

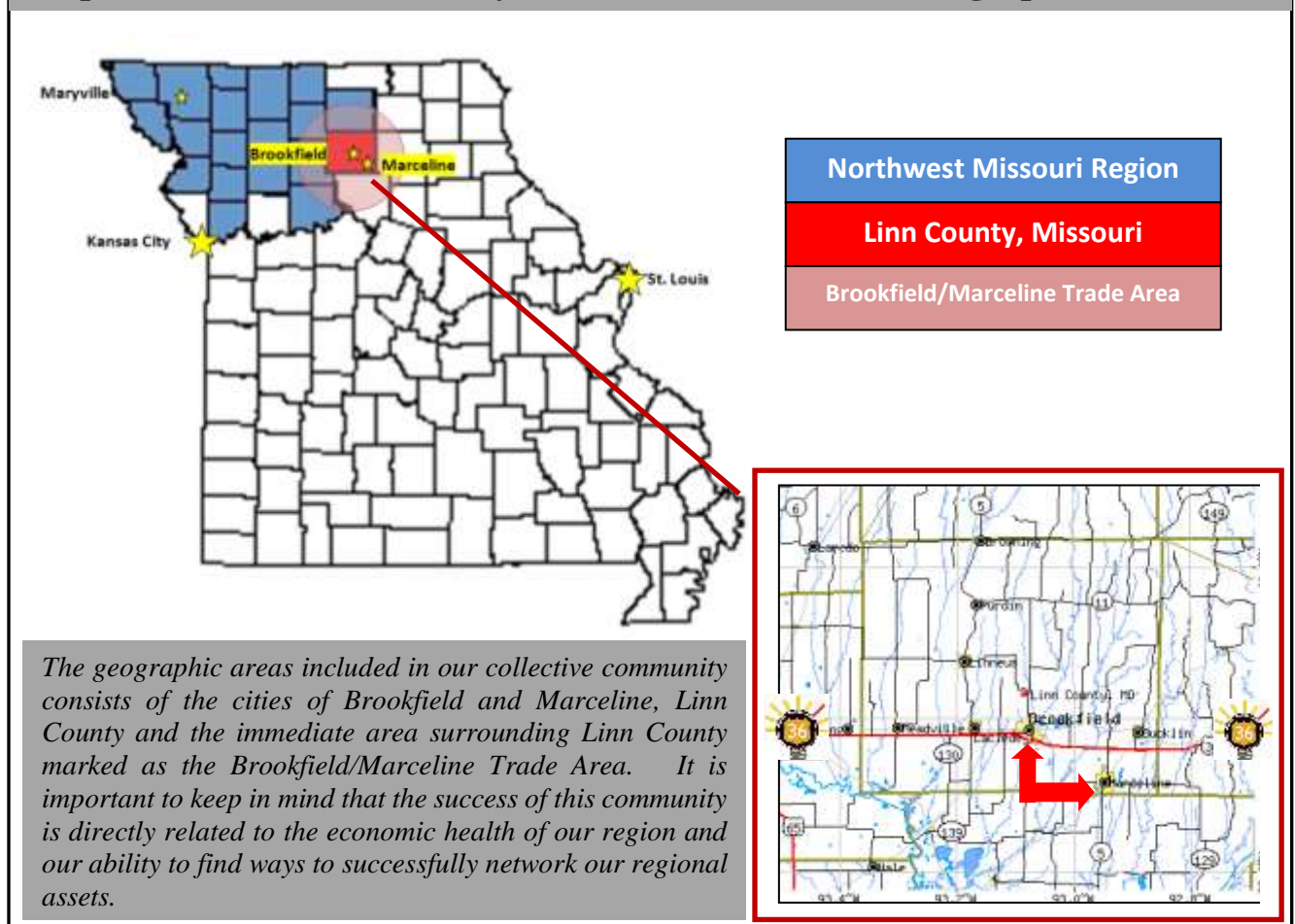
COMMUNITY PROFILE

P.1 Community Description

Ten miles of cropland and pastures separate the cities of Marceline and Brookfield, both located in north central Missouri’s Linn County. Together the two small cities serve as retail trade, healthcare, and employment centers for Linn County and the surrounding rural towns in the neighboring counties (Chariton County in particular) serving a population of 12,000 to 15,000. Rural in nature, located directly in the center of North Missouri’s farming and ranching country, it is often referred to as the Green Hills region for its beautiful rolling green hills. The region has been shaped by production agriculture and manufacturing and a small town rural/ life style.

