

FCDC NEWS

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FCDC Director's Update

As I write this, we are entering into the holiday season. I hope you are all able to take a break and enjoy time away from work and with family and friends. It has been another challenging year and I encourage you to keep a strong balance between your professional and personal life. Our community is fortunate that you choose to operate in our community. THANK YOU and may you have a blessed holiday season.

To steal a bit from the concept of the State of the Union speech we hear each year out of Washington, I thought I would use this opportunity to share with you the State of FCDC! The Franklin County Development Council is strong, impactful, and relevant to the economic vitality of our community. All our members are key to this success and to our continued efforts to support our existing industry and attract new industry to our community. Your involvement is having a positive impact on the economic health of our community.

Proximity Park

We have certainly promoted Proximity Park. During 2021 we received 39 inquiries from industry looking at our community as a potential landing spot for a new facility. That is up from 20 such inquiries in 2020. This is a result of our continued efforts and investment in marketing, networking, and building a social media presence. Our organization has invested heavily in these areas the past two years, and we are seeing favorable results from that investment. Industry is finding our community at a level much greater than in previous years.

You can learn more about Proximity Park at <https://www.proximity-park.com/>

Workforce

FCDC is also on the front lines as we all try to solve the challenges we face today regarding workforce. Recruitment and retention are a big challenge. This is costing our industry incredible time and expense as well as lost opportunity for business expansion. While we are not unique in this challenge, we are working to be unique in our response to this challenge. It will take our industry, business, government, and educational partners working together to make a significant difference. This is and will continue to be a focus of FCDC.

The workforce issues impact our existing industry and our ability to attract new industry. FCDC is taking a leadership role in promoting new housing initiatives in our community. We must aggressively promote new housing in partnership with public and private resources. Bringing new residents to our community enriches our workforce, increases our tax base, and provides an economic boom to small and large businesses in our community.

We must also bridge the gap between the jobs and the pool of prospective employees. This means building a strong pipeline from our local educational institutions to our industry and business community. We have begun this process, but you will continue to see more and more on this important element to solving our workforce challenges.

Workforce (Cont.)

We also must begin to think differently and encourage our industry to think differently about workforce recruitment. As more and more individuals retire, they become great prospects for part time labor that could fill positions that were formerly only filled with full time employees. Our older generation still can support and offer talent to our industry and business. In addition, we must understand the younger generation wants to be recruited by our business and industry. Much like a college coach recruits high school kids for his/her team, industry must recruit employees. You will continue to hear more on this in the months to come. It is a paradigm shift that is happening, and we must recognize the opportunities it is creating for us as employers. FCDC will partner with you to adapt to the changing environment of recruitment.

Attached is information provided by site selectors regarding workforce: [Site Selectors Survey on Workforce](#)

Finances

FCDC is a financially stable organization and continues to be a good steward of the funds provided by our members, the City of Ottawa, the City of Wellsville, and Franklin County. As mentioned earlier, we invested heavily in marketing materials and resources the past year. This year we will reduce our expenses by over 7%. This is after we reduced our budget by 12% the prior year. In a world with 5% inflation, this is an important statement about our fiscal performance. You can be certain that we take the support we receive from you and all our partners very seriously and will continue to be good stewards of your investment.

We are also continuing to grow our financial foundation. In October of 2020 we had \$249,373.39 in cash reserves. In October of 2021 that had grown to \$280,673.16. These funds are a reserve we keep to provide for unbudgeted projects or to provide additional financial incentive to a prospective industry.

Committee Structure

We are making a small change in how we will operate in 2022. In the past we have had committees that have served to support Marketing, Proximity Park, Member Services, and Workforce Development. In 2022 we will move away from the standard committee structure to a Project Team structure. I will work to identify specific projects we hope to accomplish by year end. When the project is completed, no more meetings! How is that for motivation! Stay tuned and be ready to participate!

Leadership

I would like to express my appreciation to our 2021 board. Craig Evans (COF) served as our President and did a terrific job leading the organization. He will remain on the board as Past President. Our new President is Scott Schultz (Morning Star Care Homes) and I look forward to working with him in 2022.

Bob Nutt (Ottawa CO-OP) and Sarah Oakleaf (Porter, Spears, & Bundy) are stepping down from the board as their terms have expired. We look forward to the new board members, Mike Schnieders (Water Systems Engineering), Josh Walker (Lloyd Builders), and Darron Ammann (Bartlett & West). Our board will continue to be a strong leader for FCDC.

2022 Goals

Of course, a major goal for FCDC in 2022 is to land an occupant in Proximity Park. We have come close on several occasions. Our volume is up and anyone in sales will tell you this is a volume business. I am confident we will land an industry and I assure you; we will do all we can to make it happen in 2022.

Another goal is to get our workforce pipeline up and running. We are doing the groundwork with our education and industry partners. I am hopeful we have a solid program up and running in 2022. This is important to existing and new industry as we face these challenges together. This is a potential task force item.

2022 Goals (Cont.)

Housing is another area of focus for FCDC in 2022. We will continue to work with our public and private partners to establish strong incentives and initiatives to support new housing in our community. This will again be a private-public partnership if we are to be successful. This will be a potential task force item.

Increasing our membership is important to the long-term health of FCDC and to properly support economic development. It will take effort from myself and our membership to expand our network and contacts. This is a potential task force item.

Summary

I see a great year ahead of us in 2022. I am so excited about the opportunities that are before us across all of Franklin County. We have the support and attention of the KS Department of Commerce, KCADC, and KS Smart Port. These are the three areas we get a majority of our leads, and they are strong partners of FCDC.

FCDC is seen as an organization that is and can make a difference in our community. This past year I have seen a large increase in the number of individuals, developers, organizations, and businesses that are seeking out FCDC for information and assistance. We are a major player in our community, and you can be proud to be a member of this outstanding organization.

Please check out our website at <https://www.fcdckansas.org/>, and you can always find us on Facebook as well.

It is a GREAT day to live in Franklin County!

Paul Bear

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