

**CLAY COUNTY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

1734 KINGSLEY AVENUE  
ORANGE PARK, FL 32073



**5-YEAR  
STRATEGIC VISION PLAN**

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**2015 – 2020**

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## **INTRODUCTION BY THE CHAIRMAN**

The Clay County Development Authority (“CCDA”) Strategic Plan, 2015 – 2020 which follows is the result of hard work put forth by CCDA’s Board of Directors and the input and guidance of CCDA’s staff. In the fall of 2014, CCDA initiated the process of developing a strategic vision plan that will be used as a guiding document for the organization to follow and implement in accordance with its mission. This process consisted of one-on-one interviews with each board member to capture their perceptions of the strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats of the organization as well as public meetings in which CCDA Board of Directors met to establish sound goals for organizational sustainability both long-term and short-term and discussed innovative concepts to further enrich economic development opportunities in Clay County.

I would like to thank my fellow board members for the selfless contribution of their time and talents that have made this organization a vital resource to our community. In addition, I want to express my deep gratification towards our Executive Director, Josh Cockrell, who has reorganized CCDA to a level of maximum efficiency and chartered a course for us to follow.

Chip Dobson, Chairman 2014-2015

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

First, I would like to thank Clay County Development Authority's Board of Directors for their commitment to this planning process, for their patience and good humor, for their confidence in my abilities, and for their fortitude in seeing this plan through to the end. The board is truly the most talented group of individuals deriving from various professional and cultural backgrounds that I have ever had the privilege of working with. The melting pot of knowledge that the board continues to devote to the community will without certain, enhance Clay County's competitive advantage in retaining and expanding small businesses as well as attracting new industries.

Undergoing a strategic planning process is daunting, time consuming, and challenging. However, it is essential in order to keep an organization on track over time. Most importantly, it allows the organization to respond to change while remaining faithful to its mission and vision. The opportunity to step back and provide constructive criticism and insight is crucial, and not afforded by the daily pace of this organization. The hard work placed into this document will serve as a roadmap for CCDA to follow.

As Clay County Development Authority approaches its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the future of this organization is stilted on turning Clay County's weaknesses into strengths and implementing the goals and objectives outlined in the latter part of this document.

Josh Cockrell, Executive Director

## **HISTORY OF CLAY COUNTY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

The Clay County Development Authority (“CCDA”) was established by a special act of the Florida Legislature in 1957 for the principal purpose of promoting sound economic development of Clay County. They are a strategic partner with the Clay Economic Development Corporation, Clay County Chamber of Commerce, numerous businesses and other local, regional and state agencies to improve the quality of life for residents. The members of CCDA are appointed by the Governor and serve four-year terms.

### **CCDA in Past Years**

In the early years, CCDA received approximately \$20,000 per year from monies generated from timber and mineral leases from Camp Blanding, known as Armory Board Funds. However, that was terminated in 1972 and thanks to the foresight and expertise of the early members of the Authority, frugal financial investments are the Authority’s major source of funding. The Authority has a long history of supporting economic development throughout Clay County and has assisted many employers to establish operations throughout Orange Park, Green Cove Springs, Fleming Island, unincorporated Middleburg, Oakleaf Plantation areas and Keystone Heights.

From 2003-2013, CCDA worked with Clay County Chamber of Commerce in forming a public-private partnership to increase Clay County’s economic prosperity, quality of life and future sustainability. This partnership maximized and leveraged resources and formed a collaborative approach to implementing Focus on the Future, the countywide strategic plan for economic development. Moreover, the organizations worked closely with key community stakeholders, other regional and statewide organizations as well as with governmental leaders to advance programs and capabilities to diversify and strengthen the local economy.

During this period, CCDA worked in unison with the Economic Development Advisory Board of the Clay County Chamber of Commerce, who monitored current trends in the business atmosphere of the county and served in providing the long-term vision.

