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## **Plug in to free data resources on CTSiteFinder.com and open up a wealth of opportunity**

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At an IndustryWeek conference in Colorado this year, senior executives from three national consulting firms cited "lack of data on available sites" as a major reason communities are eliminated during the site selection process.

These professionals encouraged communities to highlight real estate offerings in their marketing materials, along with labor force data, transportation access, utility service, educational attainment and quality of life factors. "Finding the perfect building can impact the location decision," said Steve Weitzner of Silverlode Consulting.

This underscores what many of us have long recognized: the critical need for user-friendly, comprehensive and accurate data on Connecticut real estate. Accessing site-specific information can be time consuming and confusing; and maintaining up-to-date property listings is challenging for local economic development agencies and nearly impossible in smaller municipalities that have limited resources and staff time.

This challenge is the reason the Connecticut Economic Resource Center (CERC) offers resources such as CERC SiteFinder (CTSiteFinder.com).

A recent article in Global Corporate Xpansion listed ZoomProspector, CERC SiteFinder's national affiliate, as a valued resource for site selection. The web site pairs property listings with customizable, IEDC-compliant demographic, consumer spending, labor force, community, business and housing data. So if you need to know, for example, the annual food and beverage sales within a 15 minute drive of a prospective restaurant location; the number of metals fabrication workers within 25 miles of a potential manufacturing facility; or the household income and number of families with children in a neighborhood near a proposed music school, you can find it on CERC SiteFinder. Such data is vital to companies making a location decision, and valuable to brokers marketing a property and municipalities seeking an efficient source of up-to-date economic development data.

On CERC SiteFinder, everyone can search properties, view listings and utilize data resources free of charge (though there is a fee to post listings). Municipalities also have the opportunity to add customized data including elected officials, major employers and local amenities.

In recent weeks, CTSiteFinder.com implemented a more modern and user-friendly search platform, expanded data resources and improved the administrative interface for managing property listings. CERC staff also work behind the scenes - in coordination with the state, utility companies and partners across Connecticut - to maintain relationships with a large network of site selection consultants and corporate real estate professionals; attend various industry and professional conferences to market the state and its economic development resources; respond to requests for information and provide supporting data to site selectors; as well as offer marketing and research services, and business and licensing support.

Connecticut has many positive attributes that allow it to remain competitive. But in order to attract companies, we need to showcase Connecticut's real estate options and the associated strengths. And we can only achieve this with the support and active engagement of the entire real estate community. Plugging in to this network can open up a wealth of opportunity for real estate professionals, as well as ensuring that these resources remain available to support the state's economic growth.

Connect to us on Facebook, LinkedIn and follow us on Twitter @CERCSiteFinder.

Rachel Gretencord is the director of real estate for CERC, Rocky Hill, Conn.

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540