



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: October 2nd, 2014

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

Business and Development Activity

Downtown Urbana

- A permit has been issued for the renovation of the second floor of 115 W Main Street to accommodate the expansion of Applied Pavement Technology's corporate headquarters. Their staff is expected to grow from 44 employees to 60 employees over the next two years.
- Runtime Verification, a 10-employee startup tech company, is moving into the 2nd floor of County Plaza. The company was founded by Grigore Rosu, a computer science professor at UIUC.
- Demolition work is underway at 204 W Main for the creation of an outdoor beer garden and market.
- Dancing Dog Eatery & Juicery at 126 W Main is nearing completion and should open this month.
- A new barbecue restaurant is planning to open in the former Butcher Shop space at 119 W Main St. Lord & Lacy has operated for years as a catering business and as a food vendor--most recently in front of Danville Gardens on Prospect Avenue. The business has started making improvements to the space for the new restaurant and plans to open before the end of the year.
- 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.
- Four businesses each applied for a license to establish a medical cannabis dispensary in Downtown Urbana under Illinois's Medical Cannabis Pilot Program. Two licenses will be issued for a total of two dispensaries in a ten county area including the Champaign-Urbana, Decatur and Danville metro areas.
- Muris Technologies has opened a service office at 123 W Main Street. This local computer repair and IT solution provider has been in business for over a decade and has now opened its first storefront.

University-Medical

- Foundation work for the Campus Circle apartment complex on University Avenue is underway.

Philo Road

- Renovation is underway for a new AT&T Store at The Pines at Stone Creek Commons between Subway and Café Zojo.

North Lincoln Avenue

- Illinois American Water is consolidating several of its Champaign-Urbana locations into one new office and service distribution facility at 1406 N Cardinal Ct. Work is underway on the \$1.6 million renovation which is expected to be completed in early 2015.
- Work continues on the new catering kitchen for Hendrick House at 801 W Killarney St.

Marketing and Events Activity

- The October edition of “It’s All About U” will be made available beginning Monday, October 6th.
- Staff coordinated the design of an ad to appear in the official 2015 State of Illinois Travel Guide.
- The Marketing Coordinator attended the City/County Communications and Marketing Association Conference in Minneapolis, MN.
- An updated City of Urbana Quick Reference & Resource Guide has been issued. This guide is available in City Hall, will be distributed at upcoming events, and is accessible on the City website.
- Staff attended the IHSA Committee Meeting. This committee is meeting to prepare a bid to have the state IHSA basketball tournament in Champaign-Urbana.

Urbana’s Market at the Square

- The Market Director continued to assist the Illinois Stewardship Alliance in promoting a series of dining events at restaurants that feature locally-produced items on their menu. Learn more at www.ilstewards.org. September participants were Common Ground and Destihl.
- Patron attendance at the Market has been consistent in September: 9/6 - 5,178; 9/13 - 5,068; 9/20 - 4,142; 9/27 - 4,887.
- Market Director Natalie Kenny-Marquez attended a USDA meeting at the Union League Club in Chicago to review of portions of the new Farm Bill.
- The Market Director gave a presentation at Urbana Middle School to the Future Cities Club which is focusing this year on local food systems and also appeared on ciLiving on September 18th to discuss local food.
- Staff 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 hosted Sprouts at the Market on September 20th with guest presenter The Great Pumpkin Patch.

Public Arts Program



- On September 13, the fifth and final Art at the Market for 2014 was held (shown at left above). Almost 500 people dropped by to make delicate and whimsical nature mobiles with Traci Pines and to hear local favorites, The Curses, perform “gritty old-school Rock & Roll tinged with Americana, Blues and Honky Tonk flavors.” Overall, for Art at the Market, attendance was good for the entire season. Staff estimated that we had roughly 1600 attendees for the 2014 slate of performances and art workshops.
- On Friday, September 26, the second of five (possibly six) temporary sculptures was installed on Main St. in front the Cinema Gallery in Downtown Urbana. Whirlwind is in Thorntree by V. Skip Willits of

Camanche, IA (shown at center above) will reside in this location until mid-September, 2016. This sculpture was chosen from a group of 70 entries from around the country.

- The October episode of Art Now! on UPTV will feature Champaign artist Beth Darling and her paintings of the luscious gardens of Urbana (one shown at right above) and the powerful landscapes of the Southwest.
- The Public Arts Program received their fifth program grant from the Illinois Arts Council in the amount of \$4,250, up from \$4,100 from last year. In other fundraising news, staff is working on a non-endowed fund agreement with the Community Foundation of Central Illinois (similar to that of the Legacy Tree program) to pave the way for various fundraising campaigns in order to expand the programs and reach of the Public Arts Program.

Other Updates

- The 2014 Urbana Business Survey was completed by 131 businesses and is now closed.
- Miles Thomas is the new Economic Development Intern. He is a master's student in the Urban Planning at UIUC and has experience practicing planning in North Carolina as a consultant.

Memorandum



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

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 2nd 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.