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COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY



Green River Area Development District
300 GRADD Way
Owensboro, KY 42301

Prepared for the Economic Development Administration

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

All prosperous regions are alike; each struggling region struggles in its own way.¹

Confusion and pessimism dominate the national economic scene and inevitably infiltrate the moods of state and local economies. Declarations that the recession is over provide little comfort when economic indicators paint an ambiguous national portrait and the imminent possibility of defaulting on the national debt sparks only interminable debate devoid of solutions. In such a turbid atmosphere, local economic gains and successes garner less attention and very often remain ignored. Allowing a bleak national outlook to stifle local efforts contributes to overall decline and further weakens the role of local economic progress. For success to thrive, sometimes it must emerge from humble beginnings.

The Green River Area Development District (GRADD) 2012 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) acknowledges that regions possess a vital voice within the national economic conversation. Combined with the 2007 CEDS and the 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011 updates, this new edition of the CEDS celebrates local economic successes, underscores known weaknesses, and analyzes trends that could indicate expectations for the future. Assessing the historical and current economic conditions for a region is instrumental in the development of effective strategies capable of securing successes.

Supporting the role of regional economies and recognizing the value of planning for all areas regardless of size, the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) directs Economic Development Districts in the evaluation of their economies through the requirements to rewrite the CEDS every five years and to prepare updates for every year in between. As a designated Economic Development District, GRADD assists the region with the preparation and maintenance of the CEDS, striving for an accurate representation of the economic conditions of a given year. Equal emphasis must be granted to successes and losses to achieve the balance demanded from extensive planning



¹ Inspired by Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*.

documents. The excitement of success too often leads to overstatement, and the disappointment of failure prompts blistering criticism. Acknowledgement that triumph and disappointment mingle within all economies can generate planning methods that will maximize economic fortunes and minimize setbacks. Adhering to this view, GRADD aspires to create a living document with the breadth and clarity to inspire local actions and regional progress.

Predictions for the economic future vacillate between positive and negative, but the prevailing reality will likely borrow from both sides and subsequently test a region's adaptability. At times, market forces, trends, and demands are as impossible to analyze as Mother Nature's fury, perpetuating an environment of chaos and turmoil. Maneuvering through such surroundings can cause some regional economies to lose direction and focus. Actions meant for the long-term are abandoned for lack of short-term gains. The morale of the general workforce plummets in the aftermath of steep losses and the dearth of foreseeable growth. To triumph, leaders must emerge with an understanding of the value of planning and a commitment to action. Through planning, a vision for growth surfaces and directs the ensuing initiatives necessary for recognizable progress.

To commence any planning endeavor, distinct guiding principles must constitute a foundation to command the entire pursuit and energize action. For the GRADD region, the CEDS embraces four core principles, which empower the goals and objectives outlined for the region:

- Social and Economic Well-Being;
- Managed, Balanced Growth;
- Livable Communities; and
- Responsible Resource Conservation.

Over the years, the GRADD CEDS has expanded and refined the analytical tools upon which it relies, but the general framework remains familiar. The sequence is strategic, in that strong economic analysis cannot begin without a preliminary understanding of existing conditions. From overviews of all segments of the regional economy, the CEDS traverses the realm of priority projects for the future before concluding with the goals, objectives, and strategies prescribed for the well-being and vitality of the regional economy. Noteworthy elements of the plan include:

- An assessment highlighting the region's economic and community development situation, incorporating available data and information from other planning documents;
- An articulation of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats impacting all facets of the region's economy;
- An analysis of various industry sectors currently thriving in the region's economic climate;
- A plan detailing goals and objectives designed to maximize area opportunities and to address obvious issues and weaknesses;

- A listing of the strategic projects that represent the necessary actions for implementation of the goals and objectives; and
- An outline of performance measures that offer a basis for analyzing the extent to which goals and objectives have been achieved.

Plans, even if well-written and diligently prepared, lose efficacy and credibility if they do not move forward to the implementation phase. Pursuing implementation, however, is further complicated by diminishing state and federal resources. Limited resources are inextricably linked to more stringent review as local officials and the general public clamor for greater prudence in the allocation of funding. As this discourse evolves, more voices can be heard; a turbulent economy fuels an increased desire to gain audience with the hopes of achieving meaningful change. Among the new voices, the general public rises, weary from the impacts of rising costs of living, mass layoffs, facility closures, and elusory promises of future improvements. While they do not always welcome the announcement of planning efforts and instead long for the more visible results of action, the general public's involvement is an integral component of the planning process. The inclusion of these views ensures an enduring vision representative of the whole rather than mere portions of the region. In the preparation of the CEDS document, GRADD exalts the emerging harmony and diversity of the participating voices, recognizing that engaged individuals from all sectors of the region volunteer honest consideration of regional needs, strengths, and weaknesses, and unveil the possibility of robust solutions.

In some areas, regional conversation is awkward and flounders in the search for common ground. For Kentucky, the structure of regional collaboration is inherent within every Area Development District (ADD). With such relations established, discourse flows fluidly and naturally. This propels forward the Progress Kentucky process and culminates in the creation of the CEDS document. Within the ADDs, communities nurture their common bonds and enter into an exchange of ideas, resources, and analysis pertaining to local and regional economic circumstances. Every aspect of this arrangement contributes a fundamental thread to the fabric of the regional CEDS document.

News of economic victories and defeats will forever influence dialogues within regions. With great care and caution, the GRADD region extols the benefits of economic gains and successes in the shadows of recent losses. As the quest for universal recovery persists, this rewrite of our CEDS seeks to build upon the goals set forth in the 2007 edition and subsequent updates, while looks anew at the needs of our community and modifying our strategy accordingly. Perpetual economic examination, as encouraged through the Progress Kentucky process and the CEDS preparation, emboldens the region. The constant inquiry maintains dedication to planning, expects accountability from actions taken, and cultivates innovation for future strategies. To preserve stability for future generations, the GRADD region must dedicate efforts to ensure the region is known not for the way it struggles but for the way it overcomes its struggles.



PUBLIC / PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS



PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

Organization and Management

The creation of a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is futile without the cooperation of all sectors of the GRADD region. To guarantee a living, utilitarian document, input must be assembled from the diversity of voices heard throughout the GRADD population, establishing a vision that is both broad and relevant. In the end, the availability of public input is essential to achieving the ultimate goals of the CEDS document. Success flourishes from the ability to coordinate local, state, and federal goals in a manner that forges strong partnerships, maximizes action, and prudently allocates funding to achieve economic growth and quality communities.



The bulk of the planning commences at the GRADD staff level; however, with every step, information flows in from local elected officials, public and private entities, GRADD Board members, and GRADD committee members. This robust fusion of viewpoints delivers visions, critiques, and goals for consideration at the county and regional levels.

A CEDS Strategy Committee serves the GRADD region during the preparation of the final document. Comprised of an array of individuals from the public sector, private enterprise, academia, and local governments, the committee is instrumental in finalizing the update document. Their primary tasks include:

- Guiding the direction of the CEDS;
- Offering real world perspectives on all components of the area economy;
- Articulating the needs of the region;
- Identifying strategies to meet area goals; and
- Reviewing the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis for each economic component outlined for the region.

The following GRADD committees maintain a vital role in the preparation of the CEDS:

- GRADD Board of Directors
- GRADD Economic Development Corporation
- Green River Health Council
- GRADD Water Management Council
- GRADD Regional Transportation Committee
- Green River Area Council on Aging
- Green River Housing Corporation
- Green River Workforce Investment Board
- Green River RC&D Council

Public input also contributed significantly to finalizing the CEDS 2012 update process. A draft of the document was published on the GRADD website in August 2012 for public review and comment. Additionally, press releases were distributed to local news outlets to announce the availability of the document for public review.

Integration of the State's Economic Priorities

Because each Area Development District (ADD) can be considered a local extension of the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development, correlation between the goals of each ADD and the goals of the State of Kentucky is critical. Each ADD harmonizes internal goals through continual communication and cooperation with the Governor's Office. GRADD strives to ensure that while the expressed goals are unique and representative of the counties it serves, they also reflect the substance of those articulated at the state level. The Integration of the State's Economic Priorities graphic provides a visual representation of the relationship of these goals.

Five prominent state goals influence the Shared Goals developed to capture the specific needs and desires of the counties within the GRADD region. Although the State Goals listed encompass a terrain well beyond the typical functions of GRADD, they offer direction for future endeavors and highlight the expectations of all Kentucky citizens. A mutual understanding of the broad goals of the state and the specific goals outlined for the regional level enforces a cohesive commitment to a vision for ongoing progress.

Integration of the State's Economic Priorities

SHARED GOALS

**Economic and
Employment
Growth**

**Healthy
Kentuckians**

- Encourage accessibility of higher education
- Promote utilization of natural resources to protect/preserve the environment
- Enhance capacity of people and entities to compete in the global marketplace
- Ensure all residents have access to clean, affordable water and economical and efficient wastewater treatment
 - Improve transportation access
 - Improve safety of transportation systems
- Improve quality of workforce and expand opportunities
- Continue to develop industrial parks and sites throughout the region

A Safer Kentucky

**Strengthen Kentucky's
Education System**

**Efficient and Ethical
Government**

ECONOMIC ANALYSIS



ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

Economic Background

Economic uncertainty clouds the national scene, precipitating questions and fears at regional and local levels. No area can escape the pervasiveness of the cloud, and inevitably all regions endure a mixture of positive and negative trends. The Green River Area Development District stands before an unpredictable future, embracing the good news and contemplating methods to rectify the bad news. As the region negotiates with time and patience to secure a more stable course, it will look to the strengths that guided prosperity in the past. Regardless of size and resources, a perfect place does not exist in this world; however, economic success is achievable through strong leadership, vision, and development of natural assets.

According to the May 2012 TIP Regional Economic Growth Strategy, GRADD ranked more than twice as high as the nation at large at having a high occupational strength in the field of production.

The typical disadvantages of size and rural qualities are not new to the GRADD region. Even during strong economic times, the region endures struggles that larger cities with established niches and diverse populations never consider. As the spirits of invention and adaptation seep into economic discourse, the GRADD region has an opportunity to enhance attributes and reverse perceived deficiencies. The critical factor in determining the nature of the region's progress will be the extent to which area leadership accepts changes. Openness is an attractive quality for entrepreneurs ready to test innovative approaches capable of transforming the area's economic fortunes. As long as the citizenry welcome the metamorphosis, the potential for prosperity can prevail.



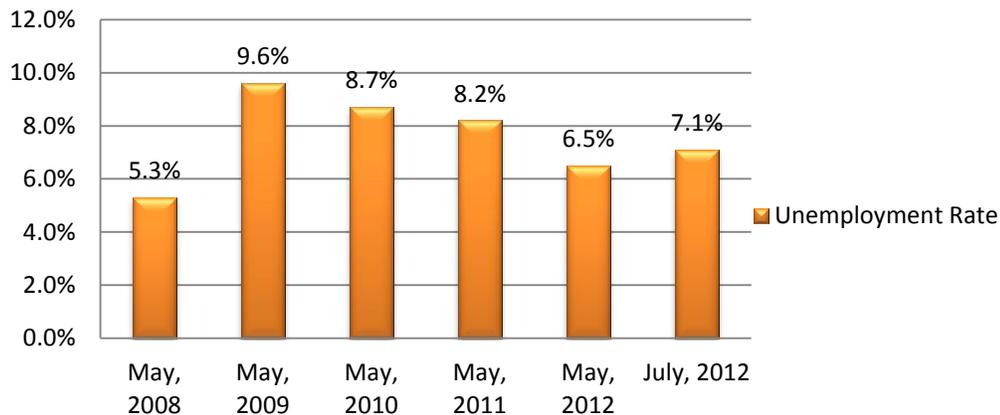
Demographic Changes

Tracking demographic changes that occur within a region reveals critical insight into general progress and development. Certain demographic realities explain the GRADD region’s ability to address and/or meet the goals and objectives outlined in the 2007 CEDS document. For 2012, the release of the [2010 Census figures](#) from the U.S. Census Bureau provides an especially interesting portrait of the region’s evolution since the last census conducted in 2000. Significant demographic changes are outlined by county.

Daviess County

- The 2010 population total climbed to 96,656, marking a 5.6 percent increase since 2000. In 2011, the population was estimated to be 97,234.
- The median age increased from 36.8 in 2000 to 38.8 in 2010.
- People age 65+ now make up 14.6 percent of the population, compared to 13.8 percent in 2000.
- Total households increased by 2,586 (from 2000 to 2010 Census figures).
- Median household income increased to \$42,821 in 2010, up from \$42,538 in 2007.
- The unemployment rate recorded for May 2012 was 6.5 percent. In May 2008, it was 5.3 percent.

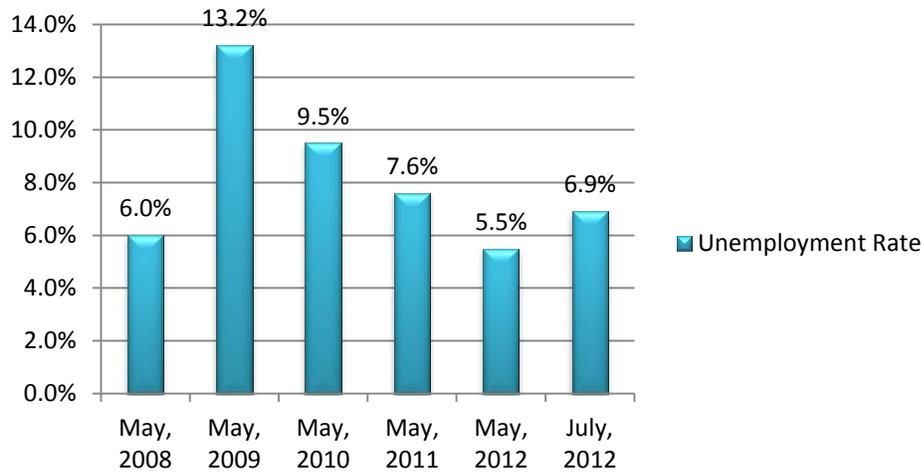
Daviess County Unemployment Rates



Hancock County

- The 2010 population total climbed to 8,565, marking a 2.1 percent increase since 2000. In 2011, the population was estimated to be 8,572.
- The median age increased from 35.9 in 2000 to 39.5 in 2010.
- People age 65+ now make up 14 percent of the population, compared to 11 percent in 2000.
- Total households increased by 70 (from 2000 to 2010 Census figures).
- Median household income decreased to \$44,892 in 2010, down from \$47,558 in 2007.
- The unemployment rate recorded for May 2012 was 5.5 percent. That is just below the rate recorded in May of 2008.

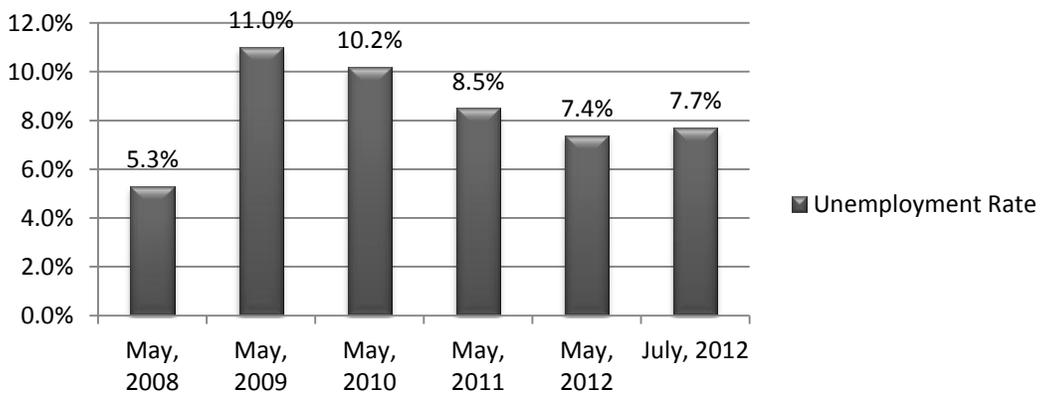
Hancock County Unemployment Rate



Henderson County

- The 2010 population climbed to 46,250, marking a 3.2 percent increase since 2000. In 2011, the population was estimated to be 46,406.
- The median age increased from 37.2 in 2000 to 39.8 in 2010.
- People age 65+ now make up 14.2 percent of the population, compared to 13.1 percent in 2000.
- Total households increased by 610 (from 2000 to 2010 Census figures).
- Median household income decreased to \$40,438 in 2010, down from \$41,692 in 2007.
- The unemployment rate recorded for May 2012 was 7.4 percent. Though still higher than in 2008, this continues Henderson County’s slow increase in employment since May 2009.

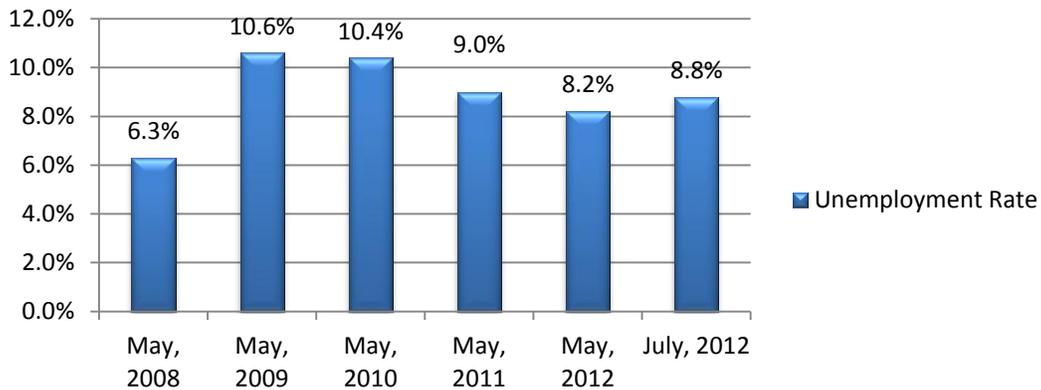
Henderson County Unemployment Rates



McLean County

- The 2010 population dropped to 9,531, marking a 4.1 percent decrease since 2000. In 2011, the population was estimated to be 9,527.
- The median age increased from 38.1 in 2000 to 41.5 in 2010.
- People age 65+ now make up 16.9 percent of the population, compared to 14.5 percent in 2000.
- Total households decreased by 151 (from 2000 to 2010 Census figures).
- Median household income increased to \$39,115 in 2010, up from \$37,866 in 2007.
- The unemployment rate recorded for May 2012 was 8.2 percent. This is slightly improved over May 2011, when unemployment was at 9 percent.

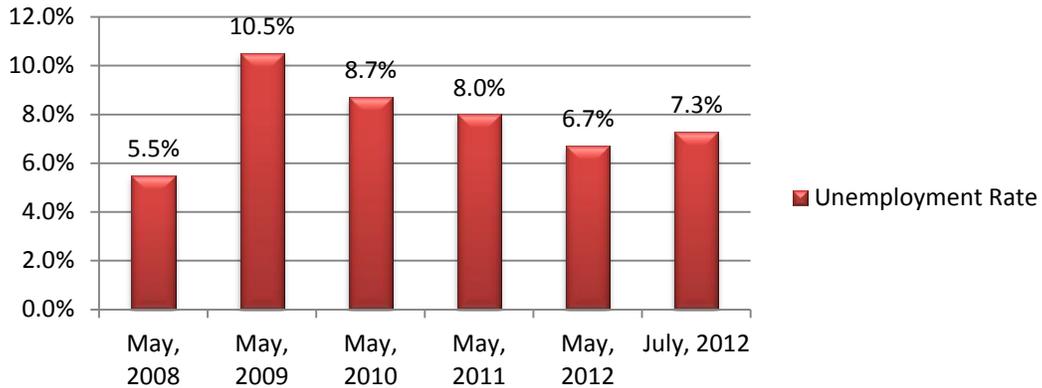
McLean County Unemployment Rates



Ohio County

- The 2010 population climbed to 23,842, marking a 4.0 percent increase since 2000.
- The median age increased from 37.5 in 2000 to 39.1 in 2010.
- People 65+ now make up 15.4 percent of the population, compared to 14.4 percent in 2000.
- Total households increased by 277 (from 2000 to 2010 Census figures).
- Median household income dropped to \$36,050 in 2010, down from \$38,710 in 2007.
- The unemployment rate recorded for May 2012 was 6.7 percent. In May 2008, unemployment was at 5.5 percent.

