

Economic Development Strategic Plan

Hale County Texas



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Hale County, Texas

October – 2012

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Summary

Communities cannot control the national or state economy. But they can create programs, which will enhance the condition of their local economy. Throughout the United States, thousands of communities have established economic development programs. Some are very aggressive, others passive in their effort.

The key to the success of a local economic development program is to have a plan which creates an economic environment which enables quality economic growth.

Hale County is also known as the Plainview, TX Micropolitan area. In 2012 POLICOM ranked Plainview 434th among the 576 Micropolitan areas for “economic strength.”

Over the last twenty years, Hale County has had very slow growth in the size of its economy. The rate of growth has been unfortunately similar to the ten weakest Micropolitan areas in the United States.

Economic Baseline projections for the area show that if the county does not create new primary jobs, the economy will have little or no growth by 2030 and will decline in quality. The overall “economic quality of life” for the residents of the area will be lower than what it is in 2012.

To prevent the projections from occurring and to improve the overall economy, three economic growth goals have been created – Slow, Medium, and Aggressive.

The goals are based upon the formation of new primary industry jobs which will pay a wage high enough to raise the overall quality of the economy.

In order to achieve any of the economic growth scenarios, the Hale County community needs to implement an aggressive economic development program.

This *Economic Development Strategic Plan* (Plan) identifies a series of activities which the community needs to initiate and achieve in order to create the new primary jobs identified in the *Economic Development Goal Study*.

At the Hale County Economic Development Planning Summit held April 26, 2012, participants identified the following as the five most important things the community must do to improve its local economy:

1. Create a community owned industrial park.
2. Improve the quality of the area workforce through training and other programs.
3. Create an incentive program for existing and new primary employers.
4. Increase funding for the economic development program.
5. Create a positive community attitude toward developing the economy.

To be successful in building a strong, dynamic economy, a community must review its geographic - economic characteristics to determine its strengths and weaknesses. From this review, it can reinforce the strengths and correct as much as possible the weak issues.

This Plan identifies a series of “Action Items” and “Tasks” which the community must do to improve the economy and reach the economic goal. These following are the most important:

Real Estate

Action Item – Industrial Property: The Hale County community must create, through private or public investment, an abundant supply of inexpensive, improved - approved industrial real estate for use by primary employers.

- The community should secure and develop at least one or possibly two industrial areas which are reserved for primary employers. At a minimum, the community should always maintain an inventory of approximately 150 industrial acres which are “building ready” with a minimum of 50 contiguous acres.
- Land for primary employers should be strategically located at interstate highway exits.
- The county and city should cooperate with private developers as much as possible in the development of privately owned industrial areas. Consideration should be given to providing “favorable treatment” to a company interested in locating on private sector land. In essence, the policy should be to use up the private sector inventory first, if possible.

Task: Within six months, a full inventory of all vacant industrial zoned property should be completed to determine the amount of ready- build acreage in the county. The inventory should include the number of acres and the current development status.

Task: Within one year, the community should identify property and create a plan for the purchase and future development of at least 500 industrial acres to be reserved for primary employers. The development of at least 150 acres should commence by the end of this one year period.

Action Step: Construct a speculative industrial building to induce a new primary employer to move to Hale County.

Task: Within one year, the community should conduct a market study which examines the market demand for the size of a speculative building. The community should then identify a building site upon which a community owned speculative building can be constructed.

Task: Within two years, the community should secure funding and construct a speculative building and market it to potential primary employers.

Workforce

Action Item: Educational attainment.

Within ten years, the community needs to reach a high school graduate level commensurate to the state average.

Task: Within one year, the Community will devise a plan to encourage all youth to complete high school and to provide incentives for all adults to enroll and complete a high school equivalency program.

Action Item: General work habits.

The community will create an educational program which teaches basic worker skills. Some of the issues which need to be addressed are: 1) fluency in the English language, both written and spoken, 2) basic arithmetic, 3) general worker safety, 4) and proper employee work habits (punctuality and reliability).

The curriculum should be created based upon input from existing employers in the community. An individual who completes the program can be designated an “employable worker” by the community. This will provide evidence to employers the low skilled workers will be able to graduate into a higher skilled job.

The program can be offered by any educational resource in the county as determined by the community.

Task: Within one year, the community will design and fund a “basic skills education program” which provides a certification for those who complete the course work.

Task: Within two years, the “basic skills education program” shall be implemented.

Action Item – Worker Training: The Hale County community needs have ready a comprehensive worker training system which has the ability to create and fund customized training programs for qualified primary businesses. The training program should be offered equally to existing companies and businesses being recruited.

Task: On an ongoing basis the community will have a program which will provide specialized worker training for the existing primary employers in the area and for new companies locating to the area.

Task: Within one year the community will identify facilities which can be utilized for special company “set-up” training in which the company’s equipment can be installed for hands on training by future employees.

Education

Action Item – Higher Education

- **Wayland Baptist University:** The community should maintain its good relationship with the University.

Task: All possible means should be explored to enable the growth of the University and the assistance by the University in the economic development effort.

- **Reese Technology Center:** The economic development organization should become acquainted with the research companies housed at the Reese Technology Center and other university research which is being conducted.

Task: The research companies at the Reese Technology Center should be marketed by Hale County as a potential location for application of the research.

Action Item: South Plains College Plainview Center and its parent South Plains College should be woven directly into the economic development program Hale County.

Task: On a regular basis, the community and South Plains College should discuss means to integrate the academic and training programs into the economic development program.

Action Item – Public Schools: The public school system should embrace the issues addressed under Workforce regarding the hiring of minor children and encouraging young adults to complete high school.

Community Education

Action Item – Community Education:

- Several presentations to the community regarding the need for and the content of the Plan should be given by the leadership of the community. At these presentations, representatives of all branches of government, the educational system, and the business community should be participants, demonstrating a unity of effort.
- Copies of the Economic Development Plan and all supporting studies should be made available to the general public.
- A truncated, simple brochure detailing the major features of the Plan should be mass produced and distributed community wide.
- Community forums regarding the economy and the status of the implementation of the Plan should be held on a regular basis.

Task: Within six months of the adoption of the Plan, the community will be provided with a series of presentations regarding the need for and the content of the Plan. Included in the presentations will be a discussion of future funding sources to finance the program activities.

Task: On an annual basis, the entire community will be invited to participate in a gathering to discuss the status of the implementation of the Plan. Additionally, on a continuing basis, business and government organizations should reinforce the need for a comprehensive economic development program.

Economic Development Program

Action Item – Existing Industry Program: The Existing Industry Program needs to be expanded by identifying all primary employers in the county and aggressively assisting them in reducing their costs relative to being located in Hale County.

Task: Within six months of the adoption of the Plan, the community will inventory and build a relationship with all primary businesses in the county.

Task: On an ongoing basis, the community will address the geographic – economic issues which are negatively impacting the existing primary employers and work to cure the problem.

Task: Any incentive programs offered to a new employer to locate to the county shall be equally presented to existing companies when appropriate.

Action Item – Marketing Attraction Program: The Marketing Attraction Program should be expanded in two phases.

Task: Within six months the Plainview Hale County Economic Development Foundation will initiate an expanded marketing program pending funding.

Task: Within three months the Plainview Hale County Economic Development Foundation expand the content of the website

Task: During the second year, a comprehensive marketing plan will be created to be initiated when the community is comfortable it can deliver its “product” in a timely fashion.

Action Item – Start-Up Program: Steps for creating a Start-Up Program should be initiated.

Task: Representatives from Hale County should meet with representatives of the West Texas A&M Enterprise Center to discuss what type of joint program can be created.

Action Item - Plainview Hale County Economic Development Foundation: The community needs to provide a dedicated, consistent source of funding to the Foundation of sufficient revenue to expand the economic development program.

Task: For the next two years funding from the City of Plainview and Hale County should be increased to enable the employ of an intern(s) and to expand the Marketing Program. In addition to the current programs, staff time will be directed to addressing the geographic economic issues identified in the Plan.

Task: During the second year, the community will identify a dependable source of funding to expand the economic development program including the Marketing Program.

Action Item – Business Incentives: The community needs create a business incentives program which includes multiple options based upon the economic impact of a company.

Task: Within the first year, the community will create an economic development incentives matrix which will identify the incentives which are offered by the community based upon specific criteria.

Task: During the planning process for the development of industrial real estate or a speculative building, the community needs to anticipate the property might be granted to a company at a discounted price, with proper recourse to the community.

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Introduction

In some communities...

Local governments have the financial resources to provide not only excellent police and fire departments, but also money to create parks and recreation programs, well-maintained streets and sewers, and necessary capital projects, even though taxes are low. Local government and community leaders spend time planning for a dynamic future, not burdened with how they will cope with the needs of the present.

The downtown is clean, crisp, and vibrant, and is the center of community activity. Neighborhoods are safe, full of well-manicured lawns and homes, which are kept like new because of the pride the people have in their community.

The corporate and business community is a generous giver to cultural projects and programs, which enlighten the residents. Most people have short commutes to their jobs, freeing hours of their day to spend time with their families and friends.

Schools are well financed, filled with the top teachers and modern equipment, providing the community's children the best chance to prepare for a dynamic future. The brightest students come home after college to find good career jobs waiting for them, who in turn raise their families in their "home town," building generations within the community, adding to its social strength.

However, in other communities...

Local governments struggle financially to provide even the basic services, burdened with the cost of caring for the needy, the impoverished, the unemployed, as taxes are as high as the people can afford.

The downtown lays dormant, full of vacant stores, which attract indigent occupants. Homes, with barred windows, stand in disrepair, with trash and broken down automobiles littering lawns full of tall grass. Churches and charities have little to give to the people except hope for a better future.

Under-funded schools do their best to "fill the day" for the youth of the area as they have few resources to cope with the overcrowded and understaffed classrooms. The smartest youth must leave the area to find financial opportunity in another town.

The difference between these two communities is the condition of their local economies. One is growing economically and is vibrant, the other declining and becoming poorer.

Communities cannot control the national or state economy. But they can create programs, which will enhance the condition of their local economy. Throughout the United States, thousands of communities have established economic development programs. Some are very aggressive, others passive in their effort.

However, communities which do nothing are destined to endure a declining economy, causing the quality of life for their residents to erode, as they will gradually become poorer and poorer.

