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Thursday, May 21, 2009

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May 21, 2009

5/21/2009 12:01:00 AM

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## Early signs encouraging

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### The Albany Herald Editorial Board

There are signs that local leadership is taking serious the recent announcement by Procter & Gamble Co. that it was offering 25 percent of the company's employees at its Albany plant an early retirement package.

On Tuesday, Albany Mayor Willie Adams in response to a question by Commissioner Jon Howard during the City Commission meeting noted that he and Dougherty County Commission Chairman Jeff Sinyard had been discussing with P&G the possibility of \$800,000 in tax credits for the Albany plant.

"We can't really go into the details here because they (P&G) view it as a business matter, but Chairman Sinyard and myself have talked with them to make sure they have what they need from us," Adams told Howard.

Taxation was one of the three costs that P&G has cited as making it more expensive to do business in Albany than in other cities in which it has facilities. The two other "big ticket" expenses cited are health care and the Georgia energy tax.

While there's a possibility that the energy tax will go away when economic recovery comes to the state, property taxes and health costs are issues that can be addressed locally.

Meanwhile, Albany-Dougherty Economic Development Commission President Ted Clem said Wednesday that his organization was working on an aggressive plan to grow businesses in key economic sectors - defense and logistics, health care, corporate-professional and customer-care services, and advanced manufacturing and food processing.

"We believe that these are areas where there is potential, especially in Albany and Dougherty County, for expansion even, in our current economic climate," Clem said at Wednesday's EDC meeting. "That will mean more work and more diligence on our end, but this vision is possible."

One item Clem promised was a method to gauge economic progress.

That is something that hasn't always been provided. Economic development leaders have labeled various programs and events as "successful," but many times they haven't backed such a statement with concrete facts.

"It's fine to have a plan, but I'm sure you at the city or the county or the chamber would like to have a tool - a measuring stick - to hold us accountable and establish a clear benchmark for success," Clem told EDC commissioners.

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## Opinion

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Indeed, a measurement device would be nice to ensure that Albany and Dougherty County are getting a good return on their investment.

But ultimately, there is only one measure that matters.

Jobs.

And that is the standard by which success or failure will ultimately be judged.

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