This community is situated on four-lane U.S. Highway 36, a major east/west route crossing the state and connecting the Mississippi to the Missouri River. It serves North Missouri as an important transportation corridor that has been recently branded the “Way of American Genius Highway”, highlighting the many nationally and internationally recognized innovators who have called this historical trail westward their home – Mark Twain, Walt Disney, General John Pershing, JC Penny, Dr. Howard Rusk and the Pony Express.

Map P.1a (0) –36/5 Community Alliance of NC Missouri Geographic Area



P.1.a (0) Community Definition and Identify: Historically, small towns and cities throughout the rural Midwest have strived for self-sufficiency and independence; however, no matter how much the various communities struggle for complete autonomy, they are finding that to be sustainable, they must partner with their neighbors to successfully provide the amenities and resources necessary for their citizens. So is the case of the Brookfield/Marceline area, the history of each town is near identical - from early settlers homesteading to the railroads establishing towns.

Figure P. 1. a (0) Shared Identity Features	
Railroad heritage	Significant farm and ag culture
Community highly value	Generational ties to family and community
Quiet rural life style/small town atmosphere	Low cost of living
High regard for child/youth education/activities	School is primary social hub/ intense pride
Manufacturing oriented workforce	Strong work ethic
Wildlife diversity and hunting	Generosity/local philanthropy/volunteerism
Robust faith based organizations and churches	Low crime/safe neighborhoods
Local economic engines both past and present: Agriculture, Transportation & Manufacturing	

Figure P. 1. a (0) Community Key Offerings		Importance to Community
H E A L T H	• Pershing Memorial Hospital →	Emergency, in-patient and out-patient care
	• Marceline Family Health Center →	Serving both the insured & underinsured
	• Health clinics & urgent care →	Routine, acute and preventative healthcare
	• Linn County Health Dept. →	Provider of essential services & immunization
	• Skilled nursing & retirement facilities →	For recovery, rehab and long term nursing
	• Healthcare professionals: Doctors/Nurses/Physical & Occupational Therapy/Dentists/Optometrists/Pharmacists/Mental Health →	First tier providers of healthcare, counseling, check-ups and wellness including dental and vision
	• Public ambulance, first responders, enhanced 911 and central dispatch →	Emergency services & rapid transit to trauma centers is critical in rural areas
	• North Central YMCA →	Wellness, physical fitness, youth sports
	• North Central Mo Mental Health →	Mental health counseling substance abuse
E D U C A T I O N	• Strong community support of schools, education and youth →	Preparing children and youth to be successful and productive citizens.
	• Five K-12 school districts in Linn County →	Learning opportunities close to home
	• Head Start and early childhood education →	Education at this most crucial stage in life
	• High school graduation and attendance rates →	A good indicator of essential soft skills
	• Safe schools & positive atmosphere →	Social hub, source of community pride
	• Linn County Area Career and Tech Center →	Providing training for the future workforce
	• 4H/MU Extension training and classes for both youth and adult →	Teaches leadership, responsibility & skills - best practices for businesses and community
	• High School Equivalency Classes →	Retooling the workforce... no one left behind
	• Adult and Youth Leadership Training →	Transitioning to the next generation of leaders
	• Highly qualified educators →	Dedicated educators impact students' lives
• Post-secondary collaboration →	Post-secondary education in local setting	
• Quality broadband availability →	Online learning opportunities for all ages	
• Central location on North Missouri's →		

