

June 15, 2015
Press Release

Rockford Community Partners Launches New Initiative to Redevelop Existing Properties



(Rockford, IL) Rockford Community Partners is proud to announce “BUSINESSFirst”, a joint venture with the City of Rockford, Winnebago County, Winnebago County Health Department, Small Business Development Center and Rock River Water Reclamation District to assist individuals in redeveloping an existing property or open a new business in an existing property.

Please join us for a press conference

DATE: June 17, 2015

TIME: 1:00pm

LOCATION: Prairie Street Brewhouse, 200 Prairie Street, Rockford, IL

BUSINESSFirst starts by making available a team of partners to any individual with a redevelopment project in the community. An individual can make an appointment to meet with the team for 30 minutes to discuss their project. The team meets the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month from 2:30pm – 4:30pm at the Regional Center for Planning & Design (315 North Main Street, Rockford, IL, 61101) beginning June 23. By having all of these partners in one place at one time, face to face with the customer, we are able to facilitate the most efficient and effective process for the customer.

“Winnebago County is happy to see this private/public partnership come together to provide a better customer service process for the Rockford Community,” said Winnebago County Chairman Scott Christiansen. “We want to do everything we can to cut out the red tape in the redevelopment process to encourage entrepreneurs and investment.”

"By bringing together partners from the public and private sector – architects, general contractors, business owners, realtors, developers, construction trades, business districts, the City and the County - we were able to determine best practices to improve our customer service for redevelopment projects in the community," said Alderman Joe Chiarelli. "As Chairman of the Codes and Regulation committee, we want to see projects come to the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) and Liquor and Tobacco Advisory Board (LTAB) as prepared as possible so we can all help them through the process efficiently and effectively."

"A key initiative of the Planning and Development Committee for 2015 was to coordinate the information provided and services provided to those wishing to enter into a redevelopment project," said Alderman Tim Durkee. "We are glad to see all partners working together to provide a one-stop service to those interested in investing in our community."

How does it work?

1. All information regarding BUSINESSFirst (including a "how-to" and "take-away" guide), can be found at www.businessfirst.support. Each of the primary partners will have a BUSINESSFirst link on their website.
2. If an individual wishes to meet with the BUSINESSFirst team, they will be directed to www.businessfirst.eventbrite.com, where they can sign up for a 30-minute appointment. They are also required to complete a basic survey no later than one week prior to their appointment. www.surveymonkey.com/r/BIZFirst. This will allow the team to be as prepared as possible to assist the customer.
3. At the appointment, the appropriate team members will meet together with the customer to walk through their project. The team will address timeline, costs, permits, zoning, and business planning issues. The customer will leave the meeting with their "take-away" guide, which will include next steps and contact information for the individuals they need to work with. If the customer requires additional time, they can sign up for another appointment.

Rockford Community Partners hopes that this private/public initiative will encourage individuals to consider investing in redevelopment and entrepreneurship in our community.

Press Information: The "how-to" and "take-away" guides are attached with this press release. You may also visit the www.businessfirst.eventbrite.com link to learn about registration for an appointment and the www.surveymonkey.com/r/BIZFirst.com to see what questions a customer will be asked prior to their appointment.

The following public/private partners have been working together to ensure the best service for redevelopment projects and develop BUSINESSFirst:

1. Bath & Body Fusion
2. City of Peoria
3. City of Rockford
4. City of Rockford Aldermen Joe Chiarelli & Tim Durkee
5. CMM & Associates
6. Contemporary Hammer Works
7. Dickerson Nieman
8. First Midwest Group
9. Gary Anderson & Associates
10. Larson & Darby Group
11. Midtown Association
12. Miracle Mile Rockford
13. Northwestern Illinois Building & Construction Trades Council
14. River District Association
15. Rock River Development Partnership
16. Rock River Water Reclamation District
17. Rockford Area Association of Realtors
18. Rural on Tap
19. Winnebago County
20. Winnebago County Clerk
21. Winnebago County Health Department

Media Contact: Jen Hall, 815-975-0466, jen@catalystjenhall.com

Following are all of the organizations involved with Rockford Community Partners.

1. *317 Gallery & Studio*
2. *Artist - Corey Hagberg*
3. *Bath & Body Fusion*
4. *Bridge Rockford Alliance*
5. *Broadway Business District*
6. *Chicago Rockford International Airport*
7. *Church School Neighborhood Association*
8. *City of Gardens*
9. *City of Rockford - Community & Economic Development*
10. *City of Rockford - Construction & Development*
11. *City of Rockford - Fire*
12. *City of Rockford - Mayors Office*
13. *City of Rockford - Public Works*
14. *City of Rockford - Zoning & Land Use*
15. *CMM & Associates*
16. *Community Foundation of Northern Illinois*
17. *Contemporary Hammer Works*
18. *Conveyor*
19. *Dickerson Nieman*
20. *First Midwest Group*
21. *Gary Anderson & Associates*
22. *Harrison Avenue Business District*
23. *Keep Northern Illinois Beautiful*
24. *Larson & Darby Group*
25. *Midtown Association*
26. *Miracle Mile Rockford*
27. *Neighborhood Network*
28. *New Zion Baptist Church*
29. *Northern Illinois Workforce Alliance*
30. *Northwestern Illinois Building & Construction Trades Council*
31. *Progressive Development*
32. *Project 1013*
33. *Project Facelift*
34. *River District Association*
35. *Rock Church*
36. *Rock River Development Partnership/City Market*
37. *Rock River Water Reclamation District*
38. *Rock Valley College*
39. *Rockford Area Arts Council*
40. *Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau/Forest City Beautiful*
41. *Rockford Area Economic Development Council*
42. *Rockford Area Economic Development District*
43. *Rockford Area Lutheran Ministries*
44. *Rockford Area Association of Realtors - Commercial & Industrial*
45. *Rockford Area Association of Realtors - Young Professionals Network*
46. *Rockford Art Deli*
47. *Rockford Chamber of Commerce*
48. *Rockford ETSY Team*
49. *Rockford First*
50. *Rockford Housing Authority*
51. *Rockford Park District*
52. *Rockford Public Library*
53. *Rockford Public Schools*
54. *Rockford Sharefest*
55. *Rockford University*
56. *Rural on Tap*
57. *Sanders Design Group*
58. *Small Business Development Center*
59. *Southwest Ideas for Today & Tomorrow*
60. *The Element*
61. *United Way*
62. *University of Illinois Extension-Winnebago County*
63. *West Gateway Coalition*
64. *Winnebago County – Chairman’s Office*
65. *Winnebago County – Clerk’s Office*
66. *Winnebago County – Development Services*
67. *Winnebago County - Economic Development*
68. *Winnebago County - Information Technology*
69. *Winnebago County - Planning & Zoning*
70. *Winnebago County Health Department*
71. *Winnebago County Housing Authority*
72. *Youthbuild/Comprehensive Community Solutions*
73. *Zion Development/Zion Partners*