



**Kirksville Regional  
Economic  
Development, Inc.  
Strategic Plan  
January 1, 2022-  
December 31, 2024**



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## INTRODUCTION

A strategic plan is a document that is used to communicate, internally and externally, the organization's goals, plans for action, and measurable outcomes. Not only do strategic plans help establish a direction for the future, but they also help sharpen an organization's focus on how to get there. To be the most effective for an organization, and to inspire those tasked with accomplishing goals, strategic plans should have three main components as themes:

- **Ambitious.** An ambitious strategic plan, while potentially daunting, can also motivate people by setting a higher goal than what they would have set themselves or even believed possible. Just because something is ambitious does not mean that it is out of reach of success.
- **Actionable.** A strategic plan must also be something where direct action can be taken. Vague or misunderstood goals can create chaos within an organization and shatter the nature of cooperation. By laying out clear and concise action steps that can be easily tracked and assessed, an organization is better suited to be successful.
- **Achievable.** Finally, a strategic plan must be achievable. If goals are too hard to reach or too complicated to understand, then there will be no motivation or buy-in by those responsible. That can make it hard to get future input or involvement when the organization needs assistance in the future.

K-REDI is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization that is a public/private partnership focused on being a sound economic competitor and providing family-supporting jobs to the Kirksville region. To guarantee that the needs and wants of the Kirksville region are being met in the best possible way through K-REDI auspices, this strategic planning session sought input two different ways: From member business/partner organizations in one session and from the Board of Directors in a secondary session. In both sessions, surveys were filled out by the attendees to help get more information. (Aggregated data is included for both surveys in Appendices A and B.)

The first meeting was open to members/partner organizations of K-REDI. While this session was open to all K-REDI members and partners, roughly a third showed up to the session. This session had several different components, the first one giving the representatives present free reign to consider outside the box or unrealistic ideas, completely unfettered from any reality or limitation, such as money, staff, feasibility, etc. This was used to help broaden the horizons of those present and make sure that they were thinking in terms that other communities do.



### *Nuclear Session Business Member Responses*

*If money, time, staff, etc. was no object, what would you like to see K-REDI accomplish in the next 1-3 years for the K-REDI region?*

- \* Aesthetics Policy for Kirksville
- \* 10-15% population growth
- \* Incentivize/Motivate work
- \* Make Kirksville the regional hub
- \* Improve roads
- \* Boutique Downtown hotel
- \* Expanded airport options
- \* Downtown Activities
- \* Target
- \* Money pile for entrepreneurs
- \* Concert venue
- \* Hwy 63 four lanes to Iowa line
- \* Allow more deer to be killed
- \* Visitors Center on Illinois and Hwy 63
- \* Drive-through Starbucks
- \* \$200K or less housing stock
- \* Childcare
- \* Localized food sources and processing
- \* Host conferences
- \* Education training for specific opportunity
- \* Local vision synch
- \* Indoor entertainment
- \* Businesses open late
- \* Larger trail access and distance
- \* Tech Ed Hub
- \* Home Renovation/Rehab Program
- \* Top Golf

The second component gave an overview of the most recent strategic plan K-REDI had adopted, allowing them to Monday Morning Quarterback the successes and failures of the organization. This allowed the businesses to put themselves in the capacity of being the Board and having to determine if outcomes were achievable or not and whether or not they had achieved success. After a long discussion, it was determined that K-REDI had excelled in the following two areas:

- **Marketing the Region.** The businesses determined that K-REDI had accomplished 100% of the goals in this category of the previous strategic plan.
- **Industry/Business Support.** The businesses determined that K-REDI had accomplished roughly 80% of the goals in this category, specifically missing out on more effective Business Retention/Recruitment/Expansion visits and roundtables as well as developing an incentive toolbox.

Conversely, businesses felt that K-REDI had not delivered as well on the following areas of the previous strategic plan:

- **Workforce.** The businesses determined that while K-REDI had made progress, they had only accomplished roughly 66% of the work outlined in this category.



- **Information Collection and Dissemination.** The businesses determined that K-REDI had been decent about collecting and presenting certain types of information, but had lacked at distributing other types of information. K-REDI received a 50% grade of accomplishment on this by the membership.
- **Building Capacity/Providing Stewardship.** The businesses determined that this was the least effective area of accomplishment for K-REDI with the last strategic plan. While there had been some good collaboration with other organizations, the businesses felt that the overall growth of the region and involvement of local stakeholders was small. K-REDI received a 25% grade of accomplishment on this by the membership.

Overall, the main concern by those present for this component was the lack of knowledge that this plan existed and what the overall goals and objectives were to accomplish. Many of those present, even if they had helped to try and develop it, had never seen it, so they had less buy-in with the final outcome and were more likely to grade harshly on whether or not the organization had been successful in its endeavors.

The third component was to use the knowledge gained from the first two areas and really drill down on those ideas and objectives they believe *should* be pursued by K-REDI while alternately drilling down on those ideas and objectives they believe *should not* be pursued by K-REDI. This helped the businesses really examine the nature of K-REDI and their own beliefs on what the organization should and does do.

