

Growing a Community Is Like Growing a Business

Business Development Program University of Missouri Extension

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NACDEP – February 15-18, 2005 – Las Vegas, NV

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI
 Extension

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Case Study

Rural Area, One-Person Office

Successful Economic Development

Counseling, Impact, and Training Data

5-year Aggregate

| Category | Totals |
|------------------------------|---------------|
| Counseling | |
| Number of Counseling Clients | 346 |
| Total Counseling Hours | 1579.85 |
| Training | |
| Conferences | 54 |
| Attendees | 800 |

Counseling, Impact, and Training Data

5-year Aggregate

| Category | Totals |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| New Jobs | 207 |
| Jobs Retained | 81 |
| Businesses Bought and Started Assets Acquired Sales Increased Profit Increased | \$13,128,380 |
| Total Investments (loans and equity) in Businesses | \$5,292,965 |

Peppermill County, Missouri

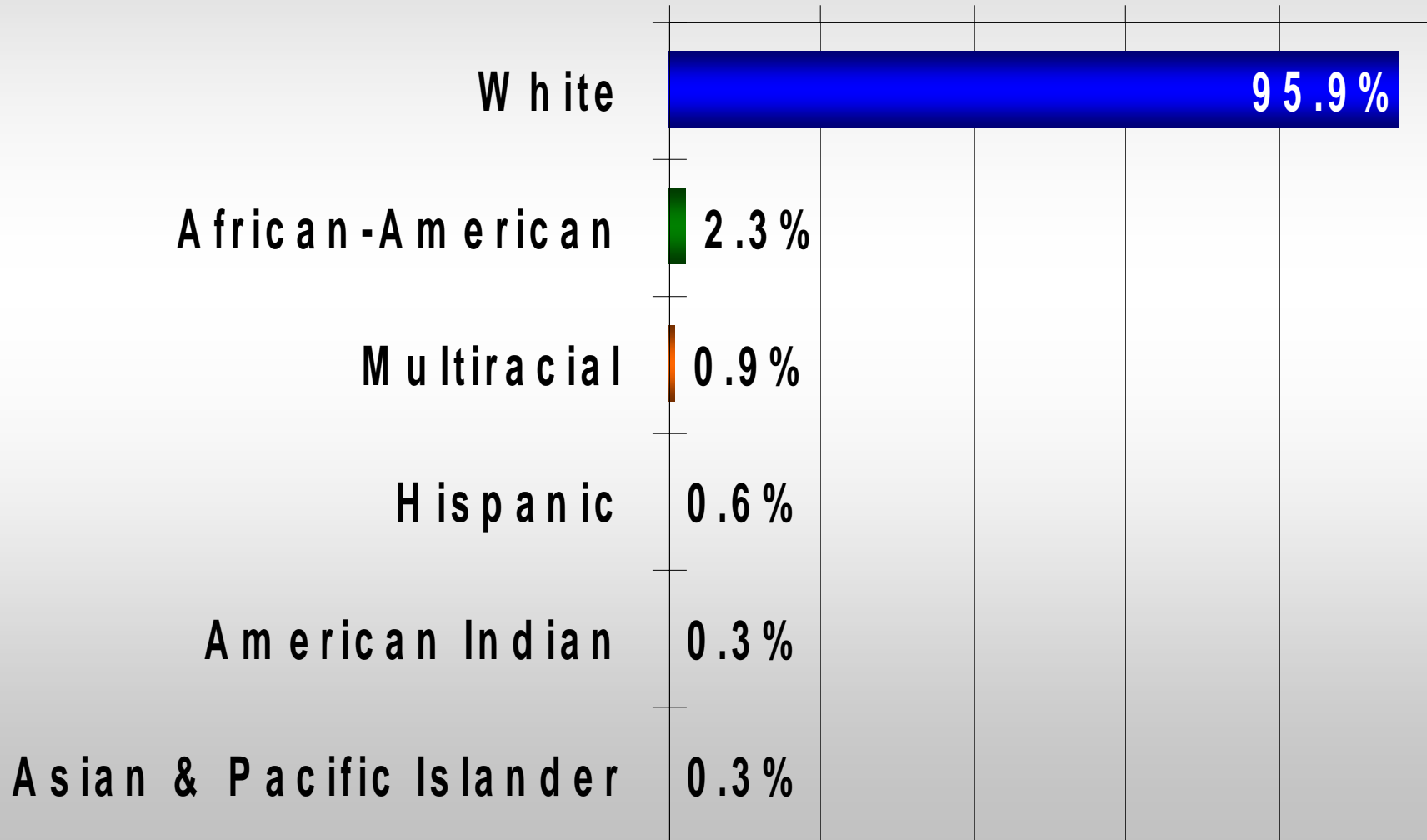
| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 2000 Population | 14,500 |
| 2000 Per capita personal income Ranks 18 th out of 114 in the state | \$24,290 |
| 2000 Total personal income Ranks 62 nd out of 114 in the state | \$352,203 |
| 1990-2000 average annual growth rate of total personal income | 4.6% |
| 2000 Total full and part-time employment | 9,185 |
| 1990-2000 percent change in total full and part-time employment | 11.67% |

***Peppermill County, Missouri
Racial Composition 1990-2000***

| Race | 1990 | 2000 |
|----------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Total | 14,592 | 14,558 |
| White | 14,193 | 13,962 |
| African-American | 317 | 339 |
| American Indian | 40 | 49 |
| Asian and Pacific Islander | 27 | 41 |
| Multiracial | - | 132 |

Population

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%



Approached Work Like Starting a Business

- Conducted needs assessment to build interest and determine what programs to offer
- Viewed community relations work like sales work
- Visited the banks and chambers of commerce in the county and region
- Built a network of community relationships to obtain potential customers, i.e., client referrals
- Regularly attended civic club meetings to network and gain community acceptance

Focused on the Highest “Profit” Customers

- Focused on those showing potential for impact
- Pre-screened clients
- Straight-forward communication with clients and referring network
- Balanced time between one-on-one (counseling), training, and community networking

Community Needs a High Priority in Balancing Workload and Time

- Became involved in community/civic projects
- Worked on committees – jumped in – didn't wait for an invitation
- Joined a group of regional economic developers

Added Value in Working With Clients

- Ensured the first impression was positive
- Made sure they came away with something in their hands
- Showed them why their business plans wouldn't work, rather than telling them it wouldn't work
- Focused on the whole picture of client needs, including quality of life issues

Was Guided by, but not Bound by “Rules”

- Entrepreneurial in charting a course of action
- Worked with stakeholders and legislators walking the fine line between informing and advocating for the organization
- Found funding to pay for community networking activities prohibited by university financial guidelines
- Followed local needs when they were in conflict with state guidelines

Obstacles Faced

- Gender
- Lack of office resources
- Extended vacancy in the position before being hired
- Lack of orientation training
- Negative attitudes from some staff
- Low-impact clients
- Diminishing sources of capital for small businesses in rural areas
- Limited availability of client resources for legal and accounting advice

How Pieces were Put Together

- Started out with press release and professional photograph
- Civic club and Chamber of Commerce involvement
- Strategic placement of marketing materials throughout a seven-county region
- Visited newspapers and radio stations in region, to learn what articles and features they wanted
- Established a database of community partners, bankers, lawyers, accountants, media, COCs, and past clients
- Held monthly training classes
- Brought experts into the county to build credibility and present new faces
- Set up satellite offices in smaller towns outside headquarter county