



KIRKSVILLE: SMALL TOWN, WIDESPREAD COLLABORATION, HARD-WORKING EMPLOYEES

Rarely does a town of 18,000 have the breadth of assets for growing businesses as well as the high quality of life that Kirksville, Mo., offers.

This northeastern Missouri town about 200 miles from St. Louis stands out for a number of reasons says Phil Tate, a former Missouri economic development official and director of job creation for K-REDI, Kirksville Regional Economic Development Inc.

"Our economy is based on two pillars: our medical and education communities," he says.

Kirksville has two rigorous institutions of higher education: nationally recognized Truman State University and A.T. Still University, the nation's premier facility for training osteopathic physicians. In addition, the city's primary and secondary schools have received national accolades.

"Our strength comes not just from the jobs created by these institutions, but they give us a unique set of dynamics when dealing with the biotech industry," Tate says. "Because there is a medical school here, you have an enormous proliferation of health care services. We serve all of northeast Missouri. Beside the teaching hospital, we also have Northeast Missouri Medical Center, and both of those facilities are really strong economic pillars."

More importantly, the region's educational, political and business leaders work together to create a flourishing environment for commerce.

A standout example is the recent deal struck with Human Identification Technologies of Redland, Calif. The company had narrowed its site search to Kirksville and another town to open a new lab for 100 forensic science employees. The incentives offered by the other city were larger, but Kirksville offered creative enticements.

Truman State offered to establish a minor degree in forensics, A.T. Still offered the services of a

well-known DNA scientist on its faculty as well as its post-doctoral students for research and both universities offered internships in DNA technology.

"The CEO told us that the collaboration is what made the decision for them. The ability to train and educate these young people in a complicated science is part of what brought them," Tate says. "In fact, the CEO moved his family to Kirksville from California because he was so impressed with the quality of life here."

The region's quality of life is enlivened by the cultural presentations offered by the universities and community groups.

"We like to say that you get the big city entertainment and culture in a small town atmosphere," Tate notes.

Residents' strong work ethic and sense of self-reliance are also an attraction.

"This is a community that has a tremendously strong can-do attitude. We don't look elsewhere for help," Tate notes.

For instance, a few years ago 80 percent of voters approved a sales tax to pay for the construction of a divided Missouri Highway 63 configuration. What's more impressive about the vote is that the highway doesn't pass through the city limits; residents saw it purely as an economic development issue.

Businesses also like to take advantage of the daily flights to St. Louis from Kirksville Regional Airport offered by AirChoice for less than what it would cost to drive to St. Louis and pay for parking.

To accommodate an influx of business, the city is expanding its 40-acre industrial park by 33 acres, which will offer excellent facilities for new business.

"It's just a great place to live, work and conduct business," Tate says.



A. T. Still University is the founding school of osteopathic medicine



Truman ranks 1st among midwestern public universities at a master's level



Medical students at A. T. Still University in Kirksville

what
is it?

background photo: close-up of bacteria and algae living in very hot water

For More Information:

Kirksville Regional Economic Development Inc., Phil Tate, Director of Job Creation

ph: 866-675-7334 | email: ptate@kirksvillecity.com | website: www.kirksvillecity.com