The fourth and final component was the voting stage by the businesses. The businesses used their lists from the above segment to vote a top ten list that would be considered by the Board for inclusion in the final plan. The businesses also voted on a top three list that K-REDI should NOT consider for inclusion in the final plan. These responses were then passed on to the Board session for further consideration.

### **Drill Down Business Member Responses**

*Being realistic with time, resources, staff, etc. what should be the most important goals for K-REDI to focus on completing in the next 1-3 years for the K-REDI region? The votes that each received are in parenthesis. The top ten are highlighted and that list was considered by the Board during their sessions.*

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| * Hosting more K-12 sports tournaments (0)      | * 20% population growth (2)            |
| * Vacant/underutilized facility plan (9)        | * Recruit non-food manufacturer (0)    |
| * Retention efforts with advanced education (3) | * Curb appeal incentives (0)           |
| * Workforce training for local workers (17)     | * Completion of Greenwood project (10) |



- \* “Not what I do” collaborations (0)
- \* Destination venues for full-service events (0)
- \* **Regional Travel/Transit Options (2)**
- \* Conference Spaces/Events (0)
- \* More information about clean energy jobs (0)
- \* Amphitheater and Outdoor Venues (1)
- \* Capital Improvement Plan for arterial roads (0)
- \* **Stakeholder involvement in K-REDI business visits (6)**
- \* **Remote marketing campaign for quality of life (3)**
- \* Benefits Survey (0)
- \* **Childcare on Industrial Road with 2 shifts (6)**
- \* **Grants for small businesses (12)**
- \* Hwy 63: 3 Lanes to Iowa Line (0)
- \* Aesthetics (0)
- \* **Increase household income by 20% (2)**

### **Drill Down 2 Business Member Responses**

*Being realistic with time, resources, staff, etc. what should K-REDI make sure to NOT focus on completing in the next 1-3 years for the K-REDI region? The votes that each received are in parenthesis. The top three vote getters are highlighted.*

- \* **No more gas stations/banks recruitment (8)**
- \* **City Beautification and Curb Appeal (6)**
- \* Convention/Fine Arts Center (0)
- \* Developing Childcare Facilities (1)
- \* Opening Retail/Restaurants (4)
- \* Remote Worker Programs (2)
- \* Destination venues for full-service events (0)
- \* **Potholes in City Streets (10)**
- \* Hwy 63 4-Lanes to Iowa (2)
- \* Sporting Events (4)
- \* Immigrant Integration (2)
- \* Renovation/Rehab Housing (1)
- \* No manufacturing recruitment (0)

The second meeting was compromised of Board members only. While all Board members were invited, only half showed up to the sessions. As the leadership of the organization, it was important to get the Board members considering the role of their Executive Director as well as their own roles in the organization. After excusing the Executive Director, the Board discussed what would make a perfect Executive Director. After that, the Board did the same thing regarding the make-up of a perfect Board of Directors.



**Executive Director Discussion Responses**

*If the Board of Directors could create a PERFECT Executive Director, what characteristics would make up this person? The votes that each received are in parenthesis. The top three are highlighted and moved to the penultimate list that the Board voted on.*

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| * Understanding of Local Economy (3)              | * <b>Has a regional outlook (6)</b>            |
| * Has current pulse of local businesses (1)       | * Positive relations with all stakeholders (2) |
| * Diverse knowledge in multiple areas (4)         | * Local roots (0)                              |
| * Aware of economic development legislation (3)   | * Works for free (0)                           |
| * Connector between business and education (1)    | * At least six feet tall (0)                   |
| * Fiscal Agent (0)                                | * Resources knowledge (1)                      |
| * Good salesperson/Advocate (4)                   | * <b>Good communicator (7)</b>                 |
| * <b>Has statewide presence and expertise (5)</b> |  |

**Board of Directors Discussion Responses**

*If the Board of Directors could create a PERFECT Board of Directors, what characteristics would make up this group? The votes that each received are in parenthesis. The top three are highlighted and moved to the penultimate list that the Board voted on.*

- |  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| * Understanding of the different hats being worn (0)                 | * Paid Board members (0)             |
| * Have expertise the Executive Director does not (2)                 | * Desire to be part of the Board (0) |
| * <b>Full participation/Supportive (7)</b>                           | * <b>Active Board Committees (8)</b> |
| * Hire an Assistant Director (3)                                     | * Empower Executive Director (1)     |
| * <b>Data-based Decisions (5)</b>                                    |                                      |
| * <b>Achieve goals through accountability and clear visions (10)</b> |                                      |

It was determined that full participation/supportive and Active Board Committees were very similar, so they were combined in the penultimate list and Data-based Decisions was moved forward.

Next, the Board went through a similar exercise to the businesses. The Board had to highlight ideas of theirs that they wanted to see, no matter if they were realistic or not. Much like the goal with the businesses, this session was to help open the minds of the Board members and get them thinking in broader terms than they might normally do when considering the future of the organization. This was followed up by a more realistic version, where Board members came up with two practical ideas on what the Board could accomplish with the time, staff, and



resources that exist for the organization. To conclude these exercises, the Board voted on the items discussed, working to whittle them down from a few dozen to a total of ten. The Board also voted on the top ten list that the businesses had decided upon earlier in the day.

