

Alton finds out if it made the top five for the Small Business Revolution next Tuesday

by Steven Spencer, Staff Writer
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ALTON - The City of Alton will find out next week if it's been selected as one of the top five towns to possibly be showcased on the "Small Business Revolution," a show produced by the Deluxe Corporation on Hulu.

Tuesday afternoon Alton's Mayor Brant Walker, President of the Alton Regional Convention and Visitors Bureau Brett Stawar, and Director of Alton Main Street Sara McGibany announced that the Alton will receive word if the city has been selected for the top five on Tuesday, Feb. 13.

At 6 a.m. next Tuesday Small Business Revolution will present the top five via Facebook live and The Post Commons will be hosting a viewing party starting at 5:30 a.m. for the community to receive the news together over a cup of coffee.

Mayor Walker said it's hard to put into words how exciting it this is for the city and thanked McGibany, Stawar and all the local businesses and organizations that helped to bring this attention to the city through the #MyAlton efforts.

"Most importantly all of our business owners that have invested in our community," Mayor Walker said. "All the time they've put in, all of the blood, sweat and tears. It's really nice to see those businesses actually get recognized for all of the hard work they've done."

McGibany said just making it this far in the competition speaks highly of the community and its future.

"We've all been saying we're on the tipping point for a number of years, it's pretty much undeniable when we get recognized by a such a huge opportunity like this," McGibany said. "I think the amount of people who are being negative about the direction of Alton are becoming quieter and quieter all the time. It's really becoming undeniable that we are coming into our own and we are reinventing ourselves as a wonderful place to live and work,"

In a previous interview with Riverbender.com Mayor Walker said he might be biased but after showing the Small Business Revolution film crew around Alton last month he has a difficult time seeing Alton not making it into the top five.

"The businesses we visited with were incredible, the energy is there, the vibe is there, it's just tremendous," Walker said after showing the crew local businesses like Mississippi Mud Pottery, It's Raining Zen, Grand Piasa Body Art and the Tiffany Inn. "People are there doing the grind day to day and they're starting to get recognized for their investment in our community. I couldn't be happier for those small businesses because they really are the backbone of our city, there's no doubt about it."

Once the top five cities are announced nationwide voting will take place to help determine the winner of the \$500,000 downtown redevelopment grant that is being offered by the Deluxe Corporation's program.

"Every person is allowed to vote once per day, per email address on the smallbusinessrevolution.org website," Stawar said. "It resets itself each day at midnight, just make sure you're voting once per day and using all the different email address you have at your capacity to do so, and encourage all of your friends."

If Alton makes it into the top five, voting can be done until 8 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 20, at www.smallbusinessrevolution.org.

"We have not made the top five yet," McGibany said. "So keep encouraging people to hashtag MyAlton (#MyAlton) and get on all of the Small Business Revolution social media pages. That's part of what gets us to the top five, final decisions have not been made yet so we still have time to make an impact on whether or not we can make the top five by hashtagging MyAlton."