

VETERANS' MEMORIAL
CIVIC & CONVENTION CENTER
OF LIMA/ALLEN COUNTY



We are your destination of choice!

Strategic Plan 2008 - 2010

Message from the CEO

In the course of business operations it becomes necessary to periodically reexamine the mission, vision, and values held by an organization. Strategic planning enables an organization to see itself within its operating environment and to plan for changes that are needed to maximize its mission accomplishment.

As the director of the Veterans' Memorial Civic and Convention Center of Lima/Allen County I am pleased to present this document as testimony of the center's commitment to become your destination of choice for meetings and events. Since its opening in 1984, more than 3 million people have attended over 10,000 events held at the center. The board and the centers' staff are committed to operating a first class facility for the citizens of Allen County.

This strategic plan, new service credo, and revised mission will guide our efforts as we continue to offer a broad array of events such as concerts, lectures, trade shows, conferences, product shows, etc. It is our sincere hope that our patrons benefit from the actions outlined in this plan. In the coming months I invite you to contact the center with your thoughts and reflections on this plan.

Director, Brian Keegan

Message from the Board Chair

Planning is something that every organization must undertake if it is to respond adequately to changes in its environment. Without an adequate planning process, organizations cannot effectively adopt goals, policies, and procedures that will ensure mission completion.

Many elements or environments affect an organizations ability to function effectively. Among these are the political climate as well as changes in the technology, social, and financial environments. Given these elements, it takes vigilance and foresight to govern an organization so that it fulfills its mission successfully.

It is for these reasons that the board of trustees agreed to develop a strategic plan. The fact that the board launched a planning effort implies that the center can and will respond to changes in its operating environment over the next two years. On the other hand, organizations should never plan so tight that they cannot take advantage of unforeseen opportunities. This document allows the board to work within and outside the framework of the plan and to quickly change directions if needed.

The reader will notice a revised mission statement. As compared to the one that existed for nearly 15 years, the new mission has been reduced to a single sentence, a single sentence that says more in a few simple words than the former mission said in more than 100.

As your destination of choice, the key to the center's future is service. We hope to provide the best possible service we can and to do it with a smile on our face. Serving you better, means that you will return over and over. Your patronage is essential for our viability. We hope to make your decision to visit us time and again so easy that you won't think twice about it.

Board Chair, Donald A. Reese

Strategic Planning Framework and Planning Assumptions

Recognizing the importance of strategic planning the Board of Trustees of the Veterans' Memorial Civic and Convention Center (VMCCC) of Lima/Allen County, Ohio in August 2007 agreed to pursue a planning process to establish priorities and goals for the coming two year period. The importance of planning was confirmed by the Allen County commissioners when they visited with the trustees at their October 2007 monthly meeting.

In order to provide guidance to the board a person external to the board was asked to facilitate the planning process. After two months of mapping a potential planning process the board, with all members present, met on December 4, 2007. The board invited Commissioners Bassit, Reiff, and Sneary as well as Allen County Administrator Becky Saine to attend the meeting. Selected members of the civic center staff as well as its Chief Executive Officer, Brian Keegan were also in attendance.

Due to the necessity to expedite the process and the extensive knowledge of the community held collectively by the 11 members of the board and the center's chief executive officer a formal environmental scan was not accomplished as part of the planning process. However, the agenda for the December meeting included a review of background information including a review of pertinent documents, organizational charts, civic center mission, results of the recent economic impact study, etc.

Two overarching themes were adopted for the December meeting. These themes were: (1) to develop a two year strategic plan and (2) to develop five key statements as the basis for a strategic planning document. Thus the board assumed a goals-based model of strategic planning.

During an exploration-phase the board's facilitator led the group in discussing the center's internal strengths, weaknesses, and potential opportunities. The board explored the future and the fundamental changes needed to do business in the next two years. The board also considered those elements that might be considered threats to its operation and its ability to serve Lima and Allen County.

At the conclusion of the session the board had a better understanding of those elements affecting its mission and had generated a list of possible opportunities, which was refined over the next two months.

At its January 2008 meeting the Board of Trustees adopted the following five key opportunities to pursue over the next two years:

1. Create customer service by design.

2. Develop and deliver a human resource plan for professional sales/marketing functions in order to increase revenue.
3. Build relations with other organizations within the county and city to leverage business.
4. Develop and implement broad strategic planning and review processes for long term success of the VMCCC, which may include by-law changes.
5. Develop strategies to create a regional box office business operation.

During the winter months of 2008 the board continued to meet in order to assign implementation strategies or action steps to each key opportunity. These action steps are described in greater detail later in this document.

In parallel with the action step process, a subcommittee of the board reviewed the present mission of the VMCCC, which had persisted unchanged for a decade and a half. On May 14, 2008, the Board accepted the recommendation of the subcommittee to change the mission of the civic center. The new mission reads:

To operate a first class facility for public assembly that is the destination of choice for everyone.

A service credo was also adopted which read, we are your destination of choice.

On June 11, 2008, the board adopted this document as its strategic plan beginning July 1, 2008 and extending over the next two years.

Mission and Service Credo

The mission of the Veterans Memorial Civic and Convention Center is . . .

"To operate a first class facility for public assembly that is the destination of choice for everyone."

