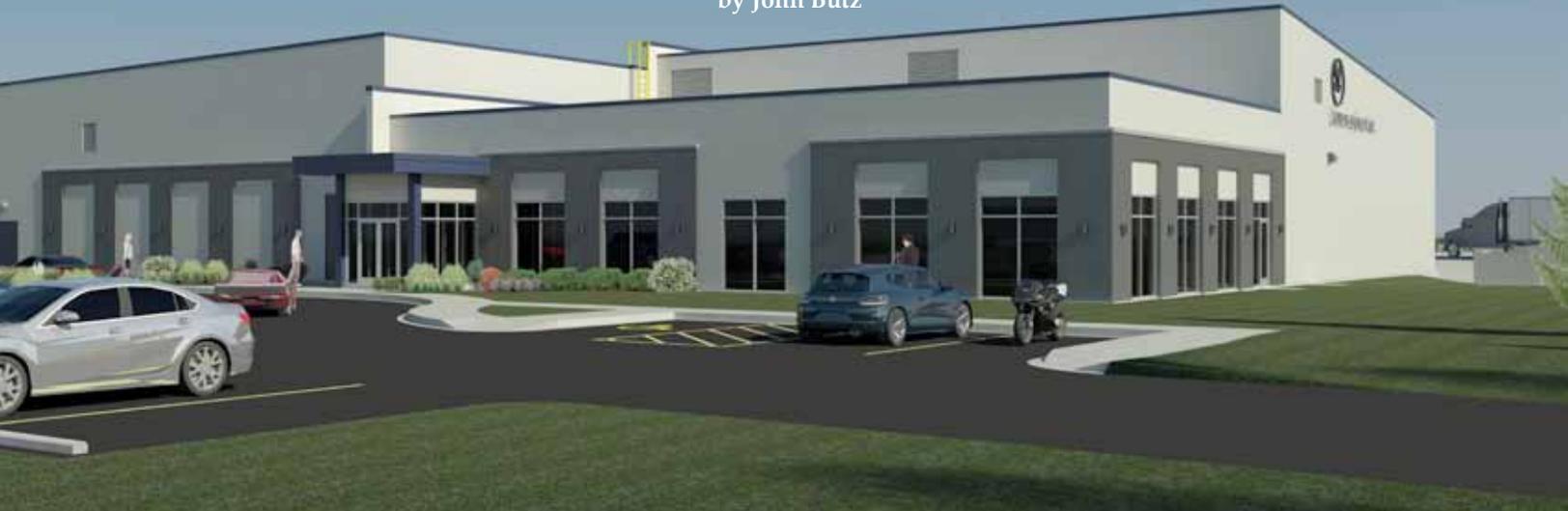


# WHEN VISIONS ALIGN: TECH TITAN GROWTH IN ROLLA

by John Butz



*Brewer Science and Missouri boast the growth of a high-tech giant without a Silicon Valley address.*

**R**olla, Mo., located at the intersection of MO 63 and I-44, has earned a global reputation for producing some of the world's best scientists, engineers and technologies. Located 2,000 miles from Silicon Valley, Rolla has been the home of Brewer Science since its beginning in 1981. Employing 300 high-tech employees, Brewer Science is producing advances in technology that rivals the great innovations of technology giants and startup companies in northern California.

Also located near Rolla, and acquired by the City in 1967 is the 1,200-acre Rolla National Airport. With limited room to expand at the current Brewer Science headquarters, Brewer Science and the city of Rolla are set to realize their aspirations for growth by expanding together at a seemingly unlikely location. The key to realizing this cooperative work has been the recognition of an aligned vision and the great leadership, respect and trust shown between several contributing parties.

## **BREWER SCIENCE**

When Dr. Terry Brewer first founded Brewer Science 32 years ago, he located the company in the country's heartland, where he could find and develop the workforce needed to

realize his dream of commercializing his invention of groundbreaking anti-reflective coatings that would change the world. For technology leaders and influencers around the globe, Rolla is increasingly becoming known as the home of Brewer Science. Located just north of Interstate 44, its headquarters are nestled along TECH 44, the emerging high-tech corridor where the company is creating technology that has helped enable the creation of the miniaturized components found inside smartphones, tablets, LED televisions, laptops, cameras, electronic games, car displays, sensors and other electronic devices. Because of the innovative technology at Brewer Science, it is possible for electronic products to complete more intricate and complex tasks with increasingly miniaturized components allowing these devices to become smaller, thinner and more powerful.

## **ROLLA NATIONAL AIRPORT**

For 45 years, the city of Rolla has operated the Rolla National Airport and always considered it "a diamond in the rough." After it was decommissioned as a military training site, the airport has been an effective general aviation facility for south-central Missouri consisting of two 5,500' runways, full-service fueling, and home to some 82 based aircraft. Unfortunately the infrastructure was military vintage

from the 1940's, wholly inadequate for today's industrial prospects.