### **Spaghetti Session Board Member Responses**

*If money, time, staff, etc. was no object, what would you like to see K-REDI accomplish in the next 1-3 years for the K-REDI region?*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| * Highway 63 be four lanes to Iowa line        | * More development of Thousand Hills         |
| * Double population of Kirksville              | * 4 <sup>th</sup> generation nuclear reactor |
| * Larger airport with more destinations        | * Increase household income 100%             |
| * High speed rail with a stop in Kirksville    | * More golf opportunities                    |
| * Recruit I-HOP/Denny's/Sam's Club             | * Be a feeder for area development           |
| * Osteo-dominant healthcare in US              | * More public transit options                |
| * Have entire healthcare continuum represented | * Free education for job training            |

### **Reality Check Session Board Member Responses**

*Being realistic with time, resources, staff, etc. what should be the most important goals for K-REDI to focus on completing in the next 1-3 years for the K-REDI region? The votes that each received are in parenthesis. The top three are highlighted and moved to the next list that the Board voted on.*

- |   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| * Build a secure community data warehouse (1)                     | * Increase funding 25% (3)            |
| * <b>Expand regional memberships to K-REDI (5)</b>                | * Increase K-REDI members (3)         |
| * More cross-pollination with Hannibal and Moberly (1)            | * Recycling Education (1)             |
| * Expose the childcare problem more (1)                           | * <b>Mandatory board training (9)</b> |
| * <b>Full-functioning board: Hold each other accountable (10)</b> | * K-REDI brand education/change (1)   |

The third and final meeting focused on a final vote to determine the top three to five objectives in the strategic plan, whittling it down from the list created at the end of the second meeting. This session was designed to help turn the ideas voted on into an actionable plan with measurable results and realistic timelines. This was done by focusing on HOW things would be accomplished over the next three years. If these goals were to be the main drivers of the work that K-REDI would be doing for the next three years, they needed to be turned from concepts into actionable items with clear goals, budgets, and timelines. While some of those elements, such as budget, were harder to pin down for various reasons, the discussion was useful because



it gave the Board the ability to think through realistic costs and what might need other resources to be accomplished.

### **Penultimate List for Board Member Voting**

*The Board of Directors used the following list to vote one final time on which goals and objectives would be the most important to accomplish in the next 1-3 years. Where there was a perceived similarity/overlap, they were combined into one item. This list is a mix between the final list the Board created and the vote they took to narrow down the Business Member Top 10 list. The vote tallies are in parentheses and the top five goals and objectives are highlighted.*

- \* Retention Efforts with Truman, MACC, ASU, etc. (6)
- \* Internal/External Communication (6)
- \* Stakeholder involvement on business visits (0)
- \* Statewide presence and expertise (2)
- \* Fully-functioning board with mandatory training and holding each other accountable (8)
- \* Childcare Centers (8)
- \* Data driven decisions (2)
- \* Regional membership/outlook (1)
- \* Investigate alternative revenue (3)

Each of the concepts will be discussed in turn on the following pages, working to address the questions outlined above and give a timeline, expected results, responsibilities, and more. The following chapters will be discussing these five topic areas for the strategic plan:

- Develop a Fully-Functioning Board
- Childcare Centers
- Retention Efforts with Postsecondary Institutions
- Internal/External Communications
- Investigate Alternative Revenue Sources

**NOTE:** It is important to note that this strategic plan should in no way diminish the day-to-day operations of the organization, including the continued focus on workforce development; business retention, recruitment, and expansion activities; and statewide representation and legislative contacts. This plan is to be used as a supplement to what the organization already does to help enhance the K-REDI region.



### **DEVELOP A FULLY-FUNCTIONING BOARD**

The main problem discussed during the planning retreat regarded whether or not the K-REDI Board was a Board of Governance or a Board of Directors and which it should be. A Board of Governance is typically nominated and elected by other Board members and have full budgetary and decision-making authority. While similar, a Board of Directors are nominated and elected by investors in the organization, usually through membership. A Board of Directors also has budgetary and decision-making authority, but are additionally part of setting the strategic direction of an organization. Finally, a Board of Governance is spread out over multiple geographic locations and jurisdictions while a Board of Directors is typically more locally located. After discussing the differences, it was decided that the K-REDI Board should focus on being an *active* Board of Directors.

But there is more to being active than just showing up. While that was considered one of the main tenets during the sessions, there was a recognition that just showing up does not equate being active or involved. To be a fully-functioning Board that is active and engaged in the work of the organization, there have to be ways to quantify and measure that engagement, attendance being just one of the many ways to measure the outcome. There was even discussion of changing the Board structure and the Director roles moving forward.