### **CCDA Today**

In 2014, the Economic Development Advisory Board of the Clay County Chamber of Commerce, Clay County Chamber of Commerce, and CCDA were reorganized to maximize efficiencies and better approach economic development efforts to benefit Clay County. Through this reorganization effort, Clay Economic Development Corporation (“CCEDC”) emerged and since has served in addition to Clay County Chamber of Commerce as a strong partner to CCDA. Today, CCDA serves the community by supporting and promoting the economic development efforts of its partners by providing unique financing tools such as issuing industrial revenue bonds and financing projects that generate positive economic impacts in Clay County.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND STAFF

**Chairman**  
Chip Dobson

**Vice-Chairman**  
Rev. William Randall

**Secretary**  
Virginia Hall

**Treasurer**  
Matt Carlton

**Past Chairman**  
Debbie Ricks

**Director**  
Russell Buck

**Director**  
Greg Clary

**Director**  
Joe Mobley

**Director**  
Paz Patel

**Director**  
Matt Welch

**General Counsel**  
Grady Williams

**Executive Director**  
Josh Cockrell

## **ORGANIZATIONAL TENETS**

### **Vision Statement**

Our vision is to support, promote, and facilitate economic development in Clay County, Florida.

### **Mission Statement**

Clay County Development Authority supports, promotes, and attracts economic development while serving as the lead public development finance agency in Clay County, Florida, partnering with new and existing businesses, non-profit organizations, faith-based communities, and government entities.

### **Statement of Core Values**

Since our establishment in 1957, our core values have been the guiding principles that have dictated and influenced our success. They are the reason why our board members have humbly volunteered their time and talents to better serve the community.

#### **Leadership**

With the gubernatorial appointment authority to lead courageously, the creativity to inspire, and the ability to foster positive economic change in Clay County, we will take charge in areas where others cannot.

#### **Commitment**

We are passionately committed to improving the economic growth prosperity of the citizens and businesses in Clay County.

#### **Community**

We are caring residents and neighbors, involved in community activities in meaningful ways, and committed to the prosperity of Clay County.

#### **Cooperation & Collaboration**

We believe that by working together in both the public and private sectors, obstacles are limited and success is limitless.

#### **Integrity**

We are committed to the highest sense of integrity and transparency encompassing every aspect of our behavior as citizens of Clay County. We strive for high moral character, honor, respect and honesty in all our actions realizing that the strength of our board is based on the integrity of its members and placing the best interests of Clay County before our own.

## SWOT ANALYSIS

Staff conducted individual interviews with each board member to gain a comprehensive understanding of the board members' perceptions as to what the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the organization are. Board members were asked to be forthright with their observations with an understanding that all comments provided will remain anonymous.

### Strengths

#### Quality of Life

Located outside of the bustling city of Jacksonville, FL and on the edge of rurality, Clay County citizens benefit from the mild climate and a quality of life that many could only dream of having. County Commissioners, county administration and staff, and the economic development partners in Clay County work tirelessly to ensure that citizens have access to a good public school system, pristine parks, recreation, a multitude of events at the Clay County Fairgrounds, and access to waterways such as the St. Johns River, Black Creek, and Doctors Lake; and, they fight to ensure that public safety is a top priority so that citizens benefit from the low crime rate. In addition, Clay County is a strong political community that puts family values first. Sidewalk neighborhoods with community amenity centers and open spaces are indicative of Clay County's family friendly environment.

#### Land Development

Clay County is situated along I-295 with easy access to I-10, I-95 and the outer beltway that is under development. Access to multi-modal transportation is available including rail, nearby JaxPort and Jacksonville International Airport. Clay County also boasts the benefits of nearby Cecil Field and Cecil Commerce Center. Clay County is attractive to developers due to the swath of land/greenfield sites available for development that is inexpensive relative to neighboring markets and that is not impeded by any natural environments such as swampland. Also, developers are attracted to Clay County because of the moratorium on impact fees and competitive utility services available through Clay County Utility Authority.

#### Economy

Clay County has a diverse economy, a low tax rate, and low unemployment. The presence of NAS Jax brings forth strong military and civilian economic impact to the area. In addition, there is growth in several markets particularly in nursing. Clay County is amenable to incentives and attracting diverse businesses. In addition, businesses can benefit from CCDA's competitive bond issuance fees when pursuing bond financing.

