

Chapter 1

Development Strategy & Process

Seward County

About This Report

This Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is the first regional economic development plan completed by citizen representatives of Seward County, Nebraska. As a member of the Southeast Nebraska Development District, Seward County and its communities are working with the River Country Economic Development District (River Country) to gain formal recognition as a constituent member of River Country.

Seward County is a component county of the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) Economic Area 95 (November 2004 definition). This CEDS is the outcome of a county-wide planning process to address the economic issues and potential of Seward County within the larger surrounding nonmetropolitan region.

Through its CEDS planning process, Seward County seeks to establish a framework for comprehensive, objective reporting on the state of the Seward County area and define goals and strategies to coordinate activities in support of its vision within the larger regional economy. This report draws together a wide variety of data indicators to sketch a holistic picture of conditions in Seward County. And, it will continue this process to identify measurable indicators of county and regional conditions and link these to the development programs instituted for the county itself and those of the River Country Economic Development District.

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1. Governance Structure

The County of Seward, Nebraska operates under an organized county government of commissioner districts and is governed by a Board of Commissioners. Seward County is one of 66 counties among Nebraska's 93 counties with a commissioner-type government. The other 27 counties in Nebraska are organized as townships and governed by a board of supervisors.

Seward County is governed by a Board of Commissioners with five members who are elected to four-year terms. (Table 1.1).

Table 1.1
Seward County Board of Commissioners - Membership 2006

Mary Koci
Darrell Miller
Ron Minchow
Joe Ruzicka
Scott Stuhr

Municipalities in Seward County are organized via instruments of incorporation recorded with the Office of the County Clerk. Ten incorporated communities are located in the county. The City of Seward is the largest community and the County Seat. It is organized as a "City of the First Class," a classification for Nebraska municipalities with a population between 5,001 and 100,000. The City of Seward is organized as a mayor-council form of government.

One community, City of Milford, is organized as a "City of the Second Class" and it is organized as a mayor-council form of government.

Eight communities are organized as the municipal classification of "Village." These are the communities of Beaver Crossing, Bee, Cordova, Garland, Goehner, Pleasant Dale, Staplehurst and Utica. Each village is organized as a five member board of trustees form of government. Nebraska's state constitution grants citizens the right to organize and incorporate as a "Village" if their community has a population of 100 to 800.

1.1 CEDS Committee

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) was developed through a public participatory process led by a CEDS Committee authorized by the Seward County Board of Commissioners.

The CEDS Committee is composed of county residents who, acting in a voluntary capacity, represent diverse populations (gender, age, ancestry) and interests, including educators, small business owners/employees, agricultural interests, corporate firms, health service providers, community representatives (elected and private citizen), professional industrial developers and media interests. (See Table 1.2)

Member	Place of Residence	Elective Status	Interest/ Affiliation
Gary Bader	NW Seward Co.	No	Community Representative
John Blomenberg	Seward	No	Housing Corporation
Roy M. Cast	Milford	No	Agriculture
Brian Friedrich	Seward	No	Education
Ronald Gade	Seward	No	Seward Co. Ag. Society
James Noe	Seward	No	Engineer Firm
Rebecca Noe	Seward	No	Engineer Firm
Don Olson	Utica	Yes	Municipal Board
Roger Reamer	Seward	No	Health
Ryne Seaman	Seward	No	Finance
Leroy Trease	Pleasant Dale	Yes	County Commissioner
Dave Webb	Columbus	No	Utility
Jill Wild	Seward	No	Health
Lana Zumbrunn	Lincoln	No	Economic Development

The Seward County CEDS Committee is constituted of the representatives of both private enterprises and public bodies. These representatives work to promote economic development in the county and area communities and providing local leadership on issues of business, transportation, housing and tourism development.

Working to develop its goals, objectives, and strategies, the CEDS Committee was representative of county-wide stakeholders. (See Table 1.2) Three general work sessions were completed for the purpose of gathering input.

Throughout the CEDS development process, the CEDS Committee brought forward insights from their individual capacities and discussions with other stakeholders. Staff of the Southeast Nebraska Development District gathered this information and used it for the foundation of the final CEDS strategic planning and priority setting effort of the CEDS Committee on November 14, 2006.

2. Strategic Planning Process

The Seward County CEDS is built upon a vision for the future. This vision has long-range measurable goals and strategies that lead to the achievement of those goals.

The CEDS Committee participated in the plan development process and reviewed information gathered through research activities, compilation of community activities, and strategic planning activities.

The 2006 Seward County CEDS presents a comprehensive review of regional trends, an inventory of environmental resources and assets, while focusing upon the opportunities and challenges presented by the county's and region's changing economy.

Basic community-based infrastructure and systems, including roads, community facilities, housing, and support services, serve not only local residents and business and industry but also the larger region and visitors. In addition, investments that enhance the economic well-being of county residents, whether by private or public sector entities, also contribute to the region's economy by enhancing regional income and employment opportunities.

2.1 Stakeholders

Recognition of stakeholders in the future prosperity of Seward County helps identify partners for economic development. As part of their analysis, local leaders can incorporate this information into their assessment of what groups, organizations or representatives they have the opportunity to partner with for development purposes. This assists in their determination if the identified opportunities and challenges are best able to be addressed by local institutions or other entities.