#### *Outcomes for Success*

The K-REDI Board decided the following estimate for success over the next three years:

- **Bylaw Review:**
  - The Board will form a Bylaws Committee comprised of Board members and at least one staff member. The Board members on the Committee should range from veteran members to newer members as well as a mix of elected and non-elected members. This should be completed the same day that the strategic plan is adopted.
  - The K-REDI Board Secretary will go through *at least* the last five years of meetings minutes to determine average Board attendance. This data collection should be completed and relayed to the Bylaws Committee no later than March 15, 2022.
  - The Bylaws Committee will review the current bylaws, especially the attendance, quorum, and Board member duties sections and make recommendations. This should be completed by April 30, 2022 in time for Board review and approval by the May 2022 Board meeting.



- **Board Portal Idea:**

- K-REDI Staff will explore the options for an online cloud platform for all of the organization's documents. This storage will include the bylaws, articles of incorporation, agendas, minutes, etc. This research should be completed and given to the Board for Board approval of an option by the May 2022 Board meeting.
- Once selected, K-REDI staff will move all required documentation for *at least* the last five years to the platform. This should happen no later than June 30, 2022.
- Starting July 1, 2022, all Board documents, especially for upcoming meetings, will be placed on the platform at least one week in advance. An email confirming this will be sent out by the Executive Director. (Currently, the Executive Director sends out four days in advance, but overall the Board maintained a week would work better).

- **Agenda Items:**

- Each month, the Board agenda will have time set aside for discussion of one strategic plan element. This will allow the Board to get immersed in a topic and allow for better discussion of progress, issues, help needed, etc. This will take effect at the March 2022 Board meeting or the first meeting after the strategic plan is adopted.
- Make sure the Board agenda and all necessary contextual information for that month's discussion is on the Board portal at least a week in advance. (Until that portal is up and running, agendas and relevant contextual information will be emailed out to all Board members at least a week in advance).

**Board Training:**

- The Board will select a Training Committee. This Committee will be comprised of veteran members and will be no less than three in number and no more than five. This Committee should be selected no later than the April 2022 Board meeting.
- The Training Committee will meet with the Executive Director in May 2022 to discuss the necessary components of a Board Orientation Course.
- The Training Committee will meet with new members to the Board as soon as they have been announced and go through the Orientation materials with them, preferably as one large setting rather than individually. Ideally this Orientation course would happen prior to their first meeting in July every year, but no later than the August Board meeting every year.
- The Training Committee will work with the Executive Director to target three other training ideas per year for ALL Board members. The goal is to find trainings to help make the Board more functional as well as keep them updated on important information in economic development. The goal would be one training per quarter.



### **CHILDCARE CENTERS**

Childcare has become one of the dominant aspects of the economic development conversation. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, childcare was not seen as overtly vital to the long-term success and well-being of local businesses. However, with the outbreaks of the coronavirus in 2020 and the subsequent shutdown of schools and other business industries, childcare began to receive a lot more attention at every level.

Childcare is one of the most misunderstood linchpins in our society. Not only are there strict rules about how many children can be on site of any given age at a time before more staff are required, most childcare providers have to go through more rigorous training and background checks than are required for most other industries. This, coupled with the slow growth of wages and complete lack of benefits, has made childcare a less desirable field to work in.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, childcare is now seen more as a workforce issue. If parents have nowhere to send their kids, then they are more likely to NOT work. Additionally, if there is not reliable childcare, parents are more likely to miss work when it comes to doctor appointments, sick children, etc. Factor in the mandatory quarantine time for parents and children if exposed to COVID-19 and you can have a severe shortage of workers on any given day of the week.

Luckily, businesses have started recognizing this and are willing partners in the search for childcare solutions. However, there are limits to what they can realistically do without some form of support from other organizations. As can be seen in the surveys, the non-Board member session listed childcare as one of its top concerns and the Board voted it through to the final round for inclusion in the strategic plan.

#### *Who is Responsible?*

The Board decided rightly that K-REDI is not the right entity to be opening or operating childcare centers. There are trained professionals in the community for that and hopefully more on the way once they graduate. K-REDI has some very important roles to play in this process, however.

First, K-REDI is the data provider for the region. When no one else was working on data collection during the pandemic, K-REDI stepped in to help get that data and get it to the proper entities. This would include information on capacity of childcare providers,



space on waiting lists for providers, costs, resource opportunities, and more. Even though other entities might be better suited for some of this, K-REDI adopted that role early on and is seen as a subject matter expert in the field. They could, and should, bring more organizations into the fold, but K-REDI needs to continue to be involved in the data collection.

Second, K-REDI has the contact with the area employers that are most likely in need of workforce. Not only can K-REDI give them information about childcare options, but K-REDI can also collect information on the number of jobs open, what shifts people need childcare for, and if distance, etc. is an issue on utilizing current childcare options. This will also help in the ability to recruit new providers or expand offerings by current providers by showing them the number of children needing childcare to enhance workforce retention and recruitment efforts.

