

# **C H A P T E R   V I I I**

## **DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The primary purpose of this chapter is to outline an economic development strategy, which will effectively guide and coordinate established economic development goals and objectives in an effort to improve the overall economy within the CAAG District. The previous chapter outlined the economic potentials and constraints that presently influence development initiatives throughout the CAAG District. This particular chapter incorporates these previously identified economic development potentials and constraints, and also incorporates the needs of individuals, development organizations, and governmental jurisdictions located throughout Gila and Pinal Counties in order to effectively implement sound economic development goals and objectives which are truly representative of the entire CAAG District. The compilation of District wide development goals and objectives are also based upon economic development trends that are expected to occur throughout the District.

The successful implementation of the District's economic development strategy will result in the creation of local and regional employment opportunities; an increase in the overall standard of living; continued economic diversification; the stabilization or expansion of the local tax base; and will also result in a higher level of economic cooperation and coordination among the District's residents, economic development groups and organizations, governmental entities, and various governmental agencies which are also concerned with economic development issues.

### **ECONOMIC TRENDS WITHIN THE DISTRICT**

Over the past several decades, the economic trends throughout Gila and Pinal Counties were not reliably conducive to the fostering and sustainment of activities, which promoted local and regional economic diversification necessary for strengthening the overall economic base of the economy. Many communities throughout Gila and Pinal Counties heavily relied upon cyclical, natural resource industries such as mining and agriculture. There was a minimal investment interest in rural areas by various governmental agencies, and the CAAG District as a whole placed little emphasis upon economic development training and planning, and maintained a lack of economic development initiatives which would have allowed for the promotion of economic growth at both the local and regional levels.

Recent economic development trends, which have occurred throughout the CAAG District, are considered more favorable than past initiatives. There has been an increasing awareness of economic development issues at both the community and regional levels, as more communities have begun to place a stronger emphasis upon economic development diversification. Such awareness has been stimulated by the formation of economic development groups and networks, recent state and federal initiatives directed at improving rural economies, and the increased industrial and business attraction policies presently being implemented by many of the District's economic development organizations. At the state level, the Arizona Department of Commerce has also been influential in enhancing economic development incentives through the designation of Gila and Pinal Counties as official Enterprise Zones, and through the implementation of the REDI (Rural Economic Development

Initiative) Program, which offers a number of economic development services to accredited communities.

With the exception of several communities, which are confronted by economic uncertainty, the overall economic outlook for the majority of communities within the CAAG District is considered to be favorable. Within Gila County, the Town of Payson is experiencing a substantial period of population growth, which is expected to generate an increasingly stable economic base for the northern region of the county. This is a trend that is expected to continue over the next ten to fifteen years.

During the 1980's, the economies of southern Gila County were predominantly dependant upon area mining activities. This dependence upon the mining sector resulted in serious regional economic decline when the copper industry began to downsize in the early 1990's. The industrial restructuring or downsizing process by the area mining companies resulted in massive employment reductions and substantial population losses as many people migrated out of the region in search of alternative employment opportunities. Recent economic development efforts throughout southern Gila County are expected to further diversify the area's economy, which will ultimately create additional employment opportunities and strengthen future economic development activities. Although mining still maintains a major presence in the region, existing employment levels within this particular sector are subject to fluctuations, and the vitality of the industry over a long-term duration cannot be permanently guaranteed.

The communities of Hayden and Winkelman also experienced serious population losses and economic decline over the decade of the 1990's due to the mining restructuring process, and have not been able to adequately recuperate from the overall economic hardships. Traditionally, communities that are primarily dependent upon this particular industry typically provide limited housing and additional services to accommodate the local mining industry's labor force, and are lacking well-structured economies, which offer an array of various alternative employment opportunities and services. Within the communities of Hayden and Winkelman, there is an immediate need to initiate a policy of diversifying the local economies by attracting residential, industrial, and commercial activities into the region. Both communities also have serious problems associated with the condition of the local housing stock, and in 1993, the Town of Winkelman experienced several days of severe flooding resulting in the complete destruction of one third of the Town's privately owned housing stock. The economic outlook for the Towns of Hayden and Winkelman primarily depends upon how effective the local communities will be in terms of diversifying the overall economic base of their respective communities, by encouraging economic activities, which are not dependent upon the mining industry.

