



GRADD

Green River Area Development District

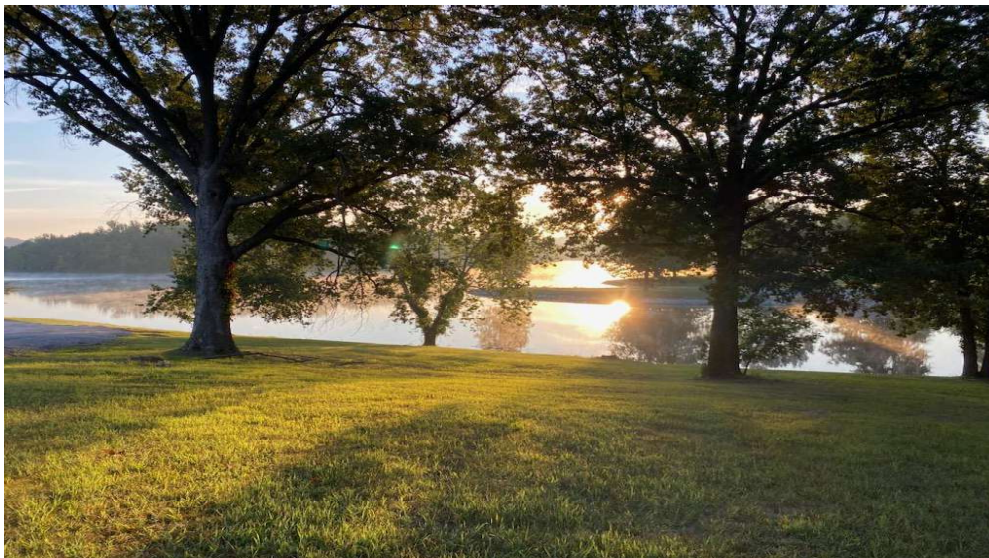
COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

2025 UPDATE



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Canaan Ridge Park, Webster County (Photo/Webster County EMA)

PUBLIC & PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

- ConnectGRADD Inc.
- Daviess County Extension Office
- GRADD Board of Directors
- GRADD Hazard Mitigation Council
- GRADD Regional Transportation Committee
- GRADD Water Management Council
- Greater Owensboro Economic Development Corporation
- Green River Area Council on Aging
- Green River Economic Development Corporation
- Green River Regional Health Council
- Green River Regional Industrial Development Authority
- Green River Workforce Development Board
- Hancock County Extension Office
- Hancock County Industrial Foundation
- Henderson Community College
- Henderson County Extension Office
- Henderson Economic Development
- Kentucky Career Center
- Kentucky State Data Center
- Madisonville Community College
- McLean County Extension Office
- Murray State Small Business Development Center
- Ohio County Extension Office
- Ohio County Economic Development Alliance
- Owensboro Community & Technical College
- Union County Extension Office
- Union County First
- Webster County Community & Economic Development
- Webster County Industrial Development Authority
- Webster County Extension Office
- Webster County Industrial Development Authority
- West Kentucky Regional Industry Development Authority

CEDS COLLABORATORS

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Hancock County Industrial Foundation

Tammy Belt

United Community Bank (Union)

Christina Carpenter

Ohio County Economic Development Alliance

Melissa Coker

Union County First

Brad Davis

Greater Owensboro Economic Development Corporation (Daviess)

James E. Davis

Independence Bank (Henderson)

Brandon Gentry

Old National Bank (Daviess)

Chad Gregory

Hancock County Bank

Barbara Howard

Farm Credit Services of Mid-America (McLean)

Kim Humphrey

River View Coal (Union)

Alison Collard

Cecilian Bank (Ohio)

Whitney Risley

Henderson County Economic Development

Marty Shephard

Business Owner (Ohio)

Tina Snyder

Hancock County Chamber

Rachel Yarbrough

Retired - Webster County Schools

Charlie Castlen, Judge/Executive

Daviess County

Curtis Dame, Judge/Executive

McLean County

Steve Henry, Judge/Executive

Webster County

David Johnston, Judge/Executive

Ohio County

Johnny "Chic" Roberts, Judge/Executive

Hancock County

Adam O'Nan, Judge/Executive

Union County

Brad Schneider, Judge/Executive

Henderson County

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy serves as a blueprint for regional economic development and is updated annually to track community goal progress. The Green River Area Developmental District evaluates and updates the CEDS through local planning with stakeholders. The CEDS includes four main sections: Summary Background, providing information on economic conditions in the region; SWOT Analysis, highlighting regional strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; Strategic Direction, using the SWOT to identify key goals and objectives for the next five-year period; and the Evaluation Framework, identifying performance metrics to assess CEDS successful implementation and regional economic progress.

One of the primary challenges facing the region is low workforce participation. As of July 2025, Kentucky ranked 43rd in the nation with a Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) of 58.3%, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Kentucky's low LFPR has been studied consistently because it has been one of the most persistent challenges for the state's economy. Some main factors contributing to it include high disability rates, especially in rural counties, opioid and substance abuse crisis, lower educational attainment, older workforce, outmigration of young workers, decline of coal and tobacco industries, and limited childcare options. Solutions being explored include expanding childcare access, strengthening workforce training, improving health outcomes, and attracting and retaining younger workers.

The GRADD region also faces a skills gap in the workforce. Initiatives have been implemented to cultivate needed skills, including:

- The Hire to Operate program offsets cost of Registered Apprenticeship Program participation for prospective water and wastewater operators and has had six graduates to date, and 17 apprentices enrolled currently.
- The Webster County Area Technology Center was awarded \$326,000 through the Delta Regional Authority States' Economic Development Assistance Program (SEDAP) to purchase workforce training equipment, which was completed in 2025.
- Henderson Community College was awarded \$450,000 for its MAINTech program in April 2024, which provides industrial maintenance training to bridge the gap between current workforce skills and the talent needs of manufacturers, funded through the Delta Workforce Grant Program.
- QUEST Workforce grant supports workforce development, with eleven individuals currently enrolled in Work-Based Learning opportunities, sixty-one in Occupational Skills Training, and fifty-six job seekers having received assistance.

Another significant challenge facing the GRADD region is a shortage of housing. Ensuring adequate housing stock is critical to support the multiple new and growing industries in the region. Stakeholders cited a need to coordinate local and state incentives to encourage private development. Stakeholders also encouraged flexible zoning and communication between local officials and housing developers.

Industries in the Green River Area Development District have faced significant closures recently, impacting the local economy and workforce.

- Daramic LLC closed down its manufacturing facility, effective September 6th, 2024. This closure resulted in the layoff of 158 employees.
- Hickory Springs Manufacturing also closed permanently in August 2024 resulting in the layoff of 40 employees.
- Daicel Safety Systems Americas Inc. plant in Beaver Dam permanently closed in March of 2024, resulting in layoffs of 290 employees.
- Century Aluminum in Hawesville shuttered in August 2022, resulting in layoffs for 628 smelter employees.

However, new and expanding industries are emerging to help revitalize the region and provide new opportunities:

- River View Coal expanded into Henderson County June 2025 and created 260 high wage jobs with an expected 400 jobs before the end of the year.
- Mizkan is expanding its Owensboro facility announced on March 18, 2025, creating 44 high wage jobs.
- Churchill Downs Inc. opened Owensboro Racing & Gaming in Owensboro, and created 150 new jobs February 12, 2025.
- Swedish Match added 450 high wage jobs operating around the clock August 27, 2024.
- October 2023, Western Kentucky Distilling Co. opened in Ohio County and has created 37 new jobs.
- Pratt Industries in Henderson created 500 high wage jobs in 2023.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Aging water and wastewater infrastructure remain concerns in the region, and stakeholders stress the need for industrial site development to attract new industries. The GRADD region received \$8.7 million and \$13.1 million in funding from the Cleaner Water Program, which allocated funds based on county population for priority projects. As of September 2024, 35 Cleaner Water Program projects are active in the region and 42 projects have been completed.. Transportation in the region has made progress with many projects, including:

- The I-69 Ohio River Crossing (ORX) connecting Henderson, KY and Evansville, IN is intended to be complete with a new bridge by 2031. Beginning in mid-2022, this project includes a six-mile extension of I-69, nine new bridges, seven rehabilitated bridges, and new interchanges at US 60 and US 41. Investments into the project to date reach nearly \$470 million.
- The Rockport Railroad Bridge, connecting Ohio and Muhlenberg counties across the Green River, was obligated \$17.3 million from a grant through the Department of Transportation as part of its Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) program in September 2022. The bridge serves as critical infrastructure for transportation of goods across Kentucky.
- Construction has begun on the KY 54 widening project in Daviess County on July 2025 and is nearly complete on the US 60 improvements project in Hancock County, with total costs of \$41.6 million. These projects ensure safer transportation through these heavily trafficked roadways. Project completion for Daviess County is estimated for November 2026.

