Williamsport/Lycoming Chamber of Commerce

2019 - 2021

Strategic Plan
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2019-2021

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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

The environment we work in is ever changing and as a result, the Chamber must be ready and willing to change with it. We believe the Strategic Plan contained in these pages is capable of allowing the Chamber to adapt when needed but to also carry out its core function of working for a better economy, business climate and quality of life for our businesses and their employees. 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.

We have added some new strategic initiatives and removed some that either no longer applied or were more tactical in nature and better suited for the annual Plan of Action. 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.

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. Workforce Development is critical to the success of our employers. Without a strong, well-trained workforce, our businesses cannot hope to be successful over the long run. Therefore, we all must not only continue our work in this area, but expand upon it and seek out even more partners and innovative ideas to solve this problem.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. Infrastructure that will allow for growth remains a key issue. Whether it is safe highways, improved air service, industrial infrastructure, access to inexpensive energy – especially making natural gas extracted in Pennsylvania available to all Pennsylvanian businesses and residents, or a technologically sound communication infrastructure, we must make certain that our job producers have access to each of them so they can compete.
6. Maintaining and improving our quality of life is important and we must be successful in that objective if we are to be successful in meeting our overall goals and objectives. Cultural activities, health care and housing are three areas that offer opportunities for engagement as is the need to “sell” living in our Lycoming County communities to potential new residents.

7. Leadership is critical to our success as an organization and a community and we will strengthen 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 by reaching out to members for their input. 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). In addition to the four division meetings, a fifth meeting was conducted with the members of the Visitors Bureau Operating Committee to garner their input into the Economic Development Division where the Tourism program is housed. 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

No organization can long succeed without a good plan that is well thought out and implemented. The 2019-2021 is such a plan. It is also flexible as all good plans should be. As the organization moves forward it often becomes necessary to adjust your plan or the areas of concentration. 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 partnerships 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.
Mission, Vision and Values

Mission Statement

To preserve, protect, and defend the free enterprise system through promoting a vibrant 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.
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 multi-year Economic Development Marketing Campaign that emphasizes in-person contact, trade missions, and participation in internal and externally oriented marketing efforts.

   **Timeline:** March 2019
   **Responsibility:** ECGC, Chamber Board, ECGC Board, IPC Board, Staff.
   **Critical Success Factors:** Development of a marketing campaign and work with our affiliates to develop an economic develop funding strategy.
   **Resource Considerations:** Minor campaign expenses, Volunteer & Staff time.

2. Advocate for the development of incentives for companies who utilize Pennsylvania Natural Gas, especially for manufacturing processes.

   **Timeline:** Ongoing
   **Responsibility:** Chamber, 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.

3. 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.
4. Continually work to improve our branding as a destination for tourists and other visitors by building off of our assets both manmade and natural.

**Timeline:** Ongoing  
**Responsibility:** VBOC & Staff.  
**Critical Success Factors:** Improved recognition of our region through branding identification.  
**Resource Considerations:** Potential for budgetary implications.

5. Expand membership on the VBOC to be more inclusive of private sector outdoor recreational businesses.

**Timeline:** June 2019  
**Responsibility:** VBOC, Staff and Chamber Board of Directors.  
**Critical Success Factors:** Broader private sector outdoor recreational representation on VBOC.

6. Work proactively with governments at all levels to foster 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. Engage real estate agents and large employers who bring people into the area to the importance of selling the advantages of living in Lycoming County.

   **Timeline:** Program development and implementation by June, 2019.
   **Responsibility:** ECGC Board and Staff.
   **Critical Success Factors:** An increase in the professional population residing in Lycoming County.
   **Resource Considerations:** Budgetary implications to be determined by developed program.

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, 2019
   **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. 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, underemployed and recovering population.

**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.

5. 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.

6. 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. Create an annual program or initiative to provide the members of the Board of Directors of all our affiliates the information they need to become fully aware of all of the organizations’ programs and activities so they will be better able to inform others of the work we do.

   **Timeline:** Ongoing  
   **Responsibility:** Staff and Executive Committee.  
   **Critical Success Factors:** Increased awareness of what we do by our volunteers.  
   **Resource Considerations:** Minimal budget impact.

2. 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.

3. 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, presence of digital advertising.  
   **Resource Considerations:** Budgetary considerations.

4. 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 community-wide 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.

5. 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, 2019
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 Considerations: Budgetary considerations.

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

Timeline: Ongoing
Responsibility: Board, All Committees and Staff.
Critical Success Factors: An increase in numbers of involved members on committees and at events.
Resource Considerations: No additional considerations anticipated.

7. 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. Develop a new operating structure that allows the Industrial Properties Corporation to remain a viable part of the organization; including a new Board structure.

   **Timeline:** March, 2019  
   **Responsibility:** Chamber, IPC & ECGC Board and Staff.  
   **Critical Success Factors:** A new, streamlined IPC governance strategy.  
   **Resource Consideration:** None anticipated

2. Develop and adopt hybrid funding streams that raises necessary funds to sustain and grow the entire organization.

   **Timeline:** April, 2019  
   **Responsibility:** Chamber, ECGC, & IPC Board and Staff.  
   **Critical Success Factor:** The development and adoption of a new, comprehensive organization funding strategy.  
   **Resource Consideration:** Unknown

3. Conduct a review of current staffing needs, levels and positions.

   **Timeline:** March, 2019  
   **Responsibility:** President/CEO, Executive Committee and Board.  
   **Critical Success Factors:** Report submitted to Board for review and potential adoption.  
   **Resource Consideration:** Indeterminate

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. 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), and Senior Staff.
Critical Success Factors: Balanced budgets and maintenance of a viable reserve fund.
Resource Considerations: Normal budget considerations.