

# KANE COUNTY: REGIONAL GROWTH STRATEGIC PLAN

JANUARY 2023 UPDATE





# BACKGROUND & RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

*Working with Kane County, the Regional Growth Program and Honey Communications Began this work in late '22*

- **Background:**
  - **Late 2022:** Kane County engaged the Utah Association of Counties (UAC) Regional Growth Program (RGP)
  - **Emphasis:** conduct comprehensive analysis of the regional economy to identify tactics and initiatives to diversify the economic base of the county.
  - **Partners:** Honey Communications, Center for Education, Business, and the Arts (CEBA)
- **Phase I: Existing Research/Literature Review**
  - Previous regional plans
  - Previous economic and tourism analysis
- **Phase II: Primary Research and Stakeholder Engagement**
  - In-person meetings
  - Understanding community needs
- **Phase III: Quantitative Analysis**
  - Economic analysis
  - Regional synergies
- **Phase IV: Community Feedback**
  - Ongoing Process





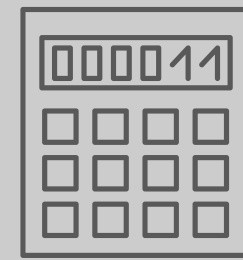
# KANE COUNTY MARKET STUDY

## Navigating Local Market



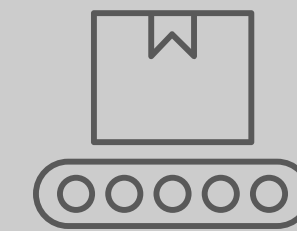
- Federal land
- Economy heavily dependent on tourism
- Workforce size
- Housing challenges
- Managing Growth

## Changing Workforce



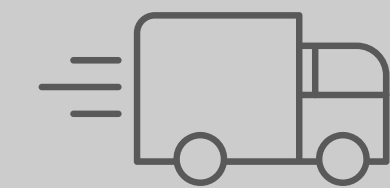
- Emphasize remote work opportunities
- Leverage existing broadband infrastructure to increase employment and education.

## Regional Collaboration



- Leverage growth of SW Utah
- Five County AOG
- New employment opportunities and economic diversification

