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Positive Results Case Study



Branding Initiative Key in Plant Expansions, \$135 Million in New Investment

**Steve Witt****President, Terre Haute Economic Development Corporation****Problem**

“Historically, Terre Haute/Vigo County’s had a disjointed economic development effort with many different entities providing economic development services. In 2000 we embarked upon – as a community – a strategic planning initiative to try to work through some of those issues. As a result of that, the Terre Haute Economic Development Corporation, which is the community’s lead economic development entity, was born, and parallel with that our branding initiative, which features the ‘Terre Haute A Level Above’ logo and tag line, was born as well.

“You’ll never see any of our marketing products have what I call the bulls-eye, where a community will say, ‘well we’re located in the Midwestern United States and we’re within a hundred-mile radius of this many people, two hundred miles of this’ and so on, because quite frankly that doesn’t set ourselves apart from anyone else in the Midwest United States that can make the same claim. So we’ve tried to take a totally different approach to our marketing materials. We’ve tried to think more as a corporate entity rather than a not-for-profit entity.”

Solution

“What we were looking for was something that was unique to the city of Terre Haute, and what we realized was the thing we had that was unique is our name, Terre Haute – high ground – is an unusual name. It’s not like Springfield where there may be a half dozen throughout the country. That’s what we focused on.

“You see our logo and what we call the swoosh and you see where that embodies the ‘high ground’ terminology. The ‘Terre Haute A Level Above,’ I think stands for a lot of things. One thing obviously is the ‘high ground’ reference in our community’s name, but more importantly, it shows we’re trying to achieve a level of success higher than we’ve enjoyed in the past, and perhaps even higher than people think possible.

“Quite frankly, before working with MillerWhite, I never was a strong proponent of community videos, because they’ve always struck me as a thing that the people in the video like to see, but they’re usually too long and don’t convey the right amount of information to keep people’s interest. But we’ve developed a 7 to 9 minute video that does an excellent job of providing a snapshot of our community and its many and varied assets, and we use that to give industrial prospects a sense of our community. Also it’s been quite popular with other groups – the realtors, the Chamber of Commerce — who work with folks relocating to the community to provide them an idea of Terre Haute/Vigo County.

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“Through MillerWhite’s improving our web site and providing us with cohesive printed materials, in a nutshell they’ve helped us achieve the level of excellence in our image and our marketing materials that we’re trying to convey to the international community.”

THEDC’s Results

“Economic development’s a team effort, and we work closely with several entities in different facets of economic development. We work very closely with MillerWhite in our marketing effort. We work very closely with the Indiana Economic Development Corporation, financial consultants, bond counsel, attorneys. It’s a multi-faceted effort.

“Since working with MillerWhite over the last four years, we’ve had some very significant successes for our community. We’ve attracted two world-class companies to Terre Haute/Vigo County. One is CertainTeed Corporation, which is part of Saint Gobain, the French manufacturing conglomerate which is a Fortune Global 50 company; and Boral Bricks, with their parent company Boral Limited from Sydney, Australia. Those two projects alone total about \$135 million in new investment.

“We’ve also seen significant expansion of existing companies such as Aisin Brake and Chassis which has doubled the size of their facility and their workforce over the past few years. Other companies like ThyssenKrupp, CSN, Staples, which has undergone a tremendous expansion. Those are some of the companies that we’ve worked closely with over the years to either attract to the community or to help them grow, and our marketing efforts help in regard to all those projects. People don’t realize, particularly with regard to companies that are expanding, there’s oftentimes competition going on within the company for where they’re going to put their next big expansion. So even though a company may already be here, it’s not guaranteed that they’re going to expand here in the future. Our marketing initiatives and the other things we do with the other folks that help us all come into play, and MillerWhite’s been an integral part of that.”