

PRESIDENT'S NEWSLETTER: December 2015

Achieving Goals Together

Welcome to the President's Monthly Newsletter, showcasing the regional momentum we all work together to generate.

Rockforward2! Final Project Pipeline Results

We achieved our three-year Rockforward2! goals!

Rockforward2! Measurement	Total Goal Over 3 Years (2013-2015)	Actual Results	Percentage Achieved
Number of jobs (New or Retained)	4,500	4,546 (Goal Achieved)	101%
Capital Investment	\$249 million	\$537.6 million (Goal Achieved)	216%
Square Feet of New or Renovated Space	2.31 million	4.1 million (Goal Achieved)	178%

Project Pipeline Update

The RAEDC, as the Economic Development Agency for the region is also the data collection agency on all new capital investment in the area, retained and created jobs and renovated

space. As we enter into our Rockforward20/20 plan, we will be informing all of you on project wins for our region as well as projects that we are working on with our various regional partners.

Curtis Metal Finishing Company of Machesney Park has recently completed an addition of 45,000 sq. ft. to their existing structure through a \$2.5 million investment. The company is also expected to increase the number of employees and could be hiring in the near future.

The Business of Incentives: Tools in the Economic Development Toolbox

Stacy Bernardi had the pleasure of attending a recent Next Rockford meeting. Many questions were raised about corporate tax breaks and what are known as "incentives".

[Read More](#)

EAV White Paper

When you think about selling our region what are some hurdles...property taxes would be high on that list.

Read the [full article](#) and [download the complete working document](#).

Business Retention and Expansion Team Have a Full Schedule in 2016

We will continue with our Voice of the Customer Surveys while exploring new options with the Synchronist System where we will not only report on the data received but also report on how the VOC give RAEDC the pulse on businesses that may need economic development assistance.

[Read More](#)

Regional Representatives attend Economic Development, Freight and Transportation Study Kick-off

Debuque, IA hosted a private-public economic development freight study kickoff to address the impact of freight transportation within the region.

Speakers included Stuart Anderson: Director of IA DOT Planning, Programming and Model, Jeff South: IL DOT Planning and Programming, Randy Blankenhorn: Secretary, IL DOT and Paul Trombino: Director, IA DOT.

Representing the Rockford Region were Mike Nicholas: President, RAEDC and Einer Forsman: President and CEO, Rockford Chamber of Commerce, Jarid Funderberg: Growth Dimensions, Mike Dunn Jr: RMAP and Jon Paul Diipla: RMAP.

Regional development updates

- The ramp at Irene Road in Belvidere, IL is open! The Illinois Tollway has completed the \$13 million exchange and bridge rebuild as part of the larger \$12 billion dollar, 15 year capital program, Move Illinois: The Illinois Tollway Driving the Future.
[Read More](#)
 - Northwest Business Magazine recognizes NIU EIGERlab's impact on innovation by repositioning the advanced manufacturing capabilities of Northern Illinois. The EIGERlab transition to NIU began with a coincidence. At the same time RAEDC was realigning its goals, NIU was seeking ways to enhance its innovation portfolio and regional economic impact. A partnership was born. "RAEDC supported and sustained EIGERlab for a number of years," says Mike Nicholas, RAEDC president. "However, we realized that to truly flourish, EIGERlab needed to be affiliated with a university-level program."
[Read More](#)
 - Taurus 80 opens its doors in the US. The Italian zinc die cast manufacturer supplies parts to the auto industry.
[Read More](#)
 - Property Taxes and Assessments under scrutiny in Rockford Register Star article. The Sunday paper contained an article evaluating the largest properties who have appealed their assessed value.
[Read More](#)
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View good news announcements. A recent sampling:

- [Wipfli LLP](#) announced on January 4, 2016 that Steinberg Advisors, Ltd. joined the firm effective January 1. Steinberg Advisors, a firm headquartered in Northbrook, Illinois, provides audit, tax and management consulting services to businesses and individuals in

the Chicago area.

- [Fehr Graham](#) announced recently they have acquired the Springfield, IL civil/structural engineering and land surveying firm Coombe-Bloxdorf P.C.
 - [Rockford announces](#) it has been recognized as the first to achieve Zero: 2016. The City of Rockford Department of Human Services announced it is the first city to achieve the goals set by First Lady Michelle Obama through the Zero: 2016 Mayor's Challenge; finding veterans a place to live and end chronic homelessness. Rockford has found housing for 73 veterans so far.
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RAEDC Updates:

Nicole Mayfield has been promoted to Investor Relations Coordinator, working with Jimmi Kuborn, VP of Investor Relations beginning January 1, 2016. Nicole joined the RAEDC in October 2015 as the Administrative Coordinator. She is a native of Rockford and earned her Associates of Applied Science in Business Management/Marketing from Rockford Career College. Nicole joined the organization with prior customer service and managerial experience.



Upcoming Events

- **Innovation Tuesday**, Marketing 101: Effective Advertising - January 12, 2016
 - **Williams-Manny Cyber Liability** - January 20, 2016
 - **Commercial Real Estate Forecasting Conference** - January 20, 2016: RAEDC is an exhibitor
 - **Hannover Messe** - April 25-29, 2016: RAEDC is an exhibitor as part of the Chicagoland Region
 - **Tri-State Alliance Summit**, Spring 2016, hosted in Dubuque, Iowa.
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Looking ahead: Rockforward20/20

Rockforward20/20 represents a bold vision for our future, this aggressive plan will cultivate opportunities to create and retain over 10,000 jobs and significantly increase capital investment in the region.

Learn more at rockfordil.com/Rockforward2020. If you have not set up a brief meeting to explore how you can get involved, contact Jimisi Kuborn at jkuborn@rockfordil.com or 815-969-4259.

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 24 project wins in 2015 was 329 days.

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 into 2016 for an even stronger, more sustainable economy. **Together, we will Trailblaze, Inspire Action, Align, Seed and Serve!**

Michael Nichols, President
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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.