

Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago | AIS - Day 2 - State Strategies

KRISTIN DZICZEK: Much for all of you for being here. I want to also, I know Rick, at the beginning, and Leslie have thanked all of the staff here at the Fed. It's been really quite wonderful to get all the support from all the departments here within the Detroit branch, as well as from Chicago.

I'm going to give you a few agenda notes. We're going to go this session till 3:45. There's no break. These lovely people will leave the stage and then we'll be joined by Leslie McGranahan, our Vice President from Chicago, who will kind of wrap up the conference and give you sort of a summary.

I also want to remind you that if you haven't done the poll and the Pigeonhole app, please do that, because we want to give you the poll results when Leslie comes up as well. Another agenda note. We had another panelist, Rick Youngblood from Tennessee, who is supposed to be with us. Unfortunately, he's had a medical issue in his family, so he was not able to be here.

But I am super happy to have these three individuals who I've known for a long time. So this is like a friend panel for me. Maureen Donohue Krauss. She's the CEO of the Detroit Regional Partnership. Jonathan Bridges, Managing Director for automotives, steel, and white goods.

JONATHAN BRIDGES: Appliance industry.

KRISTIN DZICZEK: Appliances. For JobsOhio. He does a lot of auto. And Rick Walker, who's the President and CEO and founder of the Georgia Automotive Manufacturers Alliance. So we're going to go in that order with some opening remarks. So Maureen, why don't you get us started. And here's your clicker.

MAUREEN DONOHUE KRAUSS: Here is my clicker. Perfect. Good afternoon, everyone. I really, first of all, appreciate the invitation from Kristen and the Fed out of Chicago, because this is an important conversation, and it's really invigorating to be in a room full of thought leaders and people who really care about what's happening in this very important industry.

At one point a few years ago, 1 in 10 jobs in this country were related to the auto industry. That number has shrunk a little bit. So it really does impact all of us, not just those of us in the Motor City. So let me move ahead.

So the Detroit Regional Partnership-- and I want to first of all start by saying our cluster based strategy was done four years ago by McKinsey, aligned with the state of Michigan strategy. So we're very much in alignment with the state, and you'll see why in a few minutes when I talk about the region we represent.

But we're a four-year-old organization to do best-in-class regional economic development. Our territory, as you can see by the map, is 11 counties and the city of Detroit, 348 cities, villages, and townships, and 5.4 million people. It's over half the state's population.

And we do this work as a region. This is a self selected region. So it's not aligned with any state or Federal formula. It is really people who, and communities who believe that, with Detroit as our calling card. That's how we tell the world about our assets. So that's why we are formed in this area.

We've done regional economic development for a long time in this region. And I've worked in several iterations of it, including when it was-- I don't if I want to say unfortunately, but it was referred to as the six pack when it was the city and the five counties around it. And I see a nodding head in the audience. So Mark knows what I'm talking about that. That was a few years ago.

But really, when you look at this region, it's really an interesting region, because it has the big urban city of Detroit that the world knows, some other large cities like Flint, Ann Arbor, and Port Huron, very strong suburban areas where automotive R&D and North American headquarters are just every block along the road. And some rural areas. If you look at our outlying areas, Shiawassee County, Lenawee, there's some manufacturing there. But they're fairly rural.

So we have a diverse region. And we decided-- and really, when I say we, our business leadership decided about four or five years ago that we needed to do a better job of delivering regional economic development services. They went around the country and looked at best practices. They hired McKinsey to do a cluster based strategy. We are very data and metric driven, just really from our research team is sitting here in the front row.

We also had Angela Ladetto from our team recently. But we spend a lot of time on our work doing it very data driven. And we have found and sometimes this is-- I don't if I-- Kristin would know when I say it's been like a little generational change recently. But we have discovered that doing this work as a region together is much more impactful than competing with each other, within our region.

So when we were set up, we have three pillars that we work on. First of all, marketing the region. Telling our story. For too long, Detroit let everyone else tell our story. And it wasn't always a good story. We would have-- I'd have international media come in, and they wanted to see what we called ruin porn, our old train station. Can you take me there? And I would say no. I won't.

But I'll show you where the \$10 billion in private sector investment is happening in downtown Detroit. I'll show you some of our suburbs. But I'm not doing that. Today, our ruin porn-- that's it's a famous thing, if you have a chance. Drive by it before you leave. It is now evolving and developing and being restored. It will be Ford Motors Innovation Center, and it is amazingly spectacular, and will be open soon.

So it's telling the story. Data driven, but telling the story. And we do our work internationally. Our region already has over 1,400 foreign firms. And so we want to make sure that we continue to tell the world about the opportunities for them here.

Grow the region. I have a very strong business development team. We do between 70 and 80 trips around the world every year. We don't wait for our customer to come to us. We go out to see them. Once again, very strategically where we go and who we talk to. I was in Italy in December, which sounds really fun, but it was hard work. We had 17 companies there. We have one in this afternoon. I'm missing him. He's meeting with my team. Another one coming in next week. So there was some immediate response. But it was because we were very careful about who we were talking to.

And then support the region. We have our local partners aligned with us to ensure that they can do strong retention and expansion of all of those auto tier one, tier two, tier threes who are already here. We want them to keep them here and help them grow. We support them in a lot of ways, but I would say primarily in the research space. We'll talk more about how that has-- the type of research that is really important nowadays.

Another thing that we did in the past year, I guess, it's been a long year, right? It was a long year. Many of you may be aware that the EDA, and Sue talked about it a bit as well-- the EDA came out with a Build Back Better regional challenge. And it was for regions in the country that did economic development with a cluster based strategy-- check that one off-- that were impacted by the global pandemic. Check that one off. There were times when Detroit was up to I don't about, a 25% unemployment rate or something a little crazy like that.

And what should they be doing to accelerate a rebound? To protect the jobs, grow the industries, and get back to not the same but better than before? The effort we put together is called the Global Epicenter of Mobility, and we were one of the 21 regions in the country that was awarded about \$53 million, plus we had to throw in a 20% match. This is not a check that comes to the Detroit Regional Partnership and me. That would make my job a lot easier.

But it really is spread among co-recipients. And what we all agreed upon is that we have more assets in the mobility space than anywhere in the world. They're ours right now. We want to make sure they can make this ICE to BEV conversion. And not just on electric. We're working on hydrogen and a lot of other technologies. But keeping the assets we have and supporting them and accelerating their growth in a global economy is a lot smarter than starting from scratch. Or getting a bailout, or asking for help.

When we put together the proposal, one of the key pieces that we had to discuss was what are the existing assets your region has to support the mobility industry? And I told the story at lunch. I was the last editor on our application. And the last thing I was looking at was the list of assets. And my team was seeing real time how I was editing. So I'm kind of a stickler for little periods and commas and spelling.

