

New Web site markets region's real estate to the world

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A Web site launched during the past month aims to provide detailed real estate and demographic information about Louisville and surrounding counties to site-selection specialists and companies looking to expand or move to the area.

The site, **www.louisvilleprospector.com**, is a collaboration among Greater Louisville Inc., the metro chamber of commerce, Louisville-Jefferson County Metro Government and economic development organizations from eight neighboring counties.

Those participating counties are Hardin, Nelson, Oldham, Shelby and Spencer in Kentucky and Clark, Floyd and Harrison in Indiana.

The Louisville site contains information about more than 2,600 office, industrial and retail properties across the nine-county region, according to Eileen Pickett, GLI's senior vice president of community and economic development.

Information is provided by area brokers and drawn from Greater Louisville [Association](#) of Realtors and Kentucky Commercial Real Estate Alliance databases.

San Francisco company developed portal

GLI contracted with San Francisco-based GIS Planning Inc. to develop the Web portal. The California company, formed in 1997, creates geographic information systems (GIS) Internet [applications](#) for cities, government agencies, businesses and community organizations that promote economic development.

The chamber paid \$80,000 to have the LouisvilleProspector site developed.

The other economic development agencies have a financial stake in the project, but the amount of that stake was not disclosed by GLI officials.

Links to the site have been added to the GLI and Louisville Metro Web sites, as well as to those of other participating economic development agencies and media outlets.

'A wealth of information'

Pickett called the new Web tool "critical" to staying competitive with other regions in the fight to attract and retain growing businesses.

"It's just a wealth of information," she said.

The LouisvilleProspector Web portal contains specific data and, in some cases, photographs of available properties. Users can set search parameters and view matches.

The GIS technology enables users to create and print extensive demographic, competitive and mapping reports.

The site also includes such information as a property's proximity to schools, hospitals, retail centers and golf courses.

David Davis, principal and a broker with Louisville's Commonwealth Commercial Real Estate, is impressed with what he's seen on the new Web site.

He said it provides "another avenue" for site-selection professionals and interested companies to find out about the region.

The information is "good, accurate and timely," Davis added. "What I've seen so far looks just terrific."

Saving time, money

GIS Planning has created Web-based programming for more than 180 clients in 37 states, according to Chad Catacchio, the company's marketing director.

It has worked with two-thirds of the country's 50 largest cities.

Economic development and chamber of commerce officials find that the programs save them "tons of time and tons of money" because they can get their information out without having to constantly respond to requests for proposals, he said.

Taking a regional approach

Pickett said the LouisvilleProspector initiative represents a commitment among county leaders to collaborate on economic development projects that benefit the entire region.

Kim Huston, president of the Nelson County Economic Development Agency, said such collaboration will be the key to helping the state become more competitive in an increasingly challenging economic climate.

"The only way Kentucky is going to survive is for us to start partnering," she said.

Huston added that she is "very grateful" to GLI for understanding that many counties couldn't afford to market their real estate on a national level without help.

The new Web program "lets us ... play in a much larger pool," she said.