

# Industries, businesses fuel development

Economic vitality is alive and well in DeKalb County, with industry playing a key role in all segments from north to south, east to west. The region has benefited from significant commercial and industrial development.



Paul Borek, executive director of the DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation, remains positive and upbeat about the level of vitality throughout the region. Borek regularly reports to his board and the public about the status of the region. The DCEDC's annual meeting is among the most widely anticipated and well-attended business functions of the year, due in large part to the event's review of the year in Power Point format—a visual walk through called “State of the County,” showcasing development in all 14 county communities.

Borek recently told InVironments that one of DCEDC's accomplishments has been implementation of a five-year Strategic Plan to guide efforts to facilitate sustainable and diversified growth. Responding to the recession, the organization focused on **Goal Two: Retain and Expand Existing Industry**, by conducting an extensive Business Visitation Program.

The results of the business survey, documented in the DCEDC Voice of Industry report, indicated that overall, firms were stable and optimistic about recovery. Despite unprecedented challenges imposed by the recession, 84% of companies surveyed indicated they planned to introduce new products or services.

While 48% of companies surveyed indicated sales were decreasing, 31% indicated sales were increasing. In fact, 53% indicated their market share was increasing. Fifty-five percent of the companies surveyed were active exporters and 16% indicated their primary market was international.

Overall workforce characteristics, utilities and community services were highly regarded by DeKalb County businesses. Most evaluations exceeded the average performance for all North American communities. The result that was most striking and encouraging was

that 59% of the companies surveyed indicated that they planned to expand during the next three years.

## Expansion Fuels Market-Leading Development

Based on these findings, during 2010, DCEDC focused on **Goal Four: Enhance and Promote the DeKalb County Business Climate to Support Business Growth and Encourage New Business Formation.**

True to the results of the DCEDC Voice of Industry report, significant expansion and new industrial construction was initiated. With 812,000-square-feet under construction, DeKalb County accounted for 28% of all industrial construction in the Metropolitan Chicago Area.

In addition, DeKalb and Sycamore

hosted noteworthy commercial developments despite sluggish economic conditions. Employment of DeKalb County residents increased from 52,525 to 54,693 during 2010. This employment increase of 2,168 caused the county unemployment rate to decrease from 11.7% to 8.2%.

These and other economic development achievements by DeKalb County businesses together with municipalities and County government are reported each year at DCEDC's Annual Meeting and State of the County presentation. This year's event is scheduled for Tuesday, March 29, 4:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m. at the DeKalb County Farm Bureau Center for Agriculture.

## Development in DeKalb County

**DeKalb County** - The DeKalb Advancement of Technology Authority (DATA) was awarded \$13.2 million in grants from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and the State of Illinois to develop a high speed fiber optic telecommunications system throughout the county. DATA is a consortium including DeKalb County, Northern Illinois University and cities, villages and institutions in the county. The project will link this network to unlimited, cost-effective bandwidth to transmit data and conduct business around the world. DeKalb was one of the first counties in the U. S. to secure funding to develop such a network.

**DeKalb - The 3M Regional Distribution Center** in Park 88 was selected as the Industrial Build-to-Suit of the Year by the Chicago Chapter of the National Association of Industrial and Office Parks (NAIOP). The award recognizes the significance of the \$25 million project in the Greater Chicago/Northern Illinois market. The Venture One/Clayco Realty Group team was recognized by its peers—the top developers in the region—as the most significant industrial project in 2010.

This is 3M's fifth expansion in DeKalb and the fourth project developed by Venture One. The 650,000-sq.-ft. building is expandable to one-million-sq.-ft. and is being constructed on 49 acres. The 3M build-to-suit is a joint development of Clayco Realty Group and Venture One. The project team includes Heitman Architects and Jacob & Hefner engineers. Park 88 was represented by Venture One and Milner & Associates.

3M will retain 266 full-time positions and 34 part-time positions in DeKalb. Outstanding efforts by the City of DeKalb to expedite project review and permitting were instrumental in accommodating the accelerated timetable required by 3M. The project is scheduled for completion this May.

This project was made possible by a new five-year Intergovernmental Tax Abatement Agreement and individual resolutions of support approved by DeKalb taxing bodies including the City of DeKalb, DeKalb School District 428, DeKalb Library District, DeKalb Sanitary District and DeKalb Township and DeKalb Park District. Kishwaukee College and the DeKalb County Board also approved abatement resolutions in support of the project.

