

h.e.d. Lines

A publication of the Harvard Economic Development Corporation



Chairman's Column

By HEDC Chairman Roger Lehmann



The preliminary 2010 Census data puts Harvard's current population at 9,447 residents. That represents a gain of 1,451 persons (18.2%) since the 2000 Census (population of 7,996) and an increase of 410 persons (4.5%) since the Special Census that was conducted in 2005 (population of 9,037).

Harvard was in the midst of a growth spurt in 2005. That year's census also reported that housing units had increased by 434 units since 2000 — a trend that most expected to continue, given the number of residential projects that were being discussed around town.

A struggling national economy and recession sidetracked that trend, as it did to other types of growth across the country. The economic climate in early 2008 was very different than it is today. When members of the Harvard EDC Board of Directors sat down to begin working on the organization's strategic plan in the spring of that year, we did so with expectations that residential and retail growth would steadily continue.

In June, our Board will begin the next three-year planning process, as we develop our goals through 2014. Economic challenges remain, but opportunities also exist. Still others will surely emerge.

It is our goal is to be prepared to deal with whatever comes our way.

Join us!

The HEDC is leading the way in helping Harvard become an even better place to do business.

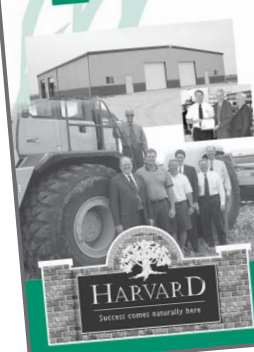
Call Executive Director Terry Smith at

(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!

Leading the Way...
For You and Your Business



Planning For The Future

HEDC Begins Strategic Planning Process

A lot has happened in the three years since the members of the Board of Directors of the **Harvard Economic Development Corporation (HEDC)** sat down to update the organization's strategic plan and, because of that, some things that the organization had planned on didn't happen.

"It was a very different environment in the spring of 2008, when we brought everyone together to talk about the future," according to **HEDC Chairman Roger Lehmann**. "Residential and retail construction was on the rise in Harvard, buildings were going up in Arrowhead Industrial Park and everyone was optimistic about the future."

The wave of construction and ribbon cuttings continued well into 2009, even as the national economy stumbled and the signs of widespread recession became undeniable. "Harvard was fortunate in that we had good momentum going into what became a bad economy," **HEDC Board Member and Arrowhead Industrial Park developer Mark Stricker** said. "Plans that had been made in 2007 and 2008 carried us through much of 2009. Harvard ended up in a better position than a lot of other communities."

The HEDC's board of directors will consider that scenario and more next month when it sits down to plan its program of work through 2014. "It's a planning cycle that we go through every three years," Lehmann said. "We look at where the Harvard economy is, talk about where we would like it to be and discuss strategies that we can put to work to help get it there." The HEDC went through similar processes in 2005 and 2008.

"A lot of our emphasis is going to be on making sure that Harvard is ready to make the most of opportunities that will come again with recovery," **Mayor Jay Nolan** said. "Harvard

has a lot to offer and we have a good story to tell. There was a lot of interest in doing business here before the economy went sour and we want to be sure that Harvard stays on the radar of expanding companies and developers who are starting to look for new opportunities."

The HEDC's new strategic plan is expected to be ready for review and approval in August. The board is working with consultant **Lori Martinek** to develop the plan.

The group is starting from a position of strength, even though all of the goals of the 2008 plan haven't been met, noted Lehmann. "World events are creating new opportunities for smaller companies to enter new markets and Harvard is a good place for those types of companies to grow. Harvard is centrally located, and the opening of the interchange at I-90 and State Route 173 has really made it easier for regional distributors to consider Harvard."

"The City saw its sales tax revenue hit an all-time high last fall and, even during the worst part of the recession in 2010, Harvard still had new businesses opening in town. We kept our car dealerships, which a lot of communities didn't, and we are seeing local companies investing and expanding in town."

