

**TEMPLATE FOR  
EDGE: Economic Development Generating Excellence  
Action Plan 2004**

Par 1:

In 2003, Governor Brad Henry initiated the Economic Development Generating Excellence (EDGE) project. A comprehensive plan that identifies key initiatives that would significantly improve Oklahoma's economy and quality of life – its “competitive edge” – the EDGE plan is based on the work of 23 teams of statewide experts from both the private and public sectors that has been integrated with contributions from more than 2,400 Oklahomans participating through public forums and online discussions. The major EDGE recommendations are to create the research capital of the plains, to dramatically update Oklahoma’s public education system, to reverse our state’s health trends—now, and to immediately reform and improve our business climate.

Par 2:

In February of 2004, the State Regents called for higher education institutions to provide the needed leadership in developing a comprehensive, integrated economic development plan for the State of Oklahoma within several key areas of the EDGE Action Plan. The recommendations from the OSRHE Economic Development Council to the President’s Council based on the EDGE Action Plan are:

I. Develop and re-apply the resources of higher education for the purpose of creating institution-based economic development opportunities for faculty, students and communities.

- The strategic plan of each higher education institution will demonstrate how it will utilize its resources to grow the economy of its community and the state and how administrative and academic units will work collaboratively with the business community to create companies, jobs and expand other companies in the community.
- Create system policies, procedures and incentives that promote higher education involvement in economic development.
  - Develop and implement technology-transfer policies and intellectual property management tools that stimulate IP production and company creation.
  - Expand the reward systems for tenure and promotion to include patents, technology commercialization, business creation, SBIR grants, STTC grants, consulting as well as publication and research.
  - Develop higher education seed capital funds to be invested in only higher education start-ups.
  - Develop and implement collaborative technology transfer programs among higher education institutions.
  - Develop and implement a series of professional development entrepreneurship programs specifically geared toward higher education faculty participation.

II. Actively seek ways to complement state, regional and community based economic development organization's efforts in creating companies, jobs and expanding local companies.

- Identify key industry clusters in which the local higher education institution can exert the most influence.
  - Assess the strengths and weaknesses of a community's workforce
  - Assess the educational needs of businesses
- Form corporate partnerships and promote commercialization of research
  - Establish the Oklahoma Research Network
    1. Secure a major path and node in Oklahoma for the National Lambda Rail.
    2. Enhance the infrastructure of OneNet and its networking capabilities.
  - Provide access to the National Lambda Rail to private companies for research and commercialization purposes.
  - Establish relationships with angel investors and venture capitalists for the purpose of investing in technology transfer spin-out companies.
- Establish non-degree community outreach and degree programs in entrepreneurship and other areas supporting local economic development.
- Adapt innovative ways to serve the data resource needs of the economic development community
  - Develop a complete inventory of professional development and continuing education offerings from higher education institutions.
  - Develop a complete inventory of credit offerings, including degree and industry cluster course enrollments.
  - Provide a wide range of professional and workforce development options and continuing education courses that meet business and industry needs.

Par 3:

The Economic Development Council of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education proposes recommendations that improve internal operations at both the campus and system levels. The recommendations build external collaborations that will improve the economy of Oklahoma and provide assistance in the development of regional economic development. The recommendations are designed to enhance recruitment of new businesses in Oklahoma, to retain and expand existing Oklahoma businesses, and grow our own businesses.

Par 4:

The benefits to the implementation of the EDC recommendations are multiple. First, it will strengthen and focus higher education's impact on economic development by addressing the EDGE recommendation. Second, an institution's involvement in communities and with local businesses builds relationships and prosperity which in turn causes business owners and citizens to be promoters of the institution with the legislature. Third, prosperous economic clusters are formed around higher educational institutions. According to Michael Porter (2004), the level of prosperity within a regional economic environment is directly determined by the quality and level of participation of its

community members, discriminating consumers, competing businesses, capital resources and an active research capable higher education institution.

Par 5:

EDGE recommendations fit into three categories:

Research and Education – the building blocks to progress in today's information-based, global economy.

Health and Quality of Life – essential to enhance the health and lifestyle for Oklahoma's citizens and for attracting others to the state.

Keeping and Creating Jobs – the most fundamental element of creating economic prosperity.

These recommendations represent the culmination of an action-planning process begun in 2003 by Governor Brad Henry, who created an inclusive, bipartisan environment in which risk taking was encouraged and bold thinking expected. These proposals are presented with the understanding that the real work of implementation is just beginning. The thousands of Oklahomans who participated in the recommendation process have a large stake in the positive outcome of EDGE and may be called upon to ensure its success.