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DeKalb County projects named top developments in the nation



VIEWS

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Two economic development projects in DeKalb County have been recognized among the best in the U.S. by a national site selection publication and a development trade association.

Social media titan Facebook was named winner of a 2021 Corporate Investment Community Impact Award by Trade and Industrial Magazine.

Ferrara Candy Co. was named winner of the Industrial Broker Transaction of the Year by the National Association of Industrial and Office Parks Chicago Chapter.

In June, Facebook announced investment of \$800 million in a 907,000-square-foot data center in the city of DeKalb. The DeKalb Data Center will be Facebook's 12th U.S. data center. When complete, it will employ 100 workers at well above average wages. Facebook will employ technicians, engineers, construction managers, facility managers, logistics professionals and security personnel.

"The Facebook DeKalb Data Center will be one of the most energy- and water-efficient data centers in the world," according to the Trade and Industrial Development CiCi Award Issue 2021. The data center "will be supported by 100% renewable energy, will use 80% less water than the average data center and will be LEED Gold certified."

The city of DeKalb, Kishwaukee Wa-

ter Reclamation District and Krusinski Construction Co. partnered with Facebook to design and build infrastructure to serve the development and surrounding area. This included about 3 miles of water mains, 1½ miles of sewer line extension, roadways and intersections.

Facebook was nominated for the award by the Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity, Intersect Illinois and the DeKalb County Economic Development Corp., organizations that collaborated with the City of DeKalb to attract the data center to DeKalb.

In January 2020, Ferrara Candy Co. announced investment of more than \$100 million in the development of a 1.6 million-square-foot distribution complex on a 106-acre site in DeKalb.

The Ferrara project at the Chicago West Business Center was recognized as part of the NAIOP Chicago Chapter's 33rd Annual Awards for Excellence event.

Named in the Industrial Broker Transaction of the Year award were Tenant/Buyer Brokers Matt Mulvihill, Calum Payne and Kevin Segerson of the CBRE commercial real estate firm. In addition, Ferrara developer Trammel Crow was named Developer of the Year by the NAIOP Chicago Chapter.

The Ferrara distribution complex consists of a 1.2 million-square-foot distribution center and a 468,000-square-foot packing center. The buildings have been completed by builder Krusinski Construction Co. and expected to be operational by the second quarter of

2021. Ferrara is projected to employ 500 workers.

National award recognition of the Facebook and Ferrara Candy Co. projects is a testament to the coordination and cooperation of numerous businesses, DeKalb County community partners and the State of Illinois contributing to the successful attraction of these two mega projects.

Completion of all phases of these two developments over the next 20 years is projected to generate property tax revenue equivalent to DeKalb's top five existing industrial complexes: 3M, Goodyear, Nestle, Panduit and Target.

National recognition through organizations like Trade and Industrial Development and the National Association of Industrial and Office Parks is priceless to the promotion of DeKalb County as a competitive, productive and profitable location for corporate investment and business operation.

Awareness and visibility in markets throughout the U.S. and North America will be a big part of DCEDC's Opportunity Unbound branding initiative. Opportunity Unbound is designed to accelerate the attraction of business, investment and human resource talent to DeKalb County. Increased business and community development will expand and diversify the tax base, help reduce tax rates and enhance the quality of life in the county.

• Paul Borek is executive director of the DeKalb County Economic Development Corp.