

#MyAlton #1: Alton currently leads the pack in Small Business Revolution Drive

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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ALTON - Two days of voting seems to be showing results for those backing the #MyAlton campaign.

A Thursday update from Deluxe Corporation and the production staff of *Small Business Revolution* revealed Alton was currently at the top of the list of five towns in the running for season three of the series, which invests as much as \$500,000 into a community and as many as six small businesses within it. That investment goes toward both marketing and business development, and the entire process will be filmed and broadcast on *Small Business Revolution*, a program available on Hulu and streaming on www.deluxe.com/small-business-revolution

"We are in first, but it's close," Alton Mayor Brant Walker said. "Keep in mind, I bet this is very close. We need to push, push, push. It's not over till it's over."

Executive Director of PRIDE, Inc. and the Greater Alton Community Development Corporation Monica Semnacher agreed the competition was far from over.

"Alton is so ripe for this opportunity and we are all rallying around getting the word out in every possible way," she said. "This is such an exciting time in Alton and I can feel us really coming together in this effort. We're not stopping anytime soon!"

Alton Main Street Executive Director Sara McGibany said the following after she received the 3 p.m. phone call Thursday:

"We are absolutely elated that Alton is in 1st place, but now we have to make sure to keep everyone fired up to keep our lead. If anyone out there has connections to sports figures or celebrities that would share this on social media for us that would be huge because other towns are starting to get endorsements from big names and that's something that we haven't been able to nail down as of yet."

Alton learned bright and early Tuesday morning at 6:30 it had made it to the next level of the competition. After Deluxe Corporation chose it for its top 10, the production staff visited each town and chose Alton as one of the top five.



Those five towns (Alton, Amesbury, Massachusetts, Bastrop, Texas, Martinez, California, and Siloam Springs, Arkansas) are now competing to see which can get the most amount of votes in a national contest hosted online. Votes can be cast once a day per email address at <https://www.deluxe.com/small-business-revolution/main-street/season-three> and voting will continue through Feb. 20 at 7 p.m.

Alton Main Street Executive Director Sara McGibany said Alton may need as many as 60,000 votes a day to win, and added it may require a total of 500,000 votes to clinch it. In order to get more votes, *Small Business Revolution* host Amanda Brinkman, and season three co-host Ty Pennington of *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* said Alton should reach out to nearby St. Louis as well as some of the top 10 towns not currently in the top five.

A winner will be announced at a to-be-determined watch party on Feb. 27. There will be at least one more update on standings before voting ends on Feb. 20.

If Alton is chosen, local businesses will be able to apply to be featured on the show. Felicia Breen, one of the owners of Mississippi Mud Pottery, said she was elated to hear the news.

"This is a fantastic opportunity that we can't let go," Breen said. "I'm so proud of everyone working together to help Alton get this. We have to stay competitive and keep growing so we can have the strongest finish. This possible investment in our community and small businesses is huge and worth everyone's effort!"

