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About the DCEDC and DeKalb County

About the DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation

The goal of the DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation is to improve living standards and create economic opportunities for DeKalb County. Since its inception in 1987, the DCEDC, now led by Executive Director Paul J. Borek, has overseen over \$1 billion in industrial and commercial investment, which spurred parallel growth in both employment and the tax base. The organization is completing a strategic planning process that will capitalize on the county's continued strengths of:

- A strong nearly recession-proof agricultural export base;
- A prolific and dynamic manufacturing mix;
- A world-class educational facility;
- A technologically advanced, cost-effective business infrastructure;
- Low land costs;
- Congestion-free interstate access;
- Proximity to several major metro areas; and
- A lifestyle that's both appealing and affordable.

Even during difficult economic times, DeKalb County continues to grow. Several large commercial projects are underway in the county, including:

- The new DeKalb Clinic, a \$16 million 70,000 square foot medical office building in Sycamore,
- DeKalb Commons, a 68-acre mixed use development including two hotels, retail centers, restaurants and a luxury apartment complex located on Peace Road and Route 38 in DeKalb,
- The proposed NB & T Square, a mixed use mid-rise development on Lincoln Highway in downtown DeKalb anchored by the National Bank & Trust Company, other retail and commercial users and upper level apartments and condominiums, and

- Waves of Fun, Inc., 65,000 square foot, 5-story indoor water park located adjacent to the new Best Western Timber Creek Suites Hotels & Convention Center in Sandwich.

Most notably, international trade and export growth is driving the expansion of numerous DeKalb County manufacturers and distributors leading to the development of several first class industrial parks. The fact that a significant portion of these projects involve manufacturing illustrates the key role of manufacturing and the strategic importance of the DCEDC. Current projects include:

- Three new buildings: The Suter Company, Superior Industrial Equipment and Ample Supply; and the expansion of Tate & Lyle Custom Ingredients in the Sycamore Prairie Business Park,
- Development of the DeKalb Business Center, a new 343 acre technology, manufacturing and distribution park on I-88, two miles from Northern Illinois University,
- Development of Phase II of the Sycamore Prairie Business Park, nine new lots totaling 54 acres,
- Attraction of Elgiloy Specialty Metals and expansion of SK Express in the Sycamore Industrial Park,
- Completion of fourth 3M Distribution Center in Park 88 and expansion of Panduit,
- Development of new industrial parks in Genoa, Hinckley and Cortland,
- Expansion of Monsanto grain processing and warehousing in Waterman.

In conjunction with its public and private member investors, the DCEDC considers initiatives that will improve its communities. The DCEDC strategic planning initiative is gathering input about county assets, trends, challenges and opportunities. Using this information, the organization is drafting a plan of action to guide future efforts.

Areas of particular interest the DCEDC has identified include:

- Capitalizing on international business development opportunities,
- Expanding local industries,
- Supporting new business creation,
- Effective marketing and communication, and
- Creating a culture supportive of new ideas and innovation.

About DeKalb County

Gross domestic product: \$2.7 billion

Population: 103,729 (represents 14.6 percent growth in seven years)

County jobs: 27,500 (represents 5.5 percent growth in seven years)

Median wage: \$29,000

The county includes 14 municipalities. DeKalb, with a population of 45,479, is the largest city and Sycamore, the county seat, is second largest with a population of 15,500. These two communities, located six miles apart, support a burgeoning area for commerce, industry, and retail.

Strategically located along I-88 within the I-39 Logistics Corridor between Chicago, Milwaukee, the Quad Cities, Bloomington, Ill., and Madison, Wisc., the county combines multiple market access with a highly skilled workforce, affordable homes, top-ranked schools, a cutting-edge business climate, and the warm neighborly ambience of communities rooted in agriculture.

Northern Illinois University in the City of DeKalb, has 26,000 students and is nationally recognized for programs in information technology, engineering, computer science, physics, and accounting.

DeKalb County is an integral part of the Chicago metropolitan region and continues to add to its agricultural and manufacturing base by supporting investment and capitalizing on Northern Illinois University's technological advances.