

PRESIDENT'S NEWSLETTER: AUGUST 2015



Rockforward20/20: Coming into focus

Welcome to the **President's Monthly Newsletter**, which is designed to showcase the regional momentum we all work together to generate.

September brings a new era for the Rockford Area Economic Development Council -- the beginning of Rockforward20/20, our new five-year strategic plan.

Thank you for the strong turnout for last week's Strategic Plan Review and Feedback Session at Rockford Brewing Company, where more than 150 stakeholders shared vital feedback on the RAEDC's draft mission, vision and strategies.

Next week, we go LIVE! A news conference at 10 a.m. Sept. 10 will kick off the new strategic plan and campaign for support. Watch for your invitation soon.

The RAEDC has a major role to play in the region's success: cultivating opportunities for job growth!



Regional workforce development update:

Northern Illinois University and **Rock Valley College** announced a [new partnership](#) allowing students to earn **engineering bachelor's and master's degrees** on the RVC campus in Rockford in the fall of 2016. Woodward, UTC Aerospace Systems and other businesses also will play key roles in growing a high-tech workforce for the future.



Regional development updates:

The RAEDC congratulates recent successes in our region:

1. **MercyRockford Health System:** A \$400 million project to create [one hospital on two campuses in Rockford](#) was announced Aug. 13 as the largest initiative in the company's 130-year history -- investing in the North Rockton Avenue location while building a new East Riverside Boulevard campus.

2. **Save-A-Lot:** The city of Rockford and neighborhoods along West State Street celebrated the [opening of a grocery store](#) Aug. 27.

3, **All World Machinery Supply:** The machine tool parts supply company is expected to [open its new 38,000-square-foot facility](#) along Interstate 90 in Roscoe in early September.

Manufacturing Day is Oct. 1: [Show off cool careers!](#)

View [good news](#) announcements. A recent sampling:

National recognition:

[Rockford ranked No. 4 for home affordability, healthcare access](#)

Updates:

[Prairie Street Brewhouse acquires Cellusuede property in downtown Rockford](#)

[Tough Mudder competition coming to Rockford area](#)

[Fast Pitch third-place winner AdsOrTails launches coupon website, mobile app](#)

[I-39 Logistics Corridor Association names Roger Hopkins as corridor administrator](#)

RAEDC project pipeline in August:

- 6 new **Business Attraction** prospective projects represent 670 jobs, \$1 million in investment and 250,000 new/renovated square feet.
- 1 **Business Retention/Expansion** prospective project represents 50 jobs, \$400 million in capital investment and 400,000 new/renovated square feet.

RAEDC updates:



1. Congratulations to **Carrie Zethmayr**, who started Aug. 24 as the **Northern Stateline Region Manager** for the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.

The RAEDC thanks Zethmayr, Executive Director of Trade and Investment, for her seven years of dedicated service.

"I am impressed with the spirit of entrepreneurship and the aggressive approach to economic development at the state level," Zethmayr said. "I look forward to being part of a team that finds new and innovative ways to make Illinois more competitive, and I expect to work in close alignment with the RAEDC to show the world what the Rockford Region and the state can offer."

2. Welcome to **Dennis McCarthy**, who has been hired as **RAEDC Director of National Business Development** to manage business attraction and area marketing projects. He started Aug. 10. McCarthy has extensive international business experience at several manufacturers in sales, marketing, project management and production/operations.

You can reach him at 815.969.4254 or dmccarthy@rockfordil.com.

Read more about Dennis' background as well as Carrie's achievements [here](#).

3. **AAR Corp.**, the largest aircraft Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) operator in the United States, [met with leaders of 26 regional businesses](#) Aug. 18. The RAEDC coordinated the **supplier event** to introduce the Rockford Region's robust supply chain to AAR, which will open a \$40 million, 24/7 facility at Chicago Rockford International Airport in 2016.

4. Congratulations to **Joshua Patterson** and **Terrance Hall**, who were [honored by the Soul News Network's 25 Black Leaders to Watch Awards](#).

Patterson and Hall, RAEDC International Business and Trade Development Specialist, volunteer for the award-winning Wabongo Leadership Council. Patterson also was recognized as a Young Leader on the Rise.

5. Best wishes to **Joshua Patterson**, who is leaving the RAEDC as Business Attraction Coordinator to pursue an MBA at Rockford University. His last day is Sept. 10.

Save the date: RAEDC Annual Meeting and Dinner



Nov. 18: 5 to 8 p.m. at Giovanni's in Rockford; the keynote speaker will be **Jim Schultz, Director of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.**

Schultz will deliver an update on the **state's new approach to marketing** and highlight our **collective impact** toward strengthening our **competitive advantage**.

Thank you to our **presenting sponsor, OSF Healthcare!** Additional sponsorships are still available; contact [Jimsi Kuborn](#) at 815.969.4259.



Other RAEDC events:

- **Oct. 28, "The Talent Tap Dance: Making the Right Moves in Workforce Development to Grow Your Business":** A Business Retention and Expansion Solutions Team program on investing in the employees you have and attracting the ones you need. 8 to 11:30 a.m. at the Radisson in Rockford. Free. **Keynote speaker will be June Hazzard, Vice President of Human Resources, Woodward.** [RSVP today!](#)
- **May 4, 2016: [Go Global 2016](#),** the stateline's premier international trade conference.
- **Spring 2016: [Tri-State Alliance Summit](#),** hosted in Dubuque, Iowa.

Watch for this President's Newsletter each month to learn more about everyone's collective impact on the Region's momentum.

The RAEDC often works behind the scenes due to the confidential nature of business projects. Plus, big deals take time: The average time from start to completion on the more than 20 announced project wins in 2014 was 665 days, with several projects requiring more than three years.

We are committed to persistence and continuity in our work: We market the Rockford Region to the world, influencing companies to locate or expand here. We support and promote growth within targeted industries through regional public-private collaboration. We assist prospective and existing companies by connecting them to resources for workforce development, available buildings, supply chain partners, incentives and more.

Together, we will continue the momentum in 2015 for an even stronger, more

sustainable economy. **Together, we will Connect, Act and Thrive!**

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ABOUT THE RAEDC

The primary role of the Rockford Area Economic Development Council (RAEDC) is to collaboratively improve the economic strength of the Rockford Region by helping employers retain and create quality jobs. The RAEDC works closely with many partners to learn what existing and new employers need to grow, and to serve as a one-stop resource for clients. The RAEDC seeks to improve the competitiveness of the region by taking what it learns from the region's employers, and engaging the community in the daily work of economic development.