

Developments

Helping Employers Retain & Create Quality Jobs Rockford, Illinois USA

Global Opportunities for Rockford Businesses E-Days Trade Conferences Pave the Way



ABA of America President Arne Stegvik of Cherry Valley thinks the Rockford Entrepreneurial-Days can further trade opportunities between Rockford and Sweden.

"The Entrepreneurial Days of April 16-20 (E-Days) in Chicago and Rockford brought a lot of attention and opportunities to Rockford," said Arne Stegvik, president of ABA of America, a manufacturer of automotive sealing and clamping products in Cherry Valley. Stegvik is an advisory board member for Entrepreneurial Days, an important business, trade and networking conference between Sweden and the United States, organized by the Swedish-American Chambers of Commerce.

"There is a very high level of awareness about Rockford, so that means Rockford companies have an advantage over others that also want to establish economic ties with Sweden. And, Swedish companies want to identify more Rockford businesses to partner with because of the important relationships that have been established," Stegvik added.

More than 100 Swedish business leaders and government officials came to Rockford as part of the April E-Days. They attended a day-long conference on Logistics and Distribution or Automotive and Production Technologies; toured state-of-the-art facilities; visited many events and attractions; and were thoroughly impressed by this community's remarkable friendliness and the prospects for mutual economic development as well as cultural and tourism exchanges.

Rockford companies that want to expand their businesses globally will have another chance to do so by attending the upcoming E-Days in South Sweden, August 20-23. The cost is only \$2,800 because expenses are shared through an SBA grant supported by U.S. Congressman Don Manzullo.

"I would definitely encourage manufacturers and others to go to E-Days in August. I went last year and it was a tremendous value for our company. I made great contacts. Based on what I learned from the trip, we were able to set up a strong dealer organization to represent W.A. Whitney in Sweden and northern Europe," said Dave Barber, CEO of W.A. Whitney, a metal-forming equipment manufacturer in Rockford.



Swedish Ambassador to the United States Gunnar Lund, right, came to Rockford to meet with Rockford Mayor Lawrence J. Morrissey, left, and Winnebago County Board Chair Scott Christiansen as part of the Rockford Entrepreneurial Days on April 16.

Photo by Eddy Montville/Rockford Register Star. © Used with permission.

Why Attend E-Days in South Sweden, August 20-23, 2007?



W.A. Whitney CEO Dave Barber, a 2006 E-Days participant, encourages companies to attend E-Days in South Sweden with the RAEDC if they want to expand globally. Photo: Mike Graham

- **Grow your business internationally.**
- **Go with support of RAEDC** and other like-minded people; all arrangements are made by RAEDC.
- **Business is conducted in English.**
- **Sweden is a natural gateway to 3 markets and 500 million consumers** – Baltic states, northern Europe and the continent.
- Previous trade missions from Rockford have built a favorable foundation for you.
- **Sweden is very receptive to Rockford-area businesses** due to Swedish immigrants who settled in Rockford.
- Take advantage of **business matchmaking meetings** that are arranged prior to E-Days; panels and seminars; and productive networking events.

For more information, contact Mark Podemski at 815.987.8118, mpodemski@rockfordil.com or visit www.sacssouthsweden.org



Ahead of the Pack Anderson Packaging's Latest Expansion Adds 250 High- Paying Jobs

Add this to the Rockford area's bragging rights . . . it will be home to the single largest pharmaceutical packaging site in the world when Anderson Packaging completes its latest expansion in December.

The \$15 million, 260,000-square foot addition at its Rockford Global Trade Park campus near the Chicago/Rockford International Airport will put Anderson Packaging's total square footage at 1.2 million.



Anderson Packaging is expanding its operations at the Rockford Global Trade Park.

Quality Jobs

The expansion will create 250 new quality jobs over a five-year period. That will bring the company's total workforce to 1,450 in the Rockford area at its seven facilities, a 21 percent increase. At Anderson Packaging,

- 50 percent of jobs are production, paying \$9 to \$18 per hour.
- 30 percent of jobs are technical, paying \$20 to \$30 per hour, and
- 20 percent of jobs are professional, paying \$50,000 to \$100,000 per year.



