

Check Out What's Developing in Downtown Urbana

Forward Motion

Moving Downtown Forward, a collaborative project to revitalize downtown Urbana, began this summer. The project, which can be applied to other downtowns in Champaign County, has two primary points of focus:

- Bringing a more diverse selection of retail business to the downtown
- Promoting renovation of upper floors into living space

Moving Downtown Forward brings together downtown Urbana property owners, local government, the CEP, the Champaign County Building Regulations Department, real estate agents, an architect, and the Monument Square District.

"We welcome anyone who wants to make our downtowns more vibrant centers of economic, social and cultural activity, where we can live, work

and play," CEP Director Marcia Bailey said.

One goal is to create a guide book to walk property owners through the process of renovating downtown buildings, saving them the time and trouble of having to learn the steps on their own.

The next public Moving Downtown Forward meeting will be August 15, 4:30-6 p.m. at the Mike Major Art Studio, 119 Miami St., Urbana.



The proposed Legacy Place project would turn the Douglas Inn into senior citizen apartments.



CT Communications has a new name — CT Comm — and a new look to help spruce up downtown.

Legacy Place

Work could begin as early as next June or July to convert Urbana South and North elementary schools and the long-vacant Douglas Inn in downtown Urbana into 51 affordable senior citizen apartments, called Legacy Place.

Developer Flaherty & Collins Properties has completed numerous similar projects in Indiana, Ohio and other states and was recently awarded 2018

Housing Credits for the project through the Ohio Housing Finance Authority. Flaherty & Collins is applying for additional funding to convert the historic buildings.

Many community partners have come together to support Legacy Place, such as the City of Urbana, Urbana City School District, the CEP, Douglas Inn owner John Doss, the Champaign County Preservation Alliance and the Monument Square District. And Residential Supports and Services,

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Sutphen Corp. Opens New Urbana Facility

Champaign County has gained a new employer, the Sutphen Corporation, a family-owned, Ohio-based maker of heavy-duty, custom firefighting apparatus.

The company, the oldest continuously owned and operated fire apparatus manufacturer in the U.S., is establishing a Service, Parts and Refurbishment Center at 49 N. Ludlow Rd., Urbana. Sutphen is recruiting service technicians and will initially employ 22 at the new facility.

The location gives Sutphen room to expand its parts inventory and focus more

on refurbishing fire engines, a side of the business with promising growth potential, says President Drew Sutphen, the fourth generation of his family to lead the 128-year-old company.



Drew Sutphen and Todd Winnenberg

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From left, Morgan Hunter, who is interning at the Hall Company; Hall Company Engineer Zach Crumley, who has been working with Hunter; and Hall Company President Kyle Hall.

Hall Company Offers Intern a Career Testing Ground

A 2018 graduate of Triad High School and the Ohio Hi-Point Career Center Advanced Manufacturing program at Triad landed a unique opportunity at the Hall Company in Urbana.

Morgan Hunter isn't certain what career path he wants to pursue, but the Hall Company has hired him as an intern to experience all facets of the high-tech company's operations – assembly floor, large-format printing, equipment maintenance and engineering.

"Eventually I would like to go to college, but I would like to give myself a year to experience the workforce before I make a big decision and end up spending thousands of dollars on a degree," Hunter says.

Hunter is the second Triad Advanced Manufacturing graduate the Hall Company has hired as an intern. President Kyle Hall, a CEP Board member, said, "We hope he gets a real feel for what he's interested in, and we're hoping we end up being a good fit for him and we can create a career path for him."

The Hall Company has a history of providing opportunities for local students and graduates. Two senior management members started taking out the trash while in high school. "They've been here 40 some years," Hall said.

"A lot of young people are thinking, 'I'm going to get out of town.' So it's nice to show them there are some world-class employment opportunities for them here."

The Advanced Manufacturing program will begin its fourth year at Triad in August with about 110 middle and high school students, says the program's instructor, Todd Bodey.

Clark State Office Hours at CEP

Clark State Community College's Workforce and Business Solutions program has established regular office hours at the CEP office, 3 Monument Square, Urbana — the second and fourth Wednesdays every month, 9 a.m.-noon. Appointments are not needed.

JOBS Team Here to Help Local Businesses Thrive

"At least 75 percent of economic development is retention – helping existing businesses succeed and possibly expand their operations to provide jobs and a tax base that improves our county's quality of life," says CEP Director Marcia Bailey.

That's why she and the CEP Board created a team that visits local businesses to learn more about them, including what's working for them and what's challenging them.

