

Update Rock Island News Release

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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.

Rock Island County Citizens Will Vote on 1% Sales Tax to Benefit Schools 4/7

Rock Island County citizens will vote on April 7 on a one percent retail sales tax to be used for school facility improvement projects. The funding raised will be distributed based on the population of the school district. Scott County has had a similar sales tax for at least ten years. An estimated \$13 million will be generated in Rock Island County.

Columbia Park Update

Progress has been made on the Columbia Park plan, located on the site of the former Farmall plant, to create a mixed-use commercial and residential area. Metro will build a multi-million dollar facility on the site. City Council considered a \$1.4 million bond issue, which will be supported by Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District in this area.

Development Activity in Rock Island

With daily headlines about the worsening state of the national economy, it is easy to overlook some of the positive development activities that have recently occurred in Rock Island. These developments underscore several points including: development can happen in recession, Rock Island has a diversified economy, growth often comes from within, and it is important to have City programs in place to encourage economic development.

Some of the recent developments highlighted include:

- **Office Machine Consultants** – OMC has been a Rock Island business since 1987. Having outgrown their building at 534 16th Street, the company bought the building at 3624 Blackhawk Road (formerly occupied by eServ). The move allows the company to almost double their square footage, will retain 25 jobs in the city, supports the creation of three new jobs and results in an investment of over a half million dollars. The City supported the project with a \$100,000 Commercial & Industrial Revolving Loan Fund (CIRLF) and façade rebate.
- **Hughes Tire** – Hughes Tire is a family owned business founded in 1974. Until Fall 2008, Hughes had operations in Milan and East Moline. With the support of a CIRLF loan, the company purchased the former Bi-State Tire business at 730 31st Avenue. The Rock Island Hughes location specializes in tire re-treading and also serves as the company's corporate headquarters. Hughes started with five employees at this location and has added five since opening. Hughes received a \$50,000 CIRLF loan and façade rebate.
- **Plumbers and Pipefitters** – Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 25 broke ground on a 13,200 square foot expansion of their office and training facility at 4600 44th Street late last year. The addition to the south of the existing building will house additional office and training space as well as a pharmacy for use by local members and the public. Seventeen people work at the site. Estimated cost of the project is over \$1 million.

- **Lift Systems** – This East Moline based company purchased the property at 1101 12th Avenue (former Quad City Engineering) and will produce hydraulic cylinders at this location with a staff of eleven. They plan to improve the exterior property appearance when weather permits in Spring 2009.
- **Champion Building** – Attorneys Pete Wessels and Carl Stojan are owners the property at 423 17th Street. As part of a remodeling project, the owners used the city's façade improvement program and sustainable loan program to undertake several green upgrades to the property including the installation of new energy efficient windows, boiler, lighting, and low VOC paint. Total project cost is \$107,000 with City support of \$40,417.
- **Scooter World** – Retail scooter sales / service business opened at 3832 14th Avenue in Fall 2008. Scooter World sells scooters, ATV's, UTV's, dirt bikes, mini-bikes, go carts, and motorcycles.
- **Inspired Design Jewelry** – Custom made retail jewelry store at 1815 24th Street opened in December 2008. Owner Mindy Diaz is a Rock Island native who works at McGivern's and started her own business. The City supported the project with a CIRLF loan and rebate grant.
- **DuMarche' Market on Third** – Completed in Winter 2008, DuMarche' Market on Third consists of six, two-story, loft style, live / work, owner-occupied housing units at 2010 3rd Avenue. The total project cost of \$1.3 million represents an opportunity to build on the strategy of creating a downtown neighborhood by offering for sale residential units. The first unit has recently been contracted for sale.
- **McKesson Lofts** – Work proceeded on the McKesson Lofts project, a \$6.6 million conversion of the former 60,000 square foot pharmaceutical warehouse into 22 condominium units and 12,000 square feet of first floor commercial space. The project is scheduled to be completed by late Summer 2009. The City supported the project through \$1,000,000 in Downtown Tax Increment funds.
- **Spirit Partners / Mandus Group** – Officially opened in January 2009, Spirit Partners / Mandus Group specializes in consulting and support work for the Rock Island Arsenal and companies wishing to do business with the Arsenal. Renovation of an existing 7,300 square foot building accommodates the company's immediate needs; however, there is high growth potential. Note that the building uses a geothermal heating/cooling system which has greatly reduced energy costs.
- **Quad Cities Kidney Center** – Located at 2623 17th Street near the Trinity West campus, the Quad Cities Kidney Center will open in Spring 2009. This 5,000 square foot medical facility will employ ten and represents an investment of over \$1 million.
- **Eye Surgeon Associates** – The new \$7 million, 25,000 square foot eye care facility opened for business in early 2009. Servicing some 300 patients per day, the project is the first development in the Prairie View Business Park. Travelers flying into the Quad Cities International Airport will notice the large eye painted on the building's roof.

Earth Hour is March 28

Rock Island will participate in Earth Hour, a global event held on March 28, when communities turn off their lights from 8:30 to 9:30 p.m. to express a commitment to reducing the quantity of energy consumed and to reduce greenhouse gasses.

Over 50 Going to Washington DC with Quad City Development Group

For the thirteenth year, city officials from Rock Island will join the Quad City Development Group's delegation to Washington DC. Top items this year's community-wide agenda include: passenger rail service, the RiverVision Plan, waste and stormwater management, the I-74 bridge, and the Rock Island Arsenal.