

# Developments

Editor Maggie Strong

## ■ CELEBRATING JIM MENTESTI'S 27 YEARS AT GREDF'S HELM

Since announcing his retirement, Jim has received dozens of cards, letters, emails, calls and well-wishes. They come from the Tri-State region and beyond, from educational and political leaders; non-profits and fellow economic developers; local companies and corporate headquarters far away; retailers and commercial developers, utility companies, engineers, former board members and friends. Each one congratulates Jim for a distinguished life of service, and thanks him for his dedication, commitment and leadership in creating and sustaining a stellar economic development program that influences so many facets of our community and region.

One small handwritten card summarizes it so succinctly... "Jim, you are a lovely man, and all that you are has made GREDF all that it is today."

On January 9th we will attempt to honor Jim for all that he is and celebrate the journey that brought him to this day.

Please join us for a brief but heartfelt look at Jim's life from his Italian roots on the south side of Chicago, coming to Quincy as a college student, his return to QC as Director of Placement, Alumni and later Development, and five years in the private sector helping to grow a local business from 70 to 370 employees. It's a perfect recipe for success for the next 27 years of Jim's life at the helm of Great River Economic Development Foundation.

How we will adequately pay tribute to a man whose life's work has made such an impact and leaves such a legacy remains to be seen, but the most important element will be surrounding Jim with the people who mean so much to him... the GREDF family he has



cared for and mentored and collaborated with for 27 years. Please come and be that family as we say "Salute and Grazie" to Jim Mentesti.

Remarks will be given at the close of the GREDF annual meeting, with a reception in Jim's honor immediately following.

## ■ ANNUAL MEETING PREVIEW

GREDF Board Chairman, Tim Finlay, says this year's annual meeting will give the organization an opportunity to recognize its many partners in economic development. "We thought it was appropriate to highlight the partnerships Jim Mentesti spent his career building on the night we celebrate his retirement," says Finlay.

Those partners include individuals and organizations representing private business and industry, education, workforce, government, non-profit, economic development, transportation and more. The presentation will highlight projects in which these partners have been involved and that impact our area's economy. "We are blessed to have a network of stakeholders that work with GREDF every day to drive economic development in our region," adds Finlay.

GREDF's 2013 Annual Meeting "A Salute and Thank You to Our Partners," will take place in conjunction with Jim Mentesti's retirement celebration on Wednesday, January 9th, at the Oakley-Lindsay Center in Quincy. Mayor John Spring and past Adams County Board Chairman Mike McLaughlin will also give remarks during the Annual Meeting portion of the evening.

*Salute & Grazie*

2013 ANNUAL MEETING  
& Jim Mentesti's Retirement Celebration

INVITATION INSIDE!

## ■ AAIM Employers' Association "90 DAYS TO SUCCESS"



Making the jump from individual contributor to supervisor is one of the toughest career challenges an employee can face. It requires a new mindset and new skills. New supervisors no longer focus only on their personal workload - they need to know how to lead their teams to maximum productivity.

90 Days to Success is a rigorous program designed to teach the skills a new supervisor needs to be successful. A combination of classroom training, computer-based instruction, on-the-job assignments and coaching, the course is a comprehensive approach to teaching the skills an employee needs to be an effective supervisor.

LOCATION: JK Creative Printers,  
2029 Hollister-Whitney Parkway, Quincy

DURATION: Six full days, 8:00 am - 4:30 pm

2013 DATES: Tuesdays 1/15, 1/29, 2/12, 2/26, 3/12 and 3/26  
OR Wednesdays 1/16, 1/30, 2/13, 2/27, 3/13 and 3/27

MEMBER COST: \$1,500 per person NON-MEMBER COST: \$1,800 per person

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: January 11, 2013

FOR QUESTIONS AND TO REGISTER, CONTACT:  
Teresa Bowen, [teresa.bowen@aaimea.org](mailto:teresa.bowen@aaimea.org), 800-948-5700

## ■ REGION CHARTERS COURSE TO TRAIN STUDENTS for Advanced Manufacturing Careers

### Pathways to Results Process Connects Education and Business Resources; \$500,000 Grant Boosts Effort

The new world of advanced manufacturing requires a drastically different set of skills from its workforce. On October 25th at the John Wood Community College Workforce Development Center, private business, education and economic development leaders signed a charter to formalize the "Pathways to Results" process. The process aligns K-12 coursework with college degrees and business resources to give students the new skills needed to ensure family-sustaining careers in our region's manufacturing sector.

The signing is the latest step in a concentrated effort to change the perception of manufacturing and build the workforce of tomorrow. The charter collectively commits

business and K-college entities to clearly define a path for manufacturing careers while boosting resources, equipment and expertise available for students to attain careers in the high-tech industry.

Phil Conover, Interim GREDF President, announced that as a result of collaborative partnerships, John Wood Community College received a \$525,769 Trade Adjustment Assistance - Illinois Network for Advanced Manufacturing Grant (TAA-INAM). JWCC is one of 20 Illinois community colleges that received funding from the Department of Labor.

"Because of the partnerships built over the last several years, this funding uniquely positions



the region to prepare future technicians, engineers and managers as our manufacturing industry expands," Conover said. "This process, when integrated, is a tremendous platform to attract new manufacturers to the region because we will have the skilled workforce they require to be successful."

## ■ SEARCH FOR NEW GREDF PRESIDENT PROGRESSES

Members of the Committee to recommend a new GREDF president are pleased with the progress they have made thus far. The Committee completed a thorough job analysis and began advertising the position in November. Applications for the job were accepted through the middle of December. Next steps include the initial screening and interview process.