3M is a diversified technology company serving customers and communities with innovative products and services. 3M has a

worldwide presence in consumer and office products, display and graphics, electro and communications, health care, industrial and transportation, and safety security and protection services. It employs 609 workers in four DeKalb facilities.

**Aligus Packaging** acquired the former D. B. Hess building on Peace Road and Route 38. Aligus designs and manufactures sealing thermal-formed packaging and full service contract packaging. The 90,000-square-foot building will house Aligus' Machinery Division. Blister packaging affords retailers and manufacturers a popular and cost effective packaging solution that displays a product while securing it. Aligus designs the blister and fabricates the thermal-form tool to produce the blisters with sealing machines.





**The Hovis Light Industrial Park** on Seventh Street has rental space available for manufacturing, warehousing and distribution and office users. The former **Spaulding Composites building** has been remodeled and improved to attract tenants to spaces of 35,000 and 38,000-square-feet. In addition, a 13-acre site with access to a Union Pacific Rail spur is available to accommodate up to a 200,000-square-foot building. Hearing Help Express has moved into the balance of the 131,000-square-foot building. The hearing aid sales and distribution company has expanded from a smaller facility on Seventh Street.

**Tegrant Corporation** has consolidated operations from Pennsylvania and Arlington Heights to its headquarters, research and production facility on Pleasant Street. Tegrant markets and produces engineered packaging solutions through three strategic business units: Alloyd Brands makes retail packaging material and machines; Thermosafe Brands creates temperature sensitive medical packaging for the pharmaceutical, biotech and food industries; and Protexic Brands manufactures protective packaging products including molded and fabricated foams. The company employs 379 workers in DeKalb.

The new 26,500-square-foot **Kishwaukee Cancer Care Center** opened its new building at 10 Health Services Dr. The \$14 million facility consolidates multiple services in one convenient location on the KishHealth System campus. Services include radiation oncology, hematology, pharmacy, laboratory services, massage therapy, skin care image center, American Cancer Society Patient Resource Center and a wig and apparel shop for patients. Previously, patients traveled to multiple locations for these services.

**Hobby Lobby** opened a new DeKalb store in 54,000-square-feet of remodeled space in the Northland Plaza shopping center, Sycamore and Barber Greene roads. It is Hobby Lobby's 30th Illinois store and will employ 30-50 full and part-time staff.

**Noodles & Company restaurant, Radio Shack** electronics retailer and **Dekamore Dental Clinic** opened new facilities in the Oakland Shopping Center on Sycamore Road developed by Carpenter Commercial Real Estate.

**Pappas Development** began construction of a three-building multi-tenant commercial center at the lighted intersection near Walmart on Sycamore Road. The buildings will accommodate

retail, restaurant and professional office users. An **AT&T** cell phone store and **All About Eyes Optometrists** have opened in one building. **Advanced Auto Parts**, a leading automotive aftermarket retailer, has signed a lease for a second building.

**Dollar General** opened a new store in a shopping center on South Fourth Street owned by Bond Companies. The store was constructed in 12,400-square-feet of space next to Lehan Drugs. An additional 31,000-square-feet is available for other tenants including grocery or retail.

Several new start-up companies were established over the past two years. **Elegant Research** formed a software and aeronautical engineering development firm working closely with the NIU College of Engineering and Engineering Technology. **Stewart Family Chiropractic** established a start-up clinic in DeKalb using a \$44,223 loan from the DeKalb County Community Services Department. An entrepreneur acquired, expanded and diversified the business services offerings of **Flash Tax** bookkeeping, accounting and business consulting.

Plans are being prepared to move into the new DeKalb High School on Dresser Road. The \$88 million, 400,000-square-foot building will accommodate up to 2,500 students. The state-of-the-art building, designed to fulfill current and future education needs with technology, classrooms, auditorium and gymnasium, will also help attract families and businesses to DeKalb, Cortland and Malta.

**Cortland - Dollar General** announced the development of a prototype retail store on Somonauk Road. Investment in the new 9,100-square-foot building is in excess of \$1 million. Dollar General is small-box discount retailer of brand name products from well-known manufacturers. **Cortland Animal Hospital** opened on IL 38, just east of Somonauk Road.

**Genoa -** Illinois Department of Transportation officials announced that **Amtrak's** new Chicago-Rockford-Dubuque intercity passenger rail service line will travel along the Canadian National railroad line through DeKalb County with a station stop in Genoa. The Chicago-Rockford-Dubuque line marks the return of passenger rail to the northern Illinois area for the first time since 1981.