This CEDS highlights quality of life as crucial for economic development, focusing on areas to attract people and industry. Projects enhancing these aspects are underway, with some completed this year, like Canaan Ridge Park in Webster County, and the new Splashpad at Vastwood Park in Hancock

County, driving regional population and economic growth.

From data and information collected in the Summary Background and the SWOT Analysis, the CEDS committee identified the following six goals as GRADD's top priorities for the next five years:

1. Grow and cultivate the region's workforce.
2. Strengthen broadband and cell availability.
3. Expand access to adequate housing.
4. Attract new industries to the region.
5. Upgrade infrastructure systems.
6. Improve the quality of life for residents.

Substantial progress has been achieved toward these goals through the dedicated collaboration of GRADD, the cities and counties in the region, and local, regional, state, and federal partners, working tirelessly to enhance the region's workforce, improve broadband and cellular access, increase availability of affordable housing, attract new industries, modernize infrastructure, and elevate residents' quality of life.



Beams installed at the Bridge Approach for the I-69 Ohio River Crossing. Each beam is 188 feet long and weighs over 100 tons. (Photo/I-69 Ohio River Crossing Facebook)

SUMMARY BACKGROUND

WORKFORCE

Notably, the Green River Workforce Development Board received \$790,476 from the General Assembly Funding Source to establish the Putting Young Kentuckians to Work Program. This program will have funding for two years and GRADD has hired an additional staff member to help coordinate this program. This program assists 16-24 year-olds who are unemployed or need help obtaining employment that allows them to be self-sufficient. Through the program individuals will be able to obtain short-term training, work experience, on-the-job training, and other services as needed to secure full-time employment that provides a livable wage. This program will allow for positive economic impact due to employers being able to receive trained employees and also this program will help place young Kentuckians in an improved income status.

Investments in workforce programs are important for the development of skilled future workforce to fill high demand jobs that come with bringing in new industry. To help increase the number of skilled workers in the region, the Delta Regional Authority (DRA) has funded multiple workforce projects:

- Henderson Community College Advanced Manufacturing Lab Expansion Project used a DRA investment of \$650,501 to purchase equipment to double their Advanced Manufacturing Center's lab stations and fund the addition of an eight-station robotics lab in November 2022. These assets will be used in classrooms to train the future workforce and students training with these tools will go on to work in local industries that are in high demand.
- Webster County Workforce Training Equipment project in Dixon, Kentucky, utilized a DRA investment of \$326,000 to purchase workforce training equipment for students in manufacturing, healthcare, industrial, and computer-aided design career tracks at the Webster County Area Technical Center in October 2023.
- Union County Public Schools was awarded \$8 million to support renovations at the district's vocational education center. Renovations include updating portions of the building that do not meet ADA requirements, renovating welding exhaust systems, and adding a sprinkler system, emergency lighting, and fire alarms to increase safety throughout the building.

The GRADD region faces a critical shortage of accessible childcare, impacting workforce participation. According to the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, all GRADD counties, except Union, qualify as child care deserts, meaning there are more than three children per licensed slot. The region's female workforce participation rate is 53.8%, below the 58.7% overall rate¹.

A 2022 Chamber of Commerce survey found 58% of American parents struggle to find childcare, with 26% unable to afford it, leading to high rates of workforce withdraw, especially among women.² The high cost of childcare often negates financial benefits, discouraging parents from returning to work. Expanding affordable childcare would boost workforce participation and drive economic growth in the region³.

GRADD and the Kentucky Career Center work together to ensure that the regions workforce is operating at maximum efficiency. During the Fiscal Year of 2025, GRADD assisted in 35 hiring events with more than 1,925 attendees and matched 411 job seekers with employment.

Additionally, 91 people received tuition assistance for training programs in growing sectors, 76 job seekers were placed in work based learning opportunities with 36 different companies. 1,124 individuals attended workshops designed to prepare them for employment, and 67 students graduated from training programs with an associate degree, certificate, or credentials.

GRADD and the Kentucky Career Center seek out potential employees and ensure they have proper customized training and help employers and employees when layoffs occur, helping those individuals with closing the skills gap, matching them with potential employers and making sure every individual has a new opportunity.

1. Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services. Child Care Deserts by County.

2. U.S. Census Bureau. 2020 Census. Workforce Participation Rate by Sex.

3. U.S. Chamber of Commerce Poll: The COVID-19 Unemployed. Published 6/3/22.

SUMMARY BACKGROUND

WORKFORCE

A September 2021 report by the Kentucky Chamber Foundation, *20 Years in the Making: Kentucky's Workforce Crisis*¹ found that the major causes of the workforce crisis in Kentucky include:

- Skills gap between what workers have and skills employers need
- Slow population growth
- Incarceration and criminal backgrounds
- Lack of access to childcare services
- Need for improved transportation, infrastructure, and broadband

The Green River Workforce Development Board has identified these issues as the primary challenges impacting GRADD's workforce and is working to address these challenges through targeted projects. The Board has been instrumental in bridging gaps for laid-off employees, individuals lacking technical skills, and those reentering the workforce after incarceration.

The GRADD Workforce Development Department serves as a connector of resources at homeless shelters and recovery centers, delivering educational programs and support services to enhance job readiness and employability of individuals experiencing homelessness, those in recovery from substance abuse, and those reentering the workforce after incarceration. This role is crucial in helping clients build skills necessary to secure and maintain employment, fostering a pathway to self-sufficiency.

They established relationships with nearly 20 sober living facilities, homeless shelters, and domestic violence shelters to assist residents with job searches and deliver workforce preparation workshops. These partnerships help ensure that vulnerable populations have access to meaningful employment support and resources.

In response to the economic impact caused by the Century Aluminum closure in June 2022, the U.S. Department of Labor awarded \$1,798,844 of the Skills to Succeed Grant to the Green River Workforce Development Board to support employment and workforce training services for dislocated workers. GRADD has utilized the Skills to Succeed Grant, which has resulted in the following impacts:

- 50 Individuals participated in Work Based Learning
- 171 Individuals were enrolled in Occupational Skills Training
- 146 Job seekers Assisted
- \$1,058,350 expended for training

GRADD also administers the Rapid Response program, delivering immediate support to workers impacted by layoffs or facility closures, and assisting transition to new employment opportunities.

In October 2023, the Green River Workforce Development Board received a \$1.5 million dollar Quality, Jobs, Equity, Strategy and Training (QUEST) Grant in partnership with the Kentucky Department of Workforce Development. The QUEST Disaster Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grant, funded through the U.S. Department of Labor, has served 300 individuals to date and continues through September 2026.



Henderson County Grab-a-Bag (Photo/GRADD)

SUMMARY BACKGROUND

BROADBAND

Broadband access is a vital need to promote economic development in the region. According to the rankings provided by the BroadbandNow initiative, Kentucky ranks 33rd in access to broadband as of September 2025¹. The GRADD region is primarily rural, and some portions of the area have inadequate or no internet access, issues shared by both households and large companies, particularly in these rural areas.

Although broadband availability has been a recognized issue for many years throughout rural America, the COVID-19 pandemic magnified the need for digital access and underscored the many impacts a lack of adequate broadband has on rural communities. Fast and accessible broadband became a necessity for work, school, telehealth, entertainment and communication during the height of the pandemic. The pandemic especially highlighted the digital divide between well-connected areas and those without quality broadband accessibility.

In 2024, Kentucky made notable strides with its Digital Equity Plan, aimed at enhancing broadband access statewide. The Kentucky Office of Broadband secured \$874,236 from the State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program to tackle issues related to digital access, skills, and affordability. In April 2024, the Department of Commerce approved Kentucky's Digital Equity Plan, detailing actions to foster digital inclusion and close the digital divide across the state. The published plan will guide efforts to implement digital equity initiatives, supporting activities to improve broadband access, digital literacy, and internet affordability, particularly for underserved populations in rural and urban areas.

Kentucky secured approximately \$1.1 billion in BEAD funding, it's largest broadband investment yet. BEAD's objectives for the GRADD region include strengthening broadband infrastructure to connect underserved areas.

Kentucky's broader strategy includes ensuring affordable broadband for low-income households through programs such as the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) and further infrastructure investments aimed at expanding reliable internet service across the state. A collaborative project led by Kenergy and Conexon Connect to construct 7,200 mile of fiber-to-the home network in rural areas of Western Kentucky is underway.



Suzanne Mills talks about Closing the Digital Divide as part of the collaboration of Conexon Connect and Kenergy.(Photo/Kenergy Facebook)

Advancements through partnerships with Kenergy and Conexon Connect have made significant progress, with Kenergy now connecting an average of 40 homes per day and signing up 66 homes daily.

As of October 2025, 3,780 miles of fiber have been installed and 8,554 households have been connected.

