

As we head into the depth of summer and await the falling leaves and coolness of fall, economic development continues. Whether or not you consider the repaving of LaSalle and Columbus street, the sprucing up Washington park, the refreshing of the downtown flower beds, the new directional signage, the re-watering of the I&M Canal, the new Anthony Place senior apartment complex, the city's infrastructure upgrades, new YMCA project and much more, economic development, you should. These are items that site finders pay close attention to when considering a community for locating their company. That said, we are responding to an increased number of site requests since our last letter.

In July I attended the 2019 Economic Development Summit sponsored by the North Central Illinois Council of Governments. Below are highlights from Mark Peterson, president and CEO of Intersect Illinois, the state's economic development arm:

1. 3 years old and a lot of pieces
2. Marketing organization that delivers a united approach
3. Quick response. Have 90-100 projects in the works now
4. Market Illinois assets-focus on 1500 economic development organizations
5. Build relationships with key stake holders
6. "change is the only constant. It drives everything they do. 40% of businesses won't be here in 10 years
7. Promote highly "skilled workforce"; transportation; available sites; state and local taxes.
8. 17th largest economy in the world
9. 1984 foreign based companies in Illinois.

Impressive.