



NEWS

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CHICAGO AREA BUSINESS EXECUTIVES SHOW A STRONG INTEREST IN EXPANDING THEIR BUSINESSES TO WISCONSIN

MADISON - - Forward Wisconsin's annual Chicago Marketing Mission held last week proved again that the Windy City is a fertile market in which to recruit corporate expansions and business investment. Five teams of Wisconsin economic development professionals met with over 30 Chicago area CEOs, real estate consultants and "headquarter" company executives on June 20-21 in the Chicago area and found that businesses continue to have a high-level of interest in expanding to Wisconsin.

"After taking an initial look at how all our appointments went, I am very optimistic regarding the early results," said Forward Wisconsin Director Jan Alf. "We met with several companies that are definitely going to expand in the next 12-18 months and are considering Wisconsin for their expansions. We've also generated some excellent leads for the future and strengthened relationships with key site selection consultants."

The spring Chicago Marketing Mission has been a staple of Forward Wisconsin's business recruitment outreach effort for over 20 years. The calling program is a three-month initiative that includes purchasing a qualified mailing list in targeted industries, and sending a personal invitation letter from Forward Wisconsin Chairman Governor Doyle to over 3,000 business executives. The overall goal of Forward Wisconsin marketing missions is to attract investment and expanding companies to the state through direct, face-to-face meetings.

The mailing from Governor Doyle was sent in May to generate interest in scheduling meetings and was followed up by an intensive phone initiative that secured appointments during the two-day calling portion of the trip. Wisconsin's pro-business message continues to resonate with Illinois corporate executives – many of which have Wisconsin vacation homes and spend significant amounts of time in Wisconsin. Since 1987, Forward Wisconsin has worked with nearly 100 Illinois firms that have expanded or relocated to Wisconsin.

"Forward Wisconsin will continue to urge Chicago area business people to consider expanding their businesses to Wisconsin. We have a high-quality labor force, lower building and land costs, competitive costs of doing business as well as excellent educational and transportation systems that can be of great benefit to growing companies," added Alf. "Why continue to have long commute times, pay burdensome Chicago taxes and endure such a high cost of living when you can be in Wisconsin?"

In addition to the traditional business cost advantages touted to Illinois business people by the Wisconsin teams, Governor Doyle and the Legislature have implemented a number of important initiatives over the past few years that are growing Wisconsin's economy and creating a better business climate.

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Successful measures include: switching to a single factor sales methodology of calculating corporate income taxes; implementing the most aggressive regulatory reform in the Midwest; providing funding to manufacturing extension programs to help small manufacturers modernize and create new jobs; providing more venture capital in Wisconsin to help start-up companies grow and develop; expediting the process of siting needed power generation and transmission facilities; and modernizing Wisconsin's financial industry.

The Chicago metro area has been a geographic target for Forward Wisconsin's marketing program since the organization began in 1984. Wisconsin has consistently had several business advantages over Illinois and especially the City of Chicago, like lower housing costs, shorter commute times, and lower than average worker's compensation rates. Our state's quality of life has also been a continual part of marketing to Illinois business people.

Eleven Wisconsin economic development officials pitched-in to conduct the appointments and promote Wisconsin and their areas.

The Wisconsin team that traveled to Chicago included:

Jan Alf	Forward Wisconsin
Brian Doudna	Eau Claire Area Economic Development Corporation
Nancy Elsing	Columbia County Economic Development Corporation
Jamie Jacobs	WISPARK LLC
Bruce Kepner	Alliant Energy
Jenny Kuderer	La Crosse Area Development Corporation
April Mielke	City of Waupaca
James Otterstein	Rock County Planning & Development Agency
Mary Perry	Wisconsin Department of Commerce
Charlie Walker	Chippewa County Economic Development Corporation
Doug Wheaton	City of Franklin

Forward Wisconsin, Inc., (ForwardWI.com), created in 1984, is a unique public-private state marketing organization. Its job is marketing Wisconsin's business advantages outside the state to educate decision-makers on the positive benefits of living, working, playing and doing business in Wisconsin. Governor Jim Doyle is Forward Wisconsin's Chairman of the Board.