

Developments

Helping Employers Retain & Create Quality Jobs Rockford, Illinois USA

Trade Mission to Sweden to Help Create & Retain Quality Jobs; Companies Invited to Join Trade Mission; "RAEDC Will Open Doors For Me"

"Sweden sounds like a country that really wants to work with Rockford, so I'm definitely interested in seeing what's possible over there to expand our business," said Ron Gustafson, president of Clinkenbeard & Associates, as to why he is part of the RAEDC's trade mission to Sweden in August. "Striking out on my own would be much more difficult because I don't have the contacts and I've never been to Sweden. But, going with the RAEDC is a great way to do it," he said. "It's like having my personal guide. It'll be so much easier. They'll set up matchmaking meetings for me," he added.

Clinkenbeard and three other companies – Haldex Hydraulics, W.A. Whitney and Dixon Automatic Tools, Inc. – are the first four companies to sign up for the trade mission to Sweden that the RAEDC is sponsoring August 21-23 in Lidköping, Sweden. The city is 200 miles southwest of Stockholm. The RAEDC can accommodate 15 companies.

The trade mission will participate in the Swedish-American Entrepreneurial Days in Lidköping, the 10th annual trade show organized by the Swedish-American Chambers of Commerce. Its purpose is to expand trade between the United States and Sweden/northern Europe.

The goal of the trade mission is to help Rockford area firms expand their businesses in Europe and to encourage Swedish companies to invest in Rockford, thus "helping employers to retain and create quality jobs." Jay Longbottom, president of Haldex Hydraulics, supports the trade mission

because "it's aimed at companies that have technical products or services that can create economic value for our community. It's important to have firms that will be good, stable investors in Rockford, and that's a good description of Swedish companies," he said.

Paul Dixon, president of Dixon Automatic Tool, joined the trade mission because "it's an opportunity to travel with like-minded people. The RAEDC will open doors that would be difficult for me to open myself," he noted.

A grant from the Small Business Administration makes the trade mission possible. The SBA is chaired by U.S. Congressman Don Manzullo (R-16th District). Three local economic development organizations share the \$1.4 million grant: Chicago/Rockford International Airport, Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau and the Rockford Area Economic Development Council.

Why Sweden?

"The United States is Sweden's favorite country to invest in and export to," explained Janyce Fadden, RAEDC president. "They want to import more from the U.S. as they have a five to one trade surplus with us," she added. Sweden is ranked third in innovation and technology according to a recent study and the U.S. is one of their top choices for exporting technology. Also, Sweden is an easy place to start foreign expansions as they speak English and their technical documents are in English. It is a good jumping off point to Europe and the Baltic States.

Here are three reasons why Sweden is a logical country for Rockford.

- 1 Rockford has a positive reputation in Sweden because of Rockford's Swedish heritage. Nearly 12 percent of Rockford citizens area of Swedish descent.
- 2 Rockford has a history of Swedish companies succeeding in Rockford. There are firms that are well aligned with industries in Sweden.
- 3 This will be the fifth trade mission to Sweden since the 1980s. The Swedish people value continuity and know that Rockford is serious about developing trade opportunities.

For More Information

Contact Janyce Fadden, RAEDC president, at 815.987.8118, jfadden@rockfordil.com or Derek Sherman, project manager, 815.975.2992, derek.sherman@insightbb.com.



L-R Joining the RAEDC's trade mission to Sweden are Ron Gustafson, president of Clinkenbeard & Associates; Jay Longbottom, president of Haldex Hydraulics will be represented by his vice president of marketing; Paul Dixon, president of Dixon Automatic and Thomas Thorelli, president of the Swedish-American Chambers of Commerce/Chicago. Not pictured is Dave Barber, CEO of W.A. Whitney.

Arf! Arf! Dog Treat Company Re-Locates to Rockford; Expects 63% Increase in Workforce

Have you ever asked for a doggy bag so you can take a nice juicy steak home for your dog? You know your dog will love it and it'll be good for him. The next best thing is to give Fido some Jones Gourmet Dog Chews made right here in Rockford by Jones Natural Chews, Co.

No chemicals or preservatives are used, only natural flavorings, in a wide variety of beef, pork, veal, lamb, jerky and sausage treats, and baked goods. All treats are made from animal products supplied by USDA-inspected plants. "Natural bones give dogs what they need, plus it helps their immune systems and satisfies their need to chew," said Laura Jones-Herr, office manager.

Jones Natural Chews moved from Woodstock to Rockford this year because they wanted to con-

solidate several buildings and expand their operations. Winnebago County Development Director-Regional Planning and Economic Development Sue Mroz visited them in Woodstock and showed them possible sites here. They've grown from the 19 employees they had in Woodstock to 22 in Rockford and plan to add 8 more.

Good Local Supply Chain in Rockford

The new facility is located at 3450 Pyramid Drive, with excellent access to Bypass 20, I-39 and I-90. In addition to finding real estate more economical in Rockford, another thing the company likes is the local supply chain. "In Woodstock, we had to draw from all over to get things done. Here in Rockford, all the day-to-day stuff is easily available, from box suppliers to people to maintain our machines. It saves us a lot of time," said Laura.



Robert Jones, president of Jones Natural Chews Co., and Gus, testing the product.

Jones Gourmet Dog Chews are available at Pet Supply Warehouse, 5051 Forest Hills Court, Rockford, as well as nationwide and overseas. *The products have been tested by the company's seven dogs: Gus, Elmo, Bear, Bandit, Mattilda, Midget and Buster!*

Inbound Customer Service Center To Add 500 Jobs



Rockford Mayor Lawrence J. Morrissey recently toured NCO, an inbound customer service center with 500 employees, where he learned that they will hire 500 more employees this year. L-R Denise Taylor, human resource manager; Pablo Ledezma, facilities manager; Brian Livingston, senior operations manager; Mayor Morrissey; John Kim, center business manager and Marshall Barkley, senior operations manager.

"How may I help you?" is the question for 500 employees who work at NCO, a Rockford inbound customer service center. The company will hire an additional 500 employees in 2006, according to Jim McGrath, NCO senior vice president of operations. He oversees the Rockford facilities and six others in the U.S. and Canada.

NCO recently purchased the center from MCI Telecommunications Corp. that had operated the 85,000 sq. ft. facility at 7180 Spring Brook Road, Rockford, for four years. NCO operates a global network of 101 centers. The \$1.1 billion company's headquarters are in Horsham, Pennsylvania. www.ncogroup.com.

"We needed another site in North America because our customer specifies that their customer service calls be done here. **Rockford was a perfect fit for us at the perfect time. It had quality employees who had received quality training and the building can accommodate our growth,**" explained McGrath.

Welcome to Rockford, NCO!

You are Invited!
Wednesday, June 21, 2006

5:00 - 6:30 p.m.
Cliffbreakers, 700 W. Riverside, Rockford IL

- network with community leaders
- get updates on local projects
- learn about RAEDC strategies

No cost but please RSVP to tlamia@rockfordil.com or call 815.987.8118.

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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