

Williamsport/Lycoming Chamber of Commerce

2016 – 2018

Strategic Plan



Williamsport/Lycoming Chamber of Commerce Strategic Plan 2016-2018

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***Note:** Under each of the four Strategies are listed Objectives/Action Items with target dates that signify when it is anticipated that specific action item will be accomplished. Under the heading “Responsibility”, we have listed those organizations we believe will be needed to successfully complete each Objective/Action Item. Under the heading “Resource Considerations”, we have listed best guess estimates on how much we will spend and what, if any other, resources will be required.*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

When we last did a major rewrite of our Strategic Plan, Lycoming County was experiencing the high of the Marcellus Shale Natural Gas boom. At that time, while we were poised to capitalize on it and we did, we also developed a Plan that recognized the nature of the industry and the fact that we could not and should not neglect our legacy companies. That thought process proved correct. Now the Natural Gas Industry has slowed and, while we are confident it will ramp up in the not too distant future, our local economy is still strong enough to withstand a stubbornly slow national and world economy. Thousands of our residents are gainfully employed while others need full time family-sustaining careers. We must utilize our many assets including, among others, location, diversity of economy, excellent educational facilities, and a committed business community to making certain every resident who wants a good job and is ready, willing and able to not only work, but to commit themselves to being an exceptional member of the workforce, has a job. The private sector drives job creation and, while government allies are important to our local economy, in the final analysis it is the private sector that must create the jobs necessary to have a successful local economy while our partners in government assist by adopting policies that promote development and job creation.

We are the only countywide organization dedicated entirely to the economic well-being of the business community and the people those businesses employ. Ours is an important job with a variety of challenges, but with great effort and cooperation from our members, volunteers and partners it can be accomplished. Our professional staff, guided by committed volunteers, is intent upon being successful in helping to grow and maintain a local economy that is attractive to businesses of all sizes – thus creating a large variety of family-sustaining jobs.

Every program and project in this plan is important and every one of the organizations and committees under our umbrella play an important role in what we are trying to accomplish. Many of the plans, programs and projects contained in this plan are interconnected. And, while some might be able to stand alone, together they build a synergy that can carry our organization and community forward in an effective and efficient manner. Recently we added a new organization, the Economic and Community Growth Corporation of Lycoming County. A registered 501(c)(3), the ECGC will allow us to expand our work and influence into areas that we were not equipped to handle before. While the organization has not been busy to-date, it will become a major force in our community over the course of the next several years.

Like any good Plan, this one is flexible and can be adapted should conditions in our community change. However, some programmatic priorities that stand out at this time are:

1. Maintaining a balance between the development and reliance upon our local economy's energy sector and our legacy industries –especially manufacturers – is critical to economic viability and stability.
2. A clean and safe environment is not only important to our health, it is important to Lycoming County's economy because of the important role tourism and the visitors' industry plays here.
3. Our cultural traditions and our heritage are important to our future. Whether it be our legacy as the birthplace of Little League and the home of the Little League World

Series or our proud history of being an industrial community surrounded by a beautiful countryside, we must move our community forward without destroying the traditions that have defined us for generations.

4. Infrastructure that will allow for growth remains a key issue. Whether it is safe highways, improved air service, industrial infrastructure, inexpensive energy, or a technologically sound communication infrastructure, we must make certain that our job producers have access to each of them so they can compete.
5. Throughout this Plan are objectives that aim at either improving or maintaining our quality of life. That objective is paramount in our overall efforts. Cultural activities, health care and housing are three areas that offer opportunities for engagement.
6. Leadership is critical to our success as an organization and a community and we will refocus our efforts on making sure new generations of community leaders are available to pick up the reins in the years ahead.

The Strategic Plan outlined in this document represents our goals and objectives for the next three years. The actual specifics of the programs and activities that will be implemented to accomplish all that it contains will be part of our annual Plans of Action developed and adopted over the life of this Plan.

Process: The Strategic Plan was developed over the course of the past year and the process started with a comprehensive membership survey. The results of the survey were analyzed by our staff, Executive Committee and Board of Directors. Following the survey each Board member selected one of the four divisions to work on. Meetings were held with each of the four division committees (Economic, Community, Membership and Organizational Development). Strengths and weaknesses were discussed and potential program areas as well. This Plan is a direct result of what was explored at each of those meetings and several projects or programs discussed will most certainly be part of one or more of our Plans of Action.

