

DeKalb County Economic Development Corp.'s program helps businesses expand

Published: Monday, Sept. 8, 2014 11:14 p.m. CDT • Updated: Monday, Sept. 8, 2014 11:25 p.m. CDT

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SYCAMORE – DeKalb County Economic Development Corp. officials aim to visit 30 businesses by year's end to help local firms expand their operations.

The group is asking interested local businesses to join its retention or expansion visitation program, which began earlier this summer, said DCEDC Executive Director Paul Borek.

Under the program, DCEDC officials will interview local firms during 45-minute visits to identify concerns, needs and opportunities. ComEd will provide a survey tool that will be used to organize information that is gathered, according to the DCEDC.

“When we identify these opportunities and needs, we follow up with connecting companies with resources that would support their expansion or address their needs,” Borek said.

Information shared during interviews is kept confidential. To participate, call 815-895-2711 or email hoyle@dcedc.org.

Some businesses already have been successful in expanding thanks to help from the DCEDC. They include the DeKalb Forge Company, SK Express in DeKalb and Suter Company in Sycamore, Borek said.

The retention program works with other organizations and companies to connect local businesses that need help. DCEDC refers manufacturing businesses to the U.S. Commercial Service to help establish exports to foreign companies, Borek said.

Businesses also may be referred to the Northern Illinois University research office or College of Engineering to help with product development and research, Borek said. Kishwaukee College and other organizations can help with employee training, and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity assists with tax credit programs, Borek said.

“The ultimate goal is to help companies grow, employ more people and generate more revenue in DeKalb County,” he said.

In a different program under DCEDC, Triumph Truss and Steel Co. was able to relocate operations to Kirkland. A prior trust company that once held the space at 110 Brennan Drive in Kirkland went out of business, Borek said, so the DCEDC worked with local real estate brokers to attract Triumph Truss and Steel into the vacant space.

Triumph Truss and Steel Treasurer Dennis Ward said thanks to DCEDC's help, his business was able to move to Kirkland with \$150,000 they received in May 2013 from the village of Kirkland. The money helped them offset costs for moving expenses, payroll and bills, Ward said.

"Had we not gotten the money from them, I don't know if we could pull off what we we're trying to do," Ward said. "It was very critical when you have a start-up business."