

## 2013 Great River Economic Development Foundation Annual Meeting Script

Tim Finlay, GREDF Chairman of the Board

January 9, 2013

\*Good evening and welcome. I'm Tim Finlay, Chairman of the Great River Economic Development Foundation Board of Directors. This, is a very special evening. We have the opportunity in a few minutes to honor and congratulate Jim Mentesti on his 27 years with GREDF. Before we do that, \*\*we will spend some time going through an overview of the economic related happenings in our region. I promise to keep it brief so that we can get to the celebration honoring Jim.

Last year, I asked you to help GREDF tell the story of the Quincy and Adams County region. We've got a great \*story to tell. Folks around here have the vision, ability and stamina it takes to achieve success. We know how to use our God-given resources along with good old-fashioned hard work and determination to make this place we call \*home the best it can be.

Many people have commented to me that they like to come to the GREDF Annual Meeting because this is the place they can receive an overview of all that is going on in our communities that is helping to drive positive economic growth.

So tonight, we are going to do just that. We would like to \*\*salute and thank all of you, our partners, who are involved in projects and efforts that drive economic development in our region. We thought it was appropriate to highlight many of the partnerships Jim Mentesti spent his career building on the night we celebrate his retirement. So here we go...

We all \*understand the importance of education. An educated and skilled workforce is the foundation of every community and the \*future of every economy. In Adams County, we are blessed to have partners committed to \*educating and growing our current and future workforce.

In October \*GREDF joined many of these partners and leaders in private business and education to sign a charter formalizing the "Pathways to Results" process. \*Pathways to Results aligns K through 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.

\*John Wood Community College received a \$500,000 dollar grant from the \*Department of Labor, one of only 20 Illinois community \*colleges to receive such funding, to expand and improve the delivery of career manufacturing training programs. We believe these programs, when integrated, will be a tremendous platform to support our local \*industries and attract new manufacturers to the region because we will have the skilled workforce they require to be successful.

GREDF's \*partnership with the Workforce Investment Board of Western Illinois helped expose over 200 young adults to local careers. GREDF project manager Megan Backs facilitated \*visits to schools by representatives from local manufacturers and workforce experts. Their message was clear: There are good, well-paying \*jobs right here in our region if you are willing to show up, receive training and work hard.

Our \*WIB partnership also allowed us to conduct a Quality of Labor Study along with our Ameren partners and celebrate \*National Manufacturing Day on October 5th. Our goal is to better understand and \*get the word out about our workforce needs in this region.

We're \*pleased to congratulate Quincy University as they launch their online degree program beginning with a \*Masters of Business Administration degree in February. Q.U. is also finishing work on the \*Connie Niemann Center for Music at their North Campus. The \*Center is a result of a \$1 million dollar donation from \*Rich Niemann Sr. and the Niemann Foods Foundation. Q.U. remains a \*pillar in our community, employing 164 people representing an annual payroll of over \$9.6 million dollars.

\*Knapheide Manufacturing Company and the Knapheide family announced that they are partnering with the \*Quincy School District and \*Quincy Public Schools Foundation to implement a major \*technology upgrade for all the district's public schools. Their commitment is a huge investment in the future of our \*kids and our communities.

Please join me in thanking the \*Niemann and Knapheide families for their generosity (lead round of applause).

While \*hosting the 2012 Illinois Main Street Conference in September, the \*Historic Quincy Business District, announced that Quincy's downtown \*occupancy rate was 94 percent. 2012 notable developments include the new \*Bank of Springfield office at 1111 Maine Street and the nearly complete \*Salvation Army Shelter across from the Kroc Center, among others. Thanks to executive director Travis Brown for his efforts and to the \*many businesses that have chosen to locate downtown.

GREDF was pleased to join our \*downtown and City of Quincy partners to successfully lobby for legislation extending the \*Illinois Enterprise Zone for another 25 years. The \*Quincy-Adams County Enterprise Zone, which has been in existence since 1984, has resulted in \*61 projects representing \*\$41 million dollars in investments and \*423 jobs.

Economic development tools such as the enterprise zone and \*Tax Increment Finance, or "TIF" district, help keep our region, and downtown specifically, moving in the \*right direction and allow the City to invest in public infrastructure projects.