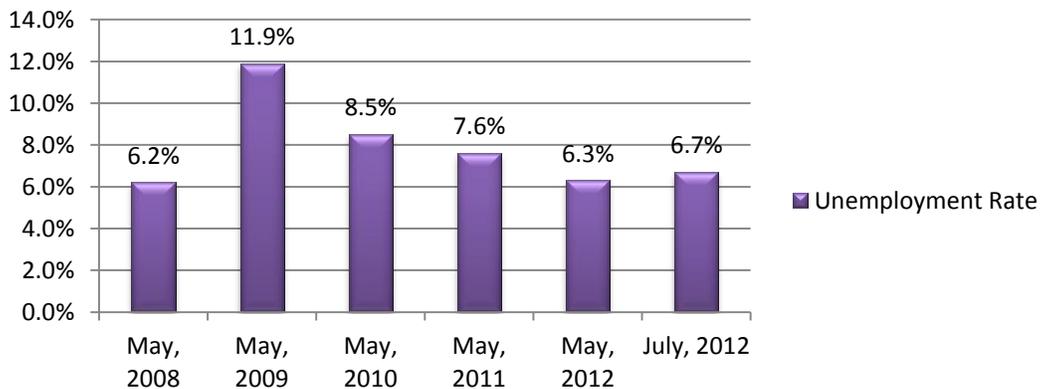
Ohio County Unemployment Rates



Union County

- The 2010 population dropped to 15,007, marking a 4.0 percent decrease since 2000.
- The median age increased from 34.5 in 2000 to 36.3 in 2010.
- People 65+ now make up 13.7 percent of the population, compared to 12.9 percent in 2000.
- Total households decreased by 161 (from 2000 to 2010 Census figures).
- Median household income dropped to \$39,515 in 2010, down from \$40,711 in 2007.
- The unemployment rate recorded for May 2012 was 6.3 percent. This is nearly identical to May 2008 unemployment rate of 6.2 percent.

Union County Unemployment Rates

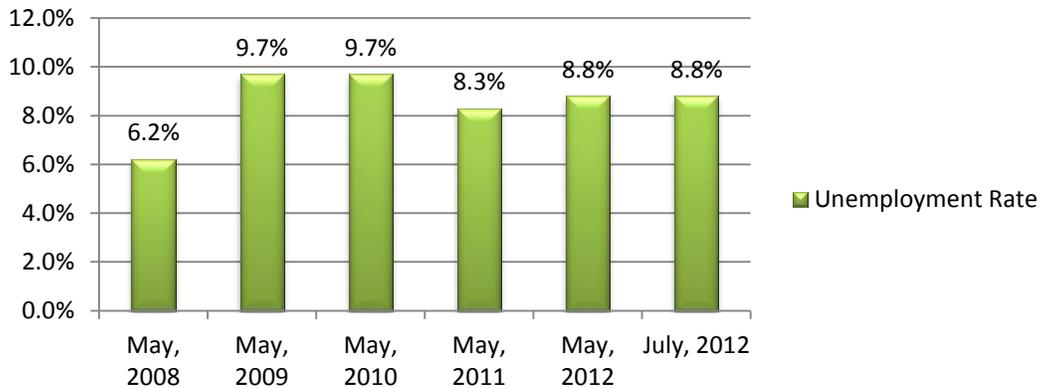


Webster County

- The 2010 population dropped to 13,621, marking a 3.5 percent decrease since 2000.
- The median age increased from 37.8 in 2000 to 40.1 in 2010.
- People 65+ now make up 15.1 percent of the population, compared to 15 percent in 2000.

- Total households decreased by 288 (from 2000 to 2010 Census figures).
- Median household income dropped to \$39,635 in 2010, down from \$39,923 in 2007.
- The unemployment rate recorded for May 2012 was 8.8 percent. This is an increase from the prior year, when unemployment in May was at 8.3 percent. In May 2008, unemployment was 6.2 percent.

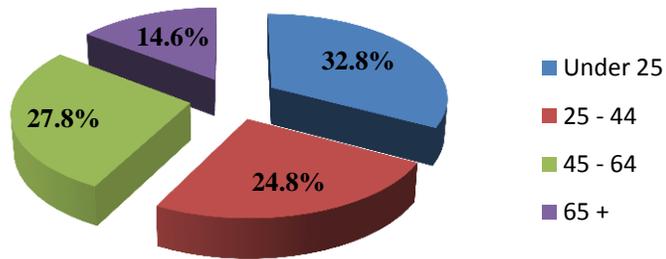
Webster County Unemployment Rates



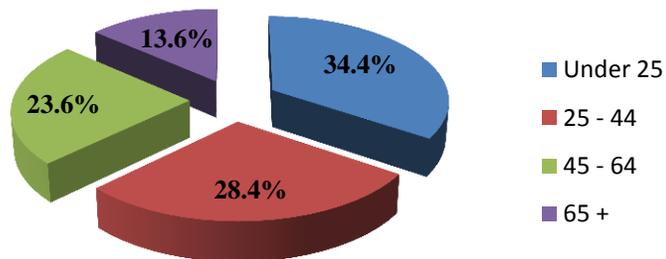
Conclusions

Striking features emerge from the analysis of demographic changes experienced in the GRADD region. Most notably, the GRADD region is comprised of an aging population. From 2000 to 2010, the median age increased for every GRADD county while the percentage of the population age 65+ increased for every county as well. This feature is critical to note, as it can significantly impact the demands for certain types of services and the overall attributes of the available labor force. Unemployment remains a chief concern, especially in the comparison of today’s rates to those recorded in 2007. When unemployment falls, local officials must monitor such drops to ensure they are not artificially induced by frustrated individuals abandoning job searches and consequently leaving the labor force. For now, local and regional leaders continue supporting education and workforce training programs, and the exploration of breakthrough opportunities in the realms of energy, biotechnology, and agriculture proves the region can accept change and remains committed to reversing negative economic trends.

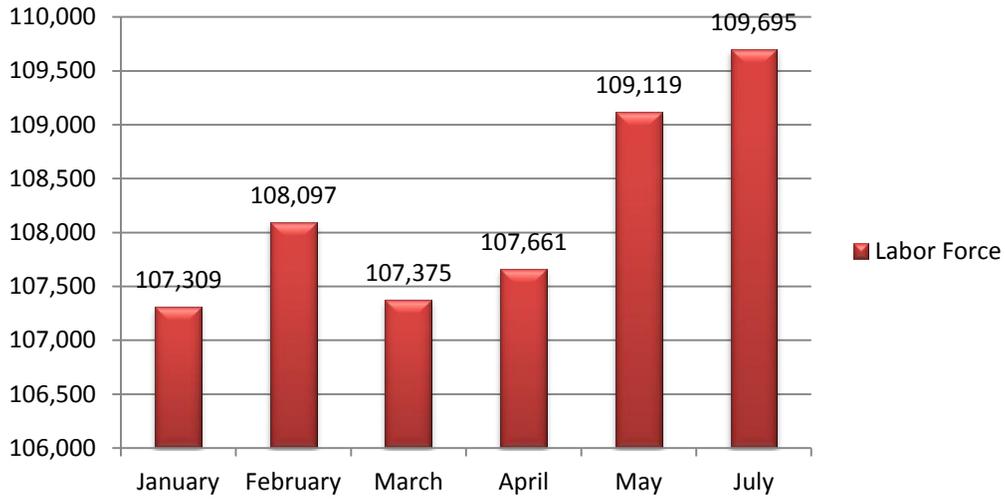
2010 GRADD Population



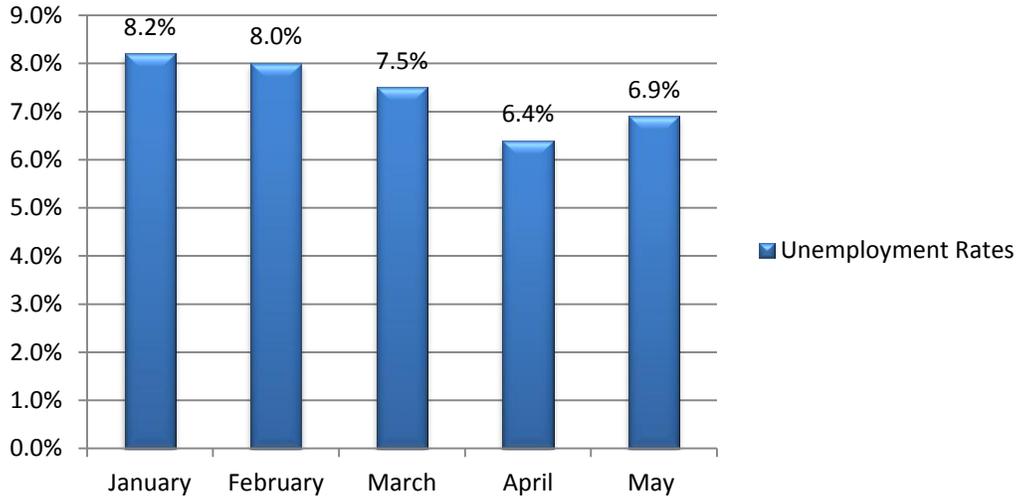
2000 GRADD Population



GRADD Labor Force, 2012



GRADD Unemployment Rates, 2012



SWOT SNAPSHOT

Strengths:

- The availability of Regional Broadband Internet infrastructure
- River transportation
- Low energy costs
- The multitude of higher education options

Weaknesses:

- The need to expand current programs to retain business
- Low post-secondary degree attainment
- Lack of jobs for advanced degree holders

Opportunities

- Development of new technologies—coal, gas, ethanol
- Interstate Spur designation for Natcher and Audubon Parkways
- Expansion of Western Kentucky University-Owensboro campus
- Broadband extension

Threats

- The continuing impact of national economic crisis
- Continued struggle to create living wage jobs
- Limited nature of air service in all counties

ECONOMY



Diversity within a region's economy is a critical component of expanding opportunities for growth; however, inaccessible resources can underscore limitations. Through the years, the GRADD region has relied heavily upon agriculture and manufacturing, with tourism and the arts slowly rising as essential sectors showing promise for further development. As world changes prompt transformation in the national economic scene, regions begin to experience combinations of prospects and tribulations within their unique economies. Ultimately, survival and success depend upon a region's openness to the vicissitudes of the market and willingness to respond and adapt. The ongoing dispute between Century Aluminum and Big Rivers Electric in Ohio County expose the threat to low energy costs that the region faces, spurring the need for further innovations that work toward revitalizing the local economy.

In recent years, the GRADD region embarked upon many innovative initiatives, from the securing of funds to recapitalize the [Green River Revolving Loan Fund](#) (RLF) for small business financing to the further extension of ConnectGRADD regional broadband internet infrastructure. These efforts are mere components of what must remain a broad commitment from all regional stakeholders to support growth and visions for widespread economic development within all viable sectors.



Economic Dependence

The United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Atlas of Rural and Small Town America analyzes counties across the nation and classifies local economic dependence in one of these six categories:

- Farm dependent;
- Mining dependent;
- Manufacturing dependent;
- Federal/State Government dependent;
- Service dependent; or
- Nonspecialized.

For the GRADD region, four of the categories predominate. Hancock, Henderson, and Ohio Counties fall within the “Manufacturing dependent” category, while McLean and Union Counties are labeled “Farm dependent.” Union County is considered “Mining dependent,” and Daviess County is categorized as “Nonspecialized.”

The recognition of local economic dependence upon particular sectors need not stifle development. If anything, such recognition serves as a reminder of an area’s strengths and, with the cultivation of vision, can give rise to future expansion and diversification. Recent employment growth by industry in the GRADD region reflects the USDA economic dependence analysis; however, it also reveals the strength of additional sectors in the region.

High Growth Industries in the GRADD Region*		
Location	Industry	Average Quarterly Employment**
Daviess County	Food Services	3,809
Daviess County	Credit Intermediation	2,279
Hancock County	Manufacturing	2,189
Hancock County	Retail Trade	136
Henderson County	Manufacturing	1,529
Henderson County	Food Manufacturing	1,209
McLean County	Retail Trade	241
McLean County	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting	166
Ohio County	Manufacturing	2,373
Ohio County	Retail Trade	805
Union County	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	1,046

High Growth Industries in the GRADD Region*		
Location	Industry	Average Quarterly Employment**
Union County	Health Care and Social Assistance	840
Webster County	Retail Trade	328
Webster County	Construction	306
<i>*Ranked based on employment totals; Top two per GRADD county featured</i>		
<i>**Based on third and fourth quarter reporting from 2010 and first and second quarter reporting from 2011</i>		
<i>Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Local Employment Dynamics</i>		

Global Business

Patterns within the economy are taking on a global nature as individuals, entrepreneurs, and companies recognize that geographic boundaries do not have to thwart partnerships and business possibilities. From time to time, the GRADD region attracts the attention of foreign companies, but at the same time, the region struggles through times when local jobs are outsourced. Despite the setbacks, local leaders must focus on the potential within the region in order to successfully navigate the global market. Recent ConnectGRADD efforts, for example, highlight the region’s intent on spreading broadband internet access, which opens up a wide array of resources for entrepreneurs, jobseekers, educators, and students. Businesses in the region have the option of transcending local markets to operate in a virtual realm spanning the globe. In fact, many companies located within the region are engaged in international business with sites positioned around the globe.

GRADD Companies with Global Reach			
Company	Location	Company Description	International Location
Alcan Primary Metal Group	Robards (Henderson County)	Extrusion Billets and Ingots	Montreal, Canada
Aleris Aluminum	Lewisport (Hancock County)	Manufactured and Recycled Aluminum	Europe, South America, China
Century Aluminum	Hawesville (Hancock County)	Primary Aluminum	Iceland
Domtar	Hawesville (Hancock County)	Paper manufacturing	Canada

GRADD Companies with Global Reach			
Company	Location	Company Description	International Location
Daicel Safety Systems America, LLC	Beaver Dam (Ohio County)	Inflators for Vehicle Airbags	Osaka, Japan
Hydro Aluminum	Henderson (Henderson County)	Extrusion Billets and Logs	Norway
Rinker Materials	Hartford (Ohio County)	Crushed Limestone and Agriculture Lime	Australia
Ritatsu Manufacturing, Inc.	Beaver Dam (Ohio County)	Stamping and Welding of Auto Parts	Toyota City, Japan
River Metals Recycling, LLC	Henderson (Henderson County)	Shredded Metal	Utretch, Netherlands
Central Star Southern Gas Pipeline	Owensboro (Davie County)	Gas Pipeline	Montreal, Canada
Swedish Match North America	Owensboro (Davie County)	Smokeless Tobacco Products	Stockholm, Sweden
Toyotetsu Mid-America, LLC	Owensboro (Davie County)	Stamped and Welded Auto Parts	Toyota City, Japan
Trelleborg, Inc.	Morganfield (Union County)	Automotive Parts	Trelleborg, Sweden
Unilever Foods North America	Owensboro (Davie County)	Pasta and Simmer Sauces	Rotterdam, Netherlands
Van Houtte, Inc.	Henderson (Henderson County)	Coffee Distribution and Roasting	Montreal, Canada

At times, focus on global business carries drawbacks, including the loss of identity. Certain unique characteristics of a region could take on a diminished role as business takes place in a realm oblivious to geography and physical place. Many regional leaders, however, continue to emphasize “placemaking” as a method of creating an atmosphere that piques the interest of new residents and visitors. If conducted successfully, “placemaking” can establish a distinct and inviting local identity that could eventually inspire and foster a vibrant workforce and diverse economy. Such a process can prove tedious, with underlying dangers stemming from the method and approaches taken. Is the end result a false reality? Does “placemaking” embrace only that which is effectually beneficial, while ignoring certain nuances that are embedded in a region or locality’s reality? “Placemaking” inevitably assumes certain values within the presentation of place that can very easily marginalize segments of the population. Alienating sectors of the population by implementing such

strategies without careful thought and public participation can weave discord throughout the community fabric.

Business Closings and Mass Layoffs

From January 2011 to June 2012, approximately 187 workers across the GRADD region suffered the impacts of facility closures and mass layoffs. This number reveals some improvement over numbers from previous years, although any number of closures and layoffs can adversely affect the region’s workforce.

GRADD Business/Industry Facility Closings and Layoffs			
January - December 2011 and January - June 2012			
Facility	Location	County	Full-Time Jobs Lost
Sykes Enterprises	Morganfield	Union	172
Sebree Fence Products Inc.	Sebree	Webster	15
Total Full-Time Jobs Lost			187
<i>Source: The Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development and the Kentucky Office of Employment and Training</i>			

When assessing facility closures and layoffs, elected officials and local leaders must also consider prevailing economic trends. Slowly, unemployment for the GRADD region is declining, and this decline can explain the decrease in facility closures and mass layoffs. The region’s unemployment rate of 6.9 percent (May 2012) showcases promising improvement. However, such numbers may be fleeting given the nation’s unstable economic atmosphere. Considering figures on the decline in employment by industry gives some indication of the types of workers suffering the most.

GRADD Employment Decline by Industry: 2002 - 2010		
Location	Industry	Decline*
Daviess County	Construction	-23.3%
Daviess County	Farm Employment	-20.5%
Daviess County	Information	-13.4%
Hancock County	Manufacturing	-28.4%
Hancock County	Farm Employment	-24.6%
Hancock County	Retail Trade	-20.2%
Henderson County	Management of Companies & Enterprises	-68.7%

GRADD Employment Decline by Industry: 2002 - 2010

Location	Industry	Decline*
Henderson County	Manufacturing	-40.6%
Henderson County	Farm Employment	-34.8%
McLean County	Retail Trade	-22.3%
McLean County	Other Services	-19.1%
McLean County	Federal Civilian	-19%
Ohio County	State Government	-26%
Ohio County	Farm Employment	-25.8%
Ohio County	Information	-19.7%
Union County	Construction	-51.7%
Union County	Manufacturing	-43.2%
Union County	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	-24.6%
Webster County	Manufacturing	-54.6%
Webster County	Admin. and Waste Services	-41.8%
Webster County	Mining	-33.6%
<i>*Employment decline measured by taking the average of annual employment decline in the period from 2002 - 2010</i>		
<i>Source: Kentucky Regional Economic Analysis Project</i>		

For the GRADD region, decline in employment by industry varies per county; however, farm employment and manufacturing appear to be declining region-wide during the reporting period (2002 – 2010). This information offers the opportunity to develop strategies to address the industries in decline. Awareness of decline also magnifies the value of high growth industries and the role they will play in the future of the region’s economy.

New and Expanding Businesses

Success might be difficult to identify as the national economy and local economies embark upon a slow recovery process. Despite certain grim realities, the GRADD region still experiences the benefits of investment, especially in new and expanding businesses. In 2011, the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development reported investment for new and expanding businesses throughout the state totaling \$2,644,277,613 and resulting in 13,220 jobs. For the GRADD region, the investment totaled \$98,757,260 with 457 new jobs. Investments reported in 2012 (through July 2012) for the GRADD region total \$34,460,000 with the promise of at least 97 new jobs.

