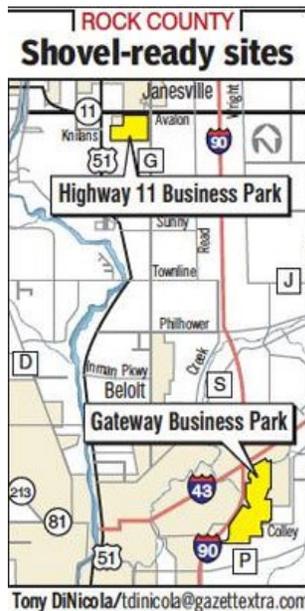


Speed to Market: Group Helps Businesses Set Up Quickly in Rock County

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JANESVILLE — A Rock County economic development group is making it easier for businesses to quickly set up shop in its business parks.

Rock County 5.0 has developed an online portfolio of six buildings designed to meet building codes and the requirements of the county's two shovel-ready industrial parks.

The buildings range in size from 59,000 square feet to 700,000 square feet. Each includes a profile with detailed specifications, floor plans, a site plan and renderings.

"It's all about speed to market, and this will help prospects get up and running even quicker," said James Otterstein, Rock County's economic development manager. "The more info we can provide right out of the gate, the more successful we will be in getting new projects. We're confident we're the first economic development group to do this, which we think is a level of service people aren't going to get anywhere else."

Rock County 5.0 last year paid a site selection consultant to certify the 224-acre Highway 11 Business Park on Janesville's south side and the 230-acre Gateway Business Park in Beloit as shovel-ready.

The consultant reviewed more than 200 variables at each site and compiled a report that addresses ownership, property, transportation, utility, environmental and community issues. The idea is to eliminate barriers that might dissuade a company from locating in one of the two sites.

Because Rock County 5.0 has done the certification work, prospects could start construction in as few as 30 days and avoid a six-to-eight month delay while they pay someone else to certify the property.

Otterstein said the online portfolio of building designs is intended to complement the speed of the shovel-ready certification. Prospects would not need to pick one of the six buildings illustrated, but they would at least have an initial idea of what could be done.

"It will help site selection people, primarily by taking the guesswork and speculation out of the early stages when their expectations of needs versus wants are sometimes out of balance," Otterstein said. "We can show them what will fit the codes, fit the landscape and what will work, and we can probably show them that they can do what they need in 10 acres rather than the 20 they thought.

"The ability to quantify and validate facility cost and size expectations plays a critical role during the site selection process."

Rock County 5.0 is working with Angus-Young Associates, a Janesville architectural, engineering and interior design firm.

Future enhancements likely will include online customization features that will let prospects mix-and-match office floor plans, add amenities and generate cost estimates in a real-time environment.

"Throughout the design of any construction project, it's important to balance facility needs versus wants within the context of functionality and operations," said Jeff Hazekamp, president of Angus-Young. "As a means to facilitate this important discussion, this virtual build-to-suit portfolio essentially serves to frame up that dialogue for prospective industrial/warehouse end users expressing an interest in Rock County."

Rock County 5.0 is a five-year public-private economic development initiative designed to reposition and revitalize the county's economy. For more information, visit www.rockcounty5.com.