



DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Economic Development Division

m e m o r a n d u m

TO: Laurel Lunt Prussing, Mayor

FROM: Elizabeth H. Tyler, Community Development Director

DATE: September 2, 2013

SUBJECT: **Economic Development Activities Report for August 2013**

Projects and Events

Downtown Urbana

- The 38th Annual Urbana Sweetcorn Festival was a huge success. It was one of the largest crowds to date based on ticket sales. Downtown businesses were pleased with many changes made during the festival planning process including closing Elm Street and rerouting MTD to Illinois Street which was of particular benefit to businesses in Lincoln Square who experienced high foot traffic.
- A soft opening preview of the Cafeteria & Company restaurant was held at 208 West Main Street during the Sweetcorn Festival. Construction is not yet complete, but the public was invited to see the newly remodeled seating area and learn about Pizza M and Flying Coffee Machine, the two businesses that will occupy the space.
- Cathedral Consulting has moved into [co][lab] at 206 West Main Street and completed business counseling to fulfill the requirements for a \$2,000 Business Development Grant.
- Dr. G's Brain Works: The Brain Fitness Store will open in 114 Lincoln Square. The new retail store will also offer neuropsychological services for all ages both at the store and online. Dr. G's has been awarded a \$2,000 Business Development Grant and renovation of the space is currently in progress.
- Transitions Retail Store is growing and expanding its current space in Lincoln Square.
- Remodeling work continues for four new businesses: The Butcher at 119 West Main Street, Sitara Indian Restaurant at 114 South Race Street, A-Plus VIP Lounge at 214 West Main Street, and the new Black Rock Pizza at 142 Lincoln Square. All are expected to be open this fall.
- The Wooden Hanger at 135 West Main Street is planning to close. Staff has referred two new potential retail tenants to the property owner.
- The City continues to work very closely with ownership of the Urbana Landmark Hotel on renovations and improvements. Recent progress includes the opening of the breakfast area, library, lower level meeting space, and the installation of new heating/air conditioning units in common areas and guest rooms.

Philo Road

- Plans for a Dollar Tree at 1303 Colorado, the former True Value location, are currently under review.
- Cherish Merchandise, a neighborhood retail store, has opened at 806 South Cottage Grove.
- Chris Saunders (Green Street Realty) has purchased the strip mall at 1720 S Philo and is currently seeking tenants for four units.

Cunningham Avenue

- Armored Gopher Games has completed business counseling and been awarded a \$2,000 Business Development Grant for their new, expanded retail store at 1508 N Cunningham Ave, Suite A. A Ribbon Cutting and Grand Reopening Celebration will be held Saturday, September 14th.
- Plans are under review for a new Wendy's restaurant at the Gateway Shoppes at Five Points.
- The Mervis Recycling facility is nearly complete.

University-Medical

- Renovation for Pawn King / Bass Pro Shop is nearly complete.

East Urbana

- Work is underway for the new Birkeys Farm Store on High Cross Road

Marketing Activities

- Urbana marketing information and Urbana Business Association app information (available for iPhone and Android devices) were distributed to Urbana hotels and Alice Campbell Alumni Center.
- Twenty visitor packets were mailed as a result of leads from the City's advertisement in the Illinois Travel Guide.
- A new City brochure geared towards visitors and those new to the community was printed.
- Staff coordinated and volunteered in an effort at freshman move-in with the Urbana Fire Department to distribute over 2,000 brochures to incoming students and their families.
- General City information was provided to incoming school teachers at an event at USD#116.

Urbana's Market at the Square

- The fourth Sprouts at the Market event of the season was held on August 3. The title of the event was, "Some Say Tomato". The event was a success with an estimated 80 children having participated.
- The Market at the Square Director attended a Farm Bureau event in Champaign to learn more about the Ag Leadership program and provide feedback to the current Ag Leadership class participants.
- Work continued on fall marketing efforts to promote the Farmers Market to the community. This includes radio and television advertising and guest appearances.
- Attendance for May Markets: 8/3, 5,888; 8/10, 6,662; 8/17, 6,662, 8/24, 6,580; 8/31, TBD.

Arts Related Activities

- Julianne Heuel, who was the Spring Public Arts Intern, will be assisting with the transition and maintaining public arts programs such as the Urbana Arts Grants in the interim period while a new Public Arts Coordinator is being hired.
- The fourth Art at the Market workshop, Letterpress with Soybean Press and music by Ryan Groff of Elsinore, was held on July 20th and attended by a record 257 people. The next Art at the Market will take place on September 28 and will feature Re-Use, Re-Purpose, Re-Create with The I.D.E.A. Store from 8 AM to noon, and a performance by The Michael Fenoglio Trio from 9:30 – 11:30 AM.
- Five Murals on Glass have been installed in downtown Urbana: Portrait of Chip McNeill by Chris Evans on the south parking deck tower, Elm Street and Broadway Avenue; Let's Ride by Molly Poganski on the windows of the Urbana Business Association office at 111 West Main Street; and Summer by Jill Miller and Fall Elegy VI by Rosalind Faiman Weinberg on the south windows of the Urbana Civic Center at 108 E Water St. Abe in the Grass by Larry Steinbauer will remain on the northeast parking deck tower on Main Street and Broadway Avenue.



Other Activities

- ED staff will attend the Illinois Economic Development Summit (formerly the Downstate Voice) on August 29 in Urbana; the event will focus on branding at the community and regional levels.
- CD staff hosted a Developer's Roundtable on August 20th at the Urbana Civic Center featuring presentations on the Geographic Information System (GIS) services provided by both the Champaign County GIS Consortium and the Regional Planning Commission.