GRADD New and Expanding Industries: January - December 2011 and January - June 2012

Facility	City	County	Investment	New Full-Time Employment	Product / Service	Year Announced
New Manufacturing Firms						
American Innovative Metal Solutions LLC	Henderson	Henderson	\$475,000	12	Auto accessories	2011
Daicel Safety Tube Processing Inc.	Beaver Dam	Ohio	\$8,800,000	25	Bottle tubular system for auto air bags	2011
Owensboro Grain Bio Products LLC	Owensboro	Daviess	\$14,000,000	12	Glycerin refinery	2012
Pap's Props LLC	Henderson	Henderson	\$660,000	15	Marine propeller restoration, repair and inspection of marine propellers	2012
Expanding Manufacturing Firms						
Owensboro Manufacturing LLC	Owensboro	Daviess	\$500,000	15	Metal stampings, production machining & fabricated metal products	2011
Phill's Custom Cabinets	Owensboro	Daviess	\$400,000		Cabinets	2011
Premium Allied Tool Inc.	Philpot	Daviess	\$500,000		Precision metal stampings, deep draw stampings, wire forms & strip forms	2011
Audubon Metals LLC	Henderson	Henderson	\$2,585,000	12	Heavy-media separator and secondary specification aluminum alloy producer. Recycling process of automobile shredder residue into secondary aluminum metal	2011

GRADD New and Expanding Industries: January - December 2011 and January - June 2012

Facility	City	County	Investment	New Full-Time Employment	Product / Service	Year Announced
Hydro Aluminum North America Inc.	Henderson	Henderson	\$2,600,000		Aluminum extrusion billet and log	2011
Industrial Service & Electronics Inc.	Henderson	Henderson	\$2,437,500	20	Water booster pumps & controllers	2011
Matrix Composites Inc.	Henderson	Henderson	\$955,000	17	Weave and knit fiberglass rolled good products	2011
Polymer Partners LLC	Henderson	Henderson	\$2,798,215		Plastic colorant-concentrates and compounds	2011
Sunrise Tool & Die Inc.	Henderson	Henderson	\$1,000,000	7	Plastic injection molds & repairing	2011
Sunspring America Inc.	Henderson	Henderson	\$1,150,000	15	Electro-plating and PVD coating	2011
Rio Tinto Alcan	Robards	Henderson	\$50,000,000		Aluminum extrusion billets & ingots	2011
Tyson Foods Inc.	Robards	Henderson	\$3,500,000	200	Chicken slaughtering, processing & packaging, administrative offices	2011
Dynamic Fabrication Inc.	Beaver Dam	Ohio	\$957,000	22	Full service steel fabrication	2011
Perdue Farms Inc.	Beaver Dam	Ohio	\$5,500,000		Chicken slaughtering, processing & packaging	2011
National Office Furniture	Fordsville	Ohio		34	Wooden office desks, bookcases & tables	2011

GRADD New and Expanding Industries: January - December 2011 and January - June 2012

Facility	City	County	Investment	New Full-Time Employment	Product / Service	Year Announced
Pride Industries Inc.	Pride	Union	\$30,000	2	Steel & aluminum standing seam roofing, preformed metal shingles	2011
Jim David Meats	Uniontown	Union	\$860,000	25	Meat processing, wholesale, retail	2011
Timewell of Kentucky LLC	Providence	Webster	\$870,000	8	Single wall agriculture tubing and large diameter dual wall pipe	2011
Green River Post Co. LLC	Sebree	Webster	\$400,000	2	Lumber, fence posts	2011
Toyotetsu Mid America	Owensboro	Daviess	\$10,000,000		Automotive stampings and welded assemblies	2012
Expanding Supportive/Service Forms						
S&Y Terminal LLC	Owensboro	Daviess	\$750,000		Tank storage facility for liquid	2011
Wax Works Inc.	Owensboro	Daviess	\$1,225,000	10	Entertainment media	2011
Carroll Engineering	Morganfield	Union	\$1,063,045	10	Mining safety, communications, network design, motor, power and electrical needs	2011
Security Seed and Chemical LLC	Morganfield	Union	\$400,000	4	Wholesale farm supplies, seed chemical treatment, repackage bulk chemical	2011
River View Coal LLC	Waverly	Union	\$9,000,000	17	Coal production	2011
Boardwalk Pipeline Partners	Owensboro	Daviess	\$4,500,000	50	Headquarters	2012

GRADD New and Expanding Industries: January - December 2011 and January - June 2012

Facility	City	County	Investment	New Full-Time Employment	Product / Service	Year Announced
Southern Star Central Gas Pipeline Inc.	Owensboro	Daviess	\$5,300,000	20	Headquarters	2012
Totals			\$133,215,760	554		

Source: [Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development](#)

Major Employers

The workforce in the GRADD region is spread among a healthy variety of industries and sectors. While there are definite industry concentrations in the region, many new industries have been supported and are experiencing growth in employment as a result. By contrast, regions possessing a workforce dependent on a single industry or sector are at risk of certain dangers. If the primary industry for an area falters, much of the area's workforce could face a period of unemployment, prompting an urgency to adapt to shifting economic trends and to cultivate resources according to local workforce needs. Regardless of an area's industry spread, mass layoffs and closures generally perpetuate high rates of unemployment, requiring extensive response and recovery efforts. Through a variety of workforce and economic development initiatives, the GRADD region strives to limit closings and layoffs as it provides resources and support for the local workforce. With a diversity of industries exhibiting strong employment growth, the region stands in a solid position capable of enduring economic downturns, as it is unlikely that all industries will significantly falter at the same time.

GRADD Employment Growth by Industry

Industry	Percentage of Growth*
Private Households	45.5%
Management of Companies and Entrepreneurs	19.3%
Chemical Manufacturing	16.6%
Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	13.4%
Warehouse and Storage	12.5%
Mining (Except Oil and Gas)	11.9%
Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores	11.6%
Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction	9.7%
Administration and Support Services	8.3%
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	8.0%

*Growth measured from the second quarter of 2010 to the second quarter of 2011

Source: [U.S. Census Bureau, Local Employment Dynamics](#)

In the GRADD region, top employment by industry varies for men and women. While there is some overlap in the top industries, top employment for men rests primarily in manufacturing industries, and top employment for women rests primarily in the services and health care industries. Knowledge of these differences can allow for the specialization of workforce training strategies and the dissemination of appropriate resources.

GRADD Top Employment Industries for Men and Women

Industry (Men)	Average Quarterly Employment* (Men)	Industry (Women)	Average Quarterly Employment* (Women)
Food Manufacturing	2,933	Food Services and Drinking Places	3,381
Primary Metal Manufacturing	2,764	Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	2,738
Administrative and Support Services	2,384	Ambulatory Health Care Services	2,510
Food Services and Drinking Places	2,321	Credit Intermediation and Related Services	2,309
Mining (Except Oil and Gas)	1,937	General Merchandise Stores	1,771
Specialty Trade Contractors	1,924	Administrative and Support Services	1,638
Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	1,214	Food Manufacturing	1,337
Merchant Wholesalers, Durable Goods	1,182	Hospitals	1,105
Merchant Wholesalers, Nondurable Goods	1,141	Social Assistance	1,100
Repair and Maintenance	1,021	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	867

**Average quarterly employment measured for the third and fourth quarters of 2010 and the first and second quarters of 2011*

Source: [U.S. Census Bureau, Local Employment Dynamics](#)

Spending Habits

Analyzing a region’s spending habits can provide some insight into how the economic climate impacts average households. In 2010, the [Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc.](#) (ESRI) compiled county-level spending data, organizing expenditures by spending categories and indicating the percentage of total spending for each category. For the report, ESRI relied upon 2006 and 2007 Consumer Expenditure Surveys from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Though these figures are older and represent a period prior to the worst of the economic downturn, they reveal typical spending trends for the region. For example, during the period analyzed, households in every GRADD county spent more on Entertainment and

Recreation than on Education. Does such a trend change when unemployment rises? The ESRI report serves as an essential starting point for future comparative analysis. Figures portraying the spending habits of the GRADD region during difficult economic times and beyond should reveal shifts. These shifts can paint an intriguing portrait of household conditions and consumer confidence in the GRADD region.

Spending Habits in the GRADD Region: Average Household Expenditures

County	Food	Housing	Transportation	Travel	Health Care	Entertainment and Recreation	Education
Daviess	\$6,390 (11.7%)	\$16,420 (30.1%)	\$8,399 (15.4%)	\$1,493 (2.7%)	\$3,272 (6.0%)	\$2,694 (4.9%)	\$1,036 (1.9%)
Hancock	\$5,905 (12.0%)	\$13,895 (28.3%)	\$8,265 (16.8%)	\$1,219 (2.5%)	\$3,176 (6.5%)	\$2,494 (5.1%)	\$787 (1.6%)
Henderson	\$6,147 (11.8%)	\$15,425 (29.6%)	\$8,178 (15.7%)	\$1,388 (2.7%)	\$3,180 (6.1%)	\$2,587 (5.0%)	\$969 (1.9%)
McLean	\$5,157 (12.2%)	\$11,392 (27.0%)	\$7,341 (17.4%)	\$1,037 (2.5%)	\$3,004 (7.1%)	\$2,227 (5.3%)	\$578 (1.4%)
Ohio	\$5,129 (12.1%)	\$11,634 (27.5%)	\$7,253 (17.2%)	\$1,034 (2.4%)	\$2,895 (6.9%)	\$2,186 (5.2%)	\$622 (1.5%)
Union	\$6,023 (11.9%)	\$14,526 (28.6%)	\$8,260 (16.3%)	\$1,320 (2.6%)	\$3,302 (6.5%)	\$2,574 (5.1%)	\$860 (1.7%)
Webster	\$5,372 (12.1%)	\$12,354 (27.8%)	\$7,553 (17.0%)	\$1,094 (2.5%)	\$2,963 (6.7%)	\$2,282 (5.1%)	\$682 (1.5%)

Source: [Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. \(ESRI\), 2010](#)

Agriculture

Favorable geography and climate, coupled with abundant natural resources, fuel a healthy agricultural sector within the GRADD area economy. Despite these obvious advantages, the GRADD region struggles to address developing economic and environmental factors that strain the progress of typical agricultural initiatives. While severe weather events, from extended droughts to hurricane force winds, can damage and destroy crops, regulatory and environmental mandates can stifle growth and alter common practices. With determination and ingenuity, the GRADD region has persevered, embracing efforts that join new market necessities with established concepts and abilities. For example, the GRADD region has been instrumental in developing soy biodiesel as an alternative to foreign oil dependence. Additionally, the region remains heavily involved in the advancing biomedical field as interest in and demand for plant-based pharmaceutical products continue to soar.

The increasing popularity of agritourism also benefits the GRADD region. Across the state, farming operations have shifted focus to the entertainment and educational value of their daily work. Families and schools can visit established agritourism locations to enjoy a mix

of recreation and education, ultimately benefitting the agriculture and tourism industries. Over 30 agritourism sites exist within the GRADD region.

GRADD Agriculture Statistics				
Location	Number of Farms	Percentage of Land in Farms	Number of Farms with Agritourism or Recreational Services	Percentage of Farms with High-Speed Internet Access
Daviess County	1,008	87.8%	4	26.89%
Hancock County	383	52.4%	--	18.80%
Henderson County	509	70.2%	13	29.87%
McLean County	419	89.2%	3	23.39%
Ohio County	969	44.8%	1	12.39%
Union County	325	91.5%	--	21.54%
Webster County	556	73.0%	5	21.23%

All data is derived from 2007 figures

Source: [United States Department of Agriculture, Atlas of Rural and Small Town America](#)



Governor Steve Beshear announced the expansion of Dynamic Fabrication in Ohio County utilizing RLF monies in July 2011.

SWOT SNAPSHOT

Strengths:

- Availability of the lowest electrical rates in the United States
- Multiple industrial clusters
- Display of unity in the region through the formation of two regional industrial parks

Weaknesses:

- Shortage of spec buildings
- Limited availability of property
- Distance from the Interstate

Opportunities

- Emerging clean coal technology
- Development of biodiesel field and the region's tremendous supply of high quality soybeans
- Interstate spur designation for Natcher and Audubon Parkways

Threats

- Shortage of funds to market sites

INDUSTRIAL PARKS



With established regional industrial parks, the GRADD region possesses a suitable foundation for fostering economic development opportunities. Like most industrial parks, Bluegrass Crossings Business Centre and 4-Star Industrial Park provide affordable blocks of land offering opportunities for industry expansion and new job growth. As regional endeavors, these parks ignore typical geographical boundaries to ensure economic growth on a much broader scale. To add to the successes of Bluegrass Crossings and 4-Star, other industrial parks and similar facilities are in various stages of development throughout the region.

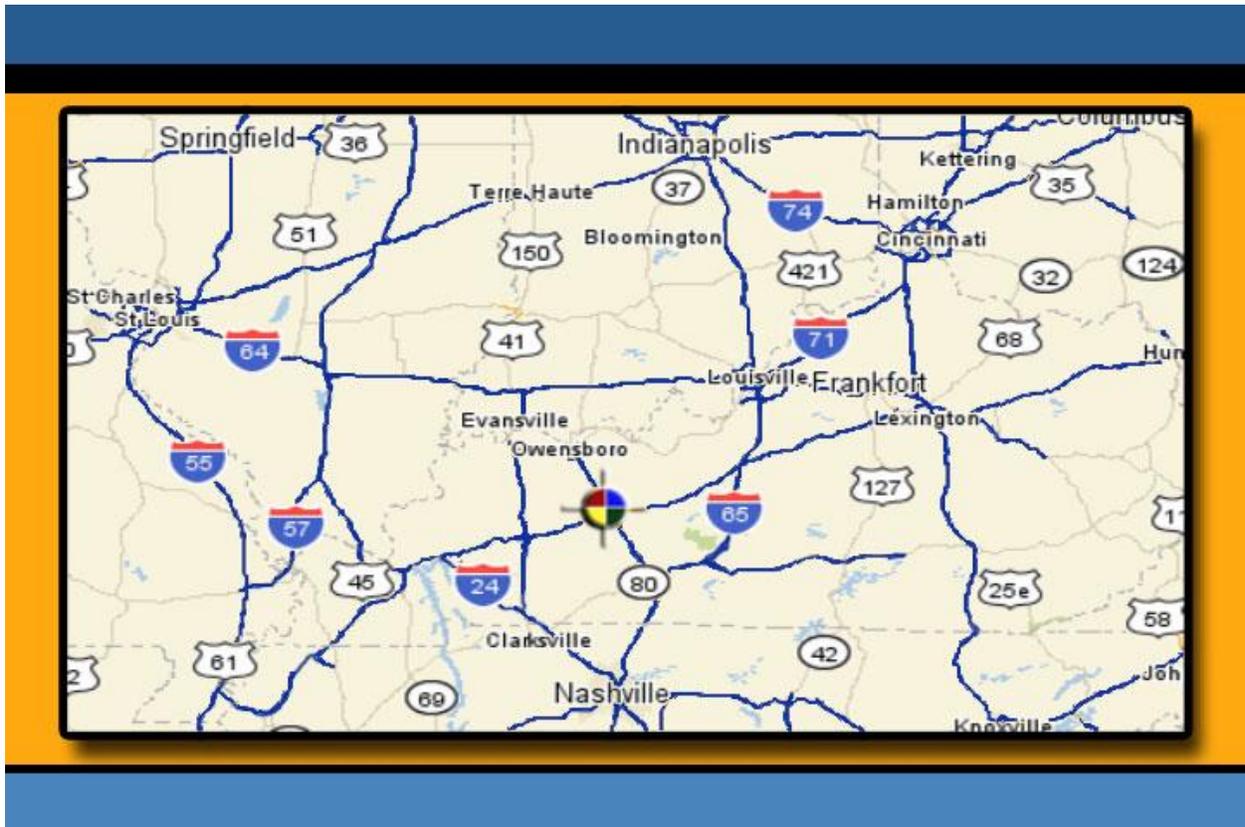
In Kentucky, the [Local Government Economic Development Fund](#) (LGEDF) supplies grants of coal severance tax revenues to assist counties in their efforts to enhance existing businesses and to secure new industries. Coal producing counties receive an allotment of LGEDF funds for use only in the county, while another portion of LGEDF funding is dedicated to regional projects. LGEDF supplies funding for the Regional Industrial Park Program, which has established several regional industrial parks across Kentucky. Ultimately, the program strives to open industrial lands and support innovative economic development initiatives that will prompt job growth and diversify local economies.



Bluegrass Crossings Business Centre

Through the collaborative efforts of Daviess, Hancock, McLean, Ohio, and Muhlenberg Counties, Bluegrass Crossings provides over 1,000 acres of land for industrial development. Located in Ohio County at the crossroads of the Natcher and Wendell Ford Parkways, this industrial park boasts convenient access to the interstate system with direct links to I-64, I-65, and I-24. For prospective companies, Bluegrass Crossings extends special services, including tours, incentives information, local networking opportunities, and local data.

Companies interested in locating in this area will have access to utilities, as Bluegrass Crossings has established the infrastructure for electrical, natural gas, water/wastewater, and telecommunications services. Utilities are serviced by Western Kentucky Gas, Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company, Warren Rural Electric Cooperative, the Ohio County Water District, and the Ohio County Regional Wastewater District. The park currently houses locations for Daicel Safety Systems of America, LLC and Ritatsu Manufacturing, Inc.



4-Star Industrial Park

To extend opportunities for industrial development in the region, Henderson, McLean, Union, and Webster Counties collaborate to oversee the progress of the 4-Star Industrial Park. The park includes over 800 acres of industrial land south of the City of Henderson, and through the years, the state assisted in the implementation of the infrastructure necessary to attract new companies. This industrial park has convenient access to I-69, US 41, and CSX.

The four counties involved share in any tax revenues generated by the park. Beginning in 2006, the 4-Star Industrial Park gained an additional boost through the development of [Northwest Kentucky Forward](#) (NWKF). As an economic development corporation, NWKF leads economic development efforts in Henderson, McLean, Union, and Webster Counties with a focus on attracting new businesses, securing existing businesses, and inspiring innovation and entrepreneurship.



SWOT SNAPSHOT

Strengths:

- Stability of community and technical college system
- Proximity of seven post-secondary institutions

Weaknesses:

- Substandard average of adults with bachelor's degrees
- High percentage of adults without a high school degree
- Need for additional Research & Development efforts in the region
- Underemployment for college graduates

Opportunities

- Growth of Western Kentucky University-Owensboro
- Employment availability in health care and life sciences industries
- High state rank for numbers of adults with Associate's degrees
- Hancock County OCTC extension

Threats

- Undereducated migrant workers
- Lack of employment opportunities for advanced degree holders

EDUCATION



Although the GRADD region contains many strong institutes and resources for education, formidable challenges threaten the future of these assets. As a difficult economic atmosphere triggers widespread budget cuts, even the education sector must adapt to decreases in government funding. The [Kentucky state budget for 2012-2014](#) will cut nearly seven percent of the funds allocated to state universities and technical schools. While base funding for public schools through the [Support Education Excellence in Kentucky](#) (SEEK) program remain stable, other important programs endured cuts. Extended School Services, for example, experienced a 60 percent cut in 2010. State lawmakers and Governor Beshear continue to seek efficiencies and negotiate cuts that could impact education due to the troubling economic mood.

As the high likelihood of more education cuts hovers over the region, administrators and local leadership must seek creative solutions and partnerships to combat dwindling monetary resources. With a network of higher education already established in the region, area leaders have a stable foundation upon which they can structure changes to enhance the existing resources for the area citizenry. Pursuing new solutions and a modified vision also opens the possibility of diversifying a growing workforce and instilling new skills required in a changing economy. To advance in the future and to meet the reality of limited budgets, local leaders must celebrate innovation of thought and action.

Primary and Secondary Schools

A strong emphasis upon the importance of education must begin early. With a commitment to the spirit of education, schools across the region continue to implement outstanding programs, incorporating literacy, diverse curricula, instructor accountability, and college preparation. Establishing a solid educational foundation through innovative techniques and programs fortifies the future of the area youth as they enter a world of increasing demands and rapid changes. To maintain unique programming, however, schools in the region must remain cognizant of the funding needed to support high-level instruction. Without question, students require quality instruction and broad resources to excel and prepare for futures in academia and/or the workforce, yet a cloudy economic forecast threatens the availability of future education funding. School officials must acknowledge this conundrum and grant greater attention to factors such as enrollment, expenditures per student, and student-to-teacher ratios.