A stakeholder is any person, group or organization that can place a claim on a region's attention, activity, resources, products or services and anybody affected by an area's action has a "stake" in the future of the region. A stake is merely an "interest," something to gain or lose depending on what a region does and how. An interest can be economic, social, sentimental or historical; consequently, stakeholders have needs and expectations that center on a region's ability to provide, produce or preserve something.

A non-exhaustive list of Seward County's stakeholders would include:

STAKEHOLDERS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The Board of Commissioners of Seward County as the governing body of the County > Seward County's municipalities > Local chambers of commerce > Elected officials > Business and economic development entities > Seward County residents > Seward County workers > Seward County's youth > Seward County's parents > Seward County's seniors > Civic and religious organizations > Seward County Rural Public Power District > Nebraska Public Power District > Hospital and other healthcare providers > Area Fire Departments and Auxiliary organizations > Agriculture operators and service providers > Banking and financial institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Concordia University > Public and parochial schools > Community Colleges > Seward County property owners > People who would like to buy or rent property in Seward County > Utilities serving Seward County residents and businesses > Jurisdictions receiving sales, income or property taxes > Local, regional, state and federal governmental entities > Southeast Nebraska Development District > Community service providers > State University system > Travelers moving through Seward County > Enterprises and Industry throughout Seward County > Visitors to Seward County for recreation, business, etc.

2.2 Environmental Scan

Meetings and discussions conducted during the planning process were used to identify key issues, both internal and external constraints and opportunities. This activity provided an environmental scan of issues of concern to private and public entities in Seward County. Identification of these issues can assist in developing priorities to guide coordinated activities that address Seward County's competitive advantages and disadvantages. A summary of the constraints and opportunities identified via these meetings and discussions is provided below.

IDENTIFIED CONSTRAINTS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Water quantity issues in eastern Seward County ✧ Water quantity concerns for irrigators ✧ Water quality concerns can affect growth opportunities ✧ Appropriate and affordable housing opportunities across county (management and labor) ✧ Availability of appropriate housing serving particular market segments (affordable, special need, and executive) ✧ Long-term care services facing financial issues in future ✧ Work force development issues, particularly demographic of 25-to-45 years ✧ Budgets for road development – all levels (local, county, and state) ✧ Coordinating programming for development of roads ✧ Housing barriers for both owner and rental occupied units – costly infrastructure development ✧ Housing stock is aged and does affect business recruitment efforts ✧ New housing market is limited within county – with exceptions ✧ Technology infrastructure readiness to proactively develop industry ✧ Need for venture capital availability ✧ Industrial sites readiness for rail accessibility and development ✧ Availability of advanced telecommunication services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Labor Market Perception – limited size of region's population affects employee and business recruitment efforts ✧ Incorporated communities' infrastructure is aged – replacement and/or upgrade presents financial burden ✧ Community infrastructure supporting new housing development – lot availability and extension of utilities, roads ✧ Community leadership generational handoff – training, education, liaisons, network systems ✧ Culture issue on development issues/concerns – often at loggerheads ✧ Developing appropriate public-and-private efforts on community development efforts ✧ Rural versus Urban conflicts affects economic development and preservation of heritage/history of county ✧ Labor resources – wage – skill ✧ Continuity of planning activities in comprehensive plan/zoning ✧ Availability of infrastructure systems in existing communities supporting development ✧ Generational transfer issues for business succession ✧ Resources to support economic development activities ✧ Emergency services demand of costs and resources

IDENTIFIED OPPORTUNITIES

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Redundant telecommunication infrastructure service facility ✧ Value-added agriculture - livestock ✧ Value-added agriculture – manufacturing facilities ✧ Work force development efforts building age cohort of 25-45 years ✧ Interstate 80 Corridor – six access points in county ✧ Economic development tools available to assist local businesses (private, local, regional, state, federal) ✧ Natural gas pipeline opportunities ✧ Community facilities reuse options ✧ Concordia University – its students and activity in the larger community ✧ U.S. and Nebraska highway network complements Interstate 80 ✧ Coordinated planning across county to fully benefit from Interstate 80 Corridor ✧ Health care system and its services ✧ Highway Corridor development throughout county ✧ Southeast Community College education system and community partnerships ✧ Community leadership development activities ✧ Technology partners presence in Seward 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Business succession and transfer for stable business services ✧ Continuum of care health facilities ✧ Targeting industry/business to promote quality-of-life ✧ Existing business community ✧ County and municipal coordination of investment supporting growth ✧ Excellent school systems ✧ Building awareness among youth about opportunities ✧ Higher Education opportunities – private and public regional and state institutions ✧ Collaboration among region governing entities – municipal, county, NRD ✧ Community amenities development of natural resources ✧ Proximity to metropolitan areas ✧ Comprehensive planning and zoning across the county ✧ Tourism development ✧ Housing development and redevelopment to serve needs ✧ Agriculture industry and its byproducts ✧ Available public power and utility presence and supply ✧ National railroad system presence serving county
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2.3 Strategic Issues

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy planning process has included participants representing diverse interests from across Seward County in order to establish a coordinated local economic development effort within the county and region.

Strategic issues are a response to economic opportunities and adjustment challenges. Identification of strategic issues within the framework of the CEDS process enables local leaders, both private and public, guide economic development efforts in a focused manner that builds upon an understanding of the area's changing economy. These strategic issues are about what Seward County, as a community and within the region, will do and why, and where, and when, and how, and to or for whom.