Finally, K-REDI can be a training conduit for childcare providers by collaborating with other agencies. So often, childcare providers are so busy between actually watching kids and filling out required paperwork for their licenses, that they have little time to devote on learning more about opportunities to become even higher quality providers. K-REDI can stay abreast of this through their state network. Additionally, K-REDI can help coordinate or even host the mandatory trainings for new childcare workers, such as CPR, etc.

### *Outcomes for Success*

These outcomes of success are the minimums that would need to be met in order to be considered a successful endeavor. The K-REDI Board decided the following estimate for a timeline of success over the next three years:

- **Data Collection:**
  - Staff will continue reach out to all local childcare providers to get available capacity. This is being done monthly to keep an accurate and updated headcount. This should be continued throughout the duration of this plan.
  - Staff will reach out to all of the major employers and industrial businesses in the community to determine need for childcare spots. This is being done monthly to keep an accurate and updated headcount. This should be continued throughout the duration of this plan.
  - Childcare training should be scheduled and held at least twice a year. Staff can send out invitations to childcare providers to get an idea of interest. Staff should work with



the educational systems as well to determine who might be interested in childcare work or studying toward that end and invite those individuals as well. Training should be offered to help start or grow childcare businesses, especially regarding how to open in-home, licensed, etc. type of care. Training should not overlap currently required state mandates or double what is already happening locally. Training should be used to cover the gaps that local childcare businesses need.

- **Recruit Childcare Spots:**

- The organization would be responsible to increase the number of available childcare spots by 10% in the next three years through a mix of having new providers open businesses as well as having current providers expand their capacity.
- Data would be tracked annually by the K-REDI Staff and compiled at the end of three years to determine if the metric was met.



### **RETENTION EFFORTS WITH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

Kirksville boasts several top-notch educational institutions. From secondary to postsecondary schools, there are endless opportunities for personal growth and knowledge/skills development. These institutions enjoy high graduation rates and continued longevity and growth. This, coupled with the Kirksville region's high quality of life, would make it the ideal setting for a long-term landing spot for many of the area's graduates.

However, recent [Census data](#) shows that Adair County and the surrounding region have all lost significant population over the last ten years, even when business industries have largely grown. This has created a workforce quandary for businesses, but also a glaring question for the educational institutions: Why aren't our graduates staying? While there are some graduates from every institution that will put down roots, they are doing so at a pace that is well below growth projections for the region.

The strategic planning sessions highlighted this concern that the Kirksville region was educating and training a future workforce that is leaving after they graduate. The questions revolved around what element is missing to have graduates consider staying in the region to live and work and put down roots. While there were numerous different scenarios discussed, a few rose to the top for more intense consideration.

#### *Who is Responsible?*

While K-REDI will play an important and pivotal role in this discussion, the organization will not be the driving force. K-REDI is the likely organization to be a conduit between educational institutions and businesses, collecting and disseminating data on student needs and workforce, and ultimately promoting the region to graduates as well as future business projects. The K-REDI Board, being comprised of many of these local entities, will play an important role in using their connections to make sure that all necessary entities are taking part in these discussions. However, the final outcome will NOT be dependent on K-REDI. A successful effort will depend on the goodwill and constant cooperation of the educational institutions and businesses that rely on a steady stream of recruitment and retention options for students to enter the regional workforce.



### *Outcomes for Success*

This was the hardest area for the K-REDI Board to coalesce around solutions because of the diversity of institutions that are present in the region and the variety of students that they train. K-REDI Board decided the following estimate for a timeline of success over the next three years:

- **Understanding Student Needs**

- K-REDI would host a meeting with all the local educational institutions (secondary and postsecondary) to discuss current retention efforts. This would help crystallize the conversation for everyone and see the similarities and differences in the retention struggle. This should be done by June 2022.
- K-REDI would work with the local educational institutions to better target data collection on students' job desires, salary expectations, plans for after they graduate, etc. to get a better picture of where students are going after they leave Kirksville and why they are leaving. This would be done annually to get current updated information.
- K-REDI will meet with area employers to discuss partnership models to get local students into businesses and job opportunities before they graduate and make alternate plans. This could be done on the idea of paid internships, apprenticeships, etc. Since some of these models might take time to get set up, this goal would need to be accomplished by June 2023.
- K-REDI can work to develop an internship portal for all local opportunities in a variety of career fields. By working with the educational institutions, this informational portal can be disseminated directly to the students. The portal will be updated as new opportunities arise and old ones are withdrawn. This should be accomplished by November 2022.



### **INTERNAL/EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION**

Too often people and organizations are reluctant to tout their accomplishments. This can be due to not knowing what to say or which audience to direct it to, but it can also be as simple as that the people that make up an organization are not comfortable in the spotlight for any reason. While this might be fine on an individual level, it can be detrimental to an organization that has to be focused on community/business relationship development as well as one dependent on outside income for its operations.

The Board decided that it was important to get the word out more frequently and through various channels on the successful work that K-REDI has accomplished. This would get the organization in front of the public, which might encourage more investment for the organization. Additionally, it would enhance the internal education piece for the Board of Directors. If the Board of Directors is not aware of the work being done by the organization, then they are not as effective in their role as community liaisons to different businesses, organizations, etc. If the Board is well-educated on the accomplishments, it will make it easier to promote the organization to other potential partners and investors.