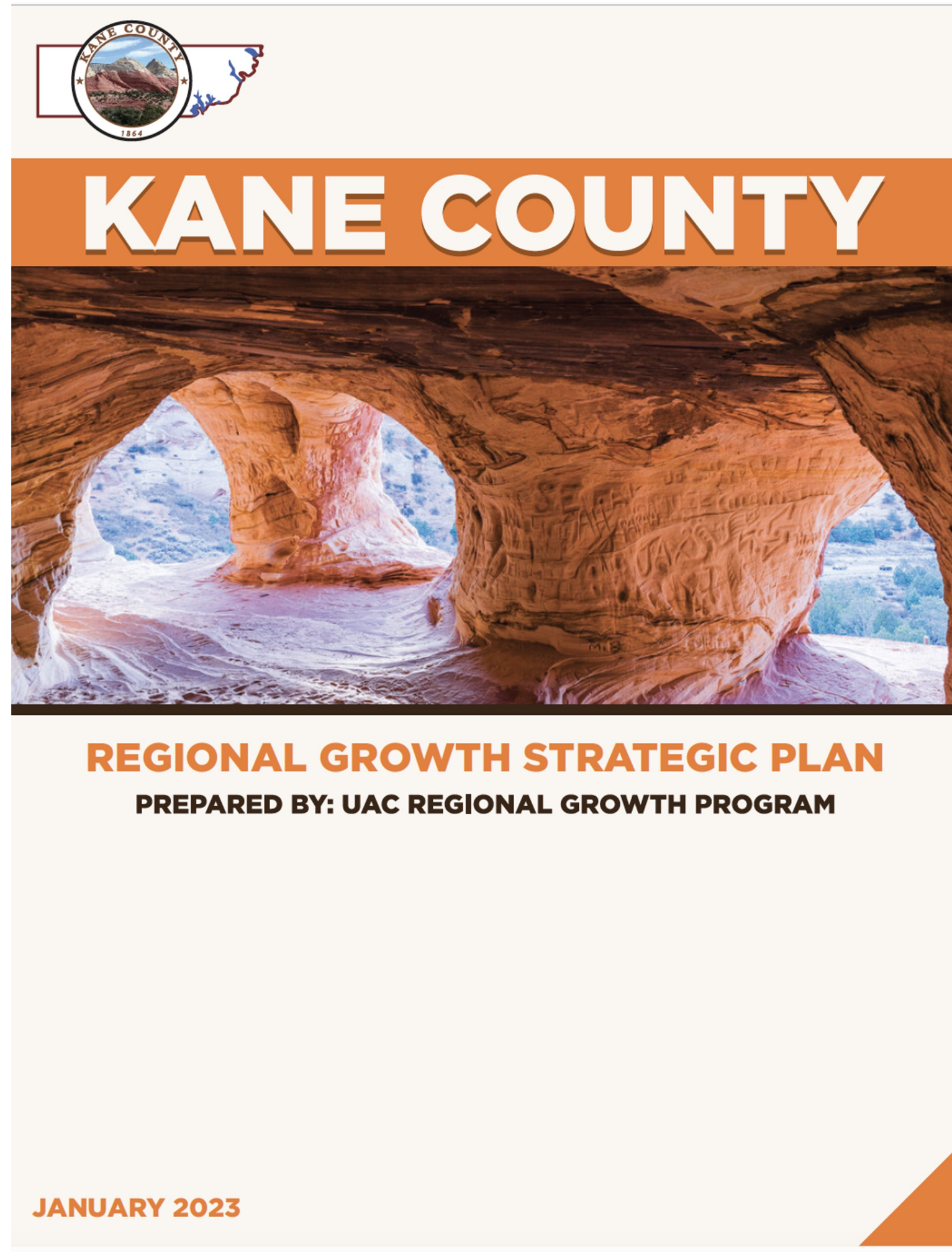
## Economic Diversification



- Increasing creative economy presence in county
- County incentives for projects that align with this
- Promoting local businesses



# ONGOING REPORT AND OPPORTUNITY FOR FEEDBACK



## Kane County: Regional Growth Strategic Plan

### Executive Summary

In late spring of 2022, the Kane County Commission engaged the Utah Association of Counties (UAC) to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the regional economy to identify tactics and initiatives to diversify the economic base of the county. UAC coordinated with the Center for Education, Business, and the Arts (CEBA) to gather data and conduct in-person interviews.

The analysis included several methods of research, including primary research in-field (stakeholder meetings, community gatherings), secondary research (literature review, online research), and quantitative analysis. The findings yielded several core challenges and possible recommendations, including:

#### Challenges:

- **Large Amount of Federal Land:** Nearly 95% of Kane County is federally or state-owned.
- **Small Workforce:** Equivalent to ~15% of the size of neighboring Iron County and only ~5% of neighboring Washington County.
- **Housing:** Like most communities in Utah, housing autonomy remains a need.
- **Economic Growth Diversification:** Heavily dependent on tourism and anchor institutions (Best Friends).

#### Recommendations:

- **Embracing the Creative Economy and Remote Work:** Increasing film production and remote work opportunities.
- **Regional Collaboration:** Bringing down the residents from neighboring communities looking for more ideal lifestyles.
- **Emphasizing Investments in Housing and Community Development for Future Growth:** Helping to position the county for future growth and expansion.

### Strategies to Enhance Growth

- **Enhancing Small Businesses and Rural Incentives:** Kane County has several tools available to help maximize development including:
  - **Zoning and Permitting,** which allows them to control how areas develop and what types of development they want to see occur.
  - **Infrastructure and Workforce Investment,** in which they can create a foundation for growth by improving transportation, water/sewage, power, and investing in workforce development.
  - **Local Incentives,** in which they improve the economics of the development for investors either on an up-front or post-performance basis (e.g., tax increment finance).
  - **State Incentives:** Including the Rural County Grant Program, the The Rural Co-working and Innovation Center (RCIC) grant, the Rural Economic Development Incentive (REDI) Program, and others.
- **Attracting Private Capital:** One of the common themes our team found in our discussion with local businesses was a lack of understanding and common language between private investors and community economic development projects. Before funding projects, investors want to see projects with clear investment parameters and request that are clearly defined to where their capital may participate, which can be difficult to translate from the community economic development level.

### Overall Recommendations:

#### Recommendation 1- Embrace the Creative Economy

Kane County should continue to invest in resources and infrastructure to support the creative economy, including film, television, and other media production. Coupled with the state's recent increase in film incentives, embracing this industry provides additional potential for employment in a growing industry.

The additional incentives the County could look to provide to amplify the incentive include:



# QUESTIONS?

Thank you!

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