

# h.e.d. Lines

Published Quarterly

Vol. 14, No. 3

August 2015

A publication of the Harvard Economic Development Corporation

## Harvard Company Expands ... Again

**Harvard Factory Automation (HFA)** co-founders **Chuck Weidner** and **Kyle Nemetz** know that Harvard is the best place to grow their business, and they're investing in another facility expansion to prove it.

The duo are adding 15,000 square feet to their existing 20,000 facility in **Arrowhead Industrial Park**. The expansion will provide additional manufacturing capacity and allow the existing facility to be reconfigured for maximum efficiency, according to Weidner.

"We have new customers, more orders from existing customers and more demand all the way around," he said. "The manufacturing, automotive and healthcare markets are all growing and a lot of companies are looking to automate."

HFA provides professionally engineered conveyors and related products such as box fillers, separators, diverters and chutes that are used in factory automation. The company celebrated its 20th anniversary in May.

This is the HFA's fifth expansion since the company was founded in 1995. Born in the former 'barrel factory' on North Lincoln Street, the company grew to 10,000 square feet at



that location before purchasing a nearly new industrial spec building in Arrowhead in 2007. The project was funded locally by Castle Bank and the work was completed by local contractors, according to Weidner.

"We want to support the local community whenever possible," he

explained. HFA is also an HEDC member.

Finishing touches are in progress and the project is expected to be finished this month.

Three new jobs were created over the past year and another six will be added over time, according to Nemetz. "It's easy to find good people in this area." HFA employees come from McHenry County and southern Wisconsin.

Weidner and Nemetz agree that Harvard is a good place to grow a business. "We came here because it was very affordable, there was access to great space at a great price, it's easy working with the City and it was logistically perfect – close to our homes and close to our customers throughout the Midwest," Nemetz said. "We've always been able to find good employees when we needed them and good space when we were ready for it."

Many HFA employees have been with the company from nearly the start. "We have very low turnover," he explained. "It's because we pay a fair wage, provide a great work environment and we stay busy. That's important."



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### Chairman's Column

By HEDC Chairman Roger Lehmann



Economic development marketing has really changed over the years. The HEDC knows that it has to talk to a global audience as well as a national one and we have a full arsenal of tools to get Harvard on the radar of site selectors and expanding companies. These include our website, our online property database, social media including LinkedIn, advertising in Chicago area newspapers, trade show marketing and personal networking.

Congratulations to **Harvard Community Radio** on the May launch of its new FM frequency, 101.3. The HEDC is proud to have helped Harvard's local radio station expand its reach to a larger regional audience.

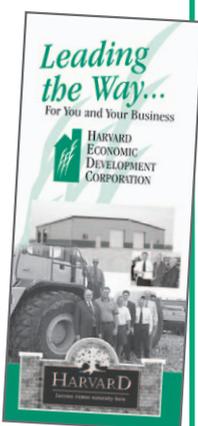
The search for another grocery store continues. The HEDC has sent copies of its 80-page grocery market study to more than 40 wholesalers and brokers. Our goal is to attract a store in the 30,000 to 50,000 sft. range to Harvard. Our community has several available sites that are ideal for such a project.

### Join us! Become an HEDC Member

Membership in the HEDC demonstrates leadership and a commitment to creating a bright economic future for our community. Join us as we continue to move Harvard forward!

Members are also eligible to post commercial and industrial property listings in the HEDC's online Land & Sites Database. Properties must be owned or represented by the member and meet other listing requirements.

You can learn more about the benefits of HEDC membership and to find out how you can play a role in Harvard's future at [www.harvardedc.com](http://www.harvardedc.com), or call (815) 943-1036 to receive a membership kit by email or regular mail.



### Mayor's Column

By Mayor Jay Nolan

The City of Harvard is planning a study of our local parks, which will help us plan for needed service levels and programming in the coming years. The study schedule is still being determined, but will include public meetings.

The City congratulates the Land Conservancy of McHenry County on the official opening of Gateway Nature Park. It is a great asset to the community and further proof that Harvard residents, businesses and organizations can achieve great things when they work together.

Hardees has been issued a permit to build a restaurant at the corner of Route 14 and 173, next to Casey's General Store. A sign is also up at the corner of Route 14 and McGuire Road, where Dunkin Donuts and Baskin Robbins are looking for other tenants for a planned commercial strip.

### Marketing To The World

Global marketing has become the norm in commercial real estate. Buyers for local properties are often found far away, in countries where growth-minded companies and investors are looking to expand into the United States.

Empty for more than a dozen years now, the former Motorola facility on Route 14 is a good candidate for global marketing due to its size and value, according to **Harvard Economic Development Corporation (HEDC) Executive Director Charlie Eldredge**. The 300-acre campus has 1.5 million sft. under roof and an 'undisclosed asking price' on broker Jones Lang LaSalle's website that is reported to be in the \$15 to \$20 million range.

Finding a buyer for the property has not been easy. The City of Harvard has no control over the seller, the maintenance of the building or the property's pricing. "The owner has been very inflexible on the price and is actually talking about raising it," noted Eldredge.

Despite those challenges, the HEDC worked with the McHenry County Economic Development Corporation to market the property to a global audience. Marketing materials were translated into Mandarin and distributed at the World Trade exhibition in Washington DC this year. The event markets directly to countries that are interested in investing in the U.S.

There has been some activity at the site. Eldredge accompanies showings when possible, offering information on county and state incentives and insights on the property's history.

The HEDC's Land and Site database (<http://newlandsites.harvardedc.com>) attracts visitors from around the globe. In recent months, there has been an increase in traffic from regions within China. The HEDC website itself also attracts visitors from across the U.S., as well as overseas.

A 2014 survey of site selectors by DCI, Inc. revealed that 63% of respondents use an economic development organization's website when doing a site location search. Information on incentives, workforce and demographics is considered most useful.

"There are buyers out there and we're doing what we can to put this property in front of them," Eldredge said. "Ultimately, however, only the seller can make a sale happen."

### Need to Know...

#### Fast-Track, Shovel-Ready Sites!

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### Working For Harvard

**Harvard Economic Development Corp.**  
(815) 943-1036

Other Local Contacts:  
City of Harvard (815) 943-6468

Visit our website at [www.harvardedc.com](http://www.harvardedc.com)