



CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

By HEDC Chairman
Roger Lehmann

The **Harvard-Woodstock Enterprise Zone** is planning to create a series of videos which will help promote the new zone, and our community, to potential project developers.

The videos will spotlight retail and commercial opportunities. The HEDC supports projects which help create positive awareness for Harvard.

The HEDC will begin its next strategic planning process this fall, as we work to develop priorities and programs for the next three years. The process traditionally begins with a visioning workshop with local business and community leaders.

Tourism and its economic impact will be an important part of the discussion. Harvard is becoming a destination and that has many positive implications for our economy. The HEDC will be considering strategies to ensure that tourism produces benefits including job creation, increased visitor spending and sales tax revenues.

OPPORTUNITIES...

Bank-Owned Site

FOR SALE: Reduced to \$215,000. Now is the time to act! Vacant 8.458 acres on McGuire Road, across from Walmart. Two parcels, zoned B-2, M-2. Ideal for grocery, retail, multi-use. In city. Access to McGuire Rd. and Frisco Dr. Call Verne Sisson at Harvard Savings Bank, part of The State Bank Group for details: (815) 943-8611.

Fast-Track, Shovel-Ready Sites

Arrowhead Industrial Park has fully improved sites at highly competitive costs, some with rail access. Call (815) 943-8788 for details. Site plan online at www.harvardedc.com

Incubator Space Available

3,600 SF with (2) 12' overhead doors, private bathrooms, divisible to 1,800 SF. Fast occupancy. \$1,750/month gross. Call (815) 943-8788.

Join us! **HARVARD ILLINOIS**
Become an HEDC Member *Success Comes Naturally Here*

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.

BALLOON FEST BOOSTS ECONOMY

Tourism is providing an important boost to the Harvard economy.

Harvard Balloon Fest produced an estimated \$2.5 million in total local economic impact, including nearly \$200,000 generated directly by the festival. The City of Harvard estimates that 45,000 people attended the event over the course of the three days, which translates to an impact of \$57 per person.

"Every person who visits Harvard is a potential shopper, resident or business owner," noted **Harvard Mayor Michael Kelly**. "Balloon Fest stirred up the local economy and created a lot of visibility and goodwill for our community."

The *Northwest Herald* named Balloon Fest one of the 'Top Entertainment Stories of 2016'. "Community pride was very strong," added Kelly. "It was all that people talked about for weeks."



© Photo by Travis Patenaude

Economic impact includes related spending by visitors and resident attendees at local businesses (restaurants, hotels, gas stations, convenience stores and general merchandise) and the sales tax revenues that result. Income is also generated through event fees, sponsorships and event merchandise sales.

Restaurants were packed, stores were busy and nearly \$40,000 was raised for Harvard non-profits.

"No doubt there was also a lot of cash spending going on," added **City Administrator Dave Nelson**.

The second annual Balloon Fest will take place September 1-3. The Events Committee has contracted 23 balloons for this year's event and added music and other activities to the lineup.

The **Harvard Economic Development Corporation (HEDC)** has joined forces with McHenry County Tourism to help promote Balloon Fest, Milk Days and other Harvard area attractions. "Harvard is becoming a tourism draw that is attracting attention from visitors to the Lake Geneva area," noted **HEDC Chair Roger Lehmann**. "We are becoming a destination in our own right."

MAYOR'S COLUMN *By Mayor Michael Kelly*



The economic impact of Balloon Fest was undeniable. Gas stations were busy. Restaurants were slammed. Some had their best weekend in years.

Most of the \$2.5 million in economic impact came from visitors – people who traveled up to two hours to come to Harvard, many for the first time. The City's goal is to attract 60,000 visitors to the second annual Balloon Fest this September. Nearly double the number of volunteers will be needed to make that happen.

As a city, we want and need to attract additional tourism opportunities, proactively recruit new industry and encourage middle income residential growth to come to Harvard which, in turn, will attract new retail. To do this, we need to reach out to existing Harvard businesses and ask them how we can help them grow. Part of that discussion will be held when the HEDC begins its strategic planning process. Other opportunities will also be planned to determine how to make tourism work best for Harvard businesses and residents.

PEDIGREE OVENS UPDATE

Construction crews are working hard to complete Pedigree Oven's new 210,000 facility in Arrowhead Industrial Park in time for an October move in.

"There are a lot of feet on the ground right now," Pedigree Ovens owner Kurt Stricker explained. "Roofers, electricians and plumbers are everywhere. We are running a few weeks behind due to the weather, but we hope to have the facility fully enclosed by mid-June."

New equipment is on order and needs to be installed and tested – hopefully in time to begin expanded production in October. Key positions have been filled to run the new equipment. Stricker expects to hire another 30 workers over the coming year as the company continues to expand.

The company's current 49,000 SF facility in Arrowhead will be used as a fulfillment and inventory control center. The human-grade facility – operating as Badger Fulfillment Group – will be able to handle food and other items, and may serve as an intermediate fulfillment center for Amazon and Jet.com.

Last year, Pedigree Ovens acquired a California pet food manufacturer that helped expand its business into new markets. Stricker's other company, The Pound Bakery, provides third party fulfillment for Pedigree Oven products to private label companies worldwide.

The new Pedigree Ovens facility is the largest project in the new Harvard-Woodstock Enterprise Zone.



STUDENTS TO LEARN KEY SKILLS

A project to create a state-of-the-art CNC (computer numerical control) training facility at **Harvard Community High School** is becoming a reality.

Organizer Steve Glasder, a machine tool instructor for District 50, has raised \$75,000 to purchase and install modern CNC equipment that will be used to train students for careers in manufacturing.

The goal is to raise \$90,000 to order the equipment and have it in place for the fall semester. Funds have already been donated by the Technology & Manufacturing Association, a Carl Perkins Vocational Education grant, the Harvard EDC, the McHenry County EDC and a grant from the Harvard Community Education Foundation.

"There is a huge demand for CNC programmers and operators in the marketplace," Glasder said. "Students who go through the training should easily make \$50,000 - \$60,000 a year."

The program will also encourage economic development. "Harvard has open space, it has manpower and now it will also have training," explained Glasder. "Employers will come to Harvard to find the CNC programmers and operators they need to grow."

District 50's Metals and Manufacturing Program typically has about 80 students enrolled. "CNC will be a new opportunity for students who are interested in careers in manufacturing," Glasder said.

The next step could be internships that will help students gain hands on experience in the field. An adult training program may also be added in the future.

"Training students for careers in manufacturing is a key element of workforce development," **HEDC Chair Roger Lehmann** said. "The HEDC supports programs that prepare Harvard students and workers for good jobs, and that encourage employers to bring those jobs to our community."