Millions of Consumers

According to the American Association of Retired Persons, 75 percent of people 65 and older in this country take a prescription drug daily, generally between two and four. That's almost 30 million people. Their medication was probably assembled at Anderson Packaging, a leading contract packager to the pharmaceutical and healthcare industries. The company is noted for the highest level of manufacturing practices and has won numerous awards for innovative packaging. It is a unit of Amerisource Bergen Packaging Group, one of the world's largest pharmaceutical services companies.

Ideal Public-Private Partnership

This business-expansion project was made possible through an agreement between the company and the City of Rockford. "This is a shining example of a public-private partnership," said Reid Montgomery, director of community development for the city. "It shows how projects can grow. It started out as a 200,000-sf expansion and grew to 260,000," he added. Because the Global Trade Park qualifies for tax increment financing, the city invested \$1.1 million to help the company purchase and demolish an adjacent vacant building for the expansion. "The return on investment is 14 to 1. Anderson Packaging invests \$14 million, the city invests \$1 million and the result is great jobs for Rockford," explained Montgomery. "This is exactly the kind of manufacturing growth the city is looking for," he said.

Worked Together

Larry H. Beckmann, president of Anderson Packaging, said the city was **"very helpful with our expansion efforts. They went above and beyond. I didn't expect them to help with the property, but they said they could!"** Beckmann also cited the cooperation of the city to remove part of Capital Drive to allow the addition to connect to an existing Anderson Packaging facility. "Everyone has really worked together to make this happen – the city, sanitary district and RAEDC. The RAEDC started the process by asking us what help we needed with our expansion plans," he explained.

Story continued on next page

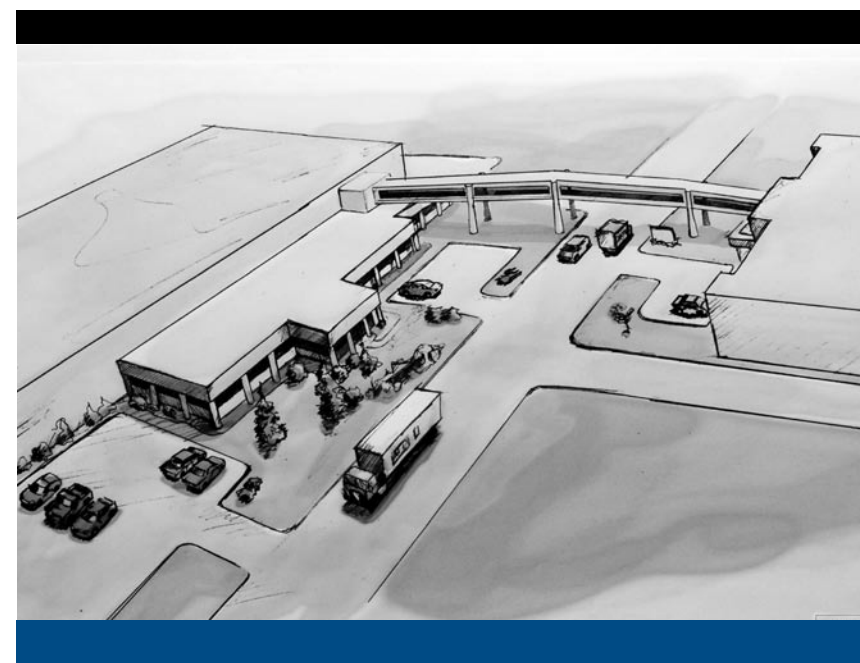


Illustration shows a skywalk connecting Anderson Packaging's corporate building to its new 260,000 sq. ft. addition (right). The City of Rockford agreed to remove part of Capital Drive so that the addition could be built on to an existing building of Anderson Packaging.

