

# Checklist for New Marengo Businesses



## Starting a Business

### Start-Up Assistance

The Illinois Small Business Development Center (SBDC) located in McHenry and offers the following resources helpful to any first-time business owner.

- ◇ Courses in Common Business Programs (i.e. Quicken, Excel, Word)
- ◇ Courses in Business Management (i.e. cash flow management, marketing etc...)
- ◇ Business Plan Set-up
- ◇ Market Research

Visit them on the web at [www.shahcenter.mchenry.edu/sbdc.asp](http://www.shahcenter.mchenry.edu/sbdc.asp).



### Utilities

Don't forget the essential services you will need.

- ◇ Water/Sewer - *City of Marengo*
- ◇ Natural Gas - *Nicor*
- ◇ Electricity - *Commonwealth Edison (ComEd)*
- ◇ Telecommunications - *AT&T or Charter*
- ◇ Garbage/Recycling - *MDC or Waste Mgmt.*

### Legal Issues

What type of business is right for you. Discuss your plans with both an accountant and attorney to insure your business is organized to your best advantage. Common company structures are:

- ◇ Corporation
- ◇ Limited Liability Company
- ◇ Partnership
- ◇ Limited Liability Partnership
- ◇ Sole Proprietorship



### Financial

Every business has its own financial needs. Below is a list of good ideas to help get your business on a good financial track.

- ◇ Open a separate business bank account
- ◇ Set-up a credit card merchant account & credit card machine
- ◇ Do it right, visit with your accountant to get professional advice
- ◇ Organize a bookkeeping procedure for income & expense records

## Business Regulations & Taxes

There are several government agencies with which you need to register your business. Each has its own purpose and requirements. Please review the checklist below and register with all applicable departments.

### Federal Government

- ◇ If have a payroll, obtain an Employer Identification Number (EIN) - *Internal Revenue Service (IRS)*

### State of Illinois

- ◇ Obtain a Tax Identification Number (TIN) - *Illinois Department of Revenue*
- ◇ If paying sales tax, obtain an Illinois Business Tax (IBT) - *Illinois Department of Revenue*
- ◇ If have employees, a state Unemployment ID is required - *Illinois Department of Employment Security*

### County of McHenry

- ◇ If business has name other than your own, register with County - *McHenry County Clerk*
- ◇ If serving food and drink, must have Food Service Sanitation License and an inspection - *McHenry Co Health Dept.*

### City of Marengo

- ◇ There is no general business registration with the City of Marengo
- ◇ Any vehicle operated by a business with a Marengo location must have a vehicle sticker - *Marengo City Hall*

## How will you portray your business on your sign, website, business cards and other media?

Starting your business can be a daunting task. The Marengo Economic Development Commission would like to assist our fledging entrepreneurs with information re-



sources, checklists, and guidance to make your journey to a successful business endeavor easier.

## Advertise & Promotion

Most experts agree, the easiest way of promoting a business are typically the best. Below are some available media opportunities.

### Places for FREE Business Listings

- ◇ HomePages.com
- ◇ YellowPages.com
- ◇ MarengoHappenings.com
- ◇ GoMarengo.com
- ◇ Google Places
- ◇ InfoUSA.com
- ◇ MerchantCircle.com
- ◇ Yelp.com
- ◇ Yahoo.com
- ◇ Ask.com
- ◇ Mapquest.com
- ◇ Bing.com

### Marengo Area Print Media

- ◇ Northwest Herald Newspaper
- ◇ Boone County Journal
- ◇ The Farmside
- ◇ McHenry County Business Journal
- ◇ McHenry County Magazine
- ◇ McHenry County Living Magazine
- ◇ Chamber Community Guide
- ◇ Marengo Park District Quarterly Brochure

### Large Events with Promotional Opportunities

- ◇ Annual Chamber Expo (February) - *Marengo-Union Chamber of Commerce*
- ◇ Gus Macker Basketball Tournament (June) - *Marengo-Union Sport Facility Corporation*
- ◇ Settler's Days & Saturday Night of Main Street (October) - *Settler's Days, Inc. & Marengo Main Street, Inc.*

### Business & Networking Organizations

- ◇ Marengo-Union Chamber of Commerce
- ◇ Women in Business (WIB)
- ◇ Marengo-Union Tourism Council
- ◇ Marengo Main Street, Inc.
- ◇ McHenry County Convention and Visitors Bureau
- ◇ McHenry County Economic Development Corporation

### Internet Usage

- ◇ Set-up a website (can be achieved for under \$100/year)
- ◇ Set-up social media pages (ie Facebook, LinkedIn)

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"Advertising is salesmanship mass produced.  
No one would bother to use advertising if they  
could talk to all of their prospects face-to-face.  
But they can't" - Morris Hite  
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## Signage

A sign is one of the most important ways to portray your business to potential customers.

