



# Letter to the editor: Let's continue to create a rising tide around the Alton region

by Brett Stawar  
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Creating a Rising Tide, Together What is occurring in Alton as a result of the Small Business Revolution: Main Street frenzy is nothing short of phenomenal. Our three organizations, Alton Main Street, Alton Regional Convention & Visitors Bureau and River Bend Growth Association, all took the bull by the horns to bring home a winner for our region.

We firmly believe that indeed a rising tide lifts all boats. And, what a lift it has been thus far. During the voting process we experienced an entire region coming together with the goal to help Alton win its moment in the national spotlight to enhance our small business community.

These enhancements can already be seen, even before the series begins. We are already enjoying a significant increase in foot traffic as a result of that spotlight shining on

Alton. After decades of incremental steps, the collective investment from all of Alton's business and property owners are the reason why our town was identified in the first place.

The spark began with employees of Old Bakery Beer Company coming together to enter Alton in the competition. From there, it came to the Alton Regional CVB to take it to the next phase of the contest, with Alton Main Street and River Bend Growth Association ready to rally the troops for a win. The Deluxe Corporation team witnessed something special about our city that qualified us to be a top 5 finalist. It was our sense of pride of ownership, camaraderie and small business community shining through.

The silos came down throughout the St. Louis region and everyone was working toward a common goal. And, now as the finalists for the show are announced this week, we must remember how much more this offers our region. It is so much more than just about being selected as one of the six businesses that will receive help from Deluxe. That's just the icing on the cake. The true impact of the effort is realized in our reignited passion for Alton's business growth and economic vitality.

Rest assured that that passion will burn on a long time within our three organizations. We look forward to the coming months as we continue to collaborate as organizations and a community. The series filming will come and go. But our joint efforts will keep the fires burning.

Through workshops, marketing and creative storytelling, the tide will continue to rise. That same feeling we all experienced during the voting process must be kept alive. We have to remember the power of working together and the power of positivity. The light that shines the farthest shines brightest at home. And of course, the revolution will come. It's already here, let's all keep it growing! We sure will

**- Courtesy of Brett Stawar, Alton Regional Convention & Visitors Bureau, Sara McGibany, Alton Main Street and John Keller, River Bend Growth Association.**

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