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As far as I'm concerned, they are absolutely the best lead generation firm in the business for economic development organizations. Call them now. They can help you create real prospects.

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**Chad Chancellor:** Welcome to this week's episode of the Next Move Group We Are Jobs podcast. This is Chad Chancellor, co-founder of Next Move Group. Today, we've got Austin Monk with us. Austin is the president of Riverview Solutions. So, Austin, thank you for being with us today.

**Austin Monk:** Well, I appreciate you having me on today. It's an honor and a pleasure.

**Chad Chancellor:** So, Austin started Riverview Solutions last August and he really has a passion for workforce development. He worked in economic development and then worked in workforce development. He has a passion for it. So, one thing we want to do on our podcast is really spotlight entrepreneurs who are starting businesses in the economic development space and give them a chance to tell you what they are working on.

So, Austin, I appreciate you're being with us today. I know you've helped civil construction firms and software development companies and even manufacturers with workforce needs and before we logged on, you were telling me you were helping a medical company deal with the COVID situation with their workforce needs. So, why don't you just start with telling our listeners a little overview of Riverview Solutions?

**Austin Monk:** So, Riverview Solutions is based here in Cullman, Alabama. I've had the company like you said for-- it's been close to a year now, but we've had some really unique opportunities to partner with companies and find ways to help maximize their potential. What we do is we provide a one-stop-shop kind of approach. We take a lot of the resources that are available in the public sector and utilize the private sector mindset and strategy to bring those two together to maximize impact of growth for hiring new employees while maximizing the public incentives that are available to that business.

Some of the things we cover may involve a credential strategy development for the individual company for a unique process that they may administer or they may need a recruitment strategy so they can get more people on board and in their company. We'll help create and implement that for them as well as an opportunity to look at with your current workforce and with the layoffs that recently occurred with COVID-19. Taking a look at your workforce before something happens like that as you're building their skills, finding ways you can appropriately move them in the right direction upon having a layoff to take place.

We can steer them in the right direction to whether it be a career change or a college or career or credential attainment. We can attach them to the right resource that would be a low cost to them. So, it's a win-win both for the employee and the employer.

**Chad Chancellor:** Now, I know you started in economic development and then you worked in the community college system and even I think for Harvard University one time in workforce

development. So, not a whole lot of people have sat on the economic development recruitment side or helped the companies expand and on the workforce size. So, just talk about those two roles and how that helps you kind of mould together I guess the workforce opportunities for various industries.

**Austin Monk:** Well, I'd have to say a startling fact is every day, 10,000 people retire in the country. So, that right there is an important fact to keep in mind when you are recruiting business and industry. You've got to have a robust human capital effort to build your human capital in your community and keep that pipeline available and with focusing on the economic development from a workforce supply perspective gives you a little bit unique advantage because often times in rural areas, there are a lot of negatives with physical infrastructure, but we have a lot of grants and other resources out there that can help with sometimes dirt for an infrastructure improvement.

We also have a lot of improvement opportunities for the people that live in those communities or existing skills that may be business or industry may have left previously with like textiles. They have a lot of those skills still in their minds and still can use those whether it be electrical, it be welding or anything of that nature. Take those skills and maximize it and align it with a business or industry sector to make that work best for your community.

**Chad Chancellor:** So, I know you've helped industries and even several construction firms and so forth as far as their recruiting and leveraging incentives and really helping them understand the different programs available. Do you also help communities if they are trying to figure out how to build that workforce program or do you just help the private companies?

**Austin Monk:** I also help communities. Often times, communities they have a heart to do everything and sometimes it's not able to be done. So, you need to have somebody that focuses in on that specific workforce development strategy development or even in a small community that has a one-shop-stop situation with only one director and a small community. We can work with that smaller community to help maximize their efforts whether it be talking about using your existing economic development strategy to mirror or parallel with the workforce strategy and doing asset inventory of what you have locally to get the greatest impact for maybe a low-cost investment, but a maximized impact to your people of your community.

**Chad Chancellor:** Can you help communities sort of inventory all their workforce providers? So, one weakness that I see some communities have is there are so many people-- not people but there are so many entities that touch workforce and I find a lot of times on our recruitment side on the site selection, we'll take a prospect somewhere and they'll end up bringing in five or six different people to talk about what they can do for the workforce.

They'll bring in somebody from the state and they'll have a career center and they'll bring in somebody from some other entity and next thing you know, it's five or six people. It's really hard to get to just how inventory of what all they do. Is that something you can help communities with?

**Austin Monk:** Absolutely. One good thing about my relationship with the SEDC is finding those people that connect to those organizations. We all have similar organizations across our United States with the Department of Labor. They have respective state entities that mould that money into use in some way, form, or fashion, but we can quickly identify what is the most valuable stakeholder for your workforce needs upon initial investment for clients.