I thought we had 40 assets when I got started. We had 40 pages of assets. So right now, our region has over 400 assets to support the mobility industry. There really isn't anywhere else in the country or the world that has that many. This doesn't mean that we want to keep this all to ourselves, right? Our assets and the growth of our industry is important in the Midwest and it's important throughout the country.

So you'll learn a lot more on GEM, or the Global Epicenter of Mobility. The person who's heading it up for us started on Monday. We've been doing all the work with our team inside. But we need to build this out. And really, it's primarily to ensure that our talent and our small and medium sized businesses and our entrepreneurs have the tools and support and the access and they are included in all of these 400 plus assets, so that they can make this rapid conversion and not be left behind.

So that's what we've been spending a lot of time on here. I would say right now in our workflow of our prospect pipeline, about 70% are in the mobility space right now, which Jess is nodding her head, because she gets involved in all of the RFPs that are just flying in the door, and all of that work, we've all become rapid experts in the space. We're not quite there yet, but we're getting there. But that is the activity level here.

And one more thing I'll say. And I'm sensitive to the clocks I'm looking at here, because I know we'll have time for questions. In the past, and I've been doing this work for a while, in the past, we would talk about water pipeline and sewer pipeline, right? That was what was important to companies.

And we the whole site issue is a whole other issue I think we'll be talking about. And we have a lot to say about that. But now, what's most important for companies are talent pipeline. And we are winning projects, hundreds of millions of dollars worth of projects. One of our previous speakers said had map up. We like the big green private sector investment over Michigan. That was nice to look at.

But they're coming here because of the talent, because the talent is experienced. You always need to be upskilled in your job. Over the course of my career, I think I need upskilling all the time, which is why I like to learn and go to conferences. But our experienced talent, the second highest concentration of engineers in the country, is in the Detroit area. That's why we are winning these projects right now.

And so none of us have enough talent. I can say that it's a global issue, right? But let's make our talent, all of our talent smarter and able to be upskilled for the skills that are needed for tomorrow. So we're pretty excited here. I'm glad some of you from the outside got to come and check out what's happening in our area. Our downtown looks great. Usually, we have a little more snow. But I guess it's OK to say we didn't have it for those of you who are from out of town.

**KRISTIN
DZICZEK:** That's why we need EVs. Because this is a climate issue.

RICK WALKER: Exactly. Yes. But we're happy you came to see us. We welcome you to come back. We have a lot of people who come in for work conferences and say, I think I want to check it out for vacation. It's like, yeah, it's a real interesting story. We're very proud of it. And once again, happy to have the opportunity to talk about some of the opportunities and challenges that we still have that we are still working on every day. So thank you.

**KRISTIN
DZICZEK:** Thank you, Maureen. Jonathan.

**JONATHAN
BRIDGES:** So good afternoon. Thank you, Kristen, for inviting me and allowing JobsOhio to be part of the Symposium. I don't want to say an enemy territory. But we were talking earlier how often we generally compete at a state level. But really, it's more of a regional focus, right? And as we're seeing more and more of these large major projects that are landing in Michigan or Ohio or Indiana, one of the things is that, from a regional standpoint it benefits all of us, right?

Either if you don't win the direct project, you win the potential suppliers that support that. Or you're generally geographically focused or situated where you can supply maybe a project here and maybe a project down in the South. So again, that type of regional focus is probably something that we need to continue to focus on. Maybe that'll be a topic for future discussions with you and at the Fed.

So JobsOhio is the state level economic development entity. We're a private not-for-profit with the pure focus of growing the economy of the state of Ohio. We focus on different sectors to help boost the Ohio economy. We focus on different industries that, and I'll show a slide to that later. But again, our primary focus is, as being a private not-for-profit is really to work with companies, be that intermediary between the company and the state and regional and local economic development to help grow the state of Ohio.

We are, again, a private entity. So that makes us different. We have our own funding, which makes us a different entity. And again, we are the state level. So we interact directly with our Ohio Department of Development. And we offer our incentives. And we can have multiple meetings every week with the state of Ohio to ensure that the incentives that we offer to companies are in line with their goals and our goals, and obviously, we set our strategies to be aligned.

What you'll see up here is our map. We are represented by six regional entities as well. They are the experts in their regions. They roll up from the local economic development entities. So again, we use this strategy, this hierarchy to help us be experts, if you will. I'm not going to be necessarily the expert of everything that happens in Lucas County. But we have regional and local economic development entities that will help us develop the right strategy for them and their attraction.

As I mentioned, automotive is one of the major sectors in Ohio. But we represent nine other industry sectors, and we recently added military and federal installations, because of our large population of current military as well as veterans, that once they retire they find they find it advantageous and attractive to be in Ohio.

So again, that has been something that as companies are looking for expertise from a technical standpoint, they're often relying on where can we find the best talent. Well, not only do we have academic institutions and trade schools and community colleges that provide that initial education for companies to attract, but then if you have a direct population of very highly skilled individuals who are retired on paper but not ready to go off to the sunset and then live on a beach, although a lot of us would enjoy that as well.

So again, there are multiple facets of how we develop the strategy for the state of Ohio, and focusing more on the automotive space, as I'll talk about later. The talent and jobs that we're talking about on all these panels, it's not just an automotive sector job, right? These are occupations and trainings and workforce that feed all of the sectors that we're focusing on. Because all of these sectors are becoming increasingly more technical.

So again, as we focus on upskilling or training, if that particular employee doesn't feel that automotive is their preferred occupation sector, maybe it's health care, and their skills and upskilled talent is very well received into those occupations in that sector.

To delve a little bit more on the automotive space, it is a very highly important industry within the state of Ohio. The one sector on this slide that I want to point out is in the lower left hand quadrant. Ohio is the number one producer of engines and we're the second largest producer of transmissions. And I can almost feel a collective sigh as I say that.

And it's something that isn't new to us, right? We've known this. It's been a very advantageous point for us historically, but we recognize through our strategy analysis that is obviously something that's been at risk for us. And it's not new. And we've been addressing what are our potential opportunities given those risks. And so one of the things I'll talk about later is that how we have seen, even in light of some of the McKinsey research that was posed, how do we see that job and labor aspect as a benefit, if you will.

High level map, I'm sure it's hard to see. But there's two different factors on this map. One, you'll recognize the boxes, if you will. Those are our county outlines. The darker the blue, if you can differentiate the colors, the darker the blue indicates the higher the concentration of automotive employment that exists within that county, right?

All of the dots represent automotive establishments. It is not all automotive establishments in Ohio. But it's top line, ones for names that you'll recognize. And as you can imagine, if we take the Stellantis activity that's up in North Ohio there's several entities that are purely focused on supporting Stellantis. And as you can imagine, highly concentrated blue in those counties because of the automotive employment that exists there.

