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Cover Story

QUARTERLY ECONOMIC REPORT: Industrial park project in the works

By Steven Martens | [Email this story](#) [Print this story](#) [No comments posted.](#)

It was the river and the railroads that first put Clinton on the map.

Founded in 1855, the city took off when sawmills began to operate in town, using the Mississippi River to bring logs downriver from Minnesota and Wisconsin and using the railroad to send the lumber out west.

Plans to build a "world-class industrial park" just west of Clinton are a modern take on an old idea, taking advantage of Clinton's access to both the Mississippi River and major railroads, said Steve Ames, president and CEO of the Clinton Regional Development Corporation, which is overseeing the project.

Union Pacific Railroad granted approval for a restricted access mainline to serve the industrial park in 2007, and the industrial park also will provide access to the Canadian Pacific and Burlington Northern Santa Fe rail lines, Ames said.

The park will represent an investment of at least \$10 million, and the rail access to the property is expected to be completed by the end of 2010, Ames said.

Barge and rail are two of the cheapest ways to move products, Ames said. As companies look to become more efficient in their use of energy, the demand for access to rail and barge shipping is going up.

"We're trying to build and meet that demand," he said.

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The industrial park could be marketed to companies in a variety of fields, including manufacturing or food processing, Ames said.

Other prospective tenants in the industrial park include European companies that manufacture products used in the production of wind energy, said Sylvia Banes, business relations manager for the development organization.

Banes said European companies are more familiar with shipping products by rail or barge than many American companies.

Ames said the park has the potential to bring a large number of high-wage jobs to the area, as well as spur housing development in Clinton and in the small community of Low Moor, located just west of the industrial park site.

"We're confident we will be able to attract industries to the industrial park area once it's built," Ames said.

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