

UNEXPECTED kenosha

Quarterly Newsletter of the Kenosha Area Business Alliance(KABA) | Fall 2016

Vonco Products breaks ground on the first development at the Salem Business Park

The flexible packaging manufacturer will relocate HQs, operations to Kenosha County from Illinois

Vonco Products LLC, a leading manufacturer of flexible packaging and promotional products, is relocating its operations from northern Illinois to Kenosha County, company and state officials announced at a groundbreaking ceremony on October 27.

Vonco, which has been creating customized packaging solutions for more than 60 years, has outgrown its current facility in Lake Villa, Ill., and will be moving to an 80,500-square-foot facility at the Salem Business Park in the Town of Salem.

The company expects to invest more than \$4 million in equipment at the facility and create 86 jobs over the next three years.

"I would like to personally welcome Vonco to Wisconsin and thank the company for making this commitment to the state," said Lt. Governor Rebecca Kleefisch, who joined company officials in Kenosha County to make the announcement. "The fact that Vonco and other companies have decided to relocate to Wisconsin in the last six years demonstrates that our efforts to create a positive business climate and strengthen our workforce are making a real impact."

"Manufacturing in Wisconsin is a long term competitive advantage."

**– Keith Smith, President,
Vonco Products**

For Keith Smith, president of Vonco, the move signifies an opportunity to expand the company's capacity and capabilities.

"We were very impressed with what the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) and its partners put together, and we also want to thank KABA for the

continued on page 6 >

KABA is the lead business organization that drives economic development throughout Kenosha County and supports and provides services to its members and the community, helping to ensure growth, a robust economy, and a positive business climate for the Kenosha Area.



Vonco Products broke ground in October on an 80,500 SF advanced manufacturing facility, which will also be the site of its new HQS, at the newly developed Salem Business Park in western Kenosha County.

Inside...

- > Colbert Packaging to relocate to Kenosha
- > 2016 Ovation Awards
- > More Fast Forward grants now available
- > Y-Link program trains YPs to serve on non profit boards



Unexpected Kenosha is published quarterly by the Kenosha Area Business Alliance, Inc. (KABA). Archives can be found on our web site:

www.kaba.org/kaba/news

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From The President

Let's Keep it Rolling!

There's a lot to be excited about with respect to Kenosha County and its economic development landscape.

Colbert Packaging is in the process of establishing operations in the City of Kenosha. Their new facility is being built out within a new industrial building developed by Zilber Property Group in the Business Park of Kenosha. The project represents a sizable investment and is expected to generate approximately 100 manufacturing jobs within a few years.

Vonco Products has inked an agreement to become the first tenant in the Salem Business Park, a new light industrial park in Western Kenosha County which represents a joint venture between the Town of Salem, Kenosha County and KABA. Vonco's project calls for an 80,000 SF state of the art manufacturing facility and will bring approximately 100 manufacturing jobs to the community.

The First Park 94 development in Somers is off to a great start. An anchor tenant has been secured for the first building and work on Phase II and a second 600,000+ SF spec building is well under way.

ULINE has two major developments under construction: (1) a second office building on their HQs campus in Pleasant Prairie; and (2) a new Midwest distribution center facility in Kenosha. In October, the company announced plans to add another 500 employees company-wide by mid-2017. Many of those positions will be based in Kenosha County.

Major re-development plans are being teed up in the City of Kenosha with City leaders allocating resources to the Chrysler Engine Plant site and multiple Downtown revitalization projects.

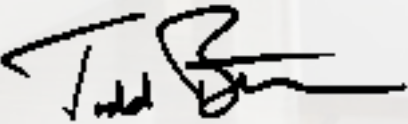
Another piece of recent good news deals with a tentative agreement between the City, Somers and Paris regarding future boundaries and municipal services. Though still subject to review and approval by the respective governing bodies, this is an encouraging sign with respect to intergovernmental cooperation.

These, and other, positive developments have not gone unnoticed. In August, Kenosha County received a ratings upgrade to AA+ (one notch below AAA) from both Fitch and S&P.

