

Business First of Louisville - November 21, 2005

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Editorial

West Louisville initiative is paying dividends

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There's millions, if not billions, of Web sites out there in cyberspace. But there's a new one we would strongly recommend you take a look at -- especially if you're thinking of creating or expanding a business.

If you go to www.westlouisville.biz you'll find out all that West Louisville has to offer as a place to do business. The site offers a history of the area, demographic information, a directory of businesses, a list of economic incentive programs and a database of available real estate.

The Web site is the latest initiative in a three-year, coordinated effort to market West Louisville as a good place to do business. And the effort is beginning to pay dividends.

According to a recent [Greater Louisville Inc.](#) report, 947 jobs have been created in West Louisville in the last three years. Twenty-three companies new to the area created 433 of those jobs with an annual payroll of \$13 million.

It's important to the entire community that West Louisville be revitalized as a center of commerce. That's why the [Louisville Community Development Bank](#), the Louisville Urban League and the Louisville Central Community Center made a commitment in 2000 to improve the economic conditions in West Louisville.

With the support of the city and several business leaders, money was raised to finance a West Louisville economic development study by Harvard professor Michael Porter and his Initiative for a Competitive Inner City (ICIC).

The results of the ICIC study dispelled many myths about West Louisville.

The study found that West Louisville is an inexpensive place to do business, is strategically located near interstates and the airport, and has an available work force.

The challenge is getting companies to think about West Louisville rather than immediately heading to the newest suburban business park.

One of the ICIC recommendations was to hire a full-time manager to lead a West Louisville economic development effort. In late December 2002, the city provided the funds to GLI, the metro chamber of commerce, to hire DeVone Holt as West Louisville economic development manager.

Holt has become a tireless cheerleader for West Louisville, and, as noted above, the coordinated marketing effort is working.

The biggest fish netted so far is California-based printer [OvernightPrints.com](#), which will move its headquarters and main printing plant to a renovated warehouse on Magazine Street and create 170 jobs.

As we said in this space in August, the availability of good jobs in the West End is vital to giving people hope for a better life. And it just makes good sense to use strategically located space near a

pool of potential workers.

We applaud everyone involved in the unified effort to market West Louisville as a place to do business. Advances have been made because these agencies committed to improving life in West Louisville banded together and then formed a partnership with the city and GLI.

There is great potential in West Louisville, and much more needs to be done. The new Web site is another valuable tool that Holt and his staff can use to market this hidden treasure.

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