Position Announcement

Effingham County, IL. The Board of Directors of the Effingham Regional Growth Alliance (The Alliance) is seeking is a talented, self-motivated and entrepreneurial leader with a solid understanding of the key principles of economic development to become the next President and Chief Executive Officer of the organization.

The Alliance is a 501(c)(6) entity which serves as the lead economic development organization for Effingham County, Illinois. The organization, which is governed by a 24-member Board of Directors, derives roughly 60% of its funding from private sources with the balance coming from public entities.

Effingham County, Illinois is literally situated at the nation’s transportation crossroads. It is the meeting point of Interstate 57 (North-South) and Interstate 70 (East-West). It is also a major junction for two Class 1 rail carriers, Canadian National Railway (North-South) and CSX Transportation (East-West). Local rail service is provided by the Effingham Railroad with neutral access and services to both mainline providers. All of this allows for fast, convenient and reliable transportation connections to the region and the nation.

The opportunities for economic development in Effingham County seem to be boundless. In addition to its enviable transportation linkages, it offers excellent schools, a skilled workforce, abundant shopping, low cost of living and a friendly, welcoming citizenry. However, like all midwestern communities, outside economic forces and competition with other communities have made the need for an effective, innovative and successful economic development organization more important than ever.

The Alliance is, therefore, seeking a new leader to build upon its past accomplishments and to seek new opportunities and new approaches to continue to grow the economy of the region. The Alliance Board is seeking candidates who have a strong background in economic development with a working knowledge of various economic development tools such as tax increment financing and enterprise zones. The Board also places a high priority on experience working with local and state government officials and the ability to establish and maintain strong relationships with those governmental partners. The Board is looking for candidates who understand the intricacies of business and land development and who are capable and experienced dealmakers. The new President & CEO will need to be an articulate person who is comfortable when speaking before large groups as well as one who demonstrates excellent interpersonal skills when interacting with individuals and small groups. Past success in securing grants from state and federal sources will be a plus. The ideal candidate will be an open and honest communicator who is a good listener and who can build community consensus around an aspirational vision.

To attract highly talented and accomplished candidates to this position, the Board has established a starting annual salary range of $120,000 to $135,000 DOQ/E. In addition to the base salary, the Board will work with the successful candidate to establish a bonus program to recognize outstanding achievement. Further, The Alliance provides a generous fringe benefit package which includes an automobile allowance, country club membership, an excellent health insurance program and the employer will contribute to a 401K program.

Community Background & History

Effingham County may very well be one of Illinois’ best kept secrets. From its thriving and diverse local economy, to its impressive urban amenities and its small-town charm and friendliness, you will be hard-pressed to find a better place to live, work and raise a family than Effingham County, Illinois. It is truly a remarkable place!

Located in the heart of east central Illinois, Effingham County serves as a trade and employment center for a region including the following eight (8) counties: Cumberland, Jasper, Clay, Fayette, Richland, Marion, Shelby, and, of course, Effingham. The County encompasses 480 square miles and has a total population of 34,250.

In 1831, Effingham County was founded just 13 short years after Illinois became a state. However, the community that is today known as the City of Effingham (population 12,600), the county seat, was first settled way back in 1814. It was referred to as Broughton up until 1859 when it adopted the name of Effingham after General E. Effingham who was a local surveyor. The City was officially incorporated as Effingham in 1867.

Effingham County’s early growth was fueled by its presence on the “National Road” which originated in Maryland and extended all the way into Illinois stopping at Vandalia, located immediately east of Effingham. Wagon loads of settlers came through the area header west, some liked what they saw in Effingham County and decided to stay.

If the National Road was Effingham’s first economic development catalyst, the second such catalyst was the extension of the Illinois Central Main Line Railroad from Chicago to Memphis and, later, the extension of the Illinois Pennsylvania Railroad from Indianapolis to St. Louis. Effingham County sat at the crossroads of these important transportation facilities much as it does today with Interstates 57 and 70.
Community Background & History (cont’d)

In the late 1880’s, local citizens founded Austin College, which lasted for several decades, and ultimately was purchased to become the Illinois College of Photography, also known as Bissel College. That school closed due to the Great Depression in the 1930s.

On April 4, 1949, Effingham’s St. Anthony’s hospital caught fire and burned to the ground, killing 74 people. As a result of this tragic incident, fire codes nationwide were improved and adopted by many municipalities. Due to extensive media coverage of the hospital fire, including a “Life Magazine” cover story, donations for rebuilding the hospital poured in from all 48 states and even several foreign countries. Today, HSHS St. Anthony’s Hospital remains an important health care facility in Effingham providing a wide array of medical services to residents throughout east central Illinois. This hospital is also Effingham’s largest employer.

Today, Effingham County is a thriving community that is always looking to the future. It offers exceptional K-12 educational services throughout the County. In addition, residents of the County have easy access to a number of excellent institutions of higher learning including Lakeland College’s Kluthe Center in Effingham, Lakeland’s main campus in Mattoon (30 miles), Eastern Illinois University in Charleston (40 miles) and the University of Illinois in Champaign/Urbana (75 miles).

