Delta Technology Education Center
Blueprint Review and Action
Steps Moving Forward

November 2015
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Introduction

DTEC Board and Staff - The following insights and suggestions have emerged from our discussions on October 26 and November 16. You are already doing many of these things, but this is an attempt to describe them as well as new opportunities that emerged from our discussions. This does not replace ideas in the blueprint, but adds to them.

You are not merely operating a work force center in Dumas; the facilities and services you offer have the potential to transform lives and build the economy of Dumas and Desha County.

Your Vision for DTEC
It is the year 2023, and the Delta Technology Education Center has become a national model for work force education and community economic development that:
* is a one-stop shop for 21st century work force education,
* equips entrepreneurs and small businesses with knowledge, skills, and motivation, and
* connects the community with top-notch resources in the nation to address critical issues and opportunities.

The Mission of DTEC
The mission of the Delta Technology Education Center is to develop an improved economy in this area of southeast Arkansas through:
* full access to technology for the public,
* additional educational opportunities,
* workforce training,
* entrepreneurship expansion, and
* alliance with public schools.

A special thanks to the Arkansas Science & Technology Authority, Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, and the U of Arkansas Division of Agriculture, for their financial support of this initiative, to the DTEC in Action Steering Committee for their participation, and especially to the DTEC board and staff for their vision, hard work, and commitment to DTEC and the people of Desha County.

Mark Peterson, Professor – Community and Economic Development
University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service
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Delta Technology Education Center
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Breakthrough Solutions – Creating Vibrant, Sustainable, and Resilient Communities
The Breakthrough Solutions Program is a partnership initiative with the purpose of equipping communities and regions in Arkansas to be vibrant, sustainable, and resilient in the 21st century economy. The program supports communities and regions as they plan for and take action, has 20 Breakthrough Solutions partners, and an annual conference. For more information about the Breakthrough Solutions program and partners, go here: http://www.uaex.edu/business-communities/strategic-planning/breakthrough-solutions.aspx.

The Breakthrough Solutions Model is a good fit for the Delta Technology Education Center, as it demonstrates that:
* citizens and community leaders can really make a difference in their communities,
* an asset-opportunity mindset is effective to move toward action, and
* communities that come together and take action will be the ones that will survive and prosper, while that those do not will fade away.
Several Breakthrough Solutions partners have been involved in the DTEC in Action planning process, as described below:

DTEC in Action Planning Process
During 2012-2013, several events took place as part of the DTEC in Action planning process:

* A DTEC in Action Steering Committee was formed, and participated in several working sessions
* These Breakthrough Solutions Partners were involved:
  - Dr. Ed Franklin, Arkansas Community Colleges,
  - Dr. Roby Robertson, UALR Institute of Government,
  - James Downs, Arkansas Science and Technology Authority,
  - Terre McLendon, UALR Institute of Government,
  - Sherry McDonnell, Entergy, and
  - Timothy Lee, UALR Small Business Technology and Development Center.
* Conducted a community survey
* Piped in an expert on business and technology telecenters from North Carolina Broadband Division

Short Term Impacts
* New logo for DTEC
* Study of most promising regional economic sectors by Terre McLendon, UALR Institute for Economic Advancement
* An intern was hired work in DTEC through funding from the Arkansas Science and Technology Authority
* Revamped DTEC website

What is Working Well
* SamaUSA program
  - courses Tuesday and Thursday
  - 15 students studying social media
* Internships have placed students at AT&T
* DTEC is a launching pad for SamaUSA in Arkansas
* New logo and revamped website
* Facebook page
* Partnership with UAMS
* Adult Education is here – DTEC becomes more of a one-stop shop
* ICP training here
* Shalaunda has received more training
Greatest Challenges
* Publicity and awareness
* Many folks don’t know what goes on here
* Funding, funding, funding

NOTE: The DTEC board and staff have been very pro-active and made significant progress. This is documented in the appendix, along with work underway and additional opportunities for the five strategic goals in the DTEC Blueprint for the 21st Century.

Potential Breakthroughs and Breakthrough Solutions for DTEC
Any of the following have the potential to be breakthroughs for DTEC; when you do several of them, the impact will be much greater. Much of this work is already underway:

1) **Get the right people on the board** – renew commitment of board members who have lost the vision and recruit new board members strategically – those with talent, abilities, connections, and passion to help DTEC realize its vision. You are selling a vision of what DTEC and Dumas/Desha County can become, and you communicate that this person in particular can play a key role in making this vision a reality.

