



Metro Economic Growth Alliance of Chicago

The time is right to work together to:

***Improve the Region's Quality of Life
Promote the Diverse Economic Base
Coordinate Regional Marketing***

Overview

The global competition for corporate investment and jobs continues to intensify. **Communities throughout the U.S. and around the world all want the quality of life afforded by a diverse economic base.**

This intensifies the competition for investment by companies seeking new markets and lower costs to remain competitive in the world marketplace.

The Chicago region is a diverse and growing economic engine. Yet, like many other areas the region has suffered setbacks including the loss of manufacturing jobs, increased traffic congestion and workforce challenges. Although strong local economic development efforts have emerged to represent communities throughout northeastern Illinois, we have not been successful in shaping them into an overall regional strategic effort. This lack of regional coordination between local efforts and state programming has led to inefficiencies, as well as the inability to marshal adequate resources for a proactive regional marketing and business retention/recruitment initiative.

Therefore, by consolidating our efforts we create a unified voice across the region. We will attract more jobs and investment working together.

A Measured Response

Recognizing the mutual benefits of regional collaboration, the economic development practitioners representing the 10 northeastern Illinois metropolitan counties, World Business Chicago, and ComEd have formed the Metro Economic Growth Alliance of Chicago (MEGA Chicago).

The Metro Economic Growth Alliance of Chicago's mission is:

To grow the economy of Northeastern Illinois through coordinated, effective business development.

MEGA Chicago will involve business, local governments, development organizations, and chambers of commerce in the enlightened pursuit of opportunities.

Founding Members:

- DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation
- DuPage County Department of Economic Development / DuPageBiz
- enterpriz Cook County
- Grundy Economic Development Council
- Kane County Economic Development
- Kankakee County Economic Development Association
- Kendall County Economic Development
- Lake County Partners
- McHenry County Economic Development Corporation
- Will County Center for Economic Development
- World Business Chicago
- ComEd

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As a regional economic development partnership, MEGA Chicago will:

- Establish a proactive domestic and international marketing program to attract new business investment and new job creation to the region
- Provide a unified voice on the region's features, attributes, and benefits for investment
- Coordinate policy and infrastructure requirements of economic development
- Team with development organizations in the region and with the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) to provide economic, demographic, site, building and labor information in person and electronically
- Coordinate marketing efforts to create economies of scale and increase effectiveness
- Serve as the point of entry for economic development projects and facilitate investment in the region
- Direct prospect leads to local partners
- Offer expertise on economic growth and development issues
- Advocate business friendly policies
- Coordinate existing business development/retention

MEGA Chicago members have direct links and ties to business clients and have the responsibility to represent the economic interests of northeastern Illinois. By joining forces through a strategic alliance, MEGA Chicago will speak for the region in a way no one else can.

Supplement, not Supplant

MEGA Chicago does not replace existing economic development organizations or diminish their role. The region's many local development organizations will continue their primary focus of effective retention and expansion of existing businesses and prospect inquiry fulfillment. MEGA Chicago will augment and complement local development efforts by promoting and marketing the region's assets and by serving as a point-of-entry contact point for regional inquiries. **MEGA represents a new era of "cooperation" for the entire northeastern Illinois region, an era that will benefit everyone.**

Why MEGA Chicago, Why Now

There are always alternatives to any course of action. In this case, the alternatives were not attractive. As economic development leaders we could sit back and do nothing. Under that scenario, we would effectively defer the responsibility for marketing the region to others. By doing nothing, we allow the competitors and unvetted sources to define the region's business climate and investment potential. And finally, by continuing to work independently, we ignore the potential value of marketing combined assets. Ultimately, we are stronger working together than independently.

Alternatively, we could over-react. By over-reacting and building an elaborate structure or taking on a broad, over-reaching economic development agenda we would duplicate resources already in place. Plus, over-reacting could be viewed as a rejection of important partners such as the State and individual community economic development efforts.

Consequently, a measured response focused exclusively on drawing all interests into a focused economic development marketing initiative is the only strategy for going forward and building a stronger regional economy.

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