



July 7, 2010

Executive Director – Growth Partnership for Ashtabula County

The Growth Partnership for Ashtabula County, Ohio, is seeking an Executive Director (ED) to establish and implement a comprehensive economic development plan for the county; build collaborative partnerships with local, regional and state-wide economic development organizations; and to lead and manage the organization. The ED must be skilled in all aspects of running an economic development organization, and will work with the Board of Trustee in establishing, implementing and maintaining policies/procedures to achieve the overall mission of the organization while developing networks/partnerships with private and public stakeholders. Key responsibilities include development and implementation of a strategic plan, build collaborative partnerships with the public and private sector, lead an active business recruitment effort, lead a proactive retention process, seek new revenue sources to include grants, manage the organization staff and finances in a sound manner.

The successful candidate will have a track record of proven success and understanding of economic development, government relations, media and public relations, fiscal management, and possess a strong public presence with 5 to 10 years of economic development or related experience. A Bachelors degree is required, an advanced degree is preferred. A professional certification and/or further Economic Development accreditation (CEcD, EDFP) is highly desired. Residency in Ashtabula County will be required. Send or email (swilson1@kent.edu) cover letter, resume, references and compensation history to Sharon Wilson, Kent State University at Ashtabula, 3300 Lake Road West, Ashtabula, OH 44004.



**Growth Partnership for Ashtabula County
Executive Director Description
July 7, 2010**

Background

The growth of the County's economy and population prompted a thorough analysis by private and public sector leaders that led to the formation of a 501(c) (3) nonprofit economic development organization called Growth Partnership for Ashtabula County. Board trustees include representatives from manufacturing and service businesses, educational institutions and local governments. Growth Partnership for Ashtabula County's primary mission is to assist local companies to grow and expand along with attracting new business investment to the County. Growth Partnership for Ashtabula County plays the key leadership role in the County for economic development and serves as the first point of contact for site selection as well as marshalling major outreach and marketing programs for the County. The Board of Growth Partnership for Ashtabula County is beginning an effort to identify and recruit an Executive Director to the organization.

Reporting Relationships

The Executive Director reports to the Executive Committee of the 60 member Board of Trustees. This executive will recruit, train and manage a small professional and support staff.

Other important working relationships include: owners/executives of businesses with current operations in Ashtabula County; representatives of targets and prospects domestically and internationally; representatives and leaders of other community, business and academic organizations countywide; local (village, township city and county), state and national elected officials and their staffs; representatives of other economic development focused organizations in the Northeastern Ohio region such as Team NEO, chambers of commerce, port authorities and other entities; and members of the media. The Executive Director is involved with politically sensitive projects and major expansions with high-level interaction with executives at the 30+ township, village and city jurisdictions, senior ranking government officials and their staffs at the County, state and federal levels; local officials.

Major Duties and Responsibilities

- Develop and implement a strategic plan that includes long range and tactical goals, objectives and action plans to be approved by the board.

- Implement an active recruitment of new business to the County, from initial relationships, to development of the prospect and potential project, through creation of the "deal" with local economic developers, relocation and ultimate retention.
- Lead a proactive retention and expansion efforts by existing businesses in the County, beginning with fostering initial relationships and to working to develop the prospect and potential project through closure and ultimate retention.
- Provide leadership to the organization and stewardship to the financial partners while maintaining strong ongoing investor relations. Grow the revenue base through increased investment, expanded and/or improved other revenue opportunities and other sources.
- Build collaborative partnerships with key County and regional economic development organizations particularly the State of Ohio, county organizations.
- Administer the development and implementation of the annual activities and budgets for Growth Partnership for Ashtabula County, and require and monitor the procedures and reports necessary for sound management.
- Represent County at official functions on the local, regional, state, national and international levels.
- Analyze reports and periodicals and contact officials and agencies to keep abreast of County facilities and services, commercial and industrial development, trends and methods of implementing business/community development.
- Advise the Board of economic development issues that affect the County's economic strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats on a regular basis.
- Recruit, orient, train, develop and supervise professional staff.
- Serve as an official spokesperson with the media and as primary liaison with elected and appointed governmental officials, major trade and professional organizations and other constituencies.
- Work closely with and/or share leadership with Ashtabula County Port Authority.

Qualifications

- A bachelor's degree is required; an advanced degree in business, law, public administration or related discipline is preferred. A CECD or EDPF designation is desirable.
- Five to ten years of successful economic development and/or related experience.
- Willing to reside in the county.

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

- *Economic development:* has coordinated with public sector delivery systems and private sector resources to effectively promote the economic development of a significant community, county or region.
- *Government relations:* experience in the process of local, state, regional and national government and government organizations.
- *Fiscal management:* demonstrated ability to manage financial affairs of an organization.

- *Communication*: strong background in interacting and communicating with multiple audiences at the public, private and media level.
- *Organization management*: ability to analyze, assess and direct operations for the entire organization; establish and implement program procedures, policies or guidelines. Experience with governance issues and Board of Director interactions.
- *Public/Private relationships*: demonstrated track record of developing effective partnerships between the public and private sector.
- *Community/regional development*: effectively manages interactions with community and regional organizations.
- *Management experience*: strong human resource and staff development skills, can effectively coach, mentor and empower a staff and create a team focus.
- *Strategic planning*: experience in developing and implementing strategic plans.
- *Entrepreneurial*: takes initiative; a proactive person who demonstrates leading edge thinking.
- *Technology*: has actively promoted enhancements and expansion of technology with an emphasis on manufacturing capabilities and knowledge-based job creation.

Personal Traits

- *Collaborative*: demonstrates a willingness and ability to work with and through others; values consensus-building.
- *Communication skills*: excellent listener; outstanding written and oral communication skills; effective presentation skills to multiple audiences.
- *Leadership*: a take charge individual with vision and the means to get there; can lead change, manage, motivate, challenge and delegate to others.
- *Energetic*: a self-starter; genuinely enthusiastic; strong personal work ethic.
- *Organization skills*: results oriented; meets established goals and objectives.
- *Ethical*: possesses honesty, integrity and the highest ethical and moral standards.
- *Analytical*: a problem-solver with the ability to analyze problems carefully and conceptualize solutions.
- *Political savvy*: able to maneuver through complex situations effectively and quietly to leverage local, regional, state and federal economy and resources.
- *Strategic thinker*: has the vision to see beyond daily operations toward broader strategic goals; understands "the big picture".

Performance Measures and Accountability

To be determined