Hale County community leaders have made the decision they want to cause Hale County to grow economically in order to improve the economic quality of life for the residents of the area.

As a result, POLICOM has been asked to create an *Economic Development Strategic Plan* (Plan) which will provide a framework, a path to follow which will cause Hale County to increase the size and improve the quality of the Hale County economy.

What is a “Local Economy?”

The first step in the process of understanding the issues described in this Plan is to understand “what is a local economy” and how to improve it.

A local economy is a geographic area where a vast majority of the people live and work, earn and spend. The geographic boundary of a local economy is mainly determined by the commuting patterns of the people in the area. The location and number of “jobs” within an area determines how big geographically the economy will be.

A local economy will grow in size based upon the amount of money being imported to the area. After money enters a local economy, it is mixed and churned, being circulated among the businesses and the people. Money or wealth eventually leaves a local economy as it is “consumed.”

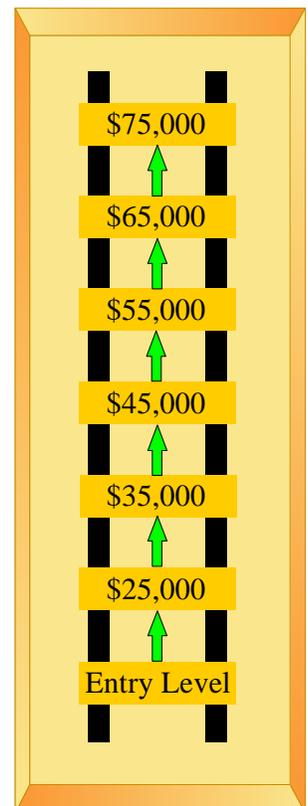
Wealth enters a local economy principally by way of the business activity of the “primary industries.” A primary industry or business sells its goods or services outside the area, thus importing money to the area.

The quality of an economy refers to the amount of money individuals in an area earn each year. The greater the personal earnings, the greater the disposable income and the economic “quality of life” for the individual.

In order to increase the size and improve the quality of a local economy, a community needs to create more primary industry jobs which pay a wage higher than the area average wage.

By doing this, more money will flow into the economy and the quality of the economy will improve over time. Not only will the wages for the workers enter the local area, so will all the spending and taxes paid by the companies themselves. As a result, all businesses will grow, more taxes will flow to local government enabling more and better services, schools will improve, and socio-economic problems will begin to fade.

When a community increases the number of high-wage primary



industry jobs, a “force” pulls up the bottom rung of the economic ladder, lifting all through a series of wage and skill steps, improving the standard of living for most people.

This “force” causes part-time low paying retail and service jobs to fold into full-time jobs at higher wage levels and with fringe benefits.

The quality of the economy will continue to rise if the new primary jobs created in the area pay a wage higher than the local average.

However, the quality will regress, decline, or dilute if new primary jobs created pay less than the area average.¹

Hale County Economy

The principle industry in Hale County is agriculture. Crops and livestock sales totaled about \$461 million in 2010. The production of crops in the multi-county area caused valued added industries to form such as grain milling. Livestock production in the region provides animals for slaughter.

Due to an anticipated shortage of water for irrigation, crop production is projected to decline but livestock is anticipated to increase.

The Wal-Mart distribution center located in Plainview is a major employer but has not expanded in many years.²

Hale County is also known as the Plainview, TX Micropolitan area. In 2012 POLICOM ranked Plainview 434th among the 576 Micropolitan areas for “economic strength.”

Over the last twenty years, Hale County has had very slow growth in the size of its economy. The rate of growth has been unfortunately similar to the ten weakest Micropolitan areas in the United States.

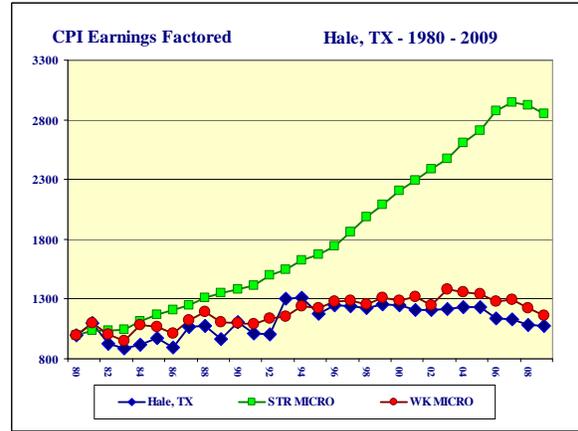
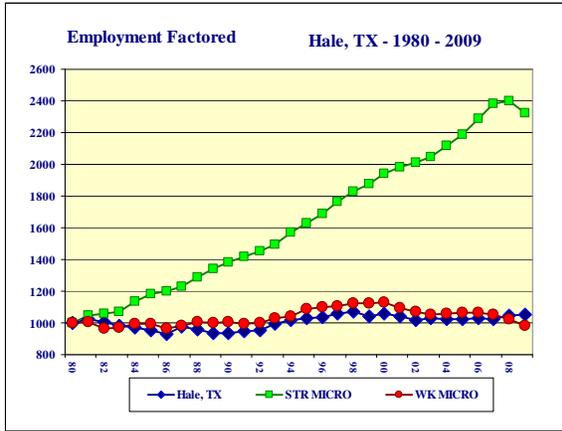
The following graphs visually compare the growth of Hale County to the 10 strongest and 10 weakest Micropolitan areas in the United States.³

The data has been factored to enable direct visual comparison on the graph. Earnings and wages have been adjusted for inflation to the value of the 2009 dollar.

¹ For a more detailed explanation on how a local economy works, please review “The Flow of Money” which is a 28 page booklet published by POLICOM. It is available in PDF format at www.policom.com.

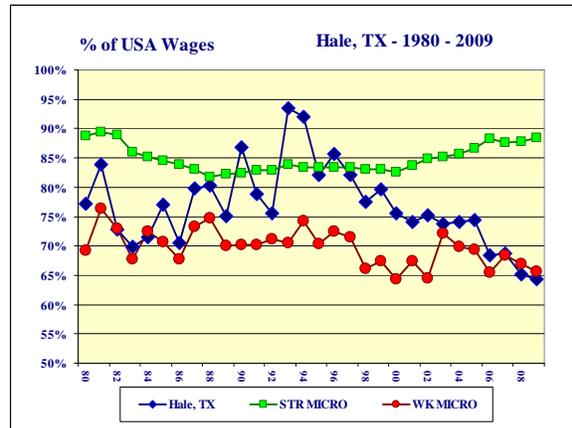
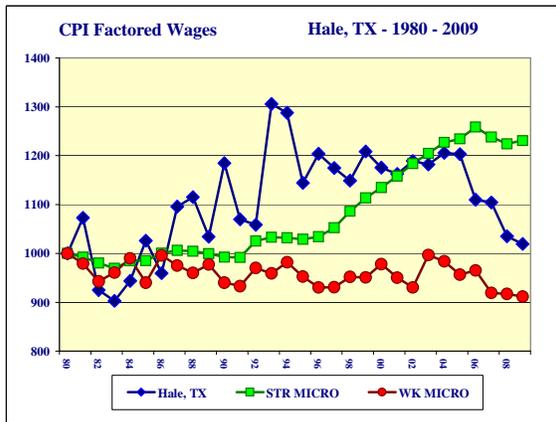
² For a complete description of the Hale County economy, please see the *Historical – Comparative Economic Analysis for Hale County* and the *Economic Development Goal Study* created by POLICOM for the Plainview Hale County Industrial Foundation.

³ The 10 strongest and weakest Micropolitan areas are listed in Section 2 of the *Historical – Comparative Economic Analysis for Hale County*.



The above graphs show how the county has grown in size relative to the 10 strongest and 10 weakest areas. Since 1980, the relative growth in size has been comparable to the average of the 10 weakest Micropolitan areas. After adjusting for inflation, the size of the Hale County economy is actually smaller than it was in 1980.

The county has also declined in quality over the last 15 years.



The first graph, CPI Factored Wages, represents the relative improvement of the quality of the economy based upon wages. The county improved almost every year, although erratically, from 1980 to about 1995. In fact, the rate of improvement during this time was better than the average of the 10 strongest Micropolitan areas.

The second graph shows the percentage the Hale County wage is of the national average wage.

Once again during the 1980's and first part of the 1990's the county's average wage jumped upwardly at a rate much faster than the strongest areas. Remember during the 1990's Hale County had the 11th fastest growth rate in wages among all of the Micropolitan areas.

This wage growth was principally driven by the Farm industry (farm proprietors) as cash receipts for both crops and livestock increased significantly during this time.

Unfortunately, beginning in about 1995 farm receipts began to decline rapidly.

From that point, the quality of the economy began to decline rapidly

The most important primary industries in the county are farming, manufacturing, and transportation-warehousing. Unfortunately, government entitlements account for 14% of the imported money to the area indicating economic distress.

Economic Baseline projections for the area show that if the county does not create new primary jobs, the economy will have little or no growth by 2030 and will decline in quality. The overall “economic quality of life” for the residents of the area will be lower than what it is in 2012.

