



PRESIDENT'S NEWSLETTER

| February 2016 |

My Perspective - Letters to the Rockford Region

From Myths to Facts Regarding Neighboring States

A myth is circulating that companies are leaving the Rockford Region for a neighboring state. When in actuality, we are seeing an increasing number of organizations moving into the Rockford Region from other states.

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The RAEDC and the Rockford Region

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.

Measurements

Regional Impact Measurements

These figures represent the second month of successes during the new Rockforward20/20 campaign. The campaign began in January 2016 and will continue through December 2020.

New or Retained Jobs

36

Capital Investment

\$25
Million

Renovated or
New Space

148,500
Square Feet

There are wins from January and February leading to these Regional Impact Measurements. A business in the healthcare cluster has expanded their facility resulting in increases for Capital Investment and Renovated or New Space figures.

RAEDC Updates

Voice of the Customer Provides More Than Just Numbers - RAEDC's business retention and expansion team coordinates a formal outreach program called "Voice of the Customer" (VOC) to utilize feedback from Winnebago County companies on their perspectives of the regional business climate to identify opportunities and barriers to growth.

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IGNITE Discusses Economic Development - Recently Mike Nicholas, President RAEDC participated in Lunch Outside the Box discussing Economic Development; hosted at Rasmussen College also included EDDNI, Growth Dimensions, and RMAP.

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Have You Tried LOIS? - LOIS, the Location One Information System is a database containing buildings and sites available in the Rockford Region. The content is generated through a relationship with the RAEDC and Rockford Association of Realtors. If you would like to have your property or building listed on LOIS contact [Debbie Van Sickle](#) at 815-969-4256.

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Getting Ready for Hannover Messe - The Business Attraction Team is getting ready for Hannover Messe in Hannover, Germany this April. Partnering with the State of Illinois, RAEDC is attending the world's largest manufacturing and industrial fair. With exhibitors from 48 countries attending Hannover Messes the opportunities for networking will be spectacular.

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Regional Wins

Ribbon Cutting for Regenerative Medicine and Disability Research Lab at U of I College of Medicine at Rockford - The University of Illinois College of Medicine at Rockford welcomes Mathew Thoppil-Mathew, PhD and Xue-Jun Li, PhD during a ribbon cutting opening the Regenerative Medicine and Disability Research Lab.

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Tough Mudder Commits to 4 Year Participation with the Rockford Region - The 2016 event scheduled for May 21 and 22 is the first of the four year commitment. The Chicago Rockford International Airport (RFD) will host the full 11 ½ mile course on May 21 featuring 20 obstacles.

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ComEd Discusses the Importance of Economic Development Partnerships - In a recent article in Global Trade Magazine ComEd's Head of Economic and Business Development, Hector Garcia discuss the importance of participation in economic development partnerships within the Rockford Region.

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Comcast Speeds Things Up - Announced on February 2nd Comcast will introduce DOCSIS 3.1-powered gigabit internet service to residential and business customers to Atlanta, Nashville, Chicago, Detroit and Miami in 2016. The new technology will allow Xfinity and Comcast Business internet customers to receive gigabit speeds over the existing lines.

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Regional Good News

Engineering Our Future for the Better - Engineering Or Future announced the beginning of the fund raising campaign to generate \$6 million to support the NIU-RVC Engineering Program. Members of the community have already stepped up to support this critical educational partnership. Woodward Charitable Trust has committed \$2 million, the Stenstrom Foundation has made a considerable leadership contribution along with the Community Foundation of Northern Illinois.

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Progress on the MRO: On Time and On Schedule - The MRO (Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul) being constructed by AAR Corp. at the Chicago Rockford International Airport is taking shape. The facility is scheduled to open in 2016 and will provide between 500 - 1000 high-quality jobs.

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Fehr Graham Awarded for Illinois Engineering Excellence - Fehr Graham Receives Two ACEC Awards for Second Consecutive Year. Fehr Graham, a leading Midwest engineering and environmental firm, today received two, 2016 ACEC-Illinois Engineering Excellence Merit Awards from the American Council of Engineering Companies of Illinois (ACEC-IL).

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Accuride Earns 2015 Diamond Supplier Award from Navistar - Announced that it is among an elite group of 33 suppliers to earn a Diamond Supplier Award from Navistar for its performance during 2015.

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Beauty on the Block - Nominations Now Open - Is there a lot that you walk by or drive by every day and you wish that someone would do something about it? Are you willing to help make that neglected space beautiful again? Nominate a spot within the Rockford area by March 14th, 2016.

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SBA Loans To Offer Refinancing Option - On December 18, 2015 Congress voted to allow 504 Debt Refinancing as a permanent option for US Small Business Administration (SBA) loans. These loans are available for starting a business, providing working capital, purchasing property or equipment and other business based uses.

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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 Jimsi Kuborn at 815-969-4259 or jkuborn@rockfordil.com.



The RAEDC

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 Nicholas

Michael Nicholas, President
MNicholas@RockfordIL.com

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.

Rockford Area Economic Development Council

100 Park Avenue, Suite 100, Rockford, IL 61101 | information@rockfordil.com

T:815.987.8118 | www.RockfordIL.com
