

## **What is the value of a NW Ohio Greenhouse cluster?**

- The goal of this project is to enhance the economic competitiveness of Ohio's greenhouse nursery industry.
- Brings competing growers together to collaborate and find solutions to large-scale industry-wide problems that individual greenhouses, due to lack of resources and avenues of communication, are often incapable of addressing by themselves. Successful cluster initiatives in other parts of the county have resulted in a number of tangible benefits for cluster members, including improved product quality, reduced production costs, the sharing of expensive infrastructure, and enhanced marketing prowess.
- The cluster has developed a brand label (Maumee Valley Growers) and is in the process of developing a comprehensive marketing strategy to capitalize on the newly established brand.
- Research is identifying solutions to the high-energy costs that are threatening the profitability of many individual greenhouses. This cluster-based approach could be utilized in other parts the U.S.
- Whether it is cut flowers from Colombia or cucumbers from Canada, large segments of the U.S. greenhouse nursery industry are under competitive attack from foreign competition. In the case of northwest Ohio, the main competitive threat comes from southern Ontario.
- Northwest Ohio's greenhouse industry also is threatened by high-energy costs. Energy costs in Northwest Ohio are among some of the highest in the nation. If the Ohio greenhouse industry is going to have a viable and sustainable economic future, steps must be taken now to address the competitive threats facing the industry. Failure will result in the closure of a number of this agriculture community.
- Northwest is one of the nation's leading producers of greenhouse nursery crops. Lucas County ranks in the top 5 percent of counties nationwide in terms of the value of greenhouse nursery crops. The industry has an economic impact of almost \$100 million in the Northwest Ohio economy. Preserving the greenhouse industry is not just about preserving an economically important industry, it also is about preserving a way of life. All of Northwest Ohio's greenhouses are family-owned. Every time one of our greenhouses goes out of business, the region and the country are losing a precious part of its cultural and economic heritage. If the cluster-base approach is successful, it has the potential to be exported to and utilized by growers in other parts of the state and the nation.