This is an exciting time for the Kenosha Area. Let's continue to work together. Let's build upon our strengths. Let's work to address our deficiencies. Let's work to make sure the benefits of recent economic development successes are extended to the entire community.

Kenosha County is incredibly well-positioned for additional economic development success and momentum is building. Let's keep it rolling.

Sincerely,



Todd Battle,
President, Kenosha Area Business Alliance



Thank you for investing in KABA!

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Investor News & Notes

Kenall earns ISO 9001:2008 certification

Kenall, a designer and manufacturer LED lighting for challenging environments, learned in October that it had received ISO 9001:2008 certification.

The certification specifies requirements for a quality management system including the ability to consistently provide product that meets customer and applicable statutory and regulatory requirements; and customer satisfaction through the effective application of that system, including processes for continual improvement of the system and the assurance of conformity to customer and applicable statutory and regulatory requirements.



Kenall also made news in September as they were awarded a Future 50 designation by the Council of Small Business Executives (COSBE). The Future 50 recognizes privately-owned companies in the seven county region

that have been in business for at least three years and have shown significant revenue and employment growth. **Vantage Point Corp.** also was honored with a Future 50 award.

St. Catherine's Hospital to expand in Pleasant Prairie

United Hospital System's St. Catherine's Medical Center Campus will expand to add an Advanced Outpatient Surgical Wing. The 194,888 SF expansion will be built adjacent to the existing hospital.



Plans call for 61,941 square feet on the first floor to accommodate a lobby, lounge, café, courtyard, registration and waiting area, private preoperative suites, a minimum of eight surgical suites, and recovery areas. A 46,653 SF lower level is also planned to accommodate support areas, a relocated receiving dock, and a trash enclosure. An additional 40,448 SF on the second floor and 22,923 SF on both the third and fourth floors will eventually house various outpatient services.

Upcoming Events

For more information about these and other events, please visit: www.kaba.org.

2016 KABA Holiday Social

Date: Wed., Dec. 7 | **Time:** 5:00 - 8:000 p.m.
Location: KABA / Jockey Factory Store, 5500 Sixth Ave., Kenosha

Eat, drink and be merry with your fellow KABA members! This purely social event is a token of KABA's appreciation to its supportive members and partners. Thank you to our sponsors Kenosha Visiting Nurses Association and Southport Bank!

Thank you new investors, cont.

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sptpros.com
Providing physical and occupational therapy, work hardening/conditioning and industrial rehabilitation.

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U.S. BANK

usbank.com
Minneapolis-based bank serving SE WI's retail, small business, wholesale and institutional customers.

WILMOT MOUNTAIN

wilmotmountain.com
Ski and snowboard resort with BMX and Mountain bike racing in the summer. serving SE WI since 1938.

Economic Development

Colbert Packaging Corporation to relocate to Kenosha; Manufacturer expected to bring more than 100 jobs to Wisconsin

Governor Scott Walker joined Colbert Packaging Corporation, a leading manufacturer of folding cartons, rigid setup boxes, and paperboard specialty products, in October to unveil plans to relocate its flexographic packaging operation and related warehousing services from Lake Forest, Illinois to Kenosha.

"On behalf of the state of Wisconsin, I'm pleased to welcome Colbert Packaging to our state, and we applaud them for making this commitment," Governor Walker said. "Businesses around the nation recognize that the reforms we've enacted to create a positive business climate and strengthen our workforce are working."

Colbert is acquiring a new 173,000 square-foot building on 16 acres in the Business Park of Kenosha from Zilber Property Group, the developer. The project is anticipated to bring more than 100 new jobs to Wisconsin.

"Wisconsin is known for its printing and paper-making industries, as well as the technical expertise of those who work in these fields, which makes the state an ideal location for Colbert," said Jim Hamilton, president of Colbert Packaging.

