

Testimony to the
Government Finance Committee

By

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Good afternoon, members of the committee. I'm Kevan Rusk, the Director of the REAC facility at the University of North Dakota. I'm happy to be here to introduce myself and explain a little about the current direction of REAC.

First, let me tell you a little bit about myself. I am originally from Dickinson, North Dakota and I earned my Mechanical Engineering degree at UND. I worked for companies around the North Central U.S., including Polaris Industries, Toro, and Larson/Glastron Boats before returning to the Grand Forks area in 2002.

I began to focus on Composites Engineering, Research and Development, Operations and Supply Chain management through roles at Owens Corning, Phoenix Industries, and most recently LM Wind Power in Grand Forks. In 2010, I was promoted to the position of Director of Core Engineering in Denmark. I had the opportunity to lead LM's R&D efforts, managing over 120 technical professionals across 6 global locations.

While in that role, I was charged with identifying a site for LM's planned North American R&D location. Because of my prior work with the Mechanical and Chemical engineering teams at UND, I had confidence that selecting Grand Forks for our initial R&D office was a solid choice, and as a result, LM Wind Power signed a contract to lease 3 spaces within REAC.

As a tenant of REAC, I quickly realized that the true value of the facility comes not only from the quality and availability of the spaces within, but also results from the connections with the variety of University resources. In LM's case, there was convenient access to Mechanical and Chemical engineering resources for composites testing and development, and LM eventually sponsored 2 Graduate students who focused on composites-based projects.

Current Efforts

As Director, I have engaged heavily with UND departments and resources in addition to understanding the partnerships with our existing tenants. That focus on the opportunities for collaboration with UND has become the cornerstone of our marketing. It is also our focus moving forward, as expressed by our tagline:

"Collaborate with UND. Build your business at REAC."

Since I joined UND at the end of October 2013, we have developed trade show materials, attended a variety of conferences, including the Bakken Shale conference in Grand Forks, attended the JEC Composites trade show, participated in a Biocontainment facilities seminar, and hosted and conducted tours for a number of potential REAC partners.

In addition to maintaining the relationships we enjoy with our Biotech clients, we will be increasing our efforts to attract tenants from the Composites, Aerospace and Oil / Energy sectors. We have great opportunities to help a variety of Aerospace companies begin their immediate expansion into Grand Forks. We have also made significant progress toward attracting a London-based Oil and Gas consultancy to Grand Forks, specifically by demonstrating the many positive opportunities that exist by partnering with the University Engineering departments.

I would glad to answer any questions from the committee at this time.