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CEDAR RAPIDS/IOWA CITY CORRIDOR'S INDEPENDENT LOCALLY OWNED BUSINESS WEEKLY



Entrepreneurial center brings capital campaign to Johnson County

The Entrepreneurial Development Center (EDC) made a pitch to Johnson County business leaders this morning, sharing its track record and asking for support .

The organization recently launched a five-year, \$5 million capital campaign, and it brought its message to about 50 people at the Coralville Marriott today. Local attorney Robert Downer, who is also a member of the Iowa Board of Regents, and University of Iowa President Sally Mason each spoke about the need for Johnson County businesses to offer greater support for entrepreneurial efforts.

"There is incredible competition for those dollars that people have to give," Mr. Downer said. "You have to justify yourself. I think there will be a positive response from today."

The organization shared that it has invested \$2.9 million in operating capital from both public and private funds since starting in 2003. It has worked with more than 800 clients and generated an impact of \$327 million, according to figures cited today.

Ms. Mason said the EDC's successes thus far have been built on fundraising from elsewhere in the Corridor, and that this must change.

"I think the university can be a good partner," she said. You've got to set priorities with the money you have, and this is a priority for the university."

Eric Bochner from Bochner Chocolates and John Slump from J&J Solutions, two Iowa City companies, also spoke about their work with the EDC.

EDC President and CEO Curt Nelson said the Cedar Rapids-based organization spends about one quarter of its time in Johnson County, but has received no funding from the area.

I'd like to see them contribute 30 percent (of the \$5 million fundraising goal)," he said. "We're a vendor. The opportunity is there to do as much as they want. So far, nobody has really stepped up and taken an interest."



University Heights planning and zoning commission rejects project

The University Heights planning and zoning commission voted last night to reject the recommendation of a proposed mixed-use development.

The vote was 3-2 against One University Place, which would be at 1300 Melrose Ave., on the northwest corner of Melrose and Sunset Street, where St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church is located. Developer Jeff Maxwell of Maxwell Construction said he will continue with the project and lobby the city council to approve it. The city council will likely host a public meeting on the issue June 2 and will need to approve three readings of the zoning ordinance for the project to move ahead.

"The commission has chosen to be the public's ear on this and I respect that," Mr. Maxwell said. "We're going to stay right on course with the very same plan and the very same mission."

More than 70 people attended the meeting, mostly residents and mostly in opposition to the 93-condominium project that would likely break ground in 2012.

City Attorney Steve Ballard told the audience that the council could include many restrictions in its contract with the developer if it voted to approve the zoning change to allow mixed-use commercial and residential development on the property.

Farmers increasing conservation efforts significantly

Iowa farmers used soil-saving conservation tillage on more than 1 million additional acres in 2007 according to the latest survey by the Conservation Technology Information Center.

New reports show these soil-saving measures, which keep crop stubble on the field from year to year, increased to 15.17 million acres, up 8.5 percent from the 2006 planting figures.

To be considered conservation tillage, more than 30 percent residue must be left on the field when planting is done.

According to studies, Iowa farmers also participate in seven conservation practices estimated to remove as much as 38 percent of the total nitrogen, 28 percent of the nitrate and up to 58 percent of

the phosphorus from rivers, streams and lakes.

According to Iowa State University's Center for Agricultural and Rural Development (CARD), Iowans invest about \$435 million annually in these agricultural conservation practices. To view the CARD report, click [here](#).



New construction program to fund 170 houses

Funding assistance to purchase a new home through the new Single Family New Construction Program in 2009 will help 170 Cedar Rapids families.

The city of Cedar Rapids and the Iowa Department of Economic Development created the program to help solve the housing shortage in the community. According to a January 2009 Maxfield Research Housing Survey, the city needs 323 new single-family houses. This program provides funding for 170 new houses through Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds.

Through the program, eligible property owners are offered assistance up to 30 percent of the purchase price for down payment and closing costs of a new house built for less than \$180,000. So far, the city has approved 16 builders to develop 103 housing units in Cedar Rapids. Construction is expected to begin this summer with a target completion date of Dec. 31 for transfer of title to new owners.

To qualify, applicants must be at or below 100 percent of Area Median Income by household size established by HUD. All assisted homebuyers must be able to support a mortgage as evidenced by a firm loan commitment and must maintain the property as their primary residence for five years. Assistance from this program cannot be combined with the Federal Jumpstart Homebuyer Assistance or State Jumpstart Down Payment Assistance programs for the same house or owner.

Houses eligible for this program must be located within the corporate limits of Cedar Rapids and cannot be located in the 100-year floodplain. Properties must be single family dwellings, single family unit condominiums or modular homes on permanent foundations.



KWWL HEADLINES

Just after 11a.m. Tuesday a young woman came to Fast Cash on the Coralville strip to buy a stamp. She got back to her car and next thing she knew, she and her car were inside the store next door. It all ended with no injuries. Just a trail of broken glass.

The driver was 19-year old Mikayla Field of Burlington. No charges have been filed. Coralville police estimate the damage at \$30,000.

Insurance investigators suspect methane gas may have caused a fire and explosion that damaged a Burger King restaurant in Cedar Rapids last month. No one was injured in the April 24 blast, which shattered dining room windows and blew out the front door.

Methane gas is often found in sewers, underground mines, and landfills. The company plans to rebuild the restaurant.

Michael J. Fox, an actor, activist and Parkinson's patient, will play in the pro-am of the Principal Charity Classic golf tournament next week. The pro-am is Wednesday and is part of the PGA Champions Tour at Glen Oaks County Club in West Des Moines.

The Principal Charity Classic is May 26-31.

KWWL WEATHER

A weak cold front will cross the area today shifting the wind direction from the southwest to the north. This north wind will bring in some slightly cooler air for the end of the week. It will be dry today but Friday through the middle of next week, it will be unsettled with a chance of showers each day. High temperatures during this time will reach the mid 70s.

Go to www.kwwl.com for your storm TRACK 7 forecast.



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