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Franklin County Commissioners to Vote on Unique Job-Creation Incentive, Part of Effort to Bring 500 New Jobs and Historic Data Analytics Center to Region

Franklin County Commissioners are set to approve a unique and vital piece of an economic development incentive package bringing 500 new jobs and the first-of-its-kind IBM Client Center for Advanced Analytics to the Columbus area.

As part of the “Smart Works in Franklin County” initiative launched last year, the County’s Economic Development and Planning Department has proposed offering IBM a workforce innovation training grant of \$300,000 to identify and educate local workers to fill the 500 new jobs to be created over the next three years.

Franklin County partnered with the State of Ohio and the City of Columbus to assemble a strategic economic development incentive package to attract IBM’s new investment in the Central Ohio region. Already announced back in November, both the City and State are providing multi-year tax credits.

IBM has pledged to create 500 new full-time permanent positions and retain 671 employees at their worldwide business analytics and software development center in northwest Franklin County. The new Client Center for Advanced Analytics will also include \$3.2 million in private investment.

On Tuesday, Commissioners will vote on the funding for this innovative grant. This unique role in offering training dollars helped in sealing the deal, by partnering with the company to develop the highly-skilled workforce that will be needed to staff the new data center.

“Our top priority remains job creation and economic development in Franklin County,” said Board of Commissioners President John O’Grady. “Franklin County’s strategic investment will have a multiplier effect. At the same time we are helping to create and retain nearly 1200 high-skill, high-wage jobs at IBM, we know the new data center will attract other high-tech companies and businesses looking to take advantage of this local big-data capabilities.”

“These jobs are the future. Understanding the intersection of our human assets and technology drives our decision to invest in IBM and projects such as this,” said County Commissioner Paula Brooks. “This is smart business for our community and leads to a technology edge for our private sector. Because we are first, Franklin County will reap gains for many years in both jobs and business.”

“Our commitment to innovative collaborations makes Franklin County unique in our approach to economic development and job creation,” said County Commissioner Marilyn Brown, who is also a board member of the Columbus 2020 -- the area’s economic-development group which also played a role in securing IBM. “The opening of this first-of-its-kind advanced analytics center here in Franklin County is yet another testament to the validity of this approach and showcases our growing importance on the global stage.”

The IBM Client Center for Advanced Analytics will add to Franklin County’s reputation as a hub for data center activities. In recent years, a number of companies have developed data centers in the region, including Citigroup, Discover Card, and Nationwide Insurance.

This investment in IBM is the latest in the County's "Smart Works in Franklin County" initiative, a coordinated effort to target and highlight workforce development, job retention and job creation. Each year, Franklin County invests in numerous efforts to grow the region's smart workforce, by giving people the skills and training they need to get and keep good-paying jobs. At the same time, the County encourages the growth of existing businesses and the creation of innovative new ventures by investing in entrepreneur training and financial support.

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