E C O N O M Y	<p>4 - Lane Highways 36 and 110</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manufacturing: Solid and versatile niche → companies, corporate headquarters, 20% of all jobs are manufacturing • An effective workforce fueled by rural work ethic ingrained in our culture → • Agriculture: thousands of acres of → productive crop land and pastures • Transportation: BNSF Rail 2 mainlines → locations, trucking companies, North Central Missouri Regional Airport • Heritage Tourism: Boyhood Home of → Walt Disney, Main Street USA, birthplace of General John J. Pershing, museums. • Outdoor Recreation: Excellent Hunting → • Retail Trade Center → 	<p>Location, location, location – The Way of American Genius Highway, CKC Expressway</p> <p>The major economic engine in both dollars and jobs for the area</p> <p>Incentive for employers to stay and grow local and attract new enterprises</p> <p>The backbone of our local economy and a great part of our rural history and current identity</p> <p>Moving people and product, it is our connection to the rest of the world</p> <p>Generates new primary jobs and sales tax revenue – a net gain by capturing revenue from those outside of our local region</p> <p>Attracting thousands of visitors annually</p> <p>Provides local shopping and generates sales tax</p>
Q U A L I T Y O F L I F E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Safety – Police and Fire → • Fiber optic network → • Strong faith community, many churches → and Linn County Food Pantry, Ministerial Alliance • Two New aquatic centers with one now → operating year round, two Country Clubs & Golf Courses, vibrant countywide YMCA • Parks, walking trails and lakes → • Small town Main Streets that feature → parades, festivals, music, art and holiday events. • Theater, restaurants, stores and shops → • Great hunting and fishing → and abundant wildlife • Farms → • Rolling green hills and scattered forests → • No traffic jams → • Country roads → • Affordable Housing → • Fresh air and stars visible in the night sky → 	<p>A sense of safety - both life and property</p> <p>Connectivity – if you don't have it...you lose</p> <p>Community giving, volunteer hours, helping the poor, addicts, troubled and mentally ill</p> <p>Local recreation for all ages and all seasons, social participation</p> <p>Natural outdoor recreation</p> <p>What really makes community - quality time with family and friends – something special and unique – forever memory makers</p> <p>Have them or your residents leave to find them</p> <p>Dearly loved by locals – attracts hundreds of visitors annually and generates revenue</p> <p>Farming is not only a job but a way of life</p> <p>You can't beat mother nature – BEAUTIFUL</p> <p>10 minute commutes – time save for living</p> <p>Best explained in lyrics by John Denver</p> <p>Low cost of housing/low property taxes</p> <p>PRICELESS!</p>

Figure P. 1. a (1) Shared Programs and Services

Health - Access to quality and immediate healthcare and wellness	Hospital - Annual Health Fair – First Responders – Public Health partnerships
Education - Preparing children and youth to be successful and productive citizens. Training a future workforce.	LC Area Career and Tech Center Summer School Programs - 4H/FHA
Economy - Self Sustaining employment for citizens, maintaining & expanding necessary local infrastructure	NCMR Airport – NCRC/Workforce Economic development & tourism partnerships – Highway 36 Alliance

<i>Quality of Life - Independence, social participation, and over all well being</i>	<i>BAGP – Public Safety – Humane Society YMCA – Saving Every Victim</i>
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P. 1. a (2) Mission, Vision and Values:

Our vision is to “Reestablish a sustainable and thriving rural community that can provide a high quality of life for residents of all ages, the amenities and workforce for businesses of all sizes and a down home hospitality experience for visitors from all places. Fueled by collaborative planning and the breaking down of long standing silos of isolation we shall put together an effective and sustainable system leadership team that focuses on identifying assets and aligning resources.

Figure P. 1 a (2) Mission, Vision and Values
Mission
Together Marceline and Brookfield will serve as modern day pioneers in revitalizing their rural community by empowering leaders from all sectors and political subdivisions to focus on collaborative planning, asset development, strategic aligning and sharing of resources.
Vision
A thriving rural community that offers a high quality of life for residents of all ages, the amenities and workforce for businesses to prosper and grow, and a down home hospitality experience for visitors.
Values
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ We always show respect to our community partners. ➤ We place the good of the community as a whole over that of any particular individual, business, organization, sector or political subdivision. ➤ We strongly promote positive attitudes and discourage negative thinking and blaming. ➤ We welcome new people and value the introduction of new ideas. ➤ We work to insure that everyone has a path to connect to the community. ➤ We give ourselves and others permission to be innovative and creative. ➤ We strive for an inclusive leadership network that models transparency. ➤ We believe that effective economic development is a team sport. ➤ We realize that we win together and we lose together. ➤ WE CELEBRATE SUCCESS!

