working with his University of Arkansas contacts to find high tech companies at the university needing permanent placement. Knetzer informed the that he has been following the fuel cell industry for several years now and during a recent trip to CA he was informed that fuel cell companies are only on the West and East coasts, there is no fuel cell manufacturing in the central United States. Some of the companies mentioned were United Technologies and IDATECH. He mentioned that the fuel cell the IDATECH builds will last up to 15,000 hours and could provide electricity to a home. Questions such as how to contact these companies and what it would take for them to consider relocating to Arkansas arose during conversation. Knetzer will bring contact info that he has to the mini task force meeting.

Venture Bank: Minutes compiled and provided by Dennis Smiley:

Workforce Training: Minutes compiled and provided by Mike Luttrell:

Bob Killion provided several Internet web page education options. These websites offered numerous job training and education opportunities:

[www.educationguys.com](http://www.educationguys.com)

[www.khake.com](http://www.khake.com)

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

[www.collegesurfing.com](http://www.collegesurfing.com)

These websites provided options to search by employment type and location for the necessary training for each particular employment opportunity. Doug Sprouse and Mike Luttrell agreed to work towards arranging a meeting with Springdale School district officials to see what types of educational opportunities are available within the school district. The task force agreed that we needed to be making sure that there was a "connection" between the types of education opportunities within the school district and the types of job opportunities which are available in Springdale.

#### **NEXT STEPS**

Set dates for mini task forces to each meet independently before next full meeting in August

#### **NEXT MEETING**

Thursday, August 28 10-11am First Security Annex



## JOB GROWTH FORCE MINUTES August 28, 2008

**Members Present:** Chair Dennis Smiley, Vice Chair John Lea, Wyatt Watkins, Gordon Knetzer, Guillermo Rolando, Doug Sprouse, Seth Mims, and Joy Heuer.

After a welcome from Smiley task force was asked to review minutes and three focus areas for the task force: High Tech jobs, Venture Bank and Workforce Training.

In September Smiley would like each group to meet as a mini task force. Contact Joy to set a meeting time and place. At these meetings, each mini task force should work towards developing a road map for task force. Brainstorm, gather data on what is currently being done on each topic and research new ideas. Smiley requested that by November each mini task force has an end goal set and a detailed plan in writing on how to get to that goal.

Status reports were given for three focus areas before the task force divided into areas of focus to meet.

High Tech Jobs: Lea reported that this mini task force divided the tasks. Some met with business leaders in regards to research at the University of Arkansas. Uvalde Lindsey helped develop an incentive package for high tech jobs that would incite companies to look at Springdale. There was mention of creating materials promoting Springdale highlighting incentives, as well as appropriate contact people within the city. These materials would be distributed to high tech job leads. In order to keep city officials in the loop regarding the efforts that Chamber is making on the economic development front, it was suggested that the Chamber visit the council on a quarterly basis. Mention was made of having a person on commission that would promote the city.

Rolando met with Dr. Garrin in the Genesis area at the U of A. After yearly report from the Genesis regarding who is in the Genesis and what they are working on, is complete then a meeting with Phil Stafford will take place. The Northwest Arkansas Council is where help with promoting regionalism and collaboration between all cities could start.

Knetzer is working on researching fuel cell companies. At this time there are no fuel cell companies on the south or mid west. Sustainable fuel will be a niche that NW Arkansas could tap in to. There is a fuel cell expo show in Phoenix in October that Knetzer will attend and report back to the group at the following meeting.

Venture Bank: Smiley reported that the task force is meeting with Tim McFarland and Uvalde Lindsey. McFarland has a white paper with details of the venture bank including a plan, steps to be successful etc. The next major step is to get three key people to commit to be on the advisory board. Those people are Rick Barrows, John Lea and Dennis Smiley. Once volunteers commit and the model is approved, fundraising will begin. The Venture Bank will help fund Springdale companies in the manufacture or ready to take to market stage, venture bank will not consider a company in startup or development stages. Meeting to get volunteers committed will be set in September.

Workforce Training: Heuer reported on behalf of Luttrell stating the mini task force has worked on gathering education institute and manufacture current training programs and needs. Task force is complying a list of manufacture needs to see if there are similarities. Sprouse reported that he and Luttrell will meet with Dr. Rollins to discuss a plan to better show 8<sup>th</sup> grade students the needs areas in Springdale. The thought behind

this is to show the students there a few things. First, there are other avenues for education besides a four year college. Second, there are immediate needs in Springdale for skilled workers. Was suggested to help manufacture project there employee needs for the next 5-8 years, in order to better tell show all opportunities for students. What can the chamber, the city and the district due to better work together in this area?