1. U.S. News Best States Internet Access Rankings.

SUMMARY BACKGROUND

INDUSTRY

Industry within the GRADD Region has faced recent setbacks, with industry closures creating challenges. Century Aluminum, Hawesville suspended operations in August 2022, resulting in 628 employee layoffs. In March 2024, Daicel Safety Systems Americas Inc., Beaver Dam shuttered, resulting in 290 job losses. Daramic, LLC closed its Owensboro manufacturing facility in September 2024 with 158 jobs lost. Hickory Springs Manufacturing ceased their Owensboro operations in late 2024, resulting in an additional 40 layoffs. Kentucky Bioprocessing announced closure of their Owensboro facility in April 2025, with plans to terminate 46 positions in October. Green River Distillery reduced its workforce by half in early 2025, eliminating its second shift and 30 positions.

While the coal industry has declined overall, Union County has experienced consistent growth in coal employment and production. As Kentucky's leading coal producer since 2012, with 932 employees,¹ Union County produced 2.5 million tons of coal in the second quarter of 2025, more than the total produced by all East Kentucky. River View Coal began its expansion into Henderson County in July 2023 along with 260 high wage jobs. GRADD's RLF loaned Mine System Solutions (MSS), one of only six companies worldwide that service electric haul trucks used in heavy mining operations, \$250,000 to facilitate its Union County expansion.

Webster County received a \$2.1 million grant to invest in land for economic development, which was used to acquire 40 acres of land along HWY 670 in Providence, and extend water and sewer service to the site. This development aims to attract investors in the manufacturing sector, enhancing the area's appeal for new business ventures.

Western Kentucky Distilling Co., opened in Ohio County in 2023, now employs 37 people, and was supported by a \$700,000 CDBG Infrastructure Project. Rhythm River Distilling began construction on its \$5 million distillery in downtown Henderson in September 2024, creating 12 new jobs and serves as a tourism attraction.

In 2023, Pratt Industries opened a new \$500 million paper mill and box manufacturing facility in Henderson, creating 500 new high wage jobs, and positioning it as one of the most significant economic developments in the region in more than 25 years.



Shocklee, LLC, RLF Loan Closing-Rampstop Marine Services in McLean County (Photo/GRADD)

Since 2022, GRADD's RLF provided \$2,427,243 in funding to small businesses, creating or retaining 220 jobs.

Churchill Downs Inc. invested over \$100 million to develop Owensboro Racing & Gaming in Owensboro. Opening in early 2025, the venue has created 150 permanent jobs, contributing an estimated \$125 million annually to the regional economy.

The Owensboro Riverport Authority received \$1.3 million in the 2024-2025 fiscal year for constructing a waterline loop to strengthen essential infrastructure and support riverport operations. This project is part of a broader Kentucky initiative to modernize and improve riverport facilities.

Southwire announced an expansion in May 2025 to their Hancock County plant, growing to 806,770 square feet and employing 561 people over the last five years. Once this expansion is completed, another 50 jobs will be added.

Tyson Foods is investing nearly \$23.5 million to expand and modernize its facility in Henderson County, retaining over 1,100 employees.

Unifirst Corp. is expanding its Owensboro facility with a \$28 million investment, upgrading and modernizing its 360,000-square-foot distribution and fulfillment center.

August 28, 2024, Mizkan America is expanding its operations and creating 44 new jobs in Owensboro. Swedish Match is investing \$232 million to expand its Owensboro facility, creating 450 new high wage jobs.

In 2024, McLean County's Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) issued its first small business loan of \$50,000 to the owners of Calhoun Pharmacy to establish a local pharmacy in Calhoun.

SUMMARY BACKGROUND

INFRASTRUCTURE

GRADD makes enhancing water and sewer infrastructure a top priority, as the costs associated with these large-scale projects to replace aging infrastructure present a significant barrier to local governments and rate payers. Funding partners, such as the Kentucky Infrastructure Authority (KIA), play a vital role in supporting these efforts, and work alongside GRADD to help identify and prioritize water and sewer infrastructure needs, develop projects, and find additional funding assistance.

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) released funds to support infrastructure development in June 2022, with \$500 million of those funds allocated based on population by county with the Cleaner Water Program (CWP), funding ninety-two projects in the GRADD region, totaling more than \$23.5 million. GRADD staff worked closely with local governments and utilities in each county to reach consensus on funded infrastructure projects.

New funding avenues will offer opportunity to replace their aging infrastructure. KYWWATERS will provide \$150 million for water and wastewater projects. The City of Sturgis was awarded two grants totaling \$2.039 million to improve their water infrastructure and the City of Providence was awarded \$850,000 to install a water interconnect. The GRANT program, administered by the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development provides \$200 million in state matching funds to federal grant application dollars. To date, 19 GRANT projects totaling \$4.5 million have been awarded in the GRADD region.

Significant infrastructure projects have recently taken center stage in the GRADD region during the 2025 Fiscal Year, including the following projects:

- The City of Morganfield and Union County Fiscal Court completed the \$6.3 million Job Corps Sewer System Rehabilitation. As the next phase, Morganfield received a \$1.3 million KIA loan for planning and designing upgrades to its similarly aged wastewater treatment plant.
- Ohio County Water District completed a \$6.2 million project to replace their intake line on the Green River.
- The City of Sacramento \$3.7 million force main sewer will be let for bid in late 2025 using \$1.25 million in GRANT funds and \$1.25 million CDBG funds.



Construction takes place on the Ohio County Water District Intake Project. (Photo/GRADD)

- The City of Sturgis \$4.67 million wastewater treatment plant rehabilitation will be let for bid in late 2025, funded with \$2 million from Delta Regional Authority, \$1 million from CWP, nearly \$1 million from KIA, and \$700,000 from Union County Fiscal Court.
- The City of Morganfield supplies finished drinking water to nearly all residents of Union County. They have received a \$7 million loan from KIA to add a Granular Activated Carbon Contactor tank to their water treatment plant, a necessary upgrade to comply with new Division of Water and Environmental Protection Agency regulations.
- The City of Providence is in the final stages of completing the funding package for a nearly \$15 million project to rehabilitate collector sewer lines, upgrade the wastewater treatment plant, and install new water lines throughout the city.
- The City of Lewisport was awarded a loan through KIA to begin construction of their new \$14 million Hancock County Regional Water Treatment Plant.

1. University of Kentucky Water Resources Research Institute. Kentucky Water Workforce Survey 2022. Accessed online: <https://heyzine.com/flip-book/cd4e92283a.html>

SUMMARY BACKGROUND

QUALITY OF LIFE & HOUSING

Community services affect the quality of life of residents. Leveraging local funds with grant funding allows GRADD communities to develop quality recreational, public safety, and public health services. With better facilities, communities can improve the quality of life of residents while retaining and attracting skilled workers who will continue growing the economy.

In April 2024, McLean County opened the doors to its brand-new McLean County Community and Senior Citizens Center in Calhoun on April 13, 2024 after a devastating fire in December 2020. Additionally, several recreation projects were recently funded through the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Parks in Morganfield and Clay have undergone upgrades with this funding. Vastwood Park in Hancock County opened their new spray park. Henderson expanding their new sports complex. Creating accessible outdoor spaces for residents to enjoy is important to local officials and appreciated by residents. Canaan Ridge Park in Webster County is a newly developed recreational area aimed at enhancing the quality of life for residents. The park features a boat ramp, picnic shelters, hiking trails, a lake, and a kayak launch, offering various outdoor activities for visitors.

Fire departments ensure the safety of our communities, so it is important to

ensure they are well-equipped. The community of Poole in Webster County was awarded \$111,034 to purchase new gear to help keep their firefighters protected. A project to construct the new Dukes Fire Station in Hancock County is now complete, using CDBG and local funds for construction.

Stakeholders across all CEDS planning meetings cited a lack of available housing units as a major concern. There is a lack of adequate data showing housing needs by county; however, an NPR report from June 2022 examined 800 cities and towns, including Owensboro. The report states that the Owensboro metro area had its housing needs met between 2012-2014 but had entered a shortage between 2017-2019¹. Kentucky faces a housing shortage, with a projected need for 290,000 new homes by 2029, as the region still hasn't fully recovered from the 2008 housing crisis.

With incoming industries and a need for a growing workforce, housing developments are an urgent need in the region. Collaborators cited a need for both more multi-unit dwellings and single-family homes. Progress has been made in areas such as Henderson County that will build 300 new housing units and in Daviess County where a 10-home subdivision is under construction through Habitat for Humanity.

Further complicating the housing issue is the rising cost of construction. Collaborators stated that increased state and local incentives are needed to encourage housing developers. The CEDS committee also highlighted the importance of communication between local governments and housing developers and the need for flexible, planning-led zoning reforms.