P. 1.a (2) Core Competencies:

Competency	Elements
<p style="text-align: center;">Manufacturing, Farming and Rural Workforce</p> <p>If you have lived in this community very long, you are aware of the relationship that a once predominantly farm-based economy has to a workforce. Hardworking, dedicated, responsible and talented are just a few of the attributes we feel our rural workforce has to offer. As farm employment declined throughout the past century, manufacturing surpassed agriculture in job numbers and now shares the stage with agriculture as an economic engine in our community. Local manufacturing companies have given rural families’ quality employment with good benefits while allowing them to live in the places they love, be that in town or on the farm. In short, our strong workforce culture is not only grounded in agriculture but in manufacturing as well. This core competency directly relates to our mission by attracting and growing businesses that provide excellent employment for the community workforce. (It must be noted that local employees are seeing a decline in the quality of our rural workforce, particularly as it applies to soft skills – this poses a real threat to this important competency)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Specialized Vocations Quality Education Rural Work Ethic Multi-Industry Experience Flexible Career & Technical Training Institution Welders Successful Manufacturing Businesses</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Heritage Tourism</p> <p>We often don’t fully appreciate the power that rests in our past. Yet thankfully for our community, we have had visionary leaders who have seen the benefits of not only preserving our local heritage but inviting others to share in it as well. Marceline delights visitors with an exploration of a source of inspiration for Walt Disney in his boyhood home, while the birthplace of the General of the Armies, John J. Pershing provides an insight into the foundation for his life. These two men are integral to both our history and our present as they’ve allowed us to attract curious individuals, a fact amplified by our membership in the Way of American Genius that stretches across the Missouri portion of U.S. Route 36. Our central location on this highway, and in the nation, allows us to market to people all across the state and nation. We welcome animators and cartoonists at the annual Toonfest in Marceline, as well as balloonists at our Pershing Balloon Derby. The rural setting of our area has been a boon as well, drawing in enthusiasts of the outdoors and wildlife. We offer many excursions into nature through our Pershing State Park, as well as ample hunting opportunities</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Walt Disney Boyhood Home Gen. John J Pershing Historic Site Way of American Genius Highway Central Location Railroad Covered Bridge Pershing Park</p>

that draws in hunters from around the nation. Beyond our countryside, our towns hold heritage closely as well, with strong connections to our historic railroad culture. With these opportunities, and others, we have a wide and growing tourism competency rooted in our heritage and natural resources.	Wildlife & Hunting Undeveloped Land
<p style="text-align: center;">Community Engagement</p> <p>Whoever said, “The world is run by those who show up” might just have had our community in mind. If you live in a small town or rural community, you learn young that if you want something done, you have to take your turn to help make it happen. There are few hired hands doing community work around here and the ones we have are busy planning and organizing the volunteers – and then of course volunteering themselves. Most of the work is accomplished by those who step up and say, I will do it or I will pay for it...or sometimes both! If you give the people a project that they believe in, it is amazing what can and has been accomplished. Even with declining public resources, the community is quick to get behind and support efforts to improve education, public safety and wellness/healthcare. Not to mention, community responsiveness. Simply put, using our “smallness” to react quickly to challenges. Giving back and taking ownership is a hallmark of the people in our community and truly a core competency that is directly connected and supports our described mission.</p>	Responsiveness Volunteerism Can-do-attitude Active Faith Based Community Networks Support for improved -Education -Public Safety -Healthcare/Wellness Philanthropy

Figure P. 1. a (3) People and Organizational Resources:	
Marceline Chamber of Commerce	Brookfield Chamber of Commerce
Marceline Industrial Development Authority	Brookfield Industrial Development Authority
Marceline – Main Street	Brookfield – Main Connection
City of Marceline	City of Brookfield
Marceline R-V School District	Brookfield R-III School District
Linn County	Brookfield Area Growth Partnership
Church Based Organizations	School Organizations
MU Extension	4 H/FFA
Linn County Health Department	Linn County Ambulance District
Multiple Service Organizations	Leadership Academy
Alumni Associations	Youth Organizations
North Missouri Arts Council	Local Lending institutions
Pershing Hospital	Businesses - Downtown and Manufacturing
Walt Disney Hometown Museum	Pershing Association

P. 1. (3) People and Organizational Resources:

The overall importance of these people and organizations relative to the sustainability of our collective community cannot be stressed enough. They provide the resources, both capital and human, that keep our towns open for business. The role they play is becoming more and more important, as our population continues to decline and more local businesses operate as a satellite to a large corporation with no local leadership present. We are doing more and more with less and less. This is the very reason that the cities of Brookfield and Marceline are working together more often, sharing resources and expertise. In the past month the Industrial Development Authorities have worked together in an attempt to land a large employer in Linn County.

