

Bristow, Walker, prominent developer Adams see nothing but bright future ahead in Alton, despite business closures

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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ALTON - River Bend Growth Association President Monica Bristow and Alton Mayor Brant Walker acknowledged last week was a difficult business week in the area, but they both see nothing but a bright future ahead economically for the region.

“I talked to the representative for the people who own the mall this morning and he said they saw this coming when they bought the mall,” she said last week. “They didn’t

center their plan around Macy's. They didn't talk specifics, but I believe in the long haul they are looking forward to working with the rest of the business owners along Homer Adams Parkway to make that a thriving business district."

Bristow said Hull Properties, the group that manages the mall, will be looking to fill Macy's void of 135,000 square feet and she looks for them to be successful in obtaining another top business or multiple businesses in the location.

Walker said he thought Hull Properties was brilliant with the way they set up the Macy's store, with control of the facility after some of Macy's business difficulties. Now, Hull Properties will be able to fill it with who they desire, he said.

"The Macy's store closure is very unfortunate, but the Hull group does have a plan and have control of that real estate," the mayor said. "It is a great location for another store."

Walker said he was not surprised by the decision to close Kmart in Alton this year. "It is very unfortunate the folks there lost their jobs," he said. "There are a lot of Kmart stores closing nationwide." He agreed because of the new train station coming close to that area, it is a great location for another business with some building renovation.

Bristow said the announcement that Kmart will be closing was not a surprise. However, she agreed the property there is valuable and with the new train station coming near there, that area will pick up in the future.

Rib City and Princivalli's closing took Bristow by surprise, but she said there are already others wanting to obtain their liquor licenses and she believes others will come forward.

Walker said Rib City renewed its liquor license with the City of Alton and is all caught up with everything owed to the city. He said he was taken completely by surprise of Rib City's closure. He said Princivalli's was also one of his favorite restaurants and he hated to see it close. Princivalli's was very established in Downtown Alton, the mayor said. The mayor did say there are other businesses already vying for the two liquor licenses that will open and several restaurant possibilities wanting to open in Alton.

Business developer Scott Adams said he sees what happened with Macy's and Kmart is a sign of the times.

"We shouldn't let that be a reflection on our community," he said of the closures. "We have some great things positioned and it is just a changing of the retail environment. There will always be change as communities grow."