

Hall Monitor

Economic Development

by [Matt Davis](#)

Mayor Sam Adams drew scrutiny this past weekend for taking off on another business trip—this time to Japan to woo Nissan and Mitsubishi by talking up Portland as a place to invest heavily in electric cars. While there he's also been tweeting up a storm, pitching frozen food companies to expand their headquarters to Portland, and meeting with anyone else who might be interested in bringing their commercial dollars to the Rose City.

Last week's council session provided an update on the mayor's new economic development strategy for Portland, too.

"Members of city council have rightly picked up on it when our job creation efforts were more rhetoric than substance," said Adams. "The honing of this strategy continues at the same time we're out there hustling for these jobs."

In a recessionary environment, Adams has lured Swiss battery manufacturer ReVolt to Portland, creating up to 250 jobs. The city has gained a \$100 million stimulus grant to bring 1,000 electric cars here on a pilot program, and the state has gained \$600 million for wind farms. A clean energy works program aims to retrofit 500 homes. We still need to make progress on activewear and software, but with the strategy only launching in July it seems the mayor is more engaged than any of his predecessors in economic development. His goal of creating 10,000 jobs in five years doesn't look unrealistic.

So rather than bitching when the mayor gets on a plane to solicit investment (good morning, *Oregonian*), I think we should collectively shout hurrah. Portland, as I've written here recently, tends to operate in a bubble of its own self-adoration. But to create jobs, we need to burst that bubble and drag profitable businesses here, as well as support the businesses we already have.

By any measure, Adams is doing a good job of talking us up elsewhere. Since taking office in January, he's been around North America (Washington, DC; Vancouver, BC; Chicago; San Francisco; Toronto; New York City; and Minneapolis) doing exactly that. And he went on international trips to Brussels in May to speak at a bicycle conference, and to Taiwan in July to pitch Oregon beer.

So Sam, the next time the haters start hating for doing the job we hired you to do, why not grab a bottle of champagne from the hotel mini-bar and charge it to the city's credit card? Issue a nasty press release, too, saying, "I deserve it."

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