

City Adopts Three-Year Strategic Plan to Guide New Business Development, Retention

Rolling Meadows' adoption of a wide-ranging plan to encourage and guide local business development for the next three years features an ambitious set of strategies and actions to support the City's economy and achieve key goals for economic growth.

Core Focus Areas

The Business Development Strategic Plan, developed by members of the Economic Development Committee and City staff, establishes 10 core focus areas:

- **Business Attraction:** welcoming new businesses to the community.
- **Business Retention and Expansion:** retaining existing businesses and supporting their continued growth.
- **Encourage Entrepreneurship:** fostering a culture that supports entrepreneurial activities.
- **Financial Resources and Incentives:** providing resources and opportunities that encourage businesses to invest in Rolling Meadows.

- **Local and Regional Partnerships:** building relationships with organizations that support economic growth.

- **Communication, Outreach, and Marketing:** developing effective marketing channels and platforms to share information and expand awareness.

- **Community Vibrancy:** emphasizing strategies for improving the City's overall quality of life.

- **Development, Redevelopment, and Repositioning:** focusing on urban planning and development to position Rolling Meadows for future growth.

- **Workforce Development:** enhancing the skills and employability of the local workforce.

- **Arlington Park Redevelopment:** understanding and planning for potential impacts of the future Arlington Park project.

The Plan, which was officially approved by City Council in

December 2023, is based on the results of a series of focus groups with business stakeholders, residents, and real estate professionals. Feedback from those groups, plus information gleaned from an online community survey, helped create a blueprint for promoting local business development and growth through 2026.

The effort also involved extensive research into municipal business development "best practices," an analysis of existing conditions, and a 360-degree review of the City's business development policies, activities, and programs.

Evolving Business Climate

"The business climate throughout the Chicago metropolitan area has evolved in large part due to the rise of e-commerce and shifting consumer habits," explained Martha Corner, Rolling Meadows' Business Development Manager. "Our goal throughout the strategic planning process has been to evaluate those impacts and figure out how we can support the changing needs of our

local business community and the customers they serve."

"We are grateful for everyone who participated in the online survey and focus groups. Feedback has been invaluable for developing a plan that meets the needs of our community," she added.

The Rolling Meadows Business Development Strategic Plan is posted online at www.cityrm.org. For more information, contact Business Development Manager Martha Corner (cornerm@cityrm.org or 847-870-9004).

In This Issue

Local Business Spotlight: Winnie Industries. 2

NLNW Takes Businesses to the 'Next Level' 2

Economic Development Among Top Goals Outlined in City's New Sustainability Plan 3

City's New Business Growth Rate Jumps 25% 3

What's in Store for 2024 . . 4

Winnie Industries Products Drive Innovation in Electrical Contracting, Data Communication Fields

The products designed and manufactured by Rolling Meadows-based Winnie Industries serve as critical “behind the scenes” components of several high-profile regional projects, including communications system upgrades at O’Hare International Airport and a major expansion at Rivers Casino Des Plaines.

However, the wide variety of beam clamps, brackets, bridle rings, electrical boxes, J hooks, magnets, and other items that Winnie Industries provides to electrical and data communications contractors are ideal for practically any project involving wire and cable management.

“We create products that save time and help reduce installation costs,” explained company founder Jon Winnie, who holds three patents for its products and has another three pending. “We are constantly looking for solutions to challenges our customers face. It’s incredibly rewarding to engineer a problem and find a solution that makes their jobs simpler.”

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‘Knack for Solving Problems’
Problem-solving is an area in which Mr. Winnie has always excelled, dating back to his work as a shift supervisor at UPS’ Palatine facility while in college (he holds an associate degree in engineering from the College of Lake County and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Business Management from Eastern Illinois University).

After graduation, Mr. Winnie went to work for a company that sold magnets to automotive industry suppliers. Around that time, he began sketching the general outlines of what would come to be Winnie Industries.

“I saw greater opportunity in the low-voltage electrical market,” he recalled. “I also wanted to be a business owner. When I was younger, I would read everything I could find about CEO’s and successful business leaders. This company was my chance to bring together my interests in engineering and business operations.”

A Family Business
The business began as many



John Winnie (far left) is proud of the family business he began in his parents’ garage.

do: with limited resources and with the help of family and friends. For the first few years of operations, Mr. Winnie ran his company out of his parents’ garage in Lake Zurich. Winnie Industries soon expanded to include a couple of storage units in Volo and, later, a warehouse in Lakemoor. By 2019, company operations were consolidated under one roof on Newport Drive in Rolling Meadows.

It is a family company: Mr. Winnie’s wife, parents, and brother-in-law are part of the business, along with his college roommate.

“My parents helped me out when I was first starting, so I brought them into the business once we got things

going. Usually, it’s the other way around,” he said with a slight chuckle. “I’m fortunate to have their support and proud to call this a family business.”

Calls Rolling Meadows Home
Mr. Winnie also feels fortunate to be based in Rolling Meadows. The City’s geographic location, at the intersection of Interstates 90 and 290, combined with its proximity to O’Hare, make it an ideal place to do business. In addition, many of the company’s customers are based in the northwest and western suburbs.

There is another advantage, too. Mr. Winnie is a Rolling Meadows resident. “It’s nice to be able to walk to work sometimes,” he added.

NLNW Takes Winnie Industries to the ‘Next Level’

Winnie Industries is one of several area companies to complete business development training through Next Level Northwest (NLNW), a regional business accelerator that helps small companies solve challenging business issues and increase productivity/profitability.

