

Alton awakes to celebration: City first announced of Small Business Revolution top 5

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ALTON - After weeks of crossed fingers, silent prayers and hashtags galore, Alton has been announced as the first of the top five cities announced at an early morning unveiling streamed live at the Post Commons.

After the announcement by Small Business Revolution host Amanda Brinkman and Extreme Home Makeover host Ty Pennington, more than 100 Altonians gathered at the coffee house exploded in celebration. Even Alton Mayor Brant Walker expressed his enthusiasm by vigorously fist-pumping and jumped up and down alongside the rest of the crowd. Following the announcement, Walker thanked Hulu, the Small Business Revolution and especially Alton's small businesses.

"I'd especially like to thank our small business owners who get up every morning and go to work, sometimes till dark," Walker said. "They have brought light to a corridor of town a lot of people said was dead. This should show them and put Alton back on the map."

With the entry into the top five, Alton now joins four other small towns in a national vote. Voting takes place on www.smallbusinessrevolution.org, and can be done once a day per email address. Voting will last eight days, and the winning town will received as much as half a million dollars in investments from the Small Business Revolution, which airs on both that website and online streaming service, Hulu.



Alton was chosen by the show's producers and parent company, Deluxe Corporation, after the show's production team and Brinkman visited small businesses in the top 10 cities chosen by the program. They visited as many as 100 small businesses during that January whirlwind road trip.

During their time in Alton, the crew of the Small Business Revolution joined with Walker, Alton Main Street Executive Director Sara McGibany and Alton Convention and Visitors Bureau Executive Director Brett Stawar.

Stawar took the stage and encouraged everyone to vote and encourage family members to vote. He reminded the crowd of the website, time and rules of voting.

"It's relieving, breath-taking and inspiring," he said. "It's all those things at once."

McGibany also encouraged everyone to vote.

"We had a good feeling about this, but we didn't want to get our hopes up too high," she said. "It's undeniable Alton is going through a renaissance."

Post Commons operator Hugh Halter agreed Alton is experiencing a positive transformation, of which the top five designation is evidence.

"To have more than 100 people come here at 5:30 in the morning - a frigid morning - shows Alton is going through a great warming."

Other towns chosen alongside Alton were Amesbury, Massachusetts, Bastrop, Texas, Martinez, California and Siloam Springs, Arkansas.

Voting for the event can be done [here](#).