Approved by the Board of Trustees April 16, 2008

Service Credo

"We are your destination of choice."

KEY OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUCCESS

PRIORITY NUMBER ONE

CREATE CUSTOMER SERVICE BY DESIGN

GOAL: *Provide the best service possible to all those using the Veterans Memorial Civic and Convention Center (VMCCC).*

ACTION STEPS

1. Create a process that fosters cultural change among center personnel. [July 2008 – June 2010]
2. Create attitude among staff members that customer service can always be improved. [July 2008 – June 2010]
 - a. Define expectations for customer service by all civic center personnel. [January 2009]
 - b. Provide greater opportunities to learn about appropriate customer service. [January 2009]
 - c. Improve the ability to recognize less-than-perfect customer service. [January 2009]
 - d. As an educational tool, publish examples of inadequate customer service. [January 2009]
 - e. Conduct periodic staff and director meetings to discuss improved customer service. [July 2008]
3. Research and identify a model of “best service” and consider its implementation. [January 2009]
4. Identify senior staff members to serve as mentors and who will model improved customer service for center personnel. [January 2009]
5. Develop a customer “service credo.” [September 2008]
 - a. Post credo in obvious locations. [September 2008]
6. Promote enhanced relations and trust between board members and center personnel. [July 2008 – June 2010]

PRIORITY NUMBER TWO

DEVELOP AND DELIVER A HUMAN RESOURCE PLAN FOR PROFESSIONAL SALES/MARKETING FUNCTIONS IN ORDER TO INCREASE CENTER REVENUE.

GOAL: *Improve the marketing and direct promotion of the services of the Veterans Memorial Civic and Convention Center with the purpose of increasing center revenue.*

ACTION STEPS

1. Employ a person to do marketing and direct promotion of Civic Center offerings and advantages. [January 2009]
 - a. Identify a method to fund such an individual. [October 2008]
2. Identify an individual to write a marketing plan for the VMCCC. [September 2008]
3. Collaborate with the VMCCC Foundation Board with an eye on sharing the services of a person to market and promote the fund raising activities of the Foundation Board as well as the services and offerings of the Civic Center itself. [September 2009]

PRIORITY NUMBER THREE

BUILD GREATER RELATIONS WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE COUNTY AND CITY BY PROMOTING A COMMON GOOD AND GREATER COLLABORATION BETWEEN AND AMONG ALL ENTITIES.

GOAL: *Improve the ability to serve the citizens of Allen County via greater business opportunities.*

ACTION STEPS

1. Communicate the willingness of Civic Center Board Members to serve on committees and boards of service organizations within the city of Lima and Allen County alike. [July 2008]
2. Invite restaurant owners and managers to meet with representatives of VMCCC. [June 2009]
 - a. Facilitate the creation of a *restaurant association* to promote Lima to potential conventions and meetings. [June 2009]
3. Promote closer relations with The Convention and Visitors Bureau. [July 2009]
 - a. Invite Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) Board to meet jointly with the VMCCC Board. [July 2008]
 - b. Seek a CVB Board appointment for the Chief Executive Officer of the Veterans Memorial Civic and Convention Center. [March 2009]
4. Accept the offer to partner with the Chamber of Commerce to operate a banquet/meeting facility in the renovated Schnorf Building. [July 2008]
5. Partner with organizations in Allen County to improve scheduling of conventions and meetings in Lima. [June 2009]
 - a. Promote building an electronic communication network to include entities such as hotels, restaurants, and other related venues. [June 2009]
 - b. Acquire scheduling tools with a relational data base for simultaneous use of Allen County organizations. [June 2009]

6. Via board member education, improve the understanding of the governance role. [June 2009]
7. Improve the understanding of board member roles and expectations. [June 2009]

PRIORITY NUMBER FOUR

DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT BOARD STRATEGIC PLANNING AND REVIEW PROCESSES FOR LONG TERM SUCCESS OF THE VETERANS MEMORIAL CIVIC AND CONVENTION CENTER OF LIMA/ALLEN COUNTY.

GOAL: *Plan for today and tomorrow.*

ACTION STEPS

1. Engage the Board in a strategic planning process with the goal of creating a two-year plan. [July 2009]
2. Produce and publish annual goals and tactical objectives. [July 2009]
3. Develop a plan to evaluate planning objectives and to review progress, in writing on a quarterly basis. [June 2009]

PRIORITY NUMBER FIVE

DEVELOP STRATEGIES TO CREATE A REGIONAL BOX OFFICE BUSINESS OPERATION.

GOAL: *Provide greater access to the purchasing of event tickets and Civic Center offerings.*

ACTION STEPS

1. Determine the Return On Investment (ROI) of establishing a regional box office business. [January 2009]
2. Strike an "ad hoc" committee of VMCCC senior staff members and the CEO to investigate various box office systems. [January 2009]
 - a. Contact other users of box office systems for advice and counsel. [January 2009]
 - b. Determine the "best fit" for the Civic Center. [January 2009]
 - c. Develop operating policies that will serve the interests of the center as well as those it serves. [July 2009 – June 2010]
3. Investigate the possibility of the VMCCC selling tickets on behalf of center clients (promoters). [July 2009 – June 2010]
4. The CEO and committee will narrow the search to three systems and prepare the ROI for board consideration. [January 2009]