

Economic Development: From the Individual to the Community

The Cordele, Georgia Community Development Project

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The representatives of K & A Brown Professional Services Corporation, a Florida and Georgia Corporation, propose to build a housing development in Cordele, Georgia on approximately 43 acres located off of Old Highway 41, south of the Farmer's market, north of Gum Creek. The housing will target people with moderate means with the goal of building an inclusive community. In order to complete the community project, K & A Brown Professional Services has retained the services of consultant Deryl Hunt, Ph.D. to complete a feasibility study. This feasibility study will look at the key factors that support the proposed project.

Affordable Housing

The proposed development project will provide affordable housing to serve the needs of the people of Cordele and the surrounding areas. A study is needed to determine several things: 1) type of housing: rental, elderly, condos, townhouses, single family, multifamily or a combination of these; 2) the number of units; 3) costs for purchase; 4) costs to build; 5) infrastructure needs, i.e., drainage, sewer lines, highways; 6) zoning ordinance; and 7) financing. Buy-in is required from key elements of Cordele: city officials, business persons, skill craftsmen, and residents who live in the Middle Georgia area who may be potential customers. In summary, we will develop a plan that will stem from a vision that guides the overall community building approach.

The Vision

The K & A Brown organization envisions a community-based affordable housing development, which includes people of all ages, and provides linkage between business community and residents. With these groups living and working in close proximity, we hope to create a helping environment, where

people will help each other based on their training, skills, experiences, and abilities to make sure the community thrives.

Community Center

A Community Center is the key to bridging the business community to the residents. This Community Center speaks to the expected partnership between K & A Brown and the City of Cordele. It is envisioned that the Community Center will be a place of fellowship where residents of all ages can benefit and share in their training, skills, experiences, and abilities. The business community in partnership with elderly and retired persons, is essential to the success of the programs and classes initiated for training and development, including computer training, sewing and cooking classes, early childhood development, and other skill areas. The facilities of the Community Center will accommodate on-site activities and programs, including a kitchen, meeting/classrooms, and a community gathering area.

Inclusive community building will be created and developed by offering a series of workshops on Conflict Resolution, Leadership, Management, and Diversity training.

Community Project

To jump start the Community Building work of the Center, K & A Brown Professional Services is engaged in a community-based project to introduce The Ellison Model to Cordele. The Ellison Model is an approach to inclusive community building, where people learn to work together in a spirit of unity to achieve individual and community goals. As they work together, people embrace a way of life that demonstrates a caring, sharing, and loving attitude, and they trust, honor, and respect each other. The community-based project makes use of the younger men and women who are service-oriented to aid a select number of senior citizens in beautifying their homes. This Ellison Model project will involve local businessmen, as well as skill craftsmen who are willing to volunteer their time upgrade the properties of elderly persons. K & A Brown has been working with a community-based group in Cordele for years under the leadership of Mrs. Ozzie Ritchey, who was born in Cordele, but now lives in Miami. K & A Brown will expand this work to include others who are willing to learn community building the ICB (Inclusive Community Building) way.

An Economic Development Project

This project requires a distinct method of implementation. In order to achieve a successful project, agreement and buy-in are required among all

parties. As indicated above, this project will use The Ellison Model approach where all having a hand in the project will be taught share the values and methods of unity and respect toward a common goal.

The Process of Economic Development: From the Individual to the Community

Economic development can be viewed from an outward and an inward sense. Economic development in the outward sense places emphasis on the production, distribution and consumption of tangible or physical goods and services. Economic development also has an inward dimension. Economic development can also be viewed from the inward development of a person according to the principles of The Ellison Model. Like outward economic development, inward economic development is about the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services.

To be economically developed inwardly is to produce fruit that is represented in one's behavior (i.e. sharing of resources, fair and honest in relationships). This is a two part work: 1) character development and 2) fruit production. Character development requires a mentor to instill the values of The Ellison Model. The fruit that is produced verifies that the character development is achieved. In the production of fruit, the person harvests goods and services that are shared (distributed) with others. The goal is to cultivate these same character traits in others. This takes place when the receiver continues this process of production by sharing with others as it was shared him or her by the mentor.