

# New development borders change who leads job creation between Cin-Day



Johnna Reeder, president and CEO, REDI Cincinnati speaks prior to a ground breaking ceremony for a new expansion at ThyssenKrupp Bilstein of America, Thursday, Sept. 11, 2014. GREG LYNCH / STAFF



John Minor, president of JobsOhio, speaks prior to a ground breaking ceremony for a new expansion at ThyssenKrupp Bilstein of America, Thursday, Sept. 11, 2014. GREG LYNCH / STAFF



Nick Daggy  
Traffic travels past a Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber billboard Wednesday, Sept. 10, 2014, on Interstate 75 near the Monroe Ohio 63 exit. The chamber, affiliated with REDI, is promoting its services in Warren County. NICK DAGGY / STAFF

By Chelsey Levingston  
Staff Writer

Local governments in Warren County have united and asked development agency REDI Cincinnati to represent them in attracting new business development and retention through JobsOhio.

The goal is to have the communities together under one development agency rather than being split between REDI and Dayton Development Coalition, said Martin Russell, economic development director of Warren County.

“We wanted to make a move that got rid of the division inside of Warren County and REDI Cincinnati put together a proposal that ended that divide and represented Warren County in its totality,” Russell said.

Greg Sample, chairman of Warren County Port Authority, and chief executive officer of The Paladin Group, became a REDI director in June. He's one of 17 members.

"What happens is we're right on that border line so we really don't work with (the Coalition) a lot. We plan on getting more involved with them, but now it sounds like they're making a change," said Franklin Mayor Denny Centers.

"Here's what I want. I want (REDI) to know we have land and development land available along the I-75 corridor and we want to work with them on new jobs coming in so we can bring those jobs and businesses in to Franklin," Centers said.

"That's the whole point of those organizations right?"

### **JobsOhio Network**

Ohio Gov. John Kasich's administration established the nonprofit JobsOhio in 2011 to lead the state's job creation efforts.

Dayton Development Coalition and REDI, formerly known as Cincinnati USA Partnership, were named later that year as two of six regional JobsOhio Network partners statewide. As such, they are the go-between for local jurisdictions and JobsOhio officials in Columbus for crafting business deals. The private JobsOhio replaced economic development activities of the public Ohio Department of Development, since renamed Ohio Development Services Agency.

This newspaper uncovered in October 2013 widespread frustration among local governments with the Partnership's rollout of JobsOhio. Community and economic development directors told this newspaper they weren't getting the job-generating leads and attention from the agency that they used to before JobsOhio entered the picture, and communications had soured.

Earlier this year, Cincinnati's head economic development agency reorganized.

Plans were unveiled to revamp the Partnership including creating an executive committee comprised of representatives of the Cincinnati Business Committee, Cincinnati Regional Business Committee, local community development organizations, the regional chamber, Northern Kentucky Economic Development Corp., JobsOhio and other business leaders.

"We've always worked with Dayton and Cincinnati and we will continue to work with Dayton and Cincinnati," Hamet said. "The main difference will be when the leads are processed from the state, they will be channeled through REDI."

Split by Ohio 63 between Cincinnati and Dayton, and divided by Interstate 75 between Butler and Warren counties, Monroe leaders say the changes don't affect the day-to-day for them. REDI already handled the majority of Monroe's business deals, said Jennifer Patterson, assistant to the city manager and economic development specialist.

"However, because a successful economic development project benefits the entire region, the city continues to work with both REDI and the DDC in support of their regional efforts," Patterson said.

### **Left in the middle**

Carlisle and Springboro city managers say their outlying communities are sometimes forgotten by leaders in either Cincinnati or Dayton's downtown.

Springboro has a good relationship with the Coalition and wants to foster one with REDI, said City Manager Christine Thompson. While Springboro and the rest of Warren County will work with REDI, part of Springboro is in Montgomery County at the Austin Boulevard interchange, and for those purposes, the city will continue to work with DDC, Thompson said.

"What we want is for Springboro to be recognized when they're out with site selectors and corporations looking for a place to be. We want Springboro recognized as a possibility for those companies to come to," Thompson said. "That's what everybody wants and we don't want to be forgotten."

"I think Springboro's done a great job of being able to attract businesses because of I-75," she said. "I think we are always somewhat in the middle of the Dayton and Cincinnati market, but I think in the next 5 to 15 years, that will change drastically."