Adapting to Shale-Based Development through a Countywide Approach: Lessons Learned from Jefferson County, Ohio

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Outline and Overview

I. Jefferson County in Historical Context

Methods

II. Re-visioning Development in the County

III. Arrival of Shale

IV. Strategic Planning

V. Lessons Learned
Jefferson County in Historical Context
Methodology

1. Analyzed government economic and fiscal data

2. Historical research and document analysis
   60+ newspaper articles, meeting minutes

3. 19 interviews and meeting attendance
   All levels of government, NGOs, former elected officials, active citizens, business leaders
Jefferson County, Ohio
Jefferson County, Ohio
Steubenville is county seat

- 40 minute drive from Pittsburgh
- County population: 69,709
- Steubenville population: 19,015
- Part of Weirton-Steubenville Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)
Percent of county residents employed in manufacturing

Population loss
Fiscal problems
Isolation from cultural and economic activities in Pittsburgh area during the 1980s and 1990s (Dieterich-Ward 2010)
Re-Visioning Development
2008/2009

2012 Countywide Leadership Network
- %20 of county workforce employed in manufacturing
- Wheeling-Pitt Steel Co. files for Bankruptcy
- Progress Alliance formed
- Financial stabilization period
- Early Chamber-initiated efforts
- “Laughingstock era” of county governance
- Significant deficits in County budget
- Creation of Jefferson County Oil and Gas Committee
- Shale oil and gas activity (leasing and permitting begins)
- Community Investment Plan process begins
- ODNR approved horizontal drilling permits

Legend:
- % of Workforce employed in manufacturing
- County revenues to expenditures gap (in $millions)
- Social infrastructure events (qualitative scale)
- ODNR approved horizontal drilling permits
October 2011 the Board of County Commissioners nominate representatives to form “Jefferson County Oil & Gas Committee” to:

- create awareness
- assess challenges related to growth
- develop communications within the industries and government
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15 citizen committee representing:

- real estate
- environment
- emergency services
- hotel and lodging
- professional services
- oil and gas industry
- workforce development
- education
- hospitals
- infrastructure
- municipalities
- townships
- three at-large citizen representatives
“Support group” created from:

- Chamber of Commerce
- Public/private economic development agency
- Regional Planning Commission
- County Engineer
- Job and Family Services
- Water and Sewer Department
- 911 Call Center
- Community Action Council
- Educational Services Center

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Marcellus and Utica/Point Pleasant Shale Wells
in Jefferson County, Ohio

August 2012
Early Outcomes

- Gap Assessment activity lead to identification of areas of high impact/low effort: communication & education
- Reduced “knowledge gap” and “leveled the playing field”
- Cross-county networking
- Built shale development into land use plan
- Project UNITE grant (2012)
  - $50,000 grant award from State of Ohio’s Local Government Innovation Fund
  - To provide unified system for service-delivery to allow multiple sectors (e.g. industry, education) to communicate and collaborate as “an online public matchmaker”

“The context and process remain constant; only the content changes. Today it is gas and oil. Tomorrow it may be purchasing fuel, tires, or whatever.”
Jefferson County is 8th highest county in Ohio for Utica/Pt. Pleasant

Significant lag behind neighboring counties

Port Authority replaced Progress Alliance

Funding difficulties

Committee on temporary leave

Expect re-formation in next two years (as drilling picks up?)

Committee crucial to uniting the townships, county and city on even playing field

Relationships paved the way for positive interactions with pipeline companies
Identify the networks that link your key stakeholders and community leaders.

Local governments *can* affect education and communication.

Which can get local government, business and community residents onto the same page.

This is important, because…

“The industry is a Ferrari, and we’re in a 1980 Ford F-150.”
Recognize the significant range of circumstances facing county residents

Build shale development into pre-existing and future economic development and land use plans

This can help communicate with one voice to industry and higher level government