

Regional Group Wants to Make SE Ark. Haven for Entrepreneurs and Investors

PINE BLUFF, AR . . . With assistance from a federal grant, the 14-county Southeast Arkansas Growth Initiative (SGI) recently completed a year-long process to create a regional plan for economic development. The result is a four-part plan that organizes area leadership around entrepreneurship, infrastructure and technology, talent development, and sector partnerships in order to help Southeast Arkansas be competitive in the global economy.

The entrepreneurship piece of the plan is already gathering steam. It envisions an environment where people can progress from having an innovative idea through developing that idea to creating a product, service, or business that actually reaches the marketplace. It intends to target services that will enhance growth in forestry, aquaculture, agriculture, bio-fuels/renewable energy, and regulatory science, which are sectors of strategic importance and promise in the region.

A just-secured supplemental grant will provide funding to continue the process for another 12 months and to implement key components of the development plan.

SGI is a project of the Economic Development Alliance of Jefferson County. SGI's regional plan can be downloaded at www.jeffersoncountyalliance.com; or contact Bryan Barnhouse, SGI Senior Project Manager, at (870) 535-0110 or bryanbarnhouse@sbcglobal.net for more details.

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