Figure P. 1. a (4) Community Assets:		
North Central Missouri Regional Airport	People – Young and Old Workforce/Volunteers	Walt Disney Hometown Museum
State Four-lane Highway 36	YMCA	High Speed Fiber Optic Network
Parks, Aquatic Centers, Golf Courses, Ball Fields	Five School Districts High Standard for Ed.	Gen. John J. Pershing State Historic Site
Hospital and Health Clinic	Main Street USA	Walsworth Community Center
LC Area Career & Tech Center	Housing and Affordable Housing	Farm Land Forests/ Wildlife
Shopping Centers	Pershing State Park	BNSF Railroad Mainlines

Yearbook and Publishing Headquarters	Metal Fabrication Industry Cluster	North Central MO Location Smack Dab in the Middle
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P. 1.a(5) Regulatory Environment: Both Brookfield and Marceline have city zoning regulations and building codes that are minimal by metropolitan area standards and easy to navigate. The County of Linn does not have planning and zoning. Of course all State and federal regulations apply.

One challenge that the incorporated towns and cities in our county face is the increased cost of complying with the EPA Clean Water standards, as they apply to drinking water and waste water.

P.1.b Community Relationships

Figure P. 1b(1) Community Leaders	
City, Town and County Government Elected Counsels and Commissions, appointed administrators and boards, road districts	Education Schools, elected boards of education, administrators, teachers, coaches, MU Extension County Council
Corporate & Business Major employers and active small business owners and operators, Downtown businesses, Banks	Community Based Organizations IDA's, Chambers of Commerce, BAGP, 36/5 Alliance, Downtown Main Street Orgs, BAGP
Healthcare Hospital, Clinics and Health Department including boards & administrators, healthcare professionals	Churches Ministers and appointed councils, church organization , member leaders, ministerial alliance
Youth Leaders School Student Councils and other organizations FFA, FBLA, 4H	Tourism & Recreation Museum, Parks & YMCA boards and administrators
Civic and Social Organizations Elks, Eagles, Rotary, Lions, Sororities	Farm & Agriculture Commodity and Livestock Organizations, Farm Bureau

P.1.b (1) Community Leaders

It sometimes seems that leaders in our community spend much of their time within their own silo such as agriculture, business, healthcare and education; however, we are seeing a shift. More frequently, collaboration is happening cross silos, particularly within and through the leadership of community based organizations. These organizations can act as a hub connecting different sectors into a more productive community network. Recent examples are: Marceline Community-wide Strategic Planning, Downtown Main Street Marceline strategic plan, the formation of the Linn County Area Career and Technical Center, Brookfield Community Planning and Downtown Strategic Plan. These planning initiatives have been open to all members of each of these two communities in an effort to get a balanced and fair representation of the community and commitment from stakeholders.

The Brookfield Area Growth Partnership (BAGP) has been a model of cross sector collaboration. Now in its 12th year the organization is encouraged by the success of some of its early initiatives. One example is the local leadership academy, offering a wide range of leadership opportunities to more residents and transitioning leadership to a younger generation.

The BAGP currently serves as the local backbone organizations for COE 2026.

