



14 EXAMPLES OF BUSINESS BLOG WRITING FOR NATIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WEBSITE

As **Editor** of **AREA DEVELOPMENT** magazine's "Front Line" news blog, Lisa Bastian produced **well over 100** short blog posts, at least **15 per week**, about economic development news and updates of interest to 42,000+ online readers. She was required to find timely topics to write about, and worked against a tight daily deadline. All articles were published on www.areadevelopment.com website.

NY-Based Financial Firm Investing \$4 Million to Relocate HQ to KY & Create 95 Jobs

Jefferson National Financial Corp. (JNFC) will invest \$4 million to move its headquarters from New York to Louisville, KY, and create 95 jobs with an average annual salary over \$85,000, according to Gov. Steve Beshear.

The project also involves expanding (or relocating) the firm's current 14,000-sq.-ft. facility located in Louisville's eastern Jefferson County into 30,000 square feet of space.

JNFC serves more than 43,000 U.S. customers with financial products and services offered via a nationwide network of 1,600 advisers. Currently it employs 55 associates at its Louisville facility.

The Kentucky Economic Development Finance Authority approved the company for performance-based tax incentives of up to \$2 million on a preliminary basis.

"[JNFC's] proprietary technology and unique distribution model have positioned them as a leader in the fast-changing financial services industry," noted Daryl Snyder, VP of economic development at Greater Louisville Inc. "We're delighted they see Louisville as the right location to attract the talent they need as they grow their corporate headquarters."

Indiana Lawmakers Approve Right-To-Work Bill, Waiting for Gov.'s Signature

Lawmakers in Indiana's Republican-controlled Senate voted Wednesday to make Indiana a right-to-work state. The legislation would ban unions from making workers to pay mandatory union representation fees.

Republican Gov. Mitch Daniels has said he will sign the bill upon its arrival on his desk. When he does, Indiana will be the first state in 10 years to enact a right-to-work law.

"We're giving freedom to workers who don't want to be a part of something they don't believe in," said Republican Sen. Carlin Yoder.

"This announces, especially in the Rust Belt, that we are open for business here," added Republican House Speaker Brian Bosma.

Nancy Guyott, Indiana's AFL-CIO president, predicted the vote would not be a permanent victory. "We'll take our state back, one block at a time," she said, pointing out that Indiana has adopted and then repealed right to work before.

BNSF Railway: Plan to Invest \$3.9 Billion in Its 2012 Capital Program Is “Investment in American Jobs”

BNSF Railway Company (BNSF) has announced a planned 2012 capital commitment program totaling about \$3.9 billion—a \$400 million increase over its 2011 capital spending of \$3.5 billion.

The biggest pieces of the plan call for BNSF to spend \$2.1 billion on its core network and “related assets” and about \$1.1 billion on locomotive, freight car and other equipment acquisitions. The program also includes about \$300 million for federally mandated positive train control (PTC), and \$400 million for terminal, line and intermodal expansion and efficiency projects.

The expansion and efficiency projects primarily will be focused on coal routes to improve velocity and throughput capacity and the new Kansas City intermodal facility. .

Chairman and CEO Matthew Rose said this investment in rail freight infrastructure “is an investment in American jobs and competitiveness. It will ensure our infrastructure remains strong and improve the efficiency of our operations.”

Based in Fort Worth, Texas, BNSF Railway is one of North America’s leading freight transportation companies operating on 32,000 route miles of track in 28 states and two Canadian provinces. The company is recognized as one of the top transporters of consumer goods, grain, industrial goods and low-sulfur products.

Chrysler to Add 1,800 Workers at Its Belvidere, Illinois, Plant

Chrysler has announced it will add 1,800 employees to its Belvidere, Illinois, plant’s workforce due to an increase in production at the facility. The positions are expected to be filled by third quarter 2012.

Company officials said about 1,300 of the new employees will work on existing Jeep Compass and Liberty models, and the remainder (about 500 people) will work on new Dodge Dart. Currently about 2,700 people are employed at the Boone County plant.

“I know that times you’ve endured in the recent past were not easy,” Marchionne said. “In 2009, when we emerged from bankruptcy, there was only one shift that was running here ... with little hope and tremendous uncertainty.”

The positions are associated with a \$68 million package of Illinois state tax breaks (and other incentives) Chrysler received in 2010.

Cobham Antenna Systems to Add 120 Jobs to Its New Hampshire Workforce

Cobham Antenna Systems has announced 120 new jobs will be added to its Exeter, New Hampshire, plant due to a consolidation project which involves the closing of its 80,000-sq.-ft. facility in Methuen, Massachusetts.