Within Pinal County, the City of Casa Grande continues to increase in overall population. Due to an aggressive economic development business attraction program and its geographical situation upon centralized transportation routes, the City of Casa Grande has been able to successfully market itself, and is expected to provide the majority of the county's manufacturing, wholesale, and retail trade employment opportunities throughout the decade of the 1990's. As previously stated, the City of Casa Grande contains a municipal airport, and several industrial park locations to accommodate commercial and industrial activity. Residential development within the City of Casa Grande is also expected to increase with the attraction of additional employment opportunities. The economic outlook for the City of Casa Grande in the majority of industrial sectors is expected to remain favorable throughout the decade.

Aside from the City of Casa Grande, within central Pinal County the Cities of Coolidge and Eloy are also affiliated with what is commonly referred to as the Greater Casa Grande Valley region. As discussed in Chapter III, the Greater Casa Grande Economic Development Foundation is an organization, which compositely represents the Cities of Casa Grande, Coolidge, and Eloy in matters relating to the attraction of various forms of commercial and industrial activities into the region. Recent economic development efforts within the region have been extremely positive, as many out of state companies have began to inquire about possible relocation to the region. The City of Eloy is geographically situated upon Interstate Highway 10, and contains available lands for industrial development. The City of Eloy also contains a municipal airport, direct access to railways and the interstate highway system, and also contains a 267-acre industrial park. The City of Coolidge is presently in need of funding for the development of utility infrastructure to lands, which have been delineated specifically for industrial usage. Such an investment within the community would be extremely advantageous for the support of industrial activities and the overall enhancement of employment opportunities. The Cities of Coolidge and Eloy were traditionally dependent upon agriculture for their general economic support. However, since the early 1990's, there has been an increase in the amount of people employed within the construction and manufacturing sectors. This particular employment trend within the Cities of Coolidge and Eloy is anticipated to continue through the end of the decade.

The newly incorporated western Pinal County community of Maricopa is experiencing phenomenal growth. In the year 2000, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated the population of the Maricopa area to be 1,040. The City has grown to an estimated population of 33,923. Along with this growth, major retail has developed providing employment within this sector. Much of the land that had been utilized for agriculture has been re-developed into housing, though there is still an agricultural presence in the area. Additionally, a company that produces bio-diesel has constructed a facility nearby.

The majority of governmental employment opportunities within Pinal County are contained within the Town of Florence, which functions as the Pinal County seat. Many county administrative offices are located in the Town of Florence, as well as several state and federal agencies. The largest governmental employer within the Town is the Arizona Department of Corrections, which operates one of the larger maximum-security prisons located in the State of Arizona. The Arizona Department of Corrections has discussed the possibility of expansion at the Florence prison site, which would result in additional employment opportunities in the town. The Town of Florence is expected to remain a community with an economy primarily based upon county, state, and federal activity.

The economic outlook for the eastern Pinal County mining communities of Kearny, Mammoth, and Superior is very similar to the communities of Hayden and Winkelman, which are located within Gila County. Over the decade of the 1990's, each of these particular communities lost population as a result of employment reductions in the mining industry. Although recent population estimates indicate that these communities will stabilize in terms of overall population, it is necessary for each community to strengthen their respective economies by diversifying the local economic base through industrial and commercial attraction, and by strengthening existing businesses to ensure further community success. The economic outlook for these communities indicates that mining will still remain as a viable form of employment. However, more of an emphasis has been focused upon attracting services, which enhance the overall quality of life, and additional non-mining related industries, which provide quality employment opportunities for local residents.

