

# Economic Development Projects Happening Around Missouri



Cape Girardeau's Marquette Tech District

## Cape Girardeau: TIF Repositions Historic Downtown As Modern Economic Development Hub

The development of the Marquette Tech District is already bringing more energy to downtown Cape Girardeau by reinventing two prominent and long-empty buildings as a hotel and technology hub. The project will create considerable economic impact from the historic renovation of more than 145,000 square feet of abandoned commercial building space and a new state-of-the-art fiber optic and public Wi-Fi network. Beyond the infrastructure investments, the project is anticipated to result in a technology district that will bring 200-300 talented, enterprising professionals and many more guests to downtown Cape Girardeau. In addition to the modern office spaces in the historic Marquette building, and provisions for expanding access to the fastest internet speeds in the world, the project will also include a new Marriott Courtyard hotel in the historic Himmelberger-Harrison building — bringing a hotel downtown for the first time in more than 55 years.

The city of Cape Girardeau's Downtown Strategic Plan, adopted by the City Council in August 2009, called for the establishment of a tax increment financing (TIF) district to create a "conservation area." The area was intended to increase property values in the district and to prevent the area from deteriorating further. The Council approved the TIF's first reading in December 2015 so they would be ready to act quickly when opportunity arose. The final readings of the ordinance and development agreement were approved in April of 2016, setting the project in motion. For more information about using TIFs in your community, contact Deputy Manager Molly Hood with the City or your own local Chamber organization. The tech district is also the new home of the recently combined Cape Girardeau Area Chamber of Commerce and Convention and Visitors Bureau. The famed downtown development corporation, Old Town Cape, has also relocated to the district.

## St. Joseph: Downtown Momentum

Momentum is building in downtown St. Joseph as the City continues to revitalize its inner core. Early in 2016, Mosaic Life Care announced a plan to bring 200 employees to downtown through the renovation of the historic German-American Bank Building. Mosaic further committed to raze a deteriorated city parking garage and build a new structure with two levels of parking and 30,000 square feet of retail.

Mosaic chose to expand their operation in downtown to help the City demonstrate that a vibrant downtown signifies community investment and a high quality of life. The City, through its economic development efforts with the Chamber of Commerce, have confirmed that when site selectors consider communities, the condition of a city's downtown is one factor used in determining where to locate a business.

Further enhancing the recent success downtown, the City is in the process of updating its urban park on Felix Street and recently added a new concession area adjacent to the park. Other improvements are planned to better serve those who live and work in downtown. Downtown has the look and feel of a neighborhood with more loft apartments, a proposed grocery store and a mix of eclectic shops and restaurants. Downtown St. Joseph is becoming a destination for residents and businesses alike, and the City needs to accommodate that growing population.

Like any older community, downtown St. Joseph has had its challenges redeveloping its older buildings. The cost to renovate an older structure and the importance to revitalize St. Joseph's inner core required the City to place an emphasis on the use of public incentives to encourage private development. These incentives, such as the use of tax increment financing (TIF) and Chapter 353 tax abatement, have helped to spur private development.

To complement Mosaic's private efforts downtown, the City is working on a project that would consider a new event center, additional hotel rooms, and relocation of the existing gaming casino to downtown. Working together, investment by both the private and public sectors will help to create a vibrant downtown that, in turn, creates a vibrant community.



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of State, and it is awaiting 501(c)(3) status authorization. A total of \$156,600 is being invested each year for the next five years, with the public sector contributing \$78,500 and the private sector investing \$78,100. These monies will allow the County to hire an economic development director who will work to advance the county's economic growth and prosperity.



Christian County public officials assisted in the Christian County Business Development Corporation's formation. Pictured (l-r) are Hosea Bilyeu, western county commissioner; Bill Barnett, previous western county commissioner, Sue Childers, eastern county commissioner; Mayor Clint Ellingsworth, Highlandville; Mayor Jarred King, Clever; Ray Weter, presiding commissioner; Steve Childers, Ozark city administrator; Rick Gardner, Mayor, Ozark; Brian Bingle, Nixa city administrator; and Brian Steele, Mayor, Nixa.

## Nixa: Christian County Development Corporation

There are too many opportunities in Christian County not to afford spending more time, effort and resources on the advancement of the County's economic growth. Over the last three decades Christian County has been one of the most rapidly growing counties in Missouri. The cities of Ozark and Nixa have seen a large share of that residential growth. Sharon Gulick, University of Missouri Extension, notes, "Christian's growth was initially fueled by a persistent stream of migration of neighboring counties migration, with Greene constituting 45 percent of all migration." Today, more than 50 percent of these migrants are young, educated and employed. Yet, 60-70 percent of Christian's work force works outside of the county.

Christian County's officials recognized the benefits that nearby regional economic development organizations (i.e., Springfield Business Development Corporation, Taney County Partnership, etc.) have achieved. They pursued the creation of a Christian County Development Corporation. To date, it has received incorporation from the Missouri Secretary

## Hazelwood: Partnering With Habitat For Humanity To Revitalize Neighborhoods

A neighborhood revitalization program formed between the city of Hazelwood and Habitat for Humanity St. Louis is giving 12 low-to-moderate-income families an opportunity to achieve the American Dream of owning a home. It involves the acquisition of vacant homes and blighted lots by the City and having them transferred to Habitat for the construction of new homes.