GRADD Public School Enrollment			
School District	2010 Enrollment	2011 Enrollment	Percentage Change
Daviess County	10,676	10,761	+0.8%
Owensboro Independent	3,961	4,019	+1.5%
Hancock County	1,613	1,646	+2.0%
Henderson County	6,837	6,877	+0.6%
McLean County	1,610	1,569	-2.6%
Ohio County	3,783	3,873	+2.4%
Union County	2,279	2,219	-2.6%
Webster County	2,133	2,119	-0.7%

Source: [Kentucky Department of Education, School Report Cards -- 2010 - 2011](#)

GRADD School Districts: Student Resources					
School District	Spending per Student 2010	Spending per Student 2011	Student / Teacher Ratio 2010	Student / Teacher Ratio 2011	Percentage Change in Spending
Daviess County	\$10,388	\$10,420	15.0:1	16.0:1	+0.31%
Owensboro Independent	\$13,145	\$12,755	13.0:1	13.0:1	-3.0%
Hancock County	\$10,535	\$10,676	16.0:1	16.0:1	+1.3%
Henderson County	\$10,022	\$10,023	16.0:1	16.0:1	0%

GRADD School Districts: Student Resources					
School District	Spending per Student 2010	Spending per Student 2011	Student / Teacher Ratio 2010	Student / Teacher Ratio 2011	Percentage Change in Spending
McLean County	\$9,911	\$9,705	14.0:1	14.0:1	-2.1%
Ohio County	\$10,469	\$10,811	15.0:1	16.0:1	+3.3%
Union County	\$10,973	\$11,090	15.0:1	13.0:1	+1.1%
Webster County	\$7,899	\$8,049	15.0:1	15.0:1+	+1.9%

Source: [Kentucky Department of Education, School Report Cards](#)-- 2010 - 2011

For all eight GRADD school districts, total enrollment dropped during the 2009 – 2010 academic year. Spending per student increased for all but two school districts, and student-to-teacher ratios remained close to those reported for the 2009-2010 academic year. These trends were partly reversed as five of the seven districts experienced modest increases in enrollment during the 2010-2011 academic year. Although the increase in spending per student and the stable student-to-teacher ratios seem to indicate improvements, the drop in enrollment for several of the region’s school districts suggests a more complicated reality. From the departure of young families from the region to a decline in birthrates, a number of factors could explain the drop in enrollment. School administrators and local leaders must continue to monitor enrollment, for a continued downward trend could have economic implications for the region.

Technology serves as an additional factor for assessing the success of school systems. The quality and availability of computers for students can present a general idea of a school district’s ability to prepare students for a technology-driven future. In this regard, some GRADD school districts excel; however, some districts continue to rely on older and fewer computers per student.

GRADD School Districts: Student Resources		
School District	Percentage of Computers 5 Years Old or Less	Students per Internet Connected Computer
Kentucky average	77.4%	2.4:1
Daviess County	91.0%	1.9:1
Owensboro Independent	71.0%	2.8:1
Hancock County	100%	1.2:1
Henderson County	90.0%	2.3:1

GRADD School Districts: Student Resources		
School District	Percentage of Computers 5 Years Old or Less	Students per Internet Connected Computer
McLean County	82.3%	2.9:1
Ohio County	75.6%	3.5:1
Union County	49.1%	3.4:1
Webster County	92.8%	4.1:1
<i>Source: Kentucky Department of Education, School Report Cards -- 2010 - 2011</i>		

Challenges in the realm of secondary education touch all corners of the state. According to the [Kentucky Long Term Policy Research Center](#), issues such as poverty, parental education, rural population numbers, obesity, disability rates, and missed school days impact student performance. Faced with these obstacles, schools in the GRADD region manage to exhibit signs of progress. Despite a strained economy, the vigilant efforts and commitment of GRADD educators, students, parents, and civic leaders must continue.

Higher Education

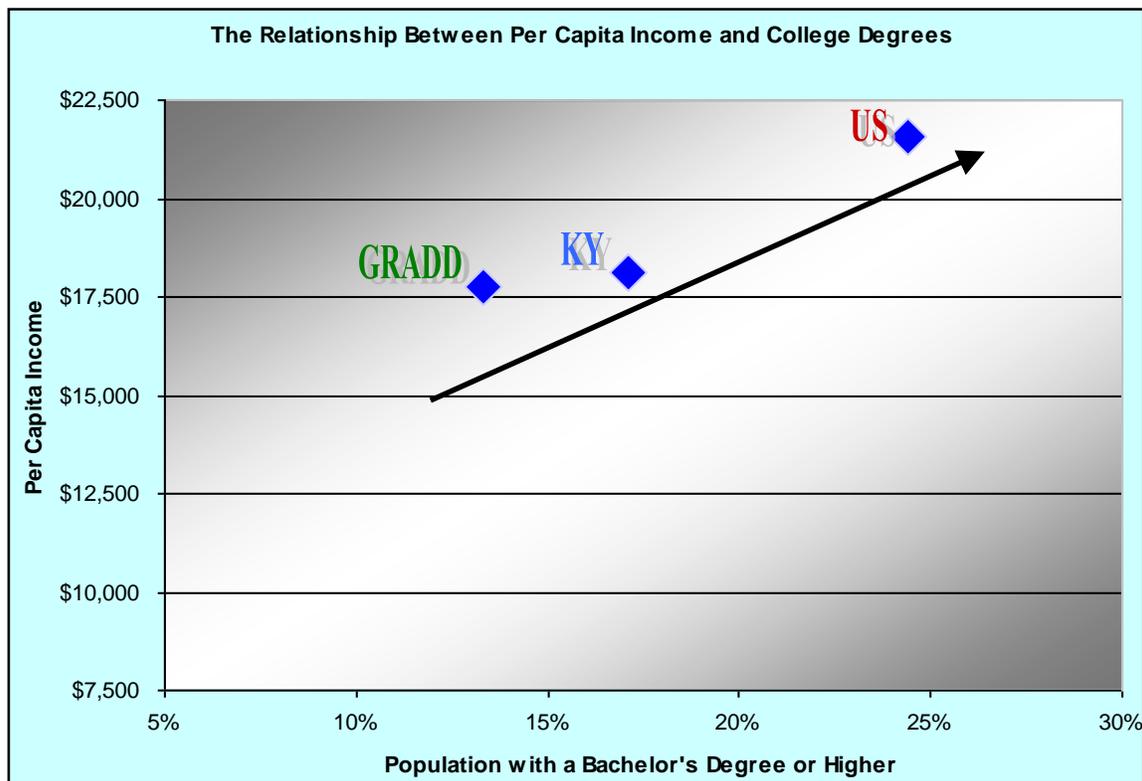
In the GRADD region, traditional and nontraditional students have a broad range of higher education options. The institutes of higher education include:

- [Brescia University](#);
- [Henderson Community College](#);
- [Kentucky Wesleyan College](#);
- [Murray State University, Henderson Regional Campus](#);
- [Owensboro Community and Technical College](#); and
- [Western Kentucky University, Owensboro Campus](#).



Despite access to institutes for higher education, the region must address some troubling statistics. According to 2010 figures from the U.S. Census Bureau’s [American Community Survey](#) (ACS), approximately 83 percent of individuals 25 and older hold a high school diploma or higher. This exceeds levels recorded for Kentucky (81 percent) and sits close to levels for the U.S. (85 percent). While this is a positive trend and might inspire assumptions that a high level of high school diploma holders gives rise to a high level of college graduates, the reality is very different for the GRADD region. Only 15 percent of individuals 25 or older in the GRADD region possess a bachelor’s degree or higher, placing the region well below the state (at 20 percent) and the nation (at 28 percent). In part, this quandary stems from the region’s job market. Many available jobs do not require educational attainment beyond a high school diploma. With the recent high rates of unemployment, many are encouraged to pursue higher education. Though potentially positive, the GRADD region must create more knowledge-based job opportunities requiring advanced degrees in order to attract and maintain college graduates.

A potential effect of the low percentage of individuals with a bachelor’s degree or higher can be discerned from the correlation between per capita income and education attainment. The national percentage of individuals with a bachelor’s degree or higher exceeds the GRADD average, and similarly, national per capita income is higher. Clearly, several factors could fuel this relationship, but the situation points to critical considerations for the GRADD region.



While it is clear the region does not lack the resources and institutions of higher education, the population is either not utilizing them or leaving the region after degree attainment. Regional leaders are exploring efforts to ameliorate this example of “brain drain.” Capitalizing on the abundance of agricultural resources, the region has created a marketplace for plant-based pharmaceutical production, which generates knowledge-based jobs. Additionally, the spread of broadband internet infrastructure in rural areas opens opportunities and resources without the constraints of geographical boundaries. Along with these ongoing efforts, some regional leaders are pursuing “placemaking” initiatives to highlight unique local environments that could produce incentives to attract new talent and to convince educated citizens to remain in the region. Local officials and leaders throughout the region must sustain these efforts and devise additional endeavors to remain competitive in an unpredictable economy.

OwensboroU.com

Launched in May 2011, the OwensboroU website is a collaborative effort involving the Greater Owensboro Economic Development Corporation, Brescia University, Kentucky Wesleyan College, Owensboro Community & Technical College, and Western Kentucky University – Owensboro. The site is touted as a marketing strategy that emphasizes the link between economic development and higher education. With goals to “Enroll, Engage, and Employ” area students, the website features general area information, existing educational partnerships, and community resources.



SWOT SNAPSHOT

Strengths:

- Multiple industrial clusters
- Regional Broadband Internet infrastructure
- History of regional unity, as displayed through two regional industrial parks
- Strong post-secondary education institutions
- Regional database for employees and job seekers

Weaknesses:

- Unskilled and/or under-educated workforce
- Lack of BA degrees
- Lack of high-paying, professional jobs
- High rates of drug addiction

Opportunities

- Development of County Technology Centers
- Growth of Western Kentucky University – Owensboro

Threats

- Dependence upon manufacturing jobs and the potentially adverse impact of the changing global economy on such jobs
- Limited funding for worker programs
- Rising college costs
- Aging work force

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



Unstable economic times demand innovative support resources and programs to encourage and fortify a region’s workforce. Enduring the hardships and distress of layoffs and job losses, the workforce depends on regional efforts to implement proper mechanisms to uplift affected workers and to introduce the tools needed to advance in an evolving labor market. From internships to adult career resources, One-Stop Career Centers and satellite centers located throughout the GRADD region supply a diverse set of resources to assist all sectors of the workforce. During recent years, the GRADD region has also established programs to address sudden layoffs and worker dislocation. The Rapid Response Program and the Green River Internship Program serve as additional avenues for reaching the workforce, disseminating information, and assisting in the creation of new workforce opportunities. Through the existence of a stable network of One-Stop Career Centers and programs dedicated to workforce assistance, the GRADD region values the importance of human labor and creativity in shaping the future of the economy.



One-Stop Career Center

Entering the job market as a student straight out of school or as an experienced worker laid-off from a long-term career is an intimidating process. Though a web of resources exists for job seekers, the complexity of absorbing everything needed to advance in the search process is overwhelming for job seekers. Offering valuable assistance in maneuvering through this terrain, One-Stop Career Centers assume a critical role in the workforce development of the GRADD region. In Owensboro, full-service centers supply job seekers with:

- Job search and resume creation assistance;
- Unemployment information;
- Resources for educational and training opportunities;
- Access to technological tools;
- Qualified support staff;
- Financial aid applications and related resources;
- Evaluations and assessments to determine individual skills; and
- Various services to employers to promote job growth.

Though they do not provide the same extent of services, satellite One-Stop Career Centers are valuable options for job seekers who cannot travel to the Henderson and Owensboro locations, or need only a limited level of personal assistance. The GRADD satellite centers include:

- The Hancock County Career Center;
- The Henderson Office of Employment and Training;
- The McLean County Career Center; and
- The Ohio County Career Center.



Training Services, Internships, and Sector-Based Training

The [Green River Workforce Investment Board](#), funded by the Workforce Investment Act, provides training opportunities to the citizens of the Green River region, including opportunities such as college scholarships, on the job training contracts, and internships.

The scholarship program provides assistance to those who qualify with college expenses such as tuition and books. Programs are available for eligible adults, dislocated workers, youth and those who have been laid off due to foreign trade. Scholarships include both long- and short-term training opportunities with a sector based approach. An individual applying for training is directed to Kentucky's ETPL and receives a program priority list, which features majors leading to high demand occupations based on current labor market data. Sectors identified as a priority are Advanced Manufacturing, Construction and Skilled Trades, Energy, Healthcare, and STEM.

Paid internships are offered to qualified participants of the scholarship program within their area of study. Internships last for three months. Individuals receive valuable on-the-job experience and perfect various soft skills.

In 2012, the Green River Workforce Investment Board provided scholarships to 371 individuals totaling over \$1.3 million dollars. 55 individuals were placed in On the Job Training Grants with employers totaling over \$90,000. In May 2012, 57 graduates obtained associates or bachelor's degrees. A month after graduation, 28 graduates found relevant employment.

Entrepreneurship

The May 2012 [Regional Economic Growth Strategy](#) stated that the region has encouraging opportunities given its great entrepreneurial potential. The Greater Owensboro Economic Development Corporation and Northwest Kentucky Forward have helped promote entrepreneurship with the Centre for Business and Research, which provides labs, equipment, and office space, and the Northwest Kentucky Entrepreneurship Center, which offers office space and shared services for up to twelve companies.

Green River Business Services

Without a strong, diverse economic climate in our region, our workforce cannot fully develop or thrive. A partnership of local agencies has combined efforts to provide a collective menu of services to businesses in the GRADD region. The Green River Business Services Team, comprised of One-Stop Career Center staff, local college staff, and economic development staff, provides customized, free workforce solutions to meet the needs of companies regardless of their size. Services include:

- On-the-job training contracts
- Internship opportunities
- Candidate referrals and applicant screenings
- On-site interviewing and workspace at the One-Stop Career Center
- Assistance developing job descriptions
- Layoff aversion strategies and Rapid Response Services

Regional Career and Job Fair 2011

GRADD partnered with several area educational institutions and development agencies in the area to present the 2011 Regional Career and Job Fair on September 27, 2011. More than forty companies and post-secondary schools from across the region were on hand at the Owensboro Sportscenter to discuss career and training opportunities with over 400 participants.

Youth Summit 2012

On March 13, 2012, GRADD partnered with the Owensboro Parks and Recreation Department to host the Youth Summit 2012 at Kentucky Wesleyan College in Owensboro. The summit featured 21 educational sessions conducted by community leaders, business professionals, and educators. Such sessions were coupled with a key note speaker and relevant skits. Providing an open environment, the Youth Summit strives to inspire area youth to express their opinions as they receive advice and information on how to better the self, the community, and society. Approximately 500 students from area middle and high schools attended this event.

Rapid Response

During times of frequent business closings and layoffs, the accessibility of necessary resources is essential for the ongoing support and encouragement of those who struggle to remain in the workforce. In 2012, a Rapid Response event was conducted in response to the closure of Freedom Mine in Henderson, which could result in the displacement of up to 196 employees. The Rapid Response program utilized a specially trained team coordinating with local offices, Workforce Investment Boards, and employers to swiftly connect with victims of closings and layoffs. Through the dissemination of information outlining available services and valuable resources, Rapid Response strove to empower individuals while leading them through the inevitable transition period following job loss. In addition, Rapid Response teams were equipped to assess the specific needs of the individuals affected.



SWOT SNAPSHOT

Strengths:

- Growth of Owensboro Transit System
- Development of Green River Intra-County Transit System (GRITS) and the Henderson Area Rapid Transit (HART)

Weaknesses:

- Deficiency of rail access
- Limited access to public transportation in rural counties
- Age of transportation infrastructure
- Bridge safety
- Limited interstate access

Opportunities

- Interstate Spur designation for Natcher and Audubon Parkways
- Increased safety of bridges and approaches
- Improvements to state highways in the GRADD region

Threats

- Financial constraints

TRANSPORTATION



The movement of people and goods has a significant impact upon the economy of a region. From quality and availability to ease of access, transportation influences how business is conducted and where people decide to live. Consequently, transportation planning emerges as a principal topic in all economic development dialogues. Planning efforts in the GRADD region consider both long and short-range plans for improving transportation networks. In addition to coordinating with the [Kentucky Transportation Cabinet](#), GRADD works closely with local officials, cities, and counties to develop specific projects that will respond to the region's needs.

Although structural development and maintenance of transportation is essential, comprehensive planning must address safety. Through the years, highway safety has surfaced as a prominent issue in the GRADD region, with active task forces meeting to identify trends and weaknesses in the region's transportation network. Recognition of problems allows the emergence of solutions that can alter poor habits and ensure greater levels of safety and dependability for the region.



Public Transportation

The existence of a strong system of public transportation can increase opportunities for the citizens of a region. In the GRADD region, the Owensboro Transit System (OTS) serves residents of Daviess County, offering urban, fixed route transportation that is convenient and affordable for the service area. Additionally, OTS implemented an ADA Paratransit Service through the Green River Intra-County Transit System (GRITS). To qualify for the service, individuals must submit an application to OTS, and if deemed eligible, reservations must be made for all rides.

Henderson County’s Henderson Area Rapid Transit (HART) emerged in 1957 as a publicly owned entity. As owners, the citizens of the City of Henderson have a role in HART’s development. Traditionally, HART pursues efforts to extend services to as many citizens as possible and strives to keep the public well-informed regarding changes in existing routes and the addition of new routes.



Although the region’s largest cities have established transportation systems, comparable options are not available in the rural areas. For some residents, the shortage of transportation can become a tremendous obstacle, blocking access to vital resources and even jobs. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) explored components of this trend with the preparation of their Food Environment Atlas. Utilizing 2006 figures, USDA calculated the number of low-income residents living more than one mile from a grocery store.

GRADD Access to Resources	
County	Number of Low Income Individuals Living More than 1 Mile from a Grocery Store*
Daviess	8,388
Hancock	2,159
Henderson	4,571
McLean	2,850
Ohio	7,286
Union	4,178
Webster	2,777
GRADD Total	32,209
*Based on 2006 figures	
Source: USDA Food Environment Atlas	

Though the figures are somewhat dated, they present a serious snapshot worth consideration. As the economy evolves, individuals will gravitate toward more affordable transportation options. With the cost of gasoline rising during recent years, vehicle ownership is no longer the most viable option for some households. Individuals exploring alternatives will need to know that the region can provide effective and efficient means for movement, not only to obtain essential resources (such as food) but also to reach their jobs. Future regional transportation planning efforts must consider the region's public transportation deficiencies and embrace solutions that will optimize access to resources and opportunities for area residents.

Traffic Safety

Despite the conveniences and advantages it offers, transportation is linked to many serious dangers. While some threats will always exist, others can be avoided through efforts as simple as public awareness campaigns and enforcement actions designed to educate the public and encourage responsible behaviors. After an especially tragic year of highway deaths in 2005, the State of Kentucky embraced safety as a priority for subsequent years. During recent years, highway and traffic safety programs have flourished throughout the GRADD region and the state. The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet maintains a Daily Fatality Summary Report, and according to this resource, the region experienced a slight drop in the number of fatalities reported in 2010. At least on the surface, the public education efforts appear to be working, indicating that the state and the region are moving in the right direction with their efforts to enhance traffic safety and reduce fatalities.

On April 15, 2010, Governor Steve Beshear signed into law House Bill 415, which bans texting while driving for all drivers and cell phone use while driving for drivers under age 18. Partially in response to the 57,000 vehicle crashes associated with driver distraction in 2009, the law encourages drivers to focus on the road. Those found violating the law were issued a warning until the law took full effect on January 1, 2011.

Interstate Spurs



Economic development and transportation systems are tightly linked. The availability of transportation options dictates the flow of goods and services and helps determine whether or not an area is advantageous for conducting business. Local officials and leaders in the GRADD region recognize this intricate relationship and spent great time and energy seeking solutions to the region's lack of a major interstate. Citizens, development agencies,

businesses, and industries across the region, sharing an interest in this issue, urged Congressional representatives to address the region’s parkways and grant them the status of interstate spurs. In January 2008, this became a reality for the GRADD region, as Congress officially designated the Audubon and Natcher Parkways as interstate spurs. Governor Beshear formally announced this in September 2008, unveiling signs that declare this new status for both parkways. In the future, as I-66 and I-69 are built, these parkways will play an integral part and figure into future planning and funding opportunities.

