



Tara Bollinger (left) and William Horst (right), of the William Vaughan Company, meet with Gary Thompson, executive vice president and chief operating officer of Regional Growth Partnership.

MIRROR PHOTOS BY KAREN GERHARDINGER



Vicky Ryan of the Anthony Wayne Board of Education (left) joins Waterville Primary principal Jamie Hollinger. The school was recognized by the Waterville Economic Development Corporation for achieving a Hall of Fame Award.

# Northwest Ohio Attracting International Businesses

**BY KAREN GERHARDINGER**  
MIRROR REPORTER

After welcoming Waterville Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) members in several languages, Paul Zito shared the good news: International business is blooming in Northwest Ohio.

"This is the busiest I've ever seen it," said Zito, vice president of international development for Regional Growth Partnership, during

the WEDC's annual spring meeting on May 18.

In 2016, more than 160 foreign-owned facilities in the area invested \$1 billion and created 1,200 new jobs, Zito said.

Hanon Systems announced plans for a new manufacturing facility in Carey, due in part to the development of a spec building. The Korean manufacturer is investing \$16 million with a potential of 200 new jobs.

South Korean luxury vinyl tile manufacturer NOX opened a new facility in Fostoria as part of a joint venture with Roppe Corporation, a commercial flooring company. The project will add 150 positions.

Givens Engineering of Ontario and Nova Pacific of China made the move to Toledo, Zito said.

As the state privatized economic development, RGP became one of six partners with JobsOhio. Zito, who lived

for 13 years in Belgium, travels around the globe to meet with potential investors.

Automotive, transportation, logistics, advanced manufacturing, materials, alternative energy — these are all businesses with an interest in expanding into the area, he said.

International business also flows the other way.

Lucas, Wood, Fulton and Ottawa counties export \$500 billion in products each year and account for 11,000 direct jobs.

"We have a lot of resources to help those wanting to export," he said. American chambers of commerce in other countries, the U.S. Commercial Service in Cleveland, trade associations, universities with international business programs and freight forwarders and logistics companies can help Ohio companies expand into foreign markets.

Maumee-based Surface Combustion, which has a facility in Waterville, is

among those with established exports, but is always seeking to expand, said its president, William Bernard.

When Zito is out selling Waterville, he mentions existing businesses, access to highways and transportation, the schools, land and quality of life.

"This area is being recognized by national and international firms," Zito said.

For more information, e-mail [zito@rgp.org](mailto:zito@rgp.org) or visit [www.watervilleedc.org](http://www.watervilleedc.org).



Sandi Denniss of StoryPoint (left) speaks with Jocelyn Bostdorff of Design Waterville.



Claire Grant of Costco and Brian McMahon of Danberry National chat before the meeting.

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