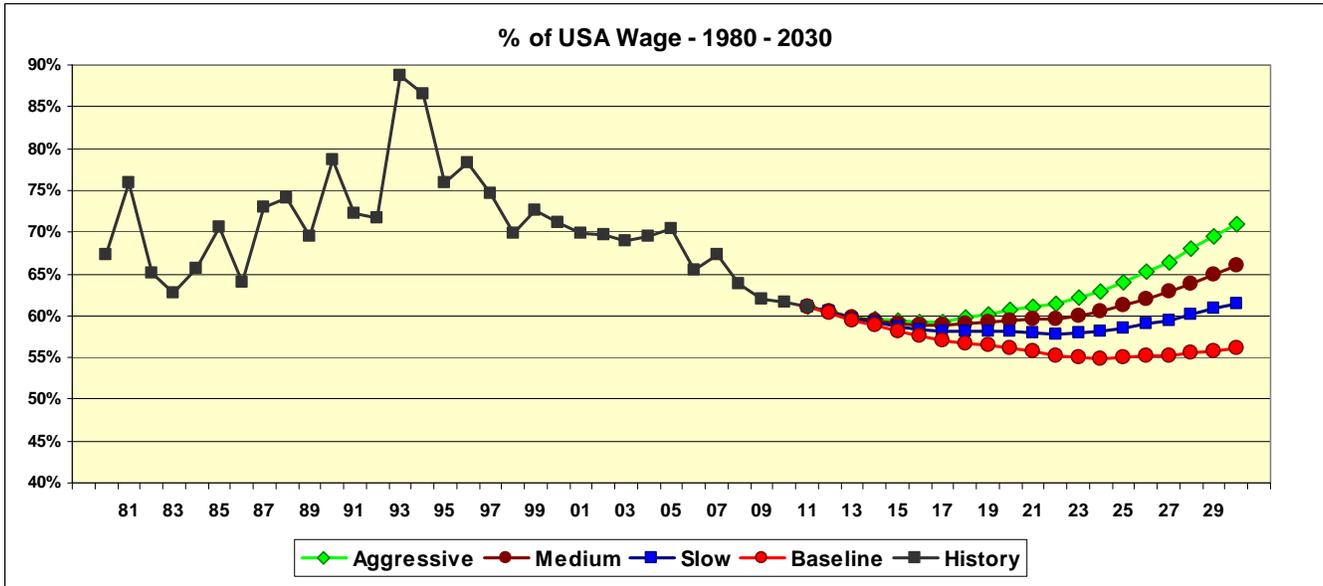
To prevent the projections from occurring and to improve the overall economy, three economic growth goals have been created – Slow, Medium, and Aggressive.⁴

The goals are based upon the formation of new primary industry jobs which will pay a wage high enough to raise the overall quality of the economy.

The following chart shows the annual milestones for each growth scenario.

Annual Milestones - Net Gain Primary Jobs - Wages						
	Slow		Medium		Aggressive	
	Jobs	Wage	Jobs	Wage	Jobs	Wage
2012	27	44,017	32	44,303	32	44,303
2013	35	44,059	67	47,047	73	45,171
2014	52	45,079	117	46,263	126	45,711
2015	57	46,004	126	47,320	141	47,006
2016	62	46,944	133	48,409	153	48,960
2017	67	47,899	140	49,522	171	50,956
2018	72	48,872	147	50,661	189	53,026
2019	77	49,863	154	51,826	207	55,174
2020	82	50,872	161	53,018	225	57,405
2021	87	51,901	168	54,238	243	59,722
2022	92	52,948	175	55,485	261	62,130
2023	97	54,016	182	56,761	279	64,632
2024	102	55,105	189	58,067	297	67,233
2025	107	56,215	196	59,402	315	69,937
2026	112	57,346	203	60,768	333	72,748
2027	117	58,499	210	62,166	351	75,670
2028	122	59,676	217	63,596	369	78,709
2029	127	60,875	224	65,059	387	81,868
2030	132	62,098	231	66,555	405	85,154
Total	1,626		3,072		4,557	

⁴ For a complete explanation of the economic projections and the three economic goal scenarios, please see the *Economic Development Goal Study for Hale County* prepared for the Plainview – Hale County Industrial Foundation.



As a percentage of the national average wage, the Hale County wage will improve if the Medium and Aggressive scenarios are achieved. However, if the Baseline projections are allowed to occur, the county will become one of the poorest in the country.

The economic goals are achieved by creating new primary industry jobs. To attain the goal, the community needs to reach annual milestones for the formation of new, medium to high-wage primary jobs.

While all goal scenarios will improve the economy, achieving the Aggressive goal will cause a vast majority of the residents to enjoy a prosperous life with many moving from being dependent upon social welfare programs to gainful employment.

Economic Development Strategic Plan

In order to achieve any of the economic growth scenarios, the Hale County community needs to implement an aggressive economic development program.

This *Economic Development Strategic Plan* (Plan) identifies a series of activities which the community needs to initiate and achieve in order to create the new primary jobs identified in the *Economic Development Goal Study*.

The Plan presents a series of issues regarding how to improve the economy. Following each issue is a recommendation by the Researcher regarding what action the community needs to take. Specific “tasks” are also suggested.

Throughout the Plan, there is a continuous reference to Hale County **community**. Economic development influences virtually all businesses, all levels of local government, and virtually every resident in an area. There is no one person or organization which can cause an economic development program to be successful. All stakeholders need to be involved, hence the reference to the “community.”

The following is the plan for Hale County. First there is there is a lengthy review of the geographic – economic issues relating to Hale County which is followed by a discussion of the economic development program for the county.

Hale County Economic Development Planning Summit – Community Input

In order to receive community input and advice regarding the creation of this Plan, the Researcher conducted a *Community Economic Development Planning Summit* (Summit) on April 26, 2012. The Summit was coordinated by the Plainview Hale County Industrial Foundation. Community, business, and government leaders attended the all day event.

At the Summit, the Researcher explained:

- How a local economy works and the characteristics of strong and weak economies.
- The condition of the Hale County economy and where it is heading.
- The economic goal which, if achieved, will significantly increase the size and improve the quality of the economy.

The Researcher then explained in great detail:

- The three basic economic development programs.
- Various types of business incentives offered by communities in the United States.
- How geographic – economic issues determine the site selection process.

The participants then discussed in small groups and provided their opinions for the following:

- Funding sources for an economic development program.

- The type of incentives which might be offered by Hale County along with the qualifications of the businesses.
- The strengths and weaknesses, assets and liabilities, of Hale County's geographic – economic features.

Additionally, the participants were asked their opinion regarding the most important things the community needs to improve the local economy.

Each small group was asked to reach a consensus on the most important issues which need to be accomplished. The groups then reported their consensus and the entire assembly voted.

The following are the *five most important things the community needs to do over the next five years to improve the Hale County economy*. They appear in order of importance.

1. Create a community owned industrial park.
2. Improve the quality of the area workforce through training and other programs.
3. Create an incentive program for existing and new primary employers.
4. Increase funding for the economic development program.
5. Create a positive community attitude toward developing the economy.

Many of the ideas reflected by the participants at the Summit and the focus groups have been incorporated into the creation of this *Economic Development Strategic Plan*.

Geographic Economic Issues

By definition, a primary employer sells its goods or services outside the economy. The company does not depend upon the local area for its revenues or income.

However, a great deal or all of its costs are determined by the geographic location of the business.

If the costs relative to the community in which a primary business is located a low enough to enable profitability, the business not only will remain in the area but most likely expand.

However, if the costs of being located in a particular area become excessive, causing the company to become unprofitable, the business will either close or locate to another community.

There are a host of local and state issues which influence the costs for a primary employer. Community which desire economic growth should work to reduce these costs as much as possible.

To be successful in building a strong, dynamic economy, a community must review its geographic - economic characteristics to determine its strengths and weaknesses. From this review, it can reinforce the strengths and correct as much as possible the weak issues.

At the Summit, the participants were asked to evaluate Hale Count’s geographic - economic assets and provide their opinion as the area’s strength for each. The Researcher also independently evaluated the area.

The following is a list of geographic economic issues. For each, a score or grade is provided by both the Community and the Researcher based upon the following scale.

Strength - Weakness	Very Strong	Somewhat Strong	Average	Somewhat Weak	Very Weak
	5	4	3	2	1

The grades reflect the relative strength of the issue, with 5 being the strongest (an asset) and 1 the weakest (a liability).

After a discussion regarding the issue, the Researcher makes a recommendation for action by the community. The recommendations are based upon the experience of the Researcher and input from the participants attending the Summit and the professional staff of the Plainview Hale County Industrial Foundation.

Real Estate

Real Estate	Community	POLICOM
A. Industrial sites available (overall)	3.3	2.0
B. Community controlled industrial sites	2.4	1.0
C. Buildings available and cost	3.3	2.0
D. Cost of housing for hourly workers	3.3	3.0
E. Cost of housing for executives	3.8	4.0

Industrial Sites

For the most part, a company looking to relocate or expand within its current community desires to lease or purchase an existing building. However, it is extremely rare a vacant building which specifically suits the needs of the company is available. As a result, the company needs to construct a facility.

The most important issue relative to economic development is the availability of “improved, approved” industrial real estate upon which a company can construct a facility. Without a suitable site available, a company (new or existing) cannot construct a facility in the community and must look elsewhere.

“Improved” means the horizontal infrastructure is in place at the site. Basically the land is “building ready” and there will not be any delays regarding constructing sewer or water lines, electric service, telecommunications and other services to the site.

“Approved” means all zoning issues, which would enable the company to begin construction, have been enacted by local government.

A cloud of uncertainty on the property exists if the land is not improved and approved. Companies usually will not consider the land “available” for their use if either of these issues is not completed. A company will not wait for the community to prepare the property.

In essence, the community needs to be able to issue the site plan approval and a building permit within 90 days of application for a community to be competitive in the marketplace.

A community which does not have a supply of industrial real estate has little hope of improving its economy.

The *Economic Development Goal Study* provides for the formation of approximately 4,557 new primary industry jobs through the year 2030 under the Aggressive scenario. Most of these jobs will form in industries which require “manufacturing type” or office-warehouse structures.

POLICOM has made general calculations regarding the number of gross industrial acres which will be needed to accommodate the businesses which will employ the new primary workers.

The calculations are based upon the following general criteria.

Land / Space Needs - Low estimates.	Industrial Usage
Facility Gross Square Feet per Worker	900
Workers per gross acre	10
*Facility Investment/SF	\$150
*Does not include land or equipment which could be 2 to 5 times facility cost. 3% SF cost escalator each year.	

The number of gross square feet per worker for a facility depends on the nature of the activity.

A manufacturer of circuit boards might need only 200 square feet per worker cramming 50 workers per acre of land. However, the new Niagara Bottling Company facility constructed in Mooresville, NC in 2011 is 310,000 square feet. The company only employs only 70 workers, a whopping 4,400 square feet per worker and occupies 66 acres of land, about one acre per worker.

To determine the estimated investment for new facilities, \$150 per square foot construction cost was used. This is more than the rule of thumb \$100 per square foot for the typical industrial shell building as most companies will need special interior improvements. It is also not unusual for an advanced manufacturing facility to cost \$1,000 to \$2,000 per square foot. The cost does not include non-fixed equipment.

The following chart shows the anticipated acreage, facility, and capital investment for each of the goal scenarios. Two time periods are identified - first 8 years and the next 10 years of the goal study period.

