

ISSUE 31 — SUMMER

SHELBY COUNTY Sizzles



Shelby County is celebrating its Bicentennial in 2019 followed by the City of Sidney's Bicentennial in 2020. All festivities will celebrate the rich history of Sidney and Shelby County.

Bicentennial Raffle and 50/50 Drawing

Aug. 22, 10:00 am
Buffalo Wild Wings

An Interesting (& Humorous) Journey Through Shelby Co's History

Sept. 12, 7:00 pm
Shelby Co. Court-

house

World Record Event

Sept. 18, 9:30 am
Sidney Memorial Sta-

dium

Shelby County Bicentennial MarketPlace

Sept. 28, 8:00 am
Shelby Co. Fair-

grounds

Bicentennial Tree Planting

Oct. 5, 12:00 pm
Shelby Co. Court-

house

The Fascinating History of Rumley, Ohio

“Placemaking” Strategy

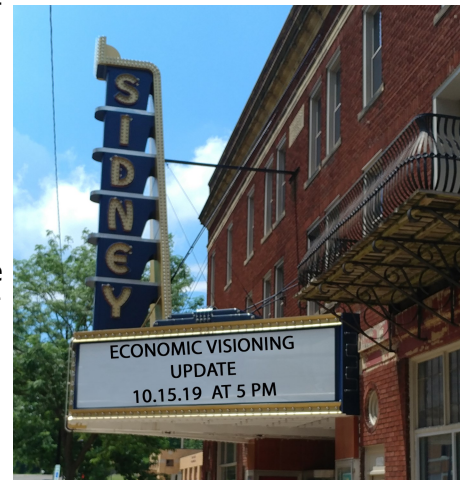
In late 2018, Sidney-Shelby Economic Partnership (SSEP) Board members along with city, county, and community leaders met for a half-day economic visioning session. After prioritization of the suggested areas of focus and importance, teams were formed to further identify solutions to 1) improve available housing, 2) enhance cooperation and partnerships, and 3) better market and brand the community.

A second visioning session was held on November 14 to review additional data and further cultivate an action plan to expand housing availability throughout Shelby County.

A team has been assembled to identify redevelopment tools, remove regulatory barriers and launch more amenities throughout Shelby County. We now refer to that activity as “Placemaking”.

Now that key teams have been assembled, community leaders are coming together to execute strategies that will achieve the development results necessary to move the community forward. We are dedicating this edition of Shelby Sizzles to progress and future plans in this area.

We will be holding a community report meeting at 5:00 pm on October 15th at the Historic Sidney Theatre. I encourage you to attend and learn more about the important work that is taking place in our community.



Influencing the Conversation

One of several outcomes derived from a community visioning session organized by the Sidney-Shelby Economic Partnership suggested that Sidney has an opportunity to improve its public perception and could benefit from a strategic and deliberate effort to reshape its image through a rebranding initiative.

The Sidney-Shelby County Chamber of Commerce and Sidney Visitors Bureau offered to take the lead in this undertaking and organized a committee of local volunteers who each have professional expertise in the disciplines of marketing and communications.

After a great deal of study and consideration, the committee sent Requests for Proposal (RFP) to five consulting agencies that have demonstrated expertise in place branding

and community branding projects. As the committee felt strongly that a fresh, out-of-town perspective would serve its interests best, none of the consultants contacted were resident agencies in Sidney or Shelby County.

In addition to other things, the RFP requires the selected agency to conduct a comprehensive study to understand the perceptions of Sidney from both a resident's and visitor's perspective. "We want our brand to be au-



thentic and genuine", says committee leader Jeff Raible. "As importantly, if we have issues, we want to address them head on in pursuit of creating an improved quality of life for those residing in and around Sidney". The RFP also requires the selected agency to assist the committee with developing a brand, a brand narrative, and if necessary, a tag line for the City.

RFPs were sent to each of the identified agencies in mid-June. The agencies have been asked to submit their proposals by early August at which time the committee will review them and select the consulting organization best suited to managing this project.

Sidney City Schools Receives

"Expanding Opportunities for Each Child" Grant



*Bob Humble, Supt.
Sidney City Schools*

Sidney City School District has received a \$700,000 grant from the Ohio Department of Education for "Expanding Opportunities for Each Child." The proposal, set for the next three years, is designed to expand access to and enrollment in construction and manufacturing coursework for students through the development of career pathways, while aligning with Sidney's continuous improvement plans.

Sidney City Schools has collaborated with the Workforce Partnership Program through a workforce readiness class to introduce middle school and high school students to 21st-century work skills through the Workforce Academy. On-site visits to businesses, job shadowing, internships and gaining awareness of the range of opportunities for employment and community service within Shelby County is a part of the curriculum.

"Workforce Partnership is excited to be a part of this tremendous collaboration between education and industry. We anticipate this funding will provide an improved path for students to connect to local careers and learn important skills needed in the workforce", said Deb McDermott, Workforce Partnership Director.

The program will continue to expand, serving students at Sidney High School and the Opportunity School through partnerships with the Upper Valley Career Center, Rhodes State College, and the Midwest Regional Educational Service Center. Building upon Workforce Academy, it will include advanced hands-on activities leading students to an industry-recognized credentialed pathway in construction or manufacturing, as well as the opportunity to fulfill new graduation requirements.

