



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: March 3rd, 2014

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

Business and Development Activity

Downtown Urbana

- Two new tenants have opened offices at 210 West Main Street, the space above Cafeteria & Co. which was renovated as part of the Development Agreement with Cake Design Development.
 - Personify has opened a five person office in 210 West Main. The company's vision is to create the future of how people will communicate remotely. Personify has raised over \$7 million in seed and venture capital financing, attracted partnerships with large companies such as Intel, AMD, and Microsoft, and, has offices in Chicago and Vietnam. Sanjay Patel, the CEO of Personify, is also a professor of electrical and computer engineering at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.
 - Launchable will be an eight-desk boutique tech incubator office in 210 West Main Street. The company will identify and lease space to 2-3 exceptional startup companies offering them one-on-one mentorship and a wide range of services. The managing director of Launchable, Chirag Shah, is a patent strategist and an Adjunct Professor at the University of Illinois College of Law.
 - Sanjay and Chirag were both panelists at the February 18th Developers Luncheon along with Matt Cho, Lori Gold-Patterson of Pixo, and Tim Montague of SBDC. The event, titled *Downtown Urbana's Emerging Innovation Ecosystem*, was attended by over 50 people.
- Choices, Inc. has opened their first Illinois office in County Plaza at 102 West Main Street, bringing thirty new employees to Downtown Urbana. Choices coordinates care for youth involved in multiple social service systems.
- A Plus VIP Lounge held their grand opening and ribbon cutting on Valentine's Day, 2/14. A Plus also received a \$1,000 Business Opening Grant.
- Professional Illustrator David Michael Moore will open his new brand identity and consulting firm, DITCHSTOCK, in [co][lab] at 206 West Main Street in March. DITCHSTOCK was also awarded a \$2,000 Business Development Grant.
- Priceless Books has opened at their new location at 112 West Main Street.
- Dancing Dog Eatery & Juicery has been approved for a \$2,000 Business Development Grant for their new restaurant going into 126 West Main Street.
- Remodeling is nearing completion for the new Champaign Cycle in Urbana at 110 South Race Street. A soft opening will occur in the coming weeks followed by a grand opening at the end of March.
- Renovations continue for a new restaurant at 202 North Race Street in the Stratford Apartments.
- Due to financial hardship, Corkscrew and Buvons will close their location at 203 North Vine Street. The Springfield location of Corkscrew will remain open.

Cunningham Avenue

- Creative Thermal has announced plans to add a sixth building to their campus on North Willow Road. The 20,000 square foot building will serve as their new corporate headquarters and is to be designed as a “zero net energy” building.
- The Black Gold Trading Post, a new jewelry and gold store at 1502 N Cunningham Avenue in Northgate Plaza Suite F, is now open.
- Interior remodeling is nearing completion at 1104 N Cunningham Avenue where property owner Martin Fuentes is planning to open a new restaurant concept.

University-Medical

- Dear 72, a new clothing store, is open at Gregory Place East.
- Renovation for KoFusion at Gregory Place West continues. A soft opening is now expected in March.
- Work is nearing completion for the Café Bene, Korea’s largest coffee franchise, going into Gregory Place East. It is expected to open in March.
- Mirror Image Hair Studio moved from 202 W University Avenue to 1205 South Mattis Avenue on February 11th.

East Urbana

- Construction is complete at the new Birkeys Farm Store on High Cross Road. A soft opening is expected in the coming days.

North Lincoln

- The Illinois Commerce Commission has approved \$7.8 million in funds to build a bridge for Olympian Drive to cross over the Illinois Central Railroad tracks.
- A Conditional Use Permit has been issued for a new catering business and banquet hall to be operated by Hendrick House at 801 W Killarney Street.

Marketing and Events Activity

- Staff provided city information and promotional materials at the Spring 2014 Off-Campus Housing Fair, located inside the Illini Union on February 13th.
- Staff is working on a new guide to Downtown Urbana Retail Shopping and Restaurants.
- Worked with ED staff to do a paid Facebook promotion from the City’s Facebook page. The promotion was geared towards a specific audience, which we chose, and promoted a recent News-Gazette article regarding the many recent and announced new businesses openings in Downtown. The return on this investment included over 8,700 page views, 60 new Facebook page ‘likes’, and 50 post ‘likes’.
- UBA’s 2014 Urbana Restaurant Week will be held from March 3rd through the 9th. Thirteen restaurants will offer special lunch and dinner price-fixed menus. City staff is assisting in promoting this event.

Urbana’s Market at the Square

- Market at the Square Director Natalie Kenny-Marquez presented at the IL Farmers Market Association Workshop in Aurora, IL. The presentation, which was assisted by Urbana Business Association Events Coordinator Jessica Snyder, discussed the partnerships between the UBA and Market at the Square on promoting year-round farmers’ market shopping in Urbana.
- Natalie was also appointed as the Chair of the Market Committee of the IL Farmers Market Assoc.
- Applications for the 2014 season of Market at the Square are now available.
- Staff gave a presentation from the Sprouts at the Market theme, “Eat Your Colors”, to a group of nine 3, 4, and 5 year olds at a local preschool.

Arts Related Activities

- Lisa Hatchadoorian is Urbana's new Public Arts Coordinator. Lisa relocated from New York City, and has a background in Curatorial Studies, Music, Art history and Arts Administration.
- Staff is in the middle of the annual Urbana grants jury process. The jury panels met on February 22 and March 1. Recommendations for funding are expected to go to the Public Arts Commission in March.
- Staff is working with the Farmers Market and UCycle to share advertising costs for slides to run during movie previews at the Art Theater in Downtown Champaign. This will be an opportunity to effectively reach a new audience to promote various city programs, arts, and food.

Other Activities

- Chris Szmurlo is serving as the new Economic Development Intern. Chris is a junior in the Geography and Urban Planning programs at UIUC and will be focusing his efforts on creating an up-to-date business database in preparation for a business survey to be conducted later this year.
- Economic Development Coordinator Brandon Boys is now serving as the City of Urbana's representative on the Urbana Business Association Board of Directors.
- The 2014 Innovation Celebration is taking place on February 27th at 5:00pm at the National Center for Supercomputing Applications (NCSA) located at 1205 West Clark Street in Urbana. [co][lab] at 206 West Main Street is one of three businesses to have been nominated for the Entrepreneurial Excellence Social Venture Award.
- Economic Development Specialist Kate Ferrer notified thirty Urbana businesses of their potential eligibility for the Illinois Small Business Jobs Tax Credit.