

Q&A

with DAEDF's Lyle Roggow

Story and photo by Charlene Belew

Q Explain what DAEDF is in simplest terms for those who may not understand what you and your team work to achieve.

A We work on a wide variety of projects that better our community. Our business focus is to attract new companies while assisting our existing companies that provide quality jobs. A careful balance between the recruitment of new companies and expansion of existing companies occurs. When local companies are expanding, we assist in trying to find more employees. During an economic downturn, greater focus is placed on the attraction of new employers with good wages.

Q How long have you been with DAEDF and what have you accomplished since your start?

A October will be the ninth year. First, I established strong relations with our local companies. The next step was to establish solid relations with individuals involved with the site selection process. During these nine years our community has seen two down-turns in the United States and Oklahoma economy. Our conservative board has maintained a vision that embraces growth under the appropriate conditions and management. Since that time, we completed over 200 Request For Proposals (RFP) on qualified projects. Accomplishments include certification of all industrial parks, the creation of Duncan Center for Business Development Incubator (DCBD), expansion of the Cameron Measurement System facility, industrial road project for Halliburton, construction of three multi-purpose office/shop buildings, and construction of a spec building, which will be home to Duncan Recycling and Refining.

Q It's understood DAEDF works on achieving economic development in the area, but what other projects has DAEDF been involved with and to what extent was the involvement? (IE, water committee, business incubator)

A One of the first items DAEDF completed was to bring five organizations together for the purpose of getting the most im-



President for Duncan Area Economic Development Foundation Lyle Roggow stands in front of a building under construction, soon to become the home to a new company, DR2.

part from those visiting or organizing events in the community. As a result from those coordinated efforts, duncancalendar.com website was created. DAEDF played a key role in the reinstatement of Leadership Duncan as a way to develop leaders for the future. Seeing the need to enhance the awareness for job opportunities and the type of skills needed in the workplace, DAEDF partnered with Duncan Public Schools to become the Career Pathways pilot project for the State of Oklahoma. Our organization started the Engineering Contest for students within the Red River Technology School district with the CO₂ car races. DAEDF created and maintains a rental property owners list to guide individuals moving to Duncan. We also market vacant commercial and industrial buildings within the community. Most recently, DAEDF led efforts to form a Water Committee to address our short and long-term community needs.

Q Did the negotiations with the city over DAEDF's most recent contract affect your ability to work with city officials?

A There is always a level of stress when trying to negotiate a new contract especially when it is close to a deadline. We have never let that obstacle get in the way of working with our city officials or other economic development partners.

Q What are the three key issues facing Duncan's development economically?

A Maintaining a manufacturing base in Duncan is critical to our success. This also requires focus on fostering entrepreneurship, which is critical to the growth of any community. This support network must have components of flexibility within the facilities. Duncan needs an incubator that provides citizens starting their own businesses with additional training support tied to or near education facilities. Our community must continue to support Red River Technology Center, Duncan Public Schools and Duncan Regional Hospital to provide high quality education and services. Each entity is an economic engine that assists in the recruitment of people and business.



Q What is your strategic 10 year plan for Duncan?

A We have begun to make great strides to build a group of diversified businesses in the North Industrial Park with the construction of four new buildings. These new home-grown businesses are in the range of 10-65 employee companies. With this in mind, our target is to continue finding small to mid-size companies with stability to fill our industrial parks. For the past several years, DAEDF has built relations with site selectors involved with foreign direct investment. Our efforts will bring us opportunities to become the home to investment from companies outside the USA.

Q Are there any businesses or ventures outside of oil you're trying to bring to the area? What are these, and what can we expect in terms of potential growth?

A We are always trying to diversify the types of business opportunities within our area. Duncan has a rich heritage for designing and manufacturing oilfield equipment. The companies that we try to recruit must be in line with the skills of our workforce. Keeping a focus on the metal works arena supports the strengths and local talent in CNC Machining, welding and fabrication. Because of the oilfield equipment, we also have support services in the engineering and chemistry occupations. DAEDF looks for companies that are natural fits for our area. We have competed in the final rounds for foreign companies looking to move into the USA market place.