

## Companies sell products, services, and themselves

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MERRILLVILLE n Truck City of Gary is moving in January.

Company officials are so interested in informing other companies about their plans that they arranged to move a 28-foot-long freight truck that had been driven inside into a ballroom, after a wall had been moved aside, at the Radisson Hotel at Star Plaza.

The Gary company's exhibit was one of the highlights of Thursday's "Best of the Northwest" expo, a regional business trade show produced by the Northwest Indiana Chamber Executives' Association. Several dozen companies and nonprofit institutions had displays.

The expo might have been more important to Truck City than its fellow exhibitors because of the Gary/Chicago International Airport's plans to expand its runway. The expansion means Truck City has to move its offices from land adjacent to the current airport to 25th Avenue and Taft Street in Gary.

"We're excited about our new location and excited about staying in Gary," said general manager/owner Gerri Davis, while standing in front of the huge freight truck.

"(The expo) is a very good opportunity to network with other businesses and that's important because we sell (truck, truck parts, and service) to other businesses."

While many companies were hoping to increase their sales of products by appearing at the show, Northwestern Mutual Financial Network was more interested in recruiting future employees. Matthew J. McGraw, director of recruiting for the company's Mishawaka office, was ready to deliver his recruiting pitch.

"We're the New York Yankees of our industry," McGraw claimed. "We're the best and the brightest."

Jorge Ramos, director of marketing for Highland-based Comfort Keepers, said he was at the expo to inform other health care companies about the services Comfort provides senior citizens, including light housekeeping, transportation, meal preparation, and cleaning of clothes.

"The key is to keep (seniors) in their homes and keep them independent as long as possible."

Davis and McGraw said they rarely attend business trade shows, but Ramos asserted that he does because "they've always paid off."

"It's a great networking fest," Ramos said. "It's a relaxed atmosphere and people are trying to see what they can give each other."