

press release

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Monroe-Union County Economic Development Receives Excellence in Economic Development Award

Monroe-Union County Economic Development (MUCED) of Union County, NC, received a Bronze Excellence in Economic Development Award for its 2016 project in the category of New Media from the International Economic Development Council (IEDC).

The honor was presented at an awards ceremony on Tuesday, Sept. 27, during the IEDC Annual Conference, which was held Sept. 25-28, in Cleveland, OH.

"On behalf of the IEDC board of directors and Excellence in Economic Development Awards Advisory Committee, congratulations to MUCED. Not only did they work to provide a necessary service to their community; but also, their participation in the awards program sheds light on their stellar projects which other communities can now use as a benchmark." - Barry Matherly, CECd, FM, IEDC 2016 Board Chair.

In 2015, Monroe-Union County Economic Development ("MUCED") unveiled its "Unitas" campaign as a strategy to increase awareness of its activities to the general county population via increased utilization and engagement through the organization's Facebook page. The Facebook page is used as a mechanism to increase the general public's awareness and knowledge of Union County companies, the products manufactured locally and how the economic development office provides benefit to the community.

Unitas, modeled after the well-loved children's character Flat Stanley, spent 2015 traveling Union County, visiting manufacturers; Facebook followers participated in a monthly contest to see if they could identify Unitas' location.

In months when the Unitas "visits" were run, engagement rose steeply and the number of followers increased significantly. Over the course of 2015, followers on the MUCED Facebook page increased 243%, with 97% of the new followers being directly associated to the Unitas campaign. The overall engagement exceeded 30,000 impressions for 2015.

In 2016, Unitas returned, appearing with products manufactured in Union County that followers of the MUCED Facebook page can attempt to identify.

"We are extremely happy for the recognition by our peers of the Unitas Campaign. It is an original attempt to get information out to our community and was a bit of a gamble adding a character to our marketing efforts. His success demonstrates that bold thinking is vital in any successful economic development program," stated Chris Platé, Executive Director of Monroe-Union County Economic Development.



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IEDC's Excellence in Economic Development Awards recognize the world's best economic development programs and partnerships, marketing materials, and the year's most influential leaders. These awards honor organizations and individuals for their efforts in creating positive change in urban, suburban, and rural communities.

"The awards process is a thorough, non-biased and multi-layered process. These are extraordinary accomplishments for all winners, and an overall great effort by all participants," Matherly said.

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About the International Economic Development Council

The International Economic Development Council (IEDC) is a non-profit membership organization serving economic developers. With more than 5,000 members, IEDC is the largest organization of its kind. Economic developers promote economic well-being and quality of life for their communities, by creating, retaining and expanding jobs that facilitate growth, enhance wealth and provide a stable tax base. From public to private, rural to urban, and local to international, IEDC's members are engaged in the full range of economic development experience. Given the breadth of economic development work, our members are employed in a wide variety of settings including local, state, provincial and federal governments, public-private partnerships, chambers of commerce, universities and a variety of other institutions. IEDC's members create high-quality jobs, develop vibrant communities and improve the quality of life in their regions. www.iedcONLINE.org

About Monroe-Union County Economic Development

Monroe-Union County Economic Development (MUCEDC) is a government organization serving Union County, North Carolina USA. The organization's responsibilities are to enhance the quality of life and broaden the tax base by providing the pro-business environment for companies to locate and expand to Union County creating long-term capital investments and new career opportunities for the residents. MUCEDC accomplishes this through marketing, business retention and expansion programs, recruitment missions, product development and the application of incentives for our companies and new prospects. www.developunion.com