

# NCEDA updates strategic plan

Tuesday, September 02, 2003

*The Kentucky Standard*

HOLLY CECIL

Improving quality of life, strengthening the community's infrastructure and improving its communication and organization are the target goals of this year's NCEDA strategic plan for Bardstown-Nelson County.

Kim Huston, president of NCEDA announced the plan last week to the community's leaders and elected officials.

After the three-year plan of 1999 expired, NCEDA Partners for Progress -- the Bardstown-Nelson County Chamber of Commerce, Bardstown-Nelson County Tourist and Convention Commission and the Bardstown Industrial Development Corporation (BIDC) -- re-assessed community needs to form a new plan, Huston said.

This year's strategic plan outlines future efforts to work toward long-term success by maximizing the strength and appeal of the community.

"This is a plan we will take and we will work toward for 12 months," Huston said.

Quality of life is one of four categories on which the plan focuses.

Nelson County and Bardstown need to diversify and strengthen recreation facilities to improve quality of life for citizens of Nelson County and the tourists who visit the community, Huston said.

"Quality of life is recreation," she said. "It's a niche tourism needs to look into. We've got to jump on board with recreational tourism."

Along those lines, the city and county should work together to find opportunities to develop an indoor recreational and swimming facility, Nelson County Judge Executive Dean Watts said.

In addition to recreation, the quality of life portion of the plan focused on promoting and funding of the local Renaissance Program with emphasis on keeping downtown vital, green space management and the strategic recruitment of new business and industry to achieve a substantial economy.

"I'm not talking about a 600-person industry," Huston said. "Those days have slowed down."

Instead, NCEDA will focus its energy on bringing in small industry and developing existing industry.

"We need to keep what we have," she said.

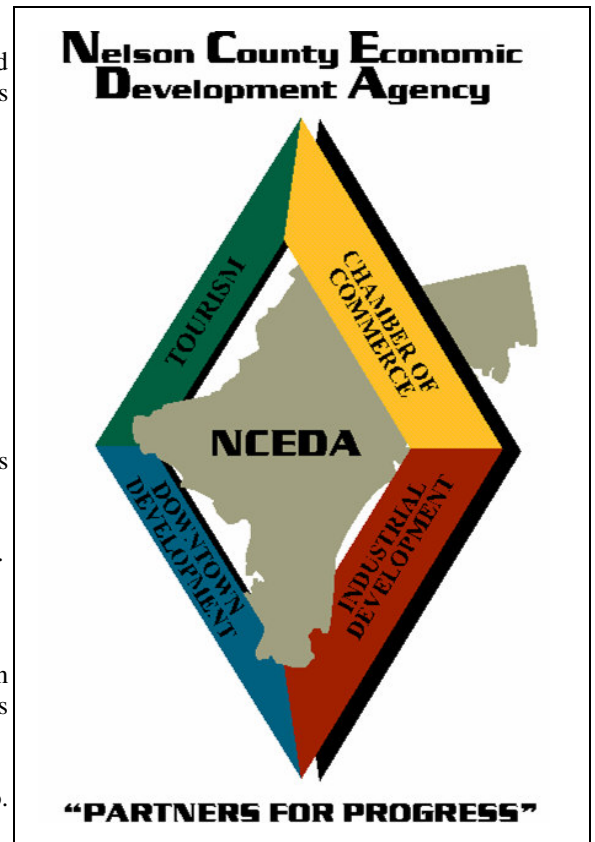
To develop infrastructure, the community should continue to monitor its current infrastructure to support economic growth, continue corridor management planning and review of its comprehensive plan and work with local government to identify future economic growth opportunities.

Information technology, retail, tourism attractions and industrial parks are examples of these opportunities, Huston said.

Under education and communication, community agencies and leaders should continue to come together on critical issues, and increase communication among different agencies.

"Moving into the Court Square building will improve this further," Huston said.

NCEDA officials and community representatives will also work to make Bardstown recognizable on the state level, as a strong and progressive community.



"There's too much competition out there," Huston said. "Bardstown needs to be everywhere."

One way in which to do that is through its Internet presence, Huston said.

"Site inspections are down," Huston said. Often a person or business will get a first glance at a community and judge it based on what he or she sees on the Web.

"It's too easy," she said. NCEDA will maintain and expand its Web page to improve the community's appeal on the Internet, according to the plan.

The community will need to seek out more external grants for projects, in addition to budgeting for community improvements.

The city is in the midst of change, Bardstown Mayor Dixie Hibbs said.

But, it is committed to working with all groups and agencies in the Bardstown-Nelson County community to provide services.