

h.e.d. Lines

A publication of the Harvard Economic Development Corporation



Chairman's Column

By HEDC Chairman Roger Lehmann



New Census data will help shape the future of our community. We hope to have a good story to tell when the numbers come out early next year. The HEDC will use the new data to update its website, its community profile and all of its marketing materials.

Approaching and pushing past the 10,000 population mark will make our community more desirable to a variety of retail developers. Recognizing our ability to pull people from nearby areas into Harvard to eat, shop and hopefully one day see a movie is also helping us market our community to a broader audience. Knowing that we are within reach of nearly 120,000 households makes owning a business in Harvard more exciting.

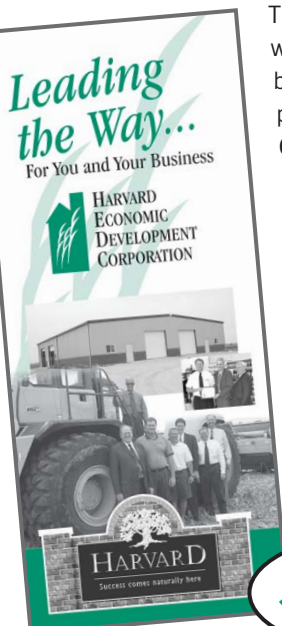
The HEDC undertakes a strategic planning process every three years. Next spring would normally be the time when we begin drafting our vision for Harvard through 2015. The strength of the economic downtown could not be fully seen when we last sat down to plan in 2008. It has been a very challenging three years, but Harvard has fared better than many of its neighbors. We remain very optimistic for the future.

Join us!

The HEDC is leading the way in helping Harvard become an even better place to do business. Call Executive Director Terry Smith at (815) 943-1036 to find out how you can play a role in Harvard's future. Affordable memberships exist for companies of all sizes, individuals and civic groups.

It's always a good time to get involved.

Join Today!



Putting Downtown Development Center Stage

The Harvard Economic Development Corporation (HEDC) wants to attract a theater to a prime spot in downtown Harvard.

The HEDC hopes to find a local movie theater chain or development company that can see the potential in building a four-screen multiplex on a nearly half-acre lot on Front Street. The parcel consists of four lots zoned B-2 that are very close to the Metra station and adjacent to a municipal parking lot with capacity for 50 vehicles.

The site is clear and ready for development. The HEDC owns the parcel and has been marketing it as ideal for mixed or retail uses, including gourmet coffee, a bookstore, office supply, specialty grocery or offices and lofts. Special pricing and financing terms could be available to make the right project happen.

"This is a high visibility, high traffic location that can support a strong business," HEDC Chairman Roger Lehmann said. "The HEDC is working to bring the right project to downtown Harvard."

A 2008 survey of Harvard residents ranked a local movie theater as one of the top five businesses that they would like to see in town. Also near the top of the list were a Kohl's department store, a Home Depot, a dry cleaner and a fitness center. Two years later, two fitness-oriented businesses – Anytime Fitness and Curves – have come to Harvard and a dry cleaner has opened a pickup location in Sullivan Foods.

"A local theater would bring people downtown, where they would eat and shop at other businesses," Mayor Jay Nolan said. "It would also bring out of area people into town to spend money and give our young people something to do in Harvard."

A survey of market potential in the Harvard area estimates that there are roughly 5,500 households within five miles of the 60033 (Harvard) zip code, more than 10,400 households within 10 miles of town and nearly 117,000 households within a 20-mile radius of the city (including towns like Delavan, Fontana, Lake Geneva, Walworth, Richmond, McHenry and Wonder Lake).

When Harvard residents want to see a movie, they currently have to travel to Woodstock, Crystal Lake, or



Rockford. They usually also eat out and shop while in those cities. The HEDC hopes to reduce the 'retail leakage' which results when local dollars get spent out of town.

The HEDC is reaching out to local movie chains and developers in search of exceptional opportunities in a down market. A new four-screen theater can cost up to \$2.3 million in land, building and equipment costs. The HEDC may be able to help with the land costs, the City of Harvard may be able to help with parking requirements and local banks have expressed interest in helping to make such a project happen.

The Front Street property is also located in an existing TIF District (see related story), which can assist in project development and financing.

"This is a prime parcel with a lot of market potential," noted Lehmann. "A lot of people would like to see it developed into a centerpiece for downtown Harvard and the HEDC is working hard to help make that happen."

Contact HEDC Executive Director Terry Smith at (815) 943-1036 for more information on the Front Street property.

What Is A TIF District?

Tax Increment Financing, or TIF, is a public financing method that is often used to facilitate redevelopment or community improvement projects. Future gains in taxes are used to finance current improvements under the theory that such enhancements will lead the property — and often properties in the surrounding area — to increase in value. The increased site values can generate increased (incremental) tax revenues which can, in turn, be used to finance debt to pay for the project.

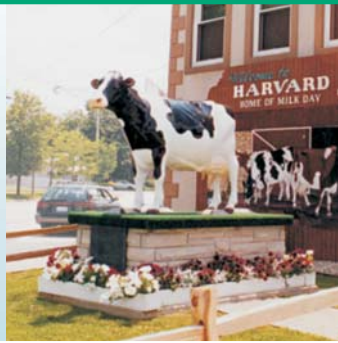
TIFs are most often used in distressed or underdeveloped areas where improvements might not otherwise occur. There are three TIF districts in Harvard, including downtown Harvard, Arrowhead Industrial Park and an area near Route 14 and Airport Road.