Hamilton said Kenosha County was a natural choice for Colbert due to its proximity to the company's headquarters and major transportation hubs, as well as that state's favorable

business climate. Many of Colbert's employees live along the Illinois-Wisconsin border and I-94 corridor, and some already call Kenosha County home.

To help attract Colbert to Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) has authorized the company to receive up to \$850,000 in state tax credits over the next three years.

"Kenosha County is thrilled to welcome Colbert Packaging and is glad to offer its support to help them establish operations here," said Kenosha County Executive Jim Kreuser. "Kenosha County is ready to partner with them to help them thrive in the years to come."

Kenosha County provided financing from its High Impact Fund to support the project. The High Impact Fund is designed to incentivize companies creating jobs in Kenosha County.

"Kenosha has a strong legacy in manufacturing that will help

Colbert Packaging be successful here," added Kenosha Mayor John Antaramian. "We have a skilled and productive workforce, solid infrastructure, and many other assets - as well as a community that values manufacturing and what it means to our economy. Kenosha welcomes Colbert Packaging to its growing roster of diverse businesses."

The City of Kenosha is providing financial support and infrastructure improvements to the project through its Tax Incremental Financing District.



Pictured: Milwaukee 7 Director Scott Beightol; Governor Scott Walker; Kenosha County Executive Jim Kreuser; Nancy Colbert MacDougall, Chairman, Colbert Packaging; Jim Hamilton, President, Colbert Packaging; Kenosha Mayor John Antaramian.

ABOUT COLBERT PACKAGING

Colbert Packaging was founded in 1959 when the late Charles Colbert purchased Kroeck Paper Box founded in Chicago in 1892.

Custom boxes and folding cartons were manufactured at that location until 1986 when corporate headquarters and operations moved to Lake Forest, IL. In 1998, Colbert opened a flexographic printing facility in Lake Forest, and the company began producing flexographic packaging, pressure-sensitive roll labels and paperboard specialty products. In 2000, an 89,000 SF warehouse was added in South Bend, Indiana.

Colbert's customer roster includes some of the biggest names in the pharmaceutical, healthcare and consumer goods markets. The company services customers in the Midwest, from coast to coast and around the world. It remains a family-owned business with roughly 300 employees and extensive research and development capabilities.

Economic Development

KABA Portfolio Update

In August 2016 KABA's Finance Committee approved a \$316,000 loan for MIKA Brands, LLC. The funds will assist MIKA Brands with the acquisition of a building in Bristol, WI to support their continued growth. The loan will be issued from the Consolidated Kenosha County (CKC) revolving loan fund.



In August 2016 KABA's Finance Committee approved a \$500,000 forgivable loan from the Kenosha County High Impact Fund for Vonco Products. The funds will be used to purchase equipment and offset moving costs as Vonco becomes the first tenant in the newly developed Salem Business Park. The High Impact Fund provides



financing for large scale development projects that result in substantial new capital investment and job creation.

In August 2016 KABA's Finance Committee approved a \$250,000 forgivable loan from the Kenosha County High Impact Fund for Colbert Packaging. The funds will be used to help Colbert acquire a building and purchase new equipment as the company establishes a new production facility in the Business Park of Kenosha. The High Impact fund was established to support large scale development projects that result in substantial new capital investment and job creation.



Kenosha County receives AA+ credit rating upgrade

In August, Kenosha County received upgraded ratings for the county's general obligation bonds and long-term obligations from both Standard & Poors Global and Fitch Ratings. Both S&P and Fitch have assigned a rating of AA+, an upgrade from AA, both citing Kenosha County's good and growing economy, and strong management and fiscal policies.

"The improved rating helps our capital financing for our infrastructure at the lowest possible cost," said Kenosha County Executive Jim Kreuser. "Good infrastructure leads to economic development, which leads to jobs."

David Geertsens, the county's Chief Financial Officer, said the reports note that the county's debt is well-managed and reasonable given the size of the County.

Ground is broken on a second building at First Park 94 in Somers

First Industrial Realty Trust broke ground in August on a second building in their 309-acre master-planned business park in Somers, First Park 94. After breaking ground on their first building less than a year ago, First Industrial has already secured a tenant and is looking to create more inventory to accommodate demand.



