

Carbondale: A Place We Are Proud to Call Home

By: Carbondale Mayor John "Mike" Henry

The city has received a \$13,900,000 federal grant for construction of the Southern Illinois Multimodal Station, a regional center that will replace the existing Amtrak station. This will be a much larger facility with retail space that will serve not only Amtrak but also regional public transit providers. Estimated date of completion is late 2022.

The City Council voted to allow recreational marijuana dispensaries within many of our business districts. We expect to have as many as two locations open this year. Public consumption is not allowed and products must be transported in approved containers, out of reach of drivers.

Phase 3 of the Illinois Avenue Streetscape Improvements Project is in the planning stage. Improvements are also continuing at the Washington Street Venue where we are hosting Sunset Concerts and other events with great success. We hope to construct a permanent stage in the near future.

In addition to the improvements being made downtown, there are a number of economic development projects taking shape in Carbondale.

- **Southern Illinois Healthcare** opened a 42,000 square foot medical clinic and teaching space that will be used by the SIUC School of Medicine. Memorial Hospital of Carbondale recently received designation as a Trauma Center.
- The former **Ramada Inn** on the city's west side has new owners and is being completely remodeled.
- **Kohl's** downsized its store on Giant City Road in order to make room for Planet Fitness.
- **Sergio's Mexican Restaurant** finished a complete remodel and update to what was formerly Lonestar Steakhouse.
- The new **Hilton Home2Suites** is now open downtown. The hotel features 99 rooms designed for business trips and extended stays.
- A 25,000 square foot **HomeGoods** store next to Dick's Sporting Goods and Best Buy will open soon.
- Two new restaurants, **Keepers Quarters** and the **Underground Public House**, moved in downtown.
- The new **Regions Bank** at the corner of Oakland Avenue and West Main Street is now open.
- **The Cellar's** beer garden on West Monroe Street is complete.
- **Buckwater Brewery** will open soon in the former Street Bar location.

This activity indicates that investors and business owners have a renewed confidence in Carbondale's economy and business-friendly attitude.

As you may know, Director of Economic Development Steven Mitchell, representatives from Southern Illinois Healthcare, Southern Illinois University, the Carbondale Chamber of Commerce, Laborer's Local 773, and I recently took a trip to Washington D.C. We met with Senators Dick Durbin and Tammy Duckworth, Congressman Mike Bost and officials from Amtrak, the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Transportation. This was our second trip, and it is something we will continue to do annually.

Southern Illinois University at Carbondale is the main economic driver for the region. The City remains dedicated to working alongside university officials to collaborate, grow enrollment, bring more entertainment to Banterra Center (formerly the SIU Arena) and promote Saluki spirit throughout the community.

As I have said before, "By working together, we are making Carbondale the place that you and I, our children and grandchildren are proud to call home."