## **THE NEED**

Brewer Science has expanded multiple times, but required an additional manufacturing facility to provide business continuity and to keep pace with the growing market demand for its products. Mike Mathews of Brewer Science was charged with conducting a new building site search and reached out to the city of Rolla, the Rolla Regional Economic Commission, the Meramec Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) and the Missouri Department of Economic Development (MoDED) to begin a dialogue for finding ways to expand that made sense for Brewer Science, the customers of Brewer Science, the community, the region and the state of Missouri. In response, Ms. Cyndra Lorey, executive director of the Rolla Regional Economic Commission, proposed Brewer Science consider the benefits for their company and the Phelps/Maries County area if their facility could be accommodated at Rolla National Airport. Located 15 miles north of Rolla, Brewer Science agreed to include the airport location in their analysis provided the site could

**Photo (above): Artist rendering of the Brewer Science Facility.**



## Welcome To The Family Warsaw

PeopleService is proud to be partnering with the City of Warsaw to provide operations, maintenance and management services for Warsaw's municipal water and wastewater facilities.

We never forget that we serve you and your community. It's a promise that's built the company behind our name - PeopleService.

Discover what the power of people can do for you.

**PeopleService** INC.  
Water & Wastewater Professionals

877-774-4311

[peopleservice.com](http://peopleservice.com)

compete financially with incentives provided from other communities. The Company was looking to lease 10 acres of property at minimal cost and required state-of-the-art utilities.

### PROPOSAL

Early in 2011 Rolla city officials met with representatives of the Maries County Commission, Intercounty Electric, the Meramec Regional Planning Commission, the Maries County Water District and the Rolla Regional Economic Commission. City Public Works Director Steve Hargis, PE became the project manager. It was Steve's passion for the airport and the continued development of the community that attracted partners, so a feasibility study was funded. Integrity Engineering, Inc., of Rolla, performed the infrastructure assessment and planning document that ultimately became instrumental in engaging the support for the MoDED and the US Department of Agriculture Economic Development Administration. With

enthusiastic support from a region-wide support network and letters of interest from three prospective industries, the MRPC ultimately submitted a substantial grant to the Economic Development Administration (EDA) that was awarded to the city of Rolla.

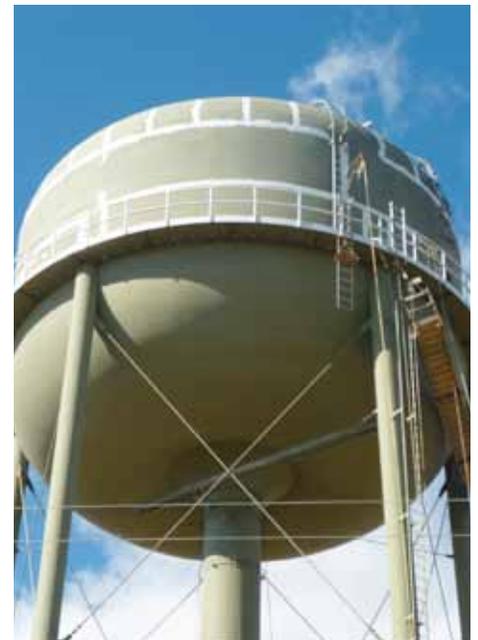
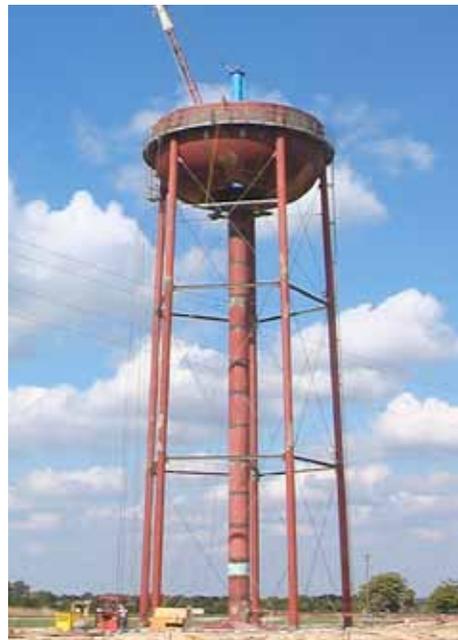
### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

"I am extremely pleased that this grant has been approved because it means more jobs and greater opportunities for hard-working Missourians," Congressman Luetkemeyer said. "This is a great example of local and federal officials working together on behalf of Missouri families."

At the state level, Missouri's Department of Economic Development also approved \$1.1 million as part of the Quality Jobs initiative. Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon voiced support of the state incentive package. "The expansion by Brewer Science in Rolla, and creation of 65 new high-tech jobs, will expand the state of Missouri's high-technology and

manufacturing sector footprints, which is a big win for our state's economy," Gov. Nixon said.

