

## Update Rock Island News Release

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### Media Contact:

Mayor Mark Schwiebert  
City of Rock Island  
1528 Third Avenue, Rock Island, IL 61201  
309.732.2012



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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](http://www.rigov.org) and provides more information on the topics listed.

### **U.S. Conference of Mayors Talks with Obama Transition Team on Economic Development**

Mayor Schwiebert participated in a conference call with the U.S. Conference of Mayors and two individuals from President-elect Obama's transition team on economic development. Jason Furman and Cecilia Munoz outlined the economic development programs being considered which will include:

1. Job generation.
2. Two year use-it-or-lose-it policy.
3. Emphasize public and private partnerships.
4. Very broad-based, to include bridges, schools, sewer, and water.
5. Some dollars will go directly to cities.
6. Programs focused on energy efficiency and health care.

The U.S. Conference of Mayors has forwarded a list of economic development projects containing 15,221 projects from 641 cities totaling \$96.6 million and expected to create 1.2 million jobs.

### **Jumer's Casino & Hotel Grand Opening**

Jumer's Casino & Hotel celebrated their official grand opening with a ribbon cutting December 19, 2008. Members of the Illinois Gaming Board, State Legislators, City Council, Illinois Quad City Chamber of Commerce, and Jumer's organization were there to celebrate this \$151 million development.

### **Columbia Park Development Agreements**

On tonight's agenda, the Council is expected to vote on two agreements regarding a development in Columbia Park. The agreements will provide for the purchase and donation of two tracts of land totaling approximately 9.7 acres. The agreements between the City and the owners of the Quad City Industrial Center will help facilitate the construction of a new multi-million dollar operations and maintenance facility by MetroLINK.

About two years ago, MetroLINK studied several Illinois Quad City sites and determined that the QCIC property was the best location for the new facility. In order to secure the site, City staff began working with owners Jim and Scott Christiansen. The Christiansen's, who already owned most of the land between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 44<sup>th</sup> and 46<sup>th</sup> Streets, purchased several outlots east of the main QCIC property which were occupied by a tavern, former union hall, and a tree service business. The Christiansen's had the buildings demolished earlier this year as part of over 1 million sq.ft. of demolition at QCIC site.

The MetroLINK project is expected to spur further development in the Columbia Park neighborhood and at the QCIC property. The project compliments recent city investment in the

Sylvan Sough Natural Area and major investment by McLaughlin Body Company at the western end of the QCIC property. Development in the Columbia Park area is one of the City Council's top priorities.

*City Council voted in favor of the agreements.*

### **USEPA Gives Ruling on Area's Fine Particulate Matter**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has ruled that most of the metropolitan areas in Rock Island, Scott, and Muscatine Counties are non-attainment areas in fine particulate matter standards. In recent testing of six air quality monitors, two monitors in Iowa showed higher levels for fine particulate matter than accepted by new EPA standards. Readings will be taken in December 2008, with results expected in February 2009, which will hopefully show the area is back within standards.

### **Property Tax Levy**

City Council will vote on staff's recommendation to hold the City's property tax rate at 2.3502. The City has consistently held or reduced property tax rates since 1990. While property values may not be increasing in other parts of the country, property values have increased in Rock Island.

*City Council voted to hold the property tax rate at 2.3502.*

### **Rock Solid, Rock Island Marketing Campaign Launches**

The third phase of the Rock Solid, Rock Island marketing campaign has launched. One of City Council's top priorities this year was identified as "Renew the Rock Island marketing plan and promote Rock Island as a 'cosmopolitan' city." This campaign will do just that. Television ads started running December 22, 2008 and will continue through May 31, 2009. A series of six television spots, produced by dphilms, will run. These ads will feature Rock Solid, Rock Islanders Brian Cady, Greg Hass, Anne Johnson, Jerry Jones, Jan Masamoto, and Monta Ponsetto.