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FEDA announces strategic priorities through 2011

FAIRFIELD, (Iowa) – The Fairfield Economic Development Association on Friday released its 2009-2011 strategic plan to the public. The plan, titled “FEDA Strategic Priorities, 2009-2011,” contains seven priorities designated for particular attention and concentration for the area’s primary economic development group. Contributing heavily to the identification of the priorities were the results of the Fairfield Existing Business Initiative survey, said Pat Doyle, FEDA President.

“You’ll see in our plan a pronounced focus on education and workforce development, legislative advocacy and existing industry expansion and retention,” he said. “Those were all themes which ran throughout the results of the Initiative: Fairfield employers have major concerns relating to the availability of a skilled and educated workforce and about the climate for doing business in our state.”

The seven strategic priorities outlined in the document are:

I. Internal Affairs

“FEDA, though the support of a vibrant membership structure, will continue to serve as Jefferson County’s primary economic development engine as well as its most dynamic and accessible provider of community and demographic information to all while maintaining and expanding a robust menu of membership benefits available to its sustaining members.”

II. Existing Obligations

“FEDA will carry out its job creation and other duties as outlined in community strategic plans endorsed by FEDA, including the Fairfield 2012 Strategic Plan and the Fairfield Go Green Sustainability Plan, work to foment strategic relationships with additional groups and projects, and entertain future assignment requests.”

III. Community Marketing

“FEDA will expand its marketing menu to include more polished and vigorous Fairfield Community Quick Reference and other publications and will expand its marketing reach through targeted mailings, trade shows and continued cultivation of regional, state and national relationships. FEDA will improve the depth and quality of in-house available commercial buildings and sites information and will work to greatly expand efficiency and user visits to GrowFairfield.com, its primary marketing engine.”

IV. Advocacy

“FEDA will expand and formalize legislative advocacy programming and work in concert with the Fairfield Area Chamber of Commerce Government Affairs Committee- delivering an annual endorsement/addendum to the Committee’s Legislative Agenda-, the Iowa Association of Business and Industry and Professional Developers of Iowa. FEDA will survey its membership annually to identify legislative priorities and issues of concern and will periodically develop positions on emerging issues and communicate them to the membership and community at large.”

V. Downtown & Industrial Development

“FEDA will work with the Chamber, the City of Fairfield and other groups to develop strategies to address the physical condition and aesthetic appeal of downtown storefronts and signage. FEDA will conduct an in-depth study to evaluate Fairfield’s available buildings and buildable sites inventory and will conduct further research and analysis relating to future industrial site development in Fairfield and will continue to market its development land inventory.”

VI. Education/Workforce Development

“FEDA will work to strike strategic relationships with the Fairfield Community School District, the Maharishi School, Indian Hills Community College and other educational institutions to address worker training and availability issues identified in the 2009 Fairfield Existing Business Initiative. FEDA will be a conduit between the business and education communities as efforts to encourage collaboration between the business and education communities, including the 2009 launch of Project Lead the Way in area school districts.”

VII. Existing Industry Retention & Expansion

“FEDA will maintain robust dialogue with existing employers and will in 2009 conduct a staff-driven phone and Internet survey of existing employers to supplement the findings of the 2009 Fairfield Existing Business Initiative and will in 2010 undertake a new existing industry study, surveying and interviewing executives from Fairfield’s 40 largest employers to identify threats, opportunities and business trends in the community. FEDA will deploy information- aggregate and individual- gathered through survey efforts in designing policies and legislative recommendations designed to encourage retention and expansion of existing industry.”

Brent Willett, FEDA executive director, said, “What we learned from the Existing Business Initiative as well as our experience in creating new jobs and wealth in Fairfield over the period of our last two-year plan really is what informed the drafting of this new plan of action. With our last plan taking us through May of this year, the document we’re sharing now is our playbook, 2009-2011.”

Added Craig Foss, FEDA Vice President & Treasurer, “the development of FEDA’s 2009-2011 Strategic Priorities is another example of FEDA’s proactive approach to economic development in the Fairfield area. I am really proud of the board and Executive Director Brent Willett for their efforts to invest the personal time necessary to develop this plan.”

Doyle cited existing business retention and expansion and the development of community marketing collateral- including the launch of GrowFairfield.com- as two of FEDA’s most notable accomplishments resulting from its previous strategic plan.

“The plan we’ve been operating under for the last two years put heavy emphasis on ramping up our marketing efforts to position Fairfield to better compete for job- and wealth-creation projects as well as on the importance of working with existing businesses and entrepreneurs already in Fairfield who are doing business or ready to do business.”

Doyle indicated that each critical objective of the previous plan had been met, “and we are excited to get going on this one.”

A copy strategic plan can be downloaded from the FEDA web site at GrowFairfield.com.

FEDA, established in 1979, works closely with local community development organizations, financial institutions and businesses, as well as agencies and elected officials in local, county, state and federal government to help facilitate economic growth in Fairfield by providing assistance in locating financing for business and community development projects, grant administration and land development. The non-profit organization is governed by a seven-member Board of Directors.