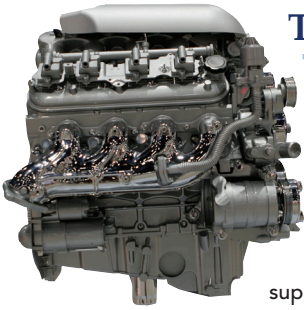


ROCKFORD REGION

On and Off Road Vehicle Cluster



The Cluster

The automotive and on & off road vehicle industry is the most important industry in the United States. Illinois is one of the nation's largest auto producers, employing more than 35,000 people at 320-plus firms and supporting more than 1,000,000 jobs in related industries.

Central Location

Northern Illinois has an ideal business climate for auto and on & off road vehicle plants and suppliers. The large and small corporations that call it home take advantage of its central location. And, it boasts an excellent rail, air and road transportation system that makes it easy to reach Midwestern, North American and worldwide markets.

Supportive Business Environment

The U.S. Customs Port of Entry in Rockford and foreign-trade zone benefits help reduce costs for automotive and on & off road vehicle companies that do business globally. Local governments understand and support these industries. Utilities systems are robust and reliable, and available in conjunction with improved sites.

6 Major Players

Fiat, Ford and Mitsubishi all have major manufacturing plants in northern Illinois, and GM just idled a plant in southern Wisconsin. Ford set up its first-ever Supplier Park in North America in northern Illinois in 2004. Chrysler (now under Fiat management) invested more than \$450 million into its Belvidere plant and relocated seven suppliers to support this plant. Northern Illinois also boasts the corporate headquarters and manufacturing plants of Caterpillar, the largest manufacturer of construction equipment in the world, and John Deere & Company, the one of the largest manufacturer of tractors and agricultural equipment in the US.

Consider Rockford Area

Rockford, a world leader in the production of machine tools, auto parts and primary and fabricated metals has a well-developed local infrastructure that supports the growing international trade of auto and on & off road vehicle parts. This rich cluster of transportation manufacturers makes the Rockford area highly attractive to other

transportation, manufacturing and R&D-related employers. Jacob's Engineering (formerly Carter Burgess), a major national site selection and architectural/engineering firm, determined that the Rockford area's infrastructure and business climate is well suited for transportation equipment manufacturing companies (aerospace, "on and off" road vehicle manufacturer, R&D engineering).

Strengths in Local Cluster

- Highly skilled workforce
- Access to R&D, engineering, and technical talent
- Access to air, land, sea transportation
- Short distance to auto plants
- Good regional suppliers
- Large, critical mass of companies
- Access to supply chain and component manufacturers
- Good job and wage impact
- Training and higher education access
- High quality of life and culture
- Available air service - Chicago O'Hare International Airport (ORD) and Chicago Rockford International Airport (RFD)

Concentrated Manufacturing Talent Above National Average

- 7.2 times, Machinery Manufacturing employment and R&D
- 4.2 times, Metals Manufacturing and R&D
- 3.4 times, Transportation Equipment Manufacturing and R&D
- 1.5 times above the Illinois average in engineer employment

Leading Manufacturing Community

- 1st in aerospace manufacturing in Illinois
- 2nd in manufacturing employment in Illinois
- 2nd in "on & off" road vehicle manufacturing in Illinois
- 2nd in industrial machine manufacturing in Illinois

Incentives

- Good regional suppliers
- Good labor/management relations
- Large regional location activity
- Good job and wage impact



Targeted Industries

- Aerospace Production
- Alternative Energy
- Chemical Manufacturing
- Customer Service Centers
- Food Processing
- Healthcare
- Industrial Machine Manufacturing
- Logistics
- Metals Manufacturing
- On & Off Road Vehicle
- Professional Business Services

For More Information

The Rockford Area Economic Development Council (RAEDC) and Growth Dimensions for Belvidere-Boone County are nonprofit economic development agencies whose primary roles are to enhance wealth creation in the Rockford Region by marketing the area and helping employers retain and create quality jobs. We work 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.

Services Available

- Database of available sites and building profiles
- Wage and labor market information
- General, statistical, economic and demographic info
- Employer training program information
- Energy cost information and comparisons
- Business climate cost analysis
- Coordination of state and local incentives
- Business financing programs
- Relocation services

Location

The Rockford Region sits contiguous to the Chicago Metropolitan Area in Northern Illinois and includes Boone and Winnebago Counties. Rockford is 65 miles northwest of Chicago's O'Hare International Airport, 90 miles east of the Mississippi River and adjacent to the Wisconsin state line. Its location allows for easy access to regional, national, and international markets. All information, unless otherwise noted, is for the Rockford Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). We are globally connected with nine Rockford Region sister cities. These relationships enhance our business and cultural connections worldwide.



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Information contained herein has been compiled to the best of our knowledge. Any inaccuracies can be reported to information@rockfordil.com.