



RETENTION AND EXPANSION QUESTIONNAIRE

Business Name	
Address	
City, State, ZIP	
Website Address	
Contact Person	
Title	
Phone Number	
Fax Number	
Email	
Project Manager	
Date	
Strategic Reason for the call	

Employment

Current number of employees: _____ Growth projection: _____

Having trouble recruiting qualified employees?

Facilities

Current size (sf)? _____ Expand/reduce to what size (sf)? _____

Able to expand at your current location?

Business Issues

Training needs (HR, employee skill sets, more)?

Do you find that the existing sources of financing and capital are sufficient for growing your company?

Are there government regulations or policies that are impeding your ability to grow and expand?

Are there community issues that concern your existing workforce or would have a negative impact on recruiting new employees?

What are the top issues facing your specific industry sector?

Are there support services that could be recruited that would benefit your industry sector if they were local?

Utilities & Infrastructure -

Company Overview

Brief description of WF Chamber operation

Alleghany County did not have a comprehensive Business and Retention program to find out the needs of the large and small businesses. From this program we have trained 5 retired volunteers and are creating an ecosystem of growth with medium and small businesses. Local businesses have strong community ties, reducing the risk of leaving and BRE programs are often less expensive than business attraction, yielding more jobs on average.

- Low - interest loans, available to businesses purchasing land, refurbishing buildings, and new equipment.
- Increased use of zoning to encourage and discourage desirable and undesirable business expansion and retention
- Low-cost training provided for the workforce of businesses and industries, allowing them to remain competitive , this is usually provided locally through a variety of counties or state programs.
- Tax credits for businesses encouraging business and retention expansion.
- Business cluster group strategies are increasingly used to assist BRE. Sharing concerns such as infrastructure, zoning and quality of life enables a more powerful voice to be heard, influencing business climate improvement
- Ensuring business finance availability is an important part of BRE. Many regions now work on identifying and promoting financial incentives

Finance, Incentives, Taxes, Real Estate, Workforce issues, Regulations, Technology

Our formal BRE program identifies the hurdles and challenges facing local businesses and provides assistance to address those issues. Technical assistance provided through a BRE program can help a business:

- Increase its competitiveness in the wider marketplace
- Assist it with expansions that add new jobs
- Keep it from relocating to other areas
- Help it survive economic difficulties
- Connect it to networks

Quantitative Measures:

- Number of jobs created/retained
- Number of retained businesses
- Cost per job created/retained
- Number of businesses visited
- Number of businesses surveyed
- Number of at-risk businesses assisted
- Percent of jobs held by local citizens

Key factors to analysis:

Labor Force

- How educated is the community's labor force?
- How is educational attainment distributed across the labor force?
- Is the labor force relatively young or old? Demographics
- Do key employers have difficulty finding and retaining workers?
- What are the median wages rates for various sectors?
- Is organized labor viewed as being relatively strong or weak in the community?
- What hard and soft skills training is available in the region and how often is it utilized?

Access to Markets

- How many people live within 100, 250, and 500 miles of the community?
- Do current major employers/industries secure their inputs from local suppliers and sources?
- Do current major employers/industries produce products that are sold to consumers or are they sold to other business customers?
- Which businesses in the area serve a global customer base?

- Do companies attend trade shows? Are they interested in global market development?
- What percentage of sales comes through the Internet, as opposed to on-site or phone sales?

Transportation

- Does the area offer close proximity to an interstate or other controlled-access highway?
- Is the area served by a major rail line?
- What level of air service is available locally and regionally?
- Does the area have access to a major port?
- What is the average commute time in the region?

Educational Infrastructure

- How well does the local school system perform on national standardized tests?
- Data graduation rates, etc.
- Is the area served by a community college or a four-year college?
- Are there extension programs available to community residents?
- Is there enough bandwidth in the area to handle online learning modules?

Site Availability for Expansions

Is land available in the community for business wishing to expand?

- Are there industrial/business parks available?
- Are available sites mapped using geographic information systems?
- Are utility companies upgrading infrastructure on available sites?
- Is Brownfield redevelopment a possibility in the community? Is it difficult or facilitated?

Business Climate

- Are the community's tax rates competitive with those in neighboring jurisdictions and states?
- Are the state and local governments generally viewed by the business community as responsive to their needs and concerns?
- Are major regulatory approvals needed for development (e.g., zoning changes) usually approved through a transparent process, or after lengthy public battles?
- Is entrepreneurship and innovation celebrated in the community or discouraged?

Utility Costs & Availability

- Are utilities available at potential sites throughout the area?
- Are there supply issues that might preclude the retention and expansion of certain types of companies?
- To what extent is broadband Internet access available in the area?
- Are utility costs competitive with benchmark communities?
- Is green energy available?

Quality of Life

- Is the community's housing stock of good quality?
- How do housing costs compare with national indices?
- How long is the average commute?
- Are there ample recreational opportunities?
- Are there significant cultural assets?
- Are there bike paths and other alternative forms of transportation?
- available?

Virginian Review

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Vol. XXVIII, No. 148

COVINGTON, VIRGINIA, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2016

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Certificate of Recognition

Marla Akridge, left, executive director of the Alleghany Highlands Economic Development Corporation, presents a certificate of recognition to Jonathan Eaton and Brett Siebenkittle, owners of Ridgeline Physical Therapy in Low Moor, for their contributions to the economic growth of the Alleghany Highlands since opening their business last year. Pictured, from left, Akridge, Eaton, Siebenkittle, Makayla May and Jennifer Nicely, physical therapy assistants and Lisa Daily, front office manager.

Virginian Review

Serving Covington, Clifton Forge, Alleghany County and Bath County Since 1914

Vol. XXIX, No. 18

COVINGTON, VIRGINIA, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2017

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Home Delivery 50 Cents



Certificate of Recognition

Terri McClung, right, of the Alleghany Highlands Economic Development Corporation, presents a certificate of recognition to Tamara and Butch Reid, owners of Anything and Everything and The Main Street Pawn Shop, for their economic growth to the Alleghany Highlands. They are located at 361 West Main Street in downtown Covington. (Photo courtesy of the Alleghany Highlands Economic Development Corporation)