The \*East Broadway Corridor saw its share of growth in 2012 as well. Significant projects include the new \*Walgreens at 18th and Broadway and the \*Texas Roadhouse expected to be open in February. We'd like to thank all of the \*developers and property owners that have invested in our east end commercial district, making Quincy the commercial and retail hub for the tri-state area. Each square foot added contributes to the City of Quincy's \*sales tax revenue, which was up by more than \$160,000 dollars during the first 8 months of fiscal year 2013 over fiscal year 2012.

Thanks to all of you, our partners, \*Adams County had the 2nd lowest unemployment rate in the state of \*Illinois in November, a position we've come to expect. Take a look at this \*graph representing the last 3 years. Let's compare Adams County to the state of \*Illinois.... (PAUSE) ... and the \*national unemployment rate. The unemployment rate is just one of many economic indicators, but it's an important one, and an extremely positive one for our region.

We also know that the \*Quincy/Adams County area did have some challenges in 2012.

You've seen the headlines, “\*Konstant Products closes”, “\*ADM announces nationwide cuts”, “\*Quincy Postal Distribution Center to Close”, “\*PCCW Teleservices Closes”... However, our \*diverse mix of agriculture, manufacturing, healthcare, service and retail, among other sectors, helps our region compensate for inevitable set backs. We would like to give credit to all of you, and our partners in business and industry, who have worked diligently to keep our region growing and viable.

Let's talk about some growth...

\*Roger Leenerts, owner of H&B Quality Tooling in downtown Quincy, is getting ready to expand into a second location on \*Ellington Road. The new venture, which Leenerts has named Leen Manufacturing, will be used for \*production scale machining and assembly, while the downtown \*location will focus on custom work such as tooling and prototypes.

\*Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois experienced a growth spurt in its \*Quincy service office over the past year and a half, adding over 150 new \*employees. The company has over 725 employees working in its \*Quincy office which is located in the Quincy Development Center.

\*Manchester Tank and Equipment Company is adding a \$3.4 million dollar 37,500 square-foot \*expansion to their facility located on Wisman Lane. This expansion will house a new paint line which will help reduce congestion in the plant. \*Construction is scheduled to be completed in March.

\*Prince Agri Products is moving forward on a \$4 million expansion at their \*South Quincy campus. The 12,000 square-foot building will house \*manufacturing for their newly-acquired specialty product line, which is adding to \*capacity they maintain on the East coast. The new line will add approximately \*6 high-quality manufacturing jobs to the growing company.

\*Ursa Farmers Cooperative opened their new, state-of-the-art, multi-million dollar grain \*elevator facility in Canton, Missouri, in December. Northeast Missouri farmers will now be able to take their \*grain to market more efficiently. The Canton facility joins the Cooperative's \*other facilities in Western Illinois.

The ag sector is so important to our \*region and companies like Prince Agri and Ursa Farmers Co-op are just a couple examples of ag's economic strength in our region.

\*Quincy-based Titan International experienced record \*revenue again in 2012 nearing the \$1.9 billion dollar mark. The company is finishing \*work on a new 100,000 square-foot facility at the former site of Huck Fixture Company which will be \*used for expanded production including a new paint line.

\*T.F. Ehrhart Company finished construction on a new 40,000 square foot building at 42nd and Koch's Lane that includes \*warehouse and office space for the heating and air conditioning equipment supplier.

\*Knapheide Manufacturing experienced major growth in their workforce in 2012, adding over 200 \*employees. Mike Dailing, Knapheide's human resources specialist, said the company was seeing more \*orders and was adding staff to meet the demand. Knapheide continues to grow and expects to hire an \*additional 40 employees in 2013.

The \*largest employer in our region, Blessing Hospital, broke ground in August on a \$70 million dollar, five-story patient care addition. The \*addition creates 104 new single rooms. Project \*construction manager S.M. Wilson, plans to award 70% of the contracts for the addition to local contractors, meaning the \*project will have a significant impact on our region's construction industry.

We'd like to congratulate \*Blessing Hospital on earning a place on The \*Leapfrog Group's annual list of Top Rural Hospitals, the first Illinois hospital to ever make the list. \*Blessing Hospital was selected from a pool of nearly 1,200 hospitals participating in The Leapfrog Group's annual survey.

We'd also like to congratulate another important healthcare \*partner, Quincy Medical Group, on 75 years of serving the Tri-State area's healthcare needs.

