

Economic poaching Bagging Bay State biz

FINALLY, THE state of New Hampshire has gotten aggressive in recruiting Massachusetts businesses.

The state Division of Economic Development has long wooed out-of-state businesses. But the approach was too subtle, too traditional. Now the division has launched a clever initiative to directly target Massachusetts-based businesses for poaching.

Called "Open Invitation," the initiative involves contacting hundreds of Bay State companies and offering their owners limo rides from the state border to a Common Man restaurant, lunch with state business recruiters, tours of possible relocation sites and tickets to a Manchester Monarchs game or Cannon Mountain.

And, as they say in sales, "that's not all." The state has created a wonderfully informative Web site, www.nhopeninvitation.com, that makes the case for relocating businesses from Massachusetts to New Hampshire. On the site are lots of data, including a lengthy comparison of business costs and quality

of life factors.

This is not your typical marketing pitch. The division is careful to include all sorts of measures by which business owners would want to compare the two states, even ones in which Massachusetts beats New Hampshire.

That lets business owners know they aren't being snowed by a fancy sales pitch; they are being informed of the facts. And the facts are that New Hampshire has a higher quality of life and is a less costly place to do business.

The icing on the cake is that the initiative is almost entirely financed by New Hampshire businesses, such as Public Service of New Hampshire, that have an interest in seeing more companies recruited here, which is an approach we have advocated for years.

Kudos to the folks at the Division of Economic Development for putting together this creative new pitch and doing it in partnership with interested businesses. That is the kind of innovative thinking too seldom seen in government.