	Slow Industrial Usage	Moderate Industrial Usage	Aggressive Industrial Usage
New Primary Jobs			
2012 - 2020 (8 years)	531	1,077	1,317
2021 - 2030 (10 years)	1,095	1,995	3,240
Total - 2012 - 2030 (18 years)	1,626	3,072	4,557
Gross Facility Square Feet			
2012 - 2020 (8 years)	477,450	969,300	1,185,300
2021 - 2030 (10 years)	985,500	1,795,500	2,916,000
Total - 2012 - 2030 (18 years)	1,462,950	2,764,800	4,101,300
Gross Acres (Includes roadways, set-asides)			
2012 - 2020 (8 years)	53	108	132
2021 - 2030 (10 years)	110	200	324
Total - 2012 - 2030 (18 years)	163	307	456
Capital Investment			
2012 - 2020 (8 years)	\$83,553,750	\$169,627,500	\$207,427,500
2021 - 2030 (10 years)	\$172,462,500	\$314,212,500	\$510,300,000
Total - 2012 - 2030 (18 years)	\$256,016,250	\$483,840,000	\$717,727,500

If the Aggressive Goal is achieved, by 2030 approximately 4 million square feet of industrial space and 456 gross acres of industrial land will be needed. This will result in about \$717 million in capital investment by the companies not including land and non-fixed equipment.

The land - facility chart is limited to the needs of the primary employers.

Additionally, land is needed for industrial type businesses which will service the general population, but are **not primary in nature**. Examples of these are food distributors, plumbing contractors, electrical supply wholesalers, auto body shops, dry cleaning plants, commercial bakeries, and cabinet shops.

In most communities, these types of businesses occupy between 50% and 75% of the industrial property. Many of the service industrial businesses are located in small industrial parks in multi-tenant buildings or on one acre parcels. This marketplace is typically serviced solely by the private sector.

For long term planning purposes, extending forty years, approximately 800 gross acres of industrial land should be identified in Hale County.

Community Controlled Industrial Sites

Typically there is hesitancy, if not total refusal, by private industrial land developers to invest in real estate reserved for “primary employers” as opposed to “service industrial” users. Since it is not known when a primary employer will come to the community, the private developer is not willing to hold the property for 10 or even 20 years.

As a result, many times a community will develop industrial parks which are limited to primary employers, not competing with the private sector for service industrial companies.

These industrial properties are looked upon by the community as a long-term investment, providing a location for future wealth creating companies. The community also has the option of selling to property to a company for little or no cost.

Participants at the Economic Development Planning Summit identified *Create a community owned industrial park* as the most important issue the community needs to do over the next five years.

Action Item – Industrial Property: The Hale County community must create, through private or public investment, an abundant supply of inexpensive, improved - approved industrial real estate for use by primary employers.

- The community should secure and develop at least one or possibly two industrial areas which are reserved for primary employers. At a minimum, the community should always maintain an inventory of approximately 150 industrial acres which are “building ready” with a minimum of 50 contiguous acres.
- Land for primary employers should be strategically located at interstate highway exits.
- The county and city should cooperate with private developers as much as possible in the development of privately owned industrial areas. Consideration should be given to providing “favorable treatment” to a company interested in locating on private sector land. In essence, the policy should be to use up the private sector inventory first, if possible.

Task: Within six months, a full inventory of all vacant industrial zoned property should be completed to determine the amount of ready- build acreage in the county. The inventory should include the number of acres and the current development status.

Task: Within one year, the community should identify property and create a plan for the purchase and future development of at least 500 industrial acres to be reserved for primary employers. The development of at least 150 acres should commence by the end of this one year period.

Existing Building Availability

For the most part, a company looking to relocate or expand prefers to lease or purchase an existing building. The benefits to an existing building are:

1. Facility costs are known.
2. Production set-up time is almost immediate.
3. Financing is more easily secured.
4. Facility costs are usually less for an older building than constructing new.

However, it is rare that an existing building is available which meets the location and configuration needs of a company. Additionally, while many “old” buildings appear to be much cheaper than constructing new, dealing with retrofitting and possible environmental issues can easily exceed the initial financial benefit.

Understanding that most companies desire an existing building, to become more competitive in the economic development marketplace, many communities have constructed speculative buildings to attract new companies to their community.

Speculative buildings are typically just a “shell building” which is designed for both expansion and subdivision. To save money, many times the floor is not pored nor is the parking lot created, leaving as much flexibility as possible for a future user to adapt the building to its specialized needs.

Some communities have created “virtual buildings.” An industrial site is identified, construction drawings are created, and construction cost bids are secured determining the price. A building permit can then be issued almost immediately and most costs are known ahead of time to the company. Three dimensional renderings are created for marketing purposes.

Ironically, many times the speculative building serves as a magnet to get a site selector to come to a community. Upon inspection of the building, it might be determined the building will not meet the needs of the company. However, the community is then in the position to say, “We can build exactly what you need right next door if you like.”

On average a community speculative building remains vacant for about three years.

Action Step: Construct a speculative industrial building to induce a new primary employer to move to Hale County.

Task: Within one year, the community should conduct a market study which examines the market demand for the size of a speculative building. The community should then identify a building site upon which a community owned speculative building can be constructed.

Task: Within two years, the community should secure funding and construct a speculative building and market it to potential primary employers.

Housing

The availability of housing for the workforce and for executives can be an issue during the community selection process. However, this is not a major issue in Hale County as the wage level to be paid by the companies being recruited will be sufficient to purchase a home in Hale County.

Additionally, if an executive home is not available, one can be quickly constructed.

As a result, this issue of housing should not be given major attention as there are more pressing issues to address.

Workforce

The issue of “labor,” its availability, suitability (skills), reliability (work stoppages), and costs, is one of the most important factors influencing the site selection process. In fact, after the availability of industrial sites, it most often is the most important issue.

Workforce	Community POLICOM	
A. Current skill level of general workforce	2.1	2.0
B. Training opportunities	2.8	3.5
C. Labor – Management relations (work stoppages)	4.2	4.0
D. Current wage rates	2.8	4.0
E. Labor availability	2.7	2.5

Current Skill Level of General Workforce:

The skill level or potential skill level of an area’s workforce is one of the most important site selection criteria. For many businesses looking to locate to a new area, the ability of the local workforce to perform the tasks demanded by the business is of ultimate importance.

Some employers seek a low skilled workforce, as the process for their business is simple and can be taught in a couple of days or even hours. These companies will usually locate in areas which have chronically high unemployment, are generally impoverished, or are areas with high foreign immigration causing large numbers of low skilled workers to seek “any type of employment.” These employers rarely go to areas with dynamic economies, as a suitable low wage, low skilled workforce is not available.

To the other extreme, some employers require highly skilled, highly educated individuals to perform the tasks needed by the organization. A software developer requires a core of individuals with graduate degrees in computer science, a semiconductor manufacturer needs a host of electrical engineers, and many pharmaceutical manufacturers need chemists, engineers, and college educated technicians to produce modern day drugs. A company which requires such a workforce must look to areas which have existing workers or the educational resources to create them. These workers also command the highest wage, as their service is of significant value.

Between these two examples are a wide range of primary businesses which utilize mid-to-high skilled workers. A site seeker will examine the existing workforce to determine if there is a supply of potential employees for their company.

Usually, there is not a supply of available (unemployed) mid to high skilled workers, as these individuals do not simply “sit around,” but find some type of employment.

When a site seeker for a higher wage company sees this situation, then the availability of trainable or “under-employed” workers is considered. Under-employment is a situation when a worker has educational attainment, special training and/or physical skills in excess of what is needed for the workers current job.

An area might have a large number of under-employed workers for several reasons.

1. A high wage employer closed or laid-off workers. The displaced workers accepted positions requiring lower skills at lower wages.
2. The area has excellent schools with high graduation rates but few employment opportunities requiring the education provided. The workers, wanting to remain in the community in which they grew up, accept “whatever” positions are available in the community. They are capable of doing more.
3. The area is a “nice or exciting place to live” and as a result draws college graduates who accept lower paying jobs just so they can live in the area. A resort community is such a location.

Along with examining the potential for under-employed workers, site seekers will examine the “ladder of skills” which is present in an area. In an economy which has a gentle mixture of industries of multiple skill needs, a natural set of upward steps is created. A high skilled employer will draw from mid-high skilled employers. The mid-high skilled employers hire new workers from mid-skilled employers, who draw from low-mid skilled employers. The chain continues to the no skilled workers being elevated to low skilled jobs.

This ladder of advancement has been traditional in the United States providing there is a hierarchy of employers in the community. It was also traditional because a vast number of people in the United States were well educated through the public school system.

The skill level of the existing workforce in Hale County unfortunately includes a large number of low skilled workers. There is a small presence of mid skilled employers but not a sufficient number to demonstrate to a new employer a workforce with the aptitude to perform higher skilled tasks exists in the county.

Also, there does not appear to be a large supply of under-employed individuals. The educational attainment of the populace appears to be relatively low compared to the state and the nation.

Educational Attainment	Hale	Texas	USA
High school graduates	70%	80%	85%
Bachelor's degree or higher	14%	26%	28%

The overall rating by the Community and POLICOM of the “Current skill level of the general workforce” is very low. Through discussions with community leaders and employers in the county, it is obvious the availability of quality, reliable labor is of utmost concern.

The industrial sectors identified in the “Cluster – Target Industry Study for Hale County” will require a workforce with a skill level higher than what exists among the general workforce at this time.

Additionally, in order for the county’s current employers to expand, they will require a “better worker” than what is currently available to them.

The second most important issue identified by the participants at the Economic Summit was “Improve the quality of the area workforce through training and other programs.”

The quality of the workforce must be addressed by the community if it hopes to improve the economy and the overall “economic quality of life” for the residents.

This is likely the most important issue facing Hale County and will take many years to accomplish.

Improving the workforce will be addressed in several ways.

Action Item: Educational attainment.

Within ten years, the community needs to reach a high school graduate level commensurate to the state average.

Task: Within one year, the Community will devise a plan to encourage all youth to complete high school and to provide incentives for all adults to enroll and complete a high school equivalency program.

Action Item: General work habits.

The community will create an educational program which teaches basic worker skills. Some of the issues which need to be addressed are: 1) fluency in the English language, both written and spoken, 2) basic arithmetic, 3) general worker safety, 4) and proper employee work habits (punctuality and reliability).

