

Rockford Area Economic Development Council

# Hälsningar

*från Rockford, Illinois, USA* Global Partners Build Local Wealth

The RAEDC is a proud member of Swedish-American Chambers of Commerce/Chicago



FEBRUARY 2009

Warm greetings to you. We hope you are having a wonderful start to a new year.

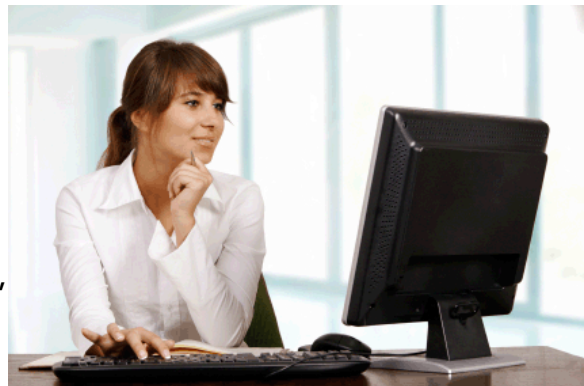
A group from the Rockford area attended the Swedish-American Chambers of Commerce-Chicago's annual Lucia luncheon on December 5 at the historic Drake Hotel. We enjoyed traditional Swedish Christmas food and drinks, as well as a lovely Lucia choir that sang Christmas songs in both Swedish and English. God Jul!



*Rockford group enjoys SACC-Chicago's Lucia luncheon.*

## ROCKFORD EXPLORES 'VIRTUAL MATCHMAKING'

Recognizing the need and desire for more matchmaking between Sweden and Rockford, the Rockford Area Economic Development Council is pursuing Virtual Matchmaking. "This will facilitate and support the face-to-face connections that Sweden and Rockford have made thus far; it can accelerate the relationship-building," said Mark Podemski of the RAEDC. "We want to take advantage of the technology that is available to all of us," he added.



If you are interested in participating, please contact Mark at [mpodemski@rockfordil.com](mailto:mpodemski@rockfordil.com).

SEEKING MORE SWEDISH SUBSCRIBERS TO HALSNINGAR

The response to the e-newsletter HALSNINGAR has been tremendous and we thank our many readers.

If you know of other businesses and organizations that would benefit from receiving HALSNINGAR, the quarterly e-newsletter that promotes Swedish and Rockford businesses building local wealth through global partnerships, please send their e-mail addresses and contact information to [information@rockfordil.com](mailto:information@rockfordil.com). Subscribers receive the latest information on matchmaking partnership and wealth-building opportunities.



### SUCCESSFUL E-DAYS & TRADE MISSION TO SWEDEN

Thanks to the excellent planning of SACC and our two interns from Lidköping, the Rockford trade delegation had a very productive experience at the 2008 Entrepreneurial Days in Stockholm and the additional meetings in Skövde and Lidköping.

While there, the trip yielded many helpful developments. Here are some of the highlights that the Rockford delegation learned:

- based on Sweden's experience and successes, Rockford must develop a sustainability strategy with regional collaboration
- there needs to be a central group or organization that drives the sustainability strategy
- continue to maximize the Industrial Partnership Agreement with Lidköping, and
- Rockford developed more contacts with Swedish companies in the alternative energy and clean tech industries

Thank you to all our old and new friends who made our trip so enjoyable and



*Winnebago County Chairman Scott Christiansen and Mayor of Skövde Thord Gustavsson.*

fruitful.

## JIMEC AB IN JOINT VENTURE WITH ROCKFORD COMPANY

Jimec AB, an automation company based in Lidköping, formed a joint venture with Leading Edge Hydraulics, a Rockford company. The new company will be named Leading Edge Hydraulics AB and be based in Lidköping. The announcement was made at E-Days in Stockholm.

