

A REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN
FOR NORTHWESTERN ILLINOIS:
EXPERIENCES AND OUTCOMES OF DEVELOPING
THE 2004-2008 *COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY*
(CEDS) UPDATE

An Abstract of
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ABSTRACT

This applied project seeks to investigate the factors influencing the success and participation of county and regional economic development groups in the Blackhawk Hills Economic Development District (BHEDD). The district, consisting of the six northwestern Illinois counties, is funded through the county governments and an annual federal matching grant with the mission of providing technical, planning, and economic development assistance to the region's communities.

The 1998-2004, Overall Comprehensive Economic Development Plan (OEDP) was used to examine the region's activities. The OEDP is the previous version of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS) recommended for regional use by the Economic Development Administration, the Federal sponsor of the BHEDD.

Key sources for this project included other Economic Development Districts CEDS documents, individual community surveys, and key informant interviews. The information was used to update the CEDS document and make recommendations for increasing service efficiency.

Findings show that various areas have different views on planning which correlate with levels of volunteer participation at economic development committee meetings. The *2004-2008 CEDS* planning document and the recommendations made in this paper aim to serve as decision-making resource for northwestern Illinois communities.