

News Release

Rockford Area Economic Development Council Unveils Multimedia Campaign to Further Economic Success for Rockford Region

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 23, 2010, ROCKFORD, ILLINOIS – In an unprecedented show of collaboration, local media who are investors in the Rockford Area Economic Development Council joined forces to create, produce, and fund a multimedia campaign to promote positive assets in the region. The campaign was unveiled today at a news conference held at the Chicago Rockford International Airport.

“This unique informational campaign with a call to action promotes regional strengths to citizens in the Rockford Area and helps us further communicate them. When we market to our target audiences, who are the current and prospective employers, we promote regional strengths as we encourage them to expand in or move their businesses to the Rockford Area,” said Bill Roop, Chairman of the Board of the RAEDC.

“We thank the media executives who worked together on this multimedia campaign. I want to emphasize that these are not public service announcements. They are paid spots made possible with trade agreements,” added Roop.

Region’s Four Economic Development Assets

The multimedia campaign focuses on four assets from an economic development perspective.

Strong Infrastructure

The Rockford Area is a cost effective region with strong infrastructure, including I-90/I-39, I-88, and I-43; proximity to Chicago; the 18th largest air cargo airport in the country; UPS’s second-largest hub; class one rail lines; and intermodal connections.

Excellent International Connections

Rockford Area businesses export over \$1.4 Billion, which is 12 percent of the region’s Gross Metropolitan Product (GMP). The region is one of the most ethnically diverse communities in Illinois, with active trade delegation and mission programs. RFD has an international arrival gate with 24-hour customs and border security service, Foreign Trade Zone #176, and more.

Plentiful Opportunities for High Education

Over 12,000 people are currently improving their lives through higher education in the Rockford Area. There are at least ten institutions that invest in our community to expand our horizons; including: Benedictine University; Judson University; Northern Illinois University; Rasmussen College; Rock Valley College; Rockford Career College; Rockford College; Saint Anthony College of Nursing; U of I College of Medicine; and Upper Iowa University-Rockford Center.

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Critical Mass of 10,000 Companies; 1,300 Are Manufacturers

70 percent of job growth in the Rockford Area comes from companies that are already here, with over 10,000 businesses and 1,300 manufacturing companies.

Call to Action

Each advertisement in the multimedia campaign will urge the public to support and participate in advancing each asset. They will encourage people to visit rockfordil.com for more information.

Media Investors/Partners

The following media, who are also investors in the RAEDC, participated to create, produce, and fund the campaign: Comcast; Cumulus Broadcasting Inc.; Maverick Media; Rockford Register Star; WIFR-TV; WQFR TV / WTVO TV; and WREX.

Multimedia Campaign Creates More Ambassadors for Region; Connects Companies to Services

"The more people who can articulate our strengths, the more ambassadors we will have for our community marketing for us," said Linda Gerber, Chair of the RAEDC Business & Community Relations Solutions Team. "I was extremely pleased to have the media companies step up and help us create a new way to market our region. To supplement our staff at the RAEDC and about 200 investor companies, it's extremely helpful to have additional people connect the RAEDC to the more than 1,300 manufacturing companies that are growing and need assistance to expand or learn about services to accelerate their growth," added Gerber.

Chairman Christiansen and Mayor Morrissey Applaud Collaboration

Also speaking at the news conference were Winnebago County Board Chair Scott Christiansen and Rockford Mayor Lawrence J. Morrissey. Chairman Christiansen praised the media for their collaboration. "This is a great extension of the Winnebago County Regional Collaboration Policy that was developed by municipalities investing in the RAEDC and signed at their annual meeting on December 2. I'm very impressed that the media investors joined forces for the greater good," he said.

Mayor Morrissey remarked on the importance of branding and marketing the Rockford Area. "When we have excellent assets, we need to systematically communicate them. I think it's a great idea to share these economic development strengths with the general public and enlist their help in spreading the word. In our world of six degrees of separation you could end up meeting and talking to someone who is influential in the out-of-town corporate headquarters of a Rockford facility. If you can articulate that Rockford has a skilled workforce and we enjoy superior logistics infrastructure, that could help retain or grow jobs," said Morrissey. "Definitely we can invite them to visit rockfordil.com," he added.

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Multimedia Campaign Schedule

The four themes in the multimedia campaign will run in equal rotation on television and radio during the week of February 23. Beginning in March, they will run each month for the rest of the year. Comcast will run quarterly 15-minute interviews on each theme, and print ads will appear quarterly in the Rockford Register Star.

Additional advertisements in 2010 will promote International Bioenergy Days, LiveBig Weekend, and the Jobapalooza Professional Career Fair in the fall. International Bioenergy Days is expected to draw 400 international and national visitors to Rockford in September and the fourth annual LiveBig Weekend and Jobapalooza Professional Career Fair will held during Thanksgiving weekend.

Multimedia Campaign Committees

A group of media executives and members of the RAEDC Business & Community Relations Solutions Team led the development of the multimedia campaign. Members include:

- Joan Sage, Government & Community Affairs Manager of Comcast
- Becky Riojas, Market Manager of Cumulus Broadcasting Inc.
- J Chapman, Market Manager of Maverick Media
- Janyce Fadden, President of the Rockford Area Economic Development Council
- Tonya Lamia, Vice President of Investor Relations of the Rockford Area Economic Development Council
- Tom Lasley, General Manager of the Rockford Register Star
- Monica Krysztopa, Director of Marketing of The Morrissey Family Businesses
- Greg Graber, Vice President/General Manager of WIFR-TV
- Joseph Denk, Vice President & General Manager of WQRF TV / WTVO TV
- John Chadwick, Vice President & General Manager of WREX

Also, a committee of RAEDC Business & Community Relations Solutions Team created the marketing themes for the multimedia campaign. Members include:

- Mark Peterson, General Manager of CherryVale Mall / CBL & Assoc Properties
- David A. Sidney, Principal Planner of Gary W. Anderson & Associates
- Fred Sabet, Owner of Kuma's Asian Bistro
- Glen Turpoff, Executive Director of Northern Illinois Building Contractors Association

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- Erin Werthman, Marketing Manager of Rasmussen College
- Mary Cacioppi, Business Development Specialist of Rockford Area Economic Development Council
- Dr. Charles Brown, PhD, Director of Communications and New Media of Rockford College
- Monica Krysztopa, Director of Marketing of The Morrissey Family Businesses

ABOUT THE RAEDC

The primary role of the Rockford Area Economic Development Council is to enhance wealth creation in the Rockford Region by marketing the area and helping employers retain and create quality jobs. The RAEDC works closely with many partners to serve as a one-stop resource for clients, to improve the competitiveness of the region, and to engage the community in the work of economic development.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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