For instance, like you said you have five or six people in the room. Many of those individual organizations may not be valuable until three-five years down the road, but still, they are a valuable partner. We can help map those assets and then establish a timeline based on the work samples that you're going to find in a business or industry when an initial greenfield investment takes place to three, five years out when they're eventually backfilling primary positions or looking at expansion opportunity. As they are building their workforce, they can find a partner on the front end to help build that formal educational endeavor or not credit the endeavor for that matter because today as you can well see, education and institutions and systems that we once knew as staple are very fluid now in COVID-19 and looking at different options and be thinking outside of the box of how you address your workforce solutions is a continual process.

**Chad Chancellor:** Thank you, Austin. We're going to take a quick break for a message for our listeners and be right back with a lot more with Austin Monk after this.

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**Chad Chancellor:** I want to thank LocationOne-- some folks know it as LOIS-- for sponsoring today's podcast. LocationOne has, in my opinion, the best buildings and sites database in the

economic development industry. Now, that coronavirus is here and everything has been disrupted, I've been thinking a lot about it. If I were an economic developer still, what would I do during this time and I know without question I would transition to LOIS and get my buildings and sites as updated as I possibly could so that when we come out of this economic downturn, we're ready to go.

Let me tell you why I like LOIS. It is the most responsive mobile friendly buildings and sites database I have found. It's easy to use. It's just as easy to use on an iPad or iPhone as it is a computer. I was browsing around last week on a state economic development building and site database and the thing it just wouldn't work. It wouldn't work properly. You had to be an engineer to figure it out. It was too much. It had this circle you could draw to look at buildings. The circle wouldn't work when I backed out if I got what square footage I was looking for.

None of that happens with LOIS. This is the best buildings and sites database I have found. I've looked far and wide. It is the most easy to use from a site selection standpoint on any platform. I'm told it's just as easy to use for economic developers. It really walks you through inserting your information and putting it in so the prospects can use it. So, I really encourage you take a look at [locationone.com](http://locationone.com). Use this time while we're down to update your buildings and sites. Transition them to LocationOne. You'll be really happy you did.

[Music]

**Chad Chancellor:** Well I tell communities you really got to figure out how you're going to recruit, screen, and train people in the recruiting process for a company. That's how you got to convey it and I've just been in a whole lot of meetings where there will be somebody from the workforce board, then you have somebody from the Federal Government, and then you have the State Government and the community college and the public education and somebody will then come along and talk about they do skills assessments or soft skills assessments and I just find a lot of times, all these entities mean very well and do great work, but it's hard to really figure out this one does this; it's step A. This one does this; it's step B. So, I can see a need for your services especially if a town is a one-person shop on economic development.

**Austin Monk:** Right. Often times, those situations they are chasing grant dollars for a means to an end and that's just a reality. It's good to have those grant dollars to be using them, but are you

really asking the right question? Are you really understanding the root cause of the problem? Could it be something else that you could be examining with this asset identification process we go through? We can help find what is that root cause of your needs and either it be in existing industry or it be a new investment. We can help through that process.

**Chad Chancellor:** So, if I were a local economic developer to you and I know COVID has changed things because right now, practically everybody is unemployed, but if I called you and said my biggest plants are telling me they're having a hard time finding folks to work. Tell us what it is you could do to help that economic developer and his situation.

**Austin Monk:** Well, first of all, we'd identify your major workforce development entities that take whatever their part of workforce is and then divide that into-- well, really align it to the greatest need of your productions scenario and then from there, identify skills and then go to the training providers of the community and help create opportunities to bring in the federal dollars to build training programs that best align with the skills training that is needed for production purposes.

So, it's a very systematic process and we can do it fairly quick because you look at the Department of Labor with WIOA dollars and their availability. Right now, we're going to get probably in the next couple of months or maybe in the next couple of weeks-- if this House and Senate can agree on the bill-- additional funding for skills training as a part of the recovery and stimulus efforts for COVID. So, having a plan now to prepare for once those funds get released it's a shovel-ready program to implement to get your people on board and in the job upon completion of that training program.

**Chad Chancellor:** Austin, I see on your website you talk about that you do facilities development for workforce programs. So, I assume you can help a community figure out an old building or something where they can do multiple production lines. Really hone in on what it is you do in that regard.

**Austin Monk:** Yes. So, I can do that very well. We had the opportunity to work with a maritime and shipping industry previously with an old building that was in the community college that I worked with and we have revitalized that program very quickly, but also, we helped to identify other facilities that could potentially be used from production facilities and take an old building that's maybe not necessarily conducive to a manufacturing process in present-day, but do a

simulated work environment that would not be necessarily as high ceiling because I'm sure that there are many rural areas with warehouses. You can repurpose those; put in three-phase power that's already there maybe and put in a training center potentially and be a local training opportunity for-- not accessible to some people, but they can learn locally; go to the training, get that, and go to work.