Our mission, vision and values statements were not changed and they will play an important part in the implementation of this Plan and everything we do will be measured against the principles laid out in them.

FOCUS

As with any good Plan, it contains new items, revised items and eliminates some contained in our past Strategic Plan. However, the focus of this Plan and this organization has not changed. Our focus will always be to work to improve our business climate, optimize our assets and minimize or correct any deficiencies all with the goal of strengthening our community and working towards the goal of having available family-sustaining jobs for all who want them. Our members and staff will continue to work with all willing partners who share our vision of a diverse and strong local economy built upon a strong business community and a quality of life the equal to anywhere.

We are always looking to strengthen our existing partners and seek out new partners because, no matter how hard we work or how good we are at what we do, we cannot do it alone. To have a successful community, we must have others working side-by-side with us. The cooperation of other organizations and political bodies as well as elected and appointed officials is important to our chances for success. When necessary, the Chamber will lead and when appropriate, the Chamber will take a supportive role.

All of our organizations will continue to work on a countywide basis to foster economic growth. We will work for and with all communities because all communities are important to our success. Lycoming County and all its residents deserve a bright future. Working together we can provide that.

The Mission, Vision and Values

Mission Statement

To preserve, protect, and defend the free enterprise system through promoting a good business climate and quality of life for the businesses and people of Lycoming County.

Vision Statement

To be a region of superior economic prosperity while sustaining our excellent quality of life.

Values Statement

The Williamsport/Lycoming Chamber of Commerce is committed to excellent service, integrity, diversity and equal opportunity for all.

The Strategies

Strategy I

Economic Development

The Chamber will work towards retaining and increasing the number and quality of employment opportunities in Lycoming County and create an aggressive commerce-friendly environment that includes developing and marketing our assets, developing our workforce, and increasing and improving our tourism and visitors' programs.

Strategy II

Community Development

The Chamber will foster an enhanced quality of life and pride in our community through existing and new alliances to support economic growth throughout Lycoming County.

Strategy III

Membership Development

We will support and expand our membership by providing valued-added benefits and services that are responsive to the needs of our existing members and attractive to prospective members as well as creating new avenues and opportunities for members to stay in touch and interact more often with the Chamber, its affiliates and staff.

Strategy IV

Organizational Development

To be successful, we must have a strong organization. Therefore, we will assure a high quality staff, appropriate staffing levels, and stable financial resources for its normal operating activities and organizational structure to meet the mission of the Chamber.

Strategy I: Economic Development

The Chamber will work towards retaining and increasing the number and quality of employment opportunities in Lycoming County and create an aggressive commerce-friendly environment that includes developing and marketing our assets, developing our workforce, and increasing and improving our tourism and visitors' programs.

Objectives/Action Items:

- 1. Develop a multiphase and multiyear Economic Development Marketing Campaign that emphasizes in-person contact, trade missions, and participation in internal and externally oriented marketing efforts.**

Timeline: Campaign development by May 1, 2016. Campaign after May 1, 2016 ending before December 31, 2016.

Responsibility: ECGC, Chamber Board, IPC Board, Staff.

Critical Success Factors: Reaching a predetermined fundraising goal to cover a five year period. (Estimated minimum need of \$150,000/year).

Resource Considerations: Minor campaign expenses, volunteer & staff time.

- 2. Develop “local incentives” for developers/businesses looking to expand or locate to Lycoming County.**

Timeline: December 31, 2016

Responsibility: IPC Board, Staff.

Critical Success Factors: Creation and implementation of local level incentive(s).

Resource Considerations: Volunteer/Staff time/possible financial investment.

- 3. Continue to work with appropriate private and public sector organizations and agencies to develop the infrastructure necessary to grow the development of the natural gas industry as well as infrastructure needs for all businesses and industries.**

Timeline: Ongoing

Responsibility: IPC Board, Staff.

Critical Success Factors: Availability of an updated, safe and modern system of infrastructure that supports economic and community development.

Resource Considerations: Volunteer and Staff time.

4. Work to develop incentives for companies who utilize Pennsylvania Natural Gas especially for manufacturing processes.

Timeline: Ongoing

Responsibility: Chamber and IPC Boards, Legislative Action Committee.