The City of Apache Junction increased from a total population of 18,092 people in 1990, to a total population of 31,814 people in 2000. This represents a total increase in population of approximately 75.8 percent over the decade of the 1990's. The City of Apache Junction's growth can be attributed to activities directly related to regional tourism, and an increasing number of retirement-aged individuals who have relocated into the community, or reside within the community on a seasonal basis. Due to the fact that the City of Apache Junction is located at the beginning of the famous Apache Trail, and functions as a transitional point in between Metropolitan Phoenix and the recreational areas of Tonto National Forest, the community is expected to maintain increasing levels of tourist-related activities, which will tremendously benefit the local economic base. Aside from local tourism, the local economy has also experienced a high amount of growth in construction and retail trade activities. The economic outlook for the City of Apache Junction is expected to remain favorable over the decade, with increased activity expected in construction, services, and retail trade. The manufacturing sector of the local economy is also expected to experience significant increases in the future.

Recent trends in the CAAG economy suggest that an increasing number of employment opportunities will be created in the construction; manufacturing; wholesale and retail trade; and service sectors of the overall economy. Agricultural and mining employment opportunities are not expected to remain stable, and the governmental sector will contain moderate increases. Regional economic development organizations promoting industrial attraction and retention activities will continue to foster and sustain industrial employment opportunities in the future. In addition, tourism-related activity is expected to increase and play a more important role in the economies of Gila and Pinal Counties throughout the decade.

## **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

The strategic planning process within the CAAG District identifies the potentials and constraints facing the local and regional economies, and assesses individual, organizational, and governmental needs in an effort to successfully implement a District wide economic development planning strategy which will enhance the overall economy. After an in-depth analysis of the CAAG District's economy, a development strategy ensuring future growth and prosperity was formulated for Gila and Pinal Counties, which outlines specific goals and objectives for selected economic components pertaining to industrial development; financing; transportation; education; planning; public services and facilities; tourism and recreation; and agriculture and water resources.

Input for the development strategy was derived from the CAAG Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Steering Committee, local citizenry response, and advisory input from various professionals throughout the District. Within each category, a stated economic development goal has been established in an effort to guide the development and implementation of the desired overall strategy for the CAAG District; and a series of objectives have been listed as required measures necessary to accomplish the established economic development goal for each sector within the comprehensive development strategy.

## **PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN THE DISTRICT**

As part of the comprehensive development strategy, and plan for implementation, the CAAG has identified selected economic development projects which are primarily based upon the development

needs of each individual community within Gila and Pinal Counties, as well as needs generated from the nonincorporated regions of each respective county. The tables included at the back of the chapter provide a comprehensive list of project needs for each governmental entity; the cost estimate for each project; the specific priority status indicated for each project; and the potential funding sources necessary to complete the identified projects.

The District priority projects have been prioritized as being urgent, intermediate, or long range. Those particular projects that have been identified as urgent are high priority projects that are of immediate need to the community. Intermediate projects are community needs, which should be completed over a two to three year period; whereas long-range projects have been scheduled for completion over a period of four years or longer. Each project within this document was submitted by a selected representative, or elected official from each particular governmental entity within the CAAG District, and reflects the immediate economic development needs of local residents and the governmental entity, which will economically benefit from the project.

The District priority projects listed at the back of this chapter are categorized by governmental entity, and are justified by their expected contribution to strengthening, or contributing to the overall advancement of the economy at the local or regional level. Such projects are in conformance with the stated economic development goals and objectives, which are also stated at the end of this chapter. It should be noted that in many cases communities have generated needs lists, but were unable to appropriately identify the total cost of the project due to a lack of professional staff members to prepare cost estimates. However, such an inability to immediately identify costs or funding sources on behalf of the community has not deterred the Central Arizona Association of Governments from including these needs within the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy planning document.

Many projects within communities that have been identified as being urgent, but have not professionally identified associated project costs, have been listed within the CEDS planning document as intermediate priorities. Staff from the Central Arizona Association of Governments will assist such communities in an effort to bring immediate project needs into full application status, as promulgated by the Economic Development Administration.

## **DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy is a multifaceted approach designed to strengthen the District's economy by working toward the advancement of established economic development goals as set forth within this document. The Central Arizona Association of Governments is committed to the advancement of an overall economic development work program which will result in higher paying, quality employment opportunities; a diversified economy at the local and regional levels; an increase in the overall standard of living; an expanded local tax base; a strengthening of economic development awareness; and the development of a higher degree of cooperation and coordination among the District's citizens, economic development groups and organizations, governmental entities, and various governmental agencies for the primary purpose of strengthening the economy within the CAAG District.

