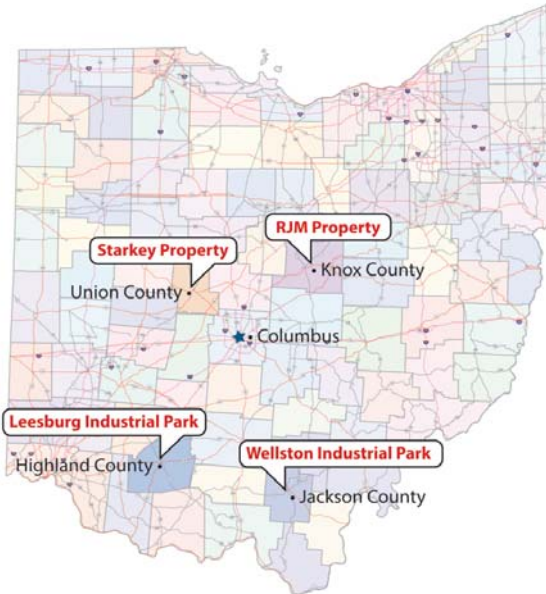




How to Minimize Rural Site Selection Risk



In early 2016, as part of a stakeholder group led by JobsOhio and with the recognition that communities must minimize risk to be competitive in the site selection process, Ohio's Electric Cooperatives (OEC) crafted a grant program to help local communities served by electric cooperatives reduce some of the unknown factors of their prime economic development sites.

In addition to the electric infrastructure engineering and expansion investment from local cooperatives, OEC provided \$15,000 grants to each of the four sites briefly described below.

Skilled workforce and natural resources draw international investment to Jackson County, Ohio

"The 56.8-acre Wellston Industrial Park is located at the crossroads of two four-lane divided highways—U.S. Route 35 and the Appalachian Highway/S.R. 32—in southeastern Ohio," said Jennifer Jacobs, Jackson County Economic Development Partnership (JCEDP) executive director. "The property is immediately adjacent to Superior Hardwoods, making the site ideally situated to build upon the strengths of our existing wood industry, manufacturing, and food processing assets."

"Speyside Bourbon Cooperage, Inc., a Scottish-owned company, recently started production of new bourbon barrels made entirely of Appalachia White Oak," commented Jacobs. "Access to experienced woodworking employees, raw materials and industrial-ready highways were important factors in Speyside's choice of a Jackson County site."

2.67% of U.S. frozen food production workers are employed in Jackson County

If you've snacked on Totino's Pizza Rolls, the product was produced at the Jackson County General Mills production facility, which is the sole U.S. producer of the nearly billion-dollar brand. Bellisio Foods—owner and producer of Michelina's frozen products—also produces the Boston Market and Chili's at Home frozen foods, which are just a few of the nationally-known food products produced in Jackson County.



For more information about Wellston Industrial Park:

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“For the Wellston Industrial site, the OEC grant paid for the environmental studies—Phase I, geotechnical, wetlands, archeology, and endangered species,” according to Kent Eldridge, vice president of member services for Buckeye Rural Electric Cooperative. “For non-profits such as JCEDP and private landowners, the OEC financial support was critical to preparing this Jackson County site to compete for national and international economic development opportunities.”



For more information about Leesburg Industrial Park:

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One-hour access to Cincinnati, Columbus, and Dayton

“The 80-acre Leesburg Industrial Park site has the benefits of a semi-rural location but is only a one-hour drive from three of Ohio’s vibrant metropolitan areas,” notes Nicole Oberrecht, clerk of the Highland County Commissioners. “The local economy is particularly strong in automotive manufacturing and agriculture, but the Leesburg site is well-suited for light to heavy manufacturing in any sector.”

“The OEC grant—which paid for most of the environmental studies—was an essential part of the collective community support that advanced the Highland County site,” states Jeff Campbell, director of key accounts for South Central Power.

Highland County Commissioner Shane Wilkin adds, “Companies simply cannot wait for due diligence, nor can they risk a project being derailed or delayed when they are pretty far along the selection timeline. Completing due diligence reduces their risk and makes our Highland County sites more competitive.”