GRADD and community partners are participating in a housing collaborative with the overarching goal to find a sustainable way to create low-cost housing. As part of the collaborative, Owensboro Health donated seventeen parcels of land to support construction of new affordable homes by Habitat for Humanity of Owensboro.

1. Arnold, Chris; Benincasa, Robert; Ganun, Jacqueline; and Chu, Haidee. *There's a massive housing shortage across the U.S. Here's how bad it is where you live.* NPR. 7/14/22



Governor Andy Beshear and Judge Charlie Castlen break ground on Carter Community, a project funded in part by a CDBG grant funded by DLG award partnership between Habitat for Humanity and Daviess County Fiscal Court. (Photo/GRADD)

SUMMARY BACKGROUND

TRANSPORTATION

Quality transportation remains critical for economic growth. Key projects are leading the way as the GRADD region seeks to improve its infrastructure to attract new industries and support growth of existing industries, as well as to improve the quality of life for residents.

The I-69 Ohio River Crossing Project, a bi-state initiative to build a new four-lane bridge linking Henderson, Kentucky, with Evansville, Indiana, as part of the Interstate 69 corridor is critical to the region's continued growth. The \$1.5 billion project consists of three sections. Section 1 in Kentucky extends I-69 from KY-425 to U.S. 60 over six miles, with nine new bridges, seven rehabilitated bridges and new interchanges at KY-351, U.S. 41, and U.S. 60. Costing \$227 million, it is 80% complete and on track for late 2025. Section 3, in Indiana, covers approach roadways and bridges from Veterans Memorial Parkway to the state line, costs \$202 million and is 30% complete, with a target of late 2026. Section 2, the \$1.2 billion river crossing, will see construction begin in early 2027 and conclude by late 2031, pending federal funding and toll revenues.



New beams are being installed for the Panther Creek Bridge Replacement Project on Old Hartford Road. (Photo/Daviess County Fiscal Court Facebook)

In August 2023, the \$14.4 million KY-331 upgrade to enhance access to the Owensboro Riverport began, widening and straightening the road, making it safer and more navigable for semi-trucks and other large vehicles.

The \$23.38 million project to widen KY-54 in Daviess County to 6 lanes began in March 2024 and is expected to be completed in November 2026.

Every two years, transportation agencies submit priority road projects for state review under the SHIFT scoring process for funding. The Owensboro-Daviess County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) submitted nine projects to the SHIFT process, while the KYTC District 2 office sponsored six projects in the MPO area, totaling \$144 million in project costs. The MPO and District 2 office added boosts to the three most critical projects in the MPO area:

Daviess County

- KY-54: Widen from Thruston-Dermont to Countryside Drive
- KY-331: Intersection Reconstruction at U.S. 60 to add two turn lanes
- Fairview Drive: Improve from Settles Road to KY-54

The GRADD Regional Transportation Committee boosted nine projects with \$147 million in total project costs:

Hancock County

- KY-69: Connect US-60 & Cannelton Bridge
- US-60: Widen from Lewisport to KY-1957

McLean County

- KY-136: Address issues with bridges

Ohio County

- KY-69: Widen from KY-85 to KY-273
- KY-69: Reconstruct from KY-54 to Sunnydale Road

Union County

- US-60: Reconstruct from Waverly to Corydon
- US-60: Widen from Morganfield Bypass to Waverly

Webster County

- KY-138: Address flooding from KY-120 to Railroad
- US-41-A: Reconstruct from KY-2836 to Vanderburg-Lisman Road

SUMMARY BACKGROUND

RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE

The GRADD region has experienced three disaster declarations to date in 2025. DR-4860-KY was approved for all GRADD counties after the severe storms, winds, tornadoes, and flooding experienced February, April and May. Volunteers from other communities, including GRADD's own employees, came to offer public assistance to the McLean, Hancock, Henderson, Ohio and Union County flooding. DR-4875 was approved for Union County after a tornado in May of this 2025.

Recovery and resilience are core priorities for the GRADD region. Kentucky has faced numerous hazard events in recent years—severe storms, tornadoes, winter weather, flooding, and drought—which disrupt communities, damage infrastructure, and strain public services. From 2022–2024 alone, the Commonwealth experienced multiple billion-dollar disasters. In 2024, the GRADD region recorded two disaster declarations: Union County declared an emergency following the April 2024 tornado and received Individual Assistance; in May 2024, McLean and Ohio counties received Public Assistance and Hazard Mitigation funding. All three counties secured disaster relief resources to support response and recovery.

GRADD's Hazard Mitigation Plan prioritizes continuity of operations for critical facilities—especially power reliability. In 2023, standby generators were installed at the Hancock County Rescue Squad building, Beaver Dam Fire Department (Ohio County), Sacramento Fire Station (McLean County), Webster County Senior Center, and emergency facilities in Daviess County. In 2024, additional generators were placed at the Dukess Fire Station (Hancock County) and at three wastewater pump stations in the City of Corydon to maintain essential services during outages.

The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) is strongly utilized throughout the GRADD region to fund projects to enhance resilience against climate and weather disasters. Owensboro Municipal Utilities (OMU) was awarded \$521,834 in HMGP funding to strengthen the electric power infrastructure in an area with 1,481 residential properties, multiple commercial businesses, two elementary schools and a radio station that serves as a primary source of information for the citizens of the county.¹



Rescue teams and volunteers provide aid in April 2025 to the McLean County community. (Photo/GRADD)

The outdated Hawesville Levee pump system risks failure during storms, which could result in flooding. To prevent this, the City secured \$3,350,000 from HMGP, \$160,800 from Kentucky Emergency Management, and \$174,200 from Kentucky's Flood Control Match Program to renovate the storm water pump station, and the project will be let for bid in early 2026.

Owensboro Municipal Utilities was also awarded \$1,668,750 in 40101(d) funding from the Department of Energy and the Kentucky Office of Energy Policy to replace a 138kV tower that is eroding due to its location next to the riverbank on the Ohio River and supplies power to more than 8,000 customers in the western portion of the OMU service area.

GRADD's resiliency agenda emphasizes hardening critical infrastructure, maintaining essential services during disruptions, and accelerating recovery

1. NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) U.S. Billion-Dollar Weather and Climate Disasters (2023). <https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/access/billions/>, DOI: 10.25921/stkw-7w73

HIGHLIGHTING RESILIENCE

HENDERSON IRT MISSION

In June 2024, the City of Henderson and GRADD, alongside the Delta Regional Authority, brought the Department of Defense's Innovative Readiness Training (IRT) mission to South Middle School in Henderson, Kentucky. This first-ever IRT mission in the GRADD region, led by the Air National Guard and supported by the Air Force, Army Reserve, Army National Guard, and Remote Area Medical, was a monumental event in the community, addressing local healthcare needs and leaving a lasting impact on both the region and the service members involved.

Over ten days, the IRT mission provided a wide range of healthcare services, from optometry to general health exams, dental care, veterinary services, and public health education. In total, the mission served 1,642 patients and conducted 34,161 procedures. These included critical dental treatments, health assessments, and the fabrication of 917 eyeglasses for community members, many of whom had limited access to these services. The economic value of these healthcare services was estimated at \$1,000,000—a testament to the mission's role in alleviating healthcare barriers for residents in the region.

The impact of the IRT mission on the local community extended beyond healthcare. The mission created an atmosphere of support, camaraderie, and trust between the community and the military. Many residents expressed deep appreciation, especially those for whom the cost of healthcare might have otherwise been prohibitive. Through this initiative, the IRT not only met critical needs but also brought hope and relief, reinforcing the value of accessible healthcare and community partnerships. For those receiving care, it was more than a one-time opportunity—it was a reinforcement of the power of collaboration to meet pressing needs.

For the 171 service members deployed, the mission was an intensive training exercise, logging 18,158 hours of training, gaining experience across a range of functions. The structure of the mission allowed service members to perform real-time assessments, respond to immediate healthcare needs, and work within a simulated deployment environment while connecting with the local community in a meaningful way. This mission-essential, cross-training readiness exercise was invaluable for honing skills that are directly transferable to their duties, whether in domestic emergencies or overseas missions. Their work in Henderson solidified readiness to respond to diverse

situations, contributing to the larger goals of the DoD while enriching their own capabilities. The successful execution of this IRT mission underscored the importance of inter-agency collaboration. The City of Henderson, GRADD, Delta Regional Authority, and the military came together to make this mission possible, illustrating the effectiveness of unified efforts in meeting public health needs. Such collaborations can inspire future missions and expand the potential of similar initiatives across other regions.

For the Henderson community, the IRT mission was a powerful reminder of the value of accessible healthcare and the impact that strategic partnerships can have. For the service members, it was a formative experience that went beyond training, allowing them to make a meaningful difference in the lives of people in the community they served. This inaugural mission in the GRADD region has set a precedent, demonstrating how military readiness training can simultaneously deliver life-changing services to communities.