And as we see and as we attract new companies into Ohio, what we are seeing and what we see as a potential advantage is that as we see this transition from ICE transmission and engine production, there is an opportunity for excess employment that would be advantageous to a new company to locate somewhere in that vicinity. We don't when this, per se. We understand what the Federal mandates are.

But we recognize that there is a trend potentially down, as we see the engine transmission demand decline, and we forecast and we understand that there's a trend up in EV or potential products that support that industry. But again, from an employment standpoint, which is an asset now. Historically, companies' OEMs may not have viewed them as an asset. They absolutely view them as an asset now.

Those employees are going to be prime and ready, and are used to being in a manufacturing environment. Whether they need upskilling in one way, shape, or form which we can talk about how we are providing some of that, they are going to be a potential asset for a company in the future. And as we talk about this, we've seen companies locate strategically because of the employment that they foresee as available in the future, right?

And it's hard for me to even tell. But if you look at blue 11, which is one of our recent announcements, which is Honda, which is their partnership with LG. It's in a county that's gray, right? But it's right below a county that's very dark blue and next to one that's somewhat light blue. So what does that mean?

They're going someplace where there isn't historically or it doesn't seem to be a very strong automotive employment, but they figure if they build it, it'll come, right? And we've seen the opposite of that, where we've seen General Motors in Toledo locate and onshore electric drive units into an existing Brownfield transmission facility that's already still producing transmissions.

But what they've decided to do is we know we have an existing employment base here. We know that we're going to make a transition out of internal combustion engine transmissions. But we need these electric drive units to support EV production. Let's bet that we can do that with the existing workforce. And so they're investing there.

So again, we're seeing ebbs and flows maybe contrary to some of the information that was provided. But again, we're seeing growth. And we see that as potential growth in light of what some may consider as a short sighted downside in the future. Just to highlight even-- and I'll move to this quickly, because I'm running over on time-- highlighting some of the major investments that we've seen since 2019. You'll see some of the automotive ones that are on there.

But again, as I mentioned as we upskill employees that are going to support not only the automotive space, these are potential projects that this same talent pool we'll be able to support, right? In the health care space, in the food and ag space, as well as the automotive space. So again, we're working to on a collective strategy not only to support the automotive industry, but to support a tech focused job creation strategy.

And again, these are just to highlight some of the companies that have found Ohio home that, again, we are working with to help them find tech talent or help upskill the talent that they already have or that we have to support their future growth in the tech space. Thanks.

KRISTIN Thank you, Jonathan. Thank you. Now Rick.

DZICZEK:

RICK WALKER: Thank you, Kristin. It's a pleasure to be here. Thank you for inviting me and for allowing me to share the stage with these companies that are just doing great things. So GAMA is a little different. So we are a very traditional trade association. So we're a 501(C)(6), for those of you who are into IRS regulations.

It means that we survive not on government funding but on membership dues, sponsorship, fees, and meeting fees. That's our entire source of income. So the flip side of that is we do not have incentives to give out. That is all done by the Georgia Department of Economic development, as well as by other counties. So we're a little different that way

I founded GAMA about 12 years ago to support what our state was doing at the time. And I can give you one example and then I'll move into a few other things. The state's been very fortunate to land a couple of large projects recently. So we weren't involved in recruiting or due diligence or closing the deals on that.

But we were involved now in supporting that in terms of onboarding new suppliers. So we're putting on a program called the three P's of supplier success, parts, process, and people. And we do that to help suppliers transition to be suppliers for the OEMs that we've been blessed to have.

You can probably tell, I don't have a Southern accent. I am from Detroit, born and raised here, and then moved South with a tier one supplier. So we ended up in Savannah for a number of years. Grew that company, and it was acquired. So I went back into the private practice of law, and then decided my love for the auto industry was so big that I wanted to get back into it. So I formed a trade association, much like existed in the neighboring states of Tennessee, Alabama, and Mississippi.

Not a very exciting slide. That's who we are. So what is GAMA. We're not radioactive. We're not a rock band. We're a phenomenon. We're a little different. So the South has-- Alabama has something called AAMA, A-A-M-A. Tennessee has TAMA, T-A-M-A. Mississippi has MAMA. Guess what South Carolina has? No, it's not SCAMA.

[LAUGHTER]

It is S-C-A-C. And they're different in that they are an affiliate of the South Carolina Manufacturing Alliance. So we're a trade association. We're non-profit. We're privately held. Again, limited sources of income. But I think we do a good job with what we have.

We're a resource for the automotive industry. I'd like to think we're a resource. And hopefully, we get mentioned as part of the recruiting efforts by the state. Like I said, formed in 2010, which makes us, believe it or not, the new kid on the block for the South. And I'm talking about four states, maybe a total of seven states in our region.

Tennessee was the first to form an organization like ours. Again, private. And trade association only. And that was about over 30 years ago, more at the time of Nissan's relocation and the General Motors Spring Hill. Followed by Alabama, maybe about 25 years ago. Followed by Mississippi about 15 years ago. And then GAMA about 10, 12 years ago.

And we've experienced dramatic growth. In fact, the last time I think I was honored to speak here was because I think the Fed was wondering what's going on with this GAMA organization down there. Tell me what's going on in GAMA? What are you doing? And that was a pleasure to speak then, like now.

GAMA is part-- I mentioned these neighboring states. GAMA is part of the Southern Automotive Manufacturing Alliance. So of course, we had to have it rhyme with GAMA, so it's called SAMA. So there's a song, something like that, GAMA, TAMA, BANANA, FANA, FO. Something like that.

Each year, the four main states in the South hold a Southern automotive conference. It's been going now for 15 years. GAMA hosted it this past October in Atlanta. We hosted it before that. It rotates among the four states. We hosted it before that in 2018. We have had attendance in the range of 1,000 to 1,200 people. And it's international in scope.

It's also a trade show. We had about 150 exhibitors this year. We had about 220 back in 2018, pre-COVID. And it has become a very well respected event for the automotive industry. We had what we call pavilions, which are sets of exhibit booths from Japan. We had almost 30 companies from Japan exhibiting.

We had a trade pavilion from Canada. We had a trade pavilion from Taiwan. And also a trade pavilion this year for the very first time from Oracle. Not a foreign country. But we did that to show just how much the automotive industry is changing. So it is going to become an entity into itself. We're now going to be running on a software economy.

Not to belabor this. You probably have heard all this in different ways the last few days. But we've had some major announcements in Georgia recently. SK Battery set up shop back about two, three years ago, and they've expanded that facility just north and east of Atlanta.

