

Q&A with David Stoecklin

Executive Director, Madison County Employment & Training

IBJ: The annual job fair, Jobs Plus '09, is coming up on Wednesday, Sept. 23 at the Gateway Center in Collinsville. How many years have you been doing this?



Stoecklin

Stoecklin: We go back to the 80s with it. We began with a smaller venue and then it grew to what it has become over the past 15 years.

IBJ: How big is it?

Stoecklin: We've been averaging anywhere between 1,200 to 1,500 job seekers each year, and normally have in the range of 60 to 65 folks at that job fair - either looking for employees or to provide information about employment services. It kind of rides the economic wave, as most things do. We expect to probably have a much larger crowd of job seekers this year, and right now we're most concerned about getting those folks to the table who are looking for skilled people. One of the things I can say right now is that there's no better time to try to do some staffing - simply because there are some very, very good candidates out there looking for work and looking to join a good firm.

IBJ: Do you expect the number of participating employers to be down because of the recession?

Stoecklin: Maybe, but we have an interesting dynamic in our region, though. One of the things that strikes me is that in the middle of this terrible recession, we also have some huge projects going on such as the expansion at ConocoPhillips, and the coke plant for US Steel and the upcoming Mississippi River Bridge construction. Some segments of our economy are in pretty good shape.

IBJ: What kind of job seekers are you expecting to be at the annual job fair?

Stoecklin: We've experienced a very wide range. We have everywhere from people with degrees to some folks who are looking for just entry-level work, and it seems to have been that way every year. Now I'm not going to tell somebody that they're going to find 20 qualified engineers there, because they're not. But they will find people of every level of education looking for all kinds of work.

IBJ: Did you receive any money from the stimulus bill for workforce programs?

Stoecklin: Yes. The workforce development system got a real boost from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. For example, we received money for a summer youth program. The goal was

to get as many young people employed in summer work as possible.

IBJ: Doing what?

Stoecklin: Everything from yard work to maintenance, working at the boys' and girls' club, in libraries, hospitals and in school systems. It's a way to get some of them out there and let them know something about work. This year they included a requirement that they go through training about work-related skills - things like attendance, teamwork, delegation. In fact, we just concluded a very successful monitoring of our program by the state of Illinois where they gave us fairly high praise for the way the program is set up. We also received an additional allocation of training dollars from the ARRA, so we can expand on the number of people we serve who are either dislocated workers, people who lost their jobs - basically through no fault of their own - or what the government calls economically disadvantaged or poor adults. We can help them to retrain. We've also been doing incumbent worker training of existing workers to upgrade their skills so that they avoid lay-offs.

IBJ: We understand that you are working on Vision 2020. What is that?

Stoecklin: That's one of the things that we're doing with the sponsorship of the two workforce boards, Madison-Bond County and Mid-America. It is an effort to do regional economic and workforce

development planning. We were able to get a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor. Southern Illinois University Edwardsville is the primary contractor on this, gathering information and helping us to put it together. The university is not only helping us on this project but also on developing a process whereby as a region we're going to attack the issues of economic development - and use those plans to guide much of our workforce development. In other words, as we identify opportunities, we're going to make sure that we have the workforce available to move that agenda forward - and I'm very interested in that. The sponsorship of the two workforce boards got the grant. The Leadership Council Southwestern Illinois is our main partner in this and will probably continue even after the grant runs out. I think the Leadership Council will be one of the driving forces, as well as the two workforce boards.

IBJ: What's the goal of Vision 2020?

Stoecklin: We need to brand ourselves as a region and take control of our own destiny, identifying the things that are important to us and mustering our resources to make sure that we go after them. We have some tremendous logistical advantages in this area. We have runways, highways, railroads and riverways, and think we need to capitalize on that. The other thing is Scott Air Force Base - focusing on what a tremendous economic engine that is and how we support that as it exists now, and as it might be in the future.

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MidAmerica Airport and Tri-City Port highlight freight industry issues, opportunities at forum

By JULIE HAUSER

MidAmerica St. Louis Airport and Tri-City Regional Port District teamed up in August to spotlight transportation/freight issues and opportunities in Southwestern Illinois as the sponsors of the 2009 MidAmerica Multimodal Series: Forum #2.

