

Mayor Report – Brant Walker, City of Alton

On September 13, 2017, the Alton Regional Multi-modal Transportation Center (RMTC) opened its doors to the public. The 9,000 square foot facility provides Amtrak passenger rail service with connections to mass transit. Passengers will be able to travel from Alton to Chicago in approximately four hours upon the completion of all high-speed rail system improvements. Additionally, a Request for Proposals has been issued for the development of the 35 acres surrounding the facility. Commercial development of the site will bring new business opportunities and revenue growth to the City of Alton in the near future.

Thanks to our Building and Zoning Department, over the last two years, we have over \$38 million in new capital investment by local businesses and are continuing our very successful business retention visits.

The Alton Fire Department has completed its inaugural year in ambulance operations. This critical service allows fire department paramedics to provide uninterrupted patient care from bedside to emergency room. The first eleven months of operation were completed utilizing only one ambulance, and both call volume and revenue have exceeded projections. As a result of the operation's success, a second ambulance was placed in service last month to answer the additional call volume. Even with the additional medical calls our firefighters were able to complete 7,220 hours of training and extinguish 156 fires that occurred in buildings with combined property values of \$105 million. We look forward to what 2018 has in store for fire department operations.

Although crime in the City has decreased, it has increased nationwide. Thanks to the coordinating efforts of the Madison County States Attorney office, the Village of Godfrey and the City of Alton, each entity donated 1/3 of the funds for the purchase of the new license plate reader cameras which are located on the Clark Bridge. These cameras will be equipped to read every license plate of each vehicle crossing to and from Missouri into Illinois, any plates registered as stolen or attached to a warrant will send an alert to several police departments including Alton and the Madison County Sheriff's Office. The Alton Police Department has hired one new officer and is in the process of hiring another.

The Liberty Bank Alton Amphitheater was a huge success again in 2017, with sold out concerts with featured national acts such as Air Supply and Better than Ezra. This also marked our third year of the hugely successful Sauce Food Truck Festival and added to our line-up was our newest event -- Bikes and BBQ Festival. After many years, we welcomed the return of the Alton Expo with five days of food, games, rides and live entertainment. Each amphitheater event was sold out and we expect an even bigger and better list of entertainment for the 2018 season.

Our Public Works department aggressively continues its undertaking of improving the city streets, parks, and sewer infrastructure. The City of Alton recently received notification from the East-West Gateway Council that the project the city submitted for federal funding was included in their Transportation Improvement Program. The 2019 TIP funds that were approved will be used to reconstruct sidewalks near the Lovejoy Elementary and Alton Middle Schools providing safe routes for pedestrians and students to travel. Specifically, new ADA compliant pedestrian routes will be installed along College Avenue from Pleasant to Holman Streets, Johnson Street from Tremont to College Avenue, and Rock Springs Drive from College to Memorial Drive. In Spring of 2018, the city will begin making long overdue repairs to the sewer mains that serve the businesses along the Broadway corridor. Once these updates are completed, Broadway will receive a new asphalt pavement surface and ADA accessible improvements will be addressed from city owned rights-of-way from Henry Street to Allen Street. These projects will be paid for using federal grant dollars secured by the Public Works Department.

Additionally, the city expects to have the new concession building and entrance at Gordon Moore Park completed by the end of 2018 as part of the \$2.2 million project paid for by federal and county grants along with donations from the members of our community. These improvements are in addition to the continuing efforts to enhance the park experience for our citizens by committing to make capital improvements to all parks throughout the Alton Park System. We hosted numerous recreation events such as baseball, softball, soccer, basketball, kickball and golf, in our City parks last year and we will be doing the same this year.

I along with my administration am looking forward to 2018! We will continue the work needed to improve our city for our residents.