Rivian announced last year a \$5 billion investment. Hyundai Motor Group-- and for those of you who may not know, Hyundai Motor Group is sort of the parent of Hyundai Motor Manufacturing that makes the Hyundai Motor vehicles in Montgomery, Alabama, and Kia Motor Manufacturing that makes the vehicles in West Point, Georgia.

So they've announced this metal plant near Savannah, Georgia. \$5.5 billion investment. And SK Battery, again, working with their parent, SK On and Hyundai, have announced a memorandum of understanding to build a facility north of Atlanta, about \$4 or \$5 billion is what the stakeholders estimate it will be.

This press release came out last week. And it tells a story about what's going on in Georgia, is about \$21 billion of investment since 2020. And I won't read it to you, but you can read that second paragraph. It's just amazing what's going on with some of the other support that's coming to the state.

There's a very simplified map of the state. Atlanta's sort of a little north of center there, but next to the Rivian logo. SK Battery, their first facility is the one off to the northeast in the state. The new facility is on the north, to the west. Kia is on the west side of the state, as you approach Alabama down Interstate 85.

Bluebird Bus, that's the blue bird that's there, the school bus manufacturer. And Hyundai Motor Group is the new electric vehicle metal plant near Savannah. Just for those of you that like interstates, just picture Interstate 75 runs north to south through Georgia right through Atlanta, right all the way down. And then Interstate 85 runs from Northeast to the southwest, passing through Atlanta.

And then Interstate 20 runs through Atlanta, west to east. So if you imagine that in your eyes, we're sort of at an epicenter of the interstates. They don't all cross at the same place. But it's pretty darn close. And that's one of the advantages the state has.

You may or may not be aware that these are some of the companies that have major operations in Georgia. Of course, I mentioned Blue Bird. Honda has a factory in Georgia. It's called Precision Parts. Think of that as mainly a transmission plant. We've been the beneficiary of a couple of tire plants. And SK On, of course, is the SK Battery facility.

We have a number of headquarters offices in Atlanta and the surrounding areas, including some of the top names. Now, for example, Mercedes Benz is not doing any manufacturing at Atlanta. That is their North American office. The same thing with Porsche and Groupe PSA. OK.

I think Kristin wanted me to say a few things about advantages of Georgia. But if I could just highlight a few of them, maybe we'll circle back. But I think in my mind, the key advantages that Georgia has, and I think the state has been doing a good job of conveying that information, is workforce. Georgia has availability of workforce.

And if you look just at the Southern region, Georgia is one of the states that has not had a major OEM locate there since Kia some 12, 15 years ago. So if you look at our neighboring states, they've had success with other OEMs. And they don't have as much workforce that's available.

We also have very strong workforce development programs and very strong workforce training programs, and we believe very strong workforce retention programs. Another factor we like to talk about is location. So I mentioned the interstates. We also have a strong railroad system.

And in addition, we have, depending upon the stats you follow, the world's busiest airport in Atlanta. It brings a lot of international travelers. Some of the headquarters that have relocated to Atlanta did that simply so their executives can come in from Germany, Japan, Korea wherever to the international airports. We also have probably one of the largest concentrations of international consulates in Atlanta.

So we've got location. We've got workforce. And we've got, I'll call it a pro-business climate. The state is very measured about its incentives, but it is trying to stay competitive. And they've been successful recently, and especially as evidenced by Rivian and the Hyundai Motor metal plant.

And there was one other thing at the very bottom there. There's another advantage. I like to think it's GAMA. But that's just me. So thanks.

**KRISTIN
DZICZEK:**

Thank you, Rick. So we'll get into the questions. I see there's already a couple in the Pigeonhole app. But if you have questions for the panel, please send them up. I can carry the conversation on my own if you'd like to just have Kristin questions, that's fine. But I'm going to start off with throughout this conference, we've been talking about the tremendous amount of investment that's flowing into electric vehicles, batteries, motors, transactions, and processing, and refining, and recycling, and mining even.

So I know you are all very busy people because of that. So with all this activity, can you talk about your organization or your state's strategy on where in that supply chain is your areas best opportunities? Where are you concentrating? Are you looking in certain advantages in certain areas of that supply chain, or are you going after everything? I know it's hard to get a lunch date with some of you that live closer to me, so I know you're busy.

MAUREEN It's the closest we've been in a while.

DONOHUE

KRAUSS:

KRISTIN It is, since maybe September.

DZICZEK:

JONATHAN We can walk to our offices.

BRIDGES:

KRISTIN Yeah, so just talk about where in the supply chain you're concentrating your efforts.

DZICZEK:

MAUREEN Sure. It's really easy to say everything, because we do believe that every job is important to the person who has it. And with our history, with our heritage, you know, auto's going to look here.

DONOHUE

KRAUSS:

But a couple of trends we've seen. Our sweet spot on a lot of the EV space. The success that we've had right now first started out in the engineering and R&D space. That was here. And it was built upon. So we've seen a great deal of success with that.

And now we're talking-- we're starting to look at the manufacturing side. So a company called Our Next Energy announced several months ago a gigafactory to do the batteries that will last 600 miles between charges That's a game changer. They're going to build a \$2.1 billion gigafactory here. No wait, 1.4 billion, 2,100 jobs. I knew I was going to mess that up. But it's a lot right bigger than we've ever seen.

So I would say, but if you look at how large our region is and you look at where is a large factory going to go, it's most likely going to go in those outlying areas. Mostly because of real estate. You have to be close to the talent, but you also have to have large ready to go sites. So our space has been really around engineering, R&D, headquarters, North American headquarters, because we have so many of the global companies here.

Right now, 98 of 100 of the top tier one suppliers have a location in our area. And so we're trying to now build up that same cadence in the EV, hydrogen space. And you'll be hearing more about those announcements. So I guess that's a long way of saying we'll talk to all of them. But it's really because of that sort of culture and supply chain and talent that we have that's already familiar with this industry.

KRISTIN My next question will be about sites. So let's stay focused on where in the supply chain are looking to play. Yeah.

DZICZEK:

so

**JONATHAN
BRIDGES:**

From the Ohio standpoint, we started looking at this some time ago, as I mentioned. And actually, one of the companies that was mentioned yesterday, Benchmark Minerals Intelligence, we actually engaged in a research study with Benchmark and the National Resources Defense Council, probably three years ago, trying to understand where Ohio fits in a battery world. And this is before it took off.

And so recognizing that we can't change the geography of how you or where you can mine things. But you can change maybe where things are processed. And then understanding where the things that are processed, where they feed into the supply chain. And so recognizing those factors.

Our strategy has been and continues to be that we have some very strategic OEMs that are in our state. And we partner with them, have partnered with them historically. We'll continue to partner with them to determine and attract what they feel is most beneficial for their success.

