

To: All Crawford County School Districts  
From: The Crawford County Partnership for Education and Economic Development and the Quality of Life Action Team  
RE: Support for Community Opportunity – A Vision Plan Initiative

### **Background**

As a part of the Crawford 20/20: Vision plan, the intended outcome of the quality of life strategy is to curb the outward migration of individuals under 45 years old. One of the key challenges we are facing is our retention and attraction of local and new talent. Jobs are available locally, but our lack of resources and tools to help bridge our opportunities to potential long term citizens is a problem we want to solve for.

### **Current State**

- Crawford County's heritage, culture, achievements, benefits, and rich history are underappreciated, unknown, and/or under-publicized.
- Perception of local opportunities is not favorable.
- Enrollment numbers are trending downward.
- Economies of scale – Less people to divide financial responsibility places tougher burden on citizens who live here.

### **Goal**

To support our county's educational system, businesses, and talent acquisition needs with a significant countermeasure to improve enrollment, job fulfillment, and increase population.

### **How?**

We are implementing a hyper local web portal to connect students and job seekers to opportunities in Crawford County. This portal will have an education element to it for schools to use to collect data, find linkages between interests and local careers, and provide a solution to connect people for internships. This tool will also be designed to provide information on community service opportunities for school requirements. We are calling this "Community Opportunity" with plans of a significant brand awareness campaign and communication plan. We are partnering with COMSTOR Outdoor, of Bellefontaine Ohio, who has already built this type of tool and has seen measurable outcomes with Mercer, Darke, and Auglaize counties.

### **End in Mind**

The investment in this approach will provide a cross-cutting, collaborative platform with these intended outcomes:

- Support our students towards gainful employment that will provide for them and support their long-term goals;
- Provide our county's businesses with direct access to local talent to support their needs of job placement and lasting tenure;
- Improve the branding of small hometown and its perceived limitations (To stay or return does not equal a failure);
- Connect talent from outside the county to us in a meaningful way.

The vision is that within 5 years the trend in population will be heading up; therefore, the trend for school enrollment should do the same.

### **Investment**

Based on the short and long term goals and the intended outcomes, we are asking for \$5000 from each district to collectively support the project both in practice and to demonstrate a commitment towards the future success of our citizens. This investment would supplement the grant provided by the Community Foundation for Crawford County in the amount of \$40,000.