

No silos along I-77 Corridor: Keeping a regional mind key to long-term growth

Regional thinking is in our vision, strategic action is our position, and the results have shown success across the regional marketplace.

BY DAVID SWENSON

Over the past year, the four-county region along Interstate 77 in South Carolina has been making headlines. Companies like Giti Tire, Lash Group and LPL Financial announced history-making new capital investments and jobs coming to the corridor. Although many different factors were taken into account, in each company's decision to move to the area, one thing was consistent: a regional perspective was important and critical to their decision.

There is no doubt that the offering of performance-based incentives helped the state win these competitive projects. It is important to note though that a multitude of other factors were evaluated as a part of the decision-making process. Some of these factors included the region's workforce, the market's quality of life, the quality and accessibility of the existing transportation infrastructure, the readiness of real estate and the overall competitiveness of South Carolina's business climate. Addressing each of these items (and many more) at the regional level is how economic development occurs in South Carolina today and will be critical for our future success.

York County continues to be on the radar for many national and international companies interested in adding to our local and regional economy. The strategy is to continue to position the county's success on regional value propositions and support. As one of the founding counties for both the South Carolina I-77 Alliance and the Charlotte Regional Partnership, our leadership understands that rising tides raise all boats.

The newly formed South Carolina I-77 Alliance, which is comprised of York, Chester, Fairfield and Richland Counties, has already made positive strides in developing a new voice for economic development in South Carolina. Leadership has worked to hire a dedicated economic development professional as well as create the appropriate marketing collateral and web presence needed to bring attention to the area. The Alliance has organized and engaged a diverse board



The new LPL Financial Carolinas campus.



Governor Haley and S.C. Commerce Secretary Bobby Hitt respond to reporters about the Lash Group's move to Fort Mill.

of directors and put into motion a targeted program focused on marketing outreach. Early results show these collaborations and partnerships to be successful, versus working in silos in hopes that success will come.

As South Carolina continues its path forward to grow and diversify its economy, one thing is certain: no one county or agency can carry the charge and create the desired results. South Carolina is involved in a TEAM approach that is built on regional thinking matched with targeted action. We will continue to seek the support of the private sector along with the public sector so that we might see the combined results that help create new job opportunities in our communities and investments in our regions.



David Swenson serves as director for York County Economic Development where he leads the business recruiting, existing industry and targeted marketing efforts for York County, S.C.

Are you connected? Finding the employee- employer match made in heaven

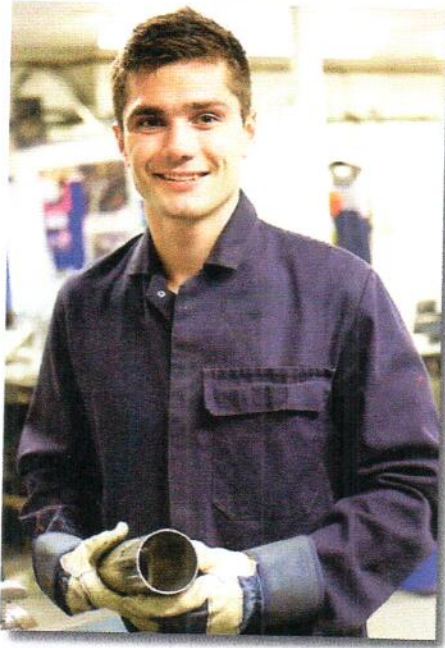
SC Works Online is perceived by many as the place where the least qualified candidates are housed, but nothing could be farther from the truth.

BY REBECCA BATTLE-BRYANT

The beginning of 2015 found South Carolina businesses with 70,000 job openings and approximately 148,000 unemployed South Carolinians looking for work unsuccessfully. This disconnection is caused by several factors to include: lack of educational attainment, technical skills and soft (interpersonal) skills. These issues are being addressed by education and workforce systems in the state and require a long-term solution. However, there is a shorter-term solution.



Job seekers can create a resume and find training and education services at SC Works.



At SC Works employers can register job openings and find a candidate.

South Carolina invests in a jobs database called SC Works Online (<https://jobs.scworks.org>). This system is perceived by many as the place where the least qualified candidates are housed, but nothing could be further from the truth. It is a system that is underutilized by both employers and job seekers and is the short-term solution for creating connectivity in the recruitment process. We need everyone to use it because it has the potential to become a virtual "meeting place" for South Carolinians.

Through SC Works Online, businesses are able to post positions, search for candidates and review job market trends. It is a service that links all of the state's regional and local workforce services and resources in one place and brings employers and job seekers together using the wealth of information available in the workforce development database.

The best news is that the SC Department of Employment and Workforce also has trained personnel across the state to assist job seekers, employers and veterans at no cost, thereby maximizing all the benefits of using SC Works Online. We encourage businesses to take advantage of this available resource and put citizens back to work.

The recruitment process inspired a recent popular talent management blog-gone-viral titled, "What eHarmony Can Teach Us About Finding the Employee-Employer Match Made In Heaven." While the article was tongue in cheek, it made several good points including that finding a good employee-employer match is not easy, and the process can actually be similar to finding your life partner. The author chides employers for not shaking up their normal methods of recruiting and to "find a new way that drives results." The SC Works Online jobs database can be that "new way" to drive results for job seekers and employers by providing connection in one "meeting place."

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