Every student, equipped with an individualized academic and career plan, will be challenged to discover and learn. As students pursue a fulfilling career path; they will be empowered to become a resilient, lifelong learner who contributes to society.

Grant funds will be used to contract instructors; provide professional development or training of staff; acquire equipment and materials as needed; and support Parent Project classes, which provide curriculum and support for parents to address destructive adolescent behaviors.

"As we continue to try to increase revenues and cut costs, we are so excited to receive such an important grant from The Ohio Department of Education. This grant will bolster our programs for our students that will strengthen and expand our partnerships with the local businesses and industry that makes Shelby County the incredible place it is", said Bob Humble, Superintendent of Sidney City Schools.

The grant steering committee is working to develop a comprehensive start-up and sustainability plan for the initiative, and demonstrate stakeholder engagement, which includes input from business and other community partners. They are also working to establish expectations for student-level outcomes.

For additional information for "Expanding Opportunities for Children," please contact Sybil Truster at the Midwest Regional Educational Service Center. Students may register for Workforce Academy courses through the Sidney High School counselors.

For additional information on the Workforce Partnership, visit www.workforcepartner.com. Follow us on Facebook @ Workforce Partnership of Shelby County and Instagram @ workforceshelbycounty.

Housing Initiative

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Improving available housing was the top economic development priority identified in the Community Visioning session in late 2018. Initial meetings focused on data collection and preparation for a second visioning session focused entirely on the housing issue.

In addition, SSEP created and distributed a housing survey which provided the backdrop for the November 14th session where 29 businesses and community leaders participated in a facilitated compression planning process that led to the following conclusions:

Perception--Need to identify the positives and change negative perceptions

Incentives--Further explore the role of incentives for housing development

Marketing/Create Awareness-- Need to market to younger population

Partnerships/Cooperation-- Cooperation with private developers is critical

Regulatory Restrictions-- Identify issues that hinder development & remove risk

Placemaking--How do we leverage downtowns and build more a sense of place

Create a Plan--Stay the course and be patient



In February, eight local developers met to discuss issues facing housing development in the area. They identified key market segments, rated the risk level, and established the following roadmap:

1. Talent attraction is a challenge for our companies & affordable housing is a key factor.
2. Subdivision development and carrying cost have increased to a point that developers can't make the numbers work.
3. Developers need municipal cooperation and flexibility to reduce development costs.
4. Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) incentives are needed to reduce costs.
5. Density will need to be addressed to make middle-market homes more affordable.

Additional outcomes included the need for more market-rate housing that aligns with the millennial market and organizing a private-public partnership to encourage neighborhood revitalization.

In June, 40 community leaders participated in an overview of the middle-market development process by Mark Locke of Ryan Homes / NRV Inc. Mark outlined Ryan Home's process for entering the mid-range market for single family homes. He defined that mid-range as \$150,000 to 250,000.

Ryan Homes will build approximately 550 homes in the Dayton market this year. That market includes Middletown, West Milton, Springfield, Xenia, Huber Heights and Miami County. Ryan Homes conducted some internal research, but is not pursuing any expansion into the Sidney/Shelby County market at this time.

Presently, our plan is to reconvene and discuss next steps in the Housing Initiative. For more information or a copy of the Sidney-Shelby Housing Assessment, contact jhill@choosesidneyshelby.com.

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Thank you to our contributors:

SSEP; Kari Egbert, City of Sidney; Julie Ehemann, Shelby County; and Jeff Raible, Sidney-Shelby County Chamber. The publishers invite your comments, suggestions, story ideas, and sponsorship of future issues. If you have questions or concerns, please contact **Jim Hill** at jhill@choosesidneyshelby.com

* For a free digital copy of Shelby Sizzles, please visit www.choosesidneyshelby.com

Downtown Revitalization Affects Entire County

By: Julie Ehemann, County Com-

After several studies and focus groups, there are significant efforts underway to revitalize Sidney's downtown. As a County official, I am pleased to be a part of these efforts and hope everyone will understand how Sidney's Downtown Revitalization efforts affect the entire county.

As a Board member for SSEP (Sidney Shelby Economic Development) I have heard for many years that our local industry is unable to hire enough workers. A lot of the struggle is in finding talent across the full spectrum of employment, but particularly in the engineering, machine service, and management occupations. To attract these individuals to Shelby County we need to have the desired amenities and sense of place. More amenities would likely attract more people to relocate to Shelby County from the larger communities where they currently reside and entice those currently residing here to stay.

County Economic Development is important for many reasons. Shelby County is mandated by the State to provide many vital services. We are constantly looking for additional revenue in order to meet these mandates but are loath to ask for additional revenue through tax levies. We know that attracting new persons and businesses to the county will assist in increasing our revenues through sales and property taxes.

These two income sources are the life-blood for our county's overall operations.

In addition, having more housing and businesses in our downtown will help to avoid urban sprawl and assist in keeping our valuable farm-ground in agricultural production.

An exciting aspect of downtown revitalization is the prospect of new businesses opening that will become destinations for shopping and entertainment. If Sidney is attractive to our own residents as a destination, we can work to attract non-residents (tourists and visitors) to our downtown to help in our overall economic vitality.

It's an exciting time for Sidney; I hope others can feel energized and participate in these efforts too!