"We are thankful to have very professional and knowledgeable community and business representatives as members of the Committee. Each is invested in getting the person who best meets the job qualifications in this leadership position," says Tim Finlay, Chairman of the GREDF Board and member of the Search Committee. The Committee, which consists of the following eleven members, will be reaching out to other key stakeholders for input during the process.

**Tim Finlay** GREDF Board of Directors Chair, ADM Alliance Nutrition

**Connie Schroeder** GREDF Board of Directors Immediate Past Chair, Blessing Corporate Services

**Stevens Plowman** GREDF Board of Directors Executive Committee Member, F&M Bank and Trust Company

**Julie Bonansinga** GREDF Board of Directors Member, Bonansinga & Associates, LLC

**Paul Mugerditchian** GREDF Board of Directors Member, DOT Foods Transportation Division

**Bryan Stokes** Quincy Recycle Inc. President

**Dr. John Letts** John Wood Community College President

**John Spring** City of Quincy Mayor

**Mike McLaughlin** Adams County Board Chair

**Hal Oakley** Former GREDF Board of Directors Chair, Schmiedeskamp, Robertson, Neu & Mitchell LLP

**Maggie Strong** GREDF Project Manager, Ex-Officio



## ■ BLESSING HOSPITAL Breaks Ground for Patient Care Addition

Blessing Hospital broke ground on August 20, 2012 for a \$70 million, five-story patient care addition to its 11th Street campus.

The addition will allow Blessing to move its three inpatient behavioral medicine units from the 14th Street campus to 11th Street. This consolidation will bring all inpatient care to one location, making the Hospital more efficient. Though the 14th Street building will continue to house a number of departments, Blessing will no longer need a hospital license for the campus.

“Blessing Behavioral Center inpatient units have experienced tremendous growth in patient demand over the past year or so with the closing of other behavioral medicine services in the region,” said Maureen Kahn, RN, MHA, MSN, president/chief executive officer, Blessing Hospital. “Moving the inpatient behavioral care to 11th Street gives it the room to meet the growing need, and allows us to maintain the 14th Street campus as an office building rather than a hospital, which will lower the cost of operating the campus.”

The patient care addition will also create 104 new single bed rooms. Fifty-two of those rooms will be in the new addition. Converted rooms in Blessing’s existing facility will make up the remaining 52 single bed rooms.

“I have received overwhelmingly positive feedback from people regarding this improvement,” Kahn continued. “Single



bed rooms make hospitalization a bit more comfortable, and increase safety and quality of care through decreased infection risk.”

S.M. Wilson is the project construction manager, as the company has been for most major Blessing Health System building projects. Much of the work will be done by local contractors and their employees.

“It was a goal of the Blessing Board of Trustees to involve as many local contractors as possible,” said Jerry Jackson, vice president, Engineering and Facility Development, Blessing Corporate Services. “We are exceeding those expectations and pleased with the response of local companies.”

The new Blessing Hospital patient room addition will be complete in two years.

Blessing will use \$33 million in cash and routine capital investment to pay for the building. The rest of the funds will come from a combination of borrowing and fundraising.

## ■ COMPETING IN THE GLOBAL MARKETPLACE

More than 70 percent of the world’s purchasing power and 95 percent of the world’s consumers are outside of the United States. In 2009, 90 percent of exports in Illinois were done by small and medium-sized businesses with fewer than 500 employees.\*

During Retention visits with area manufacturers, GREDF has become keenly aware that our region’s businesses want to be competitive on a global basis. In fact, in the long run, our region’s economic health may rest on their ability to do just that.

“More and more businesses and manufacturers are realizing the opportunities out there to export the product they are creating. Many more world markets are expected to become receptive to products made in the USA and many in our region will benefit,” says Phil Conover.

GREDF is anxious to grow our platform of resources and information to enhance our businesses’ and manufacturers’ capacity to become exporters. These resources include our partnerships with the Illinois SBDC International Trade Center at Bradley University and U.S. Commercial Service Office in Peoria, Illinois. Their Trade Specialists have helped companies in our area increase sales to new global markets and we will continue to support their efforts.

For more information about how your business can benefit from the global marketplace, and what GREDF can do to help, please contact us at 217.223.4313 or [greddf@gredf.org](mailto:greddf@gredf.org).

\*Source: Quad Cities Chamber of Commerce and Quad-City Foreign Trade Zone 133

## 2012 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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300 Civic Center Plaza | Suite 256 | Quincy, IL 62301  
ph 217-223-4313 | fx 217-231-2030  
gredf@gredf.org

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## GREDF FOCUSES ON RETENTION VISITS

GREDF has conducted a number of retention visits with Adams County employers in the past six months as part of a renewed focus on a Business Retention and Expansion (BR|E) Program. “We are meeting with companies to identify issues and opportunities,” says Megan Backs, GREDF Project Manager. “Based on what we hear during these confidential conversations, we use available resources to help retain and grow our existing businesses.”

According to Blane Canada Ltd., an economic development consulting agency, most of a community’s job growth and capital investment comes from companies already located there. Their research has shown that an urban/suburban community will average 76% of their growth from existing employers. A rural community is even more dependent on internal growth.

This program is just one of the ways GREDF is fulfilling our mission to maintain and improve the economic vitality of Quincy and Adams County. If your business has not yet been contacted and you would like to set up a meeting with GREDF, please call Megan Backs at 217.223.4313 or email [meganb@gredf.org](mailto:meganb@gredf.org).



# Merry Christmas!

The staff and Board of Directors of the Great River Economic Development Foundation would like to wish you and your family a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

### CONNECT WITH GREDF

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