

# FORWARD WICHITA

An Economic Development Campaign from the **Wichita Metro Chamber of Commerce**

## The Challenge: **Competing to Win**

Wichita competes with 15,000 other communities for jobs, people and capital investment. And that's just in the United States. With the flattening of the world, global competition is fierce.

Almost four years ago business leaders answered the call to heighten our region's economic development competitiveness. Business committed to leading and funding job recruitment and retention and workforce development. We were playing catch-up to our most serious competitors. Today our success story is recognized locally and nationally.

But the world doesn't stand still. Other communities continue to improve their product and so must metro Wichita. We must venture boldly. We must build on the success we have in new jobs and investment. Our future success depends on our ability to compete for jobs, investment and talent. We must think long-term and work together to be better each year.

In 2003 and 2004, 129 companies stepped forward and pledged \$3.7 million to fund economic development efforts. The public sector has worked closely with us to achieve our success story.

## Forward Wichita: **Reaching the Next Level**

Forward Wichita is about building our economic future. We are seeking five-year funding commitments for 2008 through 2012 with funding for GWEDC for 2009 - 2013. Each initiative leverages our success and looks to our current and future competitive advantage.

We accomplished much in our first effort with:

- Job recruitment and retention plus capital investment through GWEDC
- Talent recruitment and retention

After talking with business leaders and surveying the competition, we are adding:

- Advanced materials initiative
- Visioneering Wichita long-term plan
- Brand Wichita community identity

We are committed to winning the competitive race for talent and prosperity. And, we are committed to measuring our efforts and holding each other accountable.

## **Key Accomplishments** – *Business at Full Throttle*

### **Greater Wichita Economic Development Coalition**

- 6,800 jobs retained and recruited through 38 projects by December 2006
- 85% of promised 8,000 jobs secured
- Average wage that exceeds the average Wichita metro wage
- Projected annual payroll nearly \$250 million
- Projected capital investment more than \$302 million
- Diversification with more than 78% of jobs outside of aviation manufacturing
- Return on public investment of 93.8%

### **Workforce Development**

- Workforce Solutions – one-stop access point for businesses to gain training and other human resource assets
- Young Professionals of Wichita – more than 2,000 members
- Support Jabara Campus and streamlined technical education system
- Flying in Formation collaborative engineer recruitment plan

# ForwardWichita Priorities

## JOBS

### Retain and Recruit Jobs and Capital \$3.04 million

More jobs, more wages, and more capital investment are the results for the next phase, with continued emphasis on quality as well as quantity of jobs, diversification and capital investment. Co-ownership of this initiative from our public partners is critical to remaining competitive.

## TALENT

### Retain and Recruit 21st Century Talent \$1.37 million

Attracting and keeping great talent is the key to success. Companies will locate where the right workers live. Forward Wichita will fund recruitment and retention services of professionals, offer seminars for our “front door” personnel to better advocate for Wichita, extend one-stop Workforce Solutions offerings and provide enhanced programming for Young Professionals of Wichita. We will help ensure a pipeline of students motivated to pursue high-skill training and aid in the success of the Jabara campus. These goals are designed to attract and develop needed talent for our region’s growth.

## VISION

### Realize Wichita’s Future \$1.3 million

For two decades, Wichita saw a decline in many measures, including our lack of regional growth, inability to retain young people and declining per capita income. In 2004, six founding partners stepped up to fund the Visioneering Wichita process. The grassroots participation was unprecedented. More than 15,000 people touched the planning and implementation process. Volunteers work on issues in 10 strategic alliances from entrepreneurship and small business to mentoring. The first city-to-city visit to Richmond, Virginia, brought together 60 community leaders.

Forward Wichita funding will advance the Visioneering Wichita process to achieve our long-range plans. The strength of Visioneering Wichita is in its volunteers, with hundreds meeting monthly to tackle our metro community’s greatest opportunities. The result will be long-term change in the benchmarks measured every year – from retaining our young people to increasing our per-capita income.

# ForwardWichita Priorities

continued

## IDENTITY

### Brand Wichita

**\$750,000**

The product we sell is Wichita. We sell it to companies, CEOs, employees, college students, tourists and each other. Other communities have developed common stories and messages to sell their competitive advantages. A strong identity can help a community make the short list – for recruiting new people, retaining young people, or convincing a company to locate in Wichita.

Forward Wichita will fund implementation of a community branding initiative, first with an internal community identity to foster community pride. The last two years of funding will move that message outside our community, telling the story of Wichita's competitive advantage.

## DIVERSIFICATION

### Develop Advanced Materials Cluster

**\$631,000**

As the home to the premier aviation manufacturing cluster, we know strong industry clusters bring economic prosperity. We have the opportunity to develop a second cluster in advanced materials, composites and polymers. This emerging cluster has the ability to both support our aviation manufacturing, while diversifying our economy. GWEDC formed a composites advisory group more than two years ago and conducted a feasibility study this past year.

Funding for this initiative would nurture and develop this emerging cluster by positioning Wichita as a center of excellence for advanced materials and polymers. Working closely with Wichita State University and its world-renowned National Institute for Aviation Research, GWEDC would aggressively market the center to companies, while coordinating cluster development efforts.

## Forward Wichita: Getting it Done

To accomplish the Forward Wichita program, the Wichita Metro Chamber of Commerce will also raise funds to cover the fund-raising expenses of staff and consultant fees (\$343,600), program administration expenses (\$250,000), and for possible cancellations (\$350,000).



**ForwardWichita Total**

**\$8.03 million**