

Developments

Helping Employers Retain & Create Quality Jobs Rockford, Illinois USA

3 Employers Expand; Will Add 40-55 New Jobs

Three area businesses are enjoying significant growth and will be adding 40 to 55 new jobs to the local economy. They're doing what successful businesses do – investing in the community.

Norstar Heating & Cooling

2121 - 15th Street, Rockford
122 North Second Street, Rockford
> 100 employees
> www.norstarhvac.com

An upswing in commercial construction plus strong residential activity caused this HVAC contractor to double its Rockford facility with a 10,000 sq. ft. addition and create 10 new jobs. Most employees are skilled union tradespeople who work on projects such as Daimler Chrysler's Belvidere renovation, Aqua-Aerobic System Inc.'s expansion and Winnebago County Criminal Justice Center.

"The RAEDC identified some tax-saving opportunities for us as we're in an enterprise zone. We can also apply for property tax abatement, so we certainly appreciate the potential benefits of that," said Dan O'Boyle, the company's chief financial officer. **"With our increased capacity, we can handle more work and serve the ongoing expansion in Winnebago County and the region,"** he added. In 2006 the company will celebrate its 10-year anniversary.

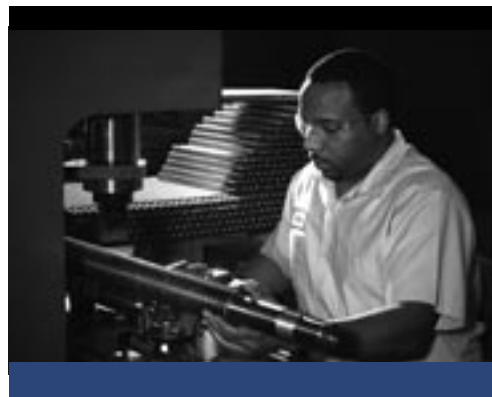


Rockford Ball Screw

940 Southrock Drive, Rockford
> 60 employees
> www.rockfordballscrew.com

Rockford Ball Screw took a hard look at their business when manufacturing weakened in 2000 and 2001. Then they implemented an aggressive sales and customer-service strategy. As their customers' businesses grew, so did Rockford Ball Screw's business.

On October 1, the company moved to a **\$1.5 million, 52,500 sq. ft. facility, more than doubling their space.** Greg Harlan, president, predicted that **"As our business grows, we could add anywhere from 10 to 15 jobs."** Most of their workforce are skilled shop employees, like CNC operators.



Left: Local 219 sheet-metal worker Ron Morhardt works on HVAC ducts at Norstar's expanded plant.

Above: Darrin Akers, Rockford Ball Screw's straightening machine operator, at their new facility.

Right: Mike Reinhardt, Sub Source Inc.'s vice president, demonstrates aerospace testing, one of their many secondary processes.

Photos: Mike Graham

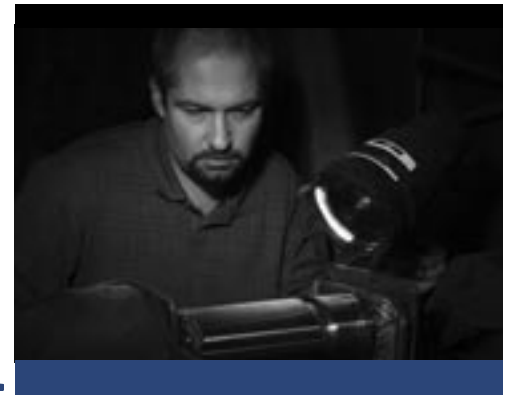
Sub Source Inc.

1715 Seminary Street, Rockford
> 40 employees
> www.subsourceinc.com

Founded in 2000, this provider of metal finishing, non-destructive testing, painting, powder coating, welding and other secondary processes has doubled its sales every year. The company **purchased a 124,000 sq. ft. building on 18th Avenue**, the former Camcar Textron Raycarl building. Consolidating their current three facilities into it will be completed by this summer.

Sub Source **plans to add 20 to 30 jobs** over the next several years. **"Our expansion is due in part to many customers doing very well. When secondary processes are in demand, that means other businesses are doing well,"** explained Melesia Boyer, sales manager.

The company received a 10-year tax abatement from Winnebago County as an incentive to purchase their new facility. Boyer said the company also considered other options proposed by the City of Rockford and the RAEDC. **"They were all very good to work with,"** she noted.



"While it's very exciting when new companies come here, it's important that we focus on our existing employers and their needs. The average community gets 76 percent of its new jobs and capital investment from existing business, so these expansions are good for our future," said Ken Edge, chair of the RAEDC business retention & expansion solutions team and chairman of the board, president & CEO of AMCORE Bank.

Cosmetics Firm Wins International & National Awards

Colorlab Custom Cosmetics, a custom makeup company with headquarters in Rockford, received two prestigious awards recently.

• They won the first Beauty Challengers Award for the most innovative cosmetics line at COSMEETING, an international cosmetics trade show held in Paris in September, 2005.

• The company received second place in the UPS national Best "Out-of-the-Box" Small Business Contest over hundreds of other entries; and won \$5,000 worth of free UPS package delivery services. Colorlab grew from shipping 300 boxes in 1996, their first year, to 5,000 boxes a year.

Company president Mary Swaab said, "Rockford is a tool and die, nuts and bolts type of town so when I needed financing, my idea of making custom lip-stick right before a customer's eyes was a tough sell."

With help from the Rockford Local Development Corporation and matching funds from the City of Rockford, the company has grown steadily and expanded its product line. Today the firm has more than 40 employees, an international customer base and annual sales in the millions. Customers from around the world come to Rockford every week for training on the Colorlab system. In September, Colorlab will celebrate its tenth anniversary.

"Rockford has helped create growth opportunities for us," said Swaab. "We're in a TIF (tax increment finance) district. We purchased this building (1112 Fifth Avenue) so we could continue to grow our business here with affordable overhead." Swaab is a Rockford native and graduated from Boylan High School, Southern Illinois University and the University of Madrid.

Colorlab products can be purchased in Rockford at Salon 1300 and Digits. www.colorlabcosmetics.com.



The sleek look of Colorlab Cosmetics in department stores around the world.

How To Attract Young Workers

What should you know about Gen Xers, and why? Rebecca Ryan, a GenXer economist and keynote speaker at the Nov. 30 RAEDC annual meeting talked about four relevant key trends.

- > 1. We are in an innovation economy.
- > 2. The workforce will be more diverse with 23 million baby boomers leaving the workforce and 10 million non-boomers entering.
- > 3. They decide first where to live, then where to work.
- > 4. Companies follow talent.

What can Rockford do to attract young talent?

- > Be more collaborative.
- > See Rockford through the lens of the next generation.
- > Index our assets and build on them.
- > Develop social capital; bridge, don't just bond.



To download her presentation, visit www.rockfordil.com

Rockford Area Development Council Is Moving

Effective January 30, the RAEDC's office will be located at 100 Park Avenue. The telephone and fax numbers will remain the same.

100 Park Avenue
 Rockford, IL 61101
 t: 815.987.8118
 f: 815.987.8129
www.rockfordil.com

For more information on RAEDC programs or services, please call 815.987.8118, e-mail info@rockfordil.com or visit www.rockfordil.com.

The primary role of the Rockford Area Economic Development Council is to market the Rockford, Illinois area. The goal is to help employers retain and create quality jobs. The RAEDC learns what employers need to grow, introduces them to potential resources and facilitates multi-agency coordination.

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ROCKFORD AREA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

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