Kendall County Participates in Launch of Metro Chicago Exports

On Monday, September 29th, Kendall County Board Chairman John Shaw along with Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle, Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, and the Chief Executives of DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry and Will Counties joined together with JPMorgan Chase, the Brookings Institution, and World Business Chicago to launch Metro Chicago Exports. The announcement of Metro Chicago Exports took place at the Industrial Council of Nearwest Chicago on Chicago’s near west side. Metro Chicago Exports is an unprecedented regional collaboration that will help small and medium enterprises throughout the region capture export opportunities and strengthen the Chicagoland area’s network of regional service providers.

“The creation of Metro Chicago Exports was an unparalleled regional collaboration to lend support to small and midsized businesses in the region. By working with existing exporting and international trade service providers, a tremendous amount of opportunity will be opened up for small and midsized companies to access foreign markets and grow their business.” - John Shaw, Chairman, Kendall County Board

Metro Chicago Exports will assist manufacturers and business service companies to reach new international markets. The pilot program will focus on three initial strategies:

* **Build the pipeline of export ready firms:** use a data-driven approach to proactively target firms in high demand industries with specific opportunities in international markets; create clear export roadmaps for groups of firms and scale the reach of existing services

* **Strengthen the export ecosystem:** serve as a concierge for firms and assist navigation through the network of regional services; develop opportunities for peer learning and mentorship to leverage the expertise of current exporters

* **Reduce the initial business costs to reach new markets:** expand resources for firms to become market ready and reduce the hurdles to exporting faced by small firms, such as specialized market research, translation, sales missions, etc.

According to one estimate, there are up to 2,500 manufacturers in the Chicago region on the threshold of exporting that would be eligible to utilize the services of Metro Chicago Exports.

Metro Chicago Exports builds on the Global Cities Initiative, a joint project of the Brookings Institution and JPMorgan Chase, that aims to catalyze a shift in economic development priorities and practices resulting in more globally connected metropolitan areas and more sustainable economic growth. JPMorgan Chase has pledged an additional $500,000 to launch Metro Chicago Exports.

To learn more about Metro Chicago Exports, contact John Sterrett, Economic Development Coordinator, at 630-553-4834.

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