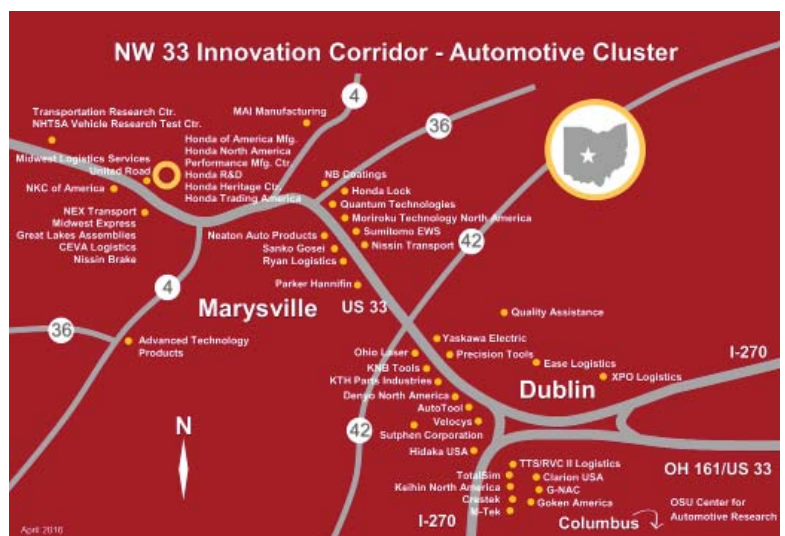
Proactive preparation elevates statewide economic development efforts

“Site preparedness is especially important for rural sites,” says Katy Farber, project manager for Appalachian Partnership for Economic Growth (APEG). “The statewide goals of JobsOhio and the six economic development regional partners include providing educational opportunities for local communities to gain insight into the site selection process; gap-analysis to understand sites’ missing elements or characteristics; cost-benefit analysis associated with potential site improvements; and marketing recommendations.”

“The APEG region offers the cheapest natural gas in the Western Hemisphere, abundant water for manufacturing, and a workforce skilled in manufacturing,” Farber continued. “Even with these known assets, we need to make sure site selection consultants are aware of our available sites and that our communities have the sites ready to meet the needs of potential end-users.”

Union County site in midst of NW U.S. 33 Smart Mobility Corridor

“The NW 33 Innovation Corridor between Dublin and East Liberty is where Honda of America Mfg., Inc., The Ohio State University’s Transportation Research Center, and over 50 automotive suppliers and advanced manufacturers have grown to form one of



the largest concentrations of manufacturing industries in the Columbus Region,” says Eric Phillips, executive director of Union County Economic Development Partnership.



For more information about the Starkey site:

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Phillips continues, “In addition, the Ohio Department of Transportation confirmed that it will invest \$10-12 million into a fiber extension along the 33 Corridor while the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) recently awarded a \$5.9 million grant to the City of Dublin, the City of Marysville and Union County for the advancement of the Northwest U.S. 33 Smart Mobility Corridor (which mirrors the footprint of the Innovation Corridor). The USDOT grant will provide funding for Dedicated Short Range Communications (DSRC) along the corridor for connected vehicle and autonomous vehicle testing and research and will help propel this area to the forefront in smart mobility development. The fiber extension will provide better connectivity to companies while the DSRC units will make the 33 Corridor the largest test bed of autonomous and connected vehicles in Ohio.”

The 74-acre Starkey site in Union County is targeted for multiple advanced manufacturing, R&D, agribusiness, logistics, e-commerce, and corporate office users. Kevin Gregory, key accounts executive for Union Rural Electric, notes, “The OEC grant helped pay for environmental studies so the property owner’s funds could support marketing of the site and development of the site master plan.”

Knox County industrial site builds on 60-year manufacturing legacy

The 217-acre RJM site’s time has come. Long identified for expansion of the existing Mount Vernon Enterprise Complex, the RJM site is flat, vacant, nearly shovel-ready, and intended for large-scale manufacturing and industrial end users.

“The RJM site is adjacent to a successful, legacy industrial park and regional employment center comprising 300 acres, with 20 end-users employing approximately 2,100 fulltime employees,” shares Jeffrey Harris, president of Area Development Foundation, Inc., the organization that leads economic development for Knox County. “Our region is widely recognized for having a workforce with the specialized skills such as machinists and world-class welders that capital goods manufacturers find highly desirable and often difficult to find.”

“While the RJM property has all utilities and industrial-quality roadways, portions of the due diligence have fallen out of date over the years,” said Gary Baker, director of marketing and public relations for the Energy Cooperative. “The OEC grant dollars will help pay the cost of the Phase 1 environmental study for the entire site, wetlands assessment, geotechnical survey, and other due diligence items needed to keep this site in contention for large-scale manufacturing and industrial projects.”



For more information about the RJM property:

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Ohio's Electric Cooperatives step up to further site due diligence

"Site selection is not without risks," said Kenny McDonald, president and CEO of Columbus 2020. "Part of our job as economic developers is to help minimize risks. One vitally important way we can do that is by educating our site owners, marketers and economic development partners about the due diligence site selection professionals need and how to present it in the most useful manner."

McDonald continued, "Ohio's Electric Cooperatives have stepped up with grant dollars to help the communities their local cooperatives serve better position their sites for future development."

Buckeye Power and Ohio's Electric Cooperatives can help with:

- Comprehensive site and building portfolios
 - Preliminary site studies
 - Site search tours
 - Assistance in identifying financial incentives
 - Electric rate analyses
 - Community profiles
 - State and local government contacts
 - Contractor introductions
-



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