So far, the JOBS (Jobs, Opportunities, Buildings and Space) team has visited Honeywell Aerospace, Bundy Baking Solutions and the Hall Company. The JOBS team is available to visit any type of business – not just manufacturing. **Businesses wanting a visit may call the CEP at 937-653-7200.**

The JOBS team varies from one visit to the next, but generally consists of Bailey; a county commissioner; a city and/or village administrator; an education representative, from Urbana University, Clark State Community College and/or Ohio Hi-Point Career Center; and a workforce development representative, from Ohio Means Jobs Champaign County or the Champaign County Department of Job and Family Services.



JOBS team member Karen Chuvalas of Urbana University on a JOBS visit with Kyle Hall at the Hall Company.

During the visits, the team learns about each business:

- Their products, services, history and markets
- Local companies they do business with
- What they like about business in Champaign County
- What they think would make doing business easier
- Plans, such as expansion, new products or markets, and what they'll need to make it happen, such as more land or building space, additional utility access, more employees or training for existing staff

"Our JOBS team visits enable us to see how the CEP and our partnerships with private businesses, local government, education, workforce development, and regional and state economic development agencies can boost local businesses," Bailey says. "And our visits help businesses learn about the resources the CEP and our partners have to offer. They learn that we're ready to help."

Business Advisory Council Formed

Under a new state law, the Madison-Champaign Educational Service Center (MCESC) has launched a countywide Business Advisory Council (BAC).

The BAC, composed of representatives of education, private business, government and nonprofit organizations, meets quarterly. MCESC Superintendent Dan Kaffenbarger, a CEP Board member, led formation of the BAC, and Jill O'Neal, also on the CEP Board, chairs the group. The BAC's main purpose, says O'Neal, human resources director for Weidmann Electrical Technology, is to help align school curriculum to provide the skilled workforce businesses need.

UU, Hi-Point Back CEP Monitors

With the financial support of Urbana University, Ohio Hi-Point Career Center, FASTLANE and DP&L, the CEP will place TV monitors around the county – like the one in the CEP office window (at right) – to broadcast information about economic and workforce development, training and jobs.

Ten monitors will be placed in public areas – one each at the five Champaign County high schools; in Mechanicsburg, North Lewisburg and St. Paris; Urbana University; and Ohio Hi-Point. The CEP will generate the content.

CEP Director Marcia Bailey said that Berry Digital Solutions is helping the CEP manage the project and that Weidmann Electrical Technology, Inc. funded the original monitor at the CEP.

The purpose, she said, is to inform students and other county residents about local career opportunities, education and training



available to prepare people for the workforce.

The monitors are the ideal way to deliver the information, says Christopher Washington, executive vice president and CEO of Urbana University, a branch campus of Franklin University. “Kids today are digitally wired and pay attention to what’s on the screen.”

He adds, “The CEP is leading the way to organize education and employers, preparing talent to meet employers’ needs.”

Kelsey Webb, Ohio Hi-Point director of communications and marketing, said, “We’re excited to help spread the message that there are great opportunities here for students.”

Investors Joining Urbana Hotel Project

About a dozen investors have come forward to support possible construction of a hotel in Urbana. BriMark Builders, LLC is pursuing the project after a third-party feasibility study arranged by the CEP indicated sufficient demand for a hotel with 70 to 80 guest rooms.

There is still opportunity for more investors to get involved. For information on becoming an investor, call CEP Director Marcia Bailey, 937-653-7200. Investors are considering options for land purchase in the city.

More Businesses Flying the ‘Open’ Flag

We welcome these new members of the local business community:



Urbana Dental Smiles, the practice of Drs. Jessica Kile and Marta Strembitsky, which made extensive improvements to its historic building, 1052 S. Main St., Urbana.



Essential Wellness Center, LLC, the essential oils business of Laura Alban, 518 Miami St., Urbana.

3 More Businesses Join CEP as Partners

Three more businesses have joined the Champaign Economic Partnership as partner investors, and four businesses recently renewed their financial commitment as partner investors.

The new partners

are Navistar, which is supporting at the Patron level; Parker Trutec, at the Advocate level; and Vectren, at the Support level.

NAVISTAR

PARKER TRUTEC

VECTREN
Live Smart

Renewing their commitment are DP&L and Memorial Health, at the Champion level, and Pioneer Electric Cooperative and Weidmann Electrical Technology, at the Advocate level.

