

Developments

Helping Employers Retain & Create Quality Jobs Rockford, Illinois USA

India? China? Sweden? Contact RAEDC How to Tap Into the Global Market

Savvy business people know that tapping into the global market sooner, rather than later, is a smart move. How does one do that?

Jeffrey Kaney, president and chief executive officer of the Kaney Group which includes Kaney Aerospace, an aerospace engineering company and Ardekin Precision, an aerospace manufacturing company, both located in Rockford, recently attended an international business matchmaking event presented by the Rockford Area Economic Development Council. The State Bank of India and EEPC India, a government-supported group that markets and diversifies India's engineering capabilities, gave a seminar in Rockford last fall. The topic was "Growth Opportunities for Small Businesses and India's Business Climate."

Rising Tide

"When the representatives from the State Bank of India and EEPC India spoke, I felt they were speaking directly to our organization. I was thrilled to be there," said Kaney. "By collaborating with foreign partners, we can create more jobs. It's about investing in both countries and that a rising tide lifts all boats. By partnering my company with global companies, we can both grow," he predicted.

The week following the seminar, the State Bank of India and EEPC India returned to Rockford to meet exclusively with Jeffrey Kaney. "That's how fast things can happen," he noted.

For more information on matchmaking or exchange opportunities with India or other countries, contact Eric Voyles at 815.987.8118 or evoyles@rockfordil.com.



Jeff Kaney, president of Kaney Group, was impressed with the RAEDC's business matchmaking event for India. He liked that "things can happen fast."

Getting to Know... Bill Roop, New RAEDC Board Chair

Each new board chair brings a unique vision. What will Bill Roop focus on as the new chair of the Rockford Area Economic Development board of directors?

An overwhelming majority of a community's new jobs come from existing companies, so Bill is focusing on the council's retention and expansion efforts.

Strengthen Connection with Top Execs

"Visiting companies' headquarters in the Rockford area and strengthening our connections with their top executives is a major focus," said Bill. "We also want to visit their corporate headquarters to increase our visibility globally, so that Rockford will be on their radar screen when the time comes for them to expand." As another priority, Bill plans on doubling the RAEDC's Voice of the Customer surveys this year.

Bill gave Hamilton Sundstrand as an example. The RAEDC helped arrange for Senator Dick Durbin to attend a meeting at the company's Rockford campus when executives from their

parent company, United Technologies, were in Rockford. "Senator Durbin was impressed with what they're doing here and he met Alain Bellemare, the president of Hamilton Sundstrand. That was a powerful connection," he said.

Another important area is education. "We want to help grow a program of internships and plant tours so that students can see first hand what job possibilities there are here. Ultimately, we hope these students will return to the Rockford area for their careers," he explained.

Bill came to Rockford in 1983 to work for banks owned by the Funderburg family. He has been president and CEO of Alpine Bank since 1996. Previously he worked for financial institutions in Wisconsin and western Illinois.

Life of Community Service

Community service has long been part of Bill's life. Examples include serving as first vice chair of the SwedishAmerican Health System board of directors; board chair of the Boys & Girls Club of Rockford; and on the executive committee of the Rock Valley

College Foundation. He was also board chair and capital campaign chair for the Rockford Rescue Mission and board chair of the Rockford Area Crime Stoppers.

Welcomes Your Involvement

Bill welcomes your involvement on a RAEDC solutions team or committee. Contact him at bill.roop@bankalpine.com. "I look forward to working with my RAEDC colleagues and partners to continue to strategically position and market our region for more economic growth," said Bill.



Bill Roop, RAEDC's new board chair, is strengthening connections with top executives of Rockford area companies.

Say "YES" to VOC

Participating in Voice of the Customer Survey Can Improve Business Climate

The permitting process for the City of Rockford had been viewed as less than ideal by applicants. However, it's gotten noticeably better in the past few years. "Our members have definitely seen an improvement," said Glen Turpoff, executive director of the Northern Illinois Building & Contractors Association. His group has 180 member companies that daily visit Rockford's city hall. "Our people say it is much more efficient than before; it's a more streamlined process," he added.

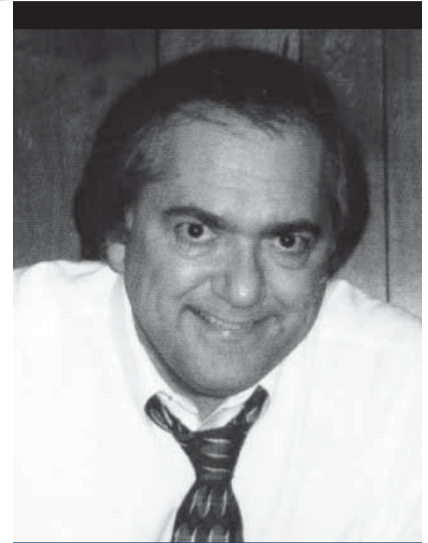
Identify/Address Common Needs

One reason for the positive change is the Voice of the Customer (VOC) Survey conducted each year by the Rockford Area Economic Development Council. As the RAEDC held these confidential surveys with employers, the permitting process kept cropping up as one area of frustration that could be re-engineered, according to Mark Podemski, RAEDC vice president for development. "We presented our aggregate findings to the city and they were very responsive. It is now more user-friendly, takes less time and you can do it online. **This is just one example of how employers can help us identify common needs through these surveys and then we can accelerate change with the appropriate partners,"** he explained.

Resources

Another example of how the VOC Survey process can help employers is that it provides an opportunity for the top executives of a company to learn more about resources. Anderson Packaging participated in a VOC survey in 2005 and said they wanted to expand. "We asked them what help they needed and brought the City of Rockford to the table. Because Anderson Packaging was in the Global Trade Park, they qualified for tax increment financing. Ultimately they completed a \$250 million, 260,000 square-foot addition to its campus and added 250 high-paying jobs," said Podemski.

"Employers benefit by participating in these surveys because they can have a direct voice in how to improve the business climate of the Rockford area," added Podemski. For more information on how to participate, contact him at mpodemski@rockfordil.com, 815.987.8118 or visit rockfordil.com and click the "workforce" tab.



Northern Illinois Building Contractors Association Executive Director Glen Turpoff says permitting process is more efficient, thanks in part to RAEDC's Voice of Customer Surveys.

You're Invited to the RAEDC First Quarter Investor Event

Wednesday, March 24, 2010
5:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Presentation by RAEDC on Voice of the Customer Survey

Giovanni's Restaurant & Convention Center,
610 N. Bell School Road, Rockford

RSVP by March 17
tjohnson@rockfordil.com

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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 on RAEDC programs or services, please call 815.987.8118, e-mail information@rockfordil.com or visit www.rockfordil.com.
Please forward to others who share your interest in our region's economic development. Be "green!"

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100 Park Avenue, Suite 100, Rockford, IL 61101 USA
www.rockfordil.com

Rockford
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