The curriculum should be created based upon input from existing employers in the community. An individual who completes the program can be designated an “employable worker” by the community. This will provide evidence to employers the low skilled workers will be able to graduate into a higher skilled job.

The program can be offered by any educational resource in the county as determined by the community.

Task: Within one year, the community will design and fund a “basic skills education program” which provides a certification for those who complete the course work.

Task: Within two years, the “basic skills education program” shall be implemented.

Worker Training:

Employers require workers be trained in the specific tasks necessary to conduct the business. The availability of “training” is one of the most important issues relative to the community selection process.

Typically, training is conducted by the local community college, vocational school, the employing company, or private vendors. In some areas of the country, training facilities are not available. This places those communities in a competitive disadvantage.

Not only is the availability of training programs needed, but the cost of the training of a local workforce is an important issue. More and more primary employers expect the community to bear the cost of preparing the workforce prior to hiring.

There are two worker training issues: 1) customized training for workers needed by expanding and new primary businesses, and 2) a continuous program for supplying trained workers for existing primary employers.

Virtually every state has training programs which it touts as available to businesses if they “locate or expand in the state.” Many of these state programs are very good, while some state programs are terribly inadequate.

The state of Texas has an excellent program for training a workforce for a new employer.

The problem for communities is the uncertainty of whether a company they are recruiting will qualify for state funded training and when such approval will occur. Sometimes the system requires months of review by the state agency responsible for approving the training expenditures and sometimes, if approved, state monies might have been exhausted for the current fiscal year, causing even more delays. As a result, the local economic development organization cannot “guarantee” the workforce will be trained for the company it is recruiting.

Additionally, it is oftentimes more difficult to secure training money for an existing company which desires to expand than for one being recruited, sometimes causing an existing company to move to another community to seek a skilled workforce.

As a result, communities which can provide training, and the cost thereof, on a local basis, have a significant competitive advantage over those which cannot.

Additionally, existing primary employers, if they are to expand, need trained workers. An ongoing community training program is essential to retain and cause the expansion of the companies.

Since Hale County does not have a large number of primary employers which hire workers with varied skill levels, the overall skill level of the workforce is not as high as it is in larger communities. This places the county in a competitive disadvantage to larger communities. The availability of working training programs is consequently very important.

Action Item – Worker Training: The Hale County community needs have ready a comprehensive worker training system which has the ability to create and fund customized training programs for qualified primary businesses. The training program should be offered equally to existing companies and businesses being recruited.

Task: On an ongoing basis the community will have a program which will provide specialized worker training for the existing primary employers in the area and for new companies locating to the area.

Task: Within one year the community will identify facilities which can be utilized for special company “set-up” training in which the company’s equipment can be installed for hands on training by future employees.

Labor – Management Relations:

Of great concern to many production employers is the “reliability” of the workforce. In some areas of the United States, there is an extreme adversarial relationship between management and labor. This has caused frequent work disruptions (strikes) in the past. Communities which have had a history of management – labor problems are shunned by most employers.

There does not appear to be a significant problem in Hale County regarding this issue.

Current Wage Rates

An employer, regardless of the skill level needed, will pay a wage relative to the marketplace. In high cost areas, an employer will likely have to pay a wage higher than the national average. For the same job in a lower cost area, the wages would be lower.

In 2009, the average wage paid for “wage and salaried workers” in Hale County was \$30,221. This ranked 502nd among the 576 micropolitan areas and was 66% of the national average and 67% of the Texas average.

This makes the area very competitive in the “wage” marketplace. Given an improvement in the quality of the workforce and adequate training, wages paid in semi-skilled and skilled positions

in Hale County will likely be much less than in the metropolitan areas in Texas. Still, the wage will be “high” for Hale County.

The relatively low base wage in Hale County is actually one of its best assets relative to recruiting companies to the area.

The community does not have to take any action regarding this issue.

Labor Availability:

The number of workers available for hire within a marketplace is of concern to employers. In very tight labor markets, when unemployment is extremely low, employers sometimes have difficulty finding enough workers with the proper skills to employ. Under this situation, employers usually have to pay a higher wage than normal to secure the workers needed. This principle applies to the general workforce.

Site selectors also do not necessarily seek areas with chronically high unemployment. Many times these areas are viewed as having a large number of unemployable people.

Primary industry employers typically pay a wage higher than the area average. As a result, these employers usually do not have a problem finding enough people who want to work for them. The problem is the “quality” of the worker.

The availability of quality labor in Hale County has been discussed. In essence, there are workers available for potential employers, but the skills necessary for the tasks are lacking.

This brings the community back to the need to educate and train the low skilled workers in the community. This will enable other workers to “climb” the skill and wage ladder.

Action Item: The recommendations relating to training and education should be implemented.

Transportation Systems

The cost of moving products and people has always been an important issue relative to economic growth for the nation and local areas. The expense of transporting products to market, via land, sea, and air, is one of the determining factors of most manufacturing and distribution businesses.

Sometimes high transportation costs can be overcome by other geographic economic features of an area such as low taxes, utilities, and wage rates.

Transportation System	Community	POLICOM
A. Highway system external to area	4.5	4.0
B. Roadway system internal (commuting time)	4.4	4.4
C. Railway	4.1	4.0
D. Commercial airport – within 60 minutes	4.4	3.5
E. Seaport – cargo/container	0.0	0.0
F. Motor carriers	4.2	4.0

Highway System External to Area

Virtually every rural county in the United State which does not have access to the Interstate Highway System has been in economic decline for the last 30 years. A remote location without transportation access has been a deterrent to the expansion of their existing production employers and to the attraction of new companies.

Conversely, communities with access to the Interstate Highway System have had the best opportunity for economic growth.

While Hale County is a “remote” location relative to population centers, it has several exits on Interstate 27. This affords a short connection in Amarillo to Interstate 40 - one of the nation’s major east –west transportation corridors.

To the south connection is made with Interstates 10 and 20 providing access to New Mexico, Arizona, and California.

The Wal-Mart distribution facility in Plainview has been very successful utilizing this highway system.

Access to the interstate highway system is one of Hale County’s best assets. The community does not have to take any action regarding this issue.

Internal Roadway System - Commuting Time

Traffic congestion in some metropolitan areas has caused workers to endure lengthy commutes to their worksite. Oftentimes the commute can be as long as one hour. Not only is this a “quality of life” issue for the employee, but employers begin to have trouble retaining their workforce when commuting times exceed 30 minutes.

Nationally, the average commuting time is 25.2 minutes and in Texas 24.8 minutes. The average commuting time for a Hale County resident is 14.9 minutes.

The community does not have to take any action regarding this issue.

Railway

Rail service is very important to companies which deal in high bulk items. Many advanced manufacturing companies need rail service to import raw materials and to export finished products to a national marketplace.

Rail service is also a market driven industry. Absent demand, rail companies sometimes discontinue service to communities.

Hale County is fortunate to have excellent rail service as a result of the presence of several high bulk industries such as agriculture. However, if crop production and its related value added industries decline, rail service to the community might be jeopardized.

Action Item - Railways: The community should continuously monitor the status of the rail service providers in the county and provide assistance them to maintain service in the county.

Commercial Airport

Virtually every county in the United States has an “airport.” A vast majority of these are general aviation facilities (GAF) which serve the local recreational flyer.

A community’s GAF should have a runway length sufficient to accommodate private corporate jets. This enables corporate executives to visit their company’s facilities bypassing the commercial airport.

The Hale County Airport can accommodate private jets and is an excellent facility.

Lubbock International Airport is located within 45 minutes of Plainview and has daily commercial air service. There are a sufficient number of flights per day to provide air travel for most business users.

The Rick Husband Amarillo International Airport is about 60 minutes from Plainview. It has more daily flights than Lubbock and is a little less expensive.

The quality or frequency of air service to a community is market driven. As demand for a location increases, the more flights are scheduled to the area. As a result, the Hale County community cannot influence the air service to either Lubbock or Amarillo.

Having two airports available to the community is an asset while general air service to each is limited.

Action Item - Airport: Aside from maintaining the Hale County Airport, there is no action the community needs to take regarding this issue.

Motor Carriers

Presently several motor carriers are servicing Hale County businesses. This is a market driven industry. As demand for more carriers increases, the marketplace will respond.

The community does not have to take any action regarding this issue.

Utilities

For many industries, “utilities” are an integral part of the production process. Communities which have an abundant supply of inexpensive energy and large volumes of water have a competitive advantage.

Utilities	Community	POLICOM
A. Electric power – availability and costs	4.3	4.0
B. Sanitary sewer – Treatment plant capacity	3.8	3.8
C. Potable water – Supply and costs	3.1	3.0
D. Natural Gas	4.3	4.3
E. Telecommunications – POPs and bandwidth	3.6	3.5

Electric Power

For many manufacturing processes, the cost of electricity is crucial. Areas which have extremely high electric rates have lost manufacturing to states with lower costs.

Texas is not part of the national electric “grid” and many parts of the state are deregulated. As a result, many communities in Texas have extremely low rates per kilowatt hour available to industry.

Hale County has very competitive electric rates for industry. This provides Hale County with an advantage over many east Texas communities where rates are higher. Even so, efforts should always be made to keep rates low to industrial users.

Action Item – Electric Power: The community should explore means to discount the cost of electricity to primary businesses which use large amounts of electricity.

Task: The community should continuously monitor and discourage any effort to increase rates for industrial users.

Sanitary Sewer

The ability to serve industrial sites with sanitary sewer is important. Few production employers will locate in an area which does not have sanitary sewer. The first consideration is the removal of the human waste caused by the workers at the facility. However, some manufacturing processes discharge treatable fluid into the sanitary system. For these, the service is a mandatory component of the site selection process.

Presently, the sanitary sewage system appears to have the capacity to service industrial users.

Action Item– Sanitary Sewer: The community should cause sanitary sewer lines to be extended to future industrial sites and monitor capacity to assure future industrial users of the service.

Task: During the planning process identifying future industrial real estate, the community will consider the capacity of sanitary sewer to future sites.

Potable Water

For some production employers, such as food processors, large amounts of potable water are needed. However, many times water is needed for cooling machines and while the water needs to be clean, it does not have to be “potable” and can be sourced from a local well. Areas with a large supply of both have a competitive advantage.

