

Franklin County Area Development Corp. offers list of local sites ripe for industrial development

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Empty factories, farms and business parks are among the more than 30 properties that Franklin County Area Development Corp. is pitching to prospective newcomers.

The nonprofit corporation published its first Site Selection Guide in mid-December. FCADC markets the county to businesses looking for new locations.

The guides have been distributed to Manitowoc Crane in Shady Grove and JLG Industries in McConnellsburg and Shippensburg. About 30 will be given out in February when Volvo hosts its suppliers' day conference in Shippensburg.

The aim is to encourage shops supplying parts to move closer to the original equipment manufacturers. The county has two rail-truck terminals and is a hot prospect for distribution warehouses.

"Any company looking to distribute products between Charlotte and Boston is looking on the I-81 corridor," FCADC President L. Michael Ross said.

It's difficult to find single-owner, 50-acre tracts in the Northeast, he said. Many of the sites in the guide are located near Interstate 81 Exit 3 (U.S. 11) at Greencastle, a possible future Exit 12 south of Chambersburg, Exit 14 (Wayne Avenue) at Chambersburg and Exit 24 (Pa. 696) at Shippensburg.

"We have 1,500 acres situated within a mile of those interchanges -- infrastructured, zoned and ready to go," Ross said. "We are not a real estate agency. We do not get commission on any sales."

The 86-page guide was a year in the making. FCADC asked property owners to submit large tracts that are ready for development.

"We are a repository of information about Franklin County, first and foremost, so (prospects) can make an informed decision," Ross said.

The guide includes data on the individual properties and buildings, as well as municipalities and utility providers.

"Franklin County has an ever-expanding and diversified work force that is predominantly non-union, highly skilled, dependable and features an extremely strong work ethic," according to the guide.

Just two of the county's top 10 companies are union shops. The county is located in a four-state "regional labor shed" of 387,000 workers.

FCADC is a public-private partnership funded in part with \$82,800 from the Franklin County commissioners.

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About the sites

The Franklin County Site Selection guide details more than 30 properties for potential industrial development across the county.

The buildings range from new to aged to proposed. Nearly all have public water and sewer, but a couple have on-lot septic systems. The real estate may be zoned industrially, or not at all.

- WCN Properties offers three farms. More than 200 acres on two farms are zoned industrial, in Guilford Township near Interstate 81 Exit 14. The 40-acre Schuck Farm on Hykes Road in Antrim Township has an approved plan for a 680,000-square-foot warehouse.

- An unzoned 15 acres owned by Caleb Eby on Rolling Road in St. Thomas Township has overhead cranes and a septic system.

- Union Tool Co.'s building, a former sawmill, is in an agricultural zone a mile from I-81 Exit 24 in Southampton Township, Franklin County.

- The Tilman Dump Trailers building in the Cumberland Valley Business Park was recently constructed and more recently vacated.

- A 90,000-square-foot warehouse at Letterkenny Army Depot was built along a rail siding in 1946.

- The former Chiquita food processing plant on Commerce Avenue in Antrim Township and the former Gibble's pretzel plant, constructed in 1970 on Industrial Drive in Chambersburg, have been vacant for several years.

- Liberty Property Trust details two proposed warehouses, totaling more than 2 million square feet, approved for 182 acres on Olde Scotland Road in Southampton Township, Franklin County.

- An industrial space of nearly 40,000 square feet is available at the former GEOFAM Landis property, 20 E. Sixth St., Waynesboro.

The guide also features industrial parks where land is ready for development;

- The Antrim Business Park at the Norfolk Southern intermodal facility and the adjacent Century Business Park, both located near I-81 and Greencastle,

- Cumberland Valley Business Park, adjacent to the Army depot.

- United Business Park at I-81 Exit 24 near Shippensburg.
- Wharf Road Industrial Park in Washington Township.

A few list prices. The Vogele American building in the Chambers-5 Business Park and a quarter-mile from the CSX Intermodal Terminal can be had for \$2.7 million. Land at the Cumberland Valley Business Park is available for \$65,000 an acre.