

Henry eyes new group

His plan, released today, would coordinate economic development.

By Kathleen Quilligan

Democratic mayoral candidate Tom Henry was expected to announce at a news conference today a new group that would help with economic development in the city if he is elected mayor.

The group, the Economic Development Coordinating Council, would have members from current economic development organizations to help direct efforts and spend money more wisely, according to a statement from the Henry campaign.

"Fort Wayne has been a leader in building strong development partnerships, but I want to be sure that every tax dollar invested in our job creation efforts is used wisely," Henry said in a statement released to The News-Sentinel this morning.

The city spends about \$550,000 helping to fund the Allen County Economic Development Alliance, the Northeast Innovation Center, the Regional Partnership and the Downtown Improvement District.

Henry's statement said questions have been raised about work overlap, priorities and lack of transparency among the groups. Henry believes the Economic Development Coordinating Council would address those problems.

The council will not have any staff or an independent budget.

Republican mayoral candidate Matt Kelty said he agrees with Henry that the various economic development organizations are unorganized, but is in favor of giving organizational power to the Allen County Economic Development Alliance.

"The city, county and chamber of commerce need to yield completely and trust the alliance to do the job it needs to do," Kelty said this morning. "The sooner we streamline, the more success we'll have."

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