"We'll look at the progress that Harvard has made and the challenges and opportunities that it faces," he said. "Our mission is to position Harvard to be competitive — and successful — in the next three years and beyond."

Pound Bakery Expands Again

A home-grown Harvard company is growing once again.

The Pound Bakery broke ground on an expansion at its existing location in **Arrowhead Industrial Park** in April. The company is adding nearly 10,000 square feet to its current 39,000 square foot manufacturing and warehouse facility. Owner **Kurt Stricker** hopes to have the addition completed and ready for use by July 1.

"We needed extra space to accommodate new customers and new business," said Stricker, who started the company in 1996 after working for his family's fifth-generation bakery business in Harvard. **The Pound Bakery** started life in the former Bowman Dairy building at 10. S. Jefferson Street in Harvard, moved to a facility on Diggins Street in Arrowhead Industrial Park in 2000, and then built its current facility in Arrowhead in 2008. That makes this project the company's fourth expansion in 15 years.

The Pound Bakery produces all natural dog treats in a human-grade bakery environment. All of its products are baked without sugar, by-products, animal fat, artificial flavorings, color, salt or preservatives and all of the ingredients that are used are sourced from the United States and Canada. Much of the company's business lies in producing and packaging dog treats for private label brands and distributors across the country.

New customers are fueling the company's continued growth. Stricker sees them migrating from three sources. "A lot of companies are getting bigger and, as they get bigger, they have less time and higher order minimums," he explained. "Someone who only wants 2,500 pounds of product has to come to someone like us now, who's willing



to work with those types of orders."

"That represents a really good marketing opportunity that is sending two kinds of people our way," Stricker added. "We're getting established companies who can't go to the big guys anymore because they don't have the room or the capacity for them, and we're getting people who are baking out of their own kitchens and need to get into more reliable production. We become an expansion contractor for them."

"We're also getting companies that aren't satisfied with their current production facility or private label people," Stricker notes. "We can do everything under one roof: bake it, package it, store it and ship it."

New product trends are also fueling growth. "Grain-free is the new thing," said Stricker. "It's already 5-10% of the market and organic is another 15%."

All of these factors have put **The Pound Bakery** in the right market at the right time and created the need for further expansion in what has always been the right place for the company: Harvard.

Learn more about **The Pound Bakery's** products and visit its online store at www.thepoundbakery.com. You can also visit **The Pound Bakery** on Facebook at <http://tinyurl.com/PoundBkry>

Visit our website at



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Harvard Approves Electric Choice

Harvard electricity consumers will soon begin benefitting from the City of Harvard's new ability to shop and compare prices from competing power providers. Voters approved 'electric choice' in the April consolidated election by a 2:1 margin, with 211 votes in favor of the referendum, versus 106 who voted against it.

The **City of Harvard** has created a committee that will work with the **Northern Illinois Municipal Energy Cooperative (NIMEC)** to solicit bids from power suppliers. NIMEC is an electric purchasing cooperative of 140 municipal and government entities that leverages the volume of its members' combined electrical power purchases to negotiate more aggressive pricing from suppliers.

Thanks to the Illinois Power Agency Act, Illinois electricity customers have the right to choose their provider of electric power, energy and metering services. ComEd will continue to deliver electricity to users and remains responsible for wires, poles and outage restoration, regardless of what company is chosen to generate (supply) the power.

Residents can 'opt out' of the program if they don't want to participate. See the City's website, at www.cityofharvard.org for more information.



Harvard Dealerships See Bright Future

Harvard Chevrolet, Buick and GMC is busy putting the finishing touches on the expansion of its Route 14 dealership.

When the dust clears and the ribbon is ready to be cut, a new exterior will be in place and 100 feet will have been added to the building — providing more sales and showroom space, a dramatically updated service department and a brighter, more open feel throughout the interior.

General Manager Martin Figueroa expects the project to be completed by June 1. The dealership will host a ribbon cutting and grand opening sometime after that date.