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)

The GRADD region received over \$27,000,000 in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding to support regional highway and transportation projects. The following projects have been commenced and/or completed with these funds:

GRADD ARRA Funding			
Project	Funding Amount	Total Project Cost	Project Description
City of Owensboro U.S. 60 Bypass Extension	\$27,200,000	\$37,700,000	Bypass Extension (I-64/65 Connector)
Henderson County Watson Lane/US 41	\$280,000	\$750,000	Watson Lane widening
Henderson County US 41 Hazard Elimination	\$200,000	\$650,000	Construction of left turn lane at KY 136
Ohio County Reed's Ferry (KY 269)	\$300,000	\$300,000	New vehicle barge

SWOT SNAPSHOT

Strengths:

- Abundance of local water supply
- Cooperation among water and sewer systems and local officials in search of solutions to local and regional infrastructure needs
- Approximately 93 percent of households have access to public water

Weaknesses:

- Lack of funding for infrastructure improvements
- Lack of sanitary sewer service to rural areas

Opportunities

- Water Management Plan providing a strategic plan for serving rural communities
- GRADD Water Management Council serving as a regional coordinator for planning future water and sewer needs
- Green infrastructure possibilities to provide adequate services at a lower cost

Threats

- Dwindling financial resources
- Untreated wastewater contaminating local waterways

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Maintaining sharp focus on infrastructure needs can enhance quality of life and generate opportunities for economic development. Though the GRADD region is fortunate to have many existing systems of infrastructure, aging and failing components contribute to persistent problems. All 27 cities have access to a public water supply, but some areas suffer from inadequate water pressure or poor water quality. Concerted efforts to extend sanitary sewer services highlight the region's commitment to wastewater infrastructure; however, several areas continue to rely upon septic systems. Leaders debate between the urgency of pursuing new infrastructure to supply the needs of unserved populations and the necessity of maintaining and updating existing infrastructure to support underserved populations. Through the years, the GRADD region has exhibited proactive measures for infrastructure development, and many diverse voices participate in dialogues promoting regional avenues for solving mutual problems. Such conversations resulted in the creation of the Ohio County Regional Wastewater District (OCRWD), which opened operations in 2008, as well as the McLean County Regional Water Commission.

Recognition of infrastructure's pivotal role in establishing the comfort and health of citizens, paving a path for future growth, and facilitating economic development initiatives represents a beginning. Unfortunately, actions are often restricted, and even thwarted, by limited funding availability. As a result, local leaders face many difficult decisions, forcing them to contemplate short-term versus long-term solutions, regulatory compliance, and regional strategies. Confronted with an unpredictable economic future, the region's leadership must consider innovative methods for managing resources and promoting the extension and enhancement of infrastructure.

Funding

Water and sewer agencies have funding opportunities available through existing grant and loan programs administered by the Kentucky Infrastructure Authority (KIA) and the state's Department for Local Government (DLG). Several infrastructure projects in the GRADD region are being completed using State Revolving Funds (SRF) and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds:

- Sturgis Water System/Union County Water District Consolidation- \$4,000,000
- City of Uniontown: Water Line Replacement - \$963,300
- City of Centertown: Water System Improvements
 - Phase III - \$302,500
 - Phase IV - \$620,350
- Regional Water Resource Agency:
 - Dublin Lane Tunnel Sewer Reconstruction - \$2,999,500
 - Veterans Boulevard Combined Sewer Upgrade - \$5,200,500
 - RWRA/Owensboro Various Projects - \$1,787,125

Water Management Planning

From 2008 to 2011, the Green River Area Development District, in concert with the Kentucky Infrastructure Authority and the Kentucky Division of Water (DOW), updated the region's [Water Management Plan](#). Completed in coordination with the GRADD Water Management Council, the GRADD plan features both water and wastewater systems, highlights the unserved and underserved areas of the region, and pinpoints essential system attributes such as usage and capacity. Additionally, the plan includes a forecasting component to project the future needs and health of area systems. Planners and systems will utilize the final plan to develop new projects and determine opportunities for cooperation with surrounding systems to achieve mutually beneficial goals. Regional water management planning ensures that valuable resources are used in a prudent manner to pursue manageable, affordable projects that address essential needs for the greatest number of citizens.

Regional Cooperation

In late 2007, the local officials and water system operators representing all four cities and six water systems in McLean County assembled to examine county water needs. The existing water treatment facilities in the Cities of Calhoun and Livermore will require plant updates in the coming years to maintain compliance with EPA and DOW standards. In recognition of the extensive costs associated with such updates, local leaders and system operators engaged in a countywide dialogue, eventually creating a formal group known as the McLean County Regional Water Commission. Recently, the Commission utilized a grant from KIA to conduct a preliminary study that analyzes the most economical means of ensuring adequate water supply and distribution throughout the county. Before determining their final action, the group is currently pursuing a cost assessment for the construction of a regional water treatment facility.

McLean County offers a brilliant example of the slow yet steady rise of regional partnerships forming in response to critical infrastructure concerns. Throughout the region, for example, water systems are venturing beyond county and system borders to establish interconnections that will secure safe water supplies during emergency situations. In Union County, the City of Sturgis recently coordinated with the Union County Water District to create a water purchasing agreement that eliminated the city's water production system and allows local leaders to focus on improving the existing distribution system. Regional efforts prove that difficult economic times can inspire ingenuity within society, and individuals throughout the GRADD region are adopting a regional framework to maximize limited resources.



Infrastructure Jobs: Water and Wastewater System Operators

Surging demand for water and wastewater services leads to an expanding demand for system operators. The [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) (BLS) anticipates improved opportunities in the realm of Water and Liquid Waste Treatment Plant and System Operators, as jobs in the sector are expected to grow at a pace that will exceed the average growth for all types of occupations. Between 2008 and 2018, BLS projects that employment for system operators will increase by 20 percent. According to the [Green River Occupational Outlook to 2018 document](#), growth in system operator jobs in the region will not reach national projections, but the anticipated 11.86 percent growth presents a tremendous future of opportunities within a field not commonly considered in economic development discussions.

SWOT SNAPSHOT

Strengths:

- Regional Broadband Internet Infrastructure
- Availability of broadband allowing students and businesses to work more effectively from home
- Increase in opportunities for education and entertainment

Weaknesses:

- Inability of individuals to purchase home computers
- Budgeting annually for technology maintenance
- Necessity of frequent software and hardware updates

Opportunities

- Innovation Center designation for Owensboro/Daviess County
- Improved accessibility of information for students

Threats

- Rapidly changing technology
- Risk of hardware failure
- Lack of future funding to maintain systems

TECHNOLOGY



The overwhelming benefits of technology often spark complicated conundrums for small communities and regions. Rapid innovation fuels swift technological transformations, and many small communities struggle to match the pace. Funding needed to implement frequent and necessary technology updates can be elusive, and failure to pursue updates can adversely affect the area's economy and workforce. Some communities hesitate to take the first major step of endorsing technology and its offerings, yet this step alone can encourage greater economic development and strengthen the area workforce. In the GRADD region, appreciation of technology continues to grow as 13 local governments maintain active websites. Additionally, all seven GRADD counties remain committed to the ConnectGRADD Broadband Internet initiative. As communities consider future technology efforts, they must look beyond the obstacles and envision the tangible benefits that emerge in areas that support the enterprise and innovation of technology.



Green River Works



With a strong focus on a prepared workforce, the [Green River Works website](#) links job seekers and appropriate employers. Made possible through the joint efforts of the Greater Owensboro Economic Development Corporation, Green River Area Development District, Henderson Community College, Northwest Kentucky Forward, and Owensboro Community and Technical College, Green River Works utilizes technology to provide a free, web-based database that streamlines the job search process. The ease of the system for users and the speed at which job seekers and employers are connected facilitates resource availability and establishes a more efficient environment for the region’s workforce.

Computer Spending

Access to a home computer enhances resource and information availability for job seekers and students. Through the years, as the workplace and schools became more dependent upon technology and computers, households perceived the advantages of home computers. As technology develops, those advantages soar, and inevitably, household spending on computers and related accessories will increase. In the 2010 report on household spending habits, [Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc.](#) highlighted the amounts households spend on computers (and hardware) and software for home use. While the report relies on 2006 – 2007 numbers, it creates a foundation for understanding the region’s perspectives and reliance on home computers. Future numbers will reflect the economic downturn, but they might also indicate the surging importance of technology as shifting job market demands influence the workforce. Additionally, as regional broadband access expands, particularly through ConnectGRADD, there could be a greater impetus for households to obtain and maintain home computers.

Computer Spending Habits in the GRADD Region		
County	Computers and Hardware for Home Use	Software and Accessories for Home Use
Daviess	\$6,149,014	\$901,037
Hancock	\$466,297	\$67,027
Henderson	\$2,859,440	\$416,766
McLean	\$454,265	\$65,190
Ohio	\$1,083,256	\$155,314

Computer Spending Habits in the GRADD Region		
County	Computers and Hardware for Home Use	Software and Accessories for Home Use
Union	\$789,968	\$114,466
Webster	\$670,776	\$96,330

Source: [Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. \(ESRI\)](#), 2010

ConnectGRADD

Grand visions for future technological development in the region give rise to both promise and complications. Originated over four years ago, ConnectGRADD remains in the implementation stage after overcoming many unforeseen obstacles. Disappointments, however, never diminished the vision, nor did they thwart the perseverance of the GRADD region.

On a weekly basis, the ConnectGRADD endeavor marches forward, updating existing service sites and adding new service sites. Though progress has been slow at times, the GRADD region is realizing the goal of extending broadband internet access. As the service area expands, the region has the potential to attract new and developing businesses, and residents across the region gain essential resources and information that would be out of reach without broadband access. ConnectGRADD has about 3,200 customers and 56 towers are online as of July 2012.

In a world connected by the invisible tools of technology, economic development occurs without regard for artificial, geographic boundaries. Efforts once considered regional in approach are evolving beyond original visions to achieve benefits stretching outside mere place and approaching universality. For ConnectGRADD, local leaders are already considering the future and the possibility of extending services to interested counties outside the original seven counties. If this new vision triumphs, the benefits of ConnectGRADD will empower an even greater number of people and facilitate economic growth over an expanded area. The results of such an undertaking could be felt across Kentucky.

SWOT SNAPSHOT

Strengths:

- Abundance of natural resources
- Sustainability efforts exist in every GRADD county

Weaknesses:

- Lack of funding opportunities
- Waning of fossil fuel viability
- Significant portion (15 to 20 percent) of the region remains in the floodplain

Opportunities

- Research initiatives exploring new uses for available resources (i.e. soybeans)
- Development of clean coal and other clean energy technologies

Threats

- Focus of industries on short-term profits over long-term environmental impact
- New and stringent EPA regulations

ENVIRONMENT



Emerging as an issue touching all levels of society, the environment inspires both activism and controversy. Availability of natural resources influences economic decision-making in communities large and small; however, opinions on resource utilization can vary drastically among elected officials, community leaders, and regular citizens. Nature dictates that many resources are finite, and without suitable precautions, such resources are rendered especially vulnerable to threats stemming from natural and manmade hazards.

Historical use of resources might be linked to tremendous economic benefits, but the eventual revelations of environmental repercussions necessitate a change in strategies and actions. In the GRADD region, access to coal has proven advantageous, but over time the activities associated with this resource have jeopardized regional waterways, air, and land. From health to environmental concerns, the improper handling of coal and other resources threatens parks and natural tourist attractions that draw tourists and tourism dollars to the region.

Ecosystem

Across the GRADD region, a rich supply of natural resources flourishes. Beautiful waterways and unique varieties of plant and wildlife attract tourists, while fertile soil, abundant timberland, and copious coal deposits invigorate economic growth and development. Awareness of the region's environmental assets and the interconnected nature of all components present a formidable challenge for the area's leadership. A single decision can lead to great prosperity in one sector of the economy, yet generate devastating loss in another. The primary dilemma results from the combination of inconclusive science and conflicting opinions that color "right" and "wrong" with hues of grey. The uncertainty spawns a minefield for economic decision-making. To assist the region in overcoming this situation, area leaders are developing a Best Practices for Going Green tool for local governments and other public entities. Additionally, GRADD hosted the first "Green-Living Symposium" in September 2011. Providing an educational experience for local governments, businesses, and individuals, the event featured exhibitors, demonstrations, and industry experts addressing sustainable infrastructure, water quality and conservation, green policies, renewable energy, energy efficiency, recycling, and a wide variety of other topics.

Coal

For the GRADD region, coal continues to generate a perplexing predicament. Historically, coal has contributed to economic growth and supported jobs for GRADD counties. Despite the distinct advantages of coal for the region, environmental concerns compelled local economies to consider entry into and development of other industries. With focus shifting to environmental considerations, technology and approaches designed to diminish the adverse impacts of coal have emerged, prompting the reopening of existing mines and the opening of new mines. To avoid the noted environmental effects of coal, such as water and air pollution, proper utilization of new technologies must become a high priority. Although federal regulations to protect the environment are more stringent and often impact the ability to conduct business as usual, preservation of natural resources, and the environment as a whole, is something individuals and the region cannot afford to sacrifice.

Stream and Lake Pollution

Every other year, the Kentucky Division of Water publishes an [*Integrated Report to Congress on the Condition of Water Resources in Kentucky*](#). Commonly referred to as the 303(d) list, this report highlights impaired waterways throughout the state. Every county in the GRADD region has a stream, creek, lake, and/or other water resource included on this list due to some level of contamination. At times, contamination can limit regular usage, not just for drinking but also for recreational purposes. Because the GRADD region relies upon the many miles of valuable waterways used for transportation and recreation, community leaders and individuals must recognize the environmental threats to local waters. Through awareness and collaborative efforts locally and regionally, contamination can be avoided and, in some cases, reversed.

SWOT SNAPSHOT

Strengths:

- Hazard Mitigation Plan for the GRADD region
- All seven counties have an Emergency Operations Plan

Weaknesses:

- Lack of individual county/city mitigation plans in some areas
- Public awareness to mitigation plans is minimal

Opportunities

- Implementation of new warning systems across the region

Threats

- Increasing intensity of natural hazards
- Decreasing funds for mitigation planning

NATURAL DISASTER MITIGATION

When mother nature chooses to display her remarkable capacity for destruction, there is little we can do but pick up the pieces afterward. In the GRADD region, natural disasters - tornadoes, floods, winter storms, and the occasional drought - routinely threaten and interrupt the lives of the region's citizens. When such a natural disaster strikes, the GRADD area relies on a variety of emergency funding sources for clean-up and recovery. These include both federal and non-federal funds that must be secured quickly and administered efficiently. An effective response in the aftermath of disaster is only half of a complete community effort to protect itself against such threats; proper education and preparation, coupled with effective hazard mitigation plans, constitute the other half. The GRADD region is continuously looking to implement permanent improvements to infrastructure, upgrades for emergency response systems, and an increase of knowledge about how best to prepare for and anticipate the most common natural disasters in the GRADD area. Such progress is in hopes of creating communities that are aware and prepared.

To this effort, GRADD worked with the region's communities and in January 2011, the GRADD Hazard Mitigation Plan Update was approved by KY FEMA. This update is in place for five years and contains hazard mitigation plans for each of the region's communities and counties that are specific to natural disasters that are of the greatest concern to that area. The GRADD Hazard Mitigation Committee meets twice a year to review and amend the plans if necessary to ensure that each community's hazard mitigation needs are covered.



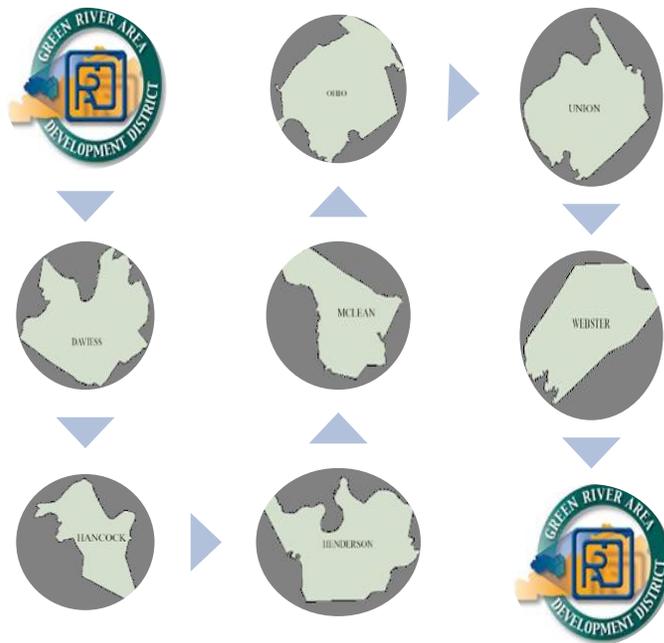
Severe Weather Events and Hazard Mitigation

During recent years, the debilitating force of natural hazard events has battered the GRADD region. On September 14, 2008, the remnants of Hurricane Ike blew through the region, causing power outages and unimaginable levels of structural damage. Later, in January 2009, an ice storm crippled the area with extended power outages and additional damages from falling tree limbs, excessive debris, and interruption of basic services. Both events challenged the resources of the region and demanded the cooperation of various entities to ensure a stable road to recovery. Following these events, the region took weeks, even months, to fully find a return to normalcy, placing a tremendous strain on local budgets.

The extended heat of the late summer months of 2010 and 2012 led to drought conditions, fueling health warnings and damaging local crops. Severe storms and excessive rain in April 2011 exposed additional area vulnerabilities as first responders prepared for major flood conditions. The relentless fury of these recent natural hazard events necessarily provokes a change in the planning and responses of local leaders. In January 2011, the region completed the GRADD Hazard Mitigation Plan Update, which offers strategies for mitigating the impacts of future events and ensures the region’s eligibility for FEMA hazard mitigation grant funding. Proper planning is one way to manage the high costs of responding to and enduring severe natural hazard events.

2010 GRADD Damage Totals		
Location	Crop Damages	Property Damages
Daviess County	\$26,000	\$33,000
Hancock County	0	0
Henderson County	\$104,000	0
McLean County	\$12,000	\$30,000
Ohio County	\$25,000	0
Union County	\$20,000	\$10,000
Webster County	\$12,000	0
GRADD Totals	\$199,000	\$73,000
<i>Source: National Climatic Data Center</i>		

ECONOMIC CLUSTER ANALYSIS



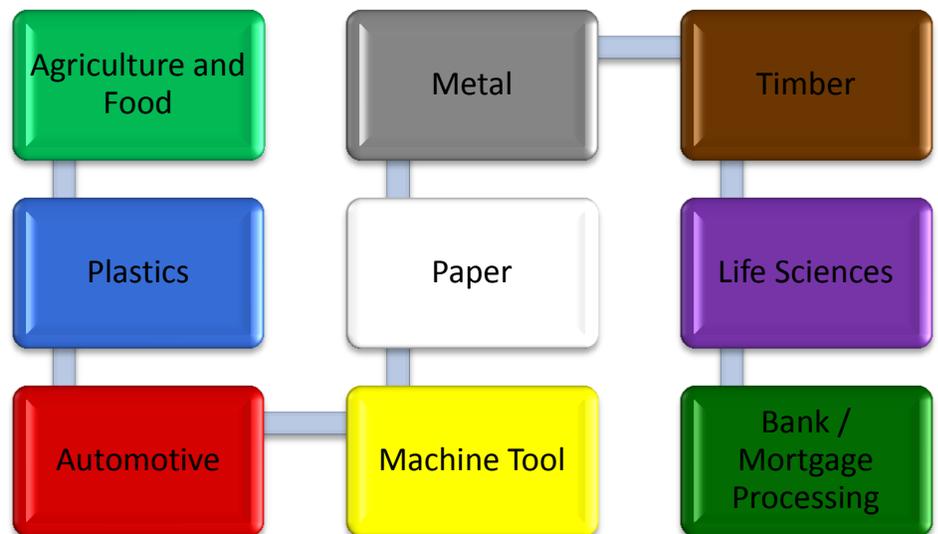


According to the Economic Development Administration, Harvard-based Professor Michael E. Porter indicates that “mid-level and advanced [economic] development depends on the formation of industry clusters, which support faster improvement and innovation of products.”

ECONOMIC CLUSTER ANALYSIS

An economic cluster is comprised of high concentrations of related companies, service providers, suppliers, and institutions representing a particular field. While some regions benefit from the impact of a single, pervasive cluster dominating the local economy, other regions nurture a diverse field of smaller clusters. Regardless of size, clusters are surfacing as a strategic mechanism for triggering regional economic development through their ability to support collaboration, fuel productivity, and stimulate healthy competition.

Regions large and small must remain cognizant of the shifts in the marketplace. With global competition escalating, cluster development offers an avenue for the creation and preservation of high caliber jobs. Clusters inspire similar companies, benefitting from proximity, to share existing resources and infrastructure. Similarly, they offer a convenient platform for exchanging ideas, building knowledge, and driving a competitive ambition that can engender innovation. This type of economic development attracts the outside interest and investment necessary to persevere amid economic uncertainty.



