Buckeye Hills/Hocking Valley Regional Development District

Current Initiatives:
- Hocking College Energy Institute – Groundbreaking for new campus in Hocking County is November 15th at 3:15 pm. – Received $1.6 million EDA grant to build that facility.
- Third Sun Solar and Wind is seeking to expand its operations
- OU Innovation Center – Built in 2003. Looking to build new technology park. Recently received a $48,000 USDA grant to conduct a feasibility study
- Newest tenant at Innovation Center is American Hydrogen which is commercializing a technology developed by an OU researcher to produce hydrogen from ammonia
- Athens County has a new energy-based economic development group that the Chamber of Commerce is coordinating
- Athens recently joined the Cool Cities initiative which is led by the Sierra Club to help communities reduce their carbon footprint.
- Hocking County’s CIC helped Hocking College purchase land for their energy institute immediately adjacent to their industrial park
- Hocking County has sold 7 acres of land to a new company that will be generating biofuels from soybeans
- Hocking County has had recent conversations with a firm out of California interested in locating a fuel cell manufacturing facility in the area.
- Meigs County has two potential clean coal power plants vying to locate there
- Meigs is also working to attract a potential coal-to-liquids plant
- The Department of Agriculture is interested in supporting bio-based energy and renewable energy development in the region
- USDA Rural Development has financing available to assist energy development projects in the region
- ODOT is willing to partner on road construction and connectivity to assist in energy development projects
- There is a group in Perry County that was just awarded a USDA Innovative Biomass Energy Conversion grant
- Belle Valley is interested in learning how to become more energy efficient

Opportunities:
- Current businesses need growth opportunities
- Workforce development opportunities
  - Partnering with Hocking College or other 2 year institutions
  - Use universities like Ohio State, Ohio University, Shawnee State, and others as consultants
- Educate ED professionals
  - Workshops, symposiums, conferences, etc.
- Offering leaders i.e. local decision makers (not just ED professionals) technology assistance in understanding opportunities

- Raise energy literacy
  - STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) education- NSF says that currently only 9% of American kids will go into these disciplines
  - Do we have students to go into these disciplines? Offer student scholarships to entice students to go into such disciplines.

- Solid Waste Authorities
  - Landfill waste to energy- Capture methane emissions and use them to generate electricity and other useful products - SWACO model

- Municipal facilities can generate money by selling electricity back to utilities
  - Called Net metering, (GA example)

- New Energy Legislation going through the state legislature
  - Opportunities to build new facilities
  - Credit Trading Programs involving renewable resources

- Sustainability/Waste Reduction
  - Education opportunity
  - Results in energy efficiency, waste to energy programs

**Resources:**
- Coal (lots of coal), natural gas
- Natural resources (all)
- Human resources
  - “We (Appalachia Ohio) are Energy”
  - Culture of Energy Production

- Most counties have industrial parks, port authorities, CIC’s, chambers
- Rural communities
  - Offer flexibility
  - Lots of empty land for development, businesses, job creation
- Forestry
  - Need to think of “Value Added” for timber products; encourage such value

**Needs:**
- Economic Sustainability
  - Keep money in the region
  - Keep jobs in the area
  - Local ownership dictates job retention or whether companies stay

- School Funding – need to get it right this time

- Increase high school education to feed into 2 and 4 year colleges
  - State internship program for high school students in energy-related businesses
  - Bill floating through legislature right now would provide tax incentives to businesses that provide and then hire interns

- Cost Recovery Plans on energy development projects

- Need to make up loss of revenue from alternative fuels
  - There’s no gas tax on ethanol (therefore no $ for road maintenance)
  - Special help for small communities facing loss of road maintenance funds
- Need to balance environmental, economic, and energy spheres
  - All sides must understand all sides of these issues
  - Folks need to feed their families
  - However, development will/may impact quality of life
- Jobs are high-tech
  - Recruitment? For example, 60 engineers for Hocking County fuel cell manufacturer. Where do you find 60 trained engineers in Hocking County? How can you attract these people to your area?
- Health Care in region
  - Companies looking for good health care before they establish a development
- Resource Mapping
  - Identify projects that build upon local assets (education, natural resources, technology)
- Economic Modeling/Forecasting – also includes business planning and helping to pass the “smell test”
- Separating “fact from fiction”
- Building local entrepreneurs
- Master Planning
  - Something that’s Proactive. The U.S. is usually reactive
  - Address the lack of local ownership or we’ll be in the same place we are with coal extraction. Loss of local control and the $ leaving the region.
- Transportation- highways, railways, rivers
- Broadband connectivity
- Regional Funding
  - ARC Priority Counties are wrong vehicle- Townships (like Perry Co.) are better
  - Need to change this formula
- All types of financing