The workshop-style forum was attended by an estimated 175 individuals who are involved in the freight industry in some capacity or interested in its impact on the region. It featured presentations by representatives of Union Pacific Railroad Co., Werner Enterprises, Ingram Barge Co., Port of New Orleans, Terminal Railroad Association, Colliers Turley Martin Tucker, Lewis & Clark Marine Inc., AEP River Operations and Stock Transport. John Webber, assistant to the Illinois director of transportation, provided the luncheon keynote address.

Tim Cantwell, airport director with MidAmerica St. Louis Airport, said the event marked the second of four multimodal workshops that are being presented by MidAmerica and Tri-City Regional Port District.

"Our first forum focused on air cargo, with highlights from rail and river cargo modes," said Cantwell. "This second forum provided multiple perspectives on the transportation/freight business outlook for 2020, as well as the bottlenecks and issues that confront the various transportation modes in this region."

Some key points emerged during the forum that helped to underscore the scope of the nation's and region's existing multimodal industry, and the potential for its continued expansion in the years to come.

For example, the U.S. Department of Transportation estimates that long-term demand for freight transportation is on a path to increase significantly, from just under 20 billion tons in 2002 to closer to 40 billion tons by 2035. While various other studies project significant growth in the tonnage of product distributed by 2020, a recent study by the American Trucking Association, titled "U.S. Freight Transportation Forecast to 2020," shows little change in how that increased tonnage will be distributed across the modes compared to today. This indicates that opportunities exist for growth across all modes.

All three of the modes discussed during the forum support both the existing industrial base in Southwestern Illinois and the region's growing logistics industry. In fact, real estate industry experts noted the strength of the multimodal network in the Metro East resulted in 40 percent of all the new industrial warehouse space developed in the metropolitan area over the past decade being built in Madison & St. Clair counties. And despite the downturn in the economy, the vacancy rates remain remarkably low compared to neighboring markets such as Kansas City and Chicago, an indication that this region's industrial market remains strong. Best of all, since these new developments are twice the size of anything that exists across the river, they are attracting new customers to the region rather than stealing customers from St. Louis.

On another positive note, the presenters across the board said they believed the bottom had been reached in their sector of the industry and anticipated that business would begin improving later this year and into 2010, with some return to normalcy by 2011.

With transportation accounting for \$1.9 trillion dollars annually in economic activity in the U.S. - representing over 16 percent of the of America's Gross National Product - presenters said it's clear that the movement of freight is a tremendous economic engine. And it's one that the groups behind the forum hope to rev up as 2020 draws nearer.

Patrick McKeenan, executive director of The Leadership Council Southwestern Illinois, moderated the event.

"We were pleased to welcome such a diverse group that included policymakers whose decisions impact our region's freight infrastructure, as well as decision-makers seeking business networking opportunities and the expansion of our freight industry," said McKeenan. "I think this forum proved be insightful for all who were in attendance."

Bob Wydra, executive director of Tri-City Regional Port District, agreed.

"Our goal was for attendees to gain insight on how a more perfect union between freight modes can lead to an increased customer base and greater profits," Wydra said. "I'd like to think

that everyone who came walked away with a greater understanding of those opportunities."

For more information about the event, or to sign up for the mailing list to get details on the remaining forums in the

series, contact Robbie Williams at (618) 452-8440 or via e-mail at rwilliams@tricityport.com. Copies of all of the presentations from the Aug. 7 forum can be found online at www.flymidamerica.com.

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Spotlight on Southwestern Illinois Commercial Real Estate

Cathy Hamilton, Broker Associate, BARBERMurphy Group

By LAURA REED

Cathy Hamilton has worked both sides of the table in real estate. As a former economic development consultant and now a broker associate for BARBERMurphy Group, she understands what it takes to make a deal in Southwestern Illinois - even in a tight economy.



Hamilton Hamilton has been with BARBERMurphy Group since 2007. In 2008, the firm saw an increase in sales of more than 30

percent, totaling 2.75 million square feet and 650 acres sold or leased. The Swansea-based firm brokers commercial real estate, industrial properties and real estate investment deals exclusively in Southern Illinois. According to Hamilton, most deals in 2009 have been leases. She says that during the first half of the year there were some lease inquiries, but now the deals are starting to pick back up again.