Agriculture and Food

Supporting a history of successful crop production, existing agribusinesses, and rising upstart companies such as the Little Kentucky Smokehouse and Fresh Meal Solutions, the GRADD region can depend on agriculture and food production as a strong economic cluster. The prevalence of poultry houses along state highways emphasizes the roles of Tyson Foods and Perdue Farms as prominent agricultural employers for the region. Located in Owensboro, Unilever Foods North America produces the bulk of Ragu and Bertolli products for the U.S. Within any economic cluster, one of the greatest struggles involves an economic universe with fickle demands. Diversifying capabilities and welcoming innovation can lead to long-term success, and Owensboro Grain's rise in the field of biodiesel fuel indicates the success of the region's agriculture sector in embracing new approaches. According to the [U.S. Census Bureau's Local Employment Dynamics](#), 4,270 individuals in the GRADD region are employed in food manufacturing, while 496 are employed in the agricultural sector. Additional U.S. Census Bureau figures from 2012 indicate that 6,097 individuals in the region are employed in the accommodation and food services sector.

Plastics

The growth of the plastics industry in the GRADD region coincided with the state's national rise in level of plastics industry employment. Part of this development can be attributed to geography, for the state, and with it the GRADD region, possesses an advantageous proximity to industrial strongholds that rely upon plastics. For 2012, jobs associated with the plastics industry totaled 18,476 in Kentucky, and approximately 1,330 of those jobs were located in the GRADD region.

Automotive



Through the years, Kentucky has performed well in the automobile industry and currently ranks third in nationwide light vehicle production. The GRADD region is a significant contributor to this success with nearly 20 automotive manufacturers within the area. As the largest automotive companies in the region, Toyotetsu Mid-America and Dana Corporation supply a sizeable portion of the 1,691 jobs (2010) benefitting the region.

Metal

Though focus usually falls on the visible and specific impact of aluminum manufacturing in Hancock County, the entire metal and metal product manufacturing cluster assumes a crucial role in the GRADD region. Interestingly, this cluster is one of the most broad-reaching, with 2010 data from the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development indicating approximately 5,402 primary metal manufacturing jobs in the region. In 2010, several aluminum companies throughout the GRADD region convened the [Northwest Kentucky Aluminum Network](#) to support the needs of existing aluminum companies and to recruit businesses that meet the needs of aluminum companies.



Paper

For the GRADD region, the paper cluster includes paper manufacturers, manufacturers of paper rolling tubes, and end-users, such as printing companies and newspapers. According to 2010 figures from the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development, paper-related companies supply 1,276 jobs in the region. The largest employers in the cluster include Domtar Paper Company in Hancock County and Kimberly-Clark in Daviess County.

Though more specialized than some clusters, the machine tool industry cluster is growing in the GRADD region. The products from this cluster supply other manufacturing industries with elements necessary to produce specific goods. With a drop in available skilled labor in the region and nationwide, the demand for technical machine tools soars. In particular, the automotive industry depends on the machine tool industry to produce mechanisms that ensure cost-effective proficiency and performance. The GRADD region's success in this cluster is attributed to the companies' anticipation of and response to growing demand. Of the 120 machine tool industry facilities in Kentucky, 12 are located in the GRADD region and provide 687 jobs, according to the [Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development](#).

Timber

Over time, timber has developed into a cluster for the GRADD region. Based on information from the [Kentucky Division of Forestry 2007 Primary Wood Industries Directory](#), 27 companies are located in the GRADD region. Ohio County stands first in the region with 12 companies on the list. A listing from the Secondary Wood Industries Directory ranks Ohio County seventh in the state with seven companies that employ 628 individuals. Additional GRADD counties make this list with companies in the region employing a total of 1,070 individuals.

Life Sciences

Shifts in the economic landscape compel regions to explore a wider realm of possibilities. At times, this results in the formation of new economic clusters. In the GRADD region, the economy relies primarily upon manufacturing, but many leaders are transitioning focus to knowledge-based industries. During recent years, the GRADD region has established a solid base in the life sciences field, which could eventually flourish into a life sciences cluster. The following entities contribute to this potential cluster: Kentucky BioProcessing, LLC; Owensboro Grain Company; Owensboro Medical Health System; Plant Biotechnology; Kentucky Wesleyan College; Brescia University; Pedia Research, LLC; Kentucky National Products Fund; Kentucky Tobacco Research and Development Center; James Graham Brown Cancer Center; and Owensboro Community and Technical College.

Signs of progress in this cluster display great promise. From 2010 to 2011, employment at Kentucky BioProcessing (KBP) soared from 17 to 35. Working with almost 25 companies and universities and holding contracts with the U.S. Department of Defense and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, KBP expects to expand its facilities and employment within the next five years. With funding from the U.S. Department of Defense, KBP built a 50,000 square foot indoor plant-growing facility in 2010.

Banking / Mortgage Processing

The advancement of banking and mortgage processing within the GRADD region offers an invaluable opportunity to diversify the regional economy and nurture a cluster that could spawn a high-growth industry. On July 1, 2010, U.S. Bank announced the creation of 500 – 525 new jobs, the investment of \$14.1 million, and the construction (in cooperation with the City of Owensboro) of an 81,000 square foot facility at the Mid-America Airpark in Owensboro. The expansion enhanced two existing locations in Daviess County, which together employ over 1,000 citizens. U.S. Bank experienced a rising demand for mortgage services in previous years, surpassing the \$100 billion in servicing volume in 2007, and nearly doubling the \$198 billion recorded in 2010. The growth in this industry mirrors the growth of service sector jobs nationwide, which increased at the fastest rate in four years, according to the Institute for Supply Management. The continued expansion of this industry will undoubtedly inspire a broad range of economic development opportunities throughout the GRADD region.



Conclusion

The prevalence of strong cluster formations should never foster a sense of invincibility. Even companies within pronounced clusters can suffer during economic downturns. Unfortunately, some of the data used in this analysis is older, as more current sources are not yet available. Consequently, certain triumphs have diminished over time as companies responding to negative economic circumstances are forced to lay off workers and occasionally close completely. Regions that support only a few clusters, or no clusters at all, might suffer more during an economic slump, especially if their focus is within a faltering economic sector. The GRADD region is fortunate to have several established and emerging clusters, yielding diversity equal to the challenge of withstanding economic shifts. Moving forward, regional leaders must acknowledge that layoffs and closures, no matter the magnitude, impact the health and morale of the local economy. Maintaining awareness of economic trends, supporting existing clusters, and encouraging the advancement of new clusters will prove to be essential commitments for area leaders as they endeavor to guarantee the security and strength of the economy in the GRADD region.

ACTION PLAN



ACTION PLAN

The goals, objectives, and strategies contained in this Action Plan were identified and developed during the rewrite of the Green River Area Development District's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy in 2007, and during subsequent updates to the document. Qualified individuals and groups representing each aspect of the area economy assisted in drafting these plan elements. GRADD will continue to utilize the goals, objectives, and strategies to prioritize programs and projects for the region.

The GRADD Board of Directors strives to develop and implement strategies that are achievable with the resources that already exist in the region. Additionally, the region as a whole continually monitors the progress of goal attainment and explores methods to expand the availability of resources. For all the projects outlined in the 2012 CEDS document, the region will research and consider all funding opportunities.

Goals, objectives, and strategies were developed for the following categories:

- Economy;
- Education;
- Industrial Parks;
- Workforce Development;
- Transportation;
- Infrastructure;
- Technology; and
- Environment.

A Changing Market
According to the TIP Regional Economic Growth Strategy for the GRADD region, over 1,600 jobs have been added in the administrative/services sector and over 1,400 in the oil, gas, and mining fields since 2007, offsetting a loss of over 3,000 manufacturing jobs during the same period.

ECONOMY

GOAL: Promote an economy that will allow the citizens of GRADD to achieve and maintain a quality standard of living.

OBJECTIVE: Attract and maintain industry to achieve regional economic growth and stability.

STRATEGIES:

- Develop an accurate measurement system that could identify the number of people employed, type of employment, and skills of the workforce, to be used to track economic development progress.
- Continue the development of projects designed to provide adequate infrastructure for the growth and development of business and industry.
- Support initiatives for existing industries and small businesses through the use of revolving loan funds, state incentive programs, and federal and loan guarantee programs.
- Utilize all available training resources to provide the labor force with the necessary skills to meet the needs of existing and potential business and industry.
- Encourage the Kentucky Economic Development Partnership to target smaller companies, particularly in rural areas, with regard to incentive programs.
- Ensure that necessary support services are available in the region to attract new business and industry and to help existing business and industry expand.
- Continue to assist businesses with federal and state procurement programs.
- Explore the alternative methods of increasing business development and promotion, including the use of private sources of capital.
- Encourage interaction among the manufacturers in the region, possibly by creating a Regional Technology Council.
- Support creation of small business incubators across the region to support entrepreneurs.

ECONOMY
Progress:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daicel Safety Tube Processing, Inc., Dynamic Fabrication, Inc., and Perdue Farms Inc., together invested a total of \$15 million and created 47 jobs in Beaver Dam. National Office Furniture in Fordsville created 34 new jobs in 2012.

ECONOMY
Progress:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timewell of Kentucky in Providence, Green River Post Company in Sebree, and M&M Trucking in Dixon invested a total of \$1,580,825 and created 20 jobs in Webster County.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toyotetsu Mid America in Owensboro invested \$10 million to save 390 jobs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Polymer Partners in Henderson invested nearly \$3 million to save 23 jobs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 58 jobs have been created in Union County because of investments totaling \$11 million by Pride Industries, Jim David Meats, Carroll Engineering, Security Seed and Chemical, and River View Coal.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Centre for Business and Research, a business accelerator, currently has nine companies and over 20 paying jobs at its location in Owensboro.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Boardwalk Pipeline Partners headquarters and the Southern Star Central Gas Pipeline headquarters, both located in Owensboro, invested a total of nearly \$10 million to create 70 jobs and retain over 200 jobs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$14 million has been invested by Owensboro Grain Bio Products, creating 12 new jobs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several industries in Henderson County, including Pap’s Props, Audubon Metals, Hydro Aluminum, Matrix Composites, Sunrise Tool and Die, and Tyson Foods have invested a total of \$14 million to create over 250 new jobs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development is continuing its partnership with GRADD for cooperative regional economic development practices.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Owensboro Manufacturing, Phill’s Custom Cabinets, Premium Allied Tool, S&Y Terminal, and Wax Works have invested over \$3 million to create nearly 30 new jobs in Daviess County.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GRADD continues to develop entrepreneurship and small business programs.

OBJECTIVE: Develop and promote the tourism industry in the Green River region through the improvement and expansion of parks, recreational facilities, and other attractions.

STRATEGIES:

- Develop a revolving loan fund for tourism-related projects.

- Encourage the state to increase funding for tourism, including marketing and promotion.
- Promote tourism-related businesses as economic development activities.
- Develop smaller industries, both service and manufacturing, that complement tourism.
- Promote the further development of state parks in the Green River region to increase and improve recreational opportunities.
- Promote the development, improvement, and expansion of park facilities throughout the district.
- Promote the development of a marina on the Ohio River.
- Develop recreational facilities along the Green and Ohio Rivers.
- Encourage federal and state officials to increase funding for tourism and parks and recreation facilities.
- Develop additional walking and biking facilities throughout the district.

ECONOMY
Progress:
• The City of Livermore received \$20,000 in 2011 to create a skateboard park.
• Hancock County received an \$18,360 Kentucky Crumb Rubber Grant to upgrade Vastwood Park.
• Over 60,000 people attended the International Bar-B-Q Festival in Owensboro in May 2011.
• The developers of the Boardwalk Pipeline project in Owensboro have plans to build a marina once construction on a second downtown hotel is completed.
• Over 21,000 people attended the River of Music Party (ROMP) Bluegrass Music Festival in Daviess County in June 2012.
• The International Bluegrass Music Museum, in cooperation with the City of Owensboro, plans to redevelop the former State Office Buildings into the new International Bluegrass Music Center. This project will involve a public investment of \$3 million and a private investment of \$7 million.
• Over 20,000 people attended the W.C. Handy Blues and Barbecue Festival in Henderson in June 2011.
• The City of Owensboro and Daviess County Fiscal Court continue to move forward with the construction of the \$140 million Downtown Redevelopment and Placemaking Initiative, which includes riverfront development, a business-class hotel and convention center, a riverfront park, new urban downtown redevelopment, a market square, and other amenities.

OBJECTIVE: Promote the preservation of historic buildings, sites, and districts, which are important to communities.

STRATEGIES:

- Redevelop historic downtown areas by applying the historic preservation-based Main Street Program approach.
- Encourage communities to participate in the Renaissance Kentucky program.
- Protect and support the revitalization of historic neighborhoods.
- Develop and market historic assets through a heritage tourism approach.
- Educate the community about historic resources and how to utilize those resources.
- Develop local programs and funding approaches, which preserve historic properties.
- Document, register, and protect the historic resources in the GRADD region.
- Preserve the character of rural neighborhoods and communities by protecting historic and scenic areas and corridors.

ECONOMY
Progress:
• McLean County Fiscal Court continues renovations to the Calhoun Visitor's Center.
• Work continues on the Camp Calhoun Civil War Museum.
• Henderson County received a Renaissance Small Grant totaling \$19,184 to pursue historical façade renovations.
• The City of Morganfield received a Renaissance Small Grant totaling \$20,000 to pursue historical façade renovations.

GOAL: Promote an economy that will allow the citizens of GRADD to achieve and maintain a quality standard of living.

OBJECTIVE: Continue the utilization of agricultural resources for economic growth in the region.

STRATEGIES:

- Improve the marketability of agricultural products within the region.
- Support projects that promote alternative uses of the region’s agricultural products.
- Provide education and technical assistance for crop diversification.

- Develop more processing plants for the region’s agricultural products.

ECONOMY
Progress:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Owensboro’s Innovation Center program has been elevated to include all of the GRADD counties for business startup services and high tech/high growth companies.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Hancock County Fair Board received \$48,594 from the Kentucky Department of Agriculture to construct a new pavilion and stage area at the Hancock County Fairgrounds.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • McLean County partnered with UK for the Green River Crops Academy to educate citizens regarding profitability and sustainability of grain crops production.

INDUSTRIAL PARKS

GOAL: Provide an adequate inventory of sites and buildings for a variety of economic bases and emerging industries.

OBJECTIVE: Attract and retain business and industry.

STRATEGIES:

- Continue development of new industrial parks and sites throughout the region.
- Continue to market existing speculative buildings and develop new facilities in the region.
- Identify gaps in industrial site infrastructure.
- Work with local governments and utility providers to extend infrastructure.
- Identify funding sources for the extension of necessary infrastructure.
- Prepare feasible business development sites for complete market readiness.
- Prepare regional and/or local brownfields site assessments.
- Analyze sites for appropriate reuse and feasibility.
- Continue to analyze the variety of manufacturing sites and buildings aimed at new, small manufacturers and the needs of expanding and existing manufacturers in the region.

INDUSTRIAL PARKS
Progress:
• Bluegrass Crossings Business Centre entered into a sanitation agreement with the Ohio County Regional Wastewater District to drastically increase the wastewater capacity of the park.
• Four Star Industrial Park has been designated as a Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) and is in the process of improving the site with extended gas lines and solar panels.
• Four Star Industrial Park now has the infrastructure in place to be considered shovel-ready.
• The West Kentucky Regional Industrial Development Authority continues to implement a strategic plan for the Four Star Industrial Park.

EDUCATION

GOAL: Make higher education more accessible and affordable to GRADD citizens.

OBJECTIVE: Increase the number of GRADD residents with a postsecondary degree.

STRATEGIES:

- Support local and state organizations that provide postsecondary assistance.
- Support knowledge of the postsecondary education process in high schools, technical schools, and career centers.

EDUCATION
Progress:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Western Kentucky University-Owensboro experienced a 12.2 percent increase in enrollment between 2009 and 2010. The campus has experienced a 30 percent increase in enrollment since 2006.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brescia University experienced an 18 percent increase in enrollment between 2011 and 2012, the largest increase in 35 years.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Owensboro Community & Technical College experienced an increase in enrollment of approximately 11 percent between 2009 and 2011.

OBJECTIVE: Increase the number and percentage of citizens who receive a high school diploma or GED.

STRATEGIES:

- Increase public awareness of available and possible funding sources by promoting a centralized referral system for such information.
- Encourage legislation that mandates high school attendance through age 18 in order to reduce the number of dropouts.
- Provide more school-to-work transitional services.
- Increase the usage of adult basic education/GED instruction by expanding program operation hours and improving program accessibility throughout the district.

EDUCATION**Progress:**

- The Average Freshman Graduation Rate for the GRADD region is 4.4 percent higher than that of Kentucky.

OBJECTIVE: Develop a comprehensive literacy initiative.

STRATEGIES:

- Support local Learning Community initiatives, which are involved in promoting learning as the center of a healthy lifestyle.

EDUCATION**Progress:**

- The Daviess County Public Library summer reading program reported increased enrollment in July 2012, during which a record 23,360 books were read.



The Daviess County Public Library in Owensboro built a new 52,000 square-foot facility in 2007.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

GOAL: Improve the quality and qualifications of the workforce and expand opportunities for the workforce.

OBJECTIVE: Increase basic entry level worker readiness skills.

STRATEGIES:

- Create a universal pre-employment certification program.
- Expand the use of testing and credentialing of knowledge and skills mastery.
- Assist counties with Kentucky Work Ready Community Certification that includes soft skills certification for secondary students and adults.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
Progress:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area Career Centers offer classroom instruction on computer literacy, job seeking, resume development and writing, labor market information, and career assessments.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GRADD adopted the National Center Readiness Certificate.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daviess and Henderson Counties are certified as Work Ready and Union County is certified as Work Ready in Progress.

OBJECTIVE: Secure all possible funding sources for training support to enhance the area residents' opportunities for competitiveness in the employment marketplace.

STRATEGIES:

- Support the Departments of Labor, Education, and Health and Human Services in program development and implementation.
- Establish agency linkages to promote the extension of funds and services while eliminating duplication through the One-Stop initiative.
- Provide the local citizenry representation and leadership opportunities on local, regional, and state councils and groups.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
Progress:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GRADD was awarded \$250,000 in Workforce Investment Act (WIA) monies to establish a Pre-Apprenticeship Program.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Green River Workforce Investment Board appointed new teams and committees to involve more people in the planning and implementation of workforce development initiatives and to improve coordination of funding streams.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GRADD was awarded \$250,000 from the Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet for healthcare worker training.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2011, the Owensboro Office of Employment and Training was awarded a portion of a \$918,562 federal grant to offer personalized job search assistance to unemployed residents.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Hancock County Public Library received \$24,000, and the Ohio County Public Library received \$23,000, both from the ARRA Broadband Technology Opportunities Program, to purchase computers and offer classes for job seekers.

OBJECTIVE: Promote upgrading of the skills of the incumbent workforce.

STRATEGIES:

- Work with companies on layoff aversion strategies pertaining to skills shortages.
- Retrain underemployed and unemployed.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
Progress:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 400 adults, dislocated workers, and youth are currently enrolled in various training programs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green River Works continues to work toward retaining employment for residents with an associate's degree or higher.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Green River Workforce Investment Board received a grant from the National Emergency Grant Program to offer ten temporary jobs. The jobs will support cleanup efforts related to severe storms, tornadoes, and flooding experienced in April and May 2011.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Green River Rapid Response Team and Business Services Team remain actively engaged in providing business services to promote skills development for incumbent workers.

OBJECTIVE: Increase community awareness and interest in high growth occupations in the region.

STRATEGIES:

- Identify high growth industries and occupational clusters for the region.
- Educate and counsel the community on the merit of entering high-demand occupations.
- Develop and market skill ladders and lattices for occupational shortages.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
Progress:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High growth and high demand occupations for the region have been identified: Healthcare; Construction; Advanced Manufacturing, Energy; and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attention and priority in funding have been shifted to accommodate high growth and high demand occupations.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approximately 400 area students attended Health Career Days at hospitals in Daviess and Ohio Counties to raise awareness of career paths in the healthcare field.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On September 17, 2011, GRADD partnered with Brescia University, Daymar College, the Department of Workforce Investment, the Greater Owensboro Economic Development Corporation, Kentucky Wesleyan College, the Office of Employment and Training, Owensboro Community & Technical College, and Western Kentucky University-Owensboro to host a free Regional Career & Job Fair. Approximately 400 individuals attended the event.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GRADD joined with the Owensboro Parks and Recreation Department to host the Youth Summit 2012. The event featured 21 educational sessions conducted by community leaders, business professionals, and educators. Approximately 500 students attended the event.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Green River Workforce Investment Board has developed the Regional Economic Growth Strategy to provide comprehensive information to workforce, education, and economic development professionals regarding the identified regional sectors.

