

# Alliance Alert



*"Our business is helping YOUR business."*

## Local Asset Maximization Produces Job Growth

*"Evaluating all metropolitan areas across Illinois, the Kankakee-Bradley MSA is one of only two that recorded positive job growth from May 2009 to June 2010."*

Even as we continue to face a global economic downturn, the first half of 2010 has produced notable economic development in Kankakee County.

Anticipated capital and roadway projects are progressing well. Kankakee County's unemployment rate, while fluctuating monthly, is on a downward trend. Although our unemployment rate remains one of the highest in Illinois, our job growth trends are encouraging.

Evaluating all metropolitan areas across Illinois, the Kankakee-Bradley MSA is one of only two that recorded positive job growth from May 2009 to June 2010. These figures may suggest a bit more stability and predictability in our local economy going forward.

### Retention & Attraction

To a certain extent, moderate job growth in Kankakee is not surprising. The Alliance has conducted more than 40 retention visits with our major employers (representing more than 11,000 employees). Several companies anticipate some job growth in 2010. On balance, the findings of our visits are positive and encouraging. Companies continue to believe that Kankakee County is a great place to do business, citing a strong work ethic, relatively low operational cost, excellent transportation network and competitive incentives.

Our retention program is critical, as 80 percent to 90 percent of job growth is generated by existing business. An interesting trend that we have discovered is the success



Michael J. Van Mill  
President/CEO

that several of our companies have had in consolidating operations here.

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## Spying a New International Museum in Mومence

International design firm Gensler revealed artists renderings this summer for a 14,000 sq. ft. James Bond museum in Mومence. The project is a partnership of the Ian Fleming Foundation, City of Mومence and the Kankakee County Museum, with all major community development entities, including the Economic Alliance, providing active support. A 2012 opening is set to coincide with the 50th anniversary of "Dr. No," the first Bond film.

With a projected 20,000 visitors per year, the museum hopes to help spur community development in Mومence. "The project itself is a bit of a double agent," Gensler Design Director Brian Vitale tells *Interior Design* magazine. "At face value, we've designed a showcase for a world-class collection of James bond vehicles and the culture that surrounds them. But, its real mission is to become a powerful catalyst for the revitalization of a once-vibrant city."



The proposed Museum of Bond Vehicles & Espionage will house the collection of the Ian Fleming Foundation, including the world's largest representation of vehicles used in the 23 James Bond films.

## New Campaign Highlights Food Processing Sector



The Economic Alliance recognizes the distinct value of the food processing sector in Kankakee County's industrial landscape. These vital and dynamic companies - from traditional producers to those on the very cutting edge of nutrifood technology - represent about 30 percent of our local manufacturing base, employ approximately 2,000, and are responsible for significant and ongoing capital investment here in the River Valley.

As the leading manufacturing industry in the state of Illinois, with an annual value of \$14 billion, as well as one that is relatively less susceptible to fluctuating economic conditions, food processing is a

natural point of focus for the Alliance in 2010.



Alliance staff members join Van Drunen Farms, the country's largest supplier of organically grown culinary herbs, at the Chicago IFT/Process Expo in July.

July's FOCUS 2010 in Tinley Park is a key opportunity to spotlight the Kankakee County food processing industry for a

regional audience of economic development stakeholders, who will share best practices; business incentives; as well as emerging transportation, logistics and infrastructure requirements.

On August 28, the Alliance will host a "Made Local, Sold Global" exposition at the Kankakee Farmers' Market. Via advance publicity, signage, literature, activities and giveaways, we will convey the strength of our local food processing industry.

Local food processors interested in participating in the Alliance's "Made Local, Sold Global" promotion are urged to contact us at 815.935.1177.

## Preservationists Acquire Kankakee Wright Home, Open for Tours



Preservation group Wright in Kankakee has completed the purchase from private owners Gaines and Sharon Hall of Frank Lloyd Wright's 1900 B. Harley Bradley House, considered by the Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy to be the first example of the architect's signature Prairie Style.

The group in July began offering docent-led public tours of the National Register of Historic Places-listed, seven-bedroom riverfront home, which features more than 100 of Wright's iconic art glass windows.

The Bradley House and the Warren Hickox House located next door have the distinction of

being two of very few Wright homes in the world that sit side by side.

In a July interview with the *Chicago Tribune*, Hall said that he hopes that the acquisition is "one bit of an economic engine" that draws tourists and businesses to Kankakee and nearby towns.

## President's Message (continued from Cover)

It is clear that Kankakee County is competitive in retaining and attracting new business.

