

February 15, 2023

**MORROW COUNTY STRATEGIC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN
NOW UPDATED & PUBLICLY AVAILABLE**
DOWNLOAD at MORROWCOUNTYOHIO.GOV

(Mount Gilead) – A new report authored by the Montrose Group touts Morrow County’s current opportunities for economic development in context of numerous favorable conditions that include being within a 30-to-40-minute drive of the \$20 billion Intel computer chip site.

The study further makes recommendations for protecting the rural lifestyle favored by county residents and their strong support for the “Love life. Live rural.” motto, while providing guidance on how best to improve good paying jobs in Morrow County, where 82.5% of residents work in out-of-county jobs.

“It is great timing for our County to have this economic strategic plan completed and available as we are already beginning to see the first waves of housing and business growth here as the Intel project is getting underway,” said Commissioner Tim Siegfried. “And I’m proud to say that the County is already taking action on some of these great recommendations.”

Jointly funded by the Morrow County Commissioners, Consolidated Cooperative, and Del-Co Water Company, the plan is available for downloading from Morrow County’s website at www.morrowcountyohio.gov .

The study’s SWOT (strengths/weaknesses/opportunities/threats) came from a series of stakeholder focus groups sessions held with a sampling of Morrow County businesses, local government representatives, social service providers, and included participation from every school superintendent within Morrow County.

“It is wonderful to see the unity between local organizations and leaders as we come together to help enhance rural life in Morrow County. This study and plan exemplify the principle that cooperatives like Consolidated and Del-Co were founded upon: We are stronger when we work together. At Consolidated, we are making plans and preparing our systems to provide utility and fiber services to the new residents and businesses that are coming our way as Morrow County becomes an increasingly great place to live and work.,” said Phil Caskey, CEO and President of Consolidated Cooperative.

The report highlighted Morrow County’s strengths and opportunities including: two interchanges along Interstate 71; proximity to Columbus and ready access to the Cleveland market; an abundance of affordable land; and a positive regulatory environment.

Key recommendations from the study include:

- Enhance Business Retention and Expansion Outreach efforts
- Establish a Morrow County CEO-Level Executive Roundtable
- Create a Port Authority/Public Private Partnership Organization
- Support private, developer-led residential investment
- Develop an economic development incentives policy
- Review the current lodging tax structure and opportunities to increase travel and tourism

“Del-Co Water is a proud partner for Morrow County and excited about the unique growth opportunities that complement its rural character”, said Glenn Marzluf, CEO and General Manger of Del-Co Water Compnay.

An advisory team for the report included: Dan Boysel and Brad Ebersole from Consolidated Cooperative; Brent Russell and Andy Ware from Morrow County; Rick Dunlop from Del-Co Water Company; and Brandon Hayes from Park National Bank.

As part of the strategic economic development effort the Morrow County Commissioners obtained through the State of Ohio access to a county-specific travel and tourism study conducted by a nationally-respected economic development firm that works with the Ohio Division of Travel and Tourism.

That study by Oxford Economics cited Morrow County visitor activity sustained 473 direct jobs and 203 indirect/induced jobs with 6.4% of all jobs in the county supported by visitor spending.

In addition, it found:

Morrow County Travel and Tourism

Total Impact:	\$54.6 Million
Direct Spending:	\$30.1 Million
Total Tax Revenue:	\$7.2 Million
State/Local Tax Revenue:	\$3.5 Million
Local Tax Revenue:	\$1.5 Million

Workforce Impact:

Associated Labor Income:	\$16.5 Million
Total jobs (PT and FT):	676
Direct Household Income:	\$9.5 Million
Total Household Income	\$16.5 Million

MORROW COUNTY

Love life. Live rural.

Supporting the Montrose Group with the study was a team of engineers and planners from the Keleinfelder (Poggemeyer Design Group) in providing research and background information.

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