

Perry County named as a CREST Pilot Community

With nearly 20 communities applying, Perry County was one of just eight locations in Tennessee designated as a CREST Pilot Community by the University of Tennessee - Institute of Agriculture. CREST stands for ***Creating a Rural Entrepreneurial System in Tennessee***. Its mission is to transform rural communities through the adoption and growth of small business development strategies. Perry County was accepted based on the application made by our local community development organization, VisionPerry.

Key elements of our application included the following categories of focus regarding the diversification of our economy:

- Agriculture – Agricultural Co-Op, CSA's, Agritourism, Holistic Products
- Arts – Arts & Historic District, Arts Incubator, Community Branding
- Tourism – Retail Development, Promoting our Natural Resources
- Retail Development – Entrepreneurial Workshop & Business Plan Development (through Columbia State), Identifying Leakage Categories & Dollars Lost, Organizing Festivals and Buy Local Campaigns
- Manufacturing Retention & Development – Recruitment and Marketing of Manufacturing Businesses that we have a strategic advantage with. Marketing our manufacturing capabilities to emerging industries (i.e. Solar Technology)
- Online Economy & Freelancing Opportunities – Rural Sourcing instead of Outsourcing, Sophisticated Project Work and Advanced Telecommuting Jobs

VisionPerry will be meeting with officials from CREST on Thursday, January 14 to agree on project goals and establish important process measurables. Interested parties are encouraged to discuss your ideas with any of our local government leaders and the staff of the VisionPerry office at 200 East Main Street in Linden.