



ACTION PLAN FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

MOUNTAIN HOME AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Prepared by Community Growth Strategies, LLC

Introduction

Economic Development Is A Team Sport!

When preparing to develop an Action Plan for Economic Development, it requires the gathering of honest and frank feedback from those in leadership positions in the community. If that feedback is to be sincere, we need the cooperation of local business, community, and political leaders. Those leaders must also be onboard in implementing the economic development process. With that being said, we must pass along our gratitude to those in leadership for their enthusiastic participation in this important exercise for Mountain Home, Baxter County, and the region.

This work product would also have been impossible without the cooperation and diligence of the **Mountain Home Mayor Hillrey Adams**, and **Baxter County Judge Mickey Pendergrass**. Mountain Home and Baxter County are fortunate for leaders with the foresight to encourage sound economic development in the region.

The development of this Action Plan would not have been possible without the determination and hard work by Mountain Home Area Chamber **President & CEO Danielle Pugsley** and the staff team, **Eric Totty** and **Katie Shay Schneider**.

In order to get unbiased opinions and individual views on the economy of the Mountain Home region, we conducted interviews with the following community, political, and business leaders:

Hon. Hillrey Adams, Mayor of Mountain Home

Mike Beam, NEXT

Kevin Beckham, Engineering Director, Baxter Lab

Tim Coleman, President – First Security Bank – Mountain Home

Paul Fagras, Manager – Baxter County Airport

David Fox, COO – Baxter Regional Medical Center

Sally Gilbert, President – Farmers & Merchants Bank – Mountain Home

Ricky Johnson, Owner – Quality Inn and Chair of the Mountain Home Advertising & Promotion Commission

Dr. Jake Long, Superintendent, Mountain Home Public Schools

Allen Moore, Vice President, Lending – First Security Bank

Dr. Robin Myers, Chancellor, Arkansas State University – Mountain Home
Jason Nazarenko, President – Cotter/Gassville Chamber of Commerce
Chris Nosari, Nosari Home Mortgage
Hon. Mickey Pendergrass, Baxter County Judge
Ron Peterson, CEO – Baxter Regional Medical Center
Rick Pierce, President – Bass Cat & Yar-Craft Boats
Kelly Shay, Shay's Appliance
Bentley Story, Arkansas Economic Development Commission
Russell Tucker, Rapp's Brewing Company and Black Hills Energy
Denise Weber, Owner – Jordan Marina
Kate Wright, E2E Value Stream Optimization Leader– Danfoss
Lang Zimmerman, Yelcot Communications

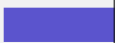













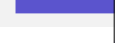



We also conducted a Focus Group with the Mountain Home Chamber Board. The participants included:

Hon. Hillrey Adams
Jennifer Baker
Mike Beam
David Fox
Grace Crownover
Allen Moore
Shelly Hill
Jackie Neff
Russell Tucker
Kate Wright
Matthew Leiboult
Hon. Mickey Pendergrass
Katie Schneider

DEMOGRAPHICS

Baxter County, AR

Comparisons

Indicators		Baxter County, AR	United States	Percent difference Baxter County, AR vs. United States
Demographics	Population Growth (% change, 2010*-2019*)	0.1%	6.8%	
	Median Age (2019*)	52.2	38.1	
	Percent Population White Alone (2019*)	96.7%	72.5%	
	Percent Population Hispanic or Latino (2019*)	2.4%	18.0%	
	Percent Population American Indian or Alaska Native (2019*)	0.4%	0.8%	
	Percent of Population 'Baby Boomers' (2019*)	30.5%	24.6%	
Income	Median Household Income (2019*)	\$42,260	\$62,843	
	Per Capita Income (2019*)	\$26,863	\$34,103	
	Percent Individuals Below Poverty (2019*)	13.1%	13.4%	
	Percent Families Below Poverty (2019*)	9.5%	9.5%	
	Percent of Households with Retirement and Social Security Income (2019*)	84.3%	51.1%	
	Percent of Households with Public Assistance Income (2019*)	16.1%	19.4%	
Structure	Percent Population 25 Years or Older without High School Degree (2019*)	11.3%	12.0%	
	Percent Population 25 Years or Older with Bachelor's Degree or Higher (2019*)	17.9%	32.1%	
	Percent Population That Speak English Less Than 'Very Well' (2019*)	0.6%	8.4%	
	Percent of Houses that are Seasonal Homes (2019*)	11.4%	4.0%	
	Owner-Occupied Homes where > 30% of Household Income Spent on Mortgage (2019*)	28.2%	27.7%	
	Renter-Occupied Homes where > 30% of Household Income Spent on Rent (2019*)	36.8%	46.0%	