The CEDS Committee recognized that many strategic issues could be grouped into common sets of superordinate issues toward which to direct available resources. These issues illuminate broad policy questions and direction setting that will help Seward County assist efforts to increase employment and income opportunities and serve stakeholders effectively, efficiently, and responsibly.

The CEDS Committee identified strategic issues within Seward County. Five superordinate issues emerged and these are presented below.

✧ **Value Added Agriculture**

Agriculture is the major industry in Seward County and value added agriculture offers great opportunities for area enterprises and residents.

Opportunities include expansion of existing industries such as livestock feeding, breeding, and bio-engineering operations. Opportunities exist for expanding manufacturing-related economic activities.

Seward County has an excellent transportation system supporting industrial activity across throughout the county. Highway, railroad, and airport services are readily available and can be extended to existing and new industrial tracts.

Build on Seward County's historic identify as a successful agriculture area.

The agriculture industry, both traditional and ag-manufacturers, utilize advanced telecommunication services to improve their competitiveness in the global market. The lack of available or affordable telecommunication services across the county is an identified concern.

✧ Work Force Development

The low unemployment rate in Seward County and surrounding area is a constraint, perceived or real, to economic development. Identified issues and needs include:

- > Statistics on labor supply understates availability of labor resources.
 - > Availability of workers in the 25-to-45 age group
 - > Retention and recruitment of skilled workers
 - > Signs of disconnect between compensation and skill in the market
 - > Small base of labor resources in technology-oriented business sector
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Seward County has a good continuum of housing opportunities but there are identified concerns that affect labor / work force recruitment retention.

Existing aged housing stock in communities presents barriers to appropriate housing with preferred amenities.

Housing market is tight lacking depth in certain market segments – speculative and new housing limited across the county

Availability of housing assistance programs is developed but would benefit from additional resources.

Proximity to the metropolitan areas of Lincoln and Omaha is a positive attribute to economic development and labor recruitment in Seward County.

Southeast Community College provides key roll in work development efforts. Identified need to examine opportunities to expand presence and programs in Seward County.

✧ **Community Planning and Development**

Comprehensive planning and management of growth in Seward County can mitigate the cost of development and advance resource management goals, particularly domestic water quantity and quality issues.

Managing rural residential growth and assisting development in established incorporated communities serves the county as-a-whole and individual communities. Coordinated planning can assist these efforts.

Collaborative and continuity of planning activities among governing bodies has a vehicle in the Seward County of Governments but the need for additional resources to enhance efforts has been identified.

For example, coordinated planning for transportation issues across the county is an identified need (Interstate 80 and highway corridors). Two examples needing additional resources for planning and development are the Cordova I-80 spur and the Seward Highway 15 and I-80 corridor.

Water issues affect the county. While eastern Seward County is particularly affected by water quantity issues, all areas of the county have water quality issues.

Community readiness to accept and/or promote community and economic development is at varying levels across the county. Infrastructure systems, land and housing are all issues that require study and planning.

✧ Economic Development

Seward County Economic Development both leads and collaborates with other local and area development agencies to provide diverse tools to assist business development and recruitment activities. Augmenting existing resource budgets will enable activities designed to enhance: Capitalization of funds for recruitment, incentives, assistances and other economic development tools; Economic Development staff resources; Entrepreneurial Assistance; existing industry collaborative programs.

An economic development priority for Seward County is developing resources for a targeted industry development program to build on existing advantages and opportunities within Seward County.

Economic development contributes to quality-of-life in Seward County and economic development agencies should reflect this in their activities.

Agriculture is a key economic sector in Seward County and governmental policies and activities should recognize this history. Ameliorating rural-urban conflicts should be a priority of governmental policies.

Value-added agriculture manufacturing represents a growing industry in Seward County and the region. Opportunities exist to expand both primary and downstream industries in Seward County.

Interstate 80 Corridor offers excellent services and opportunities with six access points and supporting services.

Housing opportunities and community infrastructure systems affect economic development. Positioning communities to succeed will assist local efforts to facilitate economic development..

✧ Community Infrastructure

Community infrastructure systems have limits to future service capacity. This impacts several facets of a community's ability to serve its residents.

The readiness of communities to accept growth and development varies across the county. This poses a potential barrier to economic development activities.

Replacement or improvements to existing facilities may impose financial burdens on community residents. An example of a growing cost is water quality mandates.

Community leadership is an integral, if not obvious, part of a community's infrastructure. Resources dedicated to training, education, and public-private efforts to build community leadership are an investment that must be renewed with each generation.

A full array of advanced telecommunication services are available in the county but there are areas that underserved or poorly served with competitive offerings and costs. Positioning telecommunication infrastructure to be ready for new development and growth will advance economic development efforts.

Primary and secondary education systems throughout the county, both public and private, provide excellent services. Higher education institutions in the county and region provide liberal and technical education opportunities.

Availability of appropriate, affordable housing opportunities is an identified concern in the county. Developing strategies to address these issues will assist future economic development opportunities.

Financing for and feasibility of infrastructure development will require cooperative efforts on the part of public and private entities. Enhancing and establishing partnerships with existing and new businesses is an ongoing commitment by local and area economic development agencies.

Housing opportunity barriers have been identified that impact the ability of communities to provide for new housing construction. These include the cost of infrastructure provision and extension and limited resources for homebuyer and homeowner programs.

2.4 *Vision Statement*

A strategic vision to guide economic development efforts toward attainment of identified goals is the purpose of the *Vision Statement*. The Seward County CEDS *Vision Statement*.

