

Why So Much Prospect Activity at EDAWN?

Prospect visits to our region are up – **dramatically**. When a new company is considering a relocation or expansion they go through the same process you do when you buy a new house: check the internet, get an agent, learn about neighborhoods, walk through houses, develop a short list, and then make an offer. In the economic development world when you get a visit from a company you are already on the short list and a final candidate. In 2011 we averaged nearly one prospect visit a week, which was an improvement over the previous year, however, in 2012 we nearly doubled that with 7.8 visits per month. In the first two months of 2013 we are over 12 visits per month – Why?

Four things have changed over the past 15 months collectively resulting in this remarkable improvement:

1. **New Aggressive and Targeted Marketing Approach:** To get more companies to visit our region we made several changes to our marketing plan. These changes included visiting 100 of the top site selectors (national real estate agents) to develop relationships, totally upgrading our website to be more prospect friendly, hiring consultants to facilitate leads to likely prospects, sending monthly postcards to more than 4,000 potential companies highlighting the strengths of our region, and restructuring our marketing materials and website to promote our strengths, such as quality of life and strategic location, rather than the prior message of low taxes.
2. **Community Assisted Lead Development:** While the financial support of EDAWN (as a non-profit) has always been a part of the assistance we received from the community, active participation as a part of our marketing efforts was not something we asked for nor expected – ***That has changed***. It takes a community effort and we have asked for your help in identifying companies that may be looking for a new and better place to live and do business. We have also asked that in your interaction with others outside of the region you highlight the many reasons why ***you*** chose to live and do business here.
3. **Synergy Of EDAWN's Retention/Expansion and Entrepreneurial Programs:** In the past year EDAWN has added two new teams, one focused exclusively on the retention and expansion of the industry already here and one that is focused on the development and growth of our entrepreneurial ecosystem. While the programs are still gaining momentum there is no doubt that the synergy of these efforts have added new connections to executives and companies outside the region along with opening doors of opportunity that have generated new prospects and job growth.

4. **California – Enough said:** California has a reputation of being less than business friendly. Their extremely low national rankings in this area are well deserved; however, some of their recent legislation has caused many there to strongly consider doing business elsewhere. Proposition 30 tax increases, Cap and Trade, worker compensation increases, and increased compliance and reporting costs associated with even more restrictive and far-reaching regulations may (collectively) be the final straw. There has certainly been a surge of California companies looking to relocate. They make up about 40% of our overall activity, and while we have some tough competition with Texas, Utah, Arizona etc., our proximity to California gives us an edge.

In short, the combination of these factors have resulted in incredible prospect activity and with increased visits come more job announcements. ***In fact, we expect to announce 9 new companies in the next 60 days!*** Remember- you are a part of this effort and we still have more than 20,000 unemployed neighbors and friends counting on us to succeed.