



# 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 4<sup>th</sup>, 2014

**SUBJECT:** **Economic Development Activities Report for August 2014**

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### **Business and Development Activity**

#### **Downtown Urbana**

- The Art Party Studio is moving into Lincoln Square. The business provides a fun atmosphere where groups take a painting lesson together; adult classes offered in the evenings allow participants to bring in their own wine or beer. Formerly located in downtown Champaign, the studio has relocated into the former Wind, Water and Light space. More information is at <http://theartpartystudio.com>
- Oriental World held a Ribbon Cutting on August 8<sup>th</sup> at their new location in Lincoln Square.
- Staff is working with CBRE to prepare for the marketing of the 200 Block of South Vine Street.
- PGAV and City staff have conducted a field inventory of all properties in the study area for the proposed new Downtown TIF District. Additional research and analysis is also underway.
- Dancing Dog Eatery & Juicery at 126 W Main is nearing completion and should open this month.
- Work continues for Emma's Eatery, the new diner and video gambling establishment to be located in the Urbana Crossing strip at the former Quizno's location.
- Miss Possible, a startup working to engage girls in science and technology currently working out of [co][lab], raised over \$85,000 on their Indiegogo campaign—surpassing their goal of \$75,000.
- Creative Health, a nutrition-focused social venture run by Maria Ludeke, has opened in [co][lab].

#### **University-Medical**

- Demolition for the Campus Circle apartment complex on University Avenue is nearing completion and site work is now underway.
- Carter's Furniture is wrapping up an expansion of their Urbana location and the concurrent closure of their Champaign location.

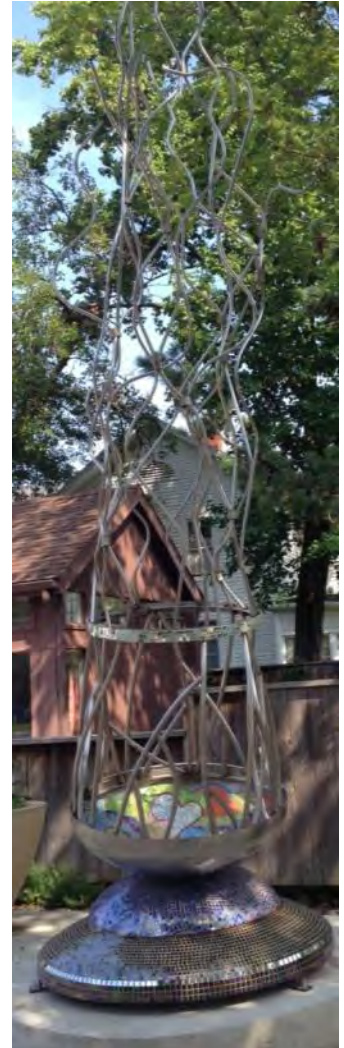
### **Marketing and Events Activity**

- Staff filmed the September edition of "It's All About U".
- The August Business and Development Luncheon was held on August 13<sup>th</sup> and attended by approximately 40 people. Natalie Kenny-Marquez and Cynthia Chandler of UBA presented "Downtown Urbana Special Event Showcase" and also provided information on Urbana's newly revised liquor license ordinance.
- Staff coordinated the printing and mailing of over 4,000 "Living in Urbana" brochures which will be mailed to off-campus residences in Urbana.
- The annual Sweetcorn Festival was a big success with over 40,000 for the weekend.
- City staff and officials distributed safety and promotional info to new students on Move-In Day.

## Urbana's Market at the Square

- Staff assisted the Illinois Stewardship Alliance in promoting a series of dining events in Urbana-Champaign at restaurants that will feature locally-produced items on their menu. Learn more at [www.ilstewards.org](http://www.ilstewards.org) Lunch at Pekara Bakery on August 6<sup>th</sup>. Dinner: at Bacaro on August 14<sup>th</sup>.
- Patron attendance at the Market has been very good in August: 8/2: 6,945; 8/9: 3,867; 8/16: 6,353; 8/23: 5,032; 8/30: TBD
- The Market Director coordinated a state-wide effort to celebrate National Farmers Market Week, August 3-9. Urbana's market participated on August 9th with a proclamation read by Mayor Prussing and free market promotional magnets, stickers, and 35th anniversary tote bags.
- Staff is working with the Central Illinois Chapter of Buy Fresh, Buy Local to have an on-air presence every Monday on ciLiving (WICA News Channel 3 afternoon program) to promote Market vendors and area restaurants committed to producing, and using local ingredients. Programs include: Pekara Bakery and Bistro, the Hendrick House Foodtruck, and Common Ground Food Coop.
- The Market Director appeared on WCIA News's "Ag Answers" to discuss recent Illinois legislation regarding farmers markets as well as on the WDWS's "It's Your Business".