Visit cepohio.com/partnership-investors.html for a complete list of partner investors.

St. Paris Chooses CEP

The St. Paris Village Council recently designated the Champaign Economic Partnership as the village’s economic development agent.

In this relationship, the CEP will assist the village in efforts to help current businesses succeed, expand and create new jobs, and attract new businesses. Earlier this year, the Village of Mechanicsburg also chose to partner with the CEP to assist with economic development.

St. Paris Mayor Brenda Cook says, “I believe that working together provides more energy and creates success. Saint Paris recognizes the CEP is a strong force in our community that is already providing leadership for economic development.”

Susan Prince, a member of the St. Paris Village Council who focuses on economic development, said, “This makes perfect sense to partner with the CEP. We want to see growth in the village, and we haven’t had any in some time. With the CEP we’ll get help in attracting businesses that are looking to expand.”

Liaison to Coordinate Education, Manufacturing

Through a partnership of the CEP, Ohio Hi-Point Career Center and local funders, a part-time liaison will work with local manufacturers and educational institutions to help make sure students are being prepared for the manufacturers' current workforce needs.

Ashley Cook, Ohio Hi-Point's supply chain management instructor at Urbana High School, will work 10 hours a week as Business Liaison, coordinating activities that bring schools, students and manufacturers together.

As Business Liaison, Cook will report to CEP Director Marcia Bailey. Her work as liaison is being funded by DP&L, Clark State Community College, FASTLANE and the Champaign County Human Resources Manufacturers Council.

"She will visit manufacturers to see what their workforce needs are, and she'll be going to the schools to help make sure their curriculum is where it needs to be to prepare students for career opportunities," Debby Wortman, Ohio Hi-Point satellite director, said.

Cook will also develop opportunities that bring together schools, students and business partners, and will market job openings, internships, job fairs and open houses.

Downtown Developments

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Inc., a local nonprofit provider of housing for seniors and adults with developmental disabilities, is serving as co-developer and 25 percent owner of the project.

Roundabout Improvements

In 2019, safety improvements will be made to Urbana's downtown roundabout, and water mains and service lines will be replaced. The projects, involving Monument Square and one block in each direction from the square, will be completed a block at a time to minimize traffic disruption, says City Engineer Tyler Bumbalough.

The city has received two grants from ODOT for the roundabout – a Safety Grant (90% state funding-10% city funding) and a Small Cities Grant (95%-5%). The water lines will be funded through an Ohio Public Works Commission 0% interest loan.

Bids are due in February, and work could start as early as March and take six to seven months. The new roundabout design will slow traffic and improve motorist and pedestrian safety, Bumbalough said.

Among others, safety features will include curbing and a truck apron to better guide traffic; center splitter islands that will provide pedestrians a "refuge" area in each crosswalk; and flashing beacons that pedestrians can actuate to alert motorists that they intend to cross the street.

A conceptual drawing of the project is on the city website, urbanaohio.com, under the Engineering Department.



Sutphen Corporation's new Champaign County location.

Sutphen Opens Urbana Site

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Sutphen recently attended a CEP Board of Trustees meeting with Todd Winnenberg, general manager of the company's Service and Chassis Divisions.

Winnenberg said the new Urbana facility will enable the company to expand chassis assembly operations at Sutphen's Springfield site. He added that the company will also use the new Urbana site to launch Sutphen University, a program for training and educating customers.

"We're so excited to welcome such an established and growing business to Champaign County," CEP Director Marcia Bailey said. "And we're grateful for the cooperative effort that has made this possible."

She gives special credit to Terry Howell of Howell Brothers Development, which originally built Sutphen's new Urbana location in 2012 for Pioneer DuPont. Howell has worked with Sutphen to modify the facility to accommodate the company's specialized needs.

Howell said, "I really appreciate the County Building Regulations Department working with us and providing guidance in the project." He adds, "It's a great use of the facility, and Sutphen is a great company to have in Champaign County."

Q3 Cleanup Nearing Completion

Cleanup of the former Johnson Manufacturing/Q3 property on Miami and Beech streets in Urbana is about 90 percent complete. Marketing has begun to find new businesses to use the redeveloped 20 acres, which are zoned for manufacturing.

Urbana-based developer True Inspection Services is directing the project through an agreement with the City of Urbana. The cleanup is being completed under the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency's Voluntary Action Program (VAP). When the project meets VAP cleanup requirements, the Ohio EPA will issue a covenant not to sue, clearing the way for development of the property by future owners.

Contact Us

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