Critical Success Factors: Development of incentives for using Pennsylvania Natural Gas that helps retain manufacturing jobs and bring new manufacturing jobs to Lycoming County and Pennsylvania.

Resource Considerations: Volunteer and Staff time.

5. Continue to recognize tourism as an integral part of economic development and promote its growth through the development of additional destinations and attractions including the expansion and enhancement of the Bases Loaded project.

Timeline: Ongoing

Responsibility: Visitors Bureau, IPC, Chamber and Staff (Lycoming County Commissioners).

Critical Success Factors: Tourism-related programs developed and implemented aimed at increasing the understanding of the importance of tourism and visitors to our region and the positive impact it has on the local economy.

Resource Considerations: Maintenance of current tourism funding.

6. Continue to investigate and develop ways for the Industrial Properties Corporation to have an impact on our local economy and job creation.

Timeline: October, 2016

Responsibility: IPC and Chamber Boards, Staff.

Critical Success Factors: A long-term solution to determine the ongoing role of the IPC.

Resource Consideration: Volunteer and Staff time.

7. Work proactively with all local governments to develop a better understanding of the Chamber, its affiliated organizations and the work we do.

Timeline: Ongoing

Responsibility: Chamber Staff, Organization Volunteers.

Critical Success Factors: An improved working relationship with local government bodies (Councils, Supervisors, Authorities) and a better understanding by their members as to the work of the Chamber and its affiliated organizations.

Resource Considerations: Staff time for preparation and meetings.

Strategy II: Community Development

Foster an enhanced quality of life and pride in our community through existing and new alliances to support economic growth throughout Lycoming County.

Objectives/Action Items:

- 1. Work with the County Commissioners and Planning Commission to continually monitor and, when appropriate, make changes to the County Comprehensive Plan.**

Timeline: Ongoing

Responsibility: County Commissioners, Planning Commission, Chamber, ECGC

Critical Success Factors: Continued improvement in reality and perception of our community as being business friendly and progressive especially with site selectors and developers.

- 2. Enhance and promote education, entertainment, cultural resources, healthcare, transportation, and environment to support growth and pride in our community.**

Timeline: Ongoing

Responsibility: Organization-wide including Staff.

Critical Success Factors: Development and implementation of a multifaceted campaign that targets our traditional assets and values such as Little League Baseball, our small town persona and our unique north central Pennsylvania culture and traditions.

Resource Considerations: To be determined by any special programs established and dollar consideration needs to be determined.

- 3. Review and analyze the need for new leadership in the community and determine the best way to ensure new, well informed leaders emerge from across all spectrums of the community.**

Timeline: September, 2016

Responsibility: Chamber Board, Leadership Lycoming, ECGC and Staff.

Critical Success Factors: Short term: A plan outlining the future of Leadership Lycoming and how the Chamber will identify and engage new community leadership.

Resource Considerations: Minimal for investigation; ongoing support for an annual program.

4. Investigate avenues for the organization to deal with distressed buildings, neighborhoods and the need for improved housing stock.

Timeline: September, 2016

Responsibility: Primarily ECGC with IPC, Staff.

Critical Success Factors: A determination as to whether or not we should become involved on a more than cursory basis in addressing the issues outlined above.

Resource Considerations: Minimal monetary investment, Staff and Volunteer time.

5. Work with the local Workforce Investment Board, CareerLink, school districts, local colleges and other like-minded organizations on workforce development efforts especially for our veterans, older workforce and underemployed.

Timeline: Ongoing

Responsibility: ECGC Board, Education Committee.

Critical Success Factors: Development of programs aimed to reduce unemployment and underemployment.

Resource Considerations: TBD - based on programs.

6. Promote a better understanding throughout the community at large of the positive impact the Chamber, its affiliates and programs/projects make.

Timeline: Ongoing

Responsibility: Organization-wide.

Critical Success Factors: Improved image and relationship of our organization.

Resource Considerations: Minimal budgetary item.

7. Work with other business-related organizations throughout Lycoming County to foster cooperative programs to create and/or maintain strong vibrant small business clusters and attractive downtown and neighborhood business districts.

Timeline: Ongoing

Responsibility: Staff and Volunteer Committees.

Critical Success Factors: Joint programs and good business relationships.

Resource Considerations: Program dependent.