And so, as I had mentioned earlier, one of the things that we worked very extensively on with General Motors is attracting the electric drive units that were being produced in Asia, right? And so those are brand new products that are being onshored, never produced in North America, let alone in the US, but now they're going to be produced in Ohio in an existing facility. Because that's what they felt they needed to be successful.

And so as we've continued on that strategy working through similar type initiatives with Ford up in Avon Lake, right? Again, OEMs. They're big whales. We need to feed the whale, right? What is it that they need? And one of the things that they were working on is an EV transit type product.

And so us working with them, like what can we do to help you? Well, we love where we're at. We've got a great workforce where we're at. But how can we build here to be that much more successful? But let us help you, right? And so they're doubling that plant size, doubling the workforce. And it's well north of a million dollars of investment.

Again, that's what they wanted to do. And that's what we help them do. And again, we're a private not-for-profit. We're the intermediary, if you will, bringing in our state, government, and local and regional and local economic development. So again, that's been our success strategy.

Again, we do do global business development and attraction. We have a great team. They contract with several entities that rep us internationally, as well as having our own reps that represent us internationally. And so we do those types of meetings, and I've been fortunate enough to participate in many of those.

But again, we have, I don't want to say a limited number of major companies, but we do, right? I mean, we have some very key names and so we support them. And then we have many suppliers. And so talking to the suppliers to determine what their strategy is.

And we do that through what we call business, retention, and expansion meetings. I think last year I did, myself and my other colleague that's part of our team, I think we did somewhere north of 150 ourselves, let alone those meetings that were held by the region or the local economic development to talk to.

Not only the whales, the big OEMs, but also the supply base. What's your strategy? How do you see yourself growing in this new environment that is something that you're not in today? And so understanding what their strategy is. And then us trying to put new programs into place to support them, or trying to help them understand how the programs that we offer from our own coffers, as well as the state funds that are available, if there is a capital investment that needs to be made or a workforce investment that needs to be made, what can we do to support you on those growth trajectories?

So again, we do that not only at the top line with the big companies, but we try to do that in the supply base. And again, that has been a successful strategy for us historically and we're going to continue to do that.

**KRISTIN
DZICZEK:** Rick, do you want to weigh in?

RICK WALKER: Yes. Since GAMA is not an economic development organization, all I can do is look at what the Georgia Department of Economic Development has done and praise what they've done. Their success has been remarkable. And I would look at their strategy in hindsight and see what they've done and the major projects they've landed.

And every once in a while, every week or so, I see another announcement of a tier one or tier two supplier coming in to support what's going in Savannah for Hyundai, or bringing in a battery manufacturer that's going to be battery technology, but maybe not directly automotive. It's more of a storage play. But it's going to be the same technology in a lot of respects. So I hate to dodge the question that way.

**KRISTIN
DZICZEK:** That's OK.

RICK WALKER: But we don't do economic development, but I'm just in awe what they are doing.

**KRISTIN
DZICZEK:** Well, you're an observer and reporter from the ground in Georgia to tell us what's going on there. So that's great. So one of the advantages Southern states have had is well developed mega sites. They go in and buy this big piece of land. They put some infrastructure into it, a big investment.

That's part of what Ford found attractive in Kentucky and in Tennessee. So mega sites are a big deal. So I would like to know from all three of your regions or states, what of initiatives have taken in developing prospective states like that? And are you seeing the site parameters or requirements different for EV investments?

Some of the ones that I know of have had more power and water requirements, or more green mandates, and they want a LEED certified building and all of that. So if you can talk a little bit about what you're doing about developing sites.

**MAUREEN
DONOHUE
KRAUSS:** Want to start with me?

**KRISTIN
DZICZEK:** Sure, I know you've talked about some of them being further out, because they want big footprints.

**MAUREEN
DONOHUE
KRAUSS:**

Yeah. We don't have a mega site in the city of Detroit. It's a very large city, but we don't have it here. So start with that. So part of it is because we're a little older, more mature in this game of automotive. A lot of our mega sites have actually, in the core around the city, have been already taken. They've been developed.

So we do talk sometimes about redevelopment of older property. Whether it's brownfield or just re-use. And that's important. But we needed to make sure that we could be competitive on these mega site projects. Our sweet spot right now is probably 50 to 100 acres, when you look at the majority of demand. But it's good to have a few of those mega sites in your back pocket.

So we were really happy, we worked very hard on this, but last December our state legislature in a bipartisan fashion, which doesn't always happen in this country anywhere, but in a bipartisan fashion passed a SORE-- it's called SORE legislation. And I know someone's going to ask me what a SORE mean, and I will get probably three of the four acronyms.

But basically what it letters, what it stands for, basically what it did is put aside \$1.5 billion for site development, specifically around mega sites and the next tier level of sites. We're using that to help companies who come in to get the sites they need, get them developed in the time that they do, and to proactively develop sites.

The site that Ford went to in Tennessee, they spent 19 years putting that site together. So it seems like, wow, they did it so quick. What are you so behind on? That was 19 years, right? 19 years ago, we were landing huge projects here that were taking up the sites that we had. So we might have to do a little bit of catch up on getting those sites here.

But when you have \$1.5 billion to help you do it. That's helped us land a couple of big projects already. We also, our legislature just got into session just this week, last week and this week. There are proposals that they will vote on shortly to put more funds into that account so we can do more of the proactive.

So that sort of big picture of what we're doing in Michigan. It's great to have a mega site. But if you aren't close enough, commutable enough to talent and supply chain, it really doesn't work. Because then you deal with issues like housing and schools. If you have to relocate 3,000 people to a mega site, that's probably not the most efficient way for any company to make an investment.

We also launched about a year ago or so-- we're still working on it-- something called VIP by DRP. So verified industrial properties by the Detroit Regional Partnership. We have 100 sites that we've identified-- we want to get up to about 200-- that we are working with third parties, engineering and consulting firms, to do really desktop analysis of how those sites are ready for companies.

So we can assure someone, you get an RFP at once, 100 acre sites or whatever, we can say these sites have been vetted by professionals. Nothing against economic developers. I've done this my whole life. But it's not vetted by people who go out and look and say, that looks good. And I don't see a cat tail. So I think we're good. It's a site, it's a great site. These are engineering firms who are really doing much more of a deep dive. So we can assure our customer that these sites will meet their timelines.

So one more thing I want to touch on that you mentioned. What's different this time, with these EV, with these battery RFPs and these projects? They're at hypospadias in what they want to be in. We've really never seen that before, the speed that they want to be in. They do have-- they want bigger sites. They want more of their supply chain near them. So they want to secure that property early on in the process.