Hamilton focuses on Madison County for BARBERMurphy where she currently is marketing a variety of developments, including Westview Development in Collinsville and The Park at Plum Creek in Edwardsville.

Westview Development sits atop the bluffs in Collinsville with a view of the

St. Louis skyline. This development features office/retail opportunities with a high-end townhome and penthouse residential component. Southern Illinois Railcar occupies 5,000 square feet with 18,000 square feet of office/retail space still available for lease.

In Edwardsville, Hamilton is the broker for the popular The Park at Plum Creek development that houses the Edge Bank and Goddard School. Under construction at the park is the first multi-tenant building, offering space for retail and office users looking to locate in the Edwardsville/Glen Carbon marketplace. Tenants within this building, which is already 50 percent leased, include a women's boutique, a wood-burning specialty pizzeria and a

counseling clinic.

Hamilton says what sets BARBERMurphy apart is the diversity of its brokers and their interest and talents in specific areas of real estate. Hamilton uses her experience in development to work an issue she believes provides great opportunities for the region: brownfields redevelopment. According to Hamilton, there are thousands of acres of industrial sites available for redevelopment in Madison and St. Clair counties. There are numerous sites from Alton to Columbia that stand out as great locations for redevelopment. She says the redevelopment of brownfields is a regional issue and one that warrants more attention.

Kevin Bowman, Senior Consultant, Johnson Properties Inc.

By KATE GENO

Johnson Properties Inc. recently launched a self storage brokerage division and hired Kevin Bowman as the senior consultant in charge. Bowman has worked in the self storage business for the past 15 years. He first entered the industry in 1994 as the vice president of marketing for Storage Trust.



Bowman While there, Bowman was responsible for the day-to-day management of nearly 250 facilities in 19 states. In 2000, Bowman formed his own consulting and

commercial real estate company to assist major companies in the self storage industry.

Bowman now brings his expertise to Johnson Properties by assisting clients who are buying or selling a self storage facility, looking to expand or needing advice. Services include brokerage, property evaluations and site selection. Bowman also advises on facility design, planning and construction. In addition, JPI offers facility management for clients by overseeing employee training, advertising, marketing, management and occupancy statistics.

Bowman has begun compiling a self storage property database for the Metro East to become knowledgeable about the market. His goal is to be a resource for buyers and sellers by doing the research and legwork for them.

According to Bowman, self storage is now a neighborhood product and facilities need to be convenient for people. Once there is demand for a facility, he conducts feasibility studies to find an appropriate site.

He is also committed to changing any negative images of self storage properties that people may have. Sites they are building now are aesthetically pleasing with brick or stucco exteriors, nice unit doors and landscaping. Many facilities resemble retail buildings with multiple stories and elevators, Bowman says. Companies who are looking to obtain the nicest locations must follow zoning regulations and work with city planners, which also helps to improve the design and quality of newer facilities.

Johnson Properties Inc. is a full service

commercial real estate company based in Fairview Heights. The company, formerly known as the Kenneth Johnson Agency, was founded in 1945 by Kenneth Johnson. Today, Johnson Properties has 13 commercial brokers with over 250 commercial listings.

IBJ Business News

Martens & Martens Join Grubb & Ellis/Gundaker Commercial

Vernon G. Martens and Faith W. Martens have joined Grubb & Ellis/Gundaker Commercial, the brokerage divisions of Gundaker Commercial Group Inc. (GCG), as vice presidents focusing on land and investment services.

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Counterpoint: High-Speed Rail

Obama's "moderate-speed" rail proposal is no solution

The facts do not bear out several aspects of President Barack Obama's desire to push high-speed rail projects with federal resources (\$8 billion in the economic stimulus package, another \$5 billion in his 2010 budget) - chiefly, that the rail projects are more efficient and more environmentally friendly than modes of

travel now widely in use.

Saving energy and reducing pollution are worthy goals. And if high-speed trains could achieve these goals, the president's



O'Toole

plan might be a good one. But since they cannot, it isn't.

Obama's proposal should really be called "moderate-speed rail." His \$13 billion won't fund 200-mile-per-hour bullet trains. Instead, it is mostly about running Amtrak trains a little faster on existing freight lines.

There are likely to be no long-term environmental benefits from investment in high-speed rail.