The supply of fresh water to Hale County is a long-term concern for the community. As a result of lengthy droughts, the agricultural community is gradually reducing crop production.

Supplying the population with potable water is a major issue for the community.

Action Item – Potable Water: The community should cause water lines to be extended to future industrial sites and enable an industrial user to utilize water from a well source if the withdrawal is feasible.

Task: During the planning process identifying future industrial real estate, the community will consider the capacity of potable water to future sites.

Natural Gas

Hale County has a sufficient supply of natural gas which might be needed by industrial users.

Action Item – Natural Gas: Aside from causing gas lines to be extended to new industrial areas, there is no specific action the community needs to take regarding this issue relative to economic development.

Task: During the planning process identifying future industrial real estate, the community will consider the availability of natural gas being extended to future sites.

Telecommunications

High speed telecommunications service is a necessity for any business today. Absent modern telecommunication systems places a community in a significant competitive disadvantage.

Action Item - Telecommunications: When planning future industrial parks, the most modern systems should be made available to the property.

Task: During the planning process identifying future industrial real estate, the community will consider the likelihood of state of the art telecommunications systems being available at future sites.

Education

Education and training programs can be a significant catalyst for economic growth. Many of the strongest economies in the United States have used their educational resources to drive the development of their economies. Universities and community colleges serve to prepare and train the workforce. The quality of the local public school system influences the general workforce and sometimes influences the site selection process when a large number of executives are being asked to move to an area.

Education	Community	POLICOM
A. Four year and post graduate university	4.1	2.0
B. Technical – vocational school	3.3	3.3
C. Community college	3.7	3.5
D. Public school system – quality thereof	2.8	3.0

Four Year and Post Graduate University

Sometimes the presence of a four year university can be one of the most important tools to cause economic growth for an area. Universities with post graduate programs, especially those in new technology disciplines, can be one of the most important reasons a local economy grows.

Economic growth can be caused by the presence of a university the following ways:

- Local businesses are invited to utilized university facilities (laboratories, computers) and access university personnel.

- The university provides continuing education programs for the existing workforce in the area.
- The university encourages the commercialization of university sponsored research. This becomes part of the “Start-Up” program.

Wayland Baptist University located in Plainview has a student enrollment of about 1,000. It offers baccalaureate and masters degrees in several subject areas.

By definition, Wayland Baptist University is a primary industry, adding wealth to the community. Any expansion of the university in the community should be encouraged and facilitated.

However, it is not a “research university” and its ability to cause economic growth from the commercialization of research or access to sophisticated laboratories by the industrial community is limited.

Students graduating from the University can be a source of management personnel for local companies. Any participation by the University in helping the community’s economic development effort should be welcomed.

Unfortunately, Hale County does not have a university of the nature which can be a catalyst for economic growth. Such a university needs to be located in the immediate area in order to for this to occur.

There is indirect access to two universities which might assist Hale County.

Texas Tech University in Lubbock is approximately 50 miles from Plainview. It has a reported student enrollment of 30,000 - possibly spread out over several campuses.

The University is conducting extensive research in wind energy and meteorology with some activity relating to vehicle engineering, software and other disciplines. Most of the research is being conducted at the Reese Technology Center.

Since the University is 50 miles away, regular access to University instructors or facilities is not likely workable.

However, the community might be in a position to benefit from the commercialization of the research being conducted. Of course, the Lubbock community will also likely aggressively pursue these opportunities.

West Texas A&M University in Amarillo is approximately 75 miles from Plainview. It has about 7,900 graduate and undergraduate students.

It is not a research University but has been very cooperative with the Amarillo Economic Development Corporation in participating in economic development programs.

The University is the primary sponsor of the West Texas A&M Enterprise Center. The Enterprise Center is a model for a university – community business incubator limited to companies which are primary in nature.

As with Texas Tech, West Texas A&M is to great a distance for direct access.

However, a relationship with the Enterprise Center can be created.

Action Item – Higher Education

- **Wayland Baptist University:** The community should maintain its good relationship with the University.

Task: All possible means should be explored to enable the growth of the University and the assistance by the University in the economic development effort.

- **Reese Technology Center:** The economic development organization should become acquainted with the research companies housed at the Reese Technology Center and other university research which is being conducted.

Task: The research companies at the Reese Technology Center should be marketed by Hale County as a potential location for application of the research.

- **Texas A&M Enterprise Center:** A relationship with the Texas A&M Enterprise Center should be created. The “Task” is included in the “Start-Up” program under Economic Development Program.

Community College

As discussed earlier, a four year university can have a significant impact upon the economic growth of an area providing it is a willing partner with the community in this endeavor. But even with the full cooperation of a university, all of the educational needs of a comprehensive economic development program cannot be met. Many times the local community college is better equipped to provide special educational or training programs.

The burden and responsibly of providing higher education resources for economic development will fall on the shoulders of South Plains College Plainview Center.

South Plans College main campus is located in Levelland. At that location the college has 44 buildings on 177 acres. It is a comprehensive educational facility offering two year degrees in multiple disciplines. Unfortunately it is located in Levelland.

In 2005 the South Plains College Plainview Center was established. Presently there is one building at the center.

The Center offers selected technical education programs, academic transfer courses and other workforce development programs. It maintains technical programs in cosmetology, vocational nursing and associate degree nursing at the Plainview Center. A variety of college-level general education courses are offered during the evening hours at the center to accommodate the needs of working adults.

For economic development purposes, the facilities at the Center are limited. Efforts to expand the campus should be encouraged by the Hale County community.

The Plainview Center and its parent South Plains Colleges need to be fully integrated into the Hale County economic development program. This academic resource is the best opportunity Hale County to provide worker training, educational advancement for the workforce, and access to the academic community as needed by the business community.

Action Item: South Plains College Plainview Center and its parent South Plains College should be woven directly into the economic development program Hale County.

Task: *On a regular basis, the community and South Plains College should discuss means to integrate the academic and training programs into the economic development program.*

Public School System

The quality of the local public school system directly influences the quality of the general workforce in an area. Additionally, when a company is considering locating several management personnel to a community, the local school system is considered. If the system is poor, the company will experience resistance by these individuals to locate to an area if their children are presently attending a system of high caliber. Sometimes, the ability to transfer key personnel influences the site selection process.

Participants at the Summit had concerns regarding the quality of the public school system in Hale County and expressed a need to improve it.

These comments are similar to those made by the participants at the last several economic summits conducted by POLICOM in other communities in other states. In each community there was concern over the quality of their public school system.

If it is indeed correct the public school system in Hale County needs to be improved, then the best reason to cause improvement is *the responsibility each generation has to educate the next generation as well or better than the education it received*. Efforts to improve public education should therefore be ongoing.

The indirect benefit of improving local education is that a well educated workforce will be available in the future of the area.

Under the Workforce section of this plan it was noted the educational attainment level of the community needs to be improved.

Action Item – Public Schools: The public school system should embrace the issues addressed under Workforce regarding the hiring of minor children and encouraging young adults to complete high school.

Local Government

Local government, including city, county, township, or regional organizations, plays an important role in influencing the local economy. Policies enacted locally can create an atmosphere conducive to economic growth. Economic development organizations in most of the strongest local economies have the complete cooperation of local government officials relative to creating a business friendly environment which enables profitability for primary employers.

There is unfortunately a long list of communities which have fallen into economic decline as a result of the actions of local governments. Due to the promulgation of excessive regulations and punitive taxes, these areas have been losing their primary employers to communities which have a more favorable business climate.

Local government	Community	POLICOM
A. Property taxes	3.6	3.6
B. Income taxes	4.0	5.0
C. Fees and assessments	3.4	4.0
D. Business climate	3.3	4.0

Property Taxes

Locally levied property taxes have a significant impact upon companies which have a large capital investment in their facility.

Action Item – Property Taxes: The community should have in place programs which abate or reduce property taxes for qualified primary employers. A task regarding this issue appears under Economic Development Program.

Income Taxes

Some cities, mostly in the Midwest, have enacted municipal income taxes. Hale County has a competitive advantage as there are no state or local personal income taxes.

Action Item: There is no specific action the community needs to take regarding this issue relative to economic development.

Fees and Assessments

Locally levied fees and assessments have added significant costs to primary employers in some areas. Most of these communities are located in California, Florida, Oregon, and most of the

states in the Northeast. Many times the fees are enacted to create a new revenue source for local government. In lieu of increasing taxes on the voting residential population, the corporate community is mined for more money.

The Researcher is not aware of excessive fees and assessments which are being levied in Hale County which might be a negative issue for a primary business.

Action Item: There is no specific action the community needs to take regarding this issue relative to economic development.

Business Climate

The overall business climate is a reflection of how cooperative local government is with its primary employers. In some communities, there is an adversarial relationship between government employees and the business sector. Some of this is caused by the “political philosophy” of the government workers, perhaps at the direction of elected officials. In today’s political arena, it is not uncommon for a government worker to carry the position “business is evil.” In fact, along the eastern and western seaboards of this county, this attitude is pervasive.

As a result, many communities have not only levied excessive fees and taxes upon the business sector as previously mentioned, but have manifested a regulatory climate so restrictive primary employers must literally move from the area.

There will always be business people who will complain about local government, even in communities which are the most cooperative. However, research has shown the most frequent reason (aside from market conditions) a primary business will move from one community to another is how it has been treated over the years by the community. The community, in this case, is usually local government.

Participants at the Summit scored the “business climate” as above average. No specific issues negative issues were identified.

Overall, the Researcher has found the Hale County government officials to have a “positive” attitude toward economic development and the business community in general.

Action Item – Business Climate: Local governments should evaluate their laws, rules, and regulations to determine which add to the costs of operating by the primary employers in the area to determine if they are necessary.

Task: Within one year an independent task force shall be created to evaluate the overall business climate in Hale County as it influences primary employers. Included in the examination should be issues identified by the primary employers which are controlled locally.

Quality of Life

Quality of life in essence refers to the “livability” of an area. In this regard, beauty is in the eye of the beholder. The residents of virtually every community in the United States believe where they live is the best place to be. There is nothing wrong with this as community pride is very important.

