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## Chamber: 15 major projects added in '09

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The Cincinnati USA Regional Partnership, the economic development arm of the Greater Cincinnati chamber of commerce, won 15 new business projects in 2009, which created 340 new jobs, the group will report at its annual meeting today.

The projects also retained 619 jobs and promised a capital investment of \$30 million, the group said.

Overall, there were 247 "growth projects," expansions that added or retained jobs or resulted in new investment, in the 15-county, three-state region during the year, the Partnership said. Those projects will result in 8,873 new jobs and \$2.2 billion in new investment, Partnership officials said.

The figures were all higher than in 2008, when the partnership reported 228 total projects, creating 7,878 jobs and an investment of \$1.9 billion. Both 2008 and 2009, years of economic recession locally and nationally, were lower than in 2007, when the group reported \$2.7 billion in new investment. The figures are gathered from a survey done with the University of Cincinnati's Economics Center for Education & Research.

"It was a very challenging year economically, as it was from an economic development perspective," said Doug Moormann, vice president of economic development for the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber.

Much of the investment in 2009 came from the expansion of the Hollywood Casino Lawrenceburg, formerly Argosy, a \$335 million project that created 250 jobs. The \$100 million Cincinnati Premium Outlet retail project in Monroe was also a major project, with 800 jobs created.

Overall, the number of new jobs paled compared to the job losses during the year. In January, there were 38,000 fewer people working in the region than there were in January 2009, according to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services.

"The new jobs certainly don't compensate for the jobs lost over the last 12 to 18 months," Moormann said. "But they do begin to mitigate the losses."

The Partnership is a coalition of more than 100 businesses that in 2009 contributed \$2 million to the organization's \$6.5 million annual budget. The group also received about \$3.7 million in state and local tax dollars.

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