Hazelwood has acquired 11 lots where 12 homes will be built. Structures on eight of these properties will need to be demolished. The City has completed two of them so far. Phase

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one of the program is underway with building five new homes in the Ward 6 area. Construction of the first house began on Sept. 30, 2016, with a “Raise-A-Wall” event.

A second home was built in less than two weeks during November as part of a “Home 4 the Holidays” promotion involving Habitat and KMOV-TV News 4 (CBS). The purpose was to make home ownership possible for another hard-working family in time for the 2016 holiday season.

The phase one structures are expected to be completed by early spring 2017. Habitat is utilizing HOME grant funds for the design and construction costs. Construction on the remaining seven homes for phase two is expected to begin by summer 2017 and be finished by the end of the year.

The families moving into these Habitat homes are purchasing them. In addition to a down payment and a 30-year affordable mortgage, each homeowner is required to invest 350 “sweat equity” volunteer hours to help build the house. They also sign-up to take several life skill classes.

Not only does this partnership between the city of Hazelwood and Habitat open the door to home ownership for many families that may not qualify through other means, but also the City benefits by making a reinvestment in a local neighborhood that helps improve the housing stock, increase property values, reduce crime, and enhance the aesthetics and pride people have for their community. Plus, bringing in more families increases the City’s population, giving Hazelwood a better chance of receiving more federal funding when the 2020 U.S. Census is taken.

Habitat for Humanity St. Louis built its first two homes in 1988. Thirty years later, thanks to the hard work of many volunteers and the support of the St. Louis community, more than 355 local families now have a safe and affordable place to call home.



## Joplin: New Jobs and Opportunities



**Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences' broke ground for a new medical school campus in Joplin.**

Joplin announces several new projects coming online in 2017 that will bring new jobs and opportunities to southwest Missouri.

After several years of collaboration, Joplin community members were pleased to join officials with the Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences (KCUMB) in a groundbreaking event for the new medical school campus in Joplin.

With the first class of 150 students starting in August 2017, KCUMB enrollment is expected to be at full capacity of 600 students after four years. Joplin’s two health systems partnered with community leaders and supporters to reach this long-term goal for Joplin. Both systems will provide residency and training opportunities for the students.

In July, Owens Corning, a global manufacturer of insulation, roofing and fiberglass composites, announced the company would invest nearly \$90 million to open a new manufacturing plant in Joplin. The 303,000-square-foot facility will produce a mineral wool insulation for residential, commercial and industrial uses, creating more than 100 local full-time jobs.

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Owens Corning employs 15,000 people in 26 countries and posted net sales of \$5.3 billion in 2014. The Joplin facility will support the company's growth opportunities in the North American construction markets.

With a goal to help the existing workforce improve their skills to advance in their current jobs or to obtain better jobs, the Joplin Advanced Training and Technology Center will open in 2017. The \$6 million project is funded through the Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery program awarded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development following the tornado that struck Joplin in May 2011. Partners in the project include the city of Joplin, Crowder College, The Workforce Investment Board of Southwest Missouri and the Joplin Area Chamber of Commerce Foundation.

Much of the Center's work will focus on targeted audiences, including the lower-to-moderate-income residents who may also be veterans, unemployed or underemployed individuals in need of expanded skills and technical training. The Center will also offer a "maker space" and flexible training space for the use of area employers.

Blue Buffalo, one of the nation's premier producers of high-quality pet food products, will be expanding their manufacturing space in Joplin during 2017.

Blue Buffalo selected Joplin for this first manufacturing facility in 2013 and the current 425,000-square-foot facility opened in 2014. The company now plans an 112,000-square-foot addition along with equipment for Heartland Pet Food Manufacturing, one of their subsidiaries, to increase their production of pet snacks and treats. The expansion will add 45 additional jobs to the current job base of more than 150 employees.

military ammunition pull-down, including packing and shipping, expanding into specialty recycling, manufacturing/remanufacturing. Additionally, they will conduct advanced research and development technology systems, and green technology ammunition projectiles. Orbital ATK, the facility and property manager of Lake City who worked directly with American Marksman, has reported the company has plans for additional expansion and job creation in the upcoming years.

"The City Council, city staff, and the Independence Economic Development Council are focused on attracting capital investment and new jobs to Independence," said Independence Mayor Eileen Weir. "American Marksman locating at Lake City and partnering with Orbital ATK is a huge contributor to those efforts. Independence has had a strategic approach to utilizing the unique assets of Lake City for businesses like American Marksman that have very specific needs. We welcome the employees and their families to our community."

This announcement furthers the City Council's strategic goal to promote a strong local economy with an expanding employment and tax base. This is accomplished through focused strategies to aid in the establishment of new businesses; redevelop existing business districts; provide exceptional customer service; and aggressively pursue economic development and redevelopment opportunities.

The City of Independence partnered with the Orbital ATK, the facility and property manager for Lake City, Independence Economic Development Council and Missouri Department of Economic Development to offer an incentive package to American Marksman. The company will receive the incentive package as it achieves stated job creation criteria. The Independence Economic Development Council also worked with the Missouri Partnership, Kansas City Area Development Council and KC SmartPort to aid American Marksman in evaluating sites and programs designed to attract new jobs and investment to the state.

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## Independence: American Marksman Opens New Manufacturing Facility



Sixty-five new advanced manufacturing jobs will be created in Independence, Missouri. American Marksman, LLC, a distributor of bullets of varying calibers, announced in November 2016 their plans to locate a new manufacturing facility at the Lake City Army Ammunition Plant in Independence. American Marksman's focus will be on U.S.