Source: Headwaters Economics

Mountain Home's Action Plan for Economic Development

Business Attraction & Retention

Goal #1 – Covet and promote the existing primary employer base and work with them to provide a platform for growth and success.

Goal #2 – Make Mountain Home attractive for outdoor and recreational retail development.

Goal #3 – Prepare Mountain Home to attract new primary employers.

Placemaking

Goal #1 – Implement a Vibrant Downtown Development Program.

Tourism

Goal #1 – Increase the number of visitors (and their dollars!!) to Mountain Home and Baxter County.



This report was prepared by Community Growth Strategies, LLC and is the property of the Mountain Home Area Chamber of Commerce.

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Our Firm

Community Growth Strategies (CGS) is a dynamic economic development consulting firm, heavy in successful experience specializing in working with communities who have a desire to formulate an achievable strategy to accommodate and encourage economic growth. Leaders at CGS fully understand the need for a plan of action even in those communities and organizations with limited resources, remote location, and other monumental challenges.



APPENDIX

Demographics material used in this report was prepared by ***Headwaters Economics***.

Some material used in the preparation of this report were from research on the websites and through interviews with the following organizations:

City of Mountain Home

US Bureau of Labor Statistics

Arkansas Economic Development Commission

Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce

Baxter County

Northwest Arkansas Planning & Development District

Existing reports and studies that we reviewed during this process were:

An Economic Development Information Assessment: City of Mountain Home

Baxter County Forward

Mountain Home/Baxter County Economic Development Assessment

Mountain Home Area Survey

The following questions were presented to Mountain Home Chamber members and the public through social media and email distribution. The survey enjoyed 96 responses.

The strongest responses were indicative of the Chamber's lack of funding to complete its mission and the opinion that the region's greatest asset is its bountiful lakes, forests, rivers, trails, and natural resources. It also reflected a desire from respondents that the region should be best known for being a "Great Place to Live and Work."

It is our conclusion that the successful pursuit of the Goals and Tactics in this Action Plan for Economic Development will achieve the desires expressed by the respondents in this survey.

1. Is the Mountain Home Chamber adequately funded for its mission?
 - a. Yes 32
 - b. No 64**
2. The most important, effective program in the Chamber's strategy is
 - a. Working with existing industry 19
 - b. Entrepreneurship Programs 4
 - c. Workforce Development 25
 - d. New Business Attraction 33**
 - e. Community events 15
3. The Chamber pursues _____ economic programs.
 - a. Too many 4
 - b. Not enough 29
 - c. Just the right amount 22
 - d. All that can be done with current funding 41**
4. Mountain Home's greatest asset is:
 - a. Lakes, forests, rivers, trails, natural resources 87**
 - b. Resorts, hotels, and restaurants 0
 - c. Healthcare 2
 - d. Low Cost of Living 7
5. Mountain Home's greatest weakness is:
 - a. Highway transportation 27
 - b. Air service 27
 - c. Workforce 37**
 - d. Location 5
6. Mountain Home should be best known as a:
 - a. Vacation Destination 10
 - b. Great Place to Live and Work 51**
 - c. An Outdoor Recreation Place 22
 - d. Best Place to Retire 10
 - e. Best Place to Start a New Business 3

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