To create an environment providing economic opportunities in Seward County, building a high quality of life, fostering traditional and new industry sectors and providing income and employment opportunities for businesses and residents.

Observation and insights gathered through the planning process can be woven together under the unified theme of positioning area businesses and residents to surmount challenges and utilize opportunities to enhance community economic development.

2.5 CEDS Goals

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Seward County is framed within five broad based goals. These include:

- [] Facilitate economic development in Seward County*
- [] Support and enhance civic engagement in Seward County*
- [] To enhance public infrastructure systems in Seward County*
- [] To improve the overall quality of life in Seward County*
- [] To enhance agriculture initiatives in Seward County*

These five broad goals respond to the analysis of the area's development potential and challenges, as identified through the planning process conducted by the CEDS Committee. Goals are general statements that provide the basis for formulating the policy objectives and serve to guide strategic activities of the CEDS Committee, area officials, and economic development stakeholders.

Seward County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy -- Goals (Not in ranked order)

1. Facilitate economic development in Seward County	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Target value added agriculture development and employment opportunities ✧ Capitalize on proximity to metropolitan areas of Lincoln and Omaha ✧ Continue planning and development activities supporting strong transportation system ✧ Support business succession and transfer services ✧ Expand economic development assistance tools and services ✧ Initiate a TARGET industry program ✧ Promote entrepreneurial education ✧ Develop natural gas pipeline opportunities ✧ Identify property assembly issues ✧ Develop and expand partnerships between industry and education ✧ Develop technology-based industry partnerships to facilitate development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Enhance distance learning opportunities ✧ Inventory community wastewater treatment facilities capacity to accommodate growth ✧ Support housing development initiatives addressing choice, affordability, and availability ✧ Build on existing business community ✧ Coordinated planning across county to maximize transportation corridor development opportunities ✧ Expand availability of industrial building and structure resources ✧ Build on existing partnerships to facilitate housing development and redevelopment ✧ Work force development activities to overcome barriers in labor supply ✧ Collaborative interlocal governmental planning to facilitate growth and development ✧ Tourism development and support services

2. Support and enhance civic engagement in Seward County

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Rural versus urban culture conflicts affects economic development and preservation of agriculture heritage ❖ Coordinated planning across county to facilitate development of Interstate 80 and highway corridors ❖ Growth and development requires continual planning and zoning for facilities, transportation, land use, housing ❖ Generational transfer issues for business succession efforts ❖ Build on existing leadership development programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Support development of education systems and partnerships at primary, secondary and post-secondary levels ❖ Promote public-private partnerships initiatives on community and economic development ❖ Build on geographic proximity to metropolitan areas ❖ Cultural life style issues can conflict with development activities ❖ Develop natural resource amenities for community benefit
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3. Provision of quality public infrastructure systems in Seward County

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Nebraska highway corridors development to promote growth and enhance transportation ❖ Interstate 80 Corridor development opportunities at each of six access points across county ❖ Water issues affect availability of water ❖ Inventory of industrial tract sites and Identified development needs ❖ Position advanced telecommunication infrastructure in place to be ready for development ❖ Advanced telecommunication services affordability across the county limits opportunities ❖ Railroad spur opportunities secured and positioned for development ❖ Municipal government ability to improve and replace public infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Emergency and law enforcement services costs and demand on resources ❖ Housing development costs and readiness to extend services to new areas ❖ Private and public partnerships to facilitate development and growth ❖ Expansion of existing and new industrial sites are limited by cost, availability of land, and service extensions ❖ Proximity to metropolitan areas affords opportunities and challenges to growth management ❖ Comprehensive planning and zoning to facilitate development and growth ❖ Educational system (primary, secondary, and post-secondary) opportunities and challenges affect economic development opportunities
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4. To improve the overall quality of life in Seward County

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Develop natural resources amenities ✧ Available housing continuum opportunities but issue of aged housing stock (amenities, choice, appropriateness) ✧ Promote economic development to expand employment and income opportunities ✧ Enhance distance learning opportunities ✧ Support intergovernmental partnerships on water issue initiatives ✧ Support community leadership generational transfer activities ✧ Address housing barriers affecting new housing development and rehabilitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Position communities to succeed with infrastructure improvements ✧ Support tourism industry expanding economic and leisure opportunities ✧ Overcome urban versus rural conflicts affecting development and growth ✧ Support and expand industry and education partnerships serving economic development goals ✧ Support health care system investments ✧ Support educational system investments and program services
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5. Enhance agriculture identity and initiatives of Seward County

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Develop and target value-added agriculture ✧ Coordinate governmental entities activities on water issues ✧ Telecommunication services availability and accessibility serving entire county ✧ Build awareness among youth about opportunities – income and employment opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Capitalize on existing businesses and opportunities for growth ✧ Promotion value-added agriculture manufacturing opportunities ✧ Position transportation systems to readily serve industry development and growth ✧ Address rural versus urban conflicts impacting value-added agriculture
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Resources & Time Frames

Partnerships with a variety of organizations and agencies in the region are a key to successful implementation of the CEDS. Those activities which address the areas or issues of greatest need and/or best enhance the region's competitive advantages were identified through the planning process. They represent identified activities that will have positive economic, environmental, and social impacts on Seward County and its region. The expected time frame and required resources for completion of objectives and activities are identified below.

