TEAM Santa Rosa
November 2009
Column Submission

By Cindy Anderson, Executive Director TEAM Santa Rosa

A keen focus on economic development is more important now than ever. With the economy around us changing with the season, TEAM Santa Rosa recognizes the importance of nurturing our existing business and celebrating their accomplishments. After all, existing business accounts for 80% of all job growth in the US. TEAM's job is to support industry and connect them with resources. We help industry with virtually all facets of growth including connecting them with a skilled labor force, facilitate training grants for expansions and working with them to obtaining tax incentives for new machinery and equipment. Economic development depends on the matching of industry needs to available resources. In other words, when an industry is looking to expand or relocate, TEAM steps in to assist in their process.

In Santa Rosa County, the information technology (IT) industry is thriving. Navarre is home to many of Santa Rosa's most successful IT companies. One shining example is SimWright, Inc. They are feeding Santa Rosa's economy by providing jobs at higher than average wage and helping build our area's technology corridor.

What do we mean by "industry" and "Technology Corridor," anyway? In economic development terms, industry is defined as any company that produces more than 50% of its sales outside of the three-county area including Santa Rosa, Escambia and Okaloosa Counties. TEAM Santa Rosa together with Florida's Great Northwest has identified five "target industries" for our area. They are information technology, aerospace and defense, life science, logistics and renewable energy. SimWright is one company in our collection of target industries, and as such, they are contributing to the area's Technology Corridor. Northwest Florida is a Mecca of information technology companies. "AeroVironmental" and "irespond" are other Navarre IT companies included in the Northwest Florida Technology Corridor. With these companies operating in Santa Rosa County, we are able to attract other companies with complimentary products and services, all adding to the area's Technology Corridor and allure as the world's best place to live and work.

Companies like SimWright, located right here in our back yard, are doing nothing less than phenomenal work, and building our technology corridor as they go along. They are supplying various government and military agencies with vital and specialized technological equipment and software. SimWright is an image processing and software development firm that utilizes pioneering software to extract and optimize geospatial data from remote sensed imagery. Their work produces enhanced analysis and modeling capabilities for its clients. Simply put, SimWright is an all-seeing "eye in the sky" – a company that specializes in collecting and synthesizing detailed information about the world around – and under – us. We're talking about GIS technology that various government and military agencies are utilizing to process images, assess forestry and generate stereoscopic images, to name just a few functions.

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Santa Rosa County is the birthplace of many companies that have produced state-of-the-art technologies found nowhere else on earth. As the economy ebbs and flows, TEAM Santa Rosa is maximizing every opportunity to enhance our existing businesses and facilitate the maintenance of that 80% of new jobs created. Visit us online at TEAMSantaRosa.com for more on Santa Rosa County industry.