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A stranger comes to town, with business in mind

By JIM KRENCIK
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ALBION — The mystery man approaches, his business clear but his client unknown.

He's come to read the situation, to gauge the temperature of the room before speaking.

He's ... Greg Sehr, the president of Upstate Consultants.

So maybe not that mysterious.

Sehr dropped into last week's Orleans Economic Development Agency meeting to speak with county officials about the potential for an un-named Illinois company seeking a rural site to build on.

"It would be a significant project, an agri-business," Sehr said, apologizing that non-disclosure prevented more information. "They have a national profile."

Sehr said his company works in government affairs, assisting companies in building relationships with local and state economic development agencies. He was on a fact-finding tour and introduction.

Orleans County was chosen as a potential partner as they looked for potential sites.

"I don't want to over promise," Sehr told EDA board members. "But this county is strategically located. I hope this is the beginning."

EDA Vice President Gabrielle Barone was quick to give Sehr a one-page promotional map and detail list for the Medina Business Park and the adjacent Keppler Site, which have open acreage cleared for utilities and project approval.

Sehr said the reputation of the OEDA was known, one that EDA members were happy to reinforce with promises of a robust, personal staff that worked to bring a fresh produce packager to Medina, find a new site for a claims processor in Albion and worked on tight deadlines to aid a Medina auto parts manufacturer expand.

"Whatever we can do to assist you, don't hesitate to come to us," EDA Board President Paul Hendel said.

"We're very aggressive, very nimble," EDA board member John Misiti told Sehr.

Sehr was appreciative, asking a question about brownfields — Orleans is mostly greenfields, EDA CEO Jim Whipple said — before listening to the rest of the EDA's monthly meeting.

His mission may be shrouded, but the mystery man didn't throw a flash of smoke to escape. He chatted with Barone, perhaps the first step in the area's next big project.

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