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MEMORANDUM

TO: Smithville Mayor, City Council, and City Manager
FROM: Jill Strube, Grants Administrator
RE: Economic Development Survey Report
DATE: April 9, 2014

The City of Smithville partnered with the Chamber of Commerce to administer an Economic Development Survey, which was active from October 1, 2013 to March 24, 2014. In total, 402 people who shop in Smithville took the survey—nearly half of them provided comments regarding what kind of economic development they would like to see in town.

The Report provides information about how the survey was conducted as well as the numerical results of all of the questions. Appendix B provides all of the results, including all of the comments made in the open-ended questions.

Highlights of those responses include the following:

- 73.5% said they would support a \$1 fee on the utility bill to be used for economic development
- The top four businesses people think we need to increase/improve or establish here are: Department store/clothing/shoes (75.1%); Entertainment (74.8%); Restaurants/Fast Food (68.8); and grocery/farmers' market/coop (53.7%).
- The primary reason people shop outside of Smithville is availability (49.6%), followed by price (20.9%) and variety (17.5%).
- The top three strengths Smithville has to offer are: Beautiful, historic neighborhoods (30.1%); Small town feeling (22.0%); and the Colorado River (20.0%).

Based on these and other results, the Economic Development Committee, which oversaw the creation of the survey and worked to distribute it as far and wide as possible, recommend the following:

- Provide funding for business development through a \$1 fee on the utility bill and establish a public forum that will engage stakeholders to recommend how Council could use those funds;
- Communicate with and to the public to help find the ideas that will have the least resistance and do the most good for business in Smithville and develop a plan to implement them;
- Create a Marketing Plan using the data provided in this report and develop strategic programs and milestones to achieve within a five-year period;
- Consider a public relations campaign to help provide residents, business owners, building owners, government agencies, and potential investors with access to the information they need and to counteract any misinformation about any unofficial or unstated "policy" on growth;
- Cultivate entrepreneurialism and work to bring in business that people here want to spend their money on; and
- Examine the data in more detail and report those results in the future to help various stakeholders as well as to tease out some of the questions about whether there are substantial differences between subgroups in our community.