Site Selection & Rural Workforce Challenges

Presented by

Jerry Szatan,
Szatan & Associates, Chicago

Labor Issues Facing Agriculture & The Rural Midwest

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Introduction

• Rural area/ small city workforce challenges and responses

• Can be one of the toughest development challenges
My Background

• Site selection & economic development consulting - 25 years
• Office, R&D, industrial projects
  – Manufacturing & distribution last 5 years
  – Food, building, aerospace, transportation
• Throughout North America
• Regional economics, labor markets, real estate
Workforce Role in Site Selection

- **Office**: labor cost, quality and availability key; usually a trade-off
  - Specialized labor may be needed

- **Industrial**:
  - Logistics often define search region
  - Specific infrastructure or utilities may be needed
  - Manufacturing: fewer jobs, but more skilled
Is There Enough Labor?

- Especially back office and other labor intensive
- Greater concern if: large employer, rapid hiring, specialized skills, seasonal or unpredictable hiring spikes, mid-level compensation
- Aging workforce, declining population & skill shortages
Labor Issues (cont.)

• Is there enough skilled labor?

• Recruiting and transferability
  • Where could my spouse/partner work?
  • Where could I work?
Potential Responses

• Understand regional commuting; may need to educate

• Build a workforce; training infrastructure and experience a plus
  • Sometimes there may not be time

• Look regionally for assets and opportunities
Contact

Jerry Szatan
Principal
Szatan & Associates
1829 N. Cleveland
Chicago, IL 60614
jerry@SzatanAssociates.com
Ph: 312-440-9070
Fax: 312-440-0368