The new building, being built by Riley Construction Co., will be west of the first structure and will be approximately 600,000 square feet, expandable to 700,000 square feet.

Adam Moore, regional director for First Industrial in Chicago, said First Industrial decided to invest in Somers because the market in southeastern Wisconsin is a natural extension of northern Illinois and the firm was impressed with the business climate in the area.

"We thank the Village of Somers for their cooperation in making the Village's first industrial development a success," said Moore. "We look forward to further growth within First Park 94 and the community with the construction of our second building at the project as well as serving potential build-to-suit requirements."

In other ED news...

Kem Krest is planning to take over the former Unified Solutions Inc. space at 9801 80th Ave. in Pleasant Prairie's LakeView Corporate Park. The Elkhart, Indiana-based company will use the 275,000 SF building for warehousing and distribution of motorcycle parts and accessories and packaging materials. The supply chain and fulfillment services provider employs approximately 150; employment at the facility is expected to reach 200.

Doheny Enterprises is constructing a 175,000 SF building on 17 acres in Pleasant Prairie to house its company HQs and a new distribution center. Preliminary plans for the building call for 163,000 square feet of warehousing and approximately 15,000 square feet of office. Doheny Enterprises is a Kenosha County-based swimming pool supplier with ten distribution centers nationwide.

Economic Development

Uline, Partners in Design, Bob Lee, Jr. and others honored at the 2016 Ovation Awards

On Nov. 3, KABA hosted the 2016 Ovation Awards, formerly known as the Kenosha County Business Excellence Awards. The Ovation Awards recognize excellence and achievement in business throughout Kenosha County. More than 380 attended the program, held at the UW-Parkside Student Center Ballroom. Thank you to all who attended and congratulations to this year's outstanding honorees! KABA would also like to thank the 2016 Ovation Awards sponsors: Johnson Financial Group, UW-Parkside, BizTimes Media, Clifton Larson Allen, Colerget Conference Center, CenterPoint Properties, Dooley & Associates and Good Foods Group.



2016 winners:

Business of the Year:
ULINE

Small Business of the Year:
**PARTNERS IN DESIGN
ARCHITECTS, INC.**

Entrepreneur of the Year:
BOB LEE, JR., CEO,
Lee Plumbing Mechanical
Contractors, Inc.

Fast Five:

- > **BONE DRY PRODUCTS**
- > **CORDECK**
- > **LEEWARD BUSINESS
ADVISORS**
- > **MEDTORQUE**
- > **REGULATORY
COMPLIANCE
ASSOCIATES, INC.**

An award selection committee comprised of previous award winners; representatives from KABA and BizTimes Media; as well as representatives from Kenosha County's higher education community chose this year's honorees.

Vonco Products breaks ground, cont.

< continued from front page

role they played in bringing the various parties together to complete this deal," said Smith.

To help attract Vonco to Wisconsin, WEDC has authorized the company to receive up to \$500,000 in state tax credits over the next three years. Additionally, Kenosha County provided \$500,000 from its High Impact Fund, which incentivizes larger economic development projects in Kenosha County.

Vonco will be the anchor tenant of a new business park being developed by KABA. Vonco is leasing the building from KABA and will have an option to purchase the facility. The company is expected to take occupancy in June 2017. The Town of Salem has created a tax increment financing district to support the Salem Business Park development.

"Vonco's decision to locate in the Salem Business Park is a positive sign that the investment that KABA, the Town of Salem and Kenosha County have made in establishing this park will prove to be a sound strategy," added KABA president Todd Battle.



YP You Need to Know:

**MATTHEW
COLLINS**
Assistant Parks
Director,
Kenosha County
Parks Division

How long have you lived and/or worked in Kenosha County? June is my one year anniversary working for the Kenosha County Parks Division.