## Public Arts Program



- The August Art at the Market performance and workshop featured art-making with fruits and vegetables with The Land Connection. There was a wide assortment of in-season produce, paper plates and organic finger paints for transforming ordinary healthy food into healthy food for your imagination. Local favorite Rebecca Rego and the Trainmen performed original music full of "Midwestern ideals, small town luxuries, and family." (Pictures of these events above.)
- Asteray, by Nicole Beck was installed at the corner of Green and Cedar by the Urbana Library. The sculpture will reside here for two years, until mid-2016. (Picture of Asteray at right.)
- The City Council approved the purchase of Fanfare by Shawn Morin as part of the permanent collection of City of Urbana. It is installed at the corner of Elm and Race.
- Jill Stroberger is the new Artist of the Corridor for August-October. She is a self-taught artist and topiary designer. Her paintings and multi-media pieces are based on nature and landscape.

## **Other Updates**

- Staff continues to work on an application for a new Urbana Enterprise Zone and have made presentations to the Urbana School District, Urbana Park District and CUMTD to explore partnership options. Staff has also held discussions with Parkland College staff and continues to partner with the City of Champaign, Champaign County and EDC staff in this process.
- Staff participated in a retention visit organized Economic Development Corporation at the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center located in Sunnycrest Mall on Philo Road.
- Multiple businesses will apply to site medical cannabis dispensaries in Urbana. Only two dispensaries will be authorized in this state police district which also includes Danville and Decatur.
- The 2014 Urbana Business Survey is underway. The survey will remain open until September 19th and all Urbana businesses are encouraged to participate in the survey.
- Grace Kyung completed her internship with the Economic Development Division and is moving forward with a Masters in Urbana Planning at UIUC. The position opening for the Fall semester Economic Development intern will close on September 7<sup>th</sup>.
- Community Development and Public Works staff presented on economic development tools and funding sources for public infrastructure projects to a Chinese delegation as part of UIUC's China Executive Leadership Program.
- Staff is participating on a committee with the University's Division of Intercollegiate Athletics, City of Champaign, Visit Champaign County, and other partners to submit a proposal to IHSA to bring back the boys basketball tournament to the community.

# Memorandum



**TO:** Laurel Lunt Prussing, Mayor  
**FROM:** Cynthia Chandler, Executive Director  
**DATE:** September 1, 2014  
**SUBJECT:** Urbana Business Association Activities Report for August 2014

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## Membership Growth

The 2014 membership year has seen the addition of 28 new member businesses, including four new members in the month of August.

## Sweetcorn Festival

The Sweetcorn Festival was held Friday, August 22, and Saturday, August 23. Set-up ran smoothly despite a drizzling rain throughout the morning and early afternoon. By the start of the event the weather had cleared and made for a perfect evening for attendees. The heat in the early part of the day Saturday, followed by the brief stint of inclement weather made for a challenge. Once the weather cleared, the crowds reconvened in downtown to enjoy all the food, arts, crafts, merchandise, information, and array of musical entertainment available.

Participating in this year's festival were 86 vendors total: 32 food (17 from CU, seven from Central Illinois, two from Chicago area, six from out of state), 39 information, 10 merchandise, and five entertainment. All booth space had been filled prior to the start of the festival.

This year's event was made possible with the assistance of approximately 600 volunteers manning a variety of areas including beer stands, Pepsi stands, ticket booths, corn tent, recycling station, check-in tables, back stage crew, ice delivery, and the sanitation team. Volunteers were rewarded with a keepsake t-shirt, food and non-alcoholic beverages, and corn bucks providing them a free ear of corn.

Positive feedback has been received from the addition of the third stage featuring CU Folk & Roots. Combined with the entertainment line-up of the One Community Together stage and the Miller Main stage, there was a variety in genres satisfying most attendees. In working with the Urbana Police Department, we implemented an emergency lane through the Miller Main staging area and limited the areas in which lawn chairs were permitted for Saturday night's crowd. This change was in direct response to issues encountered during the 2013 festival and proved successful.

Promotion of the festival was carried on all the area radio and television stations throughout the month leading up to the event including a spotlight on national television – NBC's Today Show Talk Spot on Saturday morning (August 23). Follow-up coverage of the festival across radio, television, and print has been positive.

Conversations with a variety of downtown businesses revealed an increase in both foot traffic and sales in their storefront. A few businesses held "sweet" sales promotions and 12 downtown businesses were registered for booth spaces however three never set up a booth space.

A review of the preliminary financials of the weekend event shows attendance was lower than in previous years with an approximate attendance of 40,000-45,000 throughout the weekend. The rain and high humidity were large contributing factors to this decline.

## **Holiday Market**

Planning is moving forward with the 2014 Holiday Market with fifteen vendors already signed up to participate. Promotion of this event is in process and will begin in early October.

## **Other Sponsorships**

The UBA continues to work with Urbana High School with the planning and coordination of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Sundae 5K Run/Walk scheduled for Sunday, October 5. In addition, staff are assisting in the promotion of the International Beer Tasting and Food Truck Showcase scheduled for Friday, September 13.