

Jobs, jobs, jobs.

Bucyrus International Inc. is expanding in Milwaukee County and that means 280 new, family supporting jobs in South Milwaukee and Milwaukee. Plus, we protected the 850 jobs currently in the county.

A couple of weeks ago, Bucyrus President Tim Sullivan called me and talked about his dilemma. His board of directors was looking at options to expand, but was having real problems with the cost of growing in the Milwaukee area. They were also looking at locations in Idaho and Texas.

Health care costs are 55% higher in Wisconsin than in Texas. Welders make about \$22 per hour here and around \$15 per hour in Texas. Add to that the higher tax burden in our area and it was no wonder that the board was looking at these other sites.

Immediately after Sullivan's call, I sent in our Jobs Team. They found a spot for New Market Tax Credits. They found training funds for new employees through the Private Industry Council and worked with the state Department of Commerce to find a way to keep the jobs in Milwaukee County and Wisconsin

Then, working with South Milwaukee Mayor Dave Kieck and the common council, they worked on a \$16 million TIF district. The bonds issued by the city will be guaranteed under a proposal I'll submit to the members of the Milwaukee County Board (with the help of Sup. Ryan McCue).

This concept is relatively new to Milwaukee County government. We first tried it last year with a \$27 million TIF district in Wauwatosa that attracted GE Healthcare Technologies to build a 500,000 square foot new facility for 2,000 jobs (400 new).

The bottom line is that we don't spend any tax levy. We just use our financial tools to help protect existing jobs and help others create new jobs.

In this case, the county, city, state and Bucyrus were able to come together to put forward a plan that protects and creates jobs. That's the good news.

The bigger challenge is to drive down the cost of doing business in our area and state – so we don't have to scramble to put together deals like this in the future. That's why I will continue to push to ease our tax burden, lower our regulatory hurdles and control our health care and labor costs.

The Bucyrus expansion shows the strength of our workforce in southeastern Wisconsin. Now, we just need to get our costs of doing business down so we can compete with the rest of the region, country and world.