Smiley reported that NAWCC would very much like to have a campus in Springdale, however they would need a millage to help pay for a building. The best scenario would be to have a local investor could build a campus and NWACC could rent the facility from the investor. Sprouse mentioned that Springdale is allowed 40 mills and we are currently using 38 ½.

**ACTION ITEMS**

U of A involvement on the Fayetteville board  
Federal incentives for high tech jobs?

**NEXT STEPS**

Set dates for mini task forces to each meet independently before next full meeting in September

**NEXT MEETING**

Thursday, September 25 10-11am First Security Annex



## JOB GROWTH TASK FORCE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Priorities from the CityFuture II participants are defined in three areas high valued added jobs, high value manufacturing jobs and enhanced workforce.

The Chair and Vice Chairs for the Job Growth Task Force are:

John Lea will oversee the High Tech Job Mini Task Force

Dennis Smiley will oversee the Venture Bank Mini Task Force

Mike Luttrell will oversee the Workforce Training Mini Task Force.

High Tech Jobs: Goal was to define how to attract high tech firms, identify where to find these firms, what kind of incentives are needed to attract firms, what state and city incentives are currently available, what is currently being done by the city and chamber to attract firms or what needs to happen and what are the infrastructure needs as well as to become the number one community in Arkansas that meets the needs of knowledge-based companies. Task force established relationships by networking with potential tech expansions through the University of Arkansas and existing companies. Once companies are identified, soliciting them to come to Springdale will begin. There may have to be a financial piece to get high tech companies to Springdale. State and federal incentives have been researched. With these incentives the task force will create a program that will help in areas such as property tax postponement, tax deferral etc. Business Development activities should become the focus for the chamber once again with a dedicated staff person to focus on recruitment. Identify who will be a liaison within the poultry industry, U of A, real estate etc.

Venture Bank: Goal was to educate and guide the task force regarding what research has already happened with the venture bank concept and identify unique niche starts up's that would benefit from a venture bank. A white paper was created by Tim McFarland, initial directors for the venture bank were decided upon, and they are Rick Barrows, John Lea and Dennis Smiley. The venture bank concept will be included in the Governor's Economic Development plan for the 2009 session. Hope is to raise \$8M and have all aspect functioning by July 1, 2009.

Workforce Training: Goal was to research current training options in area, survey employers to assess needs for current employees, what are employers looking for in new recruits and partner with institutions to formulate a plan on how to better serve current and upcoming training needs. It was determined that there is a need for high tech job academies in the high schools, as well as at the early college level. Currently there are academies in high school for law, law enforcement, engineering and medical. The high tech job academy could focus on computer skills. Task force will work with higher education entities to determine what is most helpful for the academies.

*Ongoing projects for 2009 as suggested by the Chair and Vice Chairs are:*

High Tech Jobs – keep a task force assembled as well as engage chamber board members, past presidents and chamber staff to identify and work with prospects.

Venture Bank – identify more people to be involved, work on initial startup commitments, legal work, including finding a lawyer must take place, as well as finding a manager for the fund.

Workforce Training – Mike Luttrell and a school board member to meet with curriculum coordinator for secondary schools to review the possibility for academies focusing on high tech jobs.



## JOB GROWTH TASK FORCE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Priorities from the CityFuture II participants are defined in three areas high valued added jobs, high value manufacturing jobs and enhanced workforce.

The Chair and Vice Chairs had met and decided to divide the Task Force in to three smaller groups assigning each an area of focus. From these Mini Task Forces the whole Task Force will then create a plan to meet all goals and objectives.

John Lea will oversee the High Tech Job Mini Task Force

Dennis Smiley will oversee the Venture Bank Mini Task Force

Mike Luttrell will oversee the Workforce Training Mini Task Force.

High Tech Jobs: how to attract high tech firms, where to find these firms, what kind of incentives are needed to attract firms, what state and city incentives are currently available, what is currently being done by the city and chamber to attract firms or what needs to happen and what are the infrastructure needs. We will do this by becoming the number one community in Arkansas that meets the needs of knowledge-based companies.

Venture Bank: work with Tim McFarland and Uvalde Lindsey to help educate and guide the Mini Task Force regarding what research has already happened with the venture bank concept and identify unique niche starts up's that would benefit from a venture bank.

Workforce Training: research current training options in area, survey employers to assess needs for current employees, what are employers looking for in new recruits and partner with institutions to formulate a plan on how to better serve current and upcoming training needs.

Next three months each mini task force should work towards developing a road map for task force. Brainstorm, gather data on what is currently being done on each topic and research new ideas. By the end of summer each mini task force will have an end goal set and by the end of fall each mini task force should have details on how to get to that goal.