

By Ben Stanley

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## Belvidere, Boone County officials engaged in 'full-court press' to keep Evac North America

BELVIDERE — A local wastewater collection and treatment company that employs more than 40 people in Boone County is considering moving to [Beloit, Wisconsin](#), to expand its operations. City and county leaders have engaged in what [Growth Dimensions](#) Executive Director Jarid Funderburg called a "full-court press" to entice the company to stay put.

According to city leaders, [Evac North America Inc.](#), located between [Belvidere](#) and [Cherry Valley](#) in the Huntwood Business Park, is being courted by economic development leaders in Beloit. The company wants to expand at its current location and add as many as 10 employees, Funderburg said, but electrical issues with [ComEd](#), and the fact that Evac would miss out on certain tax incentives since its building is not currently included in the Belvidere-Boone County [enterprise zone](#), caused company leaders to start looking at other options.

The Huntwood Business Park is located south of U.S. 20 and east of Wheeler Road off Huntwood Drive.

In response, city and county leaders introduced ordinances that would amend the current enterprise zone to include the Huntwood Business Park and began meeting with Evac and ComEd representatives to set up a more efficient electrical configuration.

A representative from Evac was not immediately available for comment.

"They are looking to expand and they're going to go to Beloit (otherwise)," Funderburg said. "We want to give them every opportunity to stay here with their 40-plus jobs and the new creation of property tax revenue for the county."

Parcels of land northwest of Huntwood recently purchased by [Ceroni Piping](#) near the intersection of U.S. 20 and Interstate 90 for a [planned expansion](#) and business park would also be included if the enterprise zone is amended.

Businesses located within enterprise zones can qualify for several expansion [incentives](#) from state and local governments. From the state, businesses can obtain tax credits for buying building materials, hiring local workers and for various equipment purchases. Locally, businesses in the zone can qualify for property tax abatement and reduced permit fees.

The two locations to be included in the enterprise zone if the ordinances are passed by Belvidere City Council and Boone County Board are outside Belvidere and Cherry Valley city limits.

"What it does do is allow a local business to stay in the area and it indirectly benefits the city both through people driving through town, plus, let's face it, if the county loses out on real-estate tax dollars, that's services that all our residents can't get as well."

Since the Belvidere-Boone County enterprise zone was formed through an intergovernmental agreement with the city and the county, both governments must amend ordinances to expand its borders.

"We looked at this as our challenge," said Belvidere Mayor Mike Chamberlain. "Somehow, these areas got left out of the enterprise zone some time ago. We're resolving that as fast as we can."

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