- ◇ Review City of Marengo Sign Ordinance
- ◇ Apply for Sign Permit (do NOT purchase a sign without the permit) - *City of Marengo Building Department*



## Risk Management/Emergency Services

Take care of your business and assets by doing the following:

- ◇ Get Appropriate business insurance
- ◇ Meet with the Marengo Fire Protection District to determine occupancy requirements
- ◇ Register emergency contact information with the Marengo Police Department
- ◇ Install a security system if desired

## Logistics

Many businesses survive on getting products in and out. Make sure you plan your logistics prior to opening your doors.

- ◇ Inform the US Post Office of business location & set-up a customer account if needed
- ◇ Set up accounts for UPS, FedEx, and/or DHL pick-up if needed
- ◇ Talk with your suppliers and distributors for appropriate delivery times (non peak hours)



## Simple Things

When trying to start your business, even the simple things can go unnoticed. Here are some ways to help increase the chances of your business surviving.

- ◇ Post storefront window lettering to include name of business, hours, and website.
- ◇ Get an answering machine with a message relaying name of business, hours, and alternate contact information.
- ◇ Make a solid commitment to maintaining posted business hours.
- ◇ Write a press release to the main media outlets (who, what, when, where, why and unique facts).
- ◇ Plan how your building and ground maintenance will be performed (ie window cleaning, lawn care, snow removal etc...).
- ◇ Do you have business cards and stationary?
- ◇ Do you have a permanent sign on your place of business? Temporary signage make your business look temporary.
- ◇ Will you have gift certificates, loyalty accounts, or coupons?
- ◇ How will you track your customers?
- ◇ Will you have a ribbon cutting or open house? How will you get the word out about that event?

## Random Facts

- ◇ A new business in the City of Marengo gets 30 days of unlimited use of temporary signage.
- ◇ The City of Marengo has a fire ISO rating of 3, which is one of the best in McHenry County. Make sure your insurance agent knows about this as business insurance should be less expensive.
- ◇ The Marengo-Union Chamber of Commerce performs ribbon cutting and networking events that can help get the word out about a new business.
- ◇ If your business is located in downtown Marengo, Marengo Main Street (MMS) exists for you. MMS is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and promoting Marengo Downtown, for the benefit of existing businesses and the community.
- ◇ Small business consultants recommend 3-6 months of working capital when opening an business. This means that if you do not receive a customer for 3-6 months you can continue to keep your business doors open.
- ◇ There are a myriad of special events for a business to take advantage of. Look at [www.marengouniontourism.com](http://www.marengouniontourism.com) to learn more about them.

# M A R E N G O

## Economic Development Commission



### Services Offered by the Marengo Economic Development Commission (MEDC)

Demographic Information - Detailed information regarding the demographic profile of Marengo, including labor data, employers, income, and spending habits.

Small Business/Entrepreneurship Services - The MEDC acts as a clearinghouse for information and will make introductions to appropriate agencies and organizations that can provide help in these specific areas.

Real Estate Services - The MEDC keeps records of available property, buildings, and sites.

Utility Information - The MEDC can provide information regarding the availability of utilities and provide introductions to appropriate utility providers and suppliers.

Finance Information/Coordination - The MEDC can facilitate financing with private banking sources, public financial funds, and programs.

Business Incentive Program in Marengo - The MEDC is the contact for obtaining and administering this local tax incentive program. The program is available to businesses that make a sizable taxable investment and create jobs.

Workforce/Job Training Information - The MEDC can facilitate meetings with organizations that develop job-training programs, file grants, and obtain workforce-training incentives.

Networking Coordination - The MEDC can facilitate meetings with other business owners, property owners, and key individuals to help make investment and business decisions.

### Contact Information

Marengo Economic Development Commission  
116 South State Street, Marengo, IL 60152

**Website:** [www.edcmarengo.com](http://www.edcmarengo.com)

**E-mail:** [edc@cityofmarengo.com](mailto:edc@cityofmarengo.com)

**Phone:** (815) 568-5105

**Fax:** (815) 568-7130

Regular meetings are scheduled on the 3rd Tuesday of every month at 7:30 AM. Meetings are held at Flatlander Market at 125 South State Street. Meetings are open to the public.

The Marengo Economic Development Commission does not endorse any businesses appearing on the checklist. This document is merely to serve as a resource for new Marengo businesses. The Commission does not guarantee that if a business follows this checklist they will be successful. This checklist is a public document and can be duplicated at any time.