

The Role of Economic Development in Communities: A Public Information Series on the Value of Economic Development

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Article 2: EDO Structures, Part 2 of 2

By: Vince Yokom, Director

Waller County Economic Development Partnership

The first part of this article outlined the two basic structures of Economic Development Organizations (EDOs), which are sales tax based economic development corporations and the public private partnership. The WCEDP is a public-private partnership where we provide contract services to the county and also receive funding from private partners. The previous article also discussed that having a public-private EDO offers wider latitude for EDO activities and, in the case of the WCEDP, allows for a broad base of local involvement and representation. This article we will look a little closer at the public-private structure and why it has several advantages.

The first advantage is that there is more latitude in the

role of the public-private structure. Unlike a state 4A or 4B corporation, the public-private structure has no legislated scope or restrictions on how it operates. It is not regulated

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by the local government code. To that end, the local community can define the role of the public-private organization. Generally the public-private structure involves a wider base of participants. In the case of the WCEDP, we have board members from every city in Waller County that has an economic development program. Additionally, each chamber of commerce can assign a representative, each member of commissioners’ court has a representative, and there is a representative from Prairie View A&M University. A broad base of participation means that all communities know what’s going on throughout the process of marketing and qualifying projects.

The second advantage is that the public-private structure can leverage non-tax dollars through memberships. This means that additional revenue is used to the benefit of the community. Additionally, members bring valuable experience and human resources to the organization and community. As a result, private resources are used to help support local initiatives. A great example of this happened when members of the WCEDP provided technical engineering expertise to help update our subdivision ordinances a few years back. The county received several thousand dollars of free engineering services and the start of a sustained subdivision ordinance. And, in 2012 and 2013, private funding exceeded county funding.

Stay tuned for the next part in this series on economic development. If you have any questions or feedback, please feel free to email me at vyokom@wallercounty.org.

About the Waller County Economic Development Partnership (WCEDP): The WCEDP is a Texas non-profit corporation with an IRS 501 (C) 6 tax designation. We are non-political and have a 24-member board, which includes representation from every community in Waller County that has an economic development program. To learn more, visit www.wallercounty.org.

Mission: The WCEDP is organized to operate a charitable service center to foster increased, environmentally balanced business commerce, positive growth, and overall cooperation and coordination for all communities throughout Waller County, Texas.