In addition to the City of Effingham, the County is home to several small municipalities including (Altamont, Teutopolis, Beecher City, Montrose, Deiterich, Shumway, Watson, Mason, Edgewood, Heartville and Funkhouser). Effingham County is home to nearly 14,000 households. The median age is 39.2 years. The median income for a household in the county was $49,509 and the median income for a family was $61,373.

In addition to outstanding highway transportation connections, Effingham has robust passenger rail service provided by Amtrak. The community is served by the north-south “Illini” passenger rail line between Chicago and New Orleans with south bound stops in Carbondale, Memphis, and Jackson on the way to New Orleans. The north bound train stops in Champaign on the way to Union Station in downtown Chicago.

For recreation and leisure-time activities, Effingham County has covered all the bases. The City of Effingham has a number of beautifully maintained parks including Community Park which consists of 35 acres and includes a number of lighted baseball fields as well as an 18-hole Disc Golf Course, lighted tennis courts, playgrounds, pavilions, basketball court and an outdoor skating rink. For summertime fun, Kluthe Memorial Pool offers a great way to cool down on a hot day. And Ron Deihl Recreation Center offers year-round recreation programming for young and old alike.

For avid golfers, the Effingham Country Club features an 18- hole championship level golf course with a PGA professional staff and an all-weather driving range. The golf course is widely considered to be among the finest in downstate Illinois and has been the home of several high school state champion contenders. The Country Club also is well known for its outstanding fine dining facility.

Beautiful Lake Sara is located in the heart of Effingham County. This 614-acre lake is managed by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and is home to some of the best Bass fishing that you will find in downstate Illinois. It is also known as a great venue for boating, swimming, and camping. Lake Sara also features many of the most beautiful and architecturally creative homes on the region.
Effingham County’s Vibrant Economy

Effingham County’s local economy has throughout its history been anchored by its outstanding transportation connections. The County is strategically located at the crossroads of U.S. Interstate Highways 57 (north/south) and 70 (east/west). It is also directly served by US Highways 40 & 45 along with Illinois Highways 32, 33, and 37. If those connections aren’t enough, Effingham is also at the crossroads of two major railroad lines, the Canadian National (north/south) and the CSX (east/west). Over 36,000 vehicles pass through Effingham County every day.

The economy in Effingham County can be characterized as both resilient and vibrant. Bolstered by several stable, mid-sized employers, Effingham County’s business community is supported by a highly reliable workforce. Over 17,000 jobs are located within the County and are spread over a variety of sectors including manufacturing, logistics, government, healthcare, education and retail. Effingham County’s outstanding transportation connections provide the community with direct access to a regional workforce of over 100,000 spanning eight counties. The County’s enviable unemployment rate has been very stable at roughly 3.8%.

Effingham County’s Largest Employers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Product or Service</th>
<th>Employees</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St. Anthony’s Memorial Hospital</td>
<td>Healthcare</td>
<td>780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quad Graphics</td>
<td>Commercial printing</td>
<td>560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sherwin-Williams</td>
<td>Paint</td>
<td>468</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patterson Companies, Inc.</td>
<td>Dental software</td>
<td>406</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heartland Dental</td>
<td>Dental service</td>
<td>400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Effingham Community Schools</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois Dept. of Transportation</td>
<td>Government</td>
<td>381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FedEx</td>
<td>Freight Center</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Boos &amp; Company</td>
<td>Furniture</td>
<td>223</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kingery Printing Company</td>
<td>Commercial printing</td>
<td>150</td>
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<tr>
<td>BB&amp;K Development</td>
<td>Real Estate</td>
<td>147</td>
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<tr>
<td>Irwin Seating Company</td>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>125</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hitachi Metals USA, Inc.</td>
<td>Precision Auto Parts</td>
<td>112</td>
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<tr>
<td>City of Effingham</td>
<td>Government</td>
<td>111</td>
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The community has a robust and growing retail sector. Retail sales in Effingham have grown at an average annual rate of 3.0% over the past five years. Given the regional nature of Effingham County’s economy, retailers and restauranteurs have chosen to locate in the community with the understanding that the size of the local market far exceeds the population of the County alone.
Local Government in Effingham County

The County seat of Effingham County is the City of Effingham. It is also the largest municipality in the County. The local government in the City of Effingham functions as a Council-Administrator form of government even though it is officially, by ordinance, a Commission form. The five-member City Council (Mayor and 4 City Council Members) appoints a professional manager, referred to as the City Administrator, to oversee the operation of all of the municipal departments as are listed below:

- Police
- Fire
- Public Works
- Economic Development
- Human Resources
- Library
- Administration/Finance/Clerk

The City of Effingham has always maintained a strong financial position. The City has a very reasonable and manageable debt portfolio of $17.8 million which consists of five (5) General Obligation bond issuances, two of which are related to the Water / Wastewater systems and one is related to a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) redevelopment project.

