

## New train station "on the right track," city officials say

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer  
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**ALTON** - Contractors are "crossing the t's and dotting the i's" on the upcoming train station, Alton Building and Zoning Director Greg Caffey said Thursday afternoon.

The new train station, which is located on the former grounds of the Robert P. Wadlow Golf Course, should be fully operational by the middle or end of next month, Caffey estimated. Currently, the City of Alton and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) are working towards its completion on schedule. Amtrak - the agency serving the high speed rail customers - is a bit delayed due to logistical issues regarding the transferring from one station to another, including what to do about passengers whose vehicles are at one station while they are being taken to the other.

Caffey said the original date of service was set by IDOT for July 1, but added it will most likely not be able to be done by then. He said mid to late July should be enough time for it to be completed and in service, though.

Once the station is completed and service begins, a trip from Alton to Chicago will take between four and four and a half hours, instead of the current estimated time of five to six hours.

"Once the station is completed, we will start to market the 30 acres around it for commercial development," Caffey said.

Cognizant of its former designation as a green space, due to it being a golf course with a creek running through it, Caffey said a multi-use bike and walk path will also encircle the area. The creek also has a conservation easement, making it protected green space for future years to come.