



P. O. Box 623 • Harvard, IL 60033
(815) 943-1036

Chairman's Column

By HEDC Chairman Roger Lehmann



The HEDC has invested significant time and resources over the past year to develop the Enterprise Zone application. I would especially like to thank **HEDC Executive Director Charlie Eldredge** and **City Administrator Dave Nelson** for their commitment to the project.

Working with Woodstock and McHenry County will significantly improve our chances to receive zone status in the first round, during what is sure to be a highly competitive process. Each community has different strengths to bring to the zone and to potential businesses, and together our joint competitiveness will be even stronger.

The process itself has raised Harvard's visibility throughout the region and the state considerably. That alone has been well worth the effort.

The HEDC will host a members-only recognition dinner event on March 11, which will feature a discussion on the benefits of Enterprise Zone status. On that evening, we also hope to debut our new ambassadors program, which will create a team of community leaders who will help the HEDC attract new businesses to Harvard.

Invitations will be mailing soon. Call Charlie Eldredge at (812) 390-3123 if you are interested in joining us as a member that evening.

Join us! Become an HEDC Member

Membership in the HEDC demonstrates leadership and a commitment to creating a bright economic future for our community. Join us as we continue to move Harvard forward!

Members are also eligible to post commercial and industrial property listings in the HEDC's online Land & Sites Database. Properties must be owned or represented by the member and meet other listing requirements.

You can learn more about the benefits of HEDC membership and to find out how you can play a role in Harvard's future at www.harvardedc.com, or call (815) 943-1036 to receive a membership kit by email or regular mail.



Working For Harvard
Harvard Economic Development Corp.
(815) 943-1036

Other Local Contacts:
City of Harvard (815) 943-6468

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Harvard Targets Enterprise Zone

A joint application has been submitted to the **Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO)** to have areas within the cities of Harvard and Woodstock designated as an Illinois Enterprise Zone.

The application, which was jointly prepared by the City of Harvard, the City of Woodstock and McHenry County, was submitted at the end of December. "Now the waiting process begins," noted **Harvard Economic Development Corporation (HEDC) Executive Director Charlie Eldredge**. The application will be scored by DCEO and then sent to a commission for evaluation.

"The process is expected to take about a year," he added.

Enterprise zones are geographic areas that are designated to stimulate economic growth and create or retain jobs through incentives which can include tax abatements, income tax credits, and sales or utility tax exemptions. There are currently 97 enterprise zones in Illinois.

In 2012, the Illinois Enterprise Zone Act authorized the certification of 10 new zones by 2022. Harvard immediately saw an opportunity, according to **HEDC Chairman Roger Lehmann**.

"Enterprise Zone status would give Harvard an edge in attracting new businesses, and in making it easier for existing businesses to expand here," he said. "We knew that we wanted this."

In an effort to make its application stronger, the City of Harvard partnered with McHenry County, which suggested that Harvard similarly team up with the City of Woodstock to broaden the proposed zone. "Everyone's chances are improved by working together," **Harvard City Administrator Dave Nelson** said.

Nelson and Eldredge worked with their counterparts in Woodstock, county officials and planning consultants for most of the year to develop the application, which proposes a zone totaling approximately 7.75 acres (4.25 square miles in Harvard and 3.5 square miles in Woodstock). Eldredge also met with municipal leaders and school boards to solicit support for the application. **Senator Pam Althoff** was supportive of the application from the start, noted Eldredge.

"This is a project that has truly taken a village," he said. "If the application is successful, it will be due to the efforts and support of a lot of dedicated people."

No other municipality in McHenry County has enterprise zone status at this time. The application meets many of the criteria needed for a successful award, according to Eldredge. The vacant former Motorola facility on Route 14 could also help the application score higher.

The first round of awards are expected to be announced by DCEO in December 2015. You can see the proposed map on the What's New page of the HEDC website, at <http://www.harvardedc.com/whats-new>.



Mayor's Column

By Mayor Jay Nolan

With winter certain to stick around for a while, the City would like to remind everyone to pay attention to parking restrictions when snow is anticipated, and to drive carefully at all times.

Construction continues at O'Reilly's Auto Parts on Route 14, with a spring opening expected. The City has fielded inquiries from other potential retail businesses, but nothing has been finalized at this time.

The corner lot that the Harvard EDC owns on Front Street in downtown Harvard offers a good opportunity for a retail business or developer to capitalize on traffic from the nearby Metra station. The parcel has Mixed Use zoning. Additional land for parking may also be available. Call (815) 943-1036 for details or to refer a potential buyer.

HEDC PREPARES ANNUAL REPORT

The HEDC is putting the finishing touches on its *2014 Annual Report*. The two-page summary highlights projects including the development of a new three-year strategic plan and the year-long process to produce and submit a detailed enterprise zone application.

A visioning workshop hosted by the HEDC in May brought together a wide range of city, community and business leaders to help lay the groundwork for the strategic plan. Their input was used to identify key needs and goals that the HEDC then incorporated into its plan.

Consultant **Lori Martinek of ED/C Partners** developed a timeline and scorecard in December that will monitor the plan's implementation, measure progress toward goals and provide benchmarks to track job creation, business expansion and development going forward.

The annual report will make its debut at a recognition dinner that the HEDC is hosting for members and their guests in March. The organization also hopes to debut its new ambassadors program at that time.

Join the HEDC's LinkedIN Group!

The HEDC has a LinkedIN group where it posts news and discussions on local economic development topics. You can see it here:

<http://tinyurl.com/hedcLINK>



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