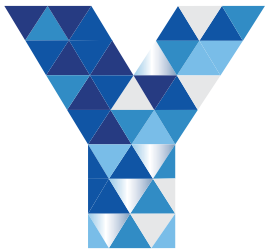
Describe a day in the life of Matt: My typical day is nothing that typical. Although I am administrative as my main work responsibilities, my office becomes the parks I manage. As for my personal life, I have a beautiful wife and will be celebrating our five-year anniversary this July. We also have an energetic, smart two year old son. As a family, we love spending as much time outdoors as possible and we are constantly grilling out and spending quality time with our neighbors.

What is your favorite Kenosha County event/activity?

My favorite event has to be Oktoberfest at Old Settlers Park. Each year, the Parks sponsor this event with our not for profit partners, Oktoberfest, Inc. to not only invite the public to be a part of this free annual event, but also raise funds to build a bandshell at the park.

What about Kenosha are you really proud of? I am extremely proud that our community has taken a stance to be on the forefront for the creation of jobs and bringing more business opportunities to this area. Our County Government and County Executive Jim Kreuser has made this a priority and am really proud to serve our constituents and bring a higher quality of life to all of our new businesses and members of the community.

Best advice for other young professionals? Always have goals, write them down, review them daily, and don't focus on tasks that do not lead to your vision. Also - Be sure to make a conscious effort to analyze the leaders in your organization and ask how they got to their level. These people always inspire me to emulate their strengths and motivate me to constantly push myself to become a better leader not only in the workplace but in my personal life as well.



LINK
YOUNG LEADERS IN KENOSHA

YLink Nonprofit Board Prep Program

YLink leadership often fields requests from organizations looking for emerging leaders to serve on boards and committees. As a result, YLink created the Nonprofit Board Prep program to train YPs on board leadership and increase the role YPs have in Kenosha's nonprofit sectors.



The program will conclude in January 2017 with a completion ceremony and nonprofit networking matching event.

If you're interested in partnering with YLink to recruit young professional leaders for board or committee leadership, please contact the Community Engagement Committee at engage@ylinkenosha.com.

YLink College-to-Career Mentoring Program

In an effort to better prepare future college graduates to enter the workforce and become professionals who contribute to our local community, YLink has partnered with UW-Parkside to host the College-to-Career Mentoring program. The pilot program kicked off in late September with 19 YPs mentoring 23 college students. The program will conclude in May 2017.



Talent Development

UPDATE: Kenosha StriveTogether is now BUILDING OUR FUTURE

Building Our Future is the new moniker for the Kenosha-based StriveTogether partnership. This community-wide, multi-sectoral partnership was publicly launched at a Community Summit in August, which drew more than 100 people representing a broad cross-section of interests and affiliations. Many action items were seeded and preliminarily developed at the summit that guided volunteer work teams. We now look forward to adopting an Accountability Structure and framing the initial Outcomes/Indicators to guide the work of the partnership.

StriveTogether is a national organization that works with communities nationwide to help them create a civic infrastructure that unites stakeholders around shared goals, measures and results in education, supporting the success of every child, cradle to career. KABA is proud to be a funding partner of this initiative.

“[We] are so impressed with the engagement of partners and the significant contribution of time, talent and resources. We know how fortunate we are to receive this level of community support.”

– Jean Moran, Director, Build our Future

Wisconsin is the 15th Happiest State in America, according to Wallet Hub

Wallet Hub considered 28 metrics, including income, physical and emotional health, sports participation rates and personal purpose, to determine which states are home to the happiest Americans. Turns out, Wisconsin is pretty happy overall ranking #15 in the nation.

This is good news as Kenosha County seeks to convince people to come live and work here! Other recent local rankings include:



What's Been Done?