"It's all very exciting," Figueroa said. "This used to be a local dealership with a bad reputation. In the three years that we've been here, we have taken this place and turned it around from a personnel standpoint, from a product standpoint and from a service standpoint. And, in doing that, we quadrupled our sales."

"It's pretty amazing what we've accomplished in less than three years, especially with the economy being so bad, and with car sales being down all over the country," he noted.

The dealership's strong performance has enabled it to survive cuts and closures by GM, which announced in 2009 that it would close or end its franchise agreement with as many as 1,100 dealerships across the country. A number of dealerships in other northern Illinois towns were not expected to fare as well.



Project Rendering

Strong sales also encouraged **Harvard Chevrolet Buick and GMC** to expand its facility, in order to provide an even better sales and service experience for customers. The dealership has been posting photos of the project's progress on its Facebook page. The photos can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/HarvardChevy>.

Harvard's Ford dealership has some remodeling plans of its own in the works. The Harvard City Council recently approved **Harvard Ford's** request for a front yard variation to accommodate its plans to remodel the front of their Route 14 building.

The dealership also plans to build an addition on the rear of the building.

Harvard Ford General Manager Sean Sivore has interests in both dealerships. He and Figueroa have worked hard to keep new and used vehicle sales alive and well in Harvard.

"We think that the future looks really great in Harvard," Figueroa said.

Harvard Chevrolet Buick and GMC has become increasingly involved and invested in the community. The dealership is an active member of the Harvard Chamber of Commerce and the primary sponsor of the Tri-County Pro Rodeo, which will come to Milk Way Park in late July. A new Junior Tackle Football scoreboard is also in the works for Milky Way Park, according to Figueroa.

"We have really changed the way that we work with the community," he noted. "The Harvard community has been really good to us and we want to be really good to them."

Mayor's Column

By Mayor Jay Nolan



Spring is bringing signs of new activity to our community.

Expansion projects at two Harvard vehicle dealerships and in Arrowhead Industrial Park demonstrate that Harvard businesses believe in their community and its future. The City looks forward to participating in a number of ribbon cuttings during the coming year. Investment is the best first sign of recovery.

Each month, the Land and Sites database on the Harvard EDC's website records four or five new visitors who sign on to learn about local properties and then sign up to receive ongoing updates. It is a small, but motivated group of people who want to learn more about expansion and development opportunities in Harvard. We welcome their interest in our community.

The Harvard Farmers Market will debut on May 7 at the corner of Ayer Street and Front Street in downtown Harvard. The producers-only market will be held each Saturday (excluding Milk Days weekend) through the end of October.

The Starline Gallery debuted its '4th Friday' series in April. The monthly event will feature exhibits by resident artists, music and studio open houses on the fourth Friday evening of each month at the gallery on Front Street. Call Nancy Merklings at (815) 347-8535 for details.

Activities like these are bringing more people to downtown Harvard.

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

Business News ...

Other Companies Grew Here, You Can Too!

Two great leasing opportunities are available in **Arrowhead Industrial Park**. The building at 1001 Diggins has 12,000 sft. available and there is 9,600 sft. available at 600 Chippewa. Each of these spaces was home to a company that expanded into another location in Harvard. Learn how to get your company off to a strong start too by visiting the HEDC website at www.harvardedc.com or by calling (815) 943-8788 for details on these properties.

Harvard
Farmers
Market

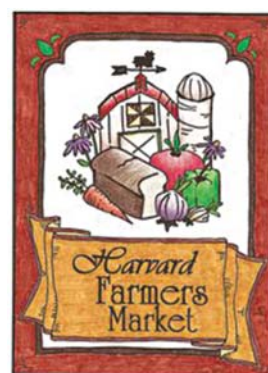
Opens May 7

Saturdays thru October
9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Downtown Harvard

Call (815) 770-0400
for information

Find it on Facebook at <http://tinyurl.com/HarvardMkt>



www.harvardedc.com



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