



PRESIDENT'S NEWSLETTER | March 2016 |

My Perspective – Letter to the Rockford Region

The Soft Skills Gap

Quite a bit has been written lately about the "skills gap". This term refers to the technical skills required, for example, to perform the jobs available in today's Advanced Manufacturing environment. However, there is another gap which our community must address as well. That gap is "soft skills".

[READ MORE>>>](#)

Sponsorship Opportunity

The RAEDC is offering an exciting new opportunity in response to our investors' requests to increase their brand awareness in the region. Investor companies will have the opportunity to sponsor the President's Newsletter. For information contact Jimmi Kuborn at JKuborn@RockfordIL.com or call 815-969-4259.

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 new or 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 collective successes during the new Rockforward20/20 campaign. The campaign began in January 2016 and will continue through December 2020.



A business in the healthcare cluster has expanded their facility. A local manufacturing company in Rockford is implementing the first of a two-stage expansion. A manufacturer in Machesney Park is expanding workforce to support increased sales.

Regional Economic Measurements

These figures represent data from December 2015.



Website Measurements

These figures represent data from January 1 - March 31, 2016.



RAEDC Updates

The **Rockforward2! Results Report** is Out - Complete with results from the main economic indicators for the region including Capital Investment, New or Retained Jobs and New or Renovated Square Feet of Space. [READ MORE>>>](#)

Qualified Sites Program Launches in the Region - The Rockford Region is announcing the launch of a qualified site program as the potential foundation for a broader program to be implemented beyond our county borders, regionally and state-wide. [READ MORE>>>](#)

Sagar Patel Joins Rockford's Economy & Legacy Panel Discussion - Sagar Patel, President, Aircraft Turbine Systems at Woodward and Chairman of the RAEDC Board of Directors participated in a panel discussion at the Midway Village's Winter Lecture Series. [READ MORE>>>](#)

RAEDC Joins Panel Discussion at Illinois Legislative Black Caucus Retreat 2016 - Stacy Bernardi, Vice President for Development participated in a panel discussion at the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus Retreat 2016. [READ MORE>>>](#)

Thank You Steve Ward - It is with mixed emotions that the RAEDC shares the news that Steve Ward has been promoted by Heartland Financial USA to become President of Centennial Bank and Trust in Denver, Colorado. Steve has been extremely active with the RAEDC, taking on leadership roles with the launch of Rockforward! [READ MORE>>>](#)

Regional Aerospace Companies Aim for the Sky - Almost 100 members and guests of the Rockford Area Aerospace Network (RAAN) held a Supplier Symposium as a great way for the companies to learn of each other and opportunities to partner and further increase the visibility and sustainability of the region as a large Aerospace Cluster. [READ MORE>>>](#)

Q&A with Fehr Graham Principal Mick Gronewold - REJournals, a commercial real estate publication spent some time with Mick Gronewold to find out more about this problem-solver and his company. [READ MORE>>>](#)

Regional Wins

Construction in the I-39 Corridor Holding Up Strong - REJournals, a commercial real estate publication recently published an article about the activity in the Rockford Region and along the I-39 Corridor. From Healthcare to MROs find out why here is the place to be. [READ MORE>>>](#)

Rock Valley College Seeking Internship Partnerships - Rock Valley College Career Services, Advising, and Placement is interested in collaborating with local employers to increase internship opportunities for students in a variety of areas. [READ MORE>>>](#)

RockfordModernForgeCompanies, LLC Consolidates Operations - ModernForgeCompanies, LLC is a manufacturer of close tolerance, near net forgings. Modern will be consolidating three of its operations into one facility located on South Kishwaukee Ave in Rockford. [READ MORE>>>](#)

Mega Sports Center at MercyRockford Sportscore 2 Approved by Park District Board - The Rockford Park District Board of Commissioners approved a construction contract for the new Mega Sports Center at MercyRockford Sportscore 2 in Loves Park. [READ MORE>>>](#)

Transform Rockford Edition of Rockford Register Star Out - Containing positive articles relating to manufacturing, local businesses, education & arts, healthcare, community & government, and sports & recreation. [READ MORE>>>](#)

Home Buyers Property Tax Refund Program - This new program would offer a three-year property tax rebate for buyers of foreclosed, short-sale or newly built homes in the city of Rockford. [READ MORE>>>](#)

Regional Good News

Rockford Career College Offering Shorter, More Affordable Programs - Rockford Career College Continues to Provide the Rockford Region with a Ready Workforce. [READ MORE>>>](#)

Tapco Site: Be Flexible to Reach Endgame - Being flexible has helped Rockford reach its goals. Collaboration between local officials and organizations has led to a transformation of downtown. [READ MORE>>>](#)

Alignment Rockford, RPS 205 Receive \$400,000 Joyce Foundation Grant - The Joyce Foundation has chosen Rockford for a new regional partnership. [READ MORE>>>](#)

Area Development Discusses Integrated Project Delivery - Area Development, an executive magazine covering corporate site selection and relocation included Ghafari Associates, Ringland-Johnson and the new Woodward, Inc facility in the Q1, 2016 edition of their publication. Recognizing their work on the Woodward, Inc Loves Park facility. [READ MORE>>>](#)

Capital Improvement Program Approved by City Council - The Rockford City Council voted to approve the 2016 - 2020 Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The approved CIP book, provides for a total of \$144,886,717 in infrastructure investment throughout the City over the next five years. [READ MORE>>>](#)

RAEDC Events

Second Quarter Investor Event: Wednesday, May 25th

Save the date! The RAEDC is planning a second quarter investor event. The location has yet to be determined and invitations will be sent. For more information contact Jimsi Kuborn, Vice President of Investor Relations at 815-969-4259 or JKuborn@RockfordIL.com.

RAEDC Updates

RAEDC Appoints New Board of Directors Vice Chair

We are pleased to announce that Michele Petrie, Senior Vice President of BMO Harris Bank, will serve as the Vice Chair/Treasurer of the Rockford Area Economic Development Council for the remainder of 2016. Michele also serves as the current Chair of the Rockforward! Leadership Council, and we embrace her continued leadership in her new role with the organization.



Welcome Gina Meeks, Business Development Assistant

As a Business Development Assistant, Gina supports the Vice President for Development, with a focus on Voice of the Customer and as assistant liaison to the Business Retention and Expansion Solutions Team and the Education for Workforce Development Committee.

[READ MORE>>>](#)



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.



New Rockforward20/20 Investors

The RAEDC welcomes these new investors to Rockforward20/20

- Astronautics Corporation of America
- Belcan Engineering Group, LLC
- Gleason Cutting Tools Corp.
- Industrial Molds Group
- Lechtenberg & Associates LLC
- Northwestern Illinois Contractors Association
- Williams McCarthy

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, 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.

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