#### *Who is Responsible?*

The Executive Director will be the person primarily tasked with these tasks. The Director is involved in all aspects of the organization, often making the first, if not only, contact with area partners, municipalities, businesses, etc. Since the Director is so integral with knowing these efforts, but also with the possible assistance to make them realities, it is easiest for the Director to publicize the efforts of the organization and keep the Board updated on the different successes, etc. of the organization.

The K-REDI Board will be responsible for keeping informed from the information provided by the Director. This means reading and assimilating information from the Board packets ahead of time and being prepared for meetings, asking questions to guarantee understanding, respecting confidentiality of subject areas as needed, and recognizing the talking points that need to be passed on. The Board has a large network of personal and professional relationships that they can leverage as well to promote the organization and its successes and the Board needs to leverage those relationships where applicable.



### *Outcomes for Success*

This particular action item was the hardest to quantify in terms of success, especially since public outreach in and of itself can happen all of the time. Additionally, some of the successes will be predicated on different projects that might get funding, different businesses that might choose to expand or relocate to the area, and external factors such as issues like the current global pandemic. Noting that, the outcomes for success were necessarily muted in this category. These outcomes of success are the minimums that would need to be met in order to be considered a successful endeavor, although the hope is to accomplish them on a shorter timeline. The K-REDI Board decided the following estimate for a timeline of success over the next three years:

- Do at least four Facebook Live Economic Development lessons per year.
- Write and distribute a newsletter at least twice a year on K-REDI activities and accomplishments.
- Publish at least four press releases a year, touting the work and accomplishments being done by K-REDI.
- Present to the Adair County Commissioners, the Kirksville City Council, and other entities (like Rotary, Kiwanis, etc.) at least twice a year, if possible, outside of funding requests.
- Continue hosting at least one Economic Development Town Hall per year.
- Guarantee that each Board member gets at least two touches on each piece of important information, at least one via email and one through another channel if possible.
- Hosting a training for the Board on Media Relations.
- Organize a meet-and-greet with the local media representatives and the Board so everyone gets to know each other better and feels more comfortable interacting.



### **INVESTIGATE ALTERNATIVE REVENUE**

Revenue is what makes businesses and organizations run. While some are able to capitalize on revenue through the work they do and the services they provide, many non-profit organizations rely on other forms of funding. K-REDI relies on public investment to help fund their work in addition to the membership investors who believe strongly enough in K-REDI's mission to financially support the organization each year. However, as times change and needs become more expensive, there is always the conversation revolving around how to increase funding to accomplish our goals?

K-REDI is lucky to have such great partnerships with local businesses and regional partners, including a solid partnership with the City of Kirksville. This helps alleviate a lot of the need for more focused membership investment campaigns and allows the K-REDI staff to focus on getting the day-to-day work done without fear of falling too low in their checking account.

Yet, it was recognized by the K-REDI Board that they might be able to do more with more resources. Some of the work done at the regional level in the last few years has been done with the leadership inherent in the Director role and that has led to a lot of investment in the K-REDI region. Because of this work done on a broader level, the conversation revolved around whether or not to expand K-REDI's territory and its membership base.

While some Board members were in favor of expanding the territory and making K-REDI a more regional entity, other Board members felt that Kirksville should continue to receive the focus of attention and projects could help the outlying regions as they came up. It was agreed that any growth in the region was good for the entire region, but there was a concern that staff time and resources would be depleted at a greater pace than they could be financed by expanding the region into areas where there was not as much capital.

What resulted in the above discussion was a realization that K-REDI needed to find more and different ways to gain revenue. The Board decided that some of the plans for the future, including long-term business recruitment, workforce development, childcare, and others would take a lot of resources. Therefore, it was decided that the organization should consider investigating alternative revenue streams as part of this strategic plan.



### *Who is Responsible?*

While the Executive Director would ultimately be responsible for pursuing and securing any new revenue funds identified, it is imperative that the Board of Directors have a strong role in assessing and researching what type of funding is needed and for what particular projects. Additionally, the Board would be the vehicle to determine if there is a need or desire to change or amend the organization's focus and mission. The K-REDI staff is already incredibly busy with day-to-day operations and taking on a project of this size and indefinite nature would distract them from more immediate and necessary work.

For the research component of this objective, the Board would be best suited to form a Committee of Board members with a breadth of non-profit and business experience. This Committee would focus on the current revenue streams and see where there might be room for growth within K-REDI's current mission and structure. Additionally, based on the recommendations that would come from the updated bylaws, this Committee could also determine if there is a need or desire to expand K-REDI's mission and goals, which might lead to a way to increase revenue from alternative sources.

