



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sept. 19, 2023

Media Contact:

Megan Blaney
megan@heartlandcommunicate.com
631-431-3011

Hardin County Chamber of Commerce releases full economic impact study, community recommendations

Elizabethtown, KY – The Hardin County Chamber of Commerce (HCCC) has released a long-term economic impact study designed to better understand the impact of the BlueOval SK Battery Park, which is slated to bring 5,000 new jobs to the area. The 208-page study was commissioned by the Chamber with three commissioning sponsors (Baptist Health Hardin, Elizabethtown Community and Technical College and the Elizabethtown/Hardin County Industrial Foundation), conducted by the Louisville-based consulting firm L.B. Schmidt and Associates and funded by several members of the Hardin County business community.

To correlate with the release of the study, a press conference was hosted at HCCC's office in Elizabethtown Tuesday morning, which included HCCC president/CEO Margy Poorman, L.B. Schmidt and Associates President Luke Schmidt and leadership personnel with the Elizabethtown/Hardin County Industrial Foundation, Baptist Health Hardin and Elizabethtown Community and Technical College.

"With the impending arrival of BlueOval SK and the prospect of 5,000 new jobs, it was crucial for HCCC, a conduit for regional business growth, to gain a deeper understanding of future implications," Poorman said.

The commissioning of the study was announced last year by HCCC. Prior to its full release, Schmidt presented key details from the study during HCCC's August Membership Luncheon. Some details shared by Schmidt during the luncheon include

- an anticipated population surge of 22,380 in Hardin County,
- an expected direct payroll (including fringe benefits) of \$3.63 billion at the battery park from 2026 to 2035,
- an anticipated need for 8,811 new housing units in Hardin County,
- an expected total of 3,901 new K-12 students and
- a projected need for 75 new hospital beds, 389 new hospital jobs and 380 new ambulatory care jobs.



“With projections that include substantial population growth, increased employment opportunities and a boost to various sectors of the local economy, this report sheds light on the kind of growth this region should expect, and hopefully can influence and guide local businesses and organizations to implement strategies to appropriately grow in tandem,” Schmidt said.

L.B. Schmidt and Associates conducted the study in collaboration with Dr. Paul Coomes, Emeritus Professor of Economics at the University of Louisville. The study’s elements comprised an exploration of the MSA baseline, comparative analysis of peer MSAs, an assessment of the impact of the BlueOval SK, an overview of competitive communities, as well as examinations of parkway conversions to interstate highway standards and MSA expansion.

The research further extended to encompass on-site visits and investigations of analogous "boom towns," including Georgetown, Kentucky; Meridian, Idaho; Reno, Nevada; and Round Rock, Texas. The study's comprehensive nature also involved active engagement with key stakeholders, incorporating pre and post-SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis, online surveys and interviews.

The report also encompasses a set of recommendations formulated from the collective input gathered through online surveys and in-person interviews with key stakeholders. These recommendations encompass crucial areas, such as community growth management, MSA future planning, quality of life, transportation, community branding/promotion and workforce recruitment.

HCCC is facilitating an online feedback survey, inviting chamber members and the community to provide comprehensive input on the recommendations outlined in the study. Participants can share their insights and express the importance they attribute to each of the proposed recommendations.

"The report's recommendations provide a roadmap for proactive community planning in response to expected growth,” Poorman said. “We encourage our members and the broader community to participate in our online feedback survey, allowing them to contribute their insights and help shape the future of our community.”

The commissioning of the study was made possible through the support of members of HCCC’s President’s Circle, along with other area businesses and organizations, including Baptist Health Hardin, Elizabethtown Community and Technical College, The Land Store, Lightsource bp, Swope Family of Dealerships, South Central Bank, WesBanco, West Point Bank, Kinetic by Windstream, the Elizabethtown Tourism & Convention Bureau, Heartland, PNC, The Cecilian Bank and Abound Credit Union.



Schmidt founded L.B. Schmidt & Associates in 2004 with a focus on economic development, public affairs and strategic planning. The firm has successfully developed, implemented and managed projects across the U.S. and in Europe.

The full economic impact report and the recommendation feedback survey can be accessed by visiting <https://hardinchamber.com/energystate>.

###

About the Hardin County Chamber of Commerce: The Hardin County Chamber of Commerce is a member-driven, proactive organization guided by a committed Board of Directors selected from a wide range of county businesses and organizations. One of the largest chambers in the Commonwealth of Kentucky, HCCC is the essential resource and advocate for anyone who wants to start, grow or improve their business in Hardin County. HCCC provides members with opportunities to **network, promote and develop their businesses, as well as a means to advocate for important business initiatives.**