THE OHIO BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION INITIATIVE

TASK FORCE COORDINATOR WORKSHOP

MODULE 2 - David Civittolo, OSU Extension, Medina County
In Ohio today, the catch phrase is economic development

Whether it’s alternative fuels (Governor Strickland: 25% renewable energy by the year 2025, half of the 25% must be produced within our state), or re-developing brownfields, economic development is on everyone’s mind.
• At the local level, competition exists today for businesses. It is not unheard of for a business to relocate within 50 miles of its current location

• Local communities, now more than ever, must be in touch with their tax base

• A good BR&E program will do just that
BR&E COORDINATOR

- The most important person in the process
- The conduit between the local community and The Ohio State University
- Responsible for the overall organization and management of the local program
- At times, the duties will be shared among co-coordinators
Besides OSU Extension, other (co) coordinators:

- Chamber of Commerce officials
- Local Economic Development Officer
- Utility company officials
- Local government official
  - City planner
  - Community development officer
  - The local do it all
BR&E COORDINATOR ROLES

Why do local officials want to serve in this capacity?

• Educate the public
• It’s the economy … jobs and investments
• Mining for information … how can we help?
• Develop relationships
  – Put 2 and 2 together
• Fix the red flags
• Put a face to a name
Importance of a sponsoring agency

- Defray the cost
- Available resources
- Legitimizes the project
- Community connections
- Agency receives benefits
- Cooperative arrangement with Ohio State University Extension
A strong coordinator results in a quality process with positive results; a weak coordinator will not get the desired effect of the program. In fact it may actually damage community relationships.

In the eyes of everyone involved, the coordinator is viewed as a full-time position while others are viewed as volunteers.
You may find the checklist helpful in communicating major milestones that comprise the BR&E program to Task Force members and program stakeholders. It is also useful in helping to plan your efforts and keep your BR&E program on track.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MAJOR MILESTONES</th>
<th>TARGET DATE</th>
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<tr>
<td>Constitute BR&amp;E Task Force</td>
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<td>Orient Task Force members; discuss objectives and methodology</td>
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<td>Identify targeted economic sectors and areas of focus to study</td>
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<td>Draft questionnaire</td>
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<td>Provide draft questionnaire to Task force for input</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finalize questionnaire</td>
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<td>Finalize list of businesses to be surveyed</td>
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<td>Draft communications plan</td>
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<td>Publish survey</td>
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<td>Launch program with media release</td>
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<td>Begin data collection</td>
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<td>Finalize data collection</td>
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<td>Analyze and interpret data collected</td>
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<td>Address key issues</td>
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<td>Communicate results to appropriate agencies, committees, institutions</td>
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<td>Coordinate comprehensive action plan</td>
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OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES

• Prepare the list for selection of businesses
  – Guidance from Ohio State University Extension

• Coordinate data collection

• Collect the contact information for the targeted businesses, print the questionnaires and cover letters, and mail or fax the materials

• Coordinate activities associated with business visits
• **Collect and review questionnaires.** The Coordinator is responsible for reviewing the completed questionnaires, sending thank you responses to businesses that complete a questionnaire, assessing the need for immediate action, and maintaining the business confidentiality.

• **Coordinate responses to immediate business concerns.** The Coordinator organizes a response to immediate business needs or “red flag” issues.

• **Manage the data entry and analysis process.**

• **Coordinate action planning, program assessment, and reporting.**
Dear XXX,

Thanks for agreeing to be a task force member for the BR&E program. We have scheduled a first kick off meeting for April, 20 at the XXX office. The meeting will last for no more than 2 hours.

Thanks again,

XXXXX

BR&E Coordinator
THE FIRST MEETING

• Coordinator introduces Ohio State University Extension and then explains the purpose of BR&E survey

• Discusses roles and responsibilities

• Discusses options to distribute survey

• Develops timeline

• Addresses confidentiality issues

• Hands out sign-up form
DISTRIBUTING SURVEYS

• Finalize business list

• Install software, develop questionnaire

• Send notice to business participants

Mr. Allen,

Thank you for taking the time to participate in the xxx County Business Retention and Expansion Survey. This is just a reminder that XXX Manufacturing’s business visit is scheduled for 9:45 a.m., Thursday, May XX. Your visitation team includes XXX, title of person and David Civitolo, Ohio State University Extension, Medina County. Please allow 1 hour for the visit.

Again, thank you for your time and participation.

XXXXX
BR&E Coordinator
DISTRIBUTING SURVEYS

- Send notice to volunteers

- Distribute questionnaires
  - E-mail, face to face, faxed, etc.

- Send reminder messages
  - Gentle e-mail to all parties within 2 business days of interview

Hi Greg!

Thanks for your participation in the XXX County BR&E! This is a friendly reminder that you are scheduled to conduct a BR&E interview on XXX at XXX.

If you are listed as the first volunteer on the company background form, you will be asking the questions to the business.

If you have any questions or conflicts, please notify me as soon as possible.

Again, thank you for your time and participation.

XXXXX

BR&E Coordinator
CONDUCTING BUSINESS VISITS

• Select businesses to visit

• Assign businesses to task force/ business visitors in two man teams
  – Role playing exercise

• Complete questionnaire
  – The emergency cancellation

• Appreciation certificates

• Complete post visit worksheets
ENTER AND TABULATE DATA

• Enter response data

• Analyze and report response data
  – Review responses with task force
  – Identify and track action items
  • Plan for action worksheet
COMMUNICATE RESULTS

• Identify audiences

• Develop key messages

• Communications plan worksheet

• Press release worksheets
• Although every community does BR&E programs a little bit differently, the key to all the programs is a strong community coordinator; one that is flexible but committed to the program.

• When the survey is complete, the real work is just beginning.

• Real-life experiences as a coordinator.
What’s next?

How do you keep the momentum?

Can you become a player in economic development in your county/region?

Do you understand the importance of providing leadership to the BR&E program?

How can we help you?
Retain, expand, and attract businesses; improve infrastructure; develop partnerships; and strategically lead for your community’s future. Call the Ohio Business Retention & Expansion Initiative today.

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