

York BIZ

Business Improvement Zone

“Building Strong & Sustainable York County Businesses”

Purpose

The York County Business Improvement Zone (BIZ) is a new and comprehensive outreach program designed by the Office of Economic Development (OED), in cooperation with the Department of Environmental & Development Services (EDS), to provide new and existing businesses with the information and resources they need to succeed, thrive, and grow. The program strives to capitalize on existing business resources available via the County and other local, state, and private organizations by creating better business linkages to them. Information on the York BIZ can be accessed at www.yesyorckcounty.com.

Background

The business community is an important component of the social and economic environment in York County. Our businesses generate jobs, provide economic livelihood to thousands of residents, and provide unique and distinctive services and goods for County residents and visitors.

Many businesses and potential entrepreneurs are unclear about the ways that York County can provide assistance to their businesses. Given the current economic challenges that many businesses face, it is more important than ever to communicate the assistance opportunities that the County can provide to existing businesses or those wishing to open a new business. In addition, there are many other excellent community resources which are dedicated to providing small business assistance, such as business planning, networking, marketing, consulting services, procurement assistance, and financing.

The OED & EDS have banded together to provide a “One-Stop Shop” for our businesses for all of their business assistance needs... and so the York BIZ was developed.

Plan of Action

The York BIZ outreach program will:

- Highlight & promote the following York County programs, efforts, and materials that can assist local businesses:
 - Starting a Business Brochure
 - Business Resource Guide
 - Commercial Development Guide
 - Grand Opening Guide
 - Business Signage Brochure
 - York County Site Selector Database
 - YesYorkCounty.com Website
 - Development Facilitator Staff Position
 - Business Retention & Expansion Program
 - Business Visitation Program
 - York County Community Forum

Detailed Program & Implementation Information:

- ✓ Develop an easy-to-read tri-fold brochure on how to start a business in York County. (January 2008)
- ✓ Provide an easy to use Business Resource Guide, containing resources and contacts for business plans, permit requirements, financing, marketing, advertising, workforce development, grand openings, local chambers of commerce, and more. (Spring 2007)
- ✓ Develop a comprehensive Commercial Development Guide to assist businesses with the ordinances, policies, procedures, and fees associated with the development and/or redevelopment of commercial property in York County. (August 2008)
- ✓ Provide a grand opening guide to assist businesses with the proper format for official ribbon cutting and grand opening events. The guide contains invitee information for appropriate local, state, and marketing contacts. (Spring 2007)
- ✓ Develop a tri-fold brochure detailing the regulations, processes, and fees associated with business signage in the County. Information will be included on permanent signs (wall mounted and freestanding) and temporary signs. (Spring 2009)
- ✓ Update and Promote York County Site Selector, a website that provides a comprehensive database of all available commercial buildings and property in the County. Site Selector can be viewed at www.yorkcountysites.com (Ongoing)
- ✓ Provide an updated and completely overhauled Economic Development website, which can be viewed at www.yesyorkcounty.com, that is easier to navigate and provides additional business resources. (Fall 2007)
- ✓ Utilize and promote the new Development Facilitator position to explain and facilitate the planning, permitting, and inspection processes for local businesses. (October 2008)
- ✓ Maintain and continually improve the Business Retention & Expansion Program. (Biennial, Ongoing) This program is designed to:
 - Learn about the local business community's perceptions of York County and the advantages and disadvantages of operating a business here.
 - Identify "red flag" situations, companies that are at risk of closing or relocating.
 - Respond to the needs of "red flag" businesses with a variety of services, from providing information on financing and marketing to acting as a liaison to County/State agencies.
- ✓ Continue to expand the Business Visitation program to include all new businesses, top employers, top taxpayers, and all businesses located in the County's industrial parks. (Ongoing)
- ✓ Communicate and advocate for current and proposed County policies, processes, and ordinances to enhance the viability of our business community. (Ongoing)
- ✓ Promote local business success stories via the new Economic Development website. (Ongoing)
- ✓ Coordinate with the County's Purchasing department to promote opportunities to do business with the County and state & federal government. (Ongoing)
- ✓ Create partnerships with various local, state, and private business resource organizations to better promote them to York County businesses. (Ongoing)
- ✓ Utilize local colleges and universities for business services and resources. (Ongoing)
- ✓ Continue to work closely with the area's three Chambers of Commerce to provide educational seminars, networking opportunities, and the Community Forum (Ongoing)
- ✓ York BIZ Program Rollout (January 2009)