The time frames established for completion of objectives and activities are:

<u>Term</u>	<u>Number of Years</u>
Short term	1 to 2 years
Mid term	3 to 4 years
Long term	5 or more years

Goal 1: Facilitate economic development in Seward County							
Specify Area	Task to be Implemented	Implementation Plan	Resources	Expected Results	Performance Measures	Timeline	Evaluation Indicators
County-wide	Technology Readiness	Develop proactively infrastructure and facilities	Local, regional, state, federal Post-secondary ed. institutions	County-wide readiness to accept technology-based industry	Determination of feasibility of developing a technology center	Mid term	Assessments; Stakeholders; Plans;
County-wide	Expansion of the tourism/recreation industry	Facilitate partnerships and resource development	Local, regional, state, federal, private	Tourism development of attraction density and employment growth	Proposal development (stakeholders, concept, budget, funding) and programming	Ongoing	Stakeholder ownership, programming and attendance figures
County-wide	Workforce Development	Develop resources to retain and recruit working age (25-45) demographic	Public, Private	Collaborative efforts with educational institutions and private business enterprises	Partnerships established to advance work plan	Mid term & Ongoing	Demographics of work force
County-wide	Provision of educational services serving residents and businesses	Concordia University development plan	Private	Educational opportunities serving students and region	Implementation of development plan	Ongoing	Opportunities available to students and region
		SCC Campus development plan	State, Local, Private	Training and educational opportunities serving students and supporting the area economy	Implementation of development plan	Ongoing	Services available to students and businesses
Seward County	Planning in Seward County supporting economic development	Implementation of Seward County Comprehensive Plan	Local, regional, Private	Consensus on future development needs and opportunities in unincorporated areas of Seward County	Interlocal coordination to achieve plan targets	Ongoing	Achievement of identified objectives and goals
County-wide		TARGET Study for Seward County	Local, regional, state, federal, Private	Analysis of community and industrial development opportunities	Organization and completion of study	Mid term	Completion of study

Goal 1, continued: Facilitate economic development in Seward County							
Specify Area	Task to be Implemented	Implementation Plan	Resources	Expected Results	Performance Measures	Timeline	Evaluation Indicators
County-wide	Economic development targeted industry plan	Seward County prioritization of target industries to enhance/promote business environment	Local, state, private	Development of industrial cluster building on targeted industries	Commitment and planning of resources to identified targeted industries	Mid term	Completion of study
Seward County	Encourage local entrepreneurs to invest in existing businesses, expand market share or in the development of a new product/service.	Conduct information seminars to educate entrepreneurs in business planning, accessing capital and marketing	Private, local, regional, state and federal	To educated entrepreneurs in starting a new business, buying an existing business or expanding products/services	Proposal development (stakeholders, concept, budget, funding) and programming	Short term & Ongoing	Collaborative effort and comprehensive scope
Seward County	Encourage local investors to capitalize seed monies for startup business ventures	Conduct seminars to educate investor on the positive impact/need for start-up business venture capital	Private, local, regional, state and federal	Inform investors of potential impact and opportunities of seed monies for small business start-up	Proposal development (stakeholders, concept, budget, funding) and programming	Ongoing	Collaborative effort and comprehensive scope
Seward County	Support and promote retention of wealth and investment in Seward County	Develop information and inform resident businesses and individuals of benefits of employing capital within the county	Local, regional, state	To capitalize a Seward County vehicles whereby the proceeds could be used for the field of interest designated by the grantor	Proposal development (stakeholders, concept, budget, funding) and programming	Ongoing	Investment vehicles for county-wide investments
Seward County	Develop Seward County Visitors website	Coordinate and implement website to market tourism industry	Local, regional, private	Website delivering comprehensive county-wide information	Operational performance	Ongoing	Collaborative effort and comprehensive scope

Goal 1, continued: Facilitate economic development in Seward County							
Specify Area	Task to be Implemented	Implementation Plan	Resources	Expected Results	Performance Measures	Timeline	Evaluation Indicators
County-wide	Economic development targeted industry plan	Seward County prioritization of target industries to enhance/promote business environment	Local, state, private	Development of industrial cluster building on targeted industries	Commitment and planning of resources to identified targeted industries	Mid term	Completion of study
County-wide	Capitalization of Economic Development financial resources	Develop financial tools to assist economic development activities	Local, state, federal	Expanded and enhanced tools supporting economic development efforts	Identification and development of financial resources	Mid term	Planning and development of economic development resources
County-wide	Economic Development Took Kit program	Readiness of resources to promote and assist economic development activities	Local, state, federal	Expanded income and employment opportunities in Seward County	Increased competitiveness in business/industry development activities	Short term & Ongoing	Identification and development of Tool Kit program
Seward County	Encourage Business Transfer education	Contact Seward County business-owners at or near retirement age to plan for the sale and/or transfer of their business	RBEG Grant, Chambers, NBDC, SCED, SENDD, Business Owners, Media Outlets	To educate local business-owners as to the process associated with getting their business ready to sell/transfer	Educational opportunities and program offerings	Short term	Businesses contacted and increased awareness of opportunities
County-wide	Labor Force Development	Provide opportunities for the entire spectrum of employment for all education levels	Education system, businesses, State, local and regional	Retention and expansion of employment at all skill levels	Partnerships established and increased employment opportunities	Long term & Ongoing	Expanded labor/work force characteristics

