

# Hälsningar

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

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



SUMMER 2009

## Summertime Greetings to Our Friends in Sweden!

We appreciate your interest in strengthening the ties between Sweden and Rockford, Illinois. If you have any questions about the cultural and economic exchange articles in this e-newsletter, please contact the Rockford Area Economic Development Council at [mpodemski@rockfordil.com](mailto:mpodemski@rockfordil.com).



The Rockford Park District celebrates its 100th anniversary in 2009.

## Lidköping-Based ITM Visits Rockford; Leverages Swedish Heritage



Markus Johnsson, MBA and senior partner with ITM Worldwide, visited the Rockford area in early April to help launch a new, international sales exchange program between ITM and Rockford.

The ITM sales training concept started as a service within the Swedish Trade Council and is now run by ITM Worldwide Foundation in Lidköping.

“We want to help create more business for companies in Sweden and Rockford by placing sales representatives with companies,” said Johnsson. “It’s a continuation of the Industrial Partnership Agreement that Lidköping Mayor Kjell Hedvall and Rockford Mayor Larry Morrissey signed in 2006,” he added.

ITM recruits, trains and places Swedish representatives with companies in Rockford (and other cities around the world) for six months. That person helps the company market their products and services in Sweden and Europe.

*For more information, visit [itmworldwide.org](http://itmworldwide.org) or contact Markus Johnsson at [markus.johnsson@itmworldwide.se](mailto:markus.johnsson@itmworldwide.se) or or Katarina Kilter at [kkilter@rockfordil.com](mailto:kkilter@rockfordil.com)*

### **Lidköping Sends Intern to Rockford**

Katarina Kilter, a young Swedish professional representing ITM and the city of Lidköping, has begun working at the RAEDC. Her primary responsibility for her one-year assignment will be to market the ITM sales representative program and place people with Rockford companies.

“This is such a great concept. It can provide valuable experience for young people like me, plus it can help Rockford companies grow their business in Europe,” she said.

After graduating from the University of Umeå and working as an account manager for Metro, the world’s largest international newspaper, Katarina joined ITM and arrived in Rockford in early April. *She can be reached at [kkilter@rockfordil.com](mailto:kkilter@rockfordil.com).*

### **International Bioenergy Days in Lidköping, 2009; Rockford, 2010**



Rockford looks forward to sending a delegation to the 2009 International Bioenergy Days in Lidköping in September, [bioenergydays.com](http://bioenergydays.com). “We have learned so much when others share their best practices with us,” said Mark Podemski of the RAEDC.

And, Rockford is proud to follow Lidköping as the site for the fifth International Bioenergy Days in September, 2010. “This is a wonderful outgrowth of building good, strong relationships with many Swedish partners, such as the city of Lidköping, the Swedish-American Chambers of Commerce and others,” added Podemski.

“We have begun our planning process and hope to see many of our Swedish partners attend. We will have many of the latest ‘green’ successes within the region to share with the

attendees,” he predicted.

*Anyone interested in becoming a presenter or sponsor can contact Mark at [mpodemski@rockfordil.com](mailto:mpodemski@rockfordil.com).*

### **RAEDC Visits the 2009 Paris Airshow**



For the first time, the RAEDC attended the Paris Airshow, June 15-21, as part of the State of Illinois’ exhibit booth. This was a good opportunity to connect with Rockford’s aerospace companies that have more than 6,000 skilled employees in the region. Thirty-three contacts were made at the show, representing the potential for over \$100 million dollars and 700 jobs in investment in the Rockford Region. There is also the potential for additional international cooperation with aerospace clusters from around the world.

The aerospace industry is one of Rockford’s key strengths, having several major aerospace supply companies and a strong cluster of supply-chain partners.

*For more information, contact Eric Voyles at [evoyles@rockfordil.com](mailto:evoyles@rockfordil.com).*

### **Lidköping Students Improve Rockford; Learn About Different Culture**



Three carpentry students from Lidköping’s De la Gardiegymnasiet were in Rockford to help build a home in a neighborhood that is undergoing revitalization. They worked with carpentry students from Rockford’s East High School in an exchange program sponsored by Rockford’s SwedishAmerican Medical Foundation.

The foundation is part of SwedishAmerican Hospital and they are improving the neighborhood around the hospital.

A construction teacher, project coordinator and four students from Lidköping were in Rockford for three weeks in April and May. In September, additional students skilled in electrical, plumbing and other specialties may arrive to help complete the three-bedroom, two-story house. The plan is to finish the house by spring of 2010 or earlier.

“The Swedish students are very advanced, quite skilled and contributing a great deal,” said John Mecklenburg of the hospital foundation. “Both the Rockford and Lidköping students

had a great experience and by observing their new Swedish friends, I think the Rockford students saw how talented you can be at a young age,” he added.

### **Rockford Mayor Morrissey Re-Elected for Second Term**



One of the events that Markus Johnsson and Katarina Kilter attended in Rockford was a victory party for Rockford Mayor Larry Morrissey on April 7 to celebrate his re-election as mayor of Rockford for a second four-year term. “I look forward to continuing to strengthen the strong ties with our friends in Sweden. Rockford is an important partner to Sweden as we develop more economic and cultural exchanges that will be mutually beneficial,” said Mayor Morrissey.