Senior Center and Pantry Make Progress

Construction on the new Senior Center and Food Pantry facility on Harvard Hills Road is moving right along. Donations to the building fund are tax deductible and can be made at Castle Bank, Harvard Savings Bank and The Harvard State Bank, or mailed to the Harvard Food Pantry, 101 N. Church St., Harvard IL 60033.

Visit our website at



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Starline Alive With Studios, Shops, Events

A historic building's exhibition hall may be getting a new life as a unique setting for banquets, weddings and other events.

Sights and festive sounds have filled the 13,000 square foot hall in Harvard's **Starline** building complex more than once this year and owner **Orrin Kinney** hopes to make special events a regular occurrence at one of downtown Harvard's most significant properties.

A temporary variance from the City of Harvard made it possible for Kinney to see how a banquet hall could work in the complex, which has become a destination for art and decor lovers from the northwest suburbs and southern Wisconsin. Located at 306 W. Front Street and nearly three blocks long, the Starline facility is within a short walk of Harvard's Metra station and home to more than a dozen artists who have studio and gallery space in the building.

The building is also home to **Steel Heart, Ltd.**, an expansive store that offers home and garden decor, including new and antique stone items, garden products, furniture, antique pieces and elements made from wrought iron and cast iron.

Now Kinney has set his sights on creating a venue for weddings, banquets, meetings and private parties. He has recruited photographers **Nancy Merkling**, whose studio is located in the building, and **Teresa Baber** to plan and coordinate events at the facility. A website is expected to be up by January, according to Merkling.

The hall can seat up to 500 people for dinner, which

would make it one of the larger venues in the area if the City of Harvard agrees to grant a special use permit or zoning. Kinney has to upgrade the hall to city standards before that can happen.

"We know that there are things that we need to get done," said Kinney. "We're determined to make this work."

A request to host a wedding for a member of the **Starline Corporation's** founding Ferris family sparked the idea for a banquet business, said Kinney. A lot of work went into converting the industrial space into an presentable banquet hall.

Since then, the space has also hosted the McHenry County Historical Society's Business

Diamond Jubilee recognition dinner and the Land Conservancy of McHenry County's Art of the Land exhibition and sale. That event featured the work of more than 30 artists, hors d'oeuvres, a silent auction and music.

Clients to date have supplied their own caterers. The facility will have to apply for and successfully obtain a liquor license from the City of Harvard before it can fill its calendar with events for next year. Doing so could make downtown Harvard and its recently renovated streets and parks the perfect backdrop for some of the region's best events.

And the rest, as they say, could be history.

Information on the proposed banquet facility is available by calling Merkling at (815) 347-8535, Baber at (815) 355-1608 or by email at StarlineGallery@gmail.com



Mayor's Column

By Mayor Jay Nolan

The 2010 Census has been completed in most parts of the country. Participation in Illinois (76%), McHenry County (83%) and in Harvard (78%) surpassed the 74% of U.S. residents who completed and mailed in their census forms nationwide. We expect to have the preliminary numbers right after the first of the year. Law requires the counts to go to the President by December 2010 and the numbers to be available for redistricting by March 2011.

Often, we get caught up in counting the number of people who live in our community and forget that Harvard actually serves a larger market area. People from outside the city and the 60033 zip codes shop, dine and use services from Harvard businesses. Many board the train here to travel throughout the suburbs.

The City of Harvard and the HEDC are working to attract the types of businesses that will make it possible for Harvard residents to shop in town and make it desirable for out of town residents to come to Harvard to spend money. When we look at market potential, we look at more than who our friends and neighbors are.

Shop local this season whenever you can. Every dollar that you spend in Harvard helps to build a stronger community.



Working For Harvard

Call us with your comments and suggestions:
Harvard Economic Development Corp.
(815) 943-1036

Other Local Contacts:

Mayor Jay Nolan/City Hall - (815) 943-6468
State Senator Pamela Althoff - (815) 455-6330
State Representative Jack Franks - (815) 334-0063
Harvard Chamber of Commerce - (815) 943-4404

Starline Remembered

In 1883, Alden dairy farmer **Henry L. Ferris** invented and patented a hay carrier that he began to manufacture from a basement workshop located under a hardware store in downtown Harvard that was operated by his father-in-law, **Nathan Helm** and a partner, **Charles Hunt**. The trio formed a venture that they named **Hunt, Helm, Ferris and Company** and began selling the carrier and other farm equipment from the first-floor hardware store.

Ferris continued to invent new products and the company built a new facility on the south side of Front Street in 1888. Additions came as the venture grew, including a three-story building that was added in 1898. The company continued to expand and finally incorporated in 1902.

Over the years, Hunt, Helm and Ferris manufactured more than 50 different products and acquired more than 250 patents on farm equipment and recreation products, including roller skates, wooden wagons and coaster sleds. The company was renamed **Starline** in 1931, after farmers began referring to the company's wide product offering as the 'star' line of farm equipment.

Business News ...

Arrowhead Building At Full Capacity

The last quadrant of **Arrowhead Industrial Park's** newest industrial building has been leased to a manufacturing company. Three tenants now call the 42,000 square foot building at 405 Comanche Trail home, according to park developer **Mark Stricker**. Information on other sites in Arrowhead is available by calling (815) 943-8788.

HEDC Seen on National Directory

The **Harvard EDC** has placed a prominent ad on **EcoDevDirectory.com**, which is the nation's largest online gateway to economic development organizations, communities and consultants. The banner ad leads visitors directly to the HEDC's website. It has been attracting hits that are comparable in number with communities including Rockford and DeKalb.



www.harvardedc.com



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