Goal 2: Provision of quality public infrastructure systems in Seward County							
Specify Area	Task to be Implemented	Implementation Plan	Resources	Expected Results	Performance Measures	Timeline	Evaluation Indicators
Seward County	Provision of county-wide sanitary landfill services	Continue County-City Landfill Resource	Private, Local, Regional (state and federal)	Licensed facility serving county industries and residents	Liaison with existing facility.	Short term	Process milestones
Existing Areas served by Railroad (Tamora, Seward)	Readiness for accessible rail spur development and utilization	Complete site assessments and determine assembly issues	Private, local, state	Readiness to provide new or enhanced rail service access	Completion of site review activities	Mid term	Process milestones
Communities in Seward County	Encourage development of housing by private developers	Review municipal zoning and future land use plans to accommodate new housing development in all income ranges; Build streets and provide utilities as needed; Encourage spec housing	Private, local, state and federal funds	Additional housing within communities supporting economic development strategies	Number of parcels and units developed, municipal improvements, acres of municipal land use for housing	Ongoing	Community growth; Increased property base; Housing Choice and Opportunities
County-wide	Public transportation services	Review present service level and projected need; implement affordable, accessible transportation services	Local, regional, state and federal agencies and funds	Provision of accessible and affordable public transportation services serving Seward County residents	Review present system and projected needs; Identify program and fleet resources; Ridership figures	Ongoing	Study milestones; Service levels; Ridership figures

Goal 2, continued: Provision of quality public infrastructure systems in Seward County							
Specify Area	Task to be Implemented	Implementation Plan	Resources	Expected Results	Performance Measures	Timeline	Evaluation Indicators
County-wide	Transportation Corridors and roadway developments including reconstruction and new construction serving commercial/industrial traffic	Continue supporting NE Hwy 15 improvements	Local, state, federal	Improved access to region	Progress on State plan implementation	Ongoing	Status of project in the State plan Traffic/Truck volume and development of parcels along roadway
City of Seward		NE Hwy 15 to US Hwy 6	Local, state, federal	Improved accessibility and serviceability of roadway	Roadway development (concept, budget, timeline, funding)	Ongoing	
Cordova		Improvement of roadway to I-80	Local, state, federal	Improved accessibility and serviceability of roadway	Roadway development (concept, budget, timeline, funding)	Mid term	Design, funding and construction process milestones
County-wide		County bridge deficiency improvements	Local, state, federal	Improved accessibility and serviceability of roadways	Bridge assessments; Budget projections; Timeline and Funding proposals	Ongoing	Number of bridges identified as structurally deficient
County-wide	Availability of advanced telecommunications services	Identify and encourage private service provision of advanced telecommunications services to business, industry and residential consumers	Local, private	Improved telecommunication services	Assessment of services, type of new or improved services, cost to consumers, areas affected	Ongoing	Improve availability and/or delivery of services
County-wide	Water quality and quantity issues	Secure resources to identify and assess development of basic public works facilities	Local, state, federal	Provision of basic infrastructure systems serving residents and industry	Status of project, resources secured, facility development, service numbers	Ongoing	Affordable, secure public services to the public

Goal 2, continued: Provision of quality public infrastructure systems in Seward County

Specify Area	Task to be Implemented	Implementation Plan	Resources	Expected Results	Performance Measures	Timeline	Evaluation Indicators
County-wide	Transportation Corridor and Interstate 80 Interchange Development	Interstate 80 access at 388 interchange	Local, state, federal	Improved access to region and opportunities for development	Compatible development zoning and State Highway Plan status	Ongoing	Local champion efforts and status in the State plan
		Interstate 80 access at 382 interchange	Local, state, federal	Improved access to region and opportunities for development	Compatible development zoning and State Highway Plan status	Ongoing	Local champion efforts and status in the State plan
		Interstate 80 access at 379 interchange	Local, state, federal	Improved access to region and opportunities for development	Compatible development zoning and State Highway Plan status	Ongoing	Local champion efforts and status in the State plan
		Interstate 80 access at 373 interchange	Local, state, federal	Improved access to region and opportunities for development	Compatible development zoning and State Highway Plan status	Ongoing	Local champion efforts and status in the State plan
		Interstate 80 access at 369 interchange	Local, state, federal	Improved access to region and opportunities for development	Compatible development zoning and State Highway Plan status	Ongoing	Local champion efforts and status in the State plan
		Interstate 80 access at 366 interchange	Local, state, federal	Improved access to region and opportunities for development	Compatible development zoning and State Highway Plan status	Ongoing	Local champion efforts and status in the State plan

Goal 3: Support and enhance civic engagement in Seward County							
Specify Area	Task to be Implemented	Implementation Plan	Resources	Expected Results	Performance Measures	Timeline	Evaluation Indicators
County-wide	County-wide and regional cooperative initiatives	Support and expand leadership and awareness opportunities	Local, regional and state, Private	Civic involvement and collaborative activities strengthening private-public initiatives	Number of communities and organizations actively engaged in programs	Ongoing	Number of collaborative and community partnerships
Seward County	County-wide and regional youth-oriented programs	Support Youth Leadership activities	Local, regional and state agencies, Private	Youth involvement and awareness of area opportunities strengthening youth retention	Number of youth and organizations utilizing program services	Ongoing	Number of youth participants and program sponsorships and partnerships
County-wide	Community leadership culture development	Develop network resources and opportunities	Private, Local and state agencies	Civic network for training, education, partnerships in the public-private arena	Stakeholder involvement and implementation of activities	Ongoing	Stakeholder ownership and participation; Operative network

