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Naperville Area Chamber of Commerce Endorses Navistar Relocation Proposal

At a Special Board Meeting of the Naperville Area Chamber of Commerce, its Directors endorsed the proposed relocation of the Navistar's world headquarters to the now vacant East Lucent Campus.

"Today we are formally endorsing this project, joining the Jobs for Lisle Coalition, notifying elected officials and encouraging our Members to take action by contacting their elected officials in support of this project," said John Schmitt, Chamber President & CEO.

The Naperville Area Chamber of Commerce represents 1,700 businesses in the region. With a diverse membership base, almost every Member will be directly or indirectly impacted by the economic activity the relocation will spur and sustain.

Last week over 325 individuals attended a Special Business Briefing held by the Naperville and Lisle Area Chambers of Commerce where Dan Ustian, Navistar Chairman, President & CEO presented and responded to questions from the audience.

"From the feedback I have received from many Members who were in attendance at the briefing, retaining Navistar in our community is extremely important in sending a message that this area supports jobs and business growth," said John Puscheck, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Naperville Area Chamber of Commerce.

The Chamber's Board weighed the economic impact of losing Navistar to another state. "To the Chamber, the idea that as a region we couldn't keep these jobs here is economic devastating and completely unacceptable. There were 715,000 Illinoisans unemployed last month and Navistar is offering to keep several thousand jobs here and move up to 1000 more. We will do everything in our power to let our elected officials know that their top priority needs to be keeping and attracting these jobs to Lisle," noted Schmitt.

In a letter sent to the Forest Preserve Monday, Schmitt wrote, "If the (intergovernmental) agreements are not extended and the concept is forced to go back to the drawing board, the result will be economically devastating for years to come. The campus specifically and the corridor in general, will be scarred. Rather than be seen as a welcoming environment for innovation and investment, we will be remembered as a region that sent the jobs of the 21st century packing."

At Navistar's request, Ernst & Young produced a study detailing the economic impact of relocation. The study noted that in addition to the 3,100 hundred jobs retained and created by the relocation, nearly 7,000 jobs are indirectly supported in Illinois economy. The Ernst and Young study also estimated the move would generate almost \$60 million in tax benefits to the region and state. Other studies by DuPage County's economic development corporation and others have substantiated there will be a significant economic impact.

The Chamber's immediate focus is encouraging the governmental bodies to renew the existing intergovernmental agreement regarding the project that is set to expire at the end of the month.

"We are at a critical point in this process," said Schmitt, who will offer comments to the Forest Preserve District of DuPage at their meeting Tuesday, March 16. "Now is the time for business, labor and civic leaders to let their voices be heard."

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More information and copies of the letters can be accessed at: <http://bit.ly/ad8mEb>