**Chad Chancellor:** Can you help folks find funding for that? So, if I had an old building and I had the thought that I wanted to turn it into a training center, but again, I was a one-person shop and didn't have time. Can you help them identify federal monies to help with that or state money?

**Austin Monk:** Yes, we can and one example of that is actually USDA. They have a community facilities funding that's out there that you can repurpose buildings for the purpose of the community and find your community partner and workforce development that can reside in there and help with the programmatic side of things to foster that continued relationship and eventually very well may end up being the office for workforce and economic development for the community.

**Chad Chancellor:** Have you been helping mostly small towns? I know a lot of small towns talk about struggling with infrastructure in terms of high-speed internet. Is that something you get involved with at all?

**Austin Monk:** I've not really gotten so much involved with broadband internet that much. However, it's an integral part to workforce development to get access to information and to do any type of simulation especially with Kanban systems for shipment and inventories and things of that nature. So, it's a very vital part of what we do though.

**Chad Chancellor:** All right. Tell us kind of some of your clients and you don't have to list them by name, but talk about some of the top companies you've helped and give us kind of case studies of what you've done for them to paint a picture for us of all the different things that you can do.

**Austin Monk:** So, we have been able to work with several different types of companies one of which is a civil construction firm. We did a comprehensive recruitment plan for the company to help find operators for the company. We assisted a software development company in trying to better align students, especially college-age students and adult learners to find ways to get access to funding and also to the best program to meet their needs associated with a business or industry

in their region. So, it's very strategic in that manner and then lastly, another example was with a diagnostic company that's actually providing-- they've got an emergency use authorization by the FDA to provide a COVID-19 antigen testing device and help them write a COVID-19 medical device credential. So, they will be able to basically offer a way to credential their skills in using that device and further show the community that they are a trained professional by following those credential standards. So, it's really broad, but yet it's all developed in workforce.

**Chad Chancellor:** All right. Is there anything that you would want to share with our audience that I haven't thought to ask you today?

**Austin Monk:** I'd like to say I really enjoyed my time as an economic developer, but as I was in economic development, I recognized in a rural area that I served in a lack of workforce development opportunity and it was either a lack of access or a lack of trained professionals to teach the training. So, that's why I moved toward workforce development and wanted to further impact the specific needs of people of the community. We're all working together to make sure that we have the best resources as economic developers, but I feel like specializing in workforce development it offers a little bit more personal approach to economic development.

**Chad Chancellor:** Well, and you've talked about workforce development long as I've known you and that's probably 10 or 15 years now. It's getting on up there.

**Austin Monk:** Yes, yes.

**Chad Chancellor:** It seems like workforce development got to be a buzz word a few years ago. You were talking about it long ago before it ever got to be a buzz word. So, I know you've got a passion for it more than just the word side. Well, Austin, as we conclude, why don't you give these people your contact information. I do have one more question. Why did you name the company Riverview? Give us that story.

**Austin Monk:** So, the reason I named it Riverview is believe it or not I was looking through a children's book one day and it was talking about the water cycle and just like the water cycle, there is a lot of resources out there for people to grab onto in workforce development, but as a water cycle, as the droplets of the resources get back together and get stronger and they come together, the most strongest part is the river that's pushing forward and flowing and strong and it's beautiful



and I think that with your workforce if you gather the right resources together and ensure that the right people are in the plan and you've got a comprehensive plan to do that, you'll be strong and you'll be able to impact so many people in your community and grow that entrepreneurial opportunity that you need to make your community great.

I think with what you're doing with your company right now is sharing with people what good things are going on and how we're going to be able to come out of this situation with COVID-19 stronger and looking forward to partnering with those people that you're working with as well as the continued support of the people that I've been working with lately to continue to build our economy and continue to improve the opportunities that people have in our great nation.

**Chad Chancellor:** Now, I would give these folks your contact information website if they want to go look at it.

**Austin Monk:** If you'd like to take a look at my website, some of the services that I provide, you can go to [www.rvsolutionsllc.com](http://www.rvsolutionsllc.com). You can also reach me at my cell at 256 796 4360. I'll be glad to take any of your workforce needs that you might have a question about.

**Chad Chancellor:** All right, Austin, thank you for being with us today.

**Austin Monk:** Thank you.

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**Chad Chancellor:** Next Move Group has launched a new initiative designed to both grow the American economy and improve the quality of lives of economic developers. So, we're going to grow the American economy in multiple ways. We've got all kinds of different ways to really help economic development organizations be more successful including helping them bring back jobs from overseas and China, reshoring that production into the United States and we're going to help economic developers improve their quality of lives.

So, you always hear this; the economic developer's job is to improve the quality of life of everybody in their community. Well, whose job is it to improve that economic developer's quality of life? And Next Move Group we're taking that task on for ourselves. So, to learn more about the movement that we're creating go to [thenextmovegroup.com/movement](http://thenextmovegroup.com/movement).

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