As part of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, the Central Arizona Association of Governments will maintain a supportive and technical role in an effort to improve the overall economy throughout Gila and Pinal Counties at both the local and regional levels. The CAAG development program will entail a number of professional and technical services that will be made

available to the District, and will be responsible for ensuring the successful implementation of the overall development strategy. In assisting the CAAG District with the successful implementation of the comprehensive economic development strategy identified within this document, the CAAG economic development work program will include the following:

- Assist governmental entities in project development.
- Function as a liaison between District governmental entities, and various state and federal agencies.
- Assist governmental entities in the compilation of grants and the identification of other available funding sources.
- Enhance district wide financing needs by establishing networks with local financial institutions.
- To assist with attraction, retention, and expansion activities for regional business and industry.
- Encourage and support local economic development efforts, and organizations, which deal with economic development activities.
- Assist with enhancing regional tourism activities.
- Identify and assist communities by acting as a district clearing house for various grant monies.
- Promote regional economic development efforts.
- Support multi-jurisdictional economic development efforts.
- Support local educational, social services, cultural, multicultural, and job training groups and programs.
- Support groups and organizations affiliated with enhancing job skills development, and ongoing job training skills.
- Assist communities in the development of local economic development plans, comprehensive community general plans, and capital improvement plans.
- Assist small business efforts throughout the District.
- Assist the local citizenry, and business, industrial, and governmental organizations in understanding local development planning processes and procedures.
- Assist local communities in the identification of minimal cost effective planning and economic development resources.
- Work toward the creation of a District wide economic development database in an effort to provide information to area sources.

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

## INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

### GOAL:

**IMPROVE, EXPAND, AND DIVERSIFY THE EXISTING INDUSTRIAL BASE WITHIN THE DISTRICT**

### OBJECTIVES:

- To vertically integrate raw materials and industries.
- To aggressively support the retention and expansion of existing businesses.
- Coordinate District wide marketing efforts to recruit business and industry within the region.
- To identify feasible and desirable target industries.
- To encourage the completion of fully improved industrial parks and buildings within the District.
- To develop quality infrastructure in an effort to attract new business and industry into the District.
- To encourage small business development centers to serve the District.

## **FINANCING**

### **GOAL:**

**EXPAND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE DISTRICT BY IDENTIFYING AND CAPITALIZING UPON APPROPRIATE FINANCING SOURCES**

### **OBJECTIVES:**

- To assist companies in accessing private funding sources for relocation and expansion within the District.
- To assist individual communities in assembling loan applications for local projects which enhance local economic development.
- To assist communities in accessing the appropriate public and private programs which provide loans for community economic development projects.
- To assist in evaluating loan institutions in the cost effectiveness and profitability of administering rural loans.
- To establish a workable revolving loan program within the District.



## TRANSPORTATION

### GOAL:

### DEVELOPMENT OF MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS TO SERVE INDUSTRY AND THE PUBLIC

### OBJECTIVES:

- Maintain and improve current transportation facilities and corridors throughout the District.
- Development of a major regional airport.
- Development of a regional public transit system.
- Support the enhancement of passenger and commercial rail service and facilities throughout the District.
- Development of a District wide courier air service.
- Develop and improve the services and facilities of the District's rural airport system.
- Communicate the District's transportation needs identified as part of the CEDS process to the Arizona Department of Transportation.

## EDUCATION

### GOAL:

**ENHANCE EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES, AND IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION THROUGHOUT THE DISTRICT**

### OBJECTIVES:

- Obtain funding for the development of upper division college courses toward a four year degree program.
- To encourage the actual implementation of a four year degree program within the District.
- Encourage the development of government, business, public school, and parent partnerships throughout regional school districts.
- Integrate family and social service programs into the public school system.
- Expand the development of apprenticeship and vocational education programs.
- Develop and implement high school retention programs throughout individual school districts located within Gila and Pinal Counties.