Community assets	Community POLICOM	
A. Climate	3.7	4.0
B. Health care	3.7	3.5
C. Cultural amenities	2.8	2.8
D. Recreational opportunities	2.8	2.8

However, some communities indeed have more “amenities” than others. These might include more parks, better schools, walking paths, abundant recreation programs, museums and other cultural facilities. In communities which do not have such amenities, if you asked the residents “would you like them” most would say yes. Then ask if they are willing to pay for them. The answer is usually no.

Communities with the greatest amount of quality of life amenities are usually those with the strongest economies. They have the parks and museums because there is more wealth in the area to pay for such things.

The importance of “quality of life” issues relative to economic development has been overstated in recent years. Some economic development consultants have advocated that the “livability” of an area is the most important site selection criteria. It is not. A company must first consider all of the economic issues stated earlier in this Plan before examining “quality of life” issues. If an area does not show itself to be a profitable location, all of the parks and museums in the world will not influence the decision to move to an area.

However, that does not mean Hale County would not enjoy having more “quality of life” amenities.

Action Item – Quality of Life: By improving the quality and increasing the size of the economy, more money will be available to fund quality of life amenities. There is no specific action the community needs to take regarding this issue relative to economic development.

Community Education

The fifth most important issue identified at the Summit was: *Create a positive community attitude toward developing the economy.*

Few areas have been able to implement a successful economic development program without the support of the “community.” Unfortunately, long term community support for an economic development program is not easily attained.

Economic development is inherently a very quiet business. Dealings with out of town clients and communications with existing primary employers are usually kept confidential. The marketing program is directed outside of the area. As a result, the community at-large knows little if anything regarding the activity of the local economic development organization.

The term “economic development” is usually not understood by most people. Few people understand the nature of a local economy, how primary employers import the money and consumptive employers use the money. As a result, when individuals do not understand something, they sometimes resist it.

In order to be successful, the community must support the program, politically and financially.

As a result, all other stakeholders in a strong economy need to launch an ongoing community education program. The program should describe the implications of not working to improve the economy, how it will gradually decline, and its impact upon virtually every facet of the community.

The Plan itself should be explained, why each program is needed, who will do it, and especially why it will cost what it does. Most importantly, the benefits of being successful should be thoroughly presented.

Community education is vital in order to secure a dedicated funding source for the program.

Action Item – Community Education:

- Several presentations to the community regarding the need for and the content of the Plan should be given by the leadership of the community. At these presentations, representatives of all branches of government, the educational system, and the business community should be participants, demonstrating a unity of effort.
- Copies of the Economic Development Plan and all supporting studies should be made available to the general public.
- A truncated, simple brochure detailing the major features of the Plan should be mass produced and distributed community wide.
- Community forums regarding the economy and the status of the implementation of the Plan should be held on a regular basis.

Task: Within six months of the adoption of the Plan, the community will be provided with a series of presentations regarding the need for and the content of the Plan. Included in the presentations will be a discussion of future funding sources to finance the program activities.

Task: On an annual basis, the entire community will be invited to participate in a gathering to discuss the status of the implementation of the Plan. Additionally, on a continuing basis, business and government organizations should reinforce the need for a comprehensive economic development program.

Economic Development Program

Economic development is the process or activity which increases the size and improves the quality of a local economy through the formation of new primary industry jobs.

A comprehensive economic development program includes three basic activities. A community needs to implement all of the programs as they are of equal importance. They include:

- Existing Industry Program.
- Marketing – Attraction Program.
- Start-Up Program.

Existing Industry Program

One of the most important yet least expensive economic development programs is the Existing Industry Program. The program is designed to retain and encourage the expansion of contributory businesses already present in the area.

This is accomplished by reducing the cost of doing business and expanding the markets as much as possible for these companies. The more profitable a company is in the area, the more likely the company will remain and expand in the community.

Research has shown, aside from market conditions, the principal reason a company moves from one community to another is “local community attitude.” Local community attitude encompasses a wide range of factors from local taxation, fees, and regulatory requirements.

However, many times “attitude” is simply how the company is treated by the community when the company has a local problem. Persistent problems for a company, large or small, add costs and time to the operation of the business, which motivates the company to seek another location when it needs to expand or retool.

Every effort should be made to reduce the costs of being located in the community for the company. This will enable the company to be more profitable, thus more likely to remain and expand in the area.

The most important element of an Existing Industry Program is quality, confidential communication between the economic development organization and the employer. This leads to problem solving activity for the employer by the economic development organization.

Communities sometimes underestimate the importance of the Existing Industry Program. Since it is more “glamorous” to recruit a new company to a community than to cause an existing company to expand, existing companies are often forgotten or ignored. Ironically, it is much easier to get an existing company to expand than to get a new company to move to an area.

As previously mentioned, an Existing Industry Program is the least expensive of the three economic development activities. For the most part, the costs of the program are driven by the salaries for the professional staff that develop the relationships with the primary employers and work to solve their problems. The Geographic – Economic issues previously discussed are important and typically come into play during the problem solving phase.

One of the first steps toward having a successful existing industry program is to identify the existing primary employers in a community. The large employers are obvious. However there likely a large number of small, five to ten job companies tucked away in a small warehouse or office building which are primary in nature which the community is not aware.

Hale County has several large, quality employers which require special attention. However, in 2010 there were 26 manufacturing companies, 51 wholesalers, 37 companies engaged in transportation and warehousing, and 4 corporate headquarters. Many of these are likely primary in nature. One means to determine if a company is primary is simple to go door to door in industrial areas and office buildings to simply ask companies “what do you do?”

The Moderate economic goal calls for the net gain of about 1,000 primary jobs by the year 2020. It is quite possible half of these jobs can come from existing primary employers in the county.

The Plainview - Hale County Industrial Foundation through its current Existing Industry Program has developed a good relationship with the major employers in the county.

However, the overall effort needs to be expanded.

Action Item – Existing Industry Program: The Existing Industry Program needs to be expanded by identifying all primary employers in the county and aggressively assisting them in reducing their costs relative to being located in Hale County.

Task: Within six months of the adoption of the Plan, the community will inventory and build a relationship with all primary businesses in the county.

Task: On an ongoing basis, the community will address the geographic – economic issues which are negatively impacting the existing primary employers and work to cure the problem.

Task: Any incentive programs offered to a new employer to locate to the county shall be equally presented to existing companies when appropriate.

Marketing Attraction Program

A Marketing Attraction Program is necessary to increase the number of contributory employers in Hale County. While new primary jobs will be created by the existing companies, new companies will be needed if the area is to reach any of the economic goals.

A Marketing – Attraction Program focuses upon business entities which are primary in nature and will pay a wage which will meet the goal.

The specific activities of an Attraction Program are very similar to those of a private company, which sells a product or service.

There are three basic steps:

- 1) determine what you have to sell,
- 2) identify who wants to buy what you have to sell, and
- 3) establish a plan to contact and sell to the potential buyers.

Most areas believe what they have to sell is a “community.” This is not the case. What an area has to sell is a geographic location, which has certain assets and characteristics, which influence the profitability of a private company.

The geographic economic issues previously discussed include many of these community characteristics.

A Marketing Attraction Program can be very expensive and time consuming. Visible results may not be seen for several years after its initiation. The actual list of marketing activities for a Marketing Attraction Program is very similar to that of a private company’s marketing - sales program.

The following are some of the marketing activities which most community programs include:

- Advertising in trade journals and industry magazines.
- Direct mail.
- Company cold calling.
- Company visitation program.
- Public Relations — Image Program.
- Attend trade shows of target industries.
- Attend association conferences of site selection professionals.
- Website geared to site selectors
- Develop a relationship with site selection consultants.

In addition to the above activities, many communities in the United States have created an “image” for their areas through a community marketing program. This is accomplished by community-wide usage of a “brand” or theme for the area.

Communities sometimes have exaggerated expectations when they initiate a marketing program. For some reason, some community leaders fully believe within a couple months after an advertisement appears in a trade magazine a business will move to the area. Usually the process takes several years to yield quality, consistent results.

The Plainview - Hale County Industrial Foundation conducts a minimal Marketing Attraction Program.

It is an active participant in the High Ground of Texas which is a marketing consortium of 75 west Texas communities. This is a very good organization but its efforts are not directed to Hale County. Continued participation is highly recommended.

In order to achieve the Aggressive or Moderate goal for the county this program will have to be significantly expanded.

But not right away!

The annual milestones for new primary jobs for Hale County in the first three years are not very high. This is because the likelihood of creating more jobs than what the milestones require is relatively remote as a result of the national recession and the fact the area is not prepared relative to skilled labor or the availability of improved industrial real estate.

Through the expenditure of hundreds of thousands of marketing dollars the community might get the “attention” of a company which needs 30 acres immediately (ready build, start tomorrow) and wants to hire 200 people. The company will look at Hale County and say “Where’s the 30 acres and where is the labor.” The company will promptly remove the area from its list because the land is not ready and labor is likely not available.

The community is basically in the position of trying to open an automobile dealership while not having any cars on the lot.

The most significant downside to prematurely initiating an expensive marketing program which will likely yield little or no results will be a negative community reaction to the economic development program. “We spent all of this money and nothing happened” will be the cry of many in the area. Consequently, this could cause the collapse of the entire program.

This does not mean Hale County should not expand its marketing effort at the present time, but initially it should be limited until the community has its cars on the lot.

Action Item – Marketing Attraction Program: The Marketing Attraction Program should be expanded in two phases:

Phase one should be initiated as soon as possible. This includes activities which are low in cost to the community. These might include a direct mail program to targeted companies, piggy backing on state of Texas marketing programs, and developing a relationship with site selection consultants letting them know “Plainview is coming soon.”

One simple marketing task which needs to be accomplished is the expansion of the information on the current website.

Community site selection by a company is a process of elimination, not inclusion. The site selector begins with a certain “universe” of areas such as Texas and Oklahoma. Then the selector begins to remove from the list communities which do not meet minimum criteria.

A great deal of this initial research is done via the internet. The first thing the research wants to see on a community’s website is if the community meets the real estate requirement. If the company needs 20 acres and the website does not show 20 acres is available, most of the time the community will be dropped from the list. The site selector does not have the time to call 200 communities to ask about land availability.

If the real estate requirement is met the researcher will want data on utility costs, property taxes, and a host of other issues. This information must be on the website or once again the area will be dropped.

Task: Within six months the Plainview Hale County Economic Development Foundation will initiate an expanded marketing program pending funding.