Goal 4: To improve the overall quality of life in Seward County							
Specify Area	Task to be Implemented	Implementation Plan	Resources	Expected Results	Performance Measures	Timeline	Evaluation Indicators
County-wide	Existing housing opportunities improvements	Assess the overall need for housing availability and rehabilitation	Local, regional, state and federal, Private resources	Removal of dilapidated housing units; Expanded safe and appropriate housing opportunities	Development of housing programs; Housing Agencies involvement	Ongoing	Positive movement of housing opportunities indicators
County-wide	New housing opportunities	Assess housing market and community readiness issues	Seward County Housing Corporation; Blue Valley CAA; SENAHC, SENDD, Communities, County, State, Federal	Housing Market Study; Home Builders Survey; Affordable Housing Plan	Stakeholder involvement; Cooperative housing activities initiated	Mid term	Completed assessments of housing market, community infrastructure, and construction financing
County-wide	Community Infrastructure	Public services facilities improvements	Local, regional, state and federal	Continued provision of efficient, affordable public services	Community facility inventories and capital improvement plans	Ongoing	Development of inventories and plans
		Community future land-use readiness	Local, regional, state and federal, Private	Planned opportunities for development and growth via housing and street readiness	Community comprehensive planning; stakeholder involvement	Ongoing	Community planning opportunities
		Water resource planning and management	Community, County, NRD, landowners	Management of water resource demands to promote appropriate development and resource availability	County-wide planning and development management	Ongoing	Water planning milestones

Goal 4, continued: To improve the overall quality of life in Seward County

Specify Area	Task to be Implemented	Implementation Plan	Resources	Expected Results	Performance Measures	Timeline	Evaluation Indicators
County-wide and Communities	Long-term care opportunities for elderly residents	Develop information and partnerships to assess needs	Private, local, state, federal	Identification of long-term care needs in area	Addressing identified needs for long-term care for aged	Long term	Partnerships developed and project milestones developed
County-wide and Communities	Community public infrastructure improvements	Public services facilities improvements	Local, regional, state and federal resources	Continued provision of efficient, affordable public services	Community facility inventories and capital improvement plans	Long term	Serve identified community needs

Goal 5: Enhance agriculture identity of Seward County							
Specify Area	Task to be Implemented	Implementation Plan	Resources	Expected Results	Performance Measures	Timeline	Evaluation Indicators
County-wide	Encourage location and expansion of value-added agriculture related industry	Agri-business retention and development	Private and local, state, federal resources	Growth in industry	Prospects identification, resource and site assessments, marketing efforts	Ongoing	Number of facilities/jobs, Area resources used, Cluster development
County-wide		Farming and livestock feeding industry support	Local and private	Growth in value-added industry	Prospects identification, resource and site assessments, marketing efforts	Ongoing	Number of permitted facilities and livestock
County-wide	Comprehensive planning and zoning in support of agricultural activities	Development supporting agriculture friendly growth	Local, Investment Groups	Maintain agriculture activities and opportunities	County and community planning supporting agriculture activity	Ongoing	Collaborative activities supporting agricultural activity
County-wide		Promote rural population growth in areas with appropriate water resources	Public, Private, NRD	Managed growth and development of population centers	Water resource management activities supporting rural development	Ongoing	Growth in areas with identified water resources
Community-based		Provide opportunities for residential and income and employment opportunities in established communities	Private, Public	Managed development encouraging investment in incorporated areas	Development in incorporated areas	Ongoing	Community-based planning activities

3. Glossary of Acronyms

A list of acronyms used in this chapter is provided below. A brief description of an agency or entity is provided, also.

<u>Acronym</u>	<u>Full Name / Description</u>
BVCA	<i>Blue Valley Community Action Partnership (BVCA)</i> BVCA is a non-profit human service agency serving a nine county core area in southeastern Nebraska. The BVCA staffs Family and Community Service Centers providing health, maternal and child, Head Start, transit and housing & rural development programs.
Byway	<i>Nebraska Byway Program – Lincoln Highway Scenic Byway</i> Communities along U.S. Highway 30 from Blair (Washington County) to past Bushnell (Kimball County) who cooperatively market tourism opportunities under the America's Byways brand.
SCC	<i>Southeast Community College</i>
CDBG	<i>Community Development Block Grant Program</i> Administered by the Nebraska Department of Economic Development, the CDBG program provides grants to eligible communities for Economic Development, Public Works, Planning and Housing activities. Source of funds is the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).
Chambers	<i>Chamber of Commerce</i> Voluntary association of local businesses working together to enhance marketing of local businesses and commercial activity.
Colleges	<i>Colleges in the Region</i> This includes the public Peru State College and Central Community College and the private institutions of Concordia University, Doane College, and York College.
Cooperatives	<i>Cooperatives in the Region</i> This includes agriculture cooperatives such as Farmers Co-Operative Elevator and smaller, niche market associations organized as member-controlled cooperatives (eg, GROW Nebraska).
ED-RLF funds	<i>Economic Development Revolving Loan Funds</i> Business and industry loan funds operated by municipalities, ED groups and organizations. These are usually capitalized by loans or grants from federal agencies such as the USDA or Small Business Administration. Private (for profit and non-profit) local ED groups have capitalized RLF programs through shares sold to member.