### *Outcomes for Success*

The K-REDI Board decided the following estimate for a timeline of success over the next three years:

- Form an Alternative Revenue Committee of Board members with a variety of non-profit and business experience. This should be accomplished no later than April 30, 2022.
- The Committee should review and understand current revenue streams and determine where there might be areas for growth.
- The Committee should determine if there is a need or desire to expand K-REDI's mission and goals to allow for more revenue expansion opportunities.
- The Committee should come up with a list of recommendations for alternative income generation no later than June 30, 2023. This list should be comprehensive in how much revenue could likely be generated and how it would fit into the current K-REDI mission and goals. If the Committee is recommending a change to the current mission or goals, that should be noted on each potential revenue source and how the Committee would recommend updating the mission and goals.



- The Committee should meet with the Executive Director to discuss these ideas and proposals no later than August 31, 2023.
- After meeting with the Executive Director and receiving feedback, the Committee needs to reconsider the recommendations list. This should be completed no later than November 30, 2023.
- The Committee should make its recommendations to the K-REDI Board of Directors at the December 2023 meeting for consideration and approval.
- If approved by the Board in December 2023, the goal would be to have pursued at least one of the alternative sources of revenue by December 2024. (If not approved, the Board would decide whether the Committee should continue their work or forgo their efforts).



### CONCLUSION

Kirksville Regional Economic Development, Inc is committed to economic development in the K-REDI region. This commitment is shown through a dedication to business expansion and recruitment, housing development discussions, workforce development, small business assistance through housing the SBDC, childcare initiatives, and professional development of the Board and staff for the organization.

Each of the above commitments are a major focus each year and the Board is devoted to working with local and regional partners to accomplish the goals listed above, along with many others. However, every goal cannot have a successful outcome each year. In fact, some goals are not touched for several years because there is not a unified front, a local actor to take the lead on the goals, a lack of resources, or some other variable that causes goals to go unfulfilled. These unfulfilled goals can weigh on a community and make people feel that less is happening than there truly is. Or they have seen so many plans created only to sit on a shelf somewhere gathering dust until years have gone by and a new one is needed. These can be devastating to the mindset of a community, its businesses, and its people. That is why it is imperative not only that the Board agree and adopt this plan as a guideline for the next three years, but that the plan is published to the membership that helped craft it. There is always greater buy-in from the community and businesses when they can see the result of the effort they put in to something.

By drafting this strategic plan, the Board of Directors are holding themselves and the organization accountable to follow through on these endeavors and hopefully succeed in making them realities. Additionally, the Board is willing to offer the organization as a lead actor or agent on these undertakings as well as willing to help offer and/or procure resources to make them happen. Finally, the Board is staking the reputation of the organization on the ability to not only get these goals pursued and hopefully accomplished, but guarantee that they will serve a purpose to the growth of the K-REDI over the short and long term.

*“Accountability. It is not only what we do, but also what we do not do, for which we are accountable.” Moliere.*



**APPENDIX A: Business Member Survey Results**

1. My key association with the organization is as:

19 Stakeholder/Investor      1 Sponsor      1 Volunteer  
4 Employee      3 Political      2 Other

2. The tenure of my business with the organization is:

14 Greater than 10 years      1 8-10 years      5 5-8 years  
4 3-5 years      3 1-3 years      2 Less than 1 year

3. In your opinion, what is the largest worry that your business will be facing in the next one to three years?

* Population Loss:	1	* Retention:	3
* Regulations:	3	* Info Tech/Cyber Security:	1
* Economy Health:	1	* Business Evolution:	1
* Lack of Relevance:	1	* Advanced Education Enrollment:	4
* Taxes:	1	* Business Growth:	2
* Legislative Concerns:	2	* Marketing:	2
* Labor Pool:	7	* Organizational Membership:	1
* Wages/Benefits:	1	* Facility Use:	1
* Unemployment:	5	* Business Start-Ups:	1

4. Do you feel that K-REDI is positioned to help your business overcome this worry? Why or why not?

15 Yes      5 Maybe      5 No      2 Not Sure/Not Applicable

\* Yes, because legislatively tuned in  
 \* Yes, because they anticipate local economy needs



\*Maybe. K-REDI should focus on think tanks/problem-solving counseling to move businesses past COVID

\* No, because they need to do a better job at community promotion.

\* No, because population growth has not kept pace with business growth.

5. In your opinion, what is the most important service that K-REDI provides to its members? Why?

- \* Diverse Representation: 1
- \* Strengthen Business Community: 1
- \* Growth/Economic Development: 6
- \* Workforce Development: 3
- \* Collaboration: 2
- \* Interaction with Elected Officials: 1
- \* Community Promotion: 6
- \* Info Gathering/Communicating: 7

6. In your opinion, what service should K-REDI provide to its members that it currently does not? Why?

- \* Employee Recruitment: 1
- \* Political Assistance: 1
- \* SHRM Chapter: 1
- \* Member Communication: 2
- \* Not Sure/Not Applicable: 11

7. What do you consider to be K-REDI's greatest strength? Why?

- |                         |                    |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| * Engagement: 2         | * Growth Focus: 2  |
| * Resources: 1          | * Communication: 1 |
| * Credibility: 4        | * Leadership: 6    |
| * Executive Director: 8 | * Cohesive: 1      |
| * Marketing: 1          |                    |