“Next Level Northwest has helped us expedite our growth and develop strategies to sustain that momentum,” explained company president Jon Winnie. “We have revamped our website and product catalog, and are now marketing in a professional manner on social media.”

NLNW guidance has also helped the company hire/onboard new employees, and integrate sales and accounting functions.

Discover how your business can benefit by visiting www.nextlevelnorthwest.org.

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Rolling Meadows' Economic Development Committee (EDC) is scheduled to meet at 6:00 pm at City Hall on the first Monday of February, April, June, August, October, and December. Community members are welcome to attend. View upcoming agendas at www.cityrm.org/354/Economic-Development-Committee.

Economic Development Among Top Goals Outlined in City's New Sustainability Plan

Rolling Meadows' new Sustainability Plan, adopted by City Council members in December 2023, highlights economic development among its top priorities and outlines a framework for supporting businesses that develop environmentally friendly products/services and adopt sustainable approaches to commerce.

Builds on 2019 Comprehensive Plan

The 48-page plan, which is posted online at www.cityrm.org, is an extension of Rolling Meadows' updated Comprehensive Plan, which was adopted in 2019.

"Creating a sustainable community requires the participation of the community as a whole," the Plan states.

"While the City as a body politic can set the direction, the tasks of implementing projects that will affect change requires the participation of everyone and every business."

City officials define sustainability as "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

"Rolling Meadows cannot solve worldwide environmental issues alone, but our work – and the work of communities across the globe – can contribute to achieving many of these goals," Mayor Lara Sanoica said. "This plan establishes a guide for moving toward our goal of becoming a sustainable community while fostering local business growth."

Strategic Goals

Rolling Meadows' plan identifies a series of "immediate," "short-term," and "long-term" actions and strategies to achieve goals in 10 specific categories:

- Climate change,
- Economic development,
- Clean energy,



- Land use,
- Leadership,
- Mobility,
- Municipal operations,
- Sustainable communities,
- Waste and recycling, and,
- Water/storm water sustainability.

The Sustainability Plan is the result of extensive work by members of the City's Environmental Committee over a period of two-and-a-half years. It is based on the Greenest Region Compact (GRC), a broad set of sustainability goals established by the regional Metropolitan Mayors Caucus. The GRC provides a framework for member communities to develop and align their own sustainability plans.

City's New Business Growth Rate Jumps 25% in 2023

New business growth in Rolling Meadows surged by over 25% in 2023, as companies in a wide range of industries continue to view the City as an ideal location for professional operations.

From IT consulting firms and manufacturing to security service providers and software developers, City leaders continue to welcome organizations in a wide range of industries. In total, Rolling

Meadows has seen more than 250 new businesses open over the past five years.

Home to Top-Tier Companies

The City's business community is comprised of all types of enterprises – everything from independent merchants to Fortune 500 corporations. In fact, many of the world's leading companies call Rolling Meadows home, including:

- **Verizon Connect** (automation),
- **Danobat Inc.** (machine manufacturing),
- **Fagor Automation** (CNC manufacturing).

Resources for Business Owners

Although annual new business openings are determined by a number of external factors, such as economic conditions and available vacancies, City officials pride themselves on their commitment to working closely with business owners to help them realize their goals.

...continued on page 4



- **Northrop Grumman** (aerospace/defense),
- **Arthur J. Gallagher** (insurance brokerage/risk management),



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CONNECT WITH US	
City Manager's Office	847-394-8500
Community Development	847-506-6030
Finance Department	847-394-8500
Fire Department (non-emergency)	847-397-3352
Police Department (non-emergency)	847-255-2416
Public Works Department	847-963-0500

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What's in Store for 2024: City Plans to Pursue Important Economic Development Projects, Rebranding Initiative

Four important economic redevelopment projects and a City-wide rebranding initiative are among the major endeavors on tap in Rolling Meadows this year.

Pacifica on Golf: The Aurora, IL-based Windfall Group has proposed a project to convert the former Sam's Club warehouse at 1460-1470 Golf Road into an Asian-centric retail and entertainment center.

Rolling Meadows Commerce Center: Chicago-based Brennan Investment Group's acquired plans to transform the former Atrium Corporate Center at 3800 Golf Road into the Rolling Meadows

Commerce Center (RMC²), featuring 600,000 square feet of space for companies in the manufacturing, distribution, and data center fields.

Vacant Downtown Fire Station Property: City planners are working with developers to explore opportunities for revitalizing the former fire station property at 3111 Meadow Drive. Preliminary plans call for the redeveloped property to serve as an anchor for a pedestrian-oriented commercial corridor.

Kirchoff Road Corridor/ Northwest Industrial District Planning: The City is in the process of selecting a consul-



Rendering of Pacifica on Golf, a proposed redevelopment of the former Sam's Club property on Golf Road.

Image courtesy of The Windfall Group.

tant to help plan for the future of these two sub-areas that will be impacted by redevelopment plans for the former Arlington Park property now owned by the Chicago Bears.

Comprehensive Rebranding Initiative: City officials have hired Selbert Perkins Design

to create a new visual brand and identity for Rolling Meadows. Plans call for the rebranding program's launch later this year.

Stay tuned for project updates and status reports in upcoming issues of the *Business Messenger*.

City's New Business Growth Rate Jumps 25% in 2023...continued from page 3

"The City's business development and retention program promotes local business success stories," explained Martha Corner, Business Development Manager.

"We offer a variety of resources and information to help business owners and their representatives make sound decisions that support their specific goals."

Learn More

Learn more about Rolling Meadows' business development and support services by visiting www.cityrm.org/35/Business.