

# DAILY CHRONICLE

## Borek: DCEDC reflects on another year of substantial economic development



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As we look back on the year 2021, the DeKalb County Economic Development Corp. is proud to report on another remarkable year of development.

The past year was unprecedented in the number of development proposals prepared. On average, DCEDC has handled 34 prospects per year. That number increased to more than 80 last year, generating exceptional development totals in 2021 and a solid prospect pipeline for 2022.

As a result of significant developer interest, company growth and investment, and highly responsive host communities, DeKalb County attracted more than \$130 million of capital investment during 2021. This is the fourth-highest total during the past 14 years. The investment is leading to the construction, acquisition or leasing of more than 2.2 million square feet of space. This is the second-highest total in the past 14 years.

Most recently, “Project Barb” in DeKalb was revealed to be Amazon. Trammell Crow is developing a 700,000-square-foot warehouse and distribution center for Amazon on a 59.65-acre site at 1401 E. Gurler Road in the Chicago West Business Center. Plans call for 535 parking spaces, 490 trailer parking spaces and 121 loading docks. Krusinski Construction Co. is the builder.

Other county developments include the following:

- Zilber Property Group, a developer based in Milwaukee, acquired the 161,542-square-foot 711 Fairview Drive building in Park 88. Zilber then leased 112,000 square feet of space to Mortenson for its operations in support of Meta (formerly Facebook) construction.
- Greco/DeRosa Investment Group of Bartlett acquired the land and building on the northwest corner of I-88 and Peace Road. Panduit is leasing back its 589,000-square-foot building for continued operations. GD Investment Group has plans to develop as much as 1.5 million square feet of space on the 65-acre land site.
- Investor Vance Kemege acquired the South Seventh Street building and land site known as the DeKalb I-88 Business Park. The 13.7-acre site is being marketed for industrial development. The 131,000-square-foot building is leased to a variety of businesses. Black Box, a Meta technology supplier, leased space in the building to accommodate its needs in serving the Meta project.
- Proven Winners acquired the Pen’s Point Market building at 1600 E. Lincoln Highway in DeKalb. The new building provides space for expansion of the company’s administrative operations. Proven Winners is a California-based plant distribution company with all marketing operations housed in DeKalb.
- Entrepreneur Ron Proesel acquired the 1709 Afton Road building and two adjoining lots in the Sycamore Prairie Business Park. A 36,500-square-foot building addition is being constructed. The expanded facility

will be leased and operated by Nighthawk Video, a provider of state-of-the-art LED screens, projectors and camera systems for live, touring musical concerts and events.

- Chris Mayer, founder of Innovative Growers Equipment, acquired the former Sycamore Industrial Park. The facility is operating as the BCM Industrial Park. The city of Sycamore is supporting redevelopment of the park and the surrounding area with the creation of a Tax Increment Financing District. DeKalb County Enterprise Zone incentives are helping support reroofing, tuckpointing, new sprinkler systems and HVAC improvements for the 650,000-square-foot complex.

- Resource Bank is developing a new branch on Route 72 in Kirkland. The builder of the downtown-style structure is Sheppard Construction. The Kirkland Branch is Resource's 13th full-service location in DeKalb and surrounding counties.

- Correct Digital Displays acquired the former Sandwich Mill Works buildings at 700 Church St. They expanded and relocated operations from Sheridan to Sandwich. The company designs, installs and maintains sports scoreboards and message displays.

- Construction is underway for the Syngenta R & D Innovation Center on Route 38 in Malta Township. The 88-acre facility will include more than 80,000 square feet of laboratory, office, auditorium, collaboration space, seed processing, greenhouses and research fields. According to Syngenta, the world-class site will showcase leading seeds and digital technologies and spotlight Syngenta's product development through on-farm collaboration with growers.

- Construction continues on the 900,000-square-foot Meta (formerly Facebook) DeKalb Data Center. Construction by Mortenson is "progressing on schedule with completion planned for late next year. Daily construction employment often exceeds 1,000 workers."

- The new Wehrli Custom Fabrication and Powder Coating building on Harvestore Drive is nearing completion. The 100,000-square-foot facility represents the latest expansion for this fast-growing, family-owned diesel-power equipment manufacturer. Krusinski Construction is the builder.

- Conserv FS has completed the first phase of its Waterman Service Center Expansion. The project included a new fertilizer building, liquid storage facility, crop protection building and blending system.

- The new Electrical Lineman Safety Training Facility was completed on Forest View Lane in Genoa. The training center was developed by International Bureau of Electrical Workers – Local 196, in cooperation with the National Electrical Contractors Association.

- Corey Brachman is building a new commercial center on Route 72 in Genoa. The retail center will be anchored by a Dunkin' drive-through restaurant.

- Ferrara Candy Co. opened its new 1.2 million-square-foot distribution center and 468,000-square-foot pack center on June 30. Employment at the two facilities exceeds 500. These buildings were also built by Krusinski Construction Co.

As DCEDC begins its 35th year of operation, we encourage readers to be on the lookout for the launch of "Opportunity Unbound," an initiative to bring awareness to the area and promote the continued growth of our community. Opportunity Unbound will help us reach our goals of increasing business and employment opportunities, creating sustainable population growth, increasing household income, and enhancing community quality of life.

- *Paul Borek is executive director of the DeKalb County Economic Development Corp.*