Green River Area Wellness Mission eye exams in Henderson County. (Photo/Green River Area Wellness 2024 Facebook)

HIGHLIGHTING RESILIENCE

GROWING TOURISM INDUSTRY

Owensboro remains a cultural and tourist hub for the western part of the state. Home to the Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame and Museum, Owensboro also declared itself the Bluegrass Capitol of the World in November 2021. The RiverPark Center hosted a summer concert series featuring free concerts. The city is also home to the annual ROMP Music Festival, which boasted popular artists including Wynonna Judd, The Steeldrivers, and Sam Bush. ROMP attracts crowds of 25,000 each year from all over the world. Owensboro also hosts "Friday After 5" during the summer that attracts residents in and outside of the GRADD region. The Hawesville music group, Ole 60, performed at Friday After 5 to a crowd of 16,000+ people.

The Beaver Dam Tourism Commission continues to be a hub for entertainment and community involvement in Ohio County with another year of successful events. Since its first show in 2014, the Amphitheater has hosted visitors from all 50 states and 13 countries. The Amphitheater has hosted the artist, Nelly, where a record 6,200+ people attended. The City of Beaver Dam was also the recipient of the 2021 Government Award, as a part of the Governor's Awards in the Arts.

Jeffreys Cliffs in Hancock County was included in National Geographic's "Great Outdoors U.S.A.: 1,000 Adventures Across All 50 States" published



A concert takes place at the newly constructed Renaissance Corner in Morganfield. (Photo/Union County Facebook)

in August 2023. The book includes twenty recreational opportunities in each state open to the public. Jeffreys Cliffs was officially opened to the public in 2018 and includes several walking and hiking trails.

Livermore was certified as Kentucky's 25th Trail Town, enhancing tourism and economic growth through outdoor recreation. The town offers river activities, bike routes, a sporting goods store with canoe and kayak rentals, and the River Trails Inn for overnight stays. The Department of Tourism highlighted outdoor recreation as a key economic driver for both Kentucky and the U.S.

Kentucky Ohio River Regional Recreation Authority offers the GRADD region a significant opportunity to grow its tourism industry by developing outdoor activities along the Ohio River. Plans for hiking trails, water sports, and recreational areas aim to attract outdoor enthusiasts, which will boost local businesses, including hotels, restaurants, and shops. The increased foot traffic can stimulate job creation, enhance local tax revenues, and increase overall economic growth. By utilizing its natural resources, the GRADD region can position itself as a key destination for nature-based tourism, benefiting local communities and businesses.



Livermore Riverfront Park (City of Livermore Website)

SWOT ANALYSIS

A SWOT Analysis is an identification of competitive assets to a region, as well as factors that could hinder economic development. A SWOT Analysis is a helpful tool to determine what features a region has implemented or needs to implement to strengthen and grow their economy.

Strengths are a region's competitive advantages, such as a skilled workforce or robust broadband availability.

Weaknesses are a region's competitive disadvantages, such as low educational attainment or high cost of living.

Opportunities are chances for regional improvement or progress, such as the potential expansion of an existing industry.

Threats are chances for negative impacts or regional decline, such as several companies considering relocating outside of the region.

Strengths

- Strong collaboration between region's water and wastewater systems
- Strong community college system with technical training programs
- Multimodal logistics and regional industrial anchors
- Strong network of senior centers & services
- Strong K-12 school systems
- Reliable, affordable utilities
- Diverse industrial base

Weaknesses

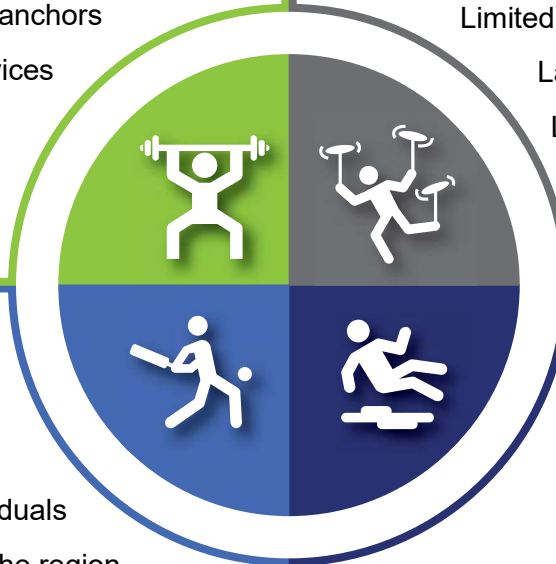
- Limited supply of shovel-ready large project sites for industry
- Lack of comprehensive health care, especially in rural areas
- Limited four-lane highway access for industry expansion
- Labor force participation rate and skills gaps
- Limited rural broadband and cell coverage
- Limited childcare options and affordability
- Shortage of decent affordable housing

Opportunities

- I-69 Ohio River Crossing
- Expanding tourism industry
- Reentry programs for incarcerated individuals
- On-shoring and green-industry attraction to the region
- State GRANT matching dollars to leverage federal dollars
- Expansion of health care facilities, especially in rural areas

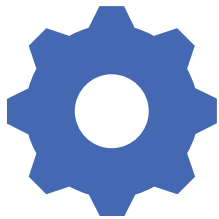
Threats

- Aging infrastructure
- Rising cost of living
- Talent pipeline outmigration
- Further decline of the coal industry
- Retiring water and wastewater operators
- Regional Performance Pressures



STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The Strategic Direction outlines broad goals and objectives for GRADD economic development for the next five years. Goals are priority general intentions, and each goal has multiple objectives, which are specific, measurable, and concrete targets.



GOAL 1

Grow and cultivate the region's workforce.



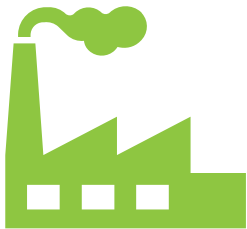
GOAL 2

Strengthen broadband and cell availability.



GOAL 3

Expand access to adequate housing.



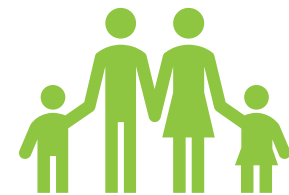
GOAL 4

Attract new industries to the region.



GOAL 5

Upgrade infrastructure systems.



GOAL 6

Improve the quality of life for residents.

GOAL 1: Grow and cultivate the region's workforce.

WHY IS THIS OUR GOAL?

Labor availability is a key factor for industries selecting new locations, and regions with a steady supply of skilled workers have a competitive edge. Maintaining a skilled workforce is also essential for retaining existing industries. Expanding workforce participation by supporting those currently unable to work can improve the region's overall quality of life.

OBJECTIVE 1

Cultivate skills in the workforce by increasing the percentage of people aged 25+ with an Associates Degree by five percent.

PROGRESS

Dislocated Worker Trainings: This program offers 28 credits in the I-TEC that help workers obtain associates degrees. As of May 2023, 11 dislocated workers completed all 28 credits and earned five OCTC certificates.

Summer Bridge Program: 13 recent students earning 16 credit hours from Tech-X classes allowed students to work towards completion of an associate's degree.

OBJECTIVE 2

Develop childcare facilities in all counties to the extent that no county is considered a childcare desert.

PROGRESS

Family Y of Owensboro Daviess County: Phase I Expansion creating 44 childcare slots completed. Phase II Expansion to create 71 childcare slots underway.

OBJECTIVE 3

Implement new technical education and training programs to attract industries.

PROGRESS

Henderson Community College Delta Workforce Grant Program (DWPG): Awarded \$450,000 in DRA funds to expand the Multi-skilled Advanced Industrial Maintenance Training (MAINTech) Program.

Union County High School: Received \$8 million to revamp its technical school, including ADA compliance updates, welding exhaust renovations, and emergency system upgrades.

Webster County Area Technical Center: Awarded \$326,000 in DRA funds to purchase training equipment for manufacturing, healthcare, industrial, and CAD career tracks for high school students.

Putting Young Kentuckians to Work Program: the Green River Workforce Development Board received \$790,476 to establish the Putting Young Kentuckians to Work Program.

GOAL 2: Strengthen broadband and cell availability.

WHY IS THIS OUR GOAL?

The pandemic underscored that broadband is essential for industries, small businesses, and individuals. Companies consider broadband availability when choosing locations, and small businesses depend on reliable internet and cell service for daily operations and growth. Individuals need high-speed access for education, remote work, telehealth, and communication. Poor broadband and cell service limits regional economic growth and competitiveness in attracting industries and talent.

OBJECTIVE 1

Secure funding and work with Internet Service Providers to complete "last mile" projects to provide internet to unserved or underserved households and businesses.