OBJECTIVE: Promote the importance of employment skills, work maturity and work ethics, cross training and upgrade training, and the creation of programs that offer these skills and tools.

STRATEGIES:

- Develop training programs designed to assist displaced workers with reentrance to the workforce.
- Utilize all resources available to project the future skill needs of business and industry and develop programs accordingly.
- Increase business and industry participation in educational activities through such means as speaking engagements and career days.
- Evaluate the existing programs to ensure they are comparable and transferable to the workplace.
- Create and support common training programs for employees in the rural areas of the district, particularly for adults.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
Progress:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The region hosted forums for healthcare and advanced manufacturing employers regarding the workforce development and training issues.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GRADD obligated \$90,000 to area employers to provide on-the-job training to 55 individuals. This program benefits employers, employees, and the overall economy of the region by encouraging the proliferation of high-skill careers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In October 2010, GRADD received a WIA grant for the Green River Internship Program, which targets high-skill high-demand sectors. The program paired qualified local businesses with interns and utilized the grant funding to pay entry-level wages for the interns. In total, 15 individuals participated in the program and wages totaling \$100,000 were disbursed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GRADD partnered with the Owensboro Medical Health System and the Ohio County Hospital to meet shortages in the healthcare field. Approximately 400 local high school students attended the collaborative event.

TRANSPORTATION

GOAL: Improve transportation access and capacity throughout the region.

OBJECTIVE: Support and endorse projects that positively impact the region, including those that are currently listed for engineering and construction in the [Transportation Cabinet’s Six-Year Plan](#), as well as highway construction not listed in the plan.

STRATEGIES:

- Promote more efficient movement of people, goods, and services throughout the region.
- Support an increase in federal and state funding for transportation projects (highway, rail, air, water, mass transit, and bikeways).
- Establish a Truck Network in all GRADD counties.
- Develop a four-lane interstate connector to Owensboro.
- Construct a new I-69 bridge connecting Evansville, Indiana to Henderson County.
- Continue the upgrade of the Edward T. Breathitt Parkway to interstate standards for future I-69 designation.
- Develop a major east-to-west highway through or near the district.
- Construct interchanges to provide direct access to all industrial parks within the region.
- Restrict heavy truck traffic in downtown business districts within the region.
- Improve access to regional transportation services among the seven area counties with attention to the elderly and persons with disabilities.
- Improve intermodal access of the district’s transportation system through the Owensboro and Henderson Riverports.
- Promote the development of a north-to-south passenger train route through the area.

TRANSPORTATION
Progress:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congress approved the designation of the Audubon and Natcher Parkways as interstate spurs. • Numerous projects have been funded in the 2012-2018 Six Year Highway Plan that will upgrade the existing Edward T. Breathitt Parkway to interstate standards for future designation as Interstate 69.

TRANSPORTATION
Progress:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KY 56 in Union County has completed the design phase and is now on the right-of-way phase.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction continues on the US 60 Bypass extension in Owensboro.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Southtown Project in Owensboro is ready for the utility relocation phase.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Sand Lane Project is near completion.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design began for the US 60 Bridge approach in Hawesville.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Owensboro-Daviess County Regional Airport completed a runway extension and is preparing for an additional extension.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Henderson City-County Airport began engineering/design for a new 16,000 square foot aircraft hangar.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The right-of-way phase for the KY 81/56 roundabout in Owensboro began in the fall of 2011.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The US 60 Widening Project from Hawesville to Lewisport is in the design phase.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design is in progress for the US 231 - Western Kentucky Parkway lane extension in Ohio County.

OBJECTIVE: Improve the safety of the region’s transportation system.

STRATEGIES:

- Reduce the highway fatality rate in the region to 1.0 per 100 Million Vehicle Miles.
- Establish increased funding for highway safety initiatives.

TRANSPORTATION
Progress:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The highway fatality rate continues to decline throughout the region, according to Kentucky State Police records. GRADD works with local, regional, and state stakeholders to reduce fatalities on the GRADD Highway Network.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the 2011 session, the Kentucky General Assembly passed a law banning "texting while driving."

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

GOAL: Ensure that all residents of the district have access to clean, affordable drinking water and provide for clean, safe, efficient, and economical wastewater treatment.

OBJECTIVE: Promote and support programs and projects that provide every resident of the district a safe, clean, and potable supply of water.

STRATEGIES:

- Develop projects and seek funding sources to extend waterlines and improve existing infrastructure for all unserved and underserved areas in the district, particularly in rural areas.

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT
Progress:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Kentucky Legislature funded approximately 56 water/sewer projects for FY 2009- FY 2011, resulting in \$16,283,000 invested in projects within the GRADD region.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centertown secured funds to replace water lines and extend service to serve at least one new commercial customer.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sebree secured funds to repair and replace the city’s aging water lines to ensure access to drinking water for its citizens.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daviess County Fiscal Court has pledged coal severance funds to extend water service to unserved water customers in the county.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City of Hartford has secured funds to build a pre-treatment basin and complete work on one of their water tanks.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ohio County Water District completed a new 4 MGD water treatment facility, funded through \$14 million in grant/loan funds from the Economic Development Administration, USDA-Rural Development, the Kentucky State Legislature, the Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund, and other sources.

**INFRASTRUCTURE
DEVELOPMENT**

Progress:

- The Webster County Water District has established emergency interconnections with the Crittenden-Livingston County, Union County, and Henderson County Water Districts.

OBJECTIVE: Ensure that residents have access to safe, clean, and affordable wastewater treatment.

STRATEGIES:

- Develop projects and seek funding for projects to upgrade and improve the existing wastewater facilities within the district.
- Support and develop alternative financing sources for the construction and/or upgrading of wastewater systems.

**INFRASTRUCTURE
DEVELOPMENT**

Progress:

- The Regional Water Resource Agency (RWRA) in Daviess County received SRF funds to replace sewer lines on Veteran's Boulevard and to rebuild the Dublin Lane Tunnel sewer outfall.
- The City of Hartford continues to seek funding to complete the second phase of its sewer project to reduce I&I.

OBJECTIVE: Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy that is both regional in scope and financially realistic.

STRATEGIES:

- Examine the feasibility and cost effectiveness of joint systems between two or more neighboring communities.
- Coordinate efforts between county and city governments to provide water and wastewater services to communities without access.

**INFRASTRUCTURE
DEVELOPMENT**

Progress:

- The McLean County Regional Water Commission was created in March 2012 with the goal to combine the water systems of Calhoun, Island, Livermore, North McLean, and Sacramento. The Commission has submitted applications for USDA and CDBG funding.
- The Butler County Water District, the Ohio County Water District, and the City of Morgantown are working to create a Regional Water Commission to ultimately own and operate Rochester Dam.
- In coordination with KIA, GRADD staff assisted in the continued improvement and implementation of the integrated online Project Profile, allowing greater accessibility in creating and amending water and wastewater projects.
- The City of Sturgis and Union County Water District have secured funding to complete an interconnection to improve water quality for 1,120 underserved citizens.

GOAL: Promote the effective and efficient handling and disposal of solid waste within the district.

OBJECTIVE: Support programs and projects that will enhance the efficient and economical collection and disposal of solid waste.

STRATEGIES:

- Develop programs to reduce the cost of transporting solid waste to disposal sites.
- Determine the impact of mandatory solid waste collection on solid waste management costs.
- Monitor emerging technologies that may offer both economic and environmental advantages to conventional landfill disposal.
- Support programs and projects that efficiently and economically reduce the solid waste stream through reuse and recycling.
- Determine the feasibility of establishing a multi-county recycling facility within the district.
- Provide support to local recycling efforts.
- Provide support for the development of public education materials regarding resource conservation, recycling, and general environmental awareness.
- Support the alternative methods of waste reduction, including composting and waste-to-energy.

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT
Progress:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GRADD worked with the City of Owensboro and the Daviess County Fiscal Court to present education materials about the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System and ways to promote a more healthy stormwater and river environment at local events including “Earth Day 2012” and “Be Cool, Go Green.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City of Owensboro and the Daviess County Fiscal Court are working together to make a proposed change to the Public Improvement Specifications to add Green Infrastructure and Best Management Practices to improve water quality.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Henderson County Fiscal Court received a grant award of \$100,000 from the Delta Regional Authority for the creation of a regional recycling center.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daviess County Fiscal Court received an award of \$58,800 in Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) funds (ARRA-stimulus) for roofs and windows.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Henderson County Fiscal Court received an award of \$125,000 in EECBG funds for new windows.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • McLean County Fiscal Court received \$83,002 in EECBG funds to replace the roof and install new windows at the McLean County Senior Center.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GRADD received an award of \$75,600 in EECBG funds for energy efficiency retrofits for the GRADD facility.

The following is a list of [Kentucky Infrastructure Authority](#) projects either funded, under construction, or completed in the GRADD region in FY2012:

Daviess County:

- Dublin Lane Sewer Rehab
- Veterans Boulevard Sewer Rehab
- RWRA Scattered Site Sewer Relining
- Locust Hill Sewer Extension
- Locust Street Lift Station Rehab

Hancock County

- 4th Street Gravity Sewer Extension in Lewisport
- Hawesville Lift Station Rehab
- Livermore Sewer Rehab

- Hawesville Booster Station Project

Ohio County

- Granulated Activated Carbon Building for Water Plant
- Centertown Phase III and IV Water System Improvements

Union County

- Sturgis/Union County Water District Water System Interconnection

Webster County:

- Dixon Sewer Rehabilitation
- Clay Sewer Rehabilitation, Phase II
- Sebree Lift Station Rehabilitation at the Carhartt Building
- Webster County Water District Interconnections with Crittenden-Livingston County Water, Union County Water, and Henderson County Water
- Sebree Water Tank Rehabilitation and Meter Replacement Project
- City of Dixon Highway 41-A Water Line Extension



Crews in Hartford recently completed work on Iron Mountain Road.

TECHNOLOGY

GOAL: Enhance the capacity of people, companies, and organizations to develop and apply technology and to compete responsibly in the global marketplace.

OBJECTIVE: Develop a comprehensive innovation strategy that brings together business, government, and education as full partners to leverage the best opportunities for the GRADD region's future.

STRATEGIES:

- Promote technology development and nurture innovative approaches conducive to entrepreneurial development.
- Identify, recruit, and support entrepreneurs and technology-based companies in the region.
- Target sources of funding to improve technology in the region.

TECHNOLOGY
Progress:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ConnectGRADD added approximately 1,000 households to the system in FY12.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 new customer-service tower sites were added to the network, bringing the total to 56.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The primary network backbone path from Owensboro to Madisonville was upgraded to support higher bandwidth, improving speeds and reliability. Individual backhaul links were also upgraded in needed areas.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wikimax service has been initiated in select areas, where speeds up to 6Mbps down/1 Mbps up can now be offered.

OBJECTIVE: Develop affordable broadband telecommunication access.

STRATEGIES:

- Promote the Governor's Broadband Initiative throughout the GRADD region.

TECHNOLOGY

Progress:

- ConnectGRADD has 3,200 customers to date, and is gaining approximately 80 per month. There are currently 56 towers throughout the GRADD region.



Governor Steve Beshear delivered a speech at GRADD promoting the Kentucky Broadband Initiative in 2011.

ENVIRONMENT

GOAL: Promote a balanced utilization of the region's natural resources to preserve and protect the environment, while maximizing their economic potential.

OBJECTIVE: Develop programs and projects that utilize the area's abundant water resources while protecting them from contamination and pollution.

STRATEGIES:

- Develop appropriate conservation and preservation programs to reduce groundwater contamination and reduce river pollution.
- Promote the development and use of the region's water resources for recreation purposes in an environmentally sound manner.
- Continue the implementation of the GRADD Water Management Plan.
- Promote the installation/extension of sanitary sewers to prevent runoff.
- Promote Best Management Practices for construction projects to prevent runoff and erosion.

ENVIRONMENT
Progress:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GRADD plans to create an Energy and Environment Committee in the next year or so to coordinate conservation and preservation efforts.

OBJECTIVE: Create and support programs that enhance the marketability of the district's mineral resources, such as coal, oil, and natural gas, without harm to the environment.

STRATEGIES:

- Support research that would identify methods of making the Green River area coal a more viable fuel source.
- Promote more stringent reclamation laws.
- Educate the public.

ENVIRONMENT
Progress:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carbon Credit Workshops were held in Daviess and Union Counties to educate the public about carbon credits and capitalizing on the opportunities they provide. • GRADD hosted a Green-Living Symposium in September 2011. Future events may be planned to support sustainability in the region.

OBJECTIVE: Develop and support programs and projects designed to conserve the region’s agricultural and timber resources.

STRATEGIES:

- Manage, develop, and protect timber resources to achieve maximum economic, recreational, and aesthetic benefits to the region.
- Encourage local, state, and federal officials to foster and promote agricultural programs that balance economic and environmental considerations.
- Educate the general public on erosion control measures and riverbank stabilization.

ENVIRONMENT
Progress:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City of Owensboro has maintained the designation of Tree City USA for 23 years, and only two cities in the state have held the title for a longer period.

OBJECTIVE: Promote programs and projects that encourage sustainability and minimize the amount of waste in landfills.

STRATEGIES:

- Develop regional sustainability plans with the planned Energy and Environment Committee.
- Encourage local, state, and federal officials to consider sustainability programs and recycling efforts.
- Educate the general public sustainability and recycling.

ENVIRONMENT**Progress:**

- The Henderson County Road Department recently opened the Henderson County Homer Varble Recycling Center.
- GreenWorks Recycling in Owensboro recycles electronic equipment (eScrap) for citizens in Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois, and Tennessee.
- The City of Owensboro and the Daviess County Fiscal Court are working together to develop public awareness programs regarding sustainability and recycling.

NATURAL DISASTER MITIGATION

GOAL: Protect the region's citizens, infrastructure, and quality of life by minimizing the disastrous effects of the many extreme weather events that threaten the region.

OBJECTIVE: Develop and implement an emergency disaster plan for all situations affecting citizens of the seven-county district.

STRATEGIES:

- Maintain communication links with service agencies within the GRADD.
- Create a Resource Coordination Council that will be notified of any disaster situations and utilized for relief resources.

NATURAL DISASTER MITIGATION
Progress:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GRADD has graduated a total of 37 staff from two Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) classes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All seven counties in the region remain in compliance with the requirements of the National Incident Management System (NIMS), establishing a database of all emergency resources and increased regional interaction.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) approved the GRADD Hazard Mitigation Plan Update in January 2011. The GRADD Hazard Mitigation Committee meets twice yearly to evaluate the Update and add amendments as necessary.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2011, the Kentucky Office of Homeland Security (KOHS) awarded grants throughout the region. McLean County EMS received \$16,000 for intravenous pumps and a stair pro gurney; McLean County Firefighters received \$20,000 for handheld radios for county departments; and Webster County EMS received \$17,000 for a communications repeater for county emergency management.

NATURAL DISASTER MITIGATION

Progress:

- Webster County Fiscal Court and the Cities of Beaver Dam, Calhoun, Clay, Corydon, Hawesville, Lewisport, Livermore, and Providence received FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) awards to purchase generators for public buildings and critical facilities.
- Communities throughout the region received funding awards from the Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery program. Hancock County Fiscal Court received \$75,000 to purchase three warning sirens and a generator for a fire department; Henderson County Fiscal Court received \$32,000 to purchase a generator for a shelter; Livermore received \$169,000 to purchase a warning siren and three generators for water and sewer facilities; Hartford received \$144,000 to purchase generators for their water treatment plant; Providence received \$76,115 to purchase a generator for their water plant; Webster County Fiscal Court received \$21,000 to purchase EOC equipment; and McLean County Fiscal Court received \$150,000 to purchase five warning sirens and a generator for the EOC.



The 2009 ice storm wreaked havoc on the GRADD region with multiple layers of snow and ice.

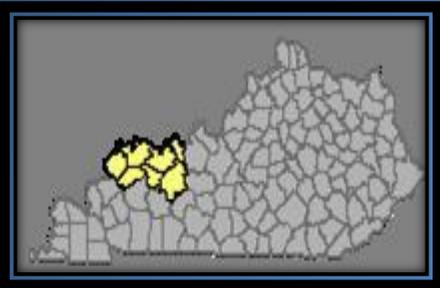
STRATEGIC PROJECTS





STRATEGIC PROJECTS

At the commencement of each update to the GRADD Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), GRADD staff members engage in a series of meetings and discussions with county judge/executives, city mayoral staff members, and other interested parties. The resulting dialogues facilitate the identification and prioritization of projects in each GRADD county. The county strategic project lists reflect local priorities and visions for the future. As an extension of the county conversations, the CEDS Strategy Committee and the GRADD Executive Committee compiled a comprehensive, priority listing of economic development projects for the whole region.



GRADD Board meetings occur once a month and feature distinguished speakers, notable citizens, and leaders of the region.

Daviess County

- Continue on the US-60 Bypass Connector, according to the Governor's Six-Year Highway Plan
- Expand higher education opportunities
- Expand Broadband accessibilities in the county
- Pursue construction of a convention/event center
- Increase public awareness of drug abuse and strengthen enforcement of the methamphetamine problem
- Work with state to correct dangerous curves on Highway 144
- Construct a roundabout on Highways 56 and 81 (at the intersection)
- Implement the joint Parks Master Plan with the City of Owensboro
- Continue cleaning and dredging major tributaries and other drainage improvements
- Continue identification and development of industrial sites and parks
- Expand and upgrade water systems within the county
- Extend the Green Belt into rural areas of the county



The RiverPark Center sits behind the newly-rededicated Smothers Park in downtown Owensboro.

Hancock County

- Develop a county VOTECH center
- Extend Broadband throughout the county
- Construct a county wellness center
- Establish childcare facilities
- Expand water lines to new areas and create a regional water system for Lewisport, Hawesville, and unincorporated areas of the county
- Encourage the addition of spec buildings for the industrial park
- Promote additional affordable housing and renovate existing affordable housing
- Identify and develop industrial sites and parks
- Improve elements of Vastwood Park, including, but not limited to, camping facilities, picnicking facilities, trails, etc.



The Hancock County Courthouse in Hawesville, constructed in 1895, is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Henderson County

- Develop a regional wastewater system
- Improve parks and recreation facilities, including, but not limited to, pools, tennis courts, trails, etc.
- Construct an Adult Day Care Center to serve all of Henderson County
- Develop a community center/convention center/conference center/arena
- Extend water service to currently unserved rural areas
- Expand existing senior citizens centers
- Improve existing sanitary sewer system in Henderson
- Improve existing water systems in Henderson and Henderson County
- Construct new and renovate existing affordable housing
- Install fire hydrants throughout the county
- Construct a regional recycling center



The John James Audubon State Park and Museum is located in Henderson.

McLean County

- Continue to identify and develop opportunities for attracting large and small business ventures through economic incentive programs and loans
- Promote additional affordable housing and renovate existing affordable housing
- Support the McLean County Regional Water Commission through economic and technical assistance
- Create a viable recycling system
- Strengthen partnerships with other governmental entities, such as the McLean County Board of Education, the McLean County Public Library, and the incorporated cities
- Seek funding to improve the recreational and industrial development opportunities on the Green River and further development of Myer Creek Park.
- Strengthen Emergency Medical and Fire Services by supporting additional staff and equipment needs
- Secure funding for the expansion and upgrading of the McLean County 911 Dispatch Center.



The Battle of Sacramento is commemorated annually in McLean County with a professional reenactment.

Ohio County

- Extend waterlines into all rural areas of the county
- Rehabilitate the Beaver Dam sewer collection system
- Improve the parks and recreational facilities, especially at the Ohio County Park
- Extend Hartford sewer lines past Rough River
- Improve the parks and recreational facilities in Hartford
- Continue to rehabilitate the water and sewer systems in Hartford
- Continue to rehabilitate the water system in Centertown
- Rehabilitate the wastewater infrastructure in Fordsville
- Construct a new county jail
- Pursue county roads improvements (based on a needs assessment currently in progress)



The home of the late Bluegrass legend Bill Monroe is located in Rosine.

