



Jerseyville Rolls Out Plans To Become The Region's Place To Be

October 25 2021 9:26 AM



JERSEYVILLE, IL – A new vibe and a fresh outlook are coming to Jerseyville that will comfortably welcome all who visit, choose to stay, or just play for the day, while continuing to honor the city's rich past.

With an intended design of making the City of Jerseyville the region's place to go and the place to be, the Jerseyville Historic City Center District has been established.

“When the world shut down in 2020, Jerseyville Economic Development Council started to talk about what the Jerseyville business community would look like after COVID,” JEDC Executive Director Shari Albrecht said. “We knew we wanted a healthy business community and to create a way of doing business that appealed to post-COVID consumers. We didn’t know what that was going to look like, and we had no idea it would take more than 15 months before Jerseyville could fully re-open for business.”

“We started by creating a team at Jerseyville City Hall that included Bob Manns from Jerseyville’s Public Works, Jeff Soer with Zoning and Planning, Tyler Hermens with Parks and Recreation, Michael Ward as Explore Jerseyville’s tourism coordinator, Mayor Bill Russell, Jerseyville City Council members, and the JEDC,” said Albrecht.

“First meeting regularly to brainstorm on what the city and JEDC could do to ‘Reimagine Jerseyville,’” Albrecht said further, “we also began talking with business owners and local stakeholders. We wanted to hear their thoughts because we knew that they represent the lifeblood of our small business community. From this, Jerseyville City Center was created.”

In a post-COVID world, industry experts have predicted that consumers will want to visit an area that is family-friendly, walkable, allows for outdoor activity, a one- or a two-hour drive from home, and is a place where families can experience a sense of community together rather than just visit while also feeling safe and healthy. “We realized that Jerseyville City Center offers all of this,” Albrecht added.

Partnering now to move this development forward are the City of Jerseyville, JEDC Partners in Progress, Jersey County Business Association, Jersey County Historical Society, Jerseyville Public Library, Jersey Community Unit School District 100, Shop the 618, Great Rivers & Routes of Southwest Illinois, and the SIUE Small Business Development Center (SBDC).



Ultimately, the Jerseyville Historic City Center District initiative