



Franklin Is More Than a Location

by MARK AREND

Companies choose locations for their facilities all the time. When they choose Franklin, Wisconsin, they've picked a destination. This suburb of Milwaukee has among the best location attributes in the region, including a 10-minute drive to Milwaukee's General Mitchell Field International Airport and a 70-minute drive to Chicago's O'Hare International Airport, three Interstate highways and all the sports, cultural and commercial benefits of nearby Milwaukee and Chicago.

But Franklin residents don't even need to travel to Milwaukee for many of those attributes. They came to Franklin in the form of Ballpark Commons, a mixed-use entertainment district that's home to the Milwaukee Milkmen franchise of the American Association baseball league and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Panthers, a Division I basketball team. And much more.

Hinterhof, a year-round beer garden, will be anchored by Luxe Golf Bays, a three-level

entertainment center with 57 heated open-air bays overlooking 215 yards of turf with a retractable roof and removable panels to create a controlled environment year-round. The Midwest Orthopedic Specialty Hospital (MOSH) Performance Center provides sports medicine and orthopedic services and includes a fitness facility. SCW Soccer Club and Prospect Training Academy, along with two professional teams, will anchor 77,000 sq. ft. of integrated sports training turf. The ROC Ventures development also includes senior housing, a drive-in theatre, apartments and plenty of dining options.

That's a destination.

But it's only part of Franklin's value proposition for businesses, like Milwaukee-based Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance, which picked Franklin for its 886,000-sq.-ft. campus where 2,000 people



Franklin Mayor Steve Olson



Kayla's Playground is one of the only all-inclusive, all-accessible playgrounds in Wisconsin.

work. Another is meat processor Strauss Brands, which is moving forward with plans to develop a 175,000-sq.-ft. expansion.

"If you're a business owner looking for a place to land your business, you have a tremendous opportunity to develop your business in a climate that wants it," says Franklin Mayor Steve Olson. "We're in Milwaukee County, which is noted for its water infrastructure and research, food and medical research — you can't beat this location for technology. Krones is a world leader in bottling and packaging for liquids, and their North American headquarters is based here." In 2019, Germany-based Krones AG opened its North American Technology & Training Center at its Franklin site.

Franklin's Future Comes into Focus

Franklin is home to the new, 125-acre Loomis Business Park, which is adjacent to several commercial and industrial properties with space for development. In addition to several Tax Incremental Finance Districts, it's also home to the Franklin Business Park, a 425-acre corporate development for office and light industrial use. It provides quick access to Interstates 94 and 894, U.S. Highways 41 and 45 and State Trunk Highway

36. The park is 20 minutes south of downtown Milwaukee and 80 minutes north of Chicago.

What kind of investment is Franklin most interested in?

"We want to be complementary with what the universities and others are looking for," says Mayor Olson, "meaning technology manufacturing and research. But we also want new development to be complementary with what already is in the city. We have aerospace manufacturing already and would like to see more of that. We would like to see some operations dovetailing with what Krones is doing in bottling. Anything technology and higher-end manufacturing we would look for."

Meanwhile, a 540-acre business park is in the planning stages, making more space available for the industries the mayor believes will be the future of Franklin.

"With the success of our parks with large, non-traditional industrial users moving in, I see probably a dozen 200,000-square-foot buildings in those parks, each housing technical manufacturing and service economy tenants," says Mayor Olson. "This will buck the trend we see now of fulfillment centers and warehousing. Our trend will be away from that. We want the clean, high-tech jobs in high-value buildings providing great jobs for skilled people. There are communities attracted to the Amazon-style developments — that's just not us. We have a strong emphasis on quality of life, and that includes parks and schools and health care. We offer the small town experience while having a big city nearby." ▼

This Investment Profile was prepared under the auspices of the City of Franklin. For more information, contact Calli Berg at (414) 427-7566 or cberg@franklinwi.gov.