

Economic Development: Communities

Employees help make progress possible at Moran Economic Development

By DENNIS GRUBAUGH

Moran Economic Development continues with a busy schedule in Metro East, and the work is being helped along by a couple of key employees, President Keith Moran says.

Jared Kanallakan and Jake Zambaldi helped bridge the communication between parties when it came to incentives to help land Boeing’s drone manufacturing plant at MidAmerica St. Louis Airport in Mascoutah. That operation, when completed in 2024, will produce carrier-based unmanned aircraft for the U.S. Navy. It

also comes with the potential of 300 jobs.

“That Boeing plant is important for the region. Places like Mascoutah and Shiloh are going to really see development as a result of Boeing locating to MidAmerica,” Moran said. “This would never have happened without a lot of the players sitting down at the same table.”

Kanallakan, a project manager, had a major hand in establishing the Mascoutah tax increment financing district, which will be used to help support the development. Zambaldi helped with the agreements and the economic impact criteria used to complete the deal with Boeing,

which included individual negotiations with the city of Mascoutah, the school district, St. Clair County and others.

“We have a team approach over here,” Moran said. “They are the guys who make the wheel go, here at Moran.”

Elsewhere in the two-county area, Moran’s consultant group played major roles in projects planned in Glen Carbon, Cahokia Heights, Troy, East St. Louis and others.

A TIF district and a business district led to the Orchard Town Center in Glen Carbon, where construction is underway and which will include a Menards as a main anchor. TIF money will underwrite development costs, which will include more turning lanes, signals and improved area roads – all better because of the incentives offered.

In Cahokia Heights, the 12-year extension of an expired TIF district aims to help fill empty commercial buildings, mainly along Illinois Route 157 and Camp Jackson Road.

In East St. Louis, residential development is being spurred by TIF funds in the Lansdowne Development

area along the Interstate 64 corridor. Groundbreaking should occur soon on some 20 single-family homes, with average costs exceeding \$200,000.

In Troy, officials were able to retire what was known as TIF No. 1, allowing some \$700,000 to go back onto tax rolls. Then, last year, a new TIF was approved for Downtown Troy.

With a new mayoral administration in place there is renewed interest in commercial development to replace older or vacant stock along Troy’s Main Street, Moran said. Officials also established a business district that stretches along the main drag from Downtown Troy to Interstate 55/70.

“The idea would be to capture interstate sale tax dollars and funnel them into Downtown,” Moran said.

Elsewhere, towns like Hartford, Wood River and Valmeyer have been readdressing development goals.

“We’re a little better off than people give us credit for in Southwestern Illinois. A lot of folks are really trying to make it a desirable place to be, to work and to live.”

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Mascoutah’s accomplishments girded by strong sense of community spirit

Mascoutah has a strong sense of community spirit, pride, and engagement as evident in the number of community organizations, volunteerism, and community involvement. Mascoutah owns and operates its own utilities (electric, water, and sewer). Economic development incentives include two TIF districts, enterprise zone, and a business district.

Located just off Interstate 64 and adjacent to Scott AFB, Mascoutah is in

close proximity to St. Louis, Missouri. Mascoutah is easily accessible to St. Louis and Lambert Airport by Metrolink with stations minutes away from town.

Mascoutah is home to MidAmerica Airport recently noted as in the top six of Illinois airports with just under 400,000 passengers yearly.

Mascoutah is home to the new Boeing Aeronautical Production Facility and Campus located near MidAmerica Airport for the production of U.S. Navy MQ-25

Stingray drones, the first carrier-based unmanned aircraft. The new facility is expected to be completed in early 2024.

Mascoutah has what it says are some of the first-rate public and private schools in the area and the School District has more than 4,000 students. Mascoutah is 15 minutes away from McKendree College and Southwestern Illinois College, and thirty minutes away from Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, St. Louis University, and Washington University.

Mascoutah is a growing community and is well positioned for growth in both commercial and residential, community officials say. Mascoutah’s population has increased by more than 1,200 residents in the past 10 years and has a current population of 8,754 residents. There have been numerous construction projects in the past year that have provided many new homes and businesses in the community.



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The City of Highland continues to make positive strides in development.

On March 29, Trouw Nutrition USA held a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the completion of an expansion of their Pre-Mix facility on 80 Executive Drive. Trouw Nutrition is a manufacturer of premixes and ingredients for premium producers of dog and cat food. The project included a \$12 million investment to build a dedicated blending facility that will enhance the company’s efforts to discover and introduce

new, unique and improved pet food ingredients. City officials and Trouw worked closely throughout the project, which was made possible by the execution of a TIF agreement, in addition to acquiring funding through the DCEO’s EDP Grant to make necessary road upgrades to help support the expected increase in semi-trailer traffic as a result of the expansion.

Following the ceremony, attendees were provided a tour of

the facility and then invited to a reception held at another recently completed project in Highland.

In December, the popular craft brewer Schlafly Beer, completed a new development in the heart of the city’s downtown. Located at 907 Main St., Schlafly Highland Square offers an 80-seat restaurant and a three-seasons patio that can accommodate an additional 80 guests. The development included renovation to the 3,420-square-foot building that once housed the local Chamber of Commerce. The space was originally occupied by First National Bank, the remnants of which are still present from the 6,000-pound safe that resides behind the bar.

The city is seeing encouraging signs of continued investment to its downtown area in the wake of Schlafly’s arrival. Several developments are in the works for the coming year. To help bolster support for

new developments and encourage improvements from existing commercial property owners, the city last year deployed a pilot version of a Façade Improvement Program designed to spur upgrades and improve aesthetics of their existing building facades. City officials intend for the program to be reapproved with additional funding to be used as an incentive tool for their economic development efforts into the future.

Economic Development Coordinator Mallord Hubbard stated, “We are very encouraged with the development activity that has been completed in the past year and look to build upon that success moving forward. The square in Highland is a great place that more people should know about. I view the opening of Schlafly Highland Square as just the start of a major revitalization of our historic downtown.”

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