The company is a world leader in the design and manufacture of communication systems and antennas serving commercial aviation, defense and law enforcement. It employs more than 10,000 people on five continents, and has customers and partners in over 100 countries.

“Consolidating the specialized design and manufacturing of microwave and electro-mechanical rotating devices will greatly complement what we do here in Exeter,” noted John Moore, VP of the firm’s microwave component business unit.

Local government officials said that New Hampshire’s low taxes, business-friendly attitude and available space were key factors in Cobham’s decision to relocate to the state.

Cheese Manufacturer to Hire Up to 400 New Employees at New South Dakota Plant

Chicago-based Bel Brands USA has announced plans to invest about \$100 million to build a new 170,000-sq.-ft. manufacturing facility in Brookings, South Dakota, anticipated to employ up to 400 workers. The new plant will help the firm meet growing demand for its Mini Babybel cheese.

Bel Brands is the U.S. subsidiary of Paris-based Fromageries (a world leader in branded cheeses), and operates two other U.S. production facilities in Kentucky and Wisconsin. The company manufactures The Laughing Cow cheese wedges, Mini Babybel (America's #1 branded snacking cheese) and Boursin as well as other natural and gourmet cheese spreads.

The company will break ground this summer for the two-phase project. Bel expects to hire around 200 employees when the first phase of the plant becomes fully operational by 2014. The second phase—contingent on anticipated increased market demands—is planned for completion in 2016-2017, and should add 200 more jobs.

Lance Chambers, president and CEO of Bel Brands USA, said the "robust" South Dakota dairy industry and its "hard-working Midwestern values" make Brookings an ideal location for the new facility.

Gov. Dennis Daugaard said the project's impact goes beyond the creation of the new jobs and "beyond the estimated annual \$500 million economic impact once the plant is fully operational." He added that having an internationally respected company like Bel Brands as the state's newest corporate citizen "tells the world that South Dakota is open and ready for business from anywhere around the globe."

Xerox to Create 500 Jobs at New Monroe County, NY, Call Center

Xerox Corporation will establish a call center in Webster, NY, and create 500 jobs over the next two years according to an announcement by Gov. Andrew Cuomo.

The company will create a 23,000-sq.-ft. call center by investing \$4.3 million to renovate a portion of a building on its Webster corporate campus, and buying IT systems and equipment. Renovation is slated to begin in February; completion is projected for third quarter 2012.

About 350 of the jobs will be added this year; and the remaining 150 by 2013. Xerox anticipates it will begin hiring the first wave of workers in March. Positions will include call center agents and managers. (The firm also will retain 70 existing employees at the project location.)

The project will use \$5 million in Excelsior Jobs Program tax credits and a \$1 million Economic Development Fund grant from Empire State Development. Moreover, the Monroe County Industrial Development Agency has approved a local tax abatement package totaling \$271,040.

With sales approaching \$23 billion, Xerox is the world's leading enterprise for business process and document management. The company and its subsidiaries employ about 10,000 people in New York State—including 6,400 in Monroe County—and serve clients in over 160 countries.

"Xerox is a global leader that could have gone anywhere in the world to expand their business, but they chose New York because our state is rapidly becoming the place to be for businesses," said Gov. Cuomo.

Auto Supplier to Add 300 Jobs at Its Seguin, TX, Plant Thanks to \$113 Million Investment

Continental Automotive Systems Inc. will relocate production of its sensors and actuators from Europe and Asia to its plant in Seguin, Texas, according to an announcement made by Gov. Rick Perry. The company's \$113 million in capital investment will create 300 new jobs, he added.

Recognized as one of the world's largest automotive industry suppliers, Continental manufactures engine, transmission and hybrid control units at its Seguin plant. Its parent company, Continental AG, has facilities in Houston and Uvalde.

Since January 2010 the Seguin plant has grown from about 660 employees to more than 1,340 today—more than doubling its workforce. When all the new employees are hired, that number will increase to nearly 1,700.

Continental SVP Gregg Wiggins said this major announcement “would not have been possible without the strong support of, and collaboration with,” the state of Texas and Texas Enterprise Fund [it's investing \$1.2 million into the project], the Seguin Economic Development Corporation, the City of Seguin and Guadalupe County officials.

Connecture to Create Over 100 Technology Jobs in Wisconsin

Atlanta, GA-based Connecture has announced it will create over 100 technology jobs at its Wisconsin office in Waukesha, a city located about 18 miles west of Milwaukee. The company is now recruiting for about 25 percent of the new hires.