PROGRESS

Bipartisan Infrastructure Broadband Equity, Access and Development Program (BEAD): \$1.1 Billion dollars secured by the State to provide Kentuckians with affordable and reliable internet access in both rural and urban areas. This is Kentucky's largest investment in broadband so far and is still in the pre-application stage.

Kentucky's Better Internet Program: House Bill 320 and House Bill 382 established Kentucky's Broadband Deployment fund to assist private sectors entities and governmental agencies in the cost of constructing "last mile" of high speed internet access to unserved and underserved households and businesses.

OBJECTIVE 2

Increase access to broadband in each county in the region.

PROGRESS

Kenergy Partnership with Conexon Connect: Total household connections of 8,554 and 3,780 miles of fiber have been installed. 40 homes per day are being connected within the GRADD region.

McLean County Broadband Tower: The new tower is complete in Calhoun and serves 2,300 residents. The new tower provides download speeds up to 100 Mbps and upload speeds up to 20 Mbps.

Digital Equity Plan: In March 2024 the state released their Digital Equity Plan through the State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program This Plan serves to set forth measurable objectives that will impact and interact with the Commonwealth's economic and workforce development goals, plans, and outcomes; education outcomes, health outcomes; civic and social engagement; and delivery of essential services.

GOAL 3: Expand access to adequate housing.

WHY IS THIS OUR GOAL?

Housing shortages are a growing concern nationwide, and the GRADD region is no exception with insufficient single- and multi-family units to support economic growth. Local officials must collaborate with developers to promote new construction and address rental property maintenance, especially when landlords are not local. Stronger housing codes are essential to ensure all renters have access to safe, sanitary living conditions.

OBJECTIVE 1

Encourage new housing construction through state and local incentives, such as tax incentives and streamlined zoning processes, resulting in at least 200 new housing units across the region by 2027.

PROGRESS

Henderson County: \$35 million private investment to build 300 new housing units.

Daviess County/Habitat for Humanity: Daviess County Fiscal Court has secured CDBG and GRANT program funds to help construct the new 10-home Carter Community Court.

OBJECTIVE 2

Identify and secure funding for affordable housing projects and shelters to meet the demand in each county.

PROGRESS

City of Owensboro: Accepted \$1 million dollars in Home Investment Partnerships American Rescue Plan funds for future low-income housing projects.

Housing Collaborative: GRADD has joined a housing collaborative focused on finding solutions to the regional housing shortage, with an emphasis on increasing the availability of affordable homes.

Owensboro Health Land Donation: As part of the housing collaborative, Owensboro Health has donated seventeen parcels of land to be used to construct affordable homes by Habitat for Humanity in Owensboro.

GOAL 4: Attract new industries to the region.

WHY IS THIS OUR GOAL?

The growth of new industries will help the GRADD region diversify its economy and build resilience against market shifts. Emerging manufacturing sectors offer well-paying jobs and often spur additional industry development. Coordinated efforts among local governments, state and federal partners, and investors are essential to attract and support new businesses. Such collaboration can ease financial pressures on communities and encourage investment in industrial sites.

OBJECTIVE 1

Coordinate with the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development to identify and market potential sites for investors with a goal of securing at least one new industrial investment in each county.

PROGRESS

Mine System Solutions: Union County received a \$7.1 million investment through Union County Industrial Development Authority, GRADD and community banks to facilitate the Mine Systems Solutions (MSS) expansion, one of only six companies worldwide who service electric haul trucks used in heavy mining operations.

Alliance Coal: Broke ground on a \$35 million coal mine project in Henderson County, bringing close to 300 new high paying jobs into the region.

Pratt Industries: Completed construction on a \$500 million investment in Henderson County and has created over 300 jobs.

South Sebree Industrial Park: Through KDPI the South Sebree Industrial Park was awarded \$450,000. The project focuses on developing 42.98 acres through infrastructure improvements like road construction, utility installation, and floodplain elevation to attract industrial investments.

GRADD Revolving Loan Fund (RLF): Since 2022, GRADD's RLF provided \$2,427,243 in funding to small businesses, creating or retaining 220 jobs.

OBJECTIVE 2

Attract new industries in emerging clusters, especially distilling and electric vehicle battery production.

PROGRESS

Western Kentucky Distilling Co.: Ohio County has completed its first rick-house in the Western Kentucky Distillery and opened to the public in September of 2023. They will continue to expand the bourbon industry in Ohio County.

Green River Distilling: Hancock County has completed one rick-house to store bourbon for Green River Distillery and is in progress of constructing eight more. This project will initially start with 15 jobs created and rise to 25 by fourth year operation.

Churchill Downs Inc.: \$100 million investment into Owensboro Racing and Gaming opened in early 2025, creating 150 jobs.

GOAL 5: Upgrade infrastructure and renewable energy.

WHY IS THIS OUR GOAL?

Strong water, wastewater and transportation infrastructure are vital to both economic growth and the overall wellbeing of a community. Infrastructure is needed by both the region's existing industries and families. With constantly aging and sometimes failing infrastructure, investments in water, wastewater and transportation projects will always be a top priority. Extending infrastructure to new industrial sites is also vital to site development and attracting new investments to the region.

OBJECTIVE 1

Develop water, wastewater and transportation infrastructure to priority industrial sites.

PROGRESS

Webster County: Completed \$1 million infrastructure upgrades at South Sebree Industrial Park.

Owensboro Riverport: received \$1 million to install a waterline to better attract industries.

OBJECTIVE 2

Develop four-lane highways to encourage new industry and improve traffic flow.

PROGRESS

Hancock County: Hwy 60 widening project nearly complete to improve traffic flow and industrial traffic.

Daviess County: \$23.38 million construction project to widen KY-54.

OBJECTIVE 3

Secure funding for water and wastewater projects identified in the WRIS portal.

PROGRESS

KIA Projects: 11 water and wastewater projects funded through Kentucky Infrastructure Authority totaling more than \$71 million.

CWP Projects: 92 water and wastewater projects funded through the Cleaner Water Program totaling more than \$24 million.

OBJECTIVE 4

Secure funding for projects identified in the GRADD Hazard Mitigation Plan.

PROGRESS

OMU: Awarded funding to complete their Poet Section Infrastructure Hardening and replace their 138kV tower.

GRADD: Hazard Mitigation Plan update process started and is expected to be complete in 2026.

GOAL 6: Improve the quality of life for residents.

WHY IS THIS OUR GOAL?

Quality of life plays a key role in attracting population and employment growth within a community. Factors such as recreation, safety, health, and education increasingly influence regional economic success. Even in non-metropolitan areas, higher quality of life correlates with lower unemployment and poverty rates and greater population growth.

OBJECTIVE 1

Create and develop community facilities including fire stations, libraries, senior centers, parks, community centers, sidewalks, public transit, etc.

PROGRESS

Webster County Senior Center: Completed their \$319,356 CDBG-CV Renovations in late 2024.

City of Morganfield: Received \$144,625 from the Land and Water Conservation Funds to build an accessible splash pad, ADA compliant bathroom and parking lot. The project is expected to be complete in 2026.

Union County Moffit Lake: Received \$100,000 in Land and Water Conservation Funds to repave existing roadways and a basketball court, which was completed in late 2024.

Dukes Fire Station: Received \$1,000,000 in CDBG funds to construct a new fire station which was completed in late 2024.

Poole Volunteer Fire Department: Awarded \$111,034 to purchase new firefighting gear.

Webster County Canaan Ridge Park: Expanded their playground with \$128,866 in Land and Water Conservation Fund and expanded the walking trails with \$203,000 in Recreational Trails funds.

Hancock County Vastwood Park: Completed their \$1.1 million splashpad in the summer 2025.

OBJECTIVE 2

Identify and secure funding for the development of healthcare facilities and initiative, including mental health and substance use treatment.

PROGRESS

Owensboro Regional Recovery: ORR receives \$200,000 in CDBG funds to support operations.

Center of Addiction Recovery of Henderson: WARM receives \$200,000 in CDBG funds to support operations.

OASIS: Daviess County Fiscal Court received \$1 million in CDBG funds to open a new shelter for those impacted by domestic violence.

EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

The Evaluation Framework is a set of measures selected to track economic progress for the GRADD Region. These measures gauge how successful the Strategic Direction goals and objectives have been towards economic growth and increasing prosperity.