Outside of the Boston-Washington corridor, the fastest Amtrak trains have top speeds of about 80 to 90 miles per hour and average speeds of 40 to 50 miles per hour. Obama proposes to boost top speeds to 110 miles per hour in some places, which means average speeds no greater than 70 to 75 miles per hour.

This is not an innovation. The Milwaukee Road, Santa Fe and other railroads routinely ran trains at those speeds 70 years ago - and still couldn't compete against cars and airlines.

Moderate-speed trains will be diesel powered. They will consume oil and emit toxic and greenhouse gases, just like cars and planes.

According to the Department of Energy, the average Amtrak train uses about 2,700 British thermal units or BTUs of energy per passenger mile. This is a little better than cars (about 3,400 BTUs per passenger mile) or airplanes (about 3,300 BTUs per passenger mile). But auto and airline fuel efficiencies are improving by 2 percent to 3 percent per year (for example, a Toyota Prius uses less than 1,700 BTUs per passenger mile).

By contrast, Amtrak's fuel efficiency has increased by just one-tenth of 1 percent per year in the past 10 years.

This means that over the lifetime of an investment in moderate-speed trains, the trains won't save any energy at all. In fact, to achieve higher speeds, moderate-speed trains will require even more energy than conventional trains and probably much more than the average car or airplane 10 or 20 years from now.

California wants to build a true high-speed rail line between San Francisco and Los Angeles, capable of top speeds of 220 miles per hour and average speeds of 140 miles per hour. The environmental analysis report for the California high-speed rail projects costs of \$33 billion

for 400 miles, while the Midwest Rail Initiative projects costs of \$7.7 billion for 3,150 miles of moderate-speed rail. That's \$82 million per mile for true high-speed rail (partly because the California project goes through some mountains) and only \$2.4 million for moderate-speed rail.

All else being equal, high-speed rail will cost 10 to 12 times more than moderate-speed rail. A true, national high-speed rail network would cost more than half a trillion dollars.

Construction of such high-speed rails will consume enormous amounts of energy and emit enormous volumes of greenhouse gases. Since future cars and planes will be more energy efficient, there are likely to be no long-term environmental benefits from investment in high-speed rail.

Electricity would power the California trains. But because most U.S. electricity comes from coal or other fossil fuels, these high-speed trains won't reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. As we develop more renewable sources of electricity, we would do better using it to power plug-in hybrids or electric cars than high-speed rail.

Americans who have ridden French or Japanese high-speed trains often wonder why such trains won't work here. The problem is, they don't work that well in France or Japan.

France and Japan have each spent roughly (after adjusting for inflation) the same amount of money per capita on high-speed rail as the United States spent on the interstate highway system. Americans use the interstates to travel nearly 4,000 passenger miles and ship more than 2,000 ton-miles of freight per person per year.

By comparison, high-speed rail moves virtually no freight and carries the average resident of Japan less than 400 miles per year, and the average resident of France less than 300 miles per year. It is likely that a few people use them a lot, and most rarely or not at all.

Interstates paid for themselves out of gas taxes, and most Americans use them almost every day. Moderate or high-speed rail would require everyone to subsidize trains that would serve only a small elite. Which symbolizes the America that Obama wants to rebuild better?

Randal O'Toole is a senior fellow with the Cato Institute.

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IBJ Business News

Geotechnology's Hobbs earns LEED accreditation

Geotechnology, Inc.'s Pam Hobbs has passed the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design exam in new construction to become a LEED-accredited professional through the United States Green Building Council.

Murray Energy opens Centralia manufacturing plant

American Equipment and Machine Inc. - a subsidiary of Murray Energy Corp. - (AEMI) announces the official opening of the company's new manufacturing facility in Centralia. The approximately 460,000-square-foot machine shop will rebuild and manufacture longwall mining equipment for parent company Murray Energy's coal mines. This new venture created more than 100 new jobs.

Monroe County co-op gets \$7 million electric loan

U.S. Rep. Jerry Costello (D-IL) announces that the Monroe County Electric Cooperative Inc. has received a \$7 million Electric Guaranteed loan from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Office of Rural Development. The funds will be used to build 44 miles of new distribution lines and make other system improvements. The cooperative serves Monroe, Randolph and St. Clair counties.