

THE FLASH

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FORWARD WISCONSIN SUCCESS COMPANY UPDATE DESIGNER DOORS OF RIVER FALLS

Early in 1996, a Minneapolis newspaper featured an article about Forward Wisconsin's aggressive efforts in recruiting businesses from the Twin Cities and encouraging CEOs to expand their firms to Wisconsin. The column quoted Eau Claire-based Ken McAdams, Forward's Western Regional Director at the time, and detailed his regular visits with Minnesota CEOs as well as the annual fall prospecting trip to the state that he organized.



Kent Forsland (pictured left), Founder and CEO of Designer Doors, read the article and called Ken McAdams to find out more about what Wisconsin could offer his growing business. Kent had started his Minneapolis-based company in 1987 and was seeking a more permanent place for his firm that would

allow for future expansion. Forsland liked what he heard and the process moved quickly. By mid-1996, Designer Doors made the decision to relocate to River Falls and the firm started operations there in October 1996.

Arriving in River Falls, Forsland brought eight employees into a 20,000-square-foot building with \$623,000 in sales annually of the custom wood overhead garage doors his company manufactures. In the



summer of 1997, Forward Wisconsin hosted Kent Forsland and his wife Diane at the GMO golf tournament and recognized them for their successful relocation to the state.

Today, Designer Doors employs more than 80, a ten-fold increase from when it came to River Falls in 1996,



including 14 national sales representatives. The business is planning on hiring another 10-15 people in 2005. Total sales in 2004 were about \$12 million and projections for 2005 are for \$17

million in sales. If that wasn't impressive enough growth, Designer Doors announced in February of this year an expansion project. It is adding another 35,000-square-feet of manufacturing space in a second location in River Falls and adding a 7,000-square-foot office complex as well.

SEVERAL COMPANIES INCREASE INVESTMENT IN FORWARD WISCONSIN MARKETING PROGRAM

We are pleased to announce that American Transmission Company, Dairyland Power Cooperative, J.P. Cullen & Sons, Madison Gas & Electric and Wausau Insurance have all recently increased their financial support of Forward. We are thankful for their commitment to growing the state's economy and for their investment of resources in Forward.

TWO NEW LEGISLATORS JOIN FORWARD BOARD



Senator Cathy Stepp, (R-Sturtevant), left, and Representative Kitty Rhoades (R-Hudson), right, have joined the Forward Wisconsin Board of Directors.



Senator Stepp represents the 21st Senate District and is Chair of the Committee on Housing and Financial Institutions. Representative Rhoades represents the 30th Assembly District and serves on the Joint Finance Committee. Senator Stepp and Representative Rhoades join Representative David Cullen (D-Milwaukee) from the 13th Assembly District on the board. The appointment of a new democratic senator to the Forward Board is still in process.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONALS ENCOURAGED TO TAKE "LOIS" TRAINING

Training sessions have begun for economic development professionals that are interested in using the LocationOne Information System (LOIS). LOIS is an Internet-based application that provides state, county, metro, locality, building and site information. It is the first-ever statewide system that any community in Wisconsin can use as its single point of data entry.



LOIS is easy to understand and very simple to use. Once the changes are saved on the administration site, the data is instantly published on the web. Communities can even link their portion of LOIS to their own web site. It's easy to use, easy to maintain and best of all, it's totally FREE.

Visit <http://www.forwardwi.com> for a list of training sessions, registration info and more details on LOIS or contact Sharon Seffrood at 608.261.2501.