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# Pflugerville tries to catch 'Big Dawg'

## Pflugerville to pay \$100 per new job

*Premium content from Austin Business Journal - by Vicky Garza, ABJ Staff*

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Pflugerville has hired a prominent consultant to be its confidential go-between in pursuing a huge employer that officials can't speak of.

At the City Council's June 28 meeting, council members authorized the **Pflugerville Community Development Corp.** to retain **Angelou Economics Inc.** to recruit a company referred to in official documents only as Project Big Dawg.

The city has agreed to pay Austin-based Angelou Economics — an international economic consulting company specializing in site selection for technology companies and the communities seeking to recruit them — \$100 per new job with medical benefits created by the company recruited.

**Angelos Angelou**, principal executive officer at Angelou Economics, said Pflugerville officials offered his company the contract to work exclusively with the city to bring as many jobs to the area as soon as possible. Bound by confidentiality of the project, he could confirm only that it is a large company searching nationally for a new site.

Likewise, **Floyd Akers**, interim executive director for the Pflugerville CDC, would speak only in generalities.

"We are attempting to create good-paying jobs and focusing on renewable energy and technology companies. We are committed to bringing companies to Pflugerville and Travis County that are environmentally and socially responsible. Companies that practice environmentally sustainable manufacturing and that are committed to hiring the long-term unemployed and underemployed are also given additional consideration," Akers said.

Economic development officials often don't know the names of companies looking at their city, but they may be told the nature of the industry, said **Mary Poché**, a business recruitment specialist at the Pflugerville CDC.

It's understood among those involved in business recruitment that preliminary dealings are usually kept quiet. Initial meetings between city officials and potential businesses are often conducted on a first name-basis only.

"You operate under their guidelines," Poché said. "You want to maintain confidentiality because you want them to know they can trust you with proprietary information."

Sometimes such meetings are arranged through Opportunity Austin, the **Austin Chamber of Commerce**'s five-county economic development initiative, and sometimes the smaller communities get calls directly from the companies or third-party firms hired by companies to scope out new locations.

Because the names of companies are often unknown, efforts to recruit them are often given project names.

Pflugerville is currently working on nine other projects, including Project Big Kat, Project Black and White, Project Sunshine and Project Big Top, Akers said.

The City Council also authorized the Pflugerville CDC to contract with Angelou to develop a comprehensive economic development strategy.

Under that agreement, Angelou Economics will be paid \$165,000 to create a strategic plan for Pflugerville that can help the city obtain federal economic development grants.

"The strategy will tell us what projects Pflugerville needs to get funding for," said Angelou, who estimated the plan will be completed by first quarter 2012.

**Courtesy of JB Goodwin**