

JobsOhio plans to partner with Global Cleveland to attract newcomers to the city

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By Robert L. Smith, the Plain Dealer

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- Global Cleveland, an economic development agency still seeking status in the region's civic arena, is gaining a powerful new partner in its quest to attract new people and talent to Northeast Ohio.

JobsOhio intends to begin working with the non-profit agency, to support it financially and to use it as a job-development model in other parts of the state.

Global Cleveland leaders are expecting a financial commitment that will cover a sizeable portion of the agency's \$1.2 million annual budget. The extent of that support is expected to be detailed tonight, at an event featuring Gov. John Kasich, JobsOhio president John Minor and representatives of many of Greater Cleveland's cultural communities.

The occasion is the launch of Global Cleveland's new Talent Attraction Campaign at 6 p.m. at the Cleveland Convention Center. Organizers have planned an evening of speeches and cultural performances to begin a promotion that aims to tap Cleveland's ethnic communities to connect the city to new worlds.

More than 1,500 people have registered to attend, including representatives from the state's public-private job development agency.

In a prepared statement, Minor described Global Cleveland as a kindred spirit, an agency that can help JobsOhio market Ohio to the nation and help attract people with the skills that local employers need to grow.

"Our support of Global Cleveland aligns with JobsOhio's economic development mission to drive job creation and new capital investment through attraction, retention and expansion efforts," Minor said in the statement.



Joy Roller, the president of Global Cleveland, is announcing a new talent attraction campaign in partnership with JobsOhio.

"It is vital that the businesses choosing to grow and create jobs here also have access to a workforce that can fill those new jobs," he added.

The support comes at a critical time for Global Cleveland, which is nearing its third-anniversary. Start-up grants from Huntington Bank and Forest City Enterprises helped **launch the agency to much fanfare** in 2011, but Global Cleveland has yet to establish a long-term funding plan.

Despite backing from some members of the business community, the agency has not generated much public or political support for its quest to revive **a depopulated city** by welcoming newcomers, including immigrants.

Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson, while a member of Global Cleveland's 40-member board, has expressed **cautious and conflicting opinions** about immigrants and the value of attracting them.

Neither Jackson nor Cuyahoga County Executive Ed FitzGerald has endorsed the **Welcoming America initiative** that Global Cleveland joined last July. The nationwide campaign calls for a region's city or county government to express an official welcome to immigrants.

Several of Global Cleveland's founders, including Cleveland immigration lawyer **Richard Herman**, have left the board in frustration over the lack of a more assertive welcome to diverse cultures.

Joy Roller, who became president of Global Cleveland a year ago in January, said she's taking a more strategic, mass market approach to talent attraction that will include a public embrace of immigrants.

"We're about everyone," she said at a meeting at The Plain Dealer Wednesday. "We have a special focus on immigrants, because we want this city to be diverse and open to all ideas."

Cleveland, once an immigrant gateway, is today less than five percent foreign-born.

Roller was joined at the meeting by Albert Ratner, the former co-chairman of the board Forest City Enterprises and a Global Cleveland board member. Both he and Roller talked of using the momentum **revealed in a new population study**.

According to the report by Richey Piiparinen and Jim Russell at the Center for Population Dynamics at Cleveland State University, Greater Cleveland's pool of knowledge workers increased sharply in recent years due to college-educated young adults arriving from other states and nations.

Ratner said Global Cleveland cannot take credit for the surge but will seek to build upon it.

"We didn't even know it was happening," he said. "We're going to keep it going. We're going to systemize it."

Attraction tools that will be revealed tonight include globalcleveland.org, a redesigned website that Roller described as a multi-lingual doorway to Cleveland. She said it provides information on Cleveland in more than 50 languages and will help people connect to their cultural communities as well as to job openings listed on OhioMeansJobs.com.

Global Cleveland will continue to sponsor online job fairs, which have proven successful connecting job seekers to openings in the region's medical, high-tech and financial sectors, Roller said.

More innovative still, the agency plans to take its message direct to far-flung audiences with a series of "road shows," starting June 26 at the National Press Club in Washington D.C.

The shows will bring together expatriate Clevelanders and representatives of Cleveland companies to talk about job and lifestyle opportunities in Northeast Ohio.

After Washington, welcome teams embark to New York City and Chicago, destinations that illustrate the agency's new, more strategic approach, Roller said.

Research shows that both of those cities, despite their brighter lights, send more people to Cleveland than Cleveland sends their way.

Robert L. Smith covers economic development for The Plain Dealer. Follow him on Twitter @rlsmithpd