

# Audubon County Economic Development Corporation

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## ACED TIDBITS

August 2008

Traditional approaches to economic development have focused primarily on business recruitment; retention; and expansion and have relied on tax incentives and other financial benefits to strengthen local economies. Urban and rural communities are shifting their economic development focus to entrepreneurial development.

Research suggests that small and local businesses are important drivers of economic growth in communities. Encouraging the growth of more small businesses may lead to greater job creation than trying to lure one or two large corporations. A research study recently completed by Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City found that between 1990 and 2003, companies employing fewer than 20 employees accounted for 79.5 percent of the net new jobs in the U.S.

Here in Audubon County we are positioning to use both the traditional economic development approach and the entrepreneur and small business development. Our local communities need to create an environment that supports both approaches and that leverages our unique strengths. We have the Valley Business Park project to lure the big businesses and we have expanded the 25 acres onto the Audubon Industrial Park for entrepreneurs and smaller businesses. All of our towns have existing available building footage that would work well for small businesses and business start ups. Audubon has approximately 62,500 square feet available and Exira has approximately 35,800 square feet available.

The other huge factor that is changing in economic development practices is Regionalism, which is a real tough transformation for a lot of folks. Audubon County is a partner in the Western Iowa Advantage Region. We are one of the few regions in the state that is working really well. We are fortunate to have a compatible and workable group that has become a model region in the states eyes. This keeps us eligible for funding of our regional efforts which in turn benefits our county.

A few years ago globalization was not considered part of the normal; but today it is. Most of us have been affected by globalization in one way or another; how we communicate, what we purchase, where something is made, etc. Economically, regionalization has evolved as the most effective way to respond to this innovation called globalization. It is at the regional

level that workers, industries, companies, educators, public, private, foundations, and government interface most directly. Regional characteristics, attitudes, and the business environment have positive impact to everyone located in the same region. Regional efforts are more responsive to local challenges by promoting public, private, and non-profit collaboration; as well as being more effective in removing government barriers.

Some challenges that regionalizing impose are that leadership is led by multi people, network based, needs to be transparent, and to be successful it cannot have political, educational, nor social boundaries. Also its leadership needs to be flat versus hierarchical. It takes good judgment on which skills and knowledge we have in-house and which can be outsourced.

This regionalism concept is also needed within the county for our towns, schools, businesses, and civic groups to survive. We are no longer large enough for everyone to do all things or have several of the same thing as in the past. Cooperation between towns and organizations is imperative to have the best for our residents and to have a best chance to attract new people and businesses to the area.

When is a weakness a weakness? A weakness is ONLY a weakness when it impacts behavior. All other weaknesses are just perceived problems. If a community allocates resources to attack a perceived problem, they remain vulnerable on the real problems, those that impact decisions. Perception changes everything.

Ideas by themselves are worthless. Effective teams are made up of people with differing talents, strengths and weaknesses. Some members excel at implementation while others generate ideas, provide administrative support, and even cheerlead. Failure to appreciate the value of each of the inputs reduces a team's morale and willingness to contribute to the future. Extracting value from ideas depends on the attitude of the idea person, team assembled, focus, commitment, and execution in some order. I think the secret is to get out of the trench long enough to get a little perspective. We can make a difference in our communities.

It is so important for the whole community to be involved in economic development; which business retention and expansion is a huge part. Our business owners/managers make many decisions based on their feel for the community. Items that really matter to them and that they measure are: workforce availability, quality, and stability; the communities strengths and weaknesses as a place to do business; and community services such as fire protection, health care, streets and roads, streetscape maintenance, spousal employment, child care, schools, housing, civic groups, and much more. Let's identify our community cheerleaders and champions and thank them for what they do and join them to move us forward.

Thomas R Nielsen  
Executive Director

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT.....

Sometimes when I am angry I have the right to be angry, but that doesn't give me the right to be cruel.

Heroes are the people who do what has to be done when it needs to be done, regardless of the consequences.

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## Audubon County Tourism.....

Margee Shaffer

### August

**21<sup>st</sup> ~ HOT AUGUST NITES IN EXIRA** ~ from 6 to 9 PM ~ Exira Lions invite you to bring your Rods, Classics, and Sport Cars to the City Park for fun-filled evenings of socializing and listening to 50s and 60s music. ~ *Just cruise in anytime and park. No registration fees, no contests.* ~ *Lots of food, popcorn, and soft drinks available.*

**23<sup>rd</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION & SADDLE CLUB HORSE SHOW** ~  
At the Audubon County Fairgrounds

**24<sup>th</sup> CULPEPPER MERRIWEATHER CIRCUS IS COMING TO AUDUBON!** ~ 2 Shows at  
2:00 & 4:30 PM the Audubon High School Football Field Parking Lot ~ Tickets available at  
Area Banks & Stores

### September

**14<sup>th</sup> GRAND OPENING HANDICAP ACCESSABLE GRAY SCHOOL** ~ 5:00 to 7:00 PM  
Chicken Dinner ~ Come see the new handicapped accessible area at the Gray School.

**16<sup>th</sup> AUDUBON COUNTY HOSPITAL FOUNDATION BOOK FAIR** ~ 9:30 AM to 3:00  
PM ~ Contact 712-563-5295 for details.

**27<sup>th</sup> EXIRA FALL FESTIVAL** ~ Crafts from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM at the Exira Rec Center  
~ Lunch & Dessert Bar ~ Baked Sales ~ Scare Crow Contest ~ Rides & Children's Activities  
~ Entertainment at the City Park Gazebo ~ Food Stands and Business Specials ~ Chili  
Cook-off at Flood Park ~ 4<sup>th</sup> Annual PARK TO PARK PUMPKIN RUN on the T-Bone Trail  
From Brayton City Park to Exira City Park ~ Contact 712-268-2252 for details.

**October**

**4<sup>th</sup> 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL FALL AUDUBON COMMUNITY GARAGE SALE** ~ 7:00 AM to 1:00 PM  
~ Everything you ever wanted! ~ Contact 712-563-3780 for details.

**5<sup>th</sup> NATHANIEL HAMLIN PARK FALL FESTIVAL** ~ 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM ~ One Mile South of Audubon ~ Come for Lunch ~ Tour the Audubon County Farm Historical Museum, Little Red School House, Blacksmith's Shop ~ View the huge Cattle Industry Mural by Cam Ross ~ Children's Games ~ Musical Entertainment ~ Bargain Barn Open ~ Contact 712-563-2516 for details.

***Audubon County Endowment Fund Grants***

Just a reminder, September 1<sup>st</sup> is the due date for the Audubon County Endowment Grant application for non-profit groups.

You can go to [www.auduboncounty.com](http://www.auduboncounty.com) and go under County Information click the Endowment Fund button then click on common grant application for details.