Connecture offers web-based sales, service and process automation solutions to the health insurance industry. Its solutions help customers minimize back-office administration tasks (i.e., workflow management, application and renewal processing, and more).

President Dan Maynard said the firm is experiencing “significant sustainable growth” resulting in not only increased jobs but also “the development of leading-edge technology in southeastern Wisconsin.”

Humana to Create 149 Jobs in St. Petersburg, FL, as Part of National Expansion

The Humana Cares division of Louisville-based [Humana Inc.](#) will create 149 jobs at its St. Petersburg, FL, operations to handle the firm's expansion of national care management programs. The new hires will work at a 75,000-sq.-ft. facility located in Carillon Business Park.

Humana Cares serves and supports member living with chronic medical conditions, such as congestive heart failure, diabetes and coronary artery disease.

The St. Petersburg center, opened about a year ago, now employs about 350 people. It provides personalized health coaching via telephone, health education, care management and support to approximately 50,000 Humana members throughout the U.S. In addition, Humana members in 24 states are offered “on-the-ground” care management.

Hiring begins immediately for health care managers, social workers, community health educators, referral specialists and health coaches, according to the company. Plans call to fill 84 of the jobs with RNs with at least three years of experience.

Toyota to Open \$350 Million Manufacturing Plant in GA & Create 320 Jobs

[Toyota Industries Corp.](#) has announced it will open a manufacturing plant in Pendergrass, Georgia, and create 320 jobs. The new Jackson County facility represents a \$350 million investment, and will be known as “Toyota Industries Compressor Parts America” (TICA). It's expected to be operations by late 2013.

Toyota Industries Corp. supplies automotive compressors for Toyota Motor Corporation, as well as for Chrysler, Ford, General Motors and others.

The TICA facility will be located next to TD Automotive Compressor (TACG) Georgia so the two operations can complement each other's activities.

TICA will manufacture the main parts of automotive compressors currently imported from Japan and assembled at the TACG facility. (The opening of the new TICA plant will allow parts once manufactured in Japan to be manufactured in Georgia—and then be conveyed directly to TACG and also shipped to other compressor plants.)

Toyota Industries Corp. will be given customized training from the Georgia Quick Start program to support TICA's launch.

Life Sciences Manufacturer to Expand in Florida & Add 72 Employees

Enzymedica Inc., a life sciences company and industry leader of therapeutic enzyme supplements, has begun renovating its new, larger location in Venice, Florida.

CEO Scott Sensenbrenner said the project's scope will include the expansion of lab, office space and production areas. He estimates the cost will exceed \$850,000.

The firm also plans to add 72 employees to its current 50-person workforce over the next five years, according to Mark Huey, president and CEO of the EDC of Sarasota County. Those new jobs will include R&D, production, customer service, sales and other support positions.

Founded in Florida in 1998, Enzymedica researches, develops, manufactures and distributes targeted enzyme supplements made from plant-based enzymes. Its dietary supplements support a wide array of indications, including digestive health, food intolerance, cardiovascular, immune, weight loss and other supportive functions.

"Our new facility, which we hope will be operational by September, is centrally located for the majority of our employees, and provides easy access from Interstate 75," explained Sensenbrenner. "We hope to attract top talent in the region."

The company has qualified for various performance-based incentives, including \$216,000 from the state and an equal match from the Sarasota County government.

"Enzymedica's expansion exemplifies the continuing growth and strength of Florida's life sciences sector, which is vital to the state's business development strategy," said Gray Swoope, president and CEO of Enterprise Florida Inc., the state's principal economic development organization.

"Enzymedica has been a wonderful employer in Charlotte County, and we wish them every success as they continue to grow in the Southwest Florida region," said Tom Patton, director of the Charlotte County Economic Development office. "The company is a shining example of the entrepreneurial spirit at work and will benefit the region with additional jobs."

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GM to Build \$200 Million Stamping Facility & Create 180 Jobs in TX

General Motors (GM) has announced it will start construction next week on a new \$200 million stamping facility at its existing Arlington, Texas, manufacturing complex. The plant is expected to create about 180 jobs. After going online in 2013 it will save GM about \$40 million a year in logistics cost, according to the company.

The new facility will produce large stamping components for the next generation of full-size Chevrolet Tahoes, Suburbans, GMC Yukons and Cadillac Escalades. Currently Arlington receives stamped components from several GM plants, with some parts coming from more than 1,000 miles away.

This announcement is the first manufacturing investment by GM in 2012. Since June 2009, the company has announced more than \$6.9 billion of investment to upgrade or expand operations in 12 states, creating or retaining more than 17,600 jobs.