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DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation Joins with ComEd to Respond to Area Business Needs

Business visitation program supports business retention and expansion.

(DeKalb, Ill.) – The DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation (DCEDC) and ComEd today announced a partnership designed to retain jobs and investments in the county through the ComEd Business Visitation Program. The initiative fulfills one of DCEDC's recently adopted strategic objectives which calls for "implementation of a systematic business visitation program to retain and expand existing industry".

The award-winning ComEd program examines issues such as workforce quality, recruiting, expansion plans, competitive challenges and overall satisfaction with the county business climate. Representatives from the DCEDC will conduct face-to-face visits with area businesses to explore these issues.

"Existing businesses are one of the most important assets of our community because these firms are the ones making payroll, purchasing goods and services, and planning capital investments," said Paul Borek, Executive Director of DCEDC. "This partnership with ComEd will strengthen our relationships with business and industry in DeKalb County."

DCEDC Board Chair Gary Evans added, "The Business Visitation Program will help ensure that we address challenges area businesses face as early as possible."

Based on the visits with local businesses, ComEd will conduct a detailed analysis using a software program called *Synchronist*, an advanced business information system that identifies key trends and issues affecting local firms. Using this analysis, the DCEDC will work with ComEd to proactively address issues would have a negative impact on the business or economic climate.

In addition, DCEDC will work with organizations like the Illinois Manufacturer's Extension Center (IMEC), the Kishwaukee College Business and Industrial Development (BID) Center and the Illinois Small Business Development Centers (SBDC's) at Elgin Community College and Waubesa Community College to identify resources to assist business in responding to challenges and opportunities.

"ComEd wants to help our communities grow and prosper. Part of that is helping our customers conserve energy, save money and protect the environment," said Ed Sitar, Economic Development Manager for ComEd. "That's also why we provide specialized programs to work with groups engaged in economic development, such as the DCEDC, to improve the vitality of the communities we serve."

ComEd makes its Business Visitation Program available to organizations like DCEDC at no charge. Since its 1999 origin, ComEd's Business Visitation Program has partnered with 40 economic development organizations and conducted 2,000 visits with area companies in 80 different communities, representing more than 185,000 jobs.

The DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation is a public/private partnership working to facilitate sustainable and diversified economic growth within DeKalb County. Since its creation in 1986, DCEDC has assisted in over \$1 billion of business investment projects and the creation of 10,000 jobs in the county.