	2010	2020	2025	2027 Goal
Owner-Occupied Housing Units Percentage¹	72.0%	68.9%	68.1%	70.0%
Cost-Burdened Households* - Renters¹	42.7%	39.1%	44.7%	38.0%
Cost-Burdened Households* - Homeowners¹	26.1%	23.6%	18.5%	22.0%
Rate of Housing Units Constructed after 2010¹	3.6%	5.3%	8.2%	10.0%
Poverty Rate¹	16.8%	16.8%	14.8%	15.8%
High School Graduation Rate²	82.4%	89.1%	94.79%	92.0%
Persons with Associate Degree 25 Years and Over¹	11,393	14,512	16,217	16,000
Total Manufacturing Sector Employment¹	19,317	18,189	19,196	19,000
Overall Labor Force Participation Rate¹	59.5%	58.7%	60.3%	60.0%
Total Number of Persons in Civilian Labor Force¹	99,762	100,276	104,208	102,000
Percentage of Women in Civilian Labor Force¹	65.9%	53.8%	69.1%	55.0%
Number of Shovel-Ready Sites³	**	14	11	16
Number of Build-Ready Sites³	**	3	4	5
Households with 25 Mbps Broadband Access¹	**	68.2%	88.3%	90.0%
Median Household Income¹	\$39,879	\$50,271 (26%)	\$61,525 (22%)	+ 5.0% Increase

1. United States Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates

2. Kentucky Department of Education, Kentucky's School Report Card 2024

3. Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development, ZoomProspector. September 2025

* Monthly housing costs greater than or equal to 30% of household income

** Data not available

DAVISS COUNTY STATISTICS

POPULATION¹

2025 Population Since 2010
103,195 **+6.64%**

Median Age
38.2

Median Household Income Since 2010
\$65,323 **+52.5%**

Percent of Population Below Poverty Line
15.2%

Percent of Population with Disability
17.4%

Limited English Proficiency Population
2,293

WORKFORCE¹

Total Labor Force

54,096

Labor Force Participation

65.4%

Annual Average Unemployment Rate

4.1%

LARGEST INDUSTRIES & EMPLOYMENT¹

⊕	Educational Services & Health	12,393 employees
🏭	Manufacturing	9,189 employees
🏪	Retail Trade	7,392 employees
🚚	Arts, Entertainment, Food Service	6,892 employees
🎓	Finance and Insurance	3,211 employees

HOUSING¹

Cost Burdened Households

Median Housing Cost
 \$933 per month

Monthly Housing Costs greater than 30% of Income

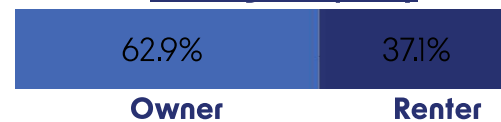
Owner - 17.6%
 Renter - 48.6%

Occupied Housing Units
41,157

Median Home Value
\$198,900

Households with Broadband
92.2%

Housing Occupancy



Age of Housing Units

2020 or Later
 1%

2000 to 2019
 20%

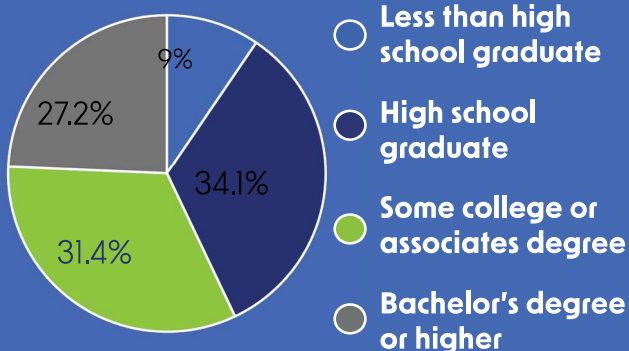
1980 to 1999
 25.4%

1960 to 1979
 29.4%

Prior to 1960
 24.2%

EDUCATION¹

Attainment for Population 25 years and older



COUNTY PRIORITIES

- Upgrade the Audubon and Natcher Parkways to interstate standards.
- Expand broadband access and ensure fiber redundancy.
- Strengthen drug prevention, awareness, and treatment.
- Develop and market industrial parks.
- Advance regional solutions for solid waste, animal care, jails, and 911.

HANCOCK COUNTY STATISTICS

POPULATION¹

2025 Population

9,032

Since 2010

+5.6%

Median Age

41.5

Median Household Income

\$62,417

Since 2010

+50.1%

Percent of Population Below Poverty Line

15.9%

Percent of Population with Disability

21.8%

Limited English Proficiency Population

45

WORKFORCE¹

Total Labor Force

4,139

Labor Force Participation

58.3%

Annual Average
Unemployment Rate²

3.9%

LARGEST INDUSTRIES & EMPLOYMENT¹

	Manufacturing	1,346 employees
	Education and Health Care	940 employees
	Retail Trade	515 employees
	Arts, Entertainment, Food Service	244 employees
	Construction	161 employees

HOUSING¹

Cost Burdened Households

Median Housing Cost

\$738 per month

Monthly Housing Costs
Greater than 30% of Income

Owner - 20.2%
Renter - 53.1%

Occupied Housing Units

3,537

Median Home Value

\$165,800

Households with Broadband

83.5%

Housing Occupancy

78.4%

21.6%

Owner

Renter

Age of Housing Units

2020 or Later

0.7%

2000 to 2019

23.4%

1980 to 1999

29.7%

1960 to 1979

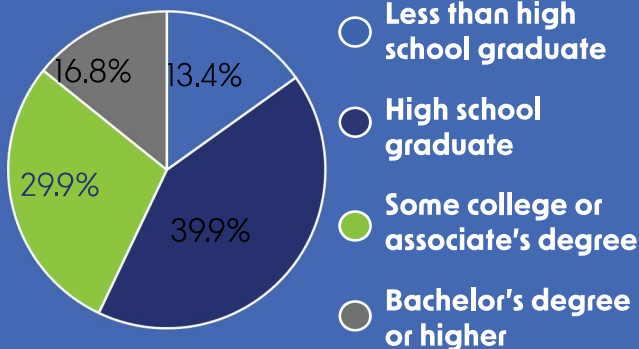
29.7%

Prior to 1960

16.5%

EDUCATION¹

Attainment for Population 25 years and older



COUNTY PRIORITIES

Complete countywide broadband build-out with Kenergy/Conexon.

Continue Highway 60 widening project for increased truck traffic.

Modernize emergency and protective services radio systems.

Upgrade county parks and partner with the Chamber on growth.

Attract and support businesses of all sizes to drive economic development.

HENDERSON COUNTY STATISTICS

POPULATION¹

2025 Population
44,493

Since 2010
-3.2%

Median Age
41.0

Median Household Income Since 2010
\$58,239 +44.0%

Percent of Population Below Poverty Line
15.4%

Percent of Population with Disability
24.1%

Limited English Proficiency Population
598

WORKFORCE¹

Total Labor Force

20,241

Labor Force Participation

56.7%

Annual Average Unemployment Rate²

3.0%

LARGEST INDUSTRIES & EMPLOYMENT¹

	Education and Health Care	4,439 employees
	Manufacturing	3,831 employees
	Retail Trade	2,185 employees
	Construction	1,483 employees
	Arts, Entertainment, Food Service	1,431 employees

HOUSING¹

Cost Burdened Households

Median Housing Cost
\$830 per month

Monthly Housing Costs
Greater than 30% of Income

Owner - 19.5%
Renter - 50.8%

Occupied Housing Units
18,458

Median Home Value
\$183,000

Households with Broadband
86.6%

Housing Occupancy



Age of Housing Units

2020 or Later
0.3%

2000 to 2019
18%

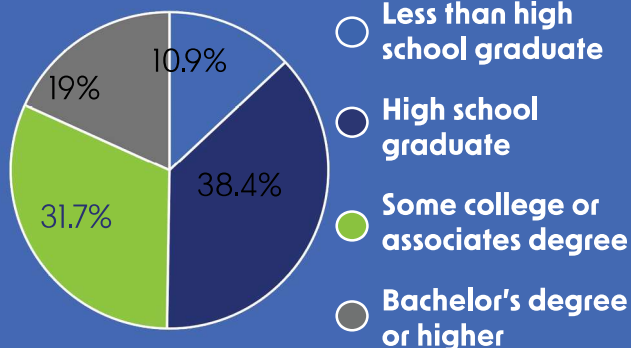
1980 to 1999
25.6%

1960 to 1979
25.8%

Prior to 1960
31.1%

EDUCATION¹

Attainment for Population 25 years and older



COUNTY PRIORITIES

Support construction of the I-69 Ohio River bridge.

Expand internet access in underserved areas.

Partner with Henderson Economic Development on growth and recruitment.

Promote Henderson Community College and career/technical education.

Maintain and upgrade infrastructure to support business and quality of life.

