

## Charlestown awarded Economic Development Grant

Written by Administrator

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Charlestown has announced that the city received a \$50,000 grant from the Lt. Governor Becky Skillman through the Office of Community and Rural Affairs (ORCA).

The grant has allowed the City to contract with Ball State University (BSU) the development of a long-term strategic economic development plan for technology advancements for businesses and the community.

The Ball State team of experts are part of the university's Building Better Communities initiative, will allow for a collaborative effort between the city and the university to develop a plan in four phases, which is expected to be completed around the end of this year.

Economic development is one of the key focuses of City's Connecting Charlestown 2015 initiative.

"We are excited to partner with Ball State in developing the technology plan which will include in part a technology park and business incubator for Charlestown residents. With the partnerships with Greater Clark County Schools, the Lt. Governor's Office, Department of Education, several companies and now Ball State, we believe we are forming the foundation to retool our community for the 21st century economy. Ball State is recognized nationally as a leader in the sciences of technology and it is wonderful to add them as a partner," stated Charlestown Mayor Bob Hall.

Launching under the direction of Richard Heupel, CECD, Director of Economic and Community Development, the project will require input from several key groups and individuals. Participants in the nine-month process will come from an interdisciplinary team from BSU comprised of representatives from the Miller College of Business, the Center for Information and Communications Sciences, and the School of Extended Education.

Architectural input will be contracted from The Estopinal Group, LLC.

Project leader Richard Heupel commented, "Our team is excited to work with a community that has such a dynamic vision that will allow them to stand above the crowd in the emerging 21st century economy. Our job is to help the city develop best practices and strategic partnerships to make the vision a reality."

The \$50,000 grant requires a local match of \$5,556, to be taken from the Economic Development Income Tax Fund.

Additional funding sources may be sought but no federal stimulus money will be used for the project.

Bob McEwen, the City's Redevelopment Director added, "I am excited about this grant, and it's another step in our long range plan of developing a 21st century economic for the benefit of the people of Charlestown."

According to official documentation from Ball State University, the comprehensive plan is expected to be complete before the end of 2010.