



NEWS RELEASE

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Study helps Lockhart EDC update plan to bring jobs to city

A six-month study and analysis conducted by an independent firm will provide a road map for economic development in Lockhart, enhancing the Lockhart Economic Development Corporation's strategy for attracting companies that will bring jobs to the Caldwell County seat.

The study helped Lockhart Economic Development Corporation and the City of Lockhart adopt a plan that involves developing its assets (training the workforce and streamlining administrative processes) and promoting its brand (developing local and regional partnerships and strengthening marketing), Lockhart EDC director Mike Kamerlander said.

In January 2020, the City of Lockhart and the Lockhart Economic Development Corporation hired Garner Economics to help prepare the backbone of its new economic plan, which has been adopted by both the LEDC and the City of Lockhart. The Competitive Realities Report and Target Industry Strategy, or TIS, that Garner prepared will assist the city and LEDC in focusing on efforts that leverage the community's strengths.

"This is the first study of this kind for the LEDC or the City of Lockhart, and it will frame Lockhart's growth over the next five years," Kamerlander said. "The study's analysis provided answers to what key forces are driving Lockhart's economy and what assets and challenges are apparent to site-location advisors that facilitate investment decisions. It also suggested business and industry segments that best match Lockhart's competitive advantages to the needs of particular industry sectors."

For each of these sectors, the community's competitive advantages were presented, along with national trends and projections of the targets. According to the study, businesses in the following four fields should consider Lockhart when looking for a home base:

- **Auto parts, metal and electronic manufacturing:** Lockhart is close to GM, Peterbilt and Toyota vehicle assembly plants, and Tesla is building a facility less than 20 miles north of town. This sector also includes metalworking, architectural and structural metals, and electronics. Nearly 60,000 manufacturing workers are located within a 45-minute drive of Lockhart.

- **Food and beverage processing:** There is an abundance of agricultural products in the region and ample water supply and great demand for food and beverage processing in Lockhart. About 75 million-100 million square feet of industrial freezer and cooler space is needed nationwide to meet the demand generated by online grocery sales.
- **Logistics and distribution:** E-commerce has sped up a demand for products. The forecast shows supply chain resiliency efforts will lead to an additional 750 million to a billion square feet of industrial space in the United States. Lockhart is a natural choice with its proximity to Austin, San Antonio, Houston and Mexico. Transportation and warehousing industry employment has grown 11 percent during the past year in Caldwell County.
- **Pharmaceutical, medical supplies and medical device manufacturing:** The emphasis here is on pharmaceutical manufacturing, not research and development. The pool of potential employees for this field crosses over with metal manufacturing and food and beverage processing, which require similar skill sets and the availability of water in the region is a plus for pharmaceutical manufacturers. The COVID-19 pandemic has also affected demand in this area, reshaping the supply chain for pharma, medical equipment and supplies.

“Lockhart is positioned to offer businesses of all sizes the ability and opportunity to profit and grow in a very dynamic region,” said Jay Garner, president of Garner Economics and one of the report’s authors. “The leadership of the City is committed to be a valued partner to promote investment, and that alone is a recipe for success.”

To learn more about opportunities in Lockhart, visit lockhartedc.com.

The Lockhart Economic Development Corporation, a department within the City of Lockhart, is designed to provide a range of business and economic development assistance. Director Mike Kamerlander can be contacted at mkamerlander@lockhart-tx.org.