

2015 CEDA AWARDS

Winners

For Communities under 5,000

Lindale, Texas

Lindale Economic Development Corporation

- The story behind the recruitment of Fed Ex Ground to build a 160,000 square foot distribution center in Lindale is the story of the importance of vision and determination—and willingness to collaborate-- in achieving economic development.
- Lindale EDC acquired land and began planning an industrial park in 2007. Staff wrote and secured an \$850,000 grant to help develop infrastructure after a power plant committed to leasing 40 acres. Half way through putting in roads, water, storm drainage, street lighting and all the rest, the power plant pulled out.
- Undaunted, Lindale EDC partnered with other local agencies and organizations to create a Tax Increment Financing District and continued to finish its infrastructure project.
- The winning of the Fed Ex Distribution Center is a testament to Lindale's determination to optimize its resources and attract new generators of jobs and tax revenue.
- Please join me in congratulating Lindale Economic Development Corporation.

For Communities 5,001- 15,000

Cullman, Alabama

Cullman Economic Development Agency

- It takes not only vision, but “true grit” to pick up and rebuild in the wake of a devastating tornado. Unfortunately, many of our communities have experienced these in the last few years. The work of many partners in the city of Cullman, including the Cullman Economic Development Agency, offers a road map for others that our judges think has real transferability.
- After the tornado in 2011, the city realized that while it had been seemingly handed a lemon, there was a golden opportunity to make lemonade.
- The city council established guidelines for the rebuilding of downtown in a way that was consistent with the city’s architectural heritage, and instituted a grant program to help downtown business owners comply.
- By partnering with businesses through the grant program, tax increment financing and tax rebates, Cullman has seen sales and property tax revenue increase and more than 1,300 jobs be created.
- While the collaboration was founded to revitalize downtown Cullman, it has in fact had three significant outcomes: the preservation of Cullman’s historic architecture to create an attractive and inviting downtown; help for Cullman’s downtown businesses and the fostering of new development, both in and around the downtown core.
- This effort not only provides hope and encouragement for other communities facing similar aftermaths, it offers a practical template for any community wanting to utilize historic preservation as a driver of economic development.

For Communities under 15,001- 40,000

Bay City, Texas

Bay City Community Development Corporation

- The story of how Bay City and rural Matagorda County were able to attract a large off-shore manufacturing company at practically the last minute—just before it decided to locate elsewhere—is an amazing tale of people pulling together and working round the clock to make the impossible come true.
- When a call came out of the blue on Tuesday, Matagorda County was told it had until Friday to come up with an 800 acre site with all the infrastructure—road, rail, power, gas, deepwater port, etc.—and all for a company it had never heard of and wasn't thinking about recruiting.
- That was just the beginning of a months-long intensive effort by a town and county that were definitely the underdog—and coming late to the game—that resulted in finally winning the game and taking the prize.
- Along the way, multiple sites had to be proposed, many owners approached and negotiated with, sales of 1031 tax exchange sites coordinated and assembled, oil and mineral rights negotiated, tax incentives proposed and worked out with a plethora of entities, city, county and school district boundaries redrawn—believe me, these people were on a mission and they let no obstacle deter them for long.
- In the end, people, organizations, agencies and communities stretched their definitions of the possible and went beyond their comfort zones for something they perceived would bring a greater good to all.
- They deserve our heartiest congratulations.

For Communities under 40,001- 100,000

Victoria, Texas

Victoria Economic Development Corporation

- We recognize Victoria, Texas today for an excellent lesson in how important it is to develop an overall strategic vision and then follow through with the tactical moves that support the vision.
- After securing a commitment from Caterpillar to build a new manufacturing facility in 2010, the Victoria Economic Development Corporation encouraged community leaders to start thinking beyond Caterpillar to the other types of businesses—in this case suppliers to Caterpillar—that might be recruited.
- Victoria went ahead with purchasing land adjacent to the Caterpillar plant to create a second business park and financed the infrastructure improvements. The Victoria EDC then targeted a specific business—Ken Garner Manufacturing—and reached out to begin marketing the advantages of its shovel-ready site.
- Winning the location of the Caterpillar supplier to Victoria was the culmination of years of planning and marketing. It has not only had the direct impact of creating 100 jobs, but has had significant secondary benefits in terms of increased demand for local goods and services, retail, hotel and housing.
- Perhaps most significantly, Victoria College has begun construction of a new Emerging Technology Complex located in the new business park. As a neighbor of both Caterpillar and Ken Garner Manufacturing, the new training facility is a clear indication that Victoria is ready to meet the current and future training needs of new and existing business and industry.
- Congratulations to the Victoria EDC for this well-deserved award.

For Communities over 100,000

Shenandoah Valley, Virginia

Shenandoah Valley Partnership – Agri-tourism Program

- Our final award today highlights the immense value of regional partnerships, clearly demonstrating how collaboration can achieve economies of scale and bring benefits that individual localities could not achieve on their own.
- We are recognizing the Shenandoah Valley for its “Fields of Gold” program, designed to promote agritourism throughout its eight counties and five cities.
- The program only started in 2011, but has already provided a case study in how regional entities—in this case local governments, economic development and tourism agencies, state agencies and agribusiness and the farming community—can come together around a shared vision.
- The vision was to protect and enhance the region’s agriculture as part of our cultural heritage and to leverage it as a catalyst for tourism—specifically agritourism that capitalizes on the growing interest in locally sourced food, farm-to-table eating experiences and visits to wineries, breweries, orchards and farms.
- The partnership surveyed and mapped existing businesses, conducted economic impact analyses, built partnerships, hosted workshops, conducted outreach and developed a marketing and business plan.
- The creation of “Fields of Gold” as a brand for the region’s “farm trail” and as an umbrella over a wide array of activities has created a strong identity for the region. The partnership also nurtures new and existing agribusiness through education, workshops and an agritourism business tool kit housed on its Web site.
- There’s much, much more and I encourage you all to take a look at the Web site and marketing materials available on this impressive initiative.
- Please join me in congratulating the Shenandoah Valley Partnership.