2) **Measure impact** – Without impact data, you don’t know what is working and what needs attention. Identify 3-5 key indicators that clearly measure the success of DTEC in achieving its goals, and do whatever it takes to track these numbers. If it means keeping track of individuals who take a course at DTEC, you do it.

3) **Capture (and celebrate) success stories** – When you find a success story, however small, be sure to document it – take a picture(s) of that person or group, get quotes, and videotape a short testimony from them that you can use on your website and in presentations to community leaders, organizations, and funders.

4) **Tell the DTEC story far and wide.**
   * Armed with impact data and personal stories, you can then use this as you interact with community organizations, partner organizations, and funders.
   * Be sure to have a professional photographer take pictures of people at DTEC with smiling faces that draw people to the website and to DTEC.

5) **Become the go-to person / organization for workforce training in Dumas/Desha County.**
• Develop ongoing, high trust partnerships with colleges, universities, and state agencies and become familiar with what they can offer for workforce training.

• Develop ongoing, high trust partnerships with the AR Department of Workforce Education, Adult Education, Dumas High School, and other local providers of workforce training in Dumas.

• Develop ongoing, high trust partnerships with employers, small businesses, and entrepreneurs in Dumas and Desha County, work with them to identify their current and future workforce training needs, and pull out the stops to address those needs.

NOTE: For the latter, it may be helpful for a DTEC board member to host a meeting of a major employer’s president or CEO, that company’s training official (whatever the title), and the DTEC Executive Director. In The South, we form high trust relationships one at a time.

All of this is to fulfill DTEC’s vision to become a one-stop shop for 21st century work force education:

Workforce Education One Stop Shop

Workforce Employers & Small Businesses  DTEC  Workforce Resources & Training

6) Embrace and fully utilize the technology you have available to address real community needs and opportunities; this is a huge asset.

• Become comfortable hosting videoconferences in your DTEC board room as well as from your classroom. Moving forward, you may want to invest in a wide-angle camera, speakers, and multi-directional microphone for the DTEC board room. If high quality equipment is installed permanently in the board room, all the better. If Skype does not allow the speaker to show PowerPoint presentations, Zoom is a good alternative. We have an expert on Zoom within Extension who would be willing to assist you.
YOU ARE CONNECTING DUMAS AND DESHA COUNTY TO THE WORLD, AND TO RESOURCES THAT WOULD OTHERWISE NEVER BE AVAILABLE!

- Purchase a couple of sets of videoconference cameras with built-in microphones that you can send to speakers you want to pipe in, in case they don’t have that equipment available. (Recommend Logitech HD Webcam C615, $69.99 plus tax – go to www.logitech.com) Request that the speakers return them to you, or give them as a gift – whatever is most strategic for DTEC in the long run. What if you gave it to them, but asked them if you can have a videoconference with them 3 or 6 months later to receive an update and ask for their continued assistance and advice?

- Example: DTEC board invites the Dumas Economic Development Committee to hold their next meeting at DTEC in the classroom or board room, and I (Mark Peterson) would be willing to be piped in. I would show a brief PowerPoint presentation with key points on these four topics:
  - mentoring programs with industries,
  - middle income housing,
  - tourism, and
  - the power of technology (and DTEC) to connect with the world.

- Another example: You invite local manufacturers to a videoconference and connect them with Arkansas Manufacturing Solutions faculty to address some critical issue or new program now becoming available. (Arkansas Manufacturing Solutions is a Breakthrough Solutions Partner).

- I know of 3 or 4 colleagues who are very knowledgeable about community and economic development resources, who would be willing to respond to requests about resources. If you asked them about some compelling issue, they could point you to important resources or communities that have been successful.

This fulfills DTEC’s vision to connect the community with top-notch resources in the nation to address critical issues and opportunities.

Resource Broker, Catalyst, and Window to the World

Community Leaders & Organizations  DTEC  Pipe in Outside Resources
7) Look at the Education and Workforce Pipeline and identify and address the most critical issue or roadblock to DTEC’s success.

- Based on our discussion, one key factor might be CAREER COUNSELING in the K-12 system. As children from low income families typically do not receive the encouragement they need to aspire to jobs and careers that fulfill their potential, then it falls to the K-12 school system (plus churches and other community organizations) to do so.

- This would require engaging other organizations in the community. Be sure to use the pipeline as a tool to come to a common understanding of the issues involved - what is working well, and what needs attention.