Understanding utility requirements was the first step in performing an industrial infrastructure needs assessment. Integrity Engineering, Inc., worked diligently with Brewer Science and other prospects to clearly identify critical requirements needed to support a high-tech, eco-friendly manufacturing facility, as well as future opportunities. Since conveying the airport to the city of Rolla officials from the FAA and MoDOT became critical players in the planning process. JVIation, the City's airport consultant, became an invaluable link in obtaining land-use and air-space clearances. Plans included a completely new water distribution system; an upgrade of one primary water well; a 300,000 gallon elevated water tower; a completely new sewer collection system; an on-site treatment system; and improved roadway access.



As of December 2013, the water tower and water and sewer systems have been completed and placed online.

## NEGOTIATION

While always amenable, negotiations required cooperation from both Brewer Science and the city of Rolla to align the requirements of all parties. Ultimately Brewer Science received a no-cost land lease thanks to the local economic development organization. Stepping outside their traditional role, the organization agreed to fund the first 20 years of lease payments required by FAA. The lease arrangement is a 35-year lease with options to extend to 75 years that is predicated upon construction and job creation.

Total new infrastructure costs including engineering and administration (not including the electric distribution system upgrade provided by Intercounty Electric) totaled \$2.4 million. While the City had committed to provide the basic infrastructure for Brewer Science, the City was unable to provide the funds to support the total upgrade of aviation infrastructure facilities including future industrial expansion opportunities. An application to EDA in September 2012 resulted in a critical announcement in November 2012 of a \$1,044,000 grant. Aided by direct contributions from local funding partners to the tune of approximately \$100,000, a \$600,000 water system lease, city in-kind construction services of \$650,000, and a \$450,000 cash infusion from the City's general fund, airport fund and sewer fund, the city was ultimately able to finance the project – not only for Brewer Science but for future industrial prospects.

## ANNOUNCEMENT AND CELEBRATION

Following discussions and commitments of support, Brewer Science announced Rolla National Airport in Vichy as the site for their new expansion, and hosted a groundbreaking ceremony for the new site on April 30, 2013, that was attended by many local, state and federal officials including U.S. Sen. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.) and Congressman Blaine Luetkemeyer, who lauded the expansion. "The expansion of Brewer Science is good for private sector job creation and economic opportunity in Missouri," said Sen. Blunt. "Brewer Science is consistently at the forefront of



**City of Rolla Mayor William Jenks III (left) stands with Brewer Science President and Chief Executive Officer Terry Brewer.**

high-tech and advanced manufacturing fields, and this new facility continues to advance our shared goal of creating and keeping good-paying, high-skilled jobs statewide."

The new 25,000 square-foot manufacturing plant will expand Missouri's advanced technology footprint and create 65 new high-tech jobs for the state. The construction of the Brewer Science facility is an initial step in a broader plan to transform Rolla National Airport into a manufacturing and transportation hub.

Dr. Terry Brewer said he was proud to maintain its global headquarters in the region as the company has grown and expanded. "Our new facility will help make possible the next generation of smart phones, tablet computers and additional high-tech innovations still to come to market," Dr. Brewer said. "We are excited about the future of technology and Brewer Science's future in Missouri. We are grateful to the local, state and federal officials with us today who support Missouri manufacturing and the research and development that is the lifeblood of Brewer Science."

## CONSTRUCTION

The city of Rolla worked very closely with Integrity Engineering to break construction into nine separate projects, of which the city of Rolla will complete five projects and contractors will complete four. The City's portion of construction includes five separate material supply contracts. The separation of construction and supply contracts allowed the city of Rolla to maximize its in-kind contribution and significantly lowered the cost of

the contracted phases of construction.

City sewer crews and engineering staff began installation of the water and sewer lines in June 2013. The City solicited bids for construction of the elevated water tower in April 2013. In May 2013, the City solicited bids for the modernization of the well and materials for construction of a well house. The City committed to providing full infrastructure access to Brewer Science in the ground lease by the completion of their new high-volume manufacturing facility by the end of 2013.

As of December 2013, the water tower and water and sewer systems have been completed and placed online. Brewer Science's building project is well underway with an estimated completion date of February 2014.

## SUCCESS

To truly be a success, all of the players/partners need to share in the workload and then benefit by the project completion. Rolla National Airport benefits from the complete upgrade of a 70-year-old infrastructure and the platting and development of the 70-acre Rolla National Airport Technology & Research Park. Maries County benefits from a world-class manufacturing facility, employment and future potential for job creation, and the city of Rolla benefits from both the development of the airport itself but more importantly in the success of securing a long-time, entrepreneurial company for many years to come with a wonderful community track record and vision for future growth. □

---

**John Butz** has served as the city administrator for the city of Rolla for more than 16 years. Information for the article was contributed by **Cyndra Lorey**, Rolla regional economic commission executive director, **Mr. Doyle Edwards**, Brewer Science business development director and **Jack Mentink**, principal, Integrity Engineering.