Figure P. 1b(2) Residents, Other Customers, and Stakeholders	
Resident Groups	Key Requirements & Expectations
Children and Youth	Quality Education & Healthcare, Safety, Broadband internet, Parks and Recreation, Play grounds, Youth Centered Outdoor Activities & Entertainment, Competitive Sports, Day Care, Pre-Schools, Part- time Jobs, Churches
Young Adults	Gainful Employment, Quality Education & Healthcare, Safety, Fitness Opportunities, Broadband Internet, Entertainment and Activities geared for their age group, Housing, Shopping – Food and Clothing, Good Quality of Life
Adults	Accessible Healthcare, Gainful Employment, Adult Learning Opportunities, Churches, Housing, Shopping, Good Quality of Life, Social Organizations
Families	Same as for Children and Youth - plus, Gainful Employment, Adult Learning Opportunities, Family Activities & Entertainment, Churches, Housing , Good Quality of Life
Low income	Same as above plus, Job Training or Re-Training, Affordable Housing, Local Assistance for Emergency Needs, Advocacy
Senior Citizens	Quality Senior Healthcare, Activities Geared for this age Group, Affordable Senior Housing, Senior Transportation, Assisted Living, Short and Long Term Nursing, Churches, Good Quality of Life
Other Customers	
Businesses & Farms	Trained and Available Workforce, Location, Adequate Infrastructure, Reasonable Utility and Tax Rates, Good Transportation, Community and Local Support, Access to Markets, Agriculture Equipment and Supplies, Veterinarians
Tourists including: Alumni, Families and Hunters	Interesting Venues and Attractions, Welcome Atmosphere, Trained and Informed Businesses and Staff, Up to date Available Information, Good Lodging and Food, Unique Events & Festivals, Shopping and Emergency Healthcare Services, Good Transportation
Stakeholder	
Surrounding Communities and Rural Residents	Shopping - Food , Clothing and Daily Necessities, Healthcare including Doctors, Dentist and Pharmacies, Good Roads, Safe Environment, Employment, Education – Linn County Career and Tech Center, Indoor and Outdoor Activities and Exercise and Fitness – North Central Mo YMCA
<p>All three of these groups have many of the same basic requirements and expectations including: safe and clean environment, necessary infrastructure, accessible healthcare, good transportation. The Residents will have a heightened concern for jobs, education, churches, social organizations, cost of living and housing. Businesses will have an added concern for workforce, available markets, taxes, utility costs and location. Tourists and visitors for lodging and dining amenities and activities & places of interest – the experience. Stakeholder communities & entities will be very similar to those of the residents, however, more selective as they can partner with other surrounding communities to meet their needs.</p>	

Figure P. 1b(3) Suppliers	
Suppliers, Partners, and Collaborators	Role
Utility Companies – Electric, Natural Gas, Fiber, TV, Internet, Phone	Necessary Utilities – Keeping the lights on!
Wal-Mart	Food and Supplies
State Government - Tourism, Transportation, Revenue, Economic Development, Conservation, Natural Resources, Agriculture	Services, Grants, Training, Administration, Networks Financing
Federal Government – USDA & Rural Development	Public Assistance, Grants, Federal Services, Transfer Payments, Financing
Regional Planning Commission & Northwest MO Workforce	Planning, Grant Writing, Training, Administration
University of Missouri Extension	Education, Youth Services
Boone Hospital Center	Healthcare networking
Missouri Municipal League, Northwest Roundtable of Economic Developers, Missouri Economic Development Council & other Networking Orgs.	Municipal networking and Education, Economic Development Education both Regional and Statewide, Networking
North Central Missouri College and other Colleges	Post -Secondary Education
Community Foundation of Northwest Missouri	Networking, Education, Local Fund, Administration
Northwest Missouri Regional Vitality	Regional Collaboration, Networking, Sharing of Resources
Commodity Groups	Information & Positioning
Railroad and Trucking	Transportation Inbound and Outbound

P.2 Community Situation

P. 2 a (1, 2 & 3) Competitive Position, Competitive Changes and Comparative Data

Linn County - population 12,761 (2010 Census) - is located squarely in North Central Missouri, significantly rural, and for the past 100 years has been shaped by production agriculture, transportation and manufacturing. A diverse manufacturing base in Linn County has grown to provide nearly 2,000 direct and indirect jobs for the North Central Missouri region, demonstrating a significantly higher percentage of manufacturing jobs per capita compared to both Missouri and the nation. Shifts in manufacturing employment globally suggest this to be critically important as manufacturing continues to be an economic driver of the county economy.

The communities of Brookfield and Marceline serve as the county’s major centers for commerce and industry, not only for Linn County but rural portions of some of the surrounding counties as well. Both communities have long been strategic in targeting employment opportunities. As far back as 1900, these two communities have demonstrated success in attracting/ retaining small light manufacturers that have provided a good job base for a number of people in the county and the North Central Missouri region. Unfortunately, over the past 35 years these economic development strategies have produced “one step forward–two steps backward” results. Even factoring in the many successful initiatives, Linn County continued to see a loss of population, vacant store fronts and out- migration of youth. The 1980’s brought not only a farm crisis but manufacturing plant closings to the area, forcing many families to move to more urban environments for employment. The past decade proved to be no exception to that downward trend, with two of the county’s major manufacturing employers closing their doors and displacing 350 local workers.

The slow economic drain that we had been experiencing for decades was now being recognized as a full blown crisis. In the pursuit of economic development and job creation, we found we were focusing a disproportionate amount of development investment and energy on outside attraction strategies. We were not taking full advantage of the many local and regional assets, partnerships in government, economic/community development and education. We frequently had overlooked the proven benefits of building the economy from within. We had neglected to listen to our existing businesses and partner with them in developing the most important tool they needed to compete in the 21st Century - a skilled workforce.

