

Update Rock Island News Release

2/2/09

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Update Rock Island is a segment at City Council meetings given by Mayor Mark Schwiebert focusing on news in Rock Island. The video segment from the meeting is available on the home page of www.rigov.org and provides more information on the topics listed.

Status Report of City Council Goals

Substantial progress has been made on accomplishing the City Council's priorities as outlined in September 2008.

- Jumer's Casino & Hotel opened December 1, 2008.
- In Columbia Park, City Council approved a development agreement with LRC Developers and purchased property for the MetroLINK maintenance facility.
- City Council approved the purchase of property at 9th Street and 11th Street, for future retail development.
- Staff prepared budget options for City Council consideration to balance the 2009-2010 budget.
- In efforts to go green, business assistance programs were modified to help businesses invest in energy saving improvements and City Council banned leaf burning.
- "Rock Solid, Rock Island" television commercials launched promoting Rock Island as a cosmopolitan community.
- For the Martin Luther King Center expansion project several large donations were received, and the architect and construction manager were hired.
- As part of the Downtown Strategic Plan, a Downtown Manager was hired by Renaissance Rock Island, the Jackson Square 72-unit housing development was announced, and DeSoto Arts Center improvements were completed.
- Bonds were sold for the first phase of the Armory Park project. Bids for the first phase were \$700,000 under budget.

Artspace Market Study Kick-Off

Artspace Projects is partnering with the City of Rock Island, IL to study the space needs of artists in the Quad Cities and neighboring region. All community activists and artists of all visual, performing, and other art disciplines are invited to an Affordable Artist Live/Work Project Market Survey Kick-Off on Tuesday, February 3, 2009 from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at Comedy Sportz, 1818 Third Avenue.

The City and Artspace Projects, a national nonprofit developer of affordable space for the arts, are undertaking an innovative and exciting new project to create affordable space where artists may live and work. The project begins by asking artists what type of space they need, by way of an online survey.

This is Artspace's second visit to Rock Island. In February 2008, Artspace conducted a series of meetings with different stakeholders and provided a Preliminary Feasibility Report on creating an artist live/work development in Rock Island. This is the next phase in the project which is needed to determine artists' needs and gauge demand for a project.

Eye Surgeons Associates Now Open

Eye Surgeons Associates is now open in a new 25,000 square foot building located at 4731 45th Street Court, just off Blackhawk Road. The \$7.5 million facility is designed to serve its growing customer base and accommodate ten additional employees.

New Neighborhoods Shaping Up

At the Neighborhood Partners annual membership meeting February 5, 2009 three new full memberships and two new associate memberships will be considered. Neighborhood Partners is a city-initiated and coordinated partnership that builds stronger working relationships among neighborhoods, city government, service agencies, schools, churches, and businesses. Several new neighborhood organizations are moving forward including: Highland Park Historic Neighborhood Association, Black Hawk Park West, and Downtown Neighborhood Association.