The new company will serve Leading Edge's customer base in Europe, such as John Deere, Hitachi, Caterpillar and Haldex with the company's industry-leading NexusForm family of hydraulic connections. It will also supply several Scandinavian and European off-highway equipment manufacturers. Product will be shipped in the first quarter of 2009.

For more information, see [www.lehydraulics.com](http://www.lehydraulics.com).



*Jimec President Jan Blom and Leading Edge Hydraulic Vice President Russ Dennis at the joint venture signing in Stockholm between the two companies.*

## GREEN NEWS FROM AMERICA'S MIDWEST

RAEDC's Mark Podemski and William Charles' Jeffrey Gregory, both of whom were part of the Rockford delegation to E-Days, attended the 2008 International Bioenergy Days at Minnesota State Mankato in September. They learned about valuable new technologies that are available now from Swedish and American companies. Next year the event will be held in Lidköping. Rockford is vying to host the 2010 edition of the International Bioenergy Days.



Linnea Bengtsson, RAEDC intern from Lidköping, traveled to Flint, Michigan to learn about that city's proposed biogas facility in partnership with Swedish Biogas International, Linköping University and Kettering University in Flint. The facility would digest wastewater and produce biogas/fuel for Flint's bus fleet. His Majesty Carl XVI Gustaf, King of Sweden, attended the event. We are hopeful that Rockford will investigate this type of effort, in partnership with Winnebago County.

## UPDATE ON RAEDC INTERNSHIPS

In November we said "farewell / gud'bai" to Linnea Bengtsson, the first intern from Lidköping to be posted to Rockford as part of the Industrial Partnership Agreement established between the two cities in 2006.

Linnea was sad to leave Rockford, but reports she learned much, particularly the importance of networking and how Americans communicate more directly.



Marie-Louise, the second intern from Lidköping has just completed her Rockford internship. While here, she continued to further the strong relationship between the two cities. One of her projects was a sales training program for Swedish trainees who would gain experience in both Sweden and Rockford before becoming a sales representative in Lidköping.

Commenting on her Rockford experience, Marie-Louise said, "I hope what I am doing here will have a positive impact on the relations between the two cities and countries. It has been very interesting and educational."

## LIDKOPING INTERN IN ROCKFORD "LEARNED A LOT"

Rockford is benefiting from its third intern from Lidköping, Gabrielle Didier. She is training for her new role at Leading Edge Hydraulics AB, the joint venture that was created in September during the 2008 Entrepreneurial Days held in Stockholm.

Gabrielle arrived in Rockford on November 16 for a four-month internship where she will learn everything from processing customer's orders to production scheduling and the shipping of completed parts to LEH AB customers.



When she returns to Lidköping in March, she will train others in the Leading Edge Hydraulics' way of doing business. She will also be taking some classes at Skövde University in production logistics and entrepreneurial business.

"This is such a great opportunity and I'm learning a lot," said Gabrielle. Everyone has been very friendly and helpful," she added.

## SWEDISH VISITORS TOUR ROCKFORD

Two groups from Sweden visited Rockford in October and November as part of their visit to the United States. Rockford was their first stop. The tour was arranged by Swanson's, the largest tour operator in Scandinavia. This is the first time they've included Rockford in their brochures and tours.

The groups of 45 and 50 tourists visited Rockford's Erlander Home Museum and had dinner in private homes. These types of connections help bring our communities closer and enrich our lives.

### RAEDC'S PODEMSKI JOINS SACC-USA BOARD

Mark Podemski, RAEDC's vice president of development, was elected to the Swedish-American Chambers of Commerce-USA Board of Directors this fall. SACC-USA is the umbrella organization for 19 regional Swedish-American Chambers of Commerce in the United States and serves more than 2,300 members in the U.S. and Sweden. This gives HALSNINGAR readers another strong connection to this important organization.



Mark is the first person from the Rockford area to serve on the Board. He is also on the group's Executive Committee. He will continue as President of the Board of Directors for the Swedish-American Chamber of Commerce-Chicago to which he was elected this year.