Task: Within three months the Plainview Hale County Economic Development Foundation expand the content of the website.

Phase two should be conducted after the community is secure it can deliver to the company what the company needs. The most important of these issues is improved real estate and a trainable workforce.

A comprehensive program should be initiated which includes specialized advertising, trade show participation, site selection consultant visits, company visits and cold calling, and community branding.

Task: During the second year, a comprehensive marketing plan will be created to be initiated when the community is comfortable it can deliver its “product” in a timely fashion.

Start-Up Program

Nurturing home grown companies, which are contributory in nature, is becoming more and more popular throughout the United States. Understanding that Microsoft was once a “start-up” company, communities are placing greater and greater emphasis on “growing their own” economy.

A business start-up program under the economic development program is not a general “business assistance program” popular in most communities. Those programs are designed to help a person start any kind of business. The Small Business Administration, local community college, and even the Chamber of Commerce many times have programs which guide a person in establishing general businesses from a travel agency to a plumbing supply store to a restaurant.

An economic development program is concerned with creating new companies which, when they evolve, will be primary or contributory in nature. They will eventually sell their products or services outside the area and not be dependent upon the local economy. They will import wealth to the area.

There are several elements relating to a “Start-Up” program.

Facility or Incubator (Accelerator/Creativity Center/Innovation Center):

One of the most important features is to have a facility in which a company is formed and a product or service is developed. The space provided to a company is usually relatively small, 500 to 2,000 square feet. The tenants typically share equipment and machines. It is in the incubator where the company develops its product or service, determines the market, and raises the capital to create the business. The rent to the company can be subsidized, but the trend is not to reduce rent, but to provide technical services instead.

Business and Technical Counseling:

Many great ideas never find their way to the market place as the individual has no idea how to do it. Additionally, most “ideas” are not great, and have no market potential. One of the most important features of a successful start-up program is the advice and counsel by individuals with experience in how to take a new idea and cause a company to be created.

The counseling involves examining the marketability of the product or process, production methodology, running patent searches, teaching the principles how to run a business, and explaining how to be an “entrepreneur.”

The team filters the businesses and determines which are appropriate to enter the “incubator.” The team also monitors the progress of the enterprise, providing needed technical, marketing, and administrative expertise when needed.

University Relationship:

Typically the most successful Start-Up programs are in communities which have a relationship with a major research university. The new company is able to interface with experts in the field in which the company is pursuing, learning about the latest technology and ideas. Many universities will partner with the incubator start-up program, allowing access to equipment and student assistants.

Absent a four-year university, the incubator can have a relationship with the local community college.

Venture Capital (Angel Network/Seed Funding):

In order for the company to begin operations in the incubator or expand outside, venture capital or business financing needs to be available.

Hale County

Even in small communities, programs to encourage new primary companies to development have been successful.

Hale County should not attempt to bear the costs of initiating a comprehensive Start-Up Program. This would involve securing a building and employing staff to serve an “unknown” and very small marketplace of potential inventors or entrepreneurs.

However, the community needs to have a Start-Up program as it is possible, by 2030 primary companies could be created locally which will employ between 200 and 300 people.

Presently there is not an incubator associated with Texas Tech. This is unfortunate for that community as there is certainly potential for new company development.

There is a highly successful incubator associated with West Texas A&M.

The West Texas A&M Enterprise Center located in Amarillo is a prototype incubator which focuses only on companies which are primary in nature. It has been extremely successful and is on the verge of a major expansion of its facilities. Sage Oil Vac, Inc. was incubated in this center in 2002 and now has a 24,000 square foot facility in Amarillo.

Representatives of the West Texas A&M Enterprise Center have advised POLICOM it is willing to advise and counsel Hale County on the nature of an incubator and to discuss developing a relationship.

Action Item – Start-Up Program: Steps for creating a Start-Up Program should be initiated.

Task: Representatives from Hale County should meet with representatives of the West Texas A&M Enterprise Center to discuss what type of joint program can be created.

Economic Development Organization

The economic development programs are implemented by one or more local economic development organizations. The organizational structure of a local economic development group varies among communities. Some areas have more than one organization. Typically they fall into one of the following types:

- Government office through the county or city or a stand alone government authority.
- Chamber of Commerce or a division within the Chamber of Commerce.
- Private, not-for-profit Corporation solely dedicated to economic development.

Funding for the organization can come solely from government, the private sector through investment, or a combination of both.

One of the important keys to successful economic development programs is having a “dedicated” or consistent source of funding year to year.

A shortage of “capital” for many business enterprises can cause their failure, as is the case for some economic development organizations. An economic development organization which has to constantly spend staff time and resources to raise money for its survival usually are not able to fully implement all three of the economic development programs.

Plainview Hale County Economic Development Foundation

While many of the geographic economic issues discussed will have to be address by the community at large, implementing the economic development programs will be the responsibility of the Plainview Hale County Economic Development Foundation (Foundation).

The Foundation is funded by Hale County and the City of Plainview.

Economic Development Program	Community	POLICOM
Retention Program	2.4	3.0
Marketing Program	2.6	2.0
Start-Up Program	2.0	1.0
Funding	2.1	2.0
Current Structure	2.7	4.0
Overall Program	2.4	3.0

Summit participants did not rate the programs of the Foundation very high. This is not surprising as the community has been supporting a minimal effort for several years.

Staffing for the Foundation includes one paid professional and a shared assistant. Funding for program activities has not been sufficient to undertake any of the programs very well.

The community realizes this which is one of the reasons this Plan is being created.

At the Summit the participants identified *increasing funding for the economic development program* as the fourth most important issue to improve the local economy.

At the Summit the participants were asked the following question:

If a comprehensive economic development program will cost between \$500,000 and \$1,000,000 annually, exclusive of land development and incentives, from where should the funding for the program come? (Insert a percentage)

Foundation Funding Sources	%
Private sector.	24.7
County government.	24.6
School system.	11.0
City governments.	22.6
Dedicated Sales tax.	20.0
Community College or University	8.2

The general consensus among Summit participants was that the cost of the program should be shared by several different groups.

The issue of increased funding needs to be addressed by the community.

Action Item - Plainview Hale County Economic Development Foundation: The community needs to provide a dedicated, consistent source of funding to the Foundation of sufficient revenue to expand the economic development program.

Task: For the next two years funding from the City of Plainview and Hale County should be increased to enable the employ of an intern(s) and to expand the Marketing Program. In addition to the current programs, staff time will be directed to addressing the geographic economic issues identified in the Plan.

Task: During the second year, the community will identify a dependable source of funding to expand the economic development program including the Marketing Program.

Business Incentives

More and more communities have come to the realization primary employers are the wealth generators for their communities. As a result, more and more are aggressively recruiting these businesses to their areas. An integral part of the process is offering financial incentives to these companies to defray the costs related to expanding in or locating to an area.

Offering financial inducements to locate in Hale County will be essential. Given the county's remote location, the community will literally have to "buy an economy."

The principle motivation for a company to move the area will be that it will cost much less in Plainview than in Amarillo or Lubbock or another place in the Texas.

This is the reality of the situation.

Attempting to "buy an economy" is not unusual. Over the last twenty years, the bio-medical industry has exploded. Much of the manufacturing of new medical related products (medicines – equipment) occurred in areas and states where extensive bio-medical research was being conducted.

The Florida university system lagged most states in bio-medical research. Consequently the industry did not flourish in the state. As a result, Florida elected to "buy" the research so to speak to enable the growth of the industry in the state.

In 2003 Florida enticed California based Scripps Research Institute to establish a research facility in the state. The state and Palm Beach County each contributed \$250 million dollars to provide free land, free building, free laboratory equipment, and salaries for about 500 people for at least three years to cause the Scripps Florida to be established.

A \$300 million package was then given to the Sanford-Burnham Institute to locate in Orlando along with a \$50 million package to the Torrey Pines Institute for Molecular Studies which located in Port St. Lucie.

To build the Hale County economy, significant financial incentives to companies will be necessary at least during the first eight years of the plan.

Sometimes communities are apprehensive about granting incentives to companies as their fear the money will be wasted, that the company will not produce the jobs or pay the wages as promised. This was sometimes the case several years ago.

Today's modern incentive packages include legal safeguards called "claw backs" which essentially awards incentives after the company has performed or enables the community recapture what has been invested if the company does not perform.

Determining whether or not to award an incentive is typically based upon criteria the economic benefit or impact the company will have on the economy. The greater the impact, the greater the incentive.

At the Summit participants identified *creating an incentive program for existing and new primary employers* as the third most important issue to improve the local economy.

At the Summit, participants were asked:

How important are the following criteria relative to giving a company an "incentive?" - with 5 being very important and 1 not important.

Importance	
Primary employer	4.2
Wages to be paid - % of area average	3.8
Square feet of building per worker	2.8
Capital investment per worker	3.4
Workers per acre	2.7
Renovation of existing building	3.8
Payroll per acre	3.0
Real property tax per acre (new money)	4.0

From this information, in order to receive an incentive the community wants the company to be a primary employer and will take into consideration the amount of real property taxes which will be generated, the wages paid by the company, and whether the company will renovate an existing building.

After a community decides on criteria for awarding an incentive, the type of incentive needs to be determined. There are a host of incentives being offered by communities throughout the United States. The following are some of them:

- Full or partial property tax refund.
- Full or partial grant for the purchase of land or building.
- Full or partial grant for the purchase of equipment.
- Low interest loan for the purchase of land, building, equipment.
- Industrial Development Revenue Bonds.
- Full or partial cost of worker training.
- Expedited permitting.
- Regulatory relief.

There are many more examples.⁵ What is important is not all companies need the same incentive and the community needs to have an array of incentives available.

⁵ When the Researcher practiced economic development, he once gave a company \$250,000 to pay for the trucks to move the company's machinery and equipment to his community from three small factories it was closing in other states.

Action Item – Business Incentives: The community needs create a business incentives program which includes multiple options based upon the economic impact of a company.

Task: Within the first year, the community will create an economic development incentives matrix which will identify the incentives which are offered by the community based upon specific criteria.

Task: During the planning process for the development of industrial real estate or a speculative building, the community needs to anticipate the property might be granted to a company at a discounted price, with proper recourse to the community.

This *Economic Development Strategic Plan* was created from the direct input of the Hale County community.

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