

VISION

We have a healthy and vibrant economic climate that provides a broad range of business and employment opportunities.

SUMMARYECONOMIC INDICATORS

When compared to other suburban counties in Missouri, Illinois and Kansas, St. Charles County ranks at or near the top of every economic category. It accounted for 6.1 percent of Missouri's economy in 2006, behind only St. Louis County and Jackson County, the two largest metropolitan counties in the state.

As with any rapidly growing community, job growth kept unemployment relatively low. Unemployment has remained fairly constant since 2002. There has been a substantial number of new positions created expanding the number of those employed. By 2020, St. Charles County will have experienced a 91.6 percent increase in the number of new jobs and a 93.5 percent increase in the number of self-employed individuals since 2000.

From 2000 to 2005, industries in the county with the biggest increase in the number of jobs (after the self-employed) were government, finance/insurance, accommodations/food service and construction. Projecting to 2020, these industries, along with health care services, will also have the highest gains in numbers of new workers, after the self-employed. Additional accommodations in the form of office business parks, commercial complexes and higher tech campuses will need to be considered.

The county has lost only one major employer since 1995, while gaining three major employers during the same period. The top five employers in St. Charles County in 2007 employed over 50 percent more workers than the top five employers in the county in 1995.

Nearly half of the labor force now remains in St. Charles County to work as opposed to 7 out of every 10 workers commuting elsewhere in 1996. This trend is likely to continue if the county can continue to attract major employers.

The average annual wage has increased 22.8 percent since 2000; however, the salary ranges for positions within the county as compared to other counties are in the middle of the range. This should be an attractive incentive for future employers looking to locate here.

The average annual income has increased for both households and families to among the highest when compared to like communities since 1999. Within the county the highest incomes are located in the western areas, such as



SUMMARY

Weldon Spring, Lake Saint Louis, Dardenne Prairie, and O'Fallon. St. Charles County has the lowest percentage of families below the poverty level for counties over 250,000 in population in the U.S.

St. Charles County currently has relatively few zoned areas available for future commercial, office complex or business park, high technology campus and industrial enterprises. Land development by residential developers along major transportation routes and local jurisdictions' inability to preserve prime sites for these enterprises have hampered the county's potential for providing desirable locations for job producing enterprises.

ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

The report, "Competitive Analysis 2004" produced for the Economic Development Center of St. Charles County by the consulting firm Carter-Burgess, Inc., identified St. Charles County's economic strengths and weaknesses, identified targeted industries, and made recommendations for St. Charles County to compete economically in the future. Those recommendations include: the development of large industrial sites through incentive alternatives and high-end research parks with wet lab potential; a cooperative effort to market the region; a comprehensive economic development assessment from a site selection perspective; preparation of a logistics analysis to promote economic advantages; an updated economic development plan to include marketing and web site elements; and address the development voids using a cooperative public private process.

The Economic Development Center of St. Charles County has identified several issues that should be addressed in order to provide for a better economic climate. Those issues include preservation of sites for office park along I-64; development of an intra-county bus system; creation of work force housing; and future transportation improvements to I-70, the I-64 bridge and the completion of MO 364.

The economic indicators previously depicted would seem to provide St. Charles County with the potential for a continued bright economic future. However, unless land use planning efforts in all jurisdictions in the county can preserve some large prime sites for business and commerce, especially along the major transportation routes, growth could stagnate.



ISSUES

- The number of existing manufacturing jobs is decreasing and service sector jobs are increasing due to technological and labor changes.
- Job incentive programs are needed in some areas of the local economy.
- A low unemployment rate and possible labor shortages could impact future job growth.
- State and federal development incentive programs need to be utilized.
- Local economic development incentive programs need to be assessed.
- County and municipal development officials need to address the lack of properties of 100 acres or more zoned industrial and ready for development.
- Need to encourage the development of high end office and research parks.
- Development regulations must be reviewed and revised to promote high quality commercial and industrial projects.
- Job skills provided by technical and vocational programs must match future employment opportunities.
- Wireless and broadband networks need to be established throughout the county.
- The positive economic development climate in the county should be emphasized in attracting new employers.
- Economic growth engines should be highlighted in the quest to land new businesses.
- The economic strengths of the St. Louis Metropolitan Area must be presented as part of the county's economic development efforts.



GOALS & STRATEGIES

GOAL St. Charles County will focus its economic development efforts to attract new business and industry, and foster the expansion of existing business and industry to diversify the tax base.

STRATEGIES

- Expand water and sanitary sewer service to those areas with potential for industrial development.
- Upgrade both the state and local transportation network.
- Determine future transportation mode needs and facilitate the transport of workers to employment sites and reduce road congestion.
- Market the human resources potential of the county by assessing and identifying strengths in the existing labor force.
- Utilize target research analysis in identifying industries which are presently in an expansion mode.
- Continue to promote the concept of small business incubators as an important tool to assist the startup of small businesses.
- Research market and industry trends to assist in targeting business relocations.
- Research and target emerging businesses and industries that offer skilled and well paying jobs.
- Target and recruit a wide range of businesses to create diversity in employment opportunities.

GOAL Create an overall impression that St. Charles County is a good location for business.

STRATEGIES

- Market St. Charles County as a “high-tech” community with attractive, fresh and innovative marketing techniques, such as multi-media and “virtual reality” tours of St. Charles County.
- Promote county’s image within and out of the county through the public media and other venues and public education.
- Implement the nation’s premier wireless and broadband system.



**GOALS &
STRATEGIES**

GOAL Utilize the land use policies of the county to enhance opportunities of economic development.

STRATEGIES

- Designate large areas on the future land use plan for industrial site alternatives. (100 acres or larger).
- Develop high-end industrial parks and research parks while maintaining high environmental standards.
- Reserve areas for the development of office parks (Class A and B office buildings) at appropriate locations with good transportation access.
- Address the need for “ready-to-go” large industrial sites with rail access.
- Encourage economic development by coordinating municipal and county land use and development policies.
- Increase focus on tourism as an economic factor throughout the county.