- > 2015-early 2016: Exploratory conversations/training with key community partners
- > May 2016: Kenosha StriveTogether retreat for initial Leadership Team Members
- > April: Contract signed with StriveTogether to become an Exploring Community
- > May-July: Work Teams launched
- > August: Community Summit
- > August: The first contracted staff member - Tatjana Bicanin- is hired
- > August-October: Three Work Teams are expanded and re-launched
- > September: Jeff Edmondson, Managing Director of StriveTogether, speaks at Inspire 2016
- > October: Adopted the name *Building Our Future*



kenosha,
wisconsin

Named by 24/7 Wall St.
as one of America's

50 BEST CITIES
TO LIVE • 2014

pleasant prairie, wisconsin

Named by NerdWallet as a
Top Ten City in Wisconsin for

HOMEOWNERSHIP • 2014
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2010 & 2005 • Wisconsin Award for
MUNICIPAL EXCELLENCE

Talent Development

Regional demand for talent drives Higher Ed collaboration

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, approximately half of Wisconsin's working-age population has only a high school diploma, or some college or university credit but no degree. A job-growth and educational-requirements study from Georgetown University indicates that 65 percent of all jobs will require postsecondary education and training by 2020, up from 28 percent in 1973.

To meet the growing demand for postsecondary education for adult learners, Carthage College, Gateway Technical College, and the University of Wisconsin-Parkside are collaborating with workforce and business development partners in southeastern Wisconsin, including KABA, to achieve higher levels of adult degree completion.

In the highly competitive market of higher education, partnerships between a private college, a technical college, and a public state university are rare. However, when adult education representatives from each institution met with community stakeholders, they quickly realized that collaboration was the key to a truly effective action plan.

Adult learners have diverse needs when it comes to how courses are offered and what types of skills and training they need. Carthage, Gateway and Parkside hope to raise the visibility of adult-education opportunities for both the individual adult learner, and businesses that want to help their employees return to school.

Leaders at the three institutions have been meeting to assess current academic programs and explore how they can be more effective with outreach to adult learners. Articulation

agreements that help students progress from an associate degree to a bachelor's degree and credit for prior learning are key topics.

In addition, conversations with community representatives from K12 education, workforce development, and economic development, along with data from regional labor studies like the one conducted by KABA, will be used to help shape strategic academic initiatives.

The unique partnership between the three institutions of higher education is important to the region because the shared focus will better serve students and thereby develop the relevant talent needed to strengthen the local economy.



Worker Training for Manufacturing Occupations

- > Company size: any
- > Award amount: \$5,000 to \$400,000
- > Match: \$1:\$1 (\$1 applicant / \$1 WFF)
- > Grant ID: # FF164ML1 f
- > Deadline: December 07, 2016 at 11:59 pm
- > Learn more at: wisconsinfastforward.com

Wisconsin Fast Forward Grants

The Wisconsin Fast Forward program provides Wisconsin manufacturing employers an opportunity to equip trainees with the skills needed to fill openings now and in the future. It acts as a catalyst, encouraging increased collaboration between Wisconsin's workforce trainers and employers to develop and execute business-led training programs.

These training programs are designed to provide sustainable short- and medium-term training and placement of workers in positions that offer trainees long-term professional growth and economic opportunity. Funding may be used for incumbent workers, new hires, and seasonal trainees.

The long-term goal of the program is to encourage partnership between employer(s) and local or regional economic development organizations, workforce development boards, post-secondary institutions, and private training providers. It is anticipated that the relationships developed through Wisconsin Fast Forward funded training programs will continue to flourish after the Wisconsin Fast Forward grant has ended.

Inspire 2016 was a day filled with inspiration, actionable ideas



WHAT INSPIRES YOU?
We asked people at Inspire and throughout the Kenosha Community...Check out our Facebook page – [KABAConnectHere](#) – to see what they said!



Thank you to the more than 200 people that attended Inspire 2016! Attendees at KABA's fourth annual one day leadership conference heard from a series of exciting speakers that talked about building a stronger community and becoming a stronger leader. We hope everyone walked away inspired and ready to take action on all that they learned. Thank you to our sponsors Southport Bank, Carthage College and Colerget Conference Center and to our moderator Aleta Norris from Living as a Leader.

Some of our favorite quotes from the day:

"It's all of our responsibility to create the community we want to live in."