In the coming months, the Alliance will launch a series of attraction initiatives to target new and expanding business ventures from outside of the area. Our initial "Made Local, Sold Global" campaign highlights the success of our existing food processing industry, while establishing a platform to market the area to others seeking a Midwest presence.

**Illiana Expressway**  
In June, Kankakee County Board Chairman Mike Bossert and I traveled to Lansing Airport to witness the signing of the bi-state memorandum of understanding between the states of Illinois and Indiana to cooperatively plan and develop the Illiana Expressway. Governors Quinn and Daniels were on hand to pledge support for this vital roadway.

The Alliance's advance campaign to generate resolutions of support from local units of government resulted in

12 Kankakee County municipalities, along with the Kankakee Regional Chamber of Commerce, joining us to formally back the Illiana project.

**Strong 2010 Finish**  
As I mentioned in remarks at a Vulcan Materials event in July, our challenging economy heightens the sense of urgency to remove unnecessary barriers to capital investment and business innovation. Let us recommit to fostering local economic prosperity with smart, sound and cooperative development in Kankakee County.

*"It is clear that Kankakee County is competitive in retaining and attracting new business."*

## State & Local Economic Development BRIEFS

Early 2010 saw the creation of the Alliance-facilitated **Kankakee River Roundtable**. The group's goal is to craft an action plan that effectively leverages one of Kankakee County key assets. Regular and subcommittee meetings are open to the public. Consult the Alliance website for details.

Ongoing roadway improvements at **Arctic Snow & Ice Control** egress points at Bradley's **Ken Hayes Industrial Park** are being made in anticipation of future growth in the snow plow manufacturer's operations there, which could result in as many as 10 new jobs. The project, which includes a new three-way stop and several walkways, was financed by \$170,000 in Kankakee County Revolving Loan and Village of Bradley funding.

The Illinois Senate in May voted 59-0 to create an **Illinois and Midwest High Speed Rail Commission** for issuing a roadmap for the creation of bullet train lines in Illinois and neighboring states. The Midwest High Speed Rail Association is backing a network of 220-mph bullet trains, including a St. Louis to

Chicago line serving Kankakee. An MHSRA economic impact study found that a 220-mph high speed rail link between Chicago and St. Louis would create 40,000 jobs and grow downstate economies by 1 percent to 3 percent. In June, the **U.S. Conference of Mayors**, including Kankakee Mayor Nina Epstein, formally backed the plan, and in July, Gov. Quinn announced the beginning of preparatory construction on the Chicago to St. Louis route.

Three notable manufacturing projects are underway in Momence—an important employer hub on Kankakee County's east end. **Silva** has completed a \$2 million expansion. Filter manufacturer **Precisionaire** is consolidating operations at its Momence site, returning lines once outsourced to Mexico.



And, **FutureCeuticals** (above) is nearly finished converting a vacant Rte. 17 auto dealership

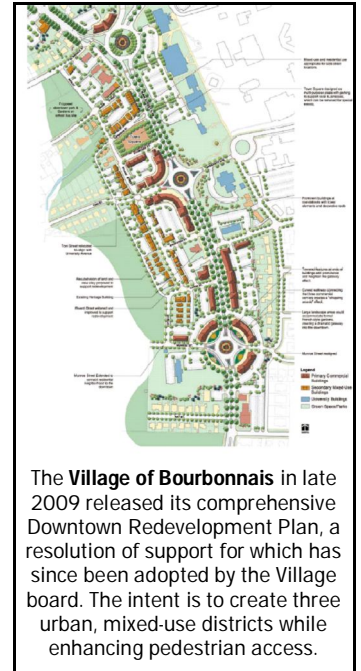
into a premier facility able to accommodate future growth.

**Kankakee Community College** President Dr. John Avendano and **Governors State University** President Dr. Elaine P. Maimon in April signed an agreement allowing bachelor's degree-seeking students simultaneous admission to both institutions. The dual admission program is the first of its kind in Illinois.

An April **Tourism & Economic Development Workshop** sponsored by the Alliance, KCCVB and Bradley-Bourbonnais Regional Chamber of Commerce and featuring panelists from the Northern Illinois Tourism Development Office, Downtown St. Charles Partnership and Peoples Economic Development Corp. revealed the impact of tourism on economic development. Tourism, a \$30 billion statewide industry, is a \$100 million annual business in Kankakee County. In 2008, there were 930 local jobs with an annual payroll of \$22.35 million associated tourism countywide.

For the third year running, Thomson Reuters has named

Kankakee's **Riverside Medical Center** as a Top 100 hospital. Riverside also was one of only 23 hospitals nationwide to earn Everest Award status in 2010.



