



Building a Better Community – Ten Steps at a Time

While we may think of buildings and landmarks when we bring to mind a particular community, what really makes a community are the people who work to develop its potential as a great place to live and do business.

The phrase “community development” has special meaning among economic development professionals who are trained to identify tactics that communities can undertake to rev up their economic engine to nurture existing business and attract new business.

The following tips are from the economic development professionals at Teamwork Arkansas, the economic development office of Entergy Arkansas, whose services are available free of charge to communities served by Entergy.

1. Realize that the goal is to learn to depend on one another within the community. Outside consultants can be extremely valuable, but the community’s goal should be to learn to help itself.
2. Form a working group. Recruit members representing a cross section of the community, the more diverse the better. This will help to establish two-way communications across multiple lines that will be the basis of your network.
3. Identify community stakeholders. These are people, institutions or organizations whose own well-being will rise and fall with that of the community. They’ll be concerned and enthusiastic allies.
4. Do an honest assessment of your community. What needs improvement and where does your potential lie? Objective consultants are particularly good at helping with this task.
5. State your purpose. Set goals. What do you intend to accomplish?
6. Develop a detailed plan of action, but be prepared to modify it as necessary as you go along.
7. Implement the plan. Don’t let it sit on the shelf. Plans are easier to write than to execute. Once you’ve planned your work, work your plan.
8. Review and evaluate periodically throughout the process.
9. Celebrate success! Let those who are doing the work know that they are appreciated for their efforts. Praise their success among your group, their peers, and in the media.
10. Number 10, do it again. Start another project. Community development is never finished. There’s always another worthwhile project waiting for someone to recognize it and make it happen. Pursue community development vigorously and be amazed at what you can accomplish!

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