

**Rockford Area Economic Development Council
Business Retention & Expansion Solutions Team
2010 Work Plan**

The Rockford Area Economic Development Council Board of Directors created three solutions teams to help achieve the organization's mission and goals. Committee contributions are extremely helpful, as members advise from their unique perspectives, broaden considerations, and lead implementation of *Rockforward!* strategies and tactics.

Meetings of the Business Retention & Expansion Solutions Team (BRE) are held on the fourth Thursday of each month (*except November*) at 7:45 am at 1401 N. Second Street in Rockford. The chairman is Gary Marzorati, who is the President of William Charles Waste Companies. The staff liaison is Mark Podemski, RAEDC Vice President for Development.

In 2010, BRE will collaborate with RAEDC staff, investors, and allies to accomplish the following:

Conduct Voice of the Customer Surveys

Tactics: BRE will strive to double the visits made in 2009 resulting in 200 VOC visits for 2010. Primary focus will be on reaching out to RAEDC investors that have not yet been visited over the last three years and to Internationally-owned companies in our region.

Projected Outcomes: The RAEDC will learn what employers need to be more successful, will identify numerous opportunities for improvement, and community strengths will be highlighted.

Generate New Growth Opportunities for Local Industry

Tactics: BRE will advocate and market the benefits of the following programs to appropriate companies: Continuous Improvement programs in all sectors of our community; TIF/EZ support programs for expanding and relocating companies; International export and strategy development; and River Edge Redevelopment Zone. Additionally, BRE will work with company influencers to increase awareness and participation in the programs.

Projected Outcomes: Businesses will achieve an increased awareness of programs that are available to help expand and improve their operations. Plan to hold at least one seminar in 2010 for company influencers.

Advocate for a Robust Entrepreneurial Environment

Tactics: BRE will work to integrate the Rockford Area Venture assets within RAEDC, enhance the entrepreneurial environment in our region and identify potential support solutions to be implemented through local partners.

Projected Outcomes: An increased level of successful entrepreneurial activity for start-ups and existing company developments.

Improve the Workforce Pipeline

Tactics: BRE will engage and facilitate educational partnerships and will increase awareness of WIB roles and strategies within our community, including:

- Educate our community on the importance of life-long learning, the available sources of education and training, and access to funding and
- Create an internet-based "clearing house" for local internships, available board positions, and other elements to help retain and attract talent.

Projected Outcomes: A greater understanding of the challenges facing our community in regards to workforce and where assistance may be provided. An increased retention of current employees due to greater ties within our communities.