The **Village of Bourbonnais** in late 2009 released its comprehensive Downtown Redevelopment Plan, a resolution of support for which has since been adopted by the Village board. The intent is to create three urban, mixed-use districts while enhancing pedestrian access.

Learn more about the benefits of locating in Kankakee County. Watch **"Kankakee County: Strategic Advantages for Industry"** on YouTube!



## 2009–2010 EXECUTIVE BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Private Sector

- Joe Franco, Chairman
- Phil Kambic
- Janine Loftus
- Steve Magruder
- Pat Martin
- Michael O'Gorman
- Leonard Tobey

- Heritage Development Company
- Riverside HealthCare
- Main Street Momence
- Kankakee Building Trades
- HomeStar Bank
- Kankakee Nursery
- Kankakee Valley Construction Co.

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- Kelly McLaren
- William Olthoff
- Robert Scholl
- Jim Vickery
- George Washington, Jr.
- Leo Whitten

- District 4
- District 22
- District 25
- District 12
- District 2
- District 17
- District 23

## STRATEGIC FOCUS: Municipal Downtown Development—St. Anne

The Alliance in recent months has partnered with the St. Anne Economic Development Steering Committee in an effort to bolster redevelopment in the community's downtown district. These efforts are part of the Alliance's charge to advance development by supporting strategic infill, historic preservation, sustainability and existing asset maximization.

An initial project involved helping to craft a community survey for inclusion in municipal water bills. Feedback generated will help to identify desired downtown businesses and suggest a sustainable commercial makeup for recruiting purposes.

Alliance Board member and Main Street Mommence

Executive Director Janine Loftus also has consulted with St. Anne officials, detailing MSM's economic development initiatives, including the group's facade grant and revolving loan programs. Short-term projects that will provide immediate community impact have been suggested as well.



Alliance, Kankakee County and DCEO officials joined U.S. Rep. Debbie Halvorson in July to recognize Main Street Mommence for the establishment of a dedicated low-interest revolving loan fund for its historic downtown district. Financing is provided through a USDA grant with county backing. The Alliance was instrumental in assisting MSM to secure program funding.

## Pembroke Township Unveils Rehabbed, Expanded POWER Center

A vacant Pembroke Township manufacturing facility is seeing new life as a small business incubator and in-demand light manufacturing facility.

The township-owned site had stood empty since 2004, when Nestle Corp. ceased operations there. After a \$2 million

rehabilitation, the POWER Center now can house from 10 to 14 small businesses in individual offices measuring 500 to 750 sq. ft. A 17,000 sq. ft. addition will accommodate light manufacturing. Facility benefits include on-site training and management, and shared secretarial and shipping support.

As many as 100 new jobs are expected to be created.



Project funding was provided by grants from the US Department

**THE POWER CENTER**  
PEMBROKE TOWNSHIP  
ST. ANNE, ILLINOIS

of Commerce EDA and the Illinois DCEO.

## Kankakee County Leads to "Put Illinois to Work"

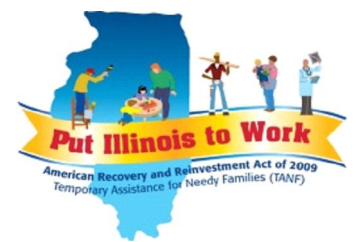
Approximately 300 Kankakee County residents secured temporary employment this spring according to *Daily Journal* reports through the federally funded "Put Illinois to Work" program. The program, launched in May and funded by \$69 million in federal stimulus

ARRA dollars, fully subsidizes full-time, \$10-per-hour employment through September 2010.

The Alliance was an active recruiter of both employers and workers for the program, participating in recruiting

sessions in Bradley, Kankakee and Pembroke Township. A PITW employee also is assisting through the summer in the Alliance office.

Statewide, nearly 20,000 reportedly had been placed by early July in available positions.



## BUSINESS REWIRED

### Lettuce President John Buchanan to Keynote

The Alliance, Kankakee Chamber of Commerce, and Kankakee Community College Small Business Development Center will host a day-long local business conference on Thursday, September 30.

Business Rewired, to be held at the Hilton Garden Inn Conference Center, will bring together area speakers representing all sizes and types of industries to address current and future small business challenges and

opportunities. Topics will range from legal, accounting and insurance planning to social media networking and strategic communications. Lettuce Consulting Group President and founding partner John

Buchanan, who joined Lettuce Entertain You in 1978, will keynote this event.

For more information, contact Bill Yohnka, Kankakee Chamber of Commerce, 815.933.0462.



200 E. Court St.  
Suite 507  
Kankakee, IL 60901

Phone: 815.935.1177  
Fax: 815.935.1181  
Email: mvanmill@kankakeecountyed.org

VISIT US ON THE WEB AT  
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