MCLEAN COUNTY STATISTICS

POPULATION¹

2025 Population **9,127** Since 2010 **-5.27%**

Median Age **43.2**

Median Household Income **\$70,549** Since 2010 **+80.4%**

Percent of Population Below Poverty Line **9.3%**

Percent of Population with Disability **19.8%**

Limited English Proficiency Population **70**

WORKFORCE¹

Total Labor Force **4,077**

Labor Force Participation **55.9%**

Annual Average Unemployment Rate² **6.6%**

LARGEST INDUSTRIES & EMPLOYMENT¹

⊕	Education and Health Care	872 employees
🏭	Manufacturing	445 employees
🏪	Retail Trade	392 employees
🚧	Construction	354 employees
🚚	Agriculture	270 employees

HOUSING¹

Cost Burdened Households

Median Housing Cost
\$662 per month

Monthly Housing Costs
Greater than 30% of Income

Owner - 11.6%
Renter - 52.5%

Occupied Housing Units
18,458

Median Home Value
\$149,300

Households with Broadband
85.4%

Housing Occupancy

81.2%

18.8%

Owner

Renter

Age of Housing Units

2020 or Later
0.1%

2000 to 2019
12.3%

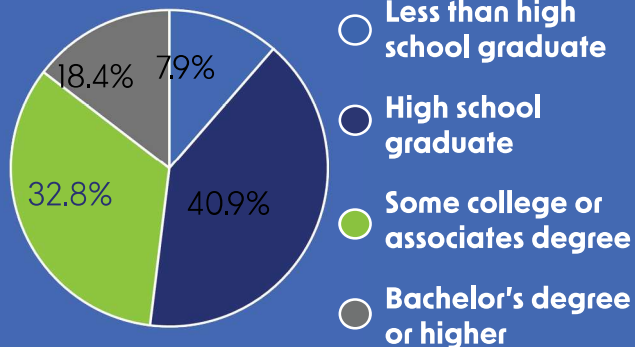
1980 to 1999
28.9%

1960 to 1979
37.2%

Prior to 1960
22.6%

EDUCATION¹

Attainment for Population 25 years and older



COUNTY PRIORITIES

Complete reconstruction of the county senior center.

Secure funding to expand recreational opportunities at Myer Creek Park.

Encourage small businesses to fill vacant storefronts.

Advance economic development and site readiness.

Evaluate countywide water system for needed upgrades and replacements.

OHIO COUNTY STATISTICS

POPULATION¹

2025 Population

23,704

Median Age

40.9

Median Household Income

\$54,369

Since 2010

-0.56%

Since 2010

+50.8%

Percent of Population Below Poverty Line

13.1%

Percent of Population with Disability

19.0%

Limited English Proficiency Population

389

WORKFORCE¹

Total Labor Force

10,208

Labor Force Participation

54.2%

Annual Average Unemployment Rate²

5.2%

LARGEST INDUSTRIES & EMPLOYMENT¹

+	Education & Health Care	2,456 employees
🏭	Manufacturing	1,958 employees
🚚	Construction	1,015 employees
🏪	Retail Trade	742 employees
🎓	Professional Services	704 employees

HOUSING¹

Cost Burdened Households

Median Housing Cost

\$646 per month

Monthly Housing Costs Greater than 30% of Income

Owner - 14.3%
Renter - 46.0%

Occupied Housing Units

18,458

Median Home Value

\$123,300

Households with Broadband

81.2%

Housing Occupancy

78.6%

21.4%

Owner

Renter

Age of Housing Units

2020 or Later
0.5%

2000 to 2019
23.8%

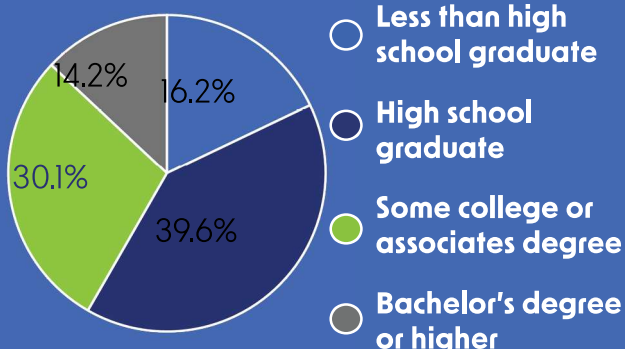
1980 to 1999
29.1%

1960 to 1979
27.0%

Prior to 1960
19.5%

EDUCATION¹

Attainment for Population 25 years and older



COUNTY PRIORITIES

Expand housing availability.

Complete construction of the regional jail.

Grow tourism and add an annex to the Bill Monroe Bluegrass Museum.

Upgrade county roads.

Enhance parks and outdoor recreation using creative funding.

UNION COUNTY STATISTICS

POPULATION¹

2025 Population **13,379** Since 2010 **-11.26%**

Median Age **41.3**

Median Household Income **\$60,989** Since 2010 **+54.3%**

Percent of Population Below Poverty Line **17.4%**

Percent of Population with Disability **30.8%**

Limited English Proficiency Population **89**

WORKFORCE¹

Total Labor Force **5,778**

Labor Force Participation **52.1%**

Annual Average Unemployment Rate² **3.1%**

LARGEST INDUSTRIES & EMPLOYMENT¹

+	Education and Health Care	1,169 employees
🏭	Manufacturing	982 employees
⚒️	Agriculture and Mining	675 employees
🏪	Retail Trade	661 employees
🚚	Construction	401 employees

HOUSING¹

Cost Burdened Households

Median Housing Cost
\$718 per month

Monthly Housing Costs
Greater than 30% of Income

Owner - 13.3%
Renter - 43.1%

Occupied Housing Units

5,128

Median Home Value

\$131,500

Households with Broadband

85.0%

Housing Occupancy

71.7%

28.3%

Owner

Renter

Age of Housing Units

2020 or Later
0.6%

2000 to 2019
11.4%

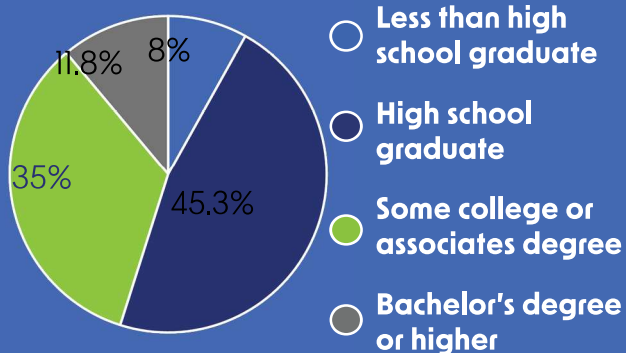
1980 to 1999
29.7%

1960 to 1979
29.2%

Prior to 1960
29.1%

EDUCATION¹

Attainment for Population 25 years and older



COUNTY PRIORITIES

Widen US 60 from Henderson Community College to Morganfield.

Acquire and develop land for ready-to-build industrial sites.

Secure land for housing development to support population and job growth.

Build a county Emergency Operations Center with room for expansion.

Extend broadband to residents beyond the current rural project.

WEBSTER COUNTY STATISTICS

POPULATION¹

2025 Population

12,873

Since 2010

-6.27%

Median Age

39.6

Median Household Income

\$58,786

Since 2010

+48.3%

Percent of Population Below Poverty Line

13.9%

Percent of Population with Disability

27.5%

Limited English Proficiency Population

273

WORKFORCE¹

Total Labor Force

5,669

Labor Force Participation

56.0%

Annual Average
Unemployment Rate²

5.4%

LARGEST INDUSTRIES & EMPLOYMENT¹

	Manufacturing	1,445 employees
	Education & Health Care	895 employees
	Construction	524 employees
	Retail Trade	427 employees
	Transportation and Utilities	413 employees

HOUSING¹

Cost Burdened Households

Median Housing Cost

\$664 per month

Monthly Housing Costs
Greater than 30% of Income

Owner - 18.8%
Renter - 30.5%

Occupied Housing Units

4,920

Median Home Value

\$152,600

Households with Broadband

85.0%

Housing Occupancy

73%

27%

Owner

Renter

Age of Housing Units

2020 or Later

0.5%

2000 to 2019

19.6%

1980 to 1999

25.6%

1960 to 1979

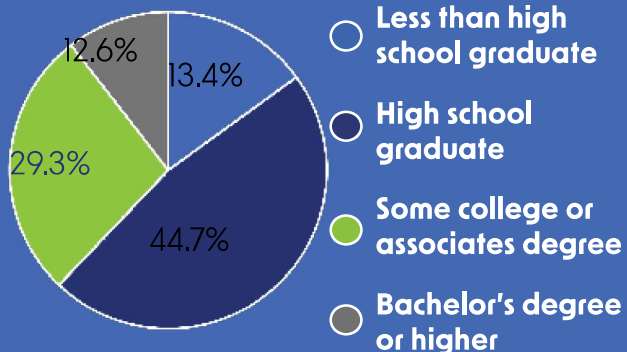
24.6%

Prior to 1960

27.8%

EDUCATION¹

Attainment for Population 25 years and older



COUNTY PRIORITIES

Expand high-speed internet countywide.

Support growth and development of existing businesses.

Develop the I-69 corridor, including the I-69 Business Park.

Increase housing availability and options.

Retain local graduates and attract new residents.