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Clinton Regional Development Corporation's history discussed

By Steve Ames

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— In these turbulent economic times, it's comforting to know that the Clinton region is not only surviving, but in many ways thriving, during this period we have only recently begun calling a recession. That is why I jumped at the opportunity to write a monthly column where I can discuss the positive things happening in Camanche, Clinton, Fulton, Ill. and the surrounding areas. I thought I would begin by providing a profile of our organization and what we do.

First, a little history. The articles of incorporation for the Clinton Development Company were signed on Dec. 12, 1953 by the original Board of Directors: R.O. Wilson, R.E. Bickelhaupt, Georg L. Davison, L.L. Jurgemeyer and Mark N. Morris. To those of you familiar with the history of our communities, these names are well-known. Those who are not, need only look around as they travel through town to see their legacies. The company was, and continues to be, a not-for-profit partnership of public entities and private investors dedicated to ensuring there is no shortage of good jobs available to our local citizens.

Today, Clinton Regional Development Corp. is the economic development agency for the region. We have a staff of five, committed to creating opportunities for growth of jobs, of our local industries and of our local tax base. We have a volunteer Board of Directors from various sectors of business and industry, public and private entities, dedicated to economic development.

During the first years of the development company, nearly a dozen new industries were drawn to the region. In recent years, opportunities for "new" industry are becoming rare. Part of our task has become actively marketing our area and its advantages to industries for which we believe it is well suited, but a majority of our focus is on existing industry. Fortunately, we have been able to assist in the growth and continued success of many of our local companies. We do this through visiting one-on-one with companies to learn about their needs and the challenges they face; advocating for them to federal, state and local government entities; and connecting them with resources for making their plans realities.

The stated mission of Clinton Regional Development Corp. is to enhance the regional business climate, attract new investment, expand existing industry and encourage quality new jobs. We focus on providing confidential assistance to businesses exploring opportunities within our region and serve as a "one-stop shop" for quick access to key information in the Clinton region.

Steven Ames is the president and CEO of the Clinton Regional Development Corp.

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