

# Industrial development reduces unemployment

Continued investment and significant job creation has reduced unemployment in DeKalb County to historic lows. The resulting tight labor market requires new initiatives to address employers' need for workers.

Sustained capital investment of \$50 million and strong leasing and construction of 787,000 square feet this year have reduced the vacancy rate in DeKalb County to 5 percent, down from more than 10 percent in 2015.

Three consecutive years of employment growth averaging about 800 more jobs have reduced the average annual unemployment rate in DeKalb County to 4 percent, the lowest level since 2006.

Target and 3M together have hired more than 1,000 new workers in DeKalb over the past two years. The ability of the region to supply the labor needed by these expanding companies has demonstrated that the DeKalb County labor market is substantial.

Target recently increased its employment to more than 1,000 workers after converting its regional distribution center into a national upstream distribution center in 2015.

3M moved into its new 978,000-square-foot distribution center in 2016 and added about 350 new employees in 2017, increasing employment to 950.

3M's growth has attracted CEVA Logistics to DeKalb. CEVA leased 112,000 square feet of the 12101 Barber Greene Road building in December to provide international shipping services exclusively for 3M. Soon thereafter, as 3M's requirements increased, CEVA leased an additional 100,000 square feet of space.

School Tool Box expanded into 87,000 square feet of space on the east end of the Barber Greene building. Rapid growth of its school supply sales and distribution business created the need for additional space.

Panduit is converting portions of its space to manufacturing. Just-in-time delivery of products directly to customers has reduced warehousing requirements for product inventory, freeing up space in DeKalb for manufacturing.

Solotech leased additional space in the 711 Fairview Drive building to fulfill increasing demand for video, sound, lighting and staging systems to serve the needs of its global entertainment clients.

Wehrli Custom Fabrication acquired and remodeled the 300 Harvestore Drive building in DeKalb to



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Paul Borek

accommodate growth of its high-performance diesel and custom metal fabrication business. The new 34,000-square-foot building has enabled Wehrli to double the size of its operations.

Unified Wire & Cable completed construction of an addition to its Dietz Avenue building, adjacent to the main plant on Wurlitzer Drive in DeKalb. Unified Wire and Cable manufactures a broad range of wire and cable for the electronics, automotive and military markets.

Win Aviation is renovating its hangar at DeKalb Taylor Municipal Airport by adding aeronautics maintenance technology to generate additional aircraft traffic and business.

In Cortland, Natural Polymers purchased the former Kishwaukee Forge building on North Street to research, develop and produce sustainable spray polyurethane insulation products. Natural Polymers relocated to Cortland from West Chicago.

The Suter Company is completing an 81,000-square-foot addition to its food production, packaging and distribution facility on Bethany Road.

Ignatius Press moved into its new religious-media design, production and distribution facility in the Sycamore Prairie Business Park.

At the Sycamore Industrial Park, Apple Plastic recycling and Glide Rite shopping carts established operations. Innovative Growers more than doubled its operations for the production of hydroponic growing tables.

In Genoa, Custom Aluminum Products is completing a 34,000-square-foot addition to house new aluminum product production machines. Polar Tech has rebuilt a building destroyed by fire. J6 Polymers has expanded its aerospace polymers production business.

In Sandwich, Meadowvale has moved into its new soft-serve ice cream production plant. Gord Industrial Plastics completed construction of its new plastic injection molding manufacturing plant, and both Midwestern Concrete and Sopris Concrete completed new buildings to house their construction businesses.

• Paul Borek is executive director of the DeKalb County Economic Development Corp.

## DeKalb Chamber celebrates Barb City Bagels



Photo provided

The DeKalb Chamber of Commerce ambassadors, board members and staff congratulated Tim and Bobbi Hays of Barb City Bagels on the shop's new location at 118 E. Lincoln Highway in DeKalb. The restaurant features an assortment of freshly baked bagels, cream cheese, sandwiches and beverages. For information, visit [www.barbcitybagels.com](http://www.barbcitybagels.com).

### LOCAL BRIEFS

#### Heartland Bank to host Fall into Free event

GENOA – On Friday, Oct. 26, Heartland Bank and Trust Co. will host its Fall into Free event.

Local offices are extending an invitation to customers, residents and businesses to join in celebration with refreshments, gifts, one-day-only offers and a chance to win a \$500 Visa Gift Card.

Local Heartland Bank offices are at 327 W. Main St. in Genoa, 913 S. Fourth St. in DeKalb, and 124 S. Main St. and 1985 DeKalb Ave. in Sycamore.

For information on Heartland Bank's Fall into Free Event, visit [www.hbtbank.com](http://www.hbtbank.com).

#### Spectrum launches faster internet service in Genoa

GENOA – Charter Communications Inc. has launched Spectrum Internet Gig for residential customers and Spectrum Business Internet Gig for small and medium-sized business clients across its northern Illinois service area, which includes Genoa.

Spectrum is committed to bringing faster internet speeds to the commu-

nities it serves with no modem fees or data caps, according to a news release. Priced at \$104.99 a month for new residential customers, Spectrum Internet Gig is available to more than 95 percent of the company's footprint, and will be available throughout virtually all of Spectrum's 41-state service area by the end of 2018, according to the release.

"Spectrum's state-of-the-art, fiber-rich network allows us to deploy dramatically faster broadband speeds, including gigabit connections, broadly and rapidly," Tom Rutledge, Charter Communications chairman and CEO, said in the release. "As consumer demands for bandwidth and capacity grow, our world-class network is best positioned to meet these demands, today and into the future."

With Spectrum Internet Gig, residential customers have access to faster and more powerful internet speeds for streaming video, online gaming, downloading music and more across multiple devices without sacrificing performance, according to the release.

For information on Spectrum's services, visit [www.spectrum.com](http://www.spectrum.com).

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