<u>Acronym</u>	<u>Full Name / Description</u>
EDA	<i>Economic Development Administration</i> The EDA is a bureau of the U.S. Department of Commerce. EDA works with Economic Development Districts to assist industrial development activities such as provision of public works (infrastructure and industrial areas).
Entrepreneurs	<i>Small Business Enterprises</i> (usually start-up proprietorships)
FHLB-Topeka	<i>Federal Home Loan Bank of Topeka</i> A private financial institution whose membership is affiliated banks. FHLB-Topeka promotes housing and community development by providing the services and rate of return necessary to attract and retain borrowing stockholders.
Foundations	<i>Private and Non-profit Organizations</i> This category includes community foundations created to support local activities and charitable organizations created by private entities to advance particular interests such as delivery of human services, community development, cultural activities, etc.
GPRCD	<i>Great Plains Resource Conservation District</i> Great Plains RC&D is a locally sponsored multi-county organization affiliated with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The purpose of the Resource Conservation and Development program is to encourage and assist rural areas to plan, develop, and carry out programs for resource conservation and development.
GROW Nebraska	GROW Nebraska is a non-profit organization, whose mission is focused on maximizing Nebraska's entrepreneurial spirit and focused on building Nebraska businesses globally by providing sustainable business environments through marketing, education, business building services and access to markets.
Investment Groups	<i>Private Organizations</i> Organizations of private individuals or Groups organized for specific purposes, such as an ethanol production facility and housing corporation.
Municipal	<i>City, Village, or County Governmental Entity</i> with responsibilities to provide services to their jurisdiction.
NBDC	<i>Nebraska Business Development Center</i> The NBDC at the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO), is a cooperative program of the U.S. Small Business Administration and UNO. Designated service areas have offices that provide business assistance such as marketing analysis and market planning services. There is a Nebraska Business Development Center located within the region in Geneva.
NDED	<i>Nebraska Department of Economic Development</i>
NDoA	<i>Nebraska Department of Agriculture</i>

<u>Acronym</u>	<u>Full Name / Description</u>
NDoL	<i>Nebraska Department of Labor</i> (Nebraska Workforce Development)
NDoR	<i>Nebraska Department of Roads</i> The NDoR administers the Transportation Enhancement Program which provides funding to local, regional and state government entities to construct and restore transportation facilities such as pedestrian/bicycle trails, development of scenic byways and restoration of historic transportation facilities.
NEDCO	<i>Nebraska Economic Development Corporation</i> NEDCO is a state-wide Community Development Corporation that offers several types of Small Business Administration Guaranteed Loans to small businesses including, SBA 504 and SBA 502 fixed asset subordinated loans for land, building acquisition and equipment, and SBA 7A working capital loans.
NGPC	<i>Nebraska Game and Parks Commission</i> NGPC makes matching grants to political subdivisions for developing outdoor recreation projects and indoor support facilities (rest rooms, maintenance, storage, and concession stands).
NETF	<i>Nebraska Environmental Trust Fund</i> The NETF is funded through the Nebraska Lottery. Grant funds are awarded by the NETF for projects meeting their priorities -- preservation and restoration of critical habitat areas, surface water quality, ground water quality, and development of recycling markets and reduction of solid waste volume and toxicity.
NIFA	<i>Nebraska Investment and Finance Authority</i>
NRD	<i>Natural Resource District</i>
NSHS	<i>Nebraska State Historical Society</i>
Non-Profits	<i>Non-Profit Organizations</i> (human service, housing agencies, foundations, etc.)
Private	<i>All Private Sector</i> businesspersons and organizations
Public	<i>All Public Entities</i> (Governmental and Quasi-Governmental, eg, cities, utilities)
Railroad ED Representatives	<i>Economic Development Agents of the Railroad Companies</i>

<u>Acronym</u>	<u>Full Name / Description</u>
RCEDD	<i>River County Economic Development District</i> RCEDD is a designated Economic Development District of the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration. SENDD and RCEDD are sister organizations which share staff.
REAP	<i>Rural Enterprise Assistance Project</i> Initiated by the Center for Rural Affairs in Walthill, the REAP begins with a community commitment to raise seed capital funds to be used for small business loans and structured programs to provide training in business planning, management, and finance.
SBA	<i>Small Business Administration</i> The U.S. Small Business Administration offers international trade counseling for individuals and companies, with an emphasis on the practical application of successful exporting and importing procedures.
Schools	<i>Public and Private School Districts</i>
SENAHC	<i>Southeast Nebraska Affordable Housing Council</i>
SENDD	<i>Southeast Nebraska Development District</i>
UNL	<i>University of Nebraska</i> Expertise and services provided by faculty, colleges, and offices governed by the university, such as the UNL Food Processing Center's food scientists and food industry business consultants who assist food-manufacturing entrepreneurs.
UNL Extension	<i>Nebraska Cooperative Extension Service</i> Extension agents and specialists serve as faculty of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, UNL. Major areas of service include agriculture, natural resources, family living, youth development, and community resource development.
USDA	<i>United State Department of Agriculture</i>
Utilities	<i>Public and Private Utility Providers</i> (examples include NPPD, Perennial Public Power District, Aquila, etc.)
SCED	<i>Seward County Economic Development</i> The Seward County Economic Development is a non-profit corporation which fosters economic development within Seward County and its local communities.