- If these children do not receive career counseling in K-12, they might be the ones who come to DTEC to play games and get on Facebook. If they have aspirations for jobs and careers, they could see DTEC as an important means to reach their goals in life.
8) Incorporate career counseling into DTEC operations.
   - What if every person who comes to use DTEC computers on-line has to sign in, and that as a requirement for them to use DTEC computers, they must go through a career counseling session at least once every 3,6, or 12 months? You would need to identify existing career counselors in the school system, or AR Department of Workforce Services, or elsewhere, or even recruit a volunteer who has that knowledge and skills with a passion to help young people realize their potential.

9) Explore alternate funding mechanisms.
   Some examples:
   - Heber Springs is seeking contributions of $100/month from businesses to support economic development.
   - Newport is seeking a commitment of $15/month from over 100 people for five years; a bank lends them the total amount and donates the interest back to the organization at the end of each year.
   - Some communities have passed a sales tax for five years to support economic development. In Dumas, it could be for economic development and workforce development: to support DTEC, a micro-loan program for small businesses, cost-sharing for storefront renovation in downtown, youth entrepreneurship, and other key strategies from Desha Forward.
   - A voluntary tax is a possibility – when people complete their taxes, they can designate a certain amount to support DTEC.
   - Some communities have a Fifty for the Future or CEO and President's Roundtable, with each person donating $1,000/year to participate.
   - The 5% Solution – communities who have participated in the Home Town Competitiveness Program encouraged local families to designate 5% of their estates to a foundation that supports entrepreneurship and local economic development. This can have a tremendous impact over the long term – a study in Nebraska revealed that if 5% of the wealth being transferred was designated to community foundations, it would amount to $3.1 million/county/year.

Summary

This DTEC in Action Blueprint for the 21st Century represents the culmination of multiple interactions with the DTEC in Action Steering Committee, the DTEC board, and staff, and represents their vision for the future of DTEC and its important role in the future of Dumas County and surrounding counties. This review and action steps builds on that blueprint
and documents the progress to date and strategic actions moving forward in this time of rapid change.

Congratulations to the DTEC in Action Steering Committee for their participation, and especially to the DTEC board and staff for their vision, hard work, and commitment to DTEC and the people of Desha County. We look forward to seeing great things happening with DTEC and in the DTEC service area.

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The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.  

_Eleanor Roosevelt_
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<tr>
<th>Strategic Goal</th>
<th>Work Underway</th>
<th>Work Accomplished</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Create a workforce development system to meet the changing needs of local</td>
<td>Working with local industry to provide continuous training for employees</td>
<td>Worked with Communities Unlimited and formed an Entrepreneurial Resource (ER)</td>
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<td>businesses and employers.</td>
<td>Working with PCCUA to provide certification programs and programs of</td>
<td>Team that met with local businesses to assess their needs and offer support</td>
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<td>Additional Opportunities</td>
<td>interest for HS students.</td>
<td>Identified areas of interest for HS students by working with career coach</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Career coach – Seek funding from the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation or</td>
<td></td>
<td>Provided space to the UAM-Adult Ed program which aids us developing the skill</td>
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<td>other funding sources to hire an adult career coach.</td>
<td></td>
<td>level of some job seekers</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Investigate Arkansas’s Work Keys Ready Community Program.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Provided space to Samaschool. The Samaschool program trains students with the</td>
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<td>3. Professional improvement – Acquaint banks, insurance companies and financial</td>
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<td>digital and occupational skills that they need to work successfully in the online</td>
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<tr>
<td>planners with how they can use DTEC for professional improvement.</td>
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<td>job market. Students also gain experience through paid internships with partner</td>
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<td>4. Drug abuse – Identify promising strategies to address drug abuse among the</td>
<td></td>
<td>employers.</td>
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<td>work force and take action</td>
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APPENDIX: DTEC IN ACTION STRATEGIC PLAN REVIEW
2. Use DTEC as a vehicle to engage, equip and inspire youth in the community.

**Additional Opportunities**
1. Involve youth in the community through New Tech High School and EAST program
2. Counsel youth to be aware of job, career & entrepreneurship opportunities in the area
3. Connect youth with businesses – internships, shadowing, projects with a career orientation
4. Provide scholarships to students who will return to live in the area, including summer internships
5. Start a youth entrepreneurship program, such as the Lemonade Day program.
6. Create an entrepreneurship competition for youth related to technology.
7. Invite youth group leaders to DTEC to demonstrate its capabilities.
8. Encourage youth in college to connect with the community such as papers and projects on local issues and opportunities.

| Working with Communities Unlimited to form a youth focus group. | Summer 2015 held a 4 week Google coding class for students in grade 4th-6th. |