Union County

- Extend Broadband infrastructure to all citizens in the county
- Continue to improve the existing industrial park in Morganfield and attract industry to the site
- Explore the feasibility of locating a riverport in Union County
- Extend water and wastewater lines to unserved areas in the county
- Continue to develop and promote the Sturgis Airport as an industrial park, particularly for air-related industries
- Improve KY 56 from the Shawneetown Bridge into and through Daviess County
- Construct new and renovate existing affordable housing (especially in downtown Morganfield)
- Improve existing recreational facilities, particularly Moffitt Lake
- Continue to identify and develop industrial sites and parks
- Improve park facilities in Morganfield
- Develop a park adjacent to or near the senior citizens facility in Sturgis
- Rehabilitate the existing sanitary sewer system in Sturgis and investigate the extension of the sanitary sewer system to unincorporated areas of the county
- Promote tourism opportunities in the county
- Construct lodging facilities, possibly utilizing the Bed and Breakfast concept
- Encourage local entrepreneurs to utilize Internet resources



Union County is home to Camp Breckenridge, a World War II POW camp converted into a museum and arts center.

Webster County

- Pursue road improvements to Highway 41-A
- Pursue road improvements to KY 132
- Pursue road improvements to KY 56
- Replace existing sewer lines in Clay, Providence, and Sebree
- Continue to identify and develop industrial sites and parks
- Renovate existing sanitary sewer service in Clay and extend sewer services to unincorporated areas
- Expand the gas system in Clay
- Construct a new water tank in Providence
- Extend waterlines into all rural areas of the county
- Promote tourism opportunities in the county
- Construct a by-pass in Dixon
- Combine the community youth/senior center



The Sebree Deposit Bank in Webster County has been in operation since 1890.

Regional Project Prioritization

1. Encourage, foster, and promote regional cooperation among all cities and counties
 2. Continue to develop and expand the utilization of GPS equipment to aide in the development of the district's overall mapping capabilities, while also assisting rural communities in obtaining local Broadband access
 3. Examine possibilities to improve the existing transportation system as it relates to the attraction of business and industry, while also ensuring utilization of all available resources to ensure improvements are made to all of US Highway 60 and all potential interstate spurs
 4. Establish small business incubators where feasible and practical, and encourage entrepreneurial endeavors where available
 5. Establish a regional roundtable of economic development professionals to help address economic development issues, particularly those that cross county boundaries
 6. Promote tourism opportunities throughout the district
 7. Continue the development of Four-Star Industrial Park, Bluegrass Crossings Business Centre, and county industrial parks and sites, including completion of a regional industrial site inventory
 8. Create a micro-loan program for use throughout the district and recapitalize the GRADD Revolving Loan Fund and Intermediary Relending Program to expand opportunities for small businesses
 9. Promote and investigate opportunities for economic development through natural resources, including recycling and energy conservation
- Establish a regional Narcotics Task Force
 - Assist in the development of regional solid waste facilities (landfills, transfer stations, recycling)
 - Seek funding for additional walkways and bikeways
 - Seek funding opportunities for construction of industrial "spec" buildings
 - Encourage all counties to participate in the FEMA flood management program
 - Increase environmental education opportunities for citizens of the district
 - Pursue funding for site development and cleanup and development of the Western KY PRIDE program to aide in the elimination of open waste dumps, straight pipes, and in the promotion of community awareness for environmental protection
 - Secure funding for Homeland Security initiatives
 - Seek funding to assist local governments with the renovation of public facilities to comply with handicapped accessibility provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act
 - Assist in the development of, and seek funding for, regional telecommunications facilities/equipment
 - Continue to meet water and wastewater needs and fill gaps in infrastructure service for GRADD communities
 - Encourage development of transportation systems throughout the region, including airports, highways, and riverports

EVALUATION / PERFORMANCE MEASURES



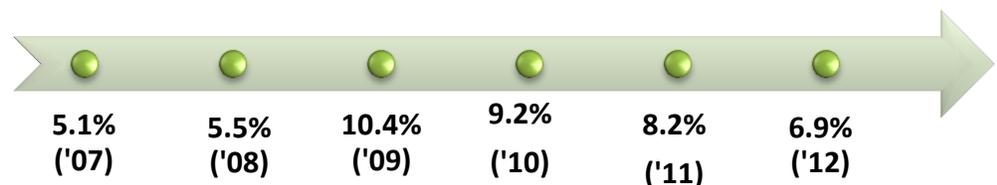
EVALUATION / PERFORMANCE MEASURES

1. Job Creation and Unemployment

A. UNEMPLOYMENT

Planning efforts must consider a variety of performance measures in determining the potential direction of an area economy. Among the measures, the level of unemployment is perhaps the most prominent and universally considered. Analysis of unemployment can take many directions, but the most common route involves comparisons of current levels with historic, state, and national levels. Assessing the unemployment level and comparing it to state and national levels can highlight a region's overall economic condition. With this in mind, the GRADD region seeks to control unemployment and achieve parity with state and national levels.

Unemployment Trends – May 2007 to May 2012

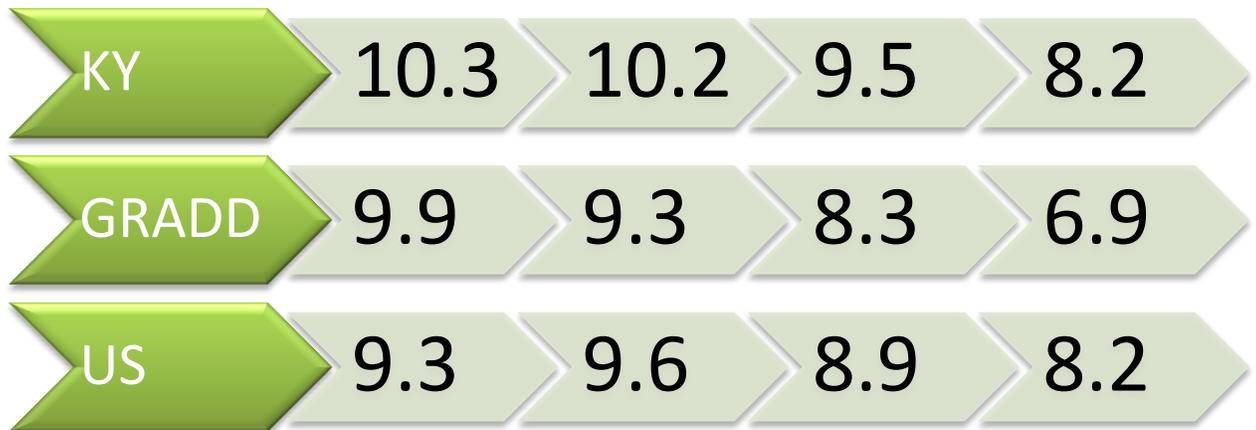


The unemployment rate in the GRADD region is unpredictable. The rate reached a peak in May 2009 (10.4 percent), but it dropped to 9.2 percent in May 2010. The rate dropped even further (down to 8.2 percent) in May 2011, and fell to an optimistic 6.9 percent in May 2012, only to rise again to 7.4% in July. Experience proves the GRADD region is not immune to these conditions, and efforts must persist to ensure unemployment for the region returns to healthy levels.

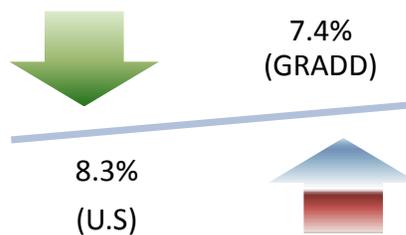
The Kentucky State Budget Director's Office anticipates continued economic growth in the state for 2012-2013.

Census data seems to corroborate this projection, highlighting Kentucky as one of the top states in the nation heading toward potential growth.

National and State Rates Compared to the GRADD Rate (May 2009-May 2012)



The National Rate Compared to the GRADD Rate (July 2012)



Local officials must monitor unemployment rates to ensure positive trends. In particular, officials must watch the labor force. A drop in the labor force, often sparked by frustrated individuals giving up on the job search process, could lead to an artificial decline of the unemployment rate.

GOAL: *Continue the trend of lower unemployment rates and maintain rates that are lower than state and national rates in 2012.*

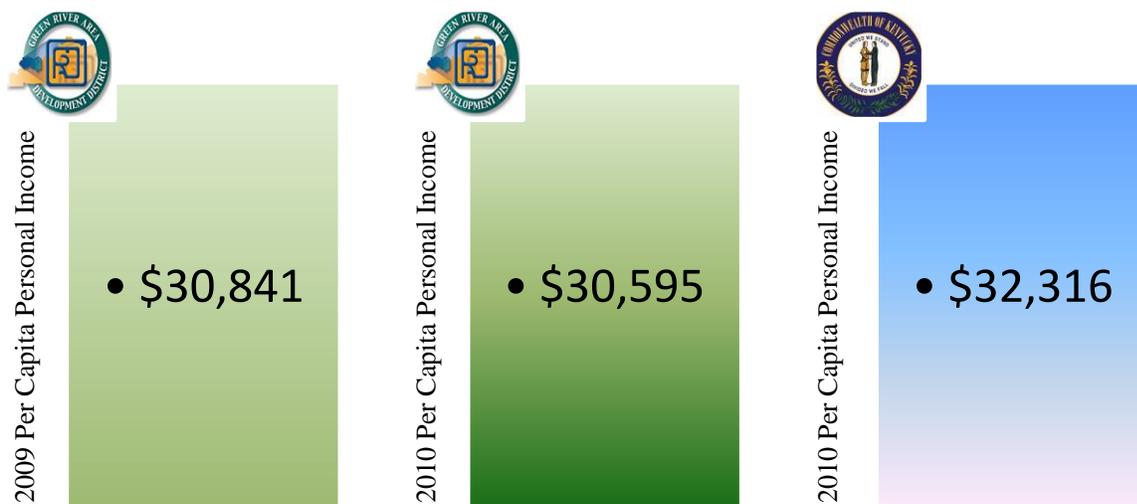
Note: The consensus among most economists suggests there is a “natural” unemployment rate of about 4 percent. Further, an unemployment rate ranging from approximately 4 percent to 6 percent is considered “healthy.” An unemployment rate lower than 4 percent may have an inflationary effect due to upward pressure on wages, and a rate over 6 percent may have a negative economic impact due to a decrease in consumer spending.

B. JOB CREATION



The most recent job creation figures from the [U.S. Census Bureau’s Local Employment Dynamics](#) database indicate that 5,121 jobs were created in the GRADD region during the second quarter of 2011. This represents a job creation increase for the region. On the whole, however, job creation totals per quarter will fluctuate based on momentary slow periods, economic news (positive and negative), and a variety of external factors, ranging from weather to politics. Local officials must monitor job creation totals at the end of each quarter and analyze potential trends that might explain drastic fluctuations. Annual totals can offer a broader picture of job creation for the entire region. In the end, the clear improvement of job creation for the region combines with declining unemployment rates to offer a glimmer of hope for economic recovery.

2. Per Capita Personal Income

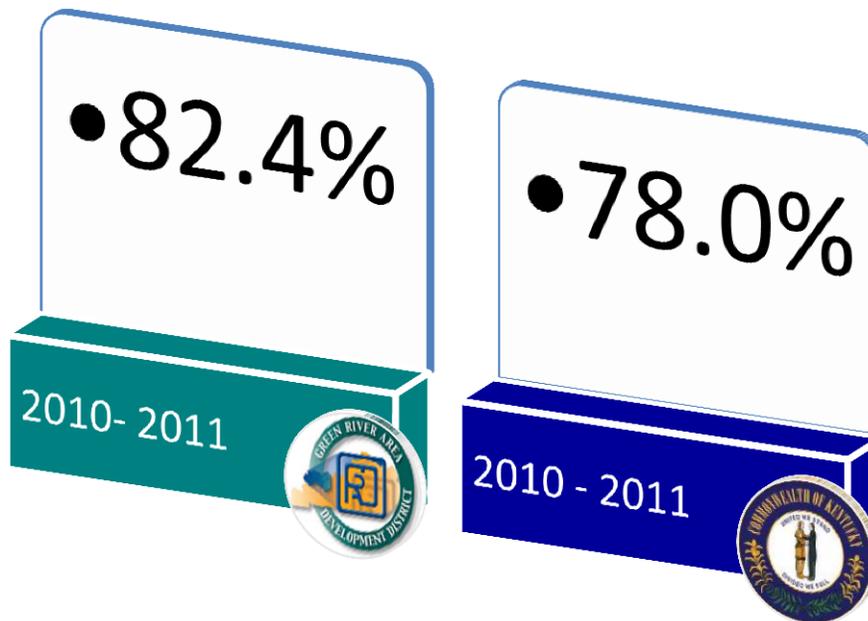


Based on April 2012 reports from the [Bureau of Economic Analysis](#), per capita personal income for the GRADD region was \$30,595 in 2010. For the regional level, this is a slight decrease over the per capita personal income recorded in 2009 (\$30,841). The region still remains behind the state, which achieved a per capita personal income of \$32,316 in 2010.

GOAL: *Continue the increase in per capita personal income regionally and achieve parity with the state per capita personal income level by 2012.*

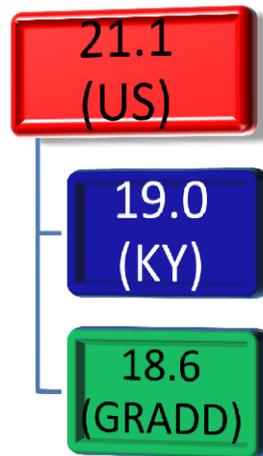
3. Educational Attainment

A. GRADUATION RATES



Based on reports from the Kentucky Department of Education, the graduation rate for the GRADD region during the 2010-2011 academic year reached approximately 82.4 percent. This figure remains higher than the state rate, which rested at 78.0 percent for the same academic year. These are lower than previous graduation rates because of a new measurement system utilized by the Kentucky Department of Education. The Average Freshman Graduation Rate (AFGR) is now used as a measurement, which the Department of Education believes is more accurate.

GOAL: *Reach a regional graduation rate of 90 percent or above for future academic years based on the state's new measurement system.*

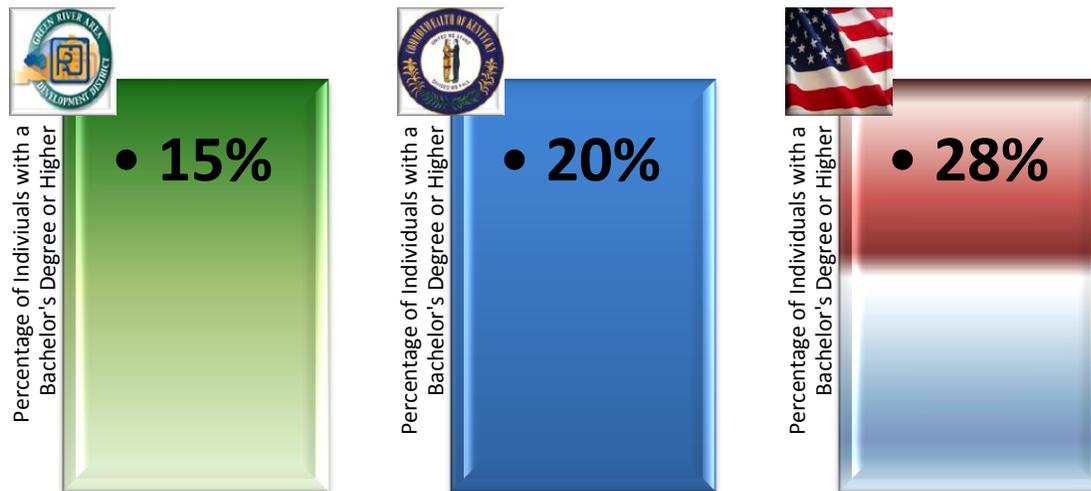
B. ACT SCORES

To assess college preparedness, a plethora of possible measures are available; however, most analysis relies on the comprehensive nature of ACT test results. As a standardized test administered nationwide to most college-bound high school students, the ACT offers a glimpse of how an area's students are performing in core subject areas and their preparedness for a typical college environment. In 2009, the State of Kentucky started requiring all high school juniors to take the ACT, altering the manner in which the results are reviewed and compared. Statewide, 44,516 students were tested in 2012. Improvements for the state in specific subject areas were slight, and the overall state composite score remained steady at 19.0. According to the [Kentucky Department of Education](#), the composite score for the GRADD region improved from 18.5 in 2009 to 18.8 in 2010. The 2012 composite score for GRADD, however, fell slightly to 18.6. For 2012, the national composite score experienced a minor increase to 21.1, up from 21.0 in 2010.

Because of the change in how the ACT is administered in Kentucky, comparisons with the national composite score are complicated. Kentucky is one of only six states in the nation that require all high school juniors to take the ACT. Presumably, in a state where students have a choice, only those who are college-bound are likely to take the ACT, and the intention of seeking a college education can impact overall performance. With the statewide ACT requirement in Kentucky, the test becomes a tool for educators to gauge the preparedness and abilities of all students, not simply those desiring a college education. While certainly a consequence of more students taking the test, the drastic drop in composite scores for GRADD, and to a certain extent for the state, could also point to a discrepancy in the level and care of instruction for college-bound students and for students who are not on a clear track to college.

GOAL: *Continue to increase ACT composite scores in the region and strive to exceed state and national composite scores.*

C. POSTSECONDARY ATTAINMENT



A 2008 – 2010 regional profile from the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education indicates that the GRADD region, at 39.2 percent, exceeds state (33.6 percent) and national (28.6 percent) levels of individuals with a high school diploma or equivalent. Despite this positive figure, the region falters in the percentage of individuals with a bachelor's degree or higher. At 15 percent, the GRADD region falls far below state (20 percent) and national (28 percent) percentages, according to the [TIP Regional Economic Growth Strategy](#) for the region. If this slight percentage of individuals with a bachelor's degree or higher trends into the future, adverse impacts could reverberate throughout local economies. Although local institutes of higher education are expanding their offerings, turbulent economic times and rising costs render higher education unaffordable for many.

Interest in higher education exists in the GRADD region, as the percentage of individuals with an associate's degree (5.5 percent) has passed the state level (4.9 percent) and is rising to meet the national level (6.3 percent). This could point to a future shift in the number of individuals in the region with a bachelor's degree or higher. Even so, available institutions of higher education comprise only a small component of the larger issue. Local leaders and officials must consider the area's lack of individuals with higher education degrees and determine whether or not the region as a whole offers resources and an atmosphere that properly values higher education. In their analysis, they must consider all contributing factors by looking beyond education and reviewing the roles of the job market, technology, infrastructure, culture, and transportation. Establishing a vision and pursuing definitive action based on this level of analysis could reverse the dilemma and allow the region a greater competitive edge in the realm of economic development.

GOAL: Progress toward reaching parity with the national percentage of individuals with a bachelor's degree or higher.

APPENDICES



RESOURCES

Bluegrass Crossings Business Centre

<http://www.bluegrasscrossings.com>

Brescia University

<http://www.brescia.edu>

Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc.

<http://www.esri.com>

Green River Area Development District

<http://www.gradd.com>

Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development

<http://www.thinkkentucky.com>

Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education

<http://cpe.ky.gov>

Kentucky Department for Local Government

<http://dlg.ky.gov>

Kentucky Department for Workforce Investment

<http://workforce.ky.gov>

Kentucky Department of Education

<http://www.education.ky.gov>

Kentucky Division of Forestry

<http://www.forestry.ky.gov>

Kentucky Division of Water

<http://www.water.ky.gov>

Kentucky Infrastructure Authority

<http://kia.ky.gov>

Kentucky State Data Center

<http://ksdc.louisville.edu>

Kentucky Wesleyan College

<http://www.kwc.edu>

RESOURCES

(continued)

National Climatic Data Center

<http://ncdc.noaa.gov>

Owensboro Community & Technical College

<http://www.octc/kctcs.edu>

Owensboro U

<http://www.owensborou.com>

Theory Into Practice (TIP) Strategies

<http://www.tipstrategies.com>

U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

<http://www.bea.gov>

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

<http://www.bls.gov>

U.S. Census Bureau

<http://www.census.gov>

U.S. Department of Agriculture

<http://www.usda.gov>

U.S. Economic Development Administration

<http://www.eda.gov>

Western Kentucky University – Owensboro

<http://www.wku.edu/owensboro>

Workforce Kentucky

<http://www.workforcekentucky.ky.gov>

4-Star Industrial Park

<http://www.4starpark.com>