

The Local Perspective

The Village of Newberry - loss of population, decreases in revenue, empty storefronts, declining school, lack of good paying jobs

Became a Project Rising Tide community 6 months ago. Through stakeholder group, chose to focus on economic development.

- I. Steering Committee formed and worked with Donna LaCourt for two meetings to form committee identity and purpose. Reviewed plans in marketing, economic and downtown development, brownfield redevelopment
- II. Identified economic challenges - public input through surveys, newspaper article, social media
- III. Developed task groups
 - A. Broadband access - two new providers are going to be offering broadband services
 - B. Business Attraction - three new businesses opening in formerly empty stores
 - C. Downtown Development - placemaking, art mural, mini grant for shrubs*
 - D. Job Training/Voc-Ed - entrepreneur is starting own training program
 - E. Planning and Grants - master plan*, planning commission being formed, considering form- based zoning
 - F. Special Events - three new summer events planned
 - G. Communication - new website*, using newspaper and social media
 - H. Park and Rec - Brownfield redevelopment project stalled, Atlas Park Renovation/DNR Passport Grant
 - I. Signage - grant application unsuccessful
 - J. Blight Elimination - contracting for ordinance enforcement officer services

III. Economic Development Strategy - Redevelopment Ready

Current Activities

- Phase 5 Water Project - Rural Development, 90% of water lines in village replaced, refurbished water tower
- Rehabilitation of Waste Water Treatment Plant
- MDOT - resurfacing and road diet project three miles of M-123 N from M-28 through downtown
- Brownfield redevelopment project - joint MDEQ/MDNR regional outdoor recreation complex
- Park Renovation with MDNR Passport Grant Funds

In order to be able to effectively interface with the programs and tools that are out there, local units need adequate staffing. Local govt. is cut to bare bones. Staffing is just adequate enough to operate.

There's no one extra to write and implement grants. No budgeted funds to hire firms to write master plans, zoning plans and build and populate a website. Certainly not enough staff to generate content for multiple digital platforms. Small pool of volunteers, board seats remain vacant.

Without resources to manage the process and projects, implementation is weak.