- Greg Tehven, Emerging Prairie/TedEx Fargo

"We think we need more but in reality we have more than enough."

- Jeff Shinabarger, Plywood People

"Extraordinary circumstances prepare people for extraordinary destinies."

- Kathleen O'Leary, Wisconsin State Fair

"Systems are made of people. If people change, systems change."

- Jeff Edmondson, Strive Together

Giving is a Gift!

Inspire attendees were asked to look in their wallets and donate any unused gift cards they happened to have with them.

The exercise ended up raising more than **\$1,000** for Gift Card Giver - a non profit organization that collects gift cards and gives them to people that really need them. Every year more than \$8 billion goes unused in gift cards and GFG believes there is an opportunity to match needs with these gift cards.

INSPIRE
2016

Accidental Leadership

"His employees are miserable; They despise him."

"He is the best machinist we have ever had in our facility."

"As a leader, he is intolerant. As a person, he is one of the nicest guys I know."



These are just a few of the comments shared with me by an HR Manager during a one-hour conversation about a struggling leader - a plant superintendent with 15 direct reports. She went on to explain, "With the company for over 30 years, there is no one in the facility who knows the equipment better than him - how to run it or how to fix it."

Later that same day, during my conversation with this leader, he said to me, "Why would I ask anyone's opinion when I know all of the answers?" He also shared, "Listen, essentially these people willingly sign on to show up every day under a dictatorship for eight hours. We've got a lot of work to do, so I tell them what to do, and they do it."

I asked him a number of questions: "How do you feel about being a leader? What are your strengths? Your weaknesses? What does it mean to be a leader? How do you believe you affect these people?" He said to me, "You are asking me questions I have never even thought about. No one has ever asked me questions like this."

What is happening here (and you already know the answer)? This organization promoted its best guy. Then everyone assumed he would be a great leader, just as he has been a great machinist. It very seldom works to promote someone into leadership....then just leave them alone to figure it out. He is, as we refer, an accidental leader.

Considering the 1000's of leaders we have worked with over the past 15 years, the most common feeling of these leaders (when being intentionally developed) is Gratitude. We often hear them say, "For the first time, I feel confident. I'm so appreciative."

Aleta Norris provides an ongoing column on developing better leadership skills. She is a leadership expert and Principal at Living as a Leader LLC.

The ROI of community involvement

I love Kenosha and my list of reasons why is almost limitless. But near the top is the great leadership ROI I have received during my 36 years of community involvement.

I moved here upon college graduation, but my real education and growth came from working and volunteering alongside the incredible people who built and developed Kenosha.

Through volunteerism and engaging in activities, I've learned about social services, community infrastructure, non-profit funding and human resource challenges, cancer research, marketing and communications, concerns of the minority communities, government operations, the arts and business development.

I've grown. I've networked. I've met people and learned skills from them that I take forward to the next opportunity. I've gained wisdom, sometimes through missteps and over-committing. And I've gotten to know some wonderful people along the way.

I feel Kenosha is the perfect sized community for professionals to become. No, I didn't leave a word off the end of the sentence. Kenosha is large enough (and growing!) to offer nearly every type of opportunity, yet small enough to need the volunteer or new employee who is just forming their skillset.

Those of us with "mature" professional careers have a different kind of investment opportunity: to encourage others to volunteer. Some of us are so used to saying yes (someone once used the term "helium hand"—love it) that we forget one of the best things we can do is say, "No, but let's see if 'Sarah' can volunteer some time—she has great organizational skills and could lead this".

Encouraging others' talents is a way of communicating confidence in the other individual's potential and giving them the opportunity to help the community while building their skills and knowledge.

Investing time and talents in Kenosha pays great leadership dividends and strengthens the future of our community.

Jayne Herring is the Director of Marketing & Communications at Gateway Technical College, an accomplished artist and tireless community volunteer.





5500 Sixth Avenue, Suite 200
Kenosha, WI 53140-3752

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Chad Navis

Director of Industrial
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