



Outsource to Detroit

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We tip our hats to Tim Bryan, CEO of GalaxE Solutions, who will be introducing President Barack Obama today at the White House forum "Insourcing American Jobs." Bryan, who started expanding his firm in downtown Detroit several years ago has been a persuasive advocate for the growing IT hub here and is one of about a dozen invited to the White House to participate in the forum.

DEGC has targeted IT as a source for economic growth and has promoted it in a number of ways, including the Creative Corridor Incentive Fund, which offers matching grants for qualifying companies or building owners in greater Downtown. GalaxE Solutions is a participant in that program and has grown from a handful to more than 450 employees.

While the Presidential forum may be drawing many people's attention for the first time to what Dan Gilbert would call "Webward Avenue," the clustering of technology and creative businesses downtown has been going on for years. Peter Karmanos certainly played a pioneering role by building an iconic world headquarters building and bringing 2,200 Compuware employees downtown in 2003. The momentum built as Quicken Loans has moved 4,000 employees downtown in several phases, and Dan Gilbert purchased buildings and opened offices for his other business interests. Urban Science, a marketing firm that specializes in data analysis is continuing the process with its expansion in Renaissance Center offices. And these are just a few examples.

The fact is that Detroit is a good place for onshoring IT jobs - that is, bringing them back from other countries. The region has a good talent pool, attractive office rents and competes well overall in costs. The city

offers world-class healthcare and hosts a major state research university as well as other institutions of higher education and culture. Downtown has become a lively place for sports and entertainment, attractive to young professionals as a walkable, livable neighborhood. So much so that housing is becoming scarce and developers are starting to scramble to fill the demand.

In short, we've all heard Chrysler's tagline, "Imported from Detroit." To that we can now add a corollary -- "Outsource to Detroit."

George W. Jackson

Jackson is president and CEO of Detroit Economic Growth Corporation, a non-profit organization that works with businesses, government and other organizations throughout Detroit to encourage and manage economic development projects.

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