## **PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

### **GOAL:**

**MAINTAIN AND CONSTRUCT QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE, AND PROVIDE PUBLIC SERVICES WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO THE ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT OF THE DISTRICT**

### **OBJECTIVES:**

- To promote the maintenance, construction, and compliance of public wastewater treatment facilities throughout the District.
- To ensure the existence of adequate police, fire, and municipal office structures within communities.
- To encourage the development of community recreational facilities, public parks, and recreational programs.
- Encourage the maintenance and expansion of public utility systems throughout the District.
- Encourage adequate solid waste sites accessible to municipalities and the general public.
- To encourage the existence of adequate sewer, water, storm water drainage and flood control facilities throughout the District.
- Encourage the construction of community and senior citizen centers throughout the municipalities throughout the District.
- Encourage the construction and development of community libraries, and the expansion of affiliated library programs.
- To encourage the development or expansion of local hospitals, health care clinics, behavioral and mental health clinics, and additional social service agencies throughout the District.

## **AGRICULTURE AND WATER RESOURCES**

### **GOAL:**

**ENHANCE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR, ENCOURAGE WATER CONSERVATION PROGRAMS, AND ENCOURAGE THE PROVISION OF ACCESSIBLE WATER RESOURCES FOR AGRICULTURAL, COMMERCIAL, INDUSTRIAL, AND DOMESTIC UTILIZATION.**

### **OBJECTIVES:**

- To encourage the construction and expansion of agricultural processing facilities within the District.
- Encourage the development of new technology in the agricultural sector, as well as new forms of agricultural ventures, which will economically enhance the industry.
- To encourage the development of district wide, agricultural marketing programs which effectively promote agricultural products to state, national, and international markets.
- Promote agricultural management programs, and establish a coordinated network between area farmers for the primary purpose of advancing the agricultural economy.
- To encourage water conservation programs and activities throughout the District.
- Encourage surface CAP water allocations to preserve existing groundwater supplies.
- To promote activities of the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality in an effort to bring public and private water systems into compliance with EPA safe drinking water standards.
- Encourage policies and advisory information provided by the Arizona Department of Water Resources, through cooperation with the District's Active Management Areas.
- Assist communities in obtaining alternative water sources, and encourage improved methods of water distribution throughout the District.

## PLANNING

### GOAL:

**DEVELOP A PROACTIVE PLANNING PROCESS THROUGHOUT THE DISTRICT IN AN EFFORT TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINED INVESTMENT**

### OBJECTIVES:

- To encourage updating and maintaining comprehensive development plans and capital improvement plans at the local and county levels.
- Utilize public regulations to support job creation activities.
- To encourage the development of economic development planning at the local level.
- To provide for the policy implementation and incentives in an effort to encourage community development.
- Promote increased planning awareness and coordination between local communities and the individual counties.
- Provide information to local communities pertaining to the availability of funds for local planning and zoning initiatives.
- Encourage the development of a comprehensive plan to identify the potentials and constraints of the North American Free Trade Agreement within the District.

## **TOURISM AND RECREATION**

### **GOAL:**

### **PROMOTE AND EXPAND TOURISM AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE DISTRICT**

### **OBJECTIVES:**

- Encourage increased levels of cooperation between District Chambers of Commerce, visitor centers, and additional tourism groups and organizations in an effort to promote tourism within the District.
- Convey the tourism and recreation needs of the District to the appropriate state and federal agencies.
- Promote the construction of developed fishing and camping areas throughout the District.
- Promote nature-based tourism throughout the District.
- Encourage the creation of additional District recreational areas.
- Encourage the maintenance and construction of recreational facilities throughout the District.
- Encourage the development of a comprehensive plan on Tourism for both Gila and Pinal Counties, analyzing various components of tourism, and the economic impact that the industry has upon each county.
- Obtain support for regional tourism programs in an effort to generate increasing numbers of visitors into the District.
- Encourage marketing at the local and regional levels through advertisements, brochures, commercials, and other forms of media to attract visitors into the District.