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CCCDA appreciates railport project support

By Steve Ames

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— On July 15, CRDC was awarded \$200,000 from the Clinton County Community Development Association (CCCDA) which will be used to cover some upfront expenses related to the development of the Lincolnway Railport. In addition, they have agreed to evaluate how a funding agreement might be structured to provide up to \$2 million over a period of 10 years. We felt the news coverage of this commitment could be seen as somewhat negative, so we want to set the record straight and to express our appreciation for the support we have received.

The CCCDA distributes thousands of dollars, proceeds from gaming revenues in Clinton County, to deserving not-for-profit entities all over the county. Last year, the group was able to have a positive impact for education, public safety, quality of life, veterans' organizations, arts and culture, health care, care for senior citizens, and so on, by contributing nearly \$1 million to over 40 projects. All of these issues contribute to economic development, but with their award to CRDC for the Lincolnway Railport, the CCCDA Board has demonstrated a commitment to directly impacting economic development for Clinton County.

The board overseeing the distribution of CCCDA funds is comprised of community leaders, bringing a wide variety of experiences and talents to the task of deciding how the organization's resources can best benefit a wide range of worthy causes. It is a difficult task and each member takes their responsibility very seriously.

The Lincolnway Railport will create investment dollars for Clinton County and provide jobs for residents of Camanche, Clinton, DeWitt, Low Moor, and the surrounding communities. More jobs, means more income for local businesses, more residents to generate tax income, more students in our schools – increases in taxes and investment which reduce the burden of increasing much needed revenues. If our local economies don't grow, the burden falls to existing residents and businesses. Economic growth benefits everyone.

In the letter of intent CRDC received from CCCDA in May, they committed, at some point in time, to investing \$2 million dollars to our economic development project. When we returned to them this month to express an immediate need, they stepped up and provided what they could commit "today" without compromising the multitude of other worthy projects which will request funding. For that, we say thank you.

Steve Ames is the president of the Clinton Regional Development Corp.

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