

# Breaking ground: Fountain improvements underway at Statehouse Square

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer  
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**ALTON** - Partnerships between **PRIDE, Inc.** and other businesses and organizations resulted in a ground-breaking at Statehouse Square Wednesday morning.

Chairperson of PRIDE's beautification committee **Tim Matifes** said he designed the project, which will feature planting boxes surrounding the already-existing fountain.

The work will be done by **Wade Rives of Rives Contracting**, and will feature raised planter boxes filled with new trees and native plants, such as prairie grasses.

"It's PRIDE's 50th anniversary this year, and we wanted a big project," Matifes said. "We took out some of the old trees with the city's help. We want three planting beds, and four curved beds around the perimeter."

The beds will be 15 by 45 feet, Matifes said.

**PRIDE, Inc. President Pat Schwarte** said the planting beds represent a continuation of PRIDE's success in beautifying Alton.

"We're building on last year's success with the **Miles Davis** statue," Schwarte said. "I'm very proud of Tim, his committee and all the board members who have worked together with civic leaders, their contacts and community businesses to contribute toward this worthy project."

**Alton Mayor Brant Walker**, who wielded a third shovel at the groundbreaking, alongside Matifes and Schwarte, said he was grateful for PRIDE's effort.

"I would like to thank PRIDE, Inc. for hosting this at Statehouse Square," he said. "This is part of the improvement of quality of life. It's a good tie-in with our work on College Avenue and Rock Spring Park. It's another beautification project in Alton, joining a long list of others."

The project's \$30,000 price tag is being covered by businesses and organizations in the community. Schwarte said PRIDE, Inc. is getting closer to their goal. Some of the biggest donors so far have been the **Alton-Godfrey Rotary Club** and **OSF St. Anthony's Health Care Center**.

**Vice President of the Alton-Godfrey Rotary Club Ron Mayhew** said his organization donated \$3,000 to the project. The rotary club formerly donated \$35,000 for the construction of the fountain located in the square.

"Somebody gave us the idea the city wanted to do this," Mayhew said. "We chose to do this, because there was a lot of visibility and nothing was here but trees, so we decided to get involved."

**Mat Hanley** of OSF St. Anthony's Health Center, located across the street from the square, said his organization donated \$5,000 to the additional planting boxes and botanical decor due to the hospital's commitment to the people of Alton.

"St. Anthony's is here to support the community and our patients," he said. "We have a long-standing history of that. We have a long history of PRIDE as well. This partnership was natural for us."

