



## WHITESIDE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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### **For Immediate Release**

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## **Enterprise Zone investment up significantly in 2019**

Morrison, IL (January 6, 2020) – Economic activity in the Whiteside Carroll Enterprise Zone (WCEZ) picked up in 2019, with 19 projects and an investment of \$38.6 million, up from 2018's 13 projects with an investment of \$10.5 million. The 2019 projects are on track to create over 450 jobs in the Whiteside Carroll Enterprise Zone. The Enterprise Zone is the region's most effective local incentive, with \$453.3 million invested in 488 projects, creating and retaining 8,526 jobs between 2000 and 2019.

The 2019 projects included a variety of size and type, including HALO Branded Solution's \$25 million expansion and a small retail expansion of \$41,000. According to Gary Camarano, WCEZ Administrator, "The Enterprise Zone is available to help all types of businesses - small to large, new or existing, home grown or a relocation, industrial or retail or commercial, and its proven itself to be a very effective incentive."

Rock Falls Mayor Bill Wescott said, "The Enterprise Zone and other local incentives, have greatly contributed to the revitalization of the Rock Falls Riverfront. Our RB&W District has seen a hotel completed in 2016, a banquet hall/event center set to open in February of this year, and another hotel set to break ground this spring. Add the Best Cob relocation in the 30 West Industrial Park to the mix, and it's easy to see what the Enterprise Zone has contributed to helping us grow our local economy."

Terry McGuire, SVP at HALO Branded Solutions, said, "Sterling is where we want to be. The Northwest Illinois region is our home. Our business was started 60 years ago in Tampico by two entrepreneurs, and has now expanded to over 500,000 square feet here with soon to be 1,000 employees in Illinois. The local business friendly environment, and incentives like the Enterprise Zone, have contributed to this growth."

The Enterprise Zone provides businesses building new facilities, or renovating existing facilities, with local tax abatements, and sales tax exemptions on building materials, which lowers the cost of building profitable job creating and retaining businesses.

Camarano added, “Businesses looking to build or expand should call the Enterprise Zone Office prior to starting a project to see if their property is in the zone, and to get an estimate of the potential savings they could achieve. Those savings can often be the deciding factor in moving ahead with a project, or perhaps allowing for additional expansion of the project. As part of our proactive EZ outreach, our office will be holding two informational meetings in Whiteside and Carroll Counties on February 19, 2020 (place and time to be announced). We hope to engage and educate businesses as to the benefits of the Enterprise Zone incentives, the ease of the application process, and answer any questions. This is an effective tool to help businesses grow here in Northwest Illinois.”

For information regarding the Whiteside Carroll Enterprise Zone, contact Gary Camarano at [econdev@whiteside.org](mailto:econdev@whiteside.org) , (815) 772-5182, or visit <https://www.nwillinoisadvantage.com/doing-business-in-nw-illinois/whiteside-carroll-enterprise-zone.html> .



HALO Branded solutions has undertaken two local expansions since 2017. The latest expansion, started in 2019, adds a \$25 million investment of 275,000 square feet, able to accommodate 350 new employees.

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