#### Resources

Clay County boasts a seasoned, skilled workforce and retired military that provides industry competition in the region. The growing medical community such as the presence of St. Vincent's HealthCare and Orange Park Medical Center makes Clay County attractive for skilled labor. In addition, Clay County is home to a readily available workforce. The proximity of Cecil Field and Cecil Commerce Center provide Clay County with a competitive industry advantage with neighboring counties. Clay County Agriculture Center is home to unique programs for the citizens of Clay County such as research-based education programs in agriculture, horticulture, family and consumer science and 4-H/youth development. Camp Blanding Joint Training Center is a critically vital training center that annually trains over 325,000 Florida National Guard troops as well as local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies from around the country.



## Opportunities

Upon initial review of the weaknesses and threats perceived, opportunities became prevalent and were established by CCDA's board members in which the CCDA can proactively pursue to provide greater strength to economic development efforts in Clay County. They are as follows:

- Identify short-term and long-term opportunities that will yield financial sustainability to the organization.
- Proactively seek bond issuances and refinance opportunities.
- Serve as an information and education resource for industrial and manufacturing businesses.
- Proactively advocate a legislative policy agenda on the local and state level that will support economic development efforts.
- Serve as an idea clearinghouse to spur new projects.
- Capitalize on opportunities generated by the growing medical community
- Cultivate stronger relationships with Enterprise Florida to provide support for small and minority-owned businesses.
- Promote and invest in start-up businesses and accelerators.
- Invest in projects such as Big League Dreams that will provide substantial economic impacts to Clay County.
- Develop stronger partnerships between local governments, education institutions, and businesses in Clay County.
- Have greater collaboration with municipalities in the county and Clay County Board of County Commissioners by educating elected officials and staff on what CCDA provides to the community and the benefits of industrial revenue bonds (IRBs).
- Collaborate with Clay County Economic Development Corporation, Clay County Chamber of Commerce, and Clay County Board of County Commissioners on economic development opportunities.
- Strengthen our relationship with Camp Blanding Joint Training Center to further support their needs.

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOALS	OBJECTIVES	OUTPUTS/STRATEGIES
Identify opportunities that will yield financial sustainability solutions	Short-Term (6 mos - 2 yrs)	Divest of DEVCOM
		Provide grant support for Camp Blanding and collect assessed administration fees
	Long-Term (2 yrs - 5 yrs)	Investment of cash into projects that support the mission
	Short-Term & Long Term (6 mos - 5 yrs)	Investigate grant opportunities that will have a return on time and capital investments
Implement findings determined in the 2015 Clay County Economic Development Plan		
Enhance marketability and relationship building	Implement a marketing plan	Develop informational pieces/pamphlets
		Update the CCDA website
		Conduct a countywide targeted marketing campaign to generate bond awareness to new and existing businesses
	Build stronger relationships with key individuals and organizations	Meet with local elected officials, community leaders, and industry leaders to market CCDA's capabilities
Attend/sponsor events around Clay County that are related to our mission, provide maximum exposure to the organization, and that have a return on investment		
Identify opportunities for board development and education	Attend conferences and webinars to enhance board knowledge	Council of Development Finance Agencies (CDFA)
		Manufacturer's Association of Florida (MAF) and First Coast Manufacturer's Association (FCMA)
		JaxUSA
		Florida Economic Development Council (FEDC)
Future board development	Identify new members to serve on the board when a vacancy occurs	
	Conduct a new member orientation for incoming board members	
Serve as an idea clearinghouse for projects seeking public financing	IRB issuances	Identify and pursue projects that can utilize industrial revenue bonds
	Financing through loans issued by CCDA	Identify and pursue projects that positively impact Clay County, but require additional financing
Advocate a legislative policy agenda for issues that affect economic development in Clay County	Gain a better understanding of the issues	State Issues: Invite members of the Clay County Legislative Delegation to provide updates
		Local Issues: Invite members of the Clay County BCC to provide updates
	Take a position on issues	Adopt resolutions recognizing the Board's position