Anderson Packaging continued

"My advice to other companies that are thinking about expanding is to discuss your plans with the RAEDC and the city. Tell them what you're trying to do and maybe something you hadn't thought about will be possible," Beckmann offered.

How Rockford Can Be A "Cool" Community By Attracting and Retaining the Next Generation of Talent

When more than 650 Rockford-area business and community leaders were told that most young people ages 20-40 look for a fun, cool place to live *first*, and *then* look for a job, some of them were a little surprised, if not taken aback. After all, that's not how they had done *their* job-hunting 10, 20 years ago. And, many of them will remember exactly when and where they heard this – November 30, 2005 when Rebecca Ryan, the high-energy president of Next Generation Consulting, gave the keynote speech on this topic at the RAEDC's 2005 annual meeting at Giovanni's.

As a result of her electrifying speech and the pressing need to continually improve our workforce, four groups joined forces as a steering committee to attract and retain "next generation" workforce talent to the Rockford area--the RAEDC, Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, Rockford Chamber of Commerce and Next Rockford, a local group of young professionals that advocates for improvements in education, business environment and urban development.

They hired Next Generation Consulting to assess how Rockford can differentiate itself from other communities and reach prospective "knowledge" employees with messages that resonate with the younger generation. In February 2007, Ms. Ryan presented her findings. Read the full report at www.rockfordil.com under "Events & Programs."



Shown above are Next Rockford members who are developing ways to attract and retain the "next generation" workforce talent to the Rockford area. L-R Jeff Hultmann, JP Morgan Chase; John Groh, Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau; Tonya Lamia, Rockford Area Economic Development Council; and David Anderson, Spring Creek Partners. Photo: Mike Graham



Larry H. Beckmann, president of Anderson Packaging, being interviewed by 13 WREX-TV at a news conference announcing their expansion.

Next Generation of Talent continued

What's Being Done?

After analyzing Rockford and finding it mostly "Average" but slightly "Above Average" in the Vitality Index, Next Generation Consulting recommended five initiatives. The steering committee is working on the following.

1. Make Rockford an urban destination.

Transportation improvements like connecting bicycle and pedestrian trails, establishing high-speed commuter rail as well as developing downtown and historic neighborhoods are some ways to achieve this initiative. **"This is a long-term effort. We have on-going meetings with government officials, business leaders, and community groups. We have been welcomed to the process and are excited to be involved,"** said David Anderson, Spring Creek Partners; danderson@springcreekpartners.com.

2. Connect young professionals to each other and to Rockford.

The committee wants to create a broad-based young professionals group that will offer professional and social events as well as an online forum. **"This new, regional organization can connect next-generation leaders from a multi-county area,"** stated Tonya Lamia, RAEDC vice president of investor relations; tlamia@rockfordil.com.

3. Pursue an economic strategy to attract and retain professional and business service jobs.

The group is developing a recruitment strategy for the fastest-growing job clusters. **"Employers have repeatedly said that they need people who are skilled in the areas of management, technical, executive and science. We need a quality workforce to attract quality jobs, so we're working on a development strategy,"** said John Groh, executive vice president of the RACVB; jgroh@gorockford.com.

4. Implement a "Why Rockford Boomerang" campaign.

Recruit young people to move back to Rockford while they're here visiting during On the Waterfront Labor Day weekend, Thanksgiving weekend and other peak times. The strategy will include collaboration with government, alumni associations and others, including the Society of Human Resource Professionals.

5. Instill a sense of pride in Rockford.

The committee is executing a multi-pronged strategy, such as writing letters to the editor, contacting elected officials and speaking at public meetings. **"This is a long-term effort, and the response has been great. For each initiative, ten to twenty people have signed up to help. Many are people who are new to the 'getting involved' process and that is excellent,"** reports Jeff Hultman, J P Morgan Chase and Next Rockford facilitator; jeff.hultman@chase.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 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.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

www.rockfordil.com

Rockford, IL 61101 USA

Suite 100

100 Park Avenue

ROCKFORD AREA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Rockford
ILLINOIS USA