I will say that incentives is not the top thing they start with. That's a little different from the past. In the past, you say, what incentives do you have? Now it's speed to market to meet their speed. So when we say this whole ICE to BEV conversion is an accelerated conversion, it is just by the deal flow of companies who want to be ready to go sooner than we've ever seen before.

So it's causing all of us to, once again, work really hard, work really fast, but also to spend a little time thinking ahead about what are we going to do in five years if they take all our sites, if we don't have buildings? So we have to do a couple-- it's not an and/or. It's both. We have to do both of them right now. So we're working very hard on it.

I suspect my colleagues really around the Midwest have the same issues, because we don't have 1,000 acre sites just sitting around with the talent nearby. So that's our challenge. But we're up to it.

KRISTIN Great. Jonathan.

DZICZEK:

JONATHAN Yeah. You hit a lot of great points. So from an Ohio standpoint, we've obviously been looking at this similar to you. And what we've developed over the last five years, we have probably a similar type program, it sounds like, where we call it SiteOhio Authentication Sites. So as I said, we're the state level. We have regional level, we have local.

And so there's a process where local economic developers will say, hey, we have a site that we would want to attract somebody to. And that site gets bubbled up to the region, gets bubbled up to the state. And then we have consultants who are part of the engineering firm, and as well as site consultants that help identify the shortcomings on those sites. And then we determine where they're at in that process.

And those that either meet the criteria of a fully, and I hate to use the term, shovel ready site, they get a stamp, right? And it's basically they've been SiteOhio authenticated. If you have a need at this acreage near a certain amount of population, and whether you need to be near a highway or a rail, this site meets your needs, right? And it's ready to go.

And that information is actually on our website. It's public information, if you will. And those sites that don't meet that criteria of a SiteOhio Authenticated Site, they're put into a category where we work with a region and work with the locals to help them identify what are the gaps that they need or that we need to help them figure out, such that these sites will move to an authenticated category.

And the difference is, I think since-- and I wrote down a couple of numbers, right? Since about 2016, we had about 500 sites that have gone through that program. And you can imagine the number that were mega site, more than 500 acres or so, very small. And since then, now, with all of the activity that we've seen and with this massive amount of requirements, now we're working to-- I don't want to say cobble together, but work with maybe between regions, because a site is in between two of our regional folks.

Or hey, this site that you have, that's a smaller acreage, has all these requirements. This site that you had separately identified isn't. Let's figure out if we can wrap these two together and put them into a different category where they could fit a mega-project in the future. And again, this is something that we've been working on in the past. We're continuing to work on in the future.

But again, we've seen great number a large amount of activity to these mega sites, if you will. And to that point, right? We've not only tried to figure out how do we have the right sites, but then put together the state of Ohio put together legislation to support some of that activity as well. So again, we're seeing an immense number of opportunities for the mega sites. But then we still have those smaller sites, which if you call under 400 acres small. 400 acres or smaller small sites.

But again, this information is public and is on our website. And again we're a free commodity. So as companies or individuals are looking at these types of opportunities, we're open and willing to help them navigate our site or find maybe a right opportunity for them.

KRISTIN
DZICZEK: Rick, do you want to weigh in, or?

RICK WALKER: Just briefly. I do know that the State of Georgia Department of Economic Development and Georgia Power as well, and they work hand in hand, have a database of sites, some of which may or may not qualify as mega sites. But they--

KRISTIN
DZICZEK: Some of those investments went to mega sites that you've already gotten.

RICK WALKER: Yeah. They do talk-- the term you use, shovel ready sites. So I'm sure the matrix is pretty detailed about what's available.

KRISTIN
DZICZEK: So incentives come along with these sites as well. And I want to get into a couple of questions we have from the audience as well as mine. I'm going to start with whenever there's this flurry of investment activity, states and communities sort of prioritize where to concentrate limited resources. And after there's been several high profile competitions that haven't yielded many jobs, because in the end this is all about jobs, so Foxconn in Wisconsin, the Amazon headquarters too. I'm not going to keep naming, but there are several more.

What kinds of efforts do you undertake in due diligence on the firms that may invest in your state? I mean, some of these are-- one of the questions from Kaley Hall is how do you evaluate the potential of smaller unknown companies that don't have a US presence? You've got some-- they may seem kind of fly by night. And you've got these great resources and money that you may be giving to them. How do you prioritize or know that you're making a good investment?

RICK WALKER: Can I take a shot at that one first?

KRISTIN
DZICZEK: Sure.

RICK WALKER: My answer would be short.

KRISTIN Sure.

DZICZEK:

RICK WALKER: I did talk to the-- I got some help on that topic from the Department of Economic Development. And they do a lot of due diligence. They assured me that. And they don't go down the path very long if it's not going to have any longevity. So that's about the extent of my knowledge of the due diligence. But being a lawyer, I know what due diligence is all about, and they do roll up their sleeves.

JONATHAN I guess I'll go next.

BRIDGES:

KRISTIN Sure. Go ahead. We'll go back the other way. Sure.

DZICZEK:

JONATHAN Yeah. So from our standpoint, we are fortunate, and I say that because we have an extensive team that does some really good work. We have a project management team that's led by one of my counterparts. And they have a great internal organization, where they literally will vet companies from international or domestic.

BRIDGES:

We run them through our own financial model, and to determine not only from an incentive standpoint what should we offer, but doing due diligence, to that point, and we employ our legal entities as well, internal, to help us have a very strong understanding of the financial position, where they fit in in industry, if it's a company that we feel from an industry standpoint that we want to help push forward in our state. And then understanding their needs and how can what we have at our disposal fit those needs.

And I'll tell you that there are projects that have been won by other states that we've passed on, because we're not only speaking for our funds, but we're speaking for the state funds, which is a very heavy undertaking. We're not going to-- we don't want to put the state in a bad position by making an incentive offer. We wouldn't.

But we also have to-- that gets vetted by the State of Ohio, our Ohio Department of Development. But it also gets vetted by our internal team. So again, it's that gravity of we wouldn't risk the state of Ohio's funds let alone our own internal funds to put the state at a disadvantage to win a particular opportunity. We're willing to pass on that. And there are projects that we have seen that we've tried to reverse engineer, could we have beat that offer?

And oftentimes, I'll say, which was similar to what you had mentioned earlier, we're not going to lose-- companies aren't looking top line for an incentive. It has to be the right fit. We're not going to lose a project because of an incentive offer. It's going to be something else. But we're going to pass on a company because of they don't necessarily either fit where we feel our limited resources need to go, or they just haven't passed what we would consider our internal vetting, if you will.

MAUREEN So like my colleagues, we don't give incentives. We coordinate between the state and the locals.

DONOHUE

KRAUSS:

JONATHAN Sorry I keep bringing that up. I apologize.

