An ongoing activity of the Clayton County Department of Economic Development is to better understand business and industry needs. In particular, the Department has undertaken an initiative to gain more intelligence about the current and future market forces and trends that are impacting Clayton County businesses and industries.

To that end, the Department has purchased a business intelligence software, Sychronis, to forecast the future economic picture in Clayton County. Using this software, a researcher would be able to isolate the top 150 employers in the county and determine their sales numbers, locations, and the type of industry. Through examining the current economic health of the top businesses in the county, the Department of Economic Development would be able to understand how these businesses look long term, and therefore get a feel for how the county’s economy will be affected by these businesses in the future.

Through the Archway Partnership, Joseph Evans, a graduate student in Public Administration with an emphasis in Public Management and Public Policy from the University of Georgia, completed the initial analysis of the 150 top employers. Evans provided additional research on the parent companies of businesses within the community and their standing on a national scale. Evans’ work saved the community hundreds of hours of time which would have been spent sorting through data. The end result gave Clayton County the flexibility they needed to focus on the local aspect of the businesses in their community.

The Economic Development Department in Clayton County has tapped higher education resources through the Archway Partnership on several occasions. Kevin Gullette, Deputy Director of Economic Development, said that working with the Archway Partnership is a beneficial collaboration for both Clayton County and UGA, and is a relationship that will certainly be continued and utilized in the near future.

“[Evans] end product was a comprehensive profile of our companies, local contacts, sales numbers, suppliers, and a host of other information, which gave us the baseline and background history on our local companies. This step allows us to focus more on our company’s Clayton County operations and not on spending time on the ‘parent’ company,” Gullette said.

Gullette added, “The Archway Partnership is plugged into the community and can look at both the community needs and the UGA resources that could benefit those needs,” Gullette said.

**Advancing Community Priorities:** One of Clayton County Archway Partnership’s top priorities is economic development. Through the business intelligence work, the Clayton County Department of Economic Development can not only understand and measure the health of the local economy, but also determine ways to improve it.