8. What do you consider K-REDI’s greatest area of improvement? Why?

- \* Focus on more than just industrial development: 2
- \* Childcare Initiatives: 1      \* Housing: 1
- \* Business Attraction: 1      \* Growth: 3
- \* Targeted Needs Assessment: 1      \* Public Communication: 3
- \* County Commissioner Involvement: 1      \* Member Communication: 4
- \* Legislative Assistance: 1      \*Not Sure/Not Applicable: 6
- \* Job Training: 1

9. What should K-REDI do differently or change in order to remain relevant and effective?

- \* Evolve: 1      \* Growth: 3
- \* Communication: 4      \* Workforce Development: 2
- \* Strategic Planning: 2      \* Increase visibility: 1
- \* Not Sure/Not Applicable: 5
- \* Recognize all businesses that contribute: 3

10. Please offer any suggestions or comments on how K-REDI can align the organization with your expectations for the next three years.

- \*Work on aligning Armor Building for the homeless
- \* Employee training/retention
- \* Communication: 2
- \* Awareness/Engagement (Not just emails): 2
- \*Population Growth
- \* Working Board
- \* Childcare: 2
- \* Infrastructure Projects: 2



**APPENDIX B: Board Member Survey Results**

1. Please list all of your current roles with K-REDI:

<u>4</u> Officer	<u>15</u> Board Member	<u>3</u> Committee Member
<u>0</u> Staff	<u>1</u> Volunteer	<u>0</u> Other

2. How long have you served on the K-REDI Board of Directors?

<u>4</u> Greater than 10 years	<u>2</u> 8-10 years	<u>2</u> 5-8 years
<u>1</u> 3-5 years	<u>5</u> 1-3 years	<u>3</u> Less than 1 year

3. In your opinion, what is the most important service that K-REDI provides to its members? Why?

* Quick Responses:	3	* BRE:	1
* Economic Development:	4	* Collaboration:	2
* Community Engagement:	1	* Leadership Connections:	1
* Resources:	1	* Advocacy:	1
* Needs Assessments:	2		

4. In your opinion, what service should K-REDI provide to its members that it currently does not? Why?

* Member Communication:	2	* City Leverage:	1
* Workforce:	1	* Retail Focus:	1
* Data Collection:	1	* Involvement:	1
* Movie days:	1	* Not Sure/Not Applicable:	1
* Act as a connector between businesses to help solve their problems:	1		



5. What do you consider to be K-REDI’s greatest strength? Why?

- |                       |   |                  |   |
|-----------------------|---|------------------|---|
| * Executive Director: | 5 | * Knowledge:     | 1 |
| * Staff:              | 3 | * City Support:  | 1 |
| * Engagement:         | 3 | * Diverse Board: | 1 |
| * Membership:         | 1 | * Commitment:    | 1 |
| * Collaboration:      | 1 |                  |   |

6. What do you consider K-REDI’s greatest area of improvement? Why?

- |                          |   |                        |   |
|--------------------------|---|------------------------|---|
| * Small Business Growth: | 1   | * Business Attraction: | 1 |
| * Member Communication:  | 2   | * Growth:              | 2 |
| * Retail Growth:         | 1   | * City Leverage:       | 1 |
| * Workforce Development: | 2 (Balance of labor versus new business growth) |                        |   |

7. What would you like to see K-REDI do in order to become a better or more effective organization?

- |  |   |                         |   |
|--|---|-------------------------|---|
| * City Leverage:   | 1 | * Retail Leads:         | 2 |
| * Communication:   | 1 | * Awareness/Engagement: | 1 |
| * Growth:  | 1 | * Working Board:        | 5 |
| * Targeted Communities:  | 1 | * Use meetings smarter: | 1 |
| * Focus on businesses who are always around, not just when they can benefit: | 1 |                         |   |

8. What should K-REDI do differently or change in order to remain relevant and effective?

- |  |   |                        |   |
|--|---|------------------------|---|
| * Re-evaluate mission constantly:      | 1 | * Increase visibility: | 1 |
| * Additional staff hires as needed:    | 2 | * Working board:       | 2 |
| * Promotion/Growth of K-REDI:          | 3 | * Retail Focus:        | 1 |
| * Focus on original BRE Mission first: | 1 | * City leverage:       | 1 |

9. Do you feel K-REDI has made notable progress in the last couple of years regarding the previous strategic plan? Why or why not?

7 Yes      0 No      1 Maybe      6 Not Sure/Not Applicable



10. Please offer any other suggestions, ideas, or comments for K-REDI to consider during the strategic planning process.

- |   |   |                       |   |
|---|---|-----------------------|---|
| * More Funding:   | 1 | * Affordable Housing: | 1 |
| * What is K-REDI's role:  | 1 | * Working Board:      | 1 |
| * Focus on K-REDI successes rather than political/apologetic excuses:           | 1 |                       |   |
| * Incorporate strategic planning into meetings better to keep abreast of goals: | 1 |                       |   |
| * Don't make me fill out stupid surveys like this:                              | 1 |                       |   |



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