The \$60 million project will create 650 construction jobs. Trains will run at least

one round-trip daily between Chicago's Union Station and Dubuque, IA, with stops in Elgin, Genoa, Rockford and Galena. Amtrak service will support business development and tourism in Genoa and northern DeKalb County. IDOT will begin engineering immediately while the City of Genoa evaluates and selects a station site, and metal distribution centers.

**A Book of Numbers** accounting and **A Perfect Fit** tailor shop moved into Genoa Main Street's new business incubator. **Neat Stuf** resale shop expanded by opening a second larger location, allowing it to add furniture to the business inventory. **ESII (Embroidery Sew Into It)** opened a new embroidery store. **Belvidere Coin** opened its second location with a store in downtown Genoa.

**Avancer Corporation** continues construction to remodel the former Genesis House into corporate offices on IL 23. **Candylac Customs** opened a new auto body shop in the rear portion of 511 W. Main St. **JLN**, a data processing firm moved into Genoa. **Joe's Pizza and Pub** reopened as a new restaurant business in the former Genoa Pizza.

The **Genoa Park District** constructed a \$900,000 expansion of Chamberlain Park, including annexation of 17 added acres for the park into the city limits, through a \$400,000 IDNR grant.

The City of Genoa completed the **North Central Interceptor** sewer project under a \$2,165,000 IEPA grant program funded through the Federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) program. This improvement provides increased capacity for economic development and community growth.

**Hinckley - Brachmann Trucking** expanded its operations in Hinckley. It has established Accurate Fire Apparatus to sell and assemble Rosenbauer Fire Apparatus and Spartan truck chassis.

**Hinckley Business Condos** opened in renovated commercial buildings near the southwest corner of U.S. 34 and East Sandwich Road. Individual retail, showroom, office, light industrial and warehousing spaces are available for sale or lease to small businesses and start-ups companies. **Big Rock Auto Rebuilders, Coffee Nook and Eatery** restaurant, **James K. Roderick Woodworking** and **Tech-Net Professional Auto Service** have located in the business center.



**Kingston** - The **Johnson Industrial Park** is planning to expand to accommodate the needs of growing tenants. A commercial project on the northwest corner of IL 72 and Glidden Road is also planned. The **City of Kingston** received a \$5,000 storm water planning grant from the DeKalb County Community Foundation to improve storm water drainage and reduce flooding.

**Kirkland - Highway 72 Pharmacy**, the first drugstore to operate in Kirkland in 25 years, opened in November. A former restaurant was gutted and remodeled to accommodate the new pharmacy. The Village of Kirkland annexed the **Euclid Chemical Company** plant, as well as the Kirkland Community Fire Department property, in order to be able to extend water service to the manufacturing plant for improved production and future expansion.

**Lee** - The former **Farmers Factory** building in Lee is available for lease or sale. The facility was used as a construction staging center and work shop for the DeKalb-Lee County Wind Farm.

**Pizzo and Associates** has expanded native prairie preservation adjacent to its headquarters office, laboratory and vehicle equipment warehouse in Rollo.

**Malta - Resource Bank** completed and moved into its new branch on Route 38 in Malta. The **Kishwaukee College** Referendum passed with 64% of the vote in November, which allows it to issue bonds up to \$52.6 million to help fund a two-phase \$67 million campus improvement plan. It will include completion of a ring-road around campus, renovation of existing space and two new buildings to host Student Services and Campus Operations.

**Maple Park** - The **Village of Maple Park** has been addressing municipal water main and storm water management infrastructure needs. It is leveraging \$100,000 in Community Block Grant funds and a \$100,000 ACCR Grant with \$103,000 in Village capital funds to improve water pressure and fire flows. The Village received a \$5,000 grant from the DeKalb County Community Foundation to revise and improve storm water management ordinances to mitigate or prevent future problems.

**Sandwich** - Sandwich has seen an explosion in food and entertainment establishments. The new **Bull Moose Bar & Grill** is nearing completion in the former Sandwich Diner property. **Gonzo's Pizza** reopened in shared space with

Brenda's Basket restaurant. **Brenda's Custard** is relocating to Sandwich from Plano. **Jay's Liquors** remodeled the former McCaslin Bakery building. **Prindi's Antiques, Derailed Pub & Grill and Knucklehedz Bar & Grill** opened in downtown Sandwich. **Shocky's Red Hots** opened a hot dog stand on U.S. 34.

**Henderson Engineering Company**

has expanded its export of its Sahara Regenerative Air Dryers to new markets throughout the world. The system protects industrial compressed air systems from damage caused by compressed water vapor. The City of Sandwich completed a major street, parking and sidewalk resurfacing project downtown, on Railroad Street.

