



**Jim Chapdelaine, Director of
Cross Competency Services
IBM**

Columbia
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IBM is synonymous with advances in IT. And, lately, so is Missouri. In May of 2010, Columbia, Missouri was announced as the site for the IBM's 5th U.S. service delivery center, pushing the total number of anticipated new Missouri IT jobs into the thousands for a 5-week period.

"Columbia's center will be a labor-based business, catering to clients in all types of industries," says Jim Chapdelaine, Director of Cross Competency Services. "We'll be providing level 2, 3, and 4 tech support for Unix and Windows and mid-range systems administration for storage, backup and recovery, SAP Basis, MBS systems programming and DBA support. Where some of our facilities are specific to data centers, the site in Columbia will be limited to technical support and project management.

Chapdelaine, a 22-year veteran of IBM, moved to Columbia from Boulder, Colorado, to head up the new center. The similarities in the two college towns is striking, and it's no accident that IBM located in both.

"You've got to realize that IBM is competing globally," Chapdelaine says. "We are trying to establish centers in communities where we can get the right talent at the right price point for us to be competitive in the marketplace.

"We're planning to grow to 800 people by 2012, and we are on track. The candidates I've seen are extremely professional. I'm not sure what my expectations were, but I've been surprised by the talent of the pool we've got to work with in the local area, and by 'the local area' I mean not only Columbia, but St. Louis, Kansas City, and Rolla.

I can tell we've got great potential for success here.

"Next year we'll start partnering with the university. As we start to see where things are going, we'll work with them on curriculum, and we'll hire more graduates. Both MU and the community colleges were instrumental in our decision to come here."

Other assets of the region have come as a surprise to Chapdelaine and his family.

"Missouri is beautiful country. There are rolling hills here, and trees everywhere. It's gorgeous. I tell people to come here and they'll see for themselves.

"My wife and I have 5 kids, and they're already plugged into their activities and schools.

I've been extremely impressed with the caliber of their teachers and the style of teaching. I think that comes from being close to the University of Missouri.

"When I think about the cities I've been in, I can tell you Columbia is a great fit. The business people have accepted us, and the community — the neighborhood — has been wonderful. In the first week we were here, we had a neighbor bring over brownies, and we got invited to a BBQ. I was like, what the heck? We were in Colorado for 5 years and that never happened. Midwest hospitality is alive and well!"