3. Market DTEC as a launching pad for career development, tapping outside resources and new initiatives.

**Additional Opportunities**
1. Promote lifelong education and DTEC services through:
   • Highlighting DTEC success stories and services,
   • An e-newsletter, PowerPoint presentations, brochures and news articles,
   • Adding the DTEC logo and link to local, regional and state websites
2. Connect community leaders, businesses and citizens to outside resources by:

| The work that Samaschool and Communities Unlimited provide also helps DTEC work towards this goal. | Use of the website and Facebook to communicate the work at DTEC, newspaper announcements, and announcement at local committee meetings |
- Local manufacturing people connecting with their national sales people
  - Farmers connecting with experts in Little Rock, Fayetteville, or Texas A & M

3. Identify and recruit DTEC champions who will pipe in resources to DTEC such as webinars, streaming of conferences and experts for specific events or meetings for key economic sectors.

4. Identify and recruit DTEC Champions from outside of the community for these same key sectors of the community.

5. Develop new initiatives that address real issues in the DTEC service area, take advantage of DTEC capabilities and staff and provide some funding to DTEC.

4 **Develop an entrepreneur-friendly environment and support system to foster entrepreneurship and small business development.**

**Additional Opportunities:**
1. Create an entrepreneur-friendly support system – work with the Communities Unlimited, AR Capital Corporation, and the UALR Small Business Technology Development Center to help develop the DTEC service area as an entrepreneur-friendly environment and support system, considering such strategies as:
   - Offering entrepreneurship courses
   - Teaching entrepreneurship to H.S. students
   - Organizing an annual entrepreneur forum
   - Identify and enable entrepreneurial opportunities in key industries
   - Create an angel investor network.

| Working with Communities Unlimited to identify resources and opportunities for our community | Partnered with Communities Unlimited and introduced them to key groups in the Dumas Community (Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Committee, and City Council) | Provide space to Communities Unlimited to meet with |
• Provide one-on-one business and marketing development counseling for entrepreneurs.
• Look into ETSY, an online marketplace for arts and crafts
• Investigate ASTA grants for seed capital and technical assistance
• Develop programs to enhance skills and create business opportunities for farmers, artists, cooks/caterers and builders.

2. Develop a small business incubator using underutilized space in DTEC, the vacant grocery store north of DTEC or other vacant buildings downtown,

3. Consider an in-person or virtual road trip to visit these small business incubators: El Dorado, Arkansas; Genoa, Illinois; or other locations.

5 Create long term sustainability for DTEC

Additional Opportunities:
1. Develop plaques and appropriate signage in both DTEC buildings to acknowledge the financial support from local individuals and organizations, as well as outside funders.

2. Develop a quarterly newsletter that informs funders and other Stakeholders about activities and progress of DTEC.

3. Hold an annual celebration an event for local and external stakeholders and funders to give an annual report, honor supporters and

Partnered with the Greater Delta Alliance for Health to provide training for hospital staff. The alliance consisted of the 10 hospitals in the southeast region of the state and DTEC staff is receiving trainings that will benefit the entrepreneurs and small business owners.

Hosted webinars and meetings concerning entrepreneurship and small business development.

The space provided to the UAM-Adult Ed program has increased rental income.

Rent space to different organizations for meetings and trainings.
1. Celebrate successes.
   - The event could be at DTEC or another venue and may be held in connection with another community event.
   - Include impact by numbers as well as individual success stories.

2. Form a DTEC Advisory Council of external stakeholders to meet two to three times a year to review progress of DTEC and make suggestions for possible opportunities. (These could become vocal and influential champions at the regional and state level.)

3. Explore possible funding streams:
   - Creating an endowment through a capital campaign.
   - Passing a sales tax for economic development (funds could go toward several economic development initiatives),
   - Becoming a formal part of an existing organization – the city of Dumas, Desha county government, an institution of higher education (Grand Prairie Center is an example), an electric co-operative or some other organization.
   - Seeking annual contributions from utilities, businesses, corporations, citizens and people outside of the DTEC service area that have a tie to the community (former residents, absentee landlords, foundations, etc.).

4. Form a DTEC Advisory Council of external stakeholders to meet two to three times a year to review progress of DTEC and make suggestions for possible opportunities. (These could become vocal and influential champions at the regional and state level.)

5. Explore possible funding streams:
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   - Seeking annual contributions from utilities, businesses, corporations, citizens and people outside of the DTEC service area that have a tie to the community (former residents, absentee landlords, foundations, etc.).

   Developing set of indicators to measure impact, track students, and document success stories.