BRIDGES:

**MAUREEN
DONOHUE
KRAUSS:**

No, no. We don't do incentives either. But we coordinate that and make sure it's the right package. So our state does due diligence. Like everyone else, sometimes we complain it takes longer than we would like, because we like to work really fast. But it's important work that needs to be done.

We also have something-- we started this a while ago. Maybe it seems a little odd. But we have a separate list of projects that are 1,000 jobs and above. And so we call that sort of our gut list. Because I have a couple of team members-- I've been doing this for 30 years-- a couple of team members who have a lot of experience.

Sometimes we look at a project and your gut just tells you, no way, right? This just doesn't make sense. I've had them-- they usually come in with sports stars attached to them or whatever, who have friends in the business. And oh, we're going to do this great thing. And it's like, that's never going to happen.

So we take them seriously. We respond to the RFPs. But we have healthy skepticism on some projects. And we will say no. And I don't want to name names on projects I'm proud of that I advised. No. I have sent notes to the head of our utilities, to the governor's office to say, our assessment is no on this one. Don't go overboard.

One of the big incentives, or at least it used to be a big incentive was free land. We competed against that all the time with some of the Southern states that were mentioned earlier. And I remember a big project that was looking at one of the states not on the stage and competing with us, and they said, but we're getting offered free land. It was an international company.

And finally I said, you know what, our land has value here. So you have to pay for it. It's your long term investment. It's going to help your investment stay stronger. It's illegal to give free land in Michigan, by the way. It's against our state constitution. So we don't do it. But it's like bottom line, let's look at what's impacting your bottom line, not just this one component of it, because free land sounds really good.

So I think have to be really thoughtful about incentives. And I think when we looked at getting this legislation passed in Michigan in December, we looked at competition. We looked at the needs of the companies. They're asking us for different things now than they did before. We were very thoughtful in talking to our legislators about what our competitive landscape looked at and what we were hearing by listening to our customer.

The other thing I will say, incentives in the past have been cash and a lot of big dollar amounts. So I spent a little bit of time in Indianapolis and I led their Amazon HQ2 project. And I will tell you, of the top 20, we were in the top 20, we had the lowest incentive package. We did not give a lot of cash out. We looked at more partnerships and things that would benefit not just the company but the community.

And I have those still tucked away, so I don't like to talk about them a lot. But they were really-- one I will say. The city had 10,000 vacant homes that had been reverted because of tax issues, right? And if you're going to bring in 50,000 people to your community, where are they all going to live? So we had a commitment from the city that they would be sold to Amazon employees for a buck a piece.

It solves several problems. It put people in communities in vacant houses that would invest money in them. It was a perk to the city. How much would that have cost the city? Not much. It would have been a win for the city to fill those homes. So I think we really have to spend time on creatively incentivizing projects that will benefit both the company, as well as the community. So

It takes a little more work to do that than just a tax write off, right? But in the end it really resonated with the company to do things like that.

**KRISTIN
DZICZEK:**

So I'm going to ask a question from our audience. This is a virtual participant. I know her. You may recognize the name Camila Domonoske. She's the NPR autos reporter, and she is going to ask about incentives. And I'm going to take it a little bit further.

So she's asking, as these bidding wars to win projects get more fierce, at what point does the going rate to attract a plant grow so high that regions start to balk? I'm going to add on to that question. There is a lot of controversy or criticism among the public about giving so much money to big companies. Or even in Georgia, there's been big pushback on the Rivian. We don't want this investment in our state. Can you talk a little bit about what do you think the going rate is going to be, and the public pushback on giving these big incentives to these investments? Do you want to start?

RICK WALKER:

Sure. As to Rivian, I believe that has gone to a steady state right now. And there was pushback by the local community, one on the loss of taxes possibly and not sufficiently high. And as well as an environmental concern. And the citizenship did rally pretty strongly, hired some competent lawyers and went forward.

I believe that has sort of simmered down to the point where it looks like it's going to go forward. And not that I have any inside information on that. But that's the read I get from the press. So I'll go with that.

And the incentives, I did ask for guidance on that from the state of Georgia, and they said they're very competitive. Because I wanted to make sure that I wasn't going to walk into something where they possibly gave away too much. But very competitive. And I do believe them, because I know they do battle on a lot of that.

**KRISTIN
DZICZEK:**

Well, I mean, I've seen a state lose a deal, and they put a dollar for dollar on the investment. It was an over a billion dollar investment. They gave them dollar for dollar, 100% incentive, and still lost because they didn't have the fundamentals in place. So do you want to talk about the transparency and the size where people might start to push back on?

**JONATHAN
BRIDGES:**

Well, and I think what you're alluding to is, and it's our terminology, right? We're not willing to buy a deal, right? We're not going to put the state of Ohio or JobsOhio financial resources at jeopardy to win a project.

Ultimately, there's a payback from a company locating, and that's part of our ROI model, right? And there's a return to the state that has to be achieved for it to be a rational decision for us to put money into the game, right? And again, our incentives aren't going to be the deciding factor on a project, right? They shouldn't be.

If a company doesn't find it advantageous to be in Ohio for a multitude of other reasons, it's probably not a good fit. And really, the incentive piece is the icing on the cake. And so we do an extensive amount of vetting.

As I mentioned earlier, there's a team project managers, project coordinators that spend ungodly amount of hours vetting projects to ensure that we don't put the state of Ohio or JobsOhio in a position of supporting a project that doesn't provide a payback that is acceptable to both of our organizations.

**KRISTIN
DZICZEK:**

But no one wants dry cake, Jonathan. I mean, you're a cake aficionado I know. No one wants dry cake.

JONATHAN BRIDGES: Well--

KRISTIN DZICZEK: They want some frosting.

JONATHAN BRIDGES: I'm going to say we're going to put a little sprinkle on the top. I mean, we absolutely-- I mean, and I'll say this. There have been companies that have located to Ohio where we've offered them nothing. And there have been companies that have located in Ohio that we didn't know about. And they come afterwards like, oh, we just set up an operation.

We're like, well, that's fabulous, great. We didn't have to put in any dollar to grab your investment or grow your investment or gravitate your investment. But that doesn't mean that we won't put money into supporting their growth into the future. So a little sprinkle is, we're happy to do that. But it shouldn't be the deciding factor.

KRISTIN DZICZEK: Jonathan and I share dessert sometimes.

JONATHAN BRIDGES: We share deserts. That's why the sprinkles.

KRISTIN DZICZEK: When we go to things. So I know he likes cake.

JONATHAN BRIDGES: Just a couple of little points, because I know we're getting close to time here. And I should have talked about this with sites, right, mega sites. Because the first question you have to ask is, does the community want this project?