Strategy III: Membership Development

We will support and expand our membership by providing value-added benefits and services that are responsive to our existing members and are attractive to prospective members as well as creating new avenues and opportunities for members to stay in touch and interact more often with the Chamber, its affiliates and staff.

Objectives/Action Items

- 1. To provide the services and benefits necessary to support our members to grow and prosper.**

Timeline: Ongoing

Responsibility: Membership Development & Retention Committee and Staff.

Critical Success Factors: Average the implementation of at least one new value-added benefit each year.

Resource Considerations: Marketing materials.

- 2. Continue to refine our online presence to bring a quality information gathering experience to members and others visiting our various pages.**

Timeline: Ongoing

Responsibility: Staff

Critical Success Factors: Increase in page visits, likes and other ways of measuring page visits.

Resource Consideration: Budgetary considerations.

- 3. Continue and enhance our communications to our members and the community at large as to the value of the Chamber of Commerce.**

Timeline: Ongoing

Responsibility: Chamber Staff and Volunteer Leadership.

Critical Success Factors: Improved communitywide recognition of the Chamber, its affiliates, and the positive impact the organization has on the community.

Resource Considerations: Web page maintenance fees – no major new financial resources.

- 4. Reach out to areas of Lycoming County that are underserved by the Chamber to spread our programs, our impact and maximize membership in all corners of Lycoming County.**

Timeline: December, 2016

Responsibility: Membership Development & Retention Committee, Chamber Board, and Staff

Critical Success Factors: Increase in membership in all areas of the County, increased attendance from underserved areas at Chamber events.

Resource Consideration: Budgetary considerations.

5. Provide opportunities for member involvement at all levels of the organization.

Timeline: Ongoing

Responsibility: All Committees, Boards and Staff.

Critical Success Factors: An increase in the number of members involved on committees and attendance at programs and activities.

Resource Considerations: No additional resource requirements anticipated.

6. Recognize and acknowledge our members and their contributions to our organization.

Timeline: Ongoing

Responsibility: Membership Development & Retention Committee.

Critical Success Factors: Improved member recognition program.

Resource Considerations: No significant budgetary impact.

7. Develop ways to make joining and accessing the Chamber easier.

Timeline: Ongoing

Responsibility: Membership Development & Retention Committee and Staff.

Critical Success Factors: Increase membership and participation.

Resource Considerations: Program dependent.

8. Gather information that assists in meeting our members' evolving needs.

Timeline: March, 2017

Responsibility: Staff

Critical Success Factors: A better understanding of our members, who they are and what their needs are as well as specific data supporting that understanding.

Resource Considerations: Minimal financial costs.

9. Develop and advocate positions on key legislative and regulatory issues facing the Lycoming County business community and job creation.

Timeline: Ongoing

Responsibility: Legislative Action Committee and Staff.

Critical Success Factors: Issuing of positions on key legislation and regulations and transmitting those positions to appropriate government officials, our membership and the general public.

Resource Considerations: \$2500 to \$5000/year.

Strategy IV: Organizational Development

To be successful, we must have a strong organization. Therefore, we will assure and retain high quality staff, appropriate staffing levels, and stable financial resources for the normal operating activities, and organizational structure to meet the mission and vision of the Chamber.

Objectives/Action Items

- 1. Routinely evaluate and adjust overall organizational structure as it relates to the mission, vision and values of the organization.**

Timeline: Annually

Responsibility: Governance Committee, Board of Directors and President/CEO.

Critical Success Factors: Continued effective and efficient organization.

Resource Considerations: None anticipated.

- 2. Provide the staff training necessary to assure the optimization of organizational competency and individual job satisfaction.**

Timeline: Ongoing

Responsibility: President/CEO and Executive Committee.

Critical Success Factors: A well-trained, results-oriented professional staff.

Resource Considerations: Availability of training funds.

- 3. Annually review and update the Strategic Plan.**

Timeline: Annually

Responsibility: Board of Directors and President/CEO.

Critical Success Factors: New, innovative approaches to programs, benefits and activities.

Resource Considerations: Budget, volunteers and business community acceptance.

- 4. Annually review our accounting and finance policies to assure a fiscally sound budget process and longtime financial security.**

Timeline: Ongoing

Responsibility: Board of Directors, Accounting, Policy & Oversight Committee (APOC), Senior Staff.

Critical Success Factors: Balanced budgets and maintenance of a viable reserve fund.

Resource Considerations: Normal budget considerations.