Real structural change has taken place in our country and county. This new technology-based “knowledge economy” is being driven by education, collaboration, and a skilled workforce. Linn County’s future is now being fueled through effective networking of business, education, economic/community development and government – the foundation necessary to build successful businesses and skilled workers.

Our community and region have been fortunate in obtaining good comparative data; the real challenge is in effectively translating the information to local leaders and decision makers so it can best be used for future planning.

P. 2 b Strategic Context

We believe that the greatest challenges we face in the Brookfield and Marceline Trade Area, and all of North Missouri, are the same ones that we have been struggling with for decades. We realize that each small town has its own particular challenges. Although possibly devastating at the time, they are frequently situational (like the loss of a long standing local employer or a disaster of Mother Nature). The challenges we find the most difficult to overcome are the ones that keep coming at us year after year. These systemic problems plague most rural areas. If not realistically faced and addressed, these will continue to rob of us our businesses and jobs, professionals and the services they provide, and ultimately our youth. This would be a fatal blow to any community.

Below are the top three challenges we have identified followed by some examples of what we are doing to combat them.

1. Loss of Industry and Small Businesses – This also includes the loss of professionals (medical doctors, dentists, accountants, and lawyers) and farms

Energizing Entrepreneurs to Build a Stronger Economy

- Public/private collaboration and joint strategic planning as a way of community sustainability, including: Schools, Cities, Chamber of Commerce, Main Streets, IDA’s, Hospital, Local Banks, Businesses and Organizations
 - ✓ Establish a collective vision
 - ✓ Create a more robust economic development game plan – realistically balancing resources with expectations
- Strong support for existing businesses – Keep what we have!
- Maintenance and development of physical community infrastructure
- Create new opportunities for regional and county wide collaborations
- Design and implement a comprehensive business visitation program.
 - ✓ Place a strong emphasis on business transfer opportunities
 - ✓ Coordinate technical training and provide resources to business owners as needed
- Develop master plans for downtown revitalization - Marceline & Brookfield

- ✓ Plan for infrastructure improvements
- Promote entrepreneurship education
- Establish better connections between businesses, schools and community.
- Continue to support tourism – building on the local legacy of Disney and Pershing
- Increased emphasis on workforce development

2. Erosion of Leadership Capacity

Mobilizing Local leaders and Building Community Civic Capacity

- Support and enhance leadership development program
 - ✓ Including all ages – youth through seniors
- Improve communications and skills development of current leaders
- Undertaking organizational collaboration and joint community strategic planning.
- Promote diversity in community leadership
- Transfer leadership to a younger generation
- Expand the program to include other Linn County communities
- Form external partnerships – business, regional, statewide

3. Historical Out-Migration of Youth – The Rural Brain Drain

Retaining and Attracting Youth and Young Adults through Inclusion, Community Development and a Focus on Entrepreneurial Opportunities

- Promote community service-learning programs
- Alumni outreach
- Continue “Invitation to Return Home” mailbox project in Marceline and Brookfield – and expand to other Linn County schools
- Engage younger adults within the community in the development process and ensure that our development plan addresses the dreams and desires of this important demographic group
- Engage youth (K-16) in the life and work of this community to:
 - ✓ Build on the work at the Linn County schools to evolve a stronger youth entrepreneurship strategy as a “come home” career option for youth
 - ✓ Enable youth to become central players in city and county-life, assuming leadership in helping to create a “youth-attractive” community

To fully meet these challenges, we recognize the importance of continued local investment. Local fund-raising and partner contributions provided the initial seed capital required to launch these and other initiatives. In addition, MU Extension, the Federal Home Loan Bank, Ameren CDC, USDA Rural Development, CDBG, Missouri Main Street and Missouri Dream Initiative have served as the financial catalyst needed to continue to move our efforts forward. However, we realize our continued success and sustainability depends upon a heightened and sustained local investment, regional collaboration and a systems leadership approach.

We take pride in reporting the continued support of the citizens of this community, particularly during these financially challenging times (evidenced by their overwhelming votes of support for city and school ballot initiatives on sales tax and bond issues). We feel this demonstrates the citizens’ overall willingness to take ownership of their community by their continued level of investment.