

A CLOSER LOOK

DeKalb bringing in the business

Construction underway at ChicagoWest to prepare for incoming companies

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DeKALB – Construction will soon be underway in the ChicagoWest Business Center to prepare for two companies that City Manager Bill Nicklas is calling “good-sized prospects.”

City staff hope the companies will soon become significant employers in DeKalb, and so does the landowner, who has begun construction to prepare the land for the companies to use if they commit to coming to the city.

“Each one of these two that we’re talking about now has very different requirements,” Nicklas said, who added he couldn’t identify the interested companies yet.

Chicago area-based Krusinski Construction Co., which owns the ChicagoWest land located south of Interstate 88 along Gurler Road and Route 23, announced site development and mass grading (ground work to remove slopes or hills to better prepare for buildings) has begun on the 1,000-acre site.

A rail spur also could be placed in the site because of its proximity to the Union Pacific Railroad.

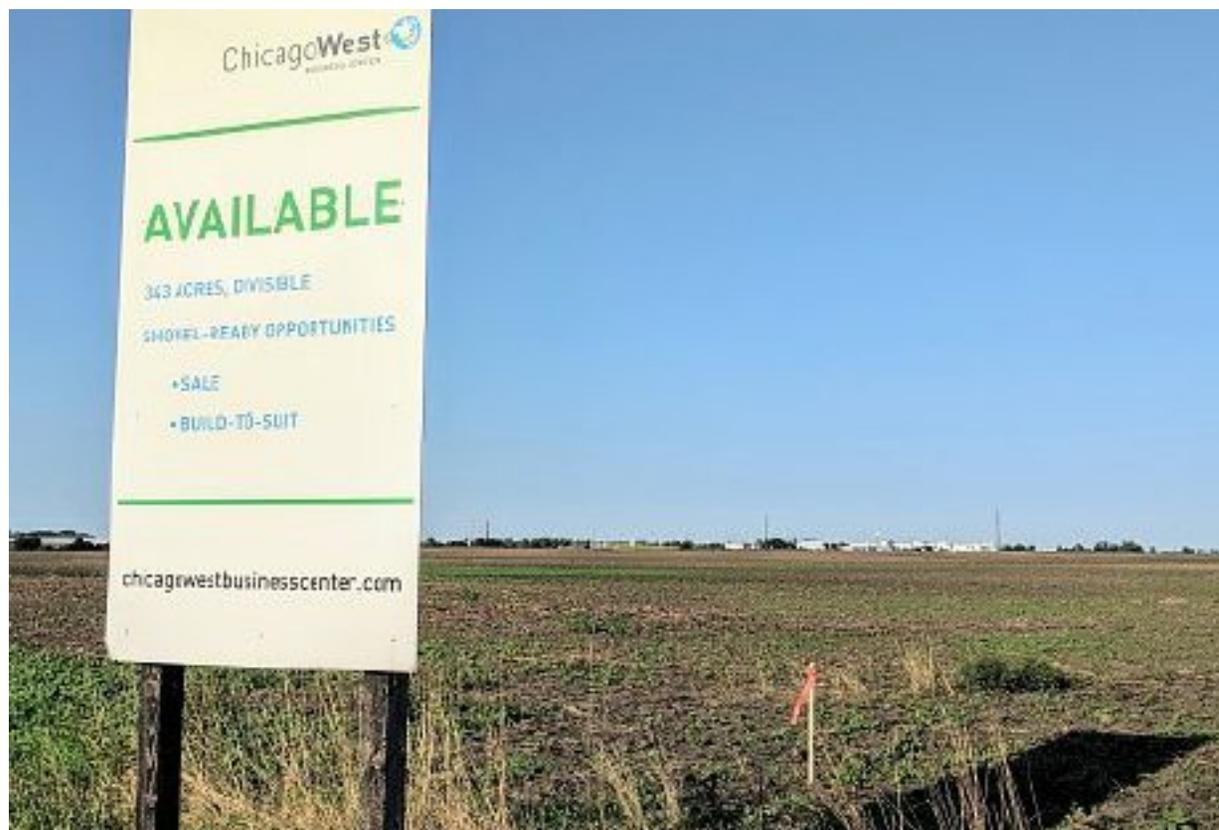
Nicklas said the site once was eyed for a \$1.6 billion Toyota-Mazda plant, when DeKalb was in the running for the employer in 2017.

Although he didn’t give any time frame for when the city might be able to announce the two companies, Nicklas said the work continues with recent City Council efforts to make DeKalb business friendly.

Jerry Krusinski, CEO of Krusinski Construction Co., said in a news release that the site offers “attractive benefits” such as The Enterprise Zone, a 10-year real estate tax abatement, strong infrastructure and pro-growth support from the city and organizations such as the DeKalb County Economic Development Corp., DeKalb Township Highway Department and the Kishwaukee Water Reclamation District, among others.

“Now the business center is of interest to a couple good-sized prospects so the owner and developer is taking a bit of a financial risk,” Nicklas said. “They’re going to invest a lot of money into the grading of that site and shaping of the land.”

Nicklas said the Krusinski Construction announcement was meant to inform people in the city of ongoing



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construction process, although they can’t yet say who the work is for.

“This is a little unusual and unique,” he said. “This is a very significant sign that both the developer and city are willing to work hard to invite companies to come by doing some things and spending some time to prepare the way.”

Nicklas said the larger goal is to ensure economic development in the city continues to grow.

“We want career jobs,” Nicklas said. “Those kinds of jobs that can support families, that can purchase houses, pay taxes, support schools and other taxing bodies and improve the culture and life to the community and make it a destination for families and business going forward.”

He said developing land that can better serve to entice larger companies and grow the local workforce is what the city wants, a goal he said is supported by leaders at Northern Illinois University and Kishwaukee College.



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“One big component in this is the local labor market and ability of our two fine educational institutions to help train and prepare potential workforce that would have the skills and expertise to succeed at either of these companies,” Nicklas said.

Nicklas said both companies would not be on the same parcel, but on either side of Gurler Road at ChicagoWest, which sits around the I-88 oasis.

The industrial park was recently rezoned from single-family home use to allow industrial use.