Speaking of TIF, Effingham has been on the cutting edge of using this economic development tool provided to municipalities by the State of Illinois. The City of Effingham currently has four active TIF Redevelopment Areas that are carefully managed by the City’s Economic Development Department. The oldest and most successful of those TIF’s is referred to as TIF #1 which encompasses most of Downtown Effingham. This has been an extremely successful TIF and has resulted in numerous infrastructure and commercial development projects. TIF #1 was originally created in 1987 and was the beneficiary of one extension by the Illinois General Assembly. TIF #1 is currently scheduled to expire in three years.

The County government in Effingham County is overseen by a nine (9) member board which are elected by geographic districts to four year overlapping terms.

The City of Effingham, the County of Effingham and several other municipalities within the County are investors in the Effingham County Regional Growth Alliance.
The President and CEO of The Alliance

It is the mission of the Effingham Regional Growth Alliance to:

- Preserve and expand the Effingham County workforce through identifying future needs and provide training, education and support to meet those needs.
- Assist in the retention/expansion of existing industry, including the improvement of conditions and policies to increase productivity.
- Promote and encourage development projects and services to improve the quality of life within the region and particularly in the County of Effingham, Illinois.
- Seek and find new industry to locate in Effingham County to increase the economic base.

The Alliance offers the following services and programs designed to make business relocation, expansion or start-up in Effingham County as smooth as possible:

- Providing general and custom data and demographic reports
- Improving business infrastructure in the region
- Assisting with applications and set-up for incentive, grant and workforce training programs
- Introducing businesses to financial contacts, regulatory authorities and strategic partners
- Coordinating build-to-suit projects
- Providing custom proposals, research and labor market analysis
- Helping with workforce recruitment

It is the responsibility of the President and CEO to provide the leadership, expertise, vision and energy necessary to further the vision and mission of The Alliance.

The President and CEO plays a very high-profile role in the community and must be visible, engaged and approachable. This person is expected to be actively involved in various civic affairs of the region and will routinely represent The Alliance Board at various meetings and events. The President and CEO will be the organization’s primary point of contact with investors of the organization, members of the business community, and representatives of government at the local, state and federal level.

The duties of the President and CEO are complex and fluid. Among many responsibilities, he/she will be responsible for expanding the membership base of The Alliance. The President and CEO will be called upon to make recommendations to the Board on all policy matters and will provide a leadership role in developing and implementing the strategic direction of the organization.

The new President and CEO will be tasked with nurturing, guiding and supporting Effingham County businesses in order to help them be successful as it is clearly understood by The Alliance Board of Directors that most job growth within the region will come from existing businesses. With that being said, the President and CEO must also actively market the region and to seek out new opportunities for new business investment and job creation.

Desirable Experience, Skills & Attributes

The Board is seeking candidates for this very important position that are strong relationship builders. The new President and CEO will need to be able to work effectively with a variety economic development stakeholders and partners in Effingham County including government officials, financial institutions, real estate professionals, land developers and business owners/operators.

The new President and CEO will need to be well-versed in the craft of local economic development and must have a solid understanding of the principles and techniques necessary to grow a region’s economy. The new CEO will need to have a working knowledge of the commonly used economic development tools in Illinois such as tax increment financing, enterprise zones, opportunity zones, special service taxing districts, etc.

It will be helpful if the new President and CEO has an established network including state economic development officials, land developers, business owners, investors, etc. The Board is hoping to attract candidates who have a successful economic development track record and who can cite specific details of their role in successful deal making activities.

In terms of personal skills, the new CEO will need to be an excellent communicator with strong listening skills. The new CEO will ideally be diplomatic, strategic and analytical. He or she should possess the ability to approach both challenges and opportunities with creativity and tenacity. The President and CEO will need to be a thoughtful and organized planner but must also be able to deliver on the specific goals and objectives that are adopted by the Board of Directors.

Candidates for this position should possess a bachelor’s degree from an accredited college or university in economic development, business administration, finance or some related field of study. A master’s degree would be desirable. In addition, candidates need to have a minimum of five (5) years of responsible and related experience working directly or indirectly with community economic development. Both private and public sector experience is considered desirable.
COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

The starting salary range for this position is $120,000-$135,000 depending on experience and qualifications. The Board of Directors will also agree to negotiate with the successful candidate a bonus program that recognizes outstanding achievement. The Alliance will also provide a generous fringe benefit package including a vehicle allowance, country club membership, vacation and sick leave benefits, health insurance and retirement programs.

HOW TO APPLY

Please direct any questions about this outstanding professional opportunity to Mark R. Peterson, Vice President GovHR USA, LLC. He can be reached at (309) 825-5091 or at mpeterson@govhrusa.com.

As a reminder, applications for the position should be submitted by February 24, 2020 to www.govHRjobs.com.