



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFING: STRATEGIC ECONOMIC DATA AUGUST 12, 2008



Economic Data Used to Anticipate and Solve Workforce Issues

Wichita, Kansas, The Center for Aviation Training. In 2001, four major aviation companies needed to hire 7,000 new employees. Yet there was a severe shortage of qualified people in the Wichita area to fill the needed positions. To compound the problem, approximately 40 percent of Kansas' 36,500 aerospace aviation manufacturing workforce will be eligible for retirement between 2006-2011. In 2006, EDA, in partnership with the City of Wichita, Sedgwick County, USD 259, the State of Kansas and the four major aviation companies, began development of the Center for Aviation Training. The Center expects to train more than 1,000 people per year in various aviation industry careers. Graduates of the program can expect annual salaries between \$40,000 and \$90,000.

Enhanced Marketing Expands Art Cluster

Missoula, Montana, University of Montana – Montana World Trade Center. Montana's economy enjoys four percent growth in its statewide art industry. Following a study of the art industry's clusters, the State recognized the need to better support its innovative and entrepreneurial artists. Stakeholders across the state collaborated with the Montana World Trade Center to identify common goals and ways to achieve them. In 2005, EDA funded \$78,000 for short-term planning to develop an innovative marketing strategy to expand domestic and international markets for Montana's arts. Expected to create hundreds of new jobs, that strategic planning resulted in *Montana Masters*, a product line of high-quality Montana-handcrafted goods that focuses specifically on Native American art.



Expanding Clusters Keeps Well-Educated Kids at Home

Valdosta-Lowndes County, Georgia. In 2005, Georgia Tech University, with EDA support, analyzed the Valdosta-Lowndes County region, focusing on the region's vision of identifying emerging economic clusters that would create higher paying jobs for Valdosta State University graduates. The three economic clusters identified by Georgia Tech were information, environmental, and medical technologies. The Valdosta-Lowndes County Chamber of Commerce then launched a progressive initiative focused on growing entrepreneurs, supporting existing industry, and further expanding these clusters with new industry. To date, the Chamber has fostered 7 projects, attracting \$700,000 in private investment, and creating 185 new jobs.

Quest for Higher Wages Leads to Promotion of Life Science

Technologies Jefferson City, Missouri, Missouri Biotechnology Association (MOBIO). Rural Missouri has a pressing need for higher-wage/higher-skill jobs. A study by the Missouri Economic Research and Information Center reports that the typical life science job pays 24 percent more than the statewide average wage. The Missouri Biotechnology Association (MOBIO) is committed to bringing financially viable life science research and biotechnology industry to rural areas of Missouri that are rich in agriculture, but lack economic growth. In 2004, EDA invested \$60,000 to develop a strategic plan to proactively identify a list of life science technologies with the most commercial promise. MOBIO's project has helped to create hundreds of new, higher wage jobs in life science research.

