

James Kennedy



moved quickly to form a six-person review board to make recommendations.

"At the time, Westgate Mall was in a state of decline with many tenants choosing to leave," says James Kennedy, director of public services and development for Fairview Park. "[The Jacobs Group] was made aware of the level of interest and support by the two communities. And while the review board efforts didn't dictate the outcome, the relationships that we formed

with the Jacobs Group proved to be important."

In early 2006, the Westgate Mall was demolished to make way for a new facility featuring traditional "Western Reserve" architecture, pedestrian-friendly walkways and plazas. When completed, the \$32 million Westgate reconstruction will account for 600,000 square feet of retail space, 50 stores and restaurants, and approximately 1,200 jobs.

**Public/Private Partnership**  
**Lorain County Growth Partnership**

**Sharing Resources**

THE LORAIN COUNTY GROWTH PARTNERSHIP HELPS BUILD A PROSPEROUS FUTURE.

**B**ased on a collaborative vision of working together to strengthen and unify the public, private and educational sectors in the region, the Lorain County Growth Partnership is succeeding in pooling Lorain County's shrinking economic resources to build a more prosperous future.

"The Growth Partnership really doesn't have any employees — it simply exists to bring together people with common goals and objectives for consensus building, collaboration and cooperation, as well as an open exchange of ideas and sharing of resources," explains County Administrator Jim Cordes about the concept County Commissioners launched less than a year ago.

The 40-plus economic development organizations, governmental agencies and educational institutions work side by side with the County Commissioners to provide assistance where it is most needed — to attract and retain businesses and employment opportunities. With more than 17 projects currently in development, Lorain County is poised to create thousands of new jobs in the industrial, manufacturing, health care and service sectors.

"Everyone is struggling with less resources and less ability to fund resources," Cordes says. "By combining our resources and making sure we are not duplicating or overlapping, we are able to more fully focus our energies and talents and limited resources to get the best outcomes."

Jim Cordes



**Public/Private Partnership**  
**City of Middleburg Heights**

**Fostering Growth**

THE CITY OF MIDDLEBURG HEIGHTS IS BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS TO BETTER ATTRACT BUSINESS.

**W**ith more than 1,300 businesses calling the City of Middleburg Heights home, it is somewhat surprising the city only created its Department of Economic Development a year ago. Prior to that, Middleburg Heights Mayor Gary Starr of 26 years handled economic development for the city, meeting with potential developers and business owners each month.

The southwest suburb, with a population of 15,000 residents, sees more than 19,000 workers travel to the community every day. Starr is proactive when it comes to fostering relationships between government and the private sector.

"Our attitude is we don't wait for business to come to City Hall, we go to them," says Starr, referring to his new "Business Positive" plan to facilitate new business considering Middleburg Heights. The city's strategy, he adds, is one of calling on

**Public/Private Partnership**  
**City of Solon**

**Suburban Renewal**

CITY OF SOLON'S INCENTIVE PROGRAM REJUVENATES BUILDINGS.

**I**n June 2006, the City of Solon developed the Growth & Revitalization Incentive Program (GRIP) to better serve its community.

GRIP is a grant program that encourages private investment to redevelop, improve or demolish obsolete and fully or partially vacant or underutilized industrial, office and retail/commercial buildings.

With much of the community's buildings built in the 1950s to 1980s, the program addresses the realities of a maturing area. The city's plan is to improve marketability and value within its neighborhood.

To date, two businesses within Solon have been successfully rebuilt by utilizing GRIP. The businesses were issued a cost-effective grant, which was paid on a reimbursement basis upon the completion of their projects.

"In its first year, GRIP helped Solon retain 126 jobs by encouraging businesses to purchase and upgrade two vacant properties," says Peggy Weil Dorfman, economic development



Gary Starr

"The city is able to demonstrate that it is an asset to a development or expansion project, and not an impediment," adds Bichara. "And word gets around."

the businesses to find out how they are doing and what the city's administration can do to help. A positive example from the success of this new plan is the new Regency Hospital Cleveland West facility on Engle Road.

Assisting the developer or business owner navigate the review-and-approval process, while acting as counselors and a source of information is key to the city's successful public/private relationship-building, says Charles Bichara, director of Middleburg Heights' economic development department.



Peggy Weil Dorfman

In order to receive the one-time grant, property owners must meet specific criteria set by the City of Solon. For a property owner to be eligible for funding, their building's age, vacancy and a minimum investment will be taken into account. Also, the property owner's project must score a minimum of 20 points according to a point system based on the various criteria. The point system allows the city to determine the amount of the funding that will be awarded.

manager for the City of Solon. "It is a flexible tool that will help us get a grip on the future by partnering with property owners on projects that address the evolving priorities of our city."

**Public/Private Partnership**  
**Medina County Economic Development Corp.**

**Joining Forces**

ORGANIZATIONS COLLABORATE TO BUILD A HIGHER EDUCATION CAMPUS IN MEDINA COUNTY.



Jim Doust

The University of Akron, Medina County Economic Development Corp. and numerous private-sector companies combined forces to create a comprehensive higher education campus in Medina County.

The Medina County University Center (MCUC) will benefit residents and businesses of the county through convenient access to postsecondary education. This initiative will provide residents and companies with the opportunity to prosper through education and workforce development.

Through private donations, businesses and individuals have promised to help and support the project. To date, nearly \$1.3 million has been pledged. Medina County has also received a \$1 million grant from the Ohio Department of Development through the 2004 Research Park Roadwork Infrastructure Assistance Fund. This grant, along with a reserved \$2.25 million from Congress, will benefit the University and the citizens of Medina County.

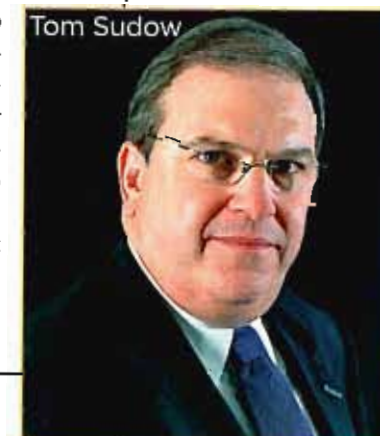
"The University Center is truly an example of a proactive, visionary public-private partnership between the University of Akron and the business community of Medina County," says Jim Doust, executive director of the Medina County Economic Development Corp. "With a unique, evolutionary approach to workforce development in the 21st century, the University Center will play a pivotal role in the future of economic development in Northeast Ohio."

**Foreign Investment**  
**Beachwood Chamber of Commerce**

**Proactive Approach**

BEACHWOOD IS REACHING ACROSS THE BIG POND TO RECRUIT INTERNATIONAL COMPANIES.

**I**n just under 36 months, 20 international companies established North American operations in Beachwood through the Beachwood Business Development Center (BBDC). The business accelerator, a collaboration between the city, Beachwood Chamber of Commerce and Cleveland State University, is reviewing an additional 50 international companies, with the



Tom Sudow