

The Ocala/Marion County Chamber and Economic Partnership (CEP) was formed with the goal of creating a one-stop approach to business retention, attraction and creation efforts. *Moving Forward* is our charge and it reflects our desire to be a unified voice and catalyst for the business community. By working together with our partners and community investors, we will continue to improve our quality of life and build a strong base for economic development in Marion County.

The CEP recognizes and embraces its mission as the Chamber and Economic Partnership for all of Marion County. As a result, five strategic program areas will set the aggressive and forward-thinking direction for CEP. These program areas will be intentional in ensuring that initiatives and activities will be held throughout the county; will be reflective of the needs of businesses throughout the county; and, will benefit businesses throughout the county.

MOVING FORWARD

BUSINESS RETENTION

CEP strongly believes that a vibrant and proactive Business Retention program is an integral part of having a prosperous community. The Business Retention program will strive to accomplish the following three goals:

1. **retain** existing businesses with two distinct focuses: Primary Employers (manufacturers, distribution centers, and back office operations) and Second Stage Small to Medium Businesses (approximately 300-325 businesses combined);
2. **expand** employment and **increase** investment in capital and workforce by these businesses;
3. **promote** the existing business base as the area's number one recruitment tool and source of both lead generation and product improvement.

CEP Five-Year Goals

**3500
NEW JOBS**

AVERAGING 115%
OF THE
COUNTY'S AVERAGE WAGE

**\$225 MILLION
IN CAPITAL INVESTMENT**

MISSION

TO BE THE CATALYST FOR A PROSPEROUS COMMUNITY

BUSINESS ATTRACTION

CEP will aggressively market our area's assets directly to company decision-makers and key influencers including site selection consultants.

The five target sectors preliminarily identified for the area include:

- > Logistics
- > Advanced Manufacturing—Food
- > Advanced Manufacturing—Aerospace
- > Back Office Operations—
Special Focus on Finance
and Logistics
- > Equine Business

BUSINESS SERVICES

The lifeblood of CEP is our 1200+ partners. The vast majority of these are small businesses whose stated goal in partnering with CEP is networking and growing their businesses.

Business Services will ensure that the needs of our partners, in particular small businesses, are met through three initiatives:

1. Structured networking events and forums;
2. Talent and workforce development;
3. Educational opportunities.

BUSINESS CREATION

A truly prosperous community will not only attract new businesses and retain existing ones, but it will foster business creation.

The Power Plant business incubator has quickly developed a focus on technology and media related companies and fosters an environment which can and should attract other like start-ups. However, the CEP's efforts need to be broader.

The CEP will expand current business creation efforts to include not only the Power Plant Business Incubator but assistance to all existing and prospective entrepreneurs by having staff to assist them throughout the process.

BUSINESS ADVOCACY

CEP is an organization of business, promoting business, and representing the needs of business.

Advocating to local, state and federal officials on behalf of local businesses is a natural and necessary role for the CEP.

While this may include advocating for or against certain proposals or plans, it will NOT include the endorsement of candidates. However, it may include hosting candidate forums and publishing their views on key issues as identified by partners and investors.

MOVING FORWARD