**Shabbona** - Plans are underway to market

the new **Shabbona Industrial Park** located on U.S. 30, along the Burlington Northern Sante Fe Railroad (BNSF), on the west side of Shabbona. The site is 246 acres with access available from Rt. 30, as well as Challand Road along its western boundary.

**NextEra Energy Resources** commenced operation of its Lee/DeKalb County Wind Energy Center. From this facility Next Era controls and maintains the 145 wind turbine generators throughout Afton, Clinton, Milan and Shabbona Townships. The **Prairie Band Potawatomi** Nation completed restoration of native prairie landscaping on its lands near Lake Shabbona.

**Somonauk** - The **Village of Somonauk** has completed a new water treatment plant and village maintenance building. The Village acted as general contractor for the maintenance building to maximize the ability use local subcontractors and local workers. Replacement of sidewalks, water main and sewer on the south side of Market Street (Route 34) was completed with the north side budgeted for 2011.

**Sycamore** - A new 130,000-square-foot corporate headquarters and production facility for **SK Hand Tools** has been constructed in the Sycamore Prairie Business Park. The building was completed for IDEAL INDUSTRIES by Krusinski Construction Company in an unprecedented 12 weeks as a result of the excellent design work done by Kwasek Architects and engineering provided by Missman Stanley.

IDEAL acquired the bankrupt SK Hand Tools in late August and needed to be operational as soon as possible. The City of Sycamore's ability to embrace the scope and schedule of this project was exemplary, according to Borek. IDEAL's decision to build in Sycamore demonstrates there is no better place to do business than DeKalb County. All the resources are present for businesses to succeed. The acquisition is the next step in IDEAL pursuing a strategy of providing American made hand tools that represent the quality, service, and value IDEAL has been known for since 1916.

**Smart Motion Robotics** completed its new 32,000-square-foot headquarters in Sycamore Prairie Business Park. The facility houses 18 full-time workers engaged in the design, assembly, programming and testing of robotic solutions for domestic and



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international manufacturing and packaging clients. The project was supported by tax abatement agreements with the City of Sycamore, Sycamore School District, DeKalb County Board, Sycamore Park District, Sycamore Public Library, Kishwaukee College and Cortland Township. The new building is designed to accommodate the company's projected growth with employment increasing to 30 workers. One of Smart Motion's most notable systems is SmartPacker, the egg industry's leading robotic egg packing solution.

**The Suter Company** completed an office expansion and a new exterior façade improvement to its headquarters and manufacturing facility on May Street. The addition provides much-needed training, conference and office space. The Suter Company offers an extensive line of refrigerated salads, dips and spreads, snack and lunch kits, deviled eggs, canned salads and other prepared foods.

**SK Express** has leased an additional 11,000-square-foot in Sycamore Industrial Park. It manufactures wire harness systems for heavy equipment manufacturers and assembly plants throughout the world. Production for Caterpillar has increased dramatically in recent months increasing employment to over 250 workers.

**Elgiloy Specialty Metals** has leased an additional 30,000-square-foot in Sycamore Industrial Park since its initial 52,800-square-foot lease in 2007. It produces safety equipment for the offshore oil and gas industry and manufacture drawn round wire in nickel, nickel-cobalt, titanium and stainless steel alloys.

**Upstaging** acquired an adjacent building on Park Place to expand operations in Sycamore. For 39 years Upstaging has set the standard for theatrical lighting and live performance equipment trucking, as well as production services, event coordination and mobile marketing.

**Gray Hunter Stenn**, a certified public accounting firm, leased 1,650-square-foot in the Prairie Professional Park, along the Bethany Road commercial corridor. Construction of the new **Hy-Vee** grocery store is progressing in the Sycamore Shopping Center on Sycamore Road. The project is on target for completion and opening in June. John Pappas is the developer of the 98,000-square-foot facility.

Construction and renovations at the **Sycamore Middle School** are progressing. The project consists of a major 35,000-square-foot addition and renovation of the existing 45,000-square-foot building. Substantial improvements have been made to parking and traffic flow. The project cost is \$13 million. Construction has been underway in phases throughout the summer and school year. Completion is scheduled for August.

**Waterman - Production Cutting Services (PCS)** expanded operations from Moline to the Vision Pickling & Processing building in Waterman. PCS does business with Vision Pickling's own QC Pickling operation in Moline. It intends to expand that relationship by servicing the Waterman facility and other northern Illinois manufacturers. For 25 years PCS has provided metal parts and fabrication services to large equipment manufacturers and metal distribution centers.

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