So before you talk about creating a mega site or putting together an incentive package, the community has to want it. And even communities that have the talent pool or have the big site, they may not want a project. So you just don't go any further in that conversation as far as community desire. So I think that's really important.

Incentives have had a long-- I've worked on them a long time in different areas. So I used to say, remember when rebates for cars were the big thing. And say, if you're the only car dealership on the block who doesn't give a rebate, you're going to have a lot of people pass you by.

But you have to be smart about it, you have to be strategic about it. And what I learned in a very large project I worked on before, the key is listening to what the customer really needs, right? They may need a talent program that suits their industry. They may need housing for 50,000 employees and how are you going to solve that, right?

So it's listening very carefully to the customer. Because one size never fits all. And I think what we've learned with this new EV battery hydrogen space is they have different needs than traditional. Remember when we all made the conversion from manufacturing to tech? It's like, wait, all our incentives help only manufacturing, not tech. We have to change our incentives.

I think we're at that moment right now where it might be something that's more community development oriented to help attract talent. So it's listening to the needs of the customers and making sure that whatever incentives we talk about, and tomorrow I get to talk to all the new legislators in Michigan about this topic. So this is a little rehearsal for me. It's good rehearsal on this.

But what is going to make this work both-- and I said this earlier, but I'll say it again-- for the community and the customer, who is the business thinking of coming in? And then after that, you both win. So I think that's really what should be our goal as we're talking about these projects that we all want in our communities.

We all agree, no matter where you are in the spectrum of politics, we all want better jobs for our residents and more investment in our community. So then you have to do a lot more listening than maybe we've done in the past.

**KRISTIN
DZICZEK:** Well, I'm going to ask the one last question. This one comes from the audience, from Laura Putri. And I know this is important not just to EV manufacturing. She asks, how important is proximity to a large water source to EV manufacturing? And will it become more important in the coming years? And does that play to any advantages that your state or area may have? I know it's important for semiconductors as well. And there's a ton of semiconductor investment going on. So do you want to talk about water?

**MAUREEN
DONOHUE
KRAUSS:** Well, at least two of us here are around the, and especially Michigan, we're surrounded by the second largest volume of freshwater in the world. So we feel really good about water here. I did this-- many years ago, I did economic development in Arizona, and it was a little different. We knew back then it was going to be a problem, right?

So when people say, oh, talent shortage, new problem. No, we the population was going to shrink in age. Water, a new problem. Not really, we understood the needs for water and having that access. And once again, it's being smart about who's going to be using it and how we're going to using it, how we're going to use it. So I think it's just increasingly important. It's an asset that we're very pleased to have and we'll protect it.

**KRISTIN
DZICZEK:** I was going to say, one that the community cares a lot about too.

**MAUREEN
DONOHUE
KRAUSS:** Absolutely. And when you talk about quality of life, in Michigan you're never more than six miles from a body of water. And that's part of our lifestyle here. Whatever the season is, we like that access to water from a community quality of life perspective, but it helps so many businesses as well.

**JONATHAN
BRIDGES:** Yeah. And I mean, that's one of the things that as we've gone through the site authentication process, water availability has been one of those requirements that has become increasingly important, and we are fortunate to also be on a very large freshwater body.

But some of our larger projects aren't necessarily on one of the Great Lakes, right? So we've been creative tapping aquifers and developing systems where they can replenish the water that they need or re-purify the water for manufacturing processes. Again, we recognize that it's one of those resources that is not only important for the company but it's important for the constituents, and I wanted to say members of our state, but citizens of our state, like myself.

So again, we wouldn't put those particular resources at risk, right? But we will work with companies and particularly technological solution providers to interact with companies to solve a solution, or to provide a solution to solve a problem for a company such that they can find the right location in Ohio. And again, us being an intermediary helps us work with various entities, whether they're private or public.

RICK WALKER: Yeah. I wish I had an answer to that one, Kristin. I don't.

**KRISTIN
DZICZEK:** So I'm going to do one rapid fire last thing. 2019. Consider that your baseline. 2023, how much more busy are you? How many more deals are you doing? How many more visits are you taking, more bids? How have ramped up? And I know, Maureen, you've got a new organization. So go back to the beginning of DRP to now.

**MAUREEN
DONOHUE
KRAUSS:** Well, we have right now five more staff people with a couple more added full time since then. And added our whole EDA effort, which is going to be eight more people and 52 more million dollars toward our work. So that's pretty high growth. We're looking rapidly to kick the people in the suite next to us out of the way, because we need some seats, right?

It's been, once again, I've done this for 30 years. We've never had a workflow like this, a project flow like this. And it's exciting, especially being from a community where there have been some ups and downs, right? It's a fabulous time to be doing this work here. And I have a team that is dedicated to doing all the work that comes along with it.

Sorry, Jess, I don't mean to keep pointing at you. But Angela had to leave, right? But it's our whole team. It's our local partners and our state. We're all just crazy busy and we love it.

**KRISTIN
DZICZEK:** Yeah. Jonathan, you're crazy busy too.

**JONATHAN
BRIDGES:** Crazy busy. So I'll say, roughly, we occupied probably 3/4 of a floor in Columbus to do economic development. That's the JobsOhio. Plus we have our regional and we have our local. At this point, we've taken over the entire floor.

And if we brought everybody back in to the office, we wouldn't have seats to support the growth that we have had since 2019, in spite of COVID, right? So that growth trajectory is not only to support what we've seen in the automotive space, but all of our other sectors. And so we're at a fundamental generational time where we're seeing all types of technological increases and advantages that are beneficial to all of us, beneficial to all of us as citizens.

Because it's either going to help me live another 60, 70 years. It's going to help me drive my car. It's going to make sure I eat less cake and more, I don't know, protein bars. But all of that is, again, these are things that are happening around us that are going to be the long term benefits to our life in the future. And so, yeah, our growth has been, I would say, at least 30%, 40%.

And I foresee, maybe not the continued growth from an employment standpoint of JobsOhio, but the workload and the activity that our teams are seeing is at par with last year and probably going to be even stronger this year.

RICK WALKER: Just from Gavin's perspective, we typically have four, five, six meetings per year, including a golf tournament and a planned tour. But in addition, we're probably going to do an additional meeting every month now just to support the success of the Georgia Department of Economic Development. We're calling it a road show.

So we're going to have a meeting in Savannah in January. We're going to have a meeting in Brunswick, which is near Florida. Then we're going to go to Rome. Then we're going to go to Macon, Georgia in the middle of the state. So yeah, we've gone from 6 to probably 20.

**KRISTIN
DZICZEK:** Well, we heard on the previous panel and panels before that this is a once in 100 years opportunity, and we're going to be setting the stage for decades to come. So thank you, guys, for the work that you're doing in that. Everyone stay tight. We're going to move very quickly off--