



Over the past few months, we have witnessed some very exciting developments for our region's economic future. Since my last letter, Woodward announced a \$50 Million investment in expansion and renovation of their Rockford Area facility, Camcar Aerospace moved its headquarters to Rockford, and Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University announced plans for a new site at RFD. This positive energy was evident during the Second Quarter Investor Event on June 27, where we celebrated the successes of the Rockforward! campaign. As of June 5, 220 organizations have committed over \$1.9 Million in support of Rockforward!, which is 128% of the original annual goal of \$1.5 Million. With continued support by investors, we will implement our Rockforward! strategies with the backing of a \$9.6 Million, five-year budget. We greatly appreciate your investment and support of this vision.

The Rockforward! Leadership Council also generated quite a buzz—in the media and on the street—when it announced four bold and decisive actions to allocate resources from its 2008 Emerging Opportunities Fund. Investments include \$75,000 for the Higher Education Alliance of the Rock River Region (HEARRR) to help develop the Rockford Area Career Clearinghouse at Rockford College; \$50,000 in the Freedom Field Renewable Energy Project to research and promote alternative energy sources including solar, methane, wind, biomass, and geothermal technology; and \$50,000 of support for the Rockford Charter School Initiative. The Leadership Council also endorsed an effort to explore, research, and report on best practices for District 205 school board governance. We will keep you apprised of the return on these investments.

Progress is being made towards developing a World-Class Business Infrastructure. A preferred local alternative was selected during the April 30 meeting of the Northern Illinois Commuter Transportation Initiative (NICTI), and a recent meeting with Senator Durbin and Congressman Manzullo pushed for aligning AMTRAK and commuter rail lines. Through our participation in the City of Rockford's Zoning Board of Approvals (ZBA) and council meetings, we'll continue to promote the need for industrial park planning and development.

To create a Thriving Business Climate, the RAEDC continues to promote inward investment. Our own Mark Podemski traveled to Sweden in June to speak at the Fokus Innovations Conference, providing European companies with insight on how best to enter the U.S. market. Further strengthening our business ties with Sweden, we're also organizing a delegation from Rockford to attend E-Days in Stockholm and a trip to Lidköping in September 2008.

In order to attract investment, Workforce Development is of critical importance. That's why we're enthusiastic in our support of Jobapalooza, the featured event of LiveBig Weekend 2008. This event is dedicated to recruiting young professionals back to the Rockford region who left for college or to live in a different community. In 2007, Jobapalooza welcomed over 250 attendees and 35 companies promoting over 600 professional jobs. If your business is looking for young professionals, participate in LiveBig Weekend and register for this year's Jobapalooza Professional Career Fair!

Much effort has gone into making our Web presence as dynamic and informative as possible for prospective investors. Image, however, is only part of our Targeted Marketing and Recruitment efforts. The sales process really happens when investors are able to physically experience what the area has to offer. The UPS Familiarization Tour on May 22 is a great example. This biannual event has allowed over 100 site selectors and brokers to witness firsthand the logistical and economical advantages of doing business in the Rockford Region. "Wow, Rockford offers more than I expected!" was a common refrain among the participants.

On behalf of the RAEDC, I thank you for your continued investment in our collective future. Through the strength of your support, the private/public partnership is poised to make even greater progress in the months ahead.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Janyce Fadden".

Janyce Fadden

President, Rockford Area Economic Development Council