De Soto, Kansas Target Industry Study:
Executive Summary

Presented to:

De Soto City Council
De Soto Chamber of Commerce

Presented by:

RealInfo
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of De Soto, Kansas, in partnership with the De Soto Chamber of Commerce/ Economic Development Council funded a Target Industry Study conducted by RealInfo Co., an economic development strategic research organization.

The primary goal of a target industry study is to first identify targets then create, attract and nurture businesses in those industries that operate at a competitive advantage within the local economy. As a result of having completed a targeted industry study, an economic development organization can better plan its marketing and recruitment effort to produce success in reaching the goal of improving the "economic" quality of life for the people living and working in the area.

The De Soto Target Industry Study was comprised of a four-step data collection approach:

- A demographic and economic profile assessment of De Soto using most current US Census data.
- A series of interviews with De Soto city staff, the De Soto Chamber/Economic Development Executive Director and representatives of utility providers that serve De Soto. These interviews were designed to assess the potential development opportunities and limitations.
- An audit of the local economic structure, providing identification, classification and rank order of industries within the defined local economy.
- A Stake Holders Workshop attended by selected community leaders to determine and validate local opinions, issues and attitudes regarding potential target industries.

Based on the evaluation of future growth opportunities, potential synergies with existing industries, near term utility capacity and local development goals, the following industries and industry clusters are recommended by RealInfo as "targets" for the City and the Chamber/Economic Development Council:

Primary De Soto Targeted Industry List	
1	Life Science/Life Science Support Manufacturing (Medical Equipment and Supplies Mfg)
2	Logistic Services/Wholesale, Packaging and Distribution
3	Food Processing Equipment/Commercial Equipment Merchant Wholesalers
4	Administrative Service Centers/Back Office

The return on the investment made by the City and the Chamber/EDC to conduct this target industry study will *only* be realized if this study is used as a basis for future actions. This study provides a series of suggested initiatives focused on positioning De Soto as an attractive business location for these industry targets. These recommendations broadly include:

- **"Shot Gun" Marketing Initiatives**. Marketing programs are expensive, and most communities with *successful* economic development programs conduct up-front research to identify where their marketing efforts should be directed. A "shotgun" approach of mailing generic brochures to a random list of companies is not a cost-effective way of conducting economic development marketing. Instead of the "shotgun" approach, The De Soto EDC's marketing programs should employ the "rifle" approach of identifying industries and companies that are in the growth mode and are most likely to find De Soto a suitable location for its new operations. Mailings and/or advertising and other marketing initiatives can be directed at those firms most likely to make good prospects. In other words, a targeted marketing program generates the most "bang for the buck" for the De Soto EDC.

- **Targeted Incentives**. The firms in the target industry list were chosen both for the business advantages these firms will benefit from with a De Soto location, but also for the positive economic impact the firms will generate for the City and its citizens. The economic development incentive policy of De Soto should reflect De Soto's desire to attract these industries by providing enhanced level of incentives to those prospective and existing businesses found in the target industry list.

Because of the current growth patterns of De Soto and Johnson County, it is recommended that the "life span" of this study be no more than three to five years. The De Soto Target Industry Study should be used as a basis for on-going discussion, analysis and action designed to improve the economic development program coordinated by the City and the De Soto EDC on behalf of the citizens of De Soto.