And then we have a couple more complex business \*developments...

Harris Corporation announced in early December that it had reached an agreement to sell its \*broadcast communications division for \$225 million dollars to \*The Gores Group. We're cautiously optimistic. All current signs point to the sale being a positive move for \*Harris' Quincy plant and the more than 300 people employed there.

Just like you, we continue to monitor the ongoing developments about \*Gardner Denver. GREDF and officials from the \*City of Quincy met with Gardner Denver's \*president and CEO in August. Quincy has forged a \*valuable partnership with the company during its 153 years in our community.

Please know that GREDF, along with our \*City and County partners, are monitoring these situations and will continue to \*promote the region as a good place to do business.

Despite current problems in the State of Illinois, we really do believe \*Adams County is a good place to do business. During retention visits with area manufacturers, the "state" of our \*State and how it affects business continues to be a hot topic. However, when we look beyond Illinois and focus on our \*region, the fundamental building blocks for economic success remain.

Quincy and Adams County are situated in the heart of the Midwest on the \*Mississippi River, a major transportation artery that's logistics and export potential has yet to be fully tapped. We're at the \*intersection of major four-lane highways and an interstate of which our 25 trucking companies do take advantage.

These \*trucking companies, which are very important to our region, benefit from ongoing highway infrastructure improvements. 2012 saw work begin on the \*Macomb Bypass, the final link in the Chicago-Kansas City Expressway. In the last 30 years, our Western Illinois region has gone from forgotten to \*connected in all directions, thanks in large part to the work of the Tri-State Development Summit Transportation Task Force.

\*Cape Air hit the 10,000 annual boarding mark on December 29th, qualifying the Quincy Regional \*Airport for a \$1 million dollar federal grant. The grant will allow the City to make capital improvements at the Airport. GREDF hosted a business travelers \*luncheon in October highlighting the opportunities and travel savings available to local companies that use Cape Air and the Quincy Regional Airport. I have personally \*used this service during the past year and it was a great experience.

Last year, GREDF \*Energy Specialist, Pete Pohlman partnered with the \*Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, \*Ameren's Act on Energy Program and the \*Illinois Manufacturing Extension Center.

\*Pete has helped save the City of Quincy, Adams County and a number of businesses and \*non-profits hundreds of thousands of dollars in energy-related costs through energy \*audits and grants during his years at GREDF. His expertise has helped in ongoing projects that will each have a major impact on the region, including the \*Ameren transmission line and \*Enbridge pipeline.

Our transportation and energy partners have laid solid \*groundwork for our local businesses and industries to build upon, and for that we thank them.

GREDF is well aware that our region's businesses want to be \*competitive on a global basis. That's why we have had a long-standing partnership with the \*Illinois Small Business Development Center International Trade Center at Bradley University and the \*U.S. Commercial Service Office in Peoria. Their Trade Specialists have helped companies in our area increase sales to new \*global markets. We will continue to offer our support and resources in the area of exports.

We'll also offer support in the form of \*organizations such as the Industrial Association of Quincy and \*the Rural Adams Development Corporation, which announced at its annual \*meeting in July that it had administered \*63 loans totaling \*nearly \$2 million dollars since it was started.

Our Entrepreneurship Director, \*Charles Bell, sits on the Board of the R.A.D.C. Charles counseled over 50 businesses in 2012. He assisted startups such as \*River Skate Ice Rink, \*Alliance Industrial Corporation and \*Golden Bridges, winner of the Chamber of Commerce Business Plan Competition. He helped in the expansions of \*Beckman Seed in Paloma and \*Riverside Smokehouse and Grill in Quincy.

Take a look at \*Charles' 2012 numbers: <slide>

The work Charles does through the GREDF Entrepreneurship Center highlights what partnership means at its most fundamental level... teamwork. I invite you to \*enlist the GREDF team to help you grow in 2013.

I talked about a lot of \*\*partners tonight, but there are so many more. \*Too many to mention by name this evening. Please know that it has been our pleasure to work with all of you over the years, those included in tonight's presentation and many others. It is your hard work and dedication that make the Quincy and Adams County area a great place to work, live and raise our families.

In closing, we all know that 2013 is likely to be another challenging year. We also know that based on our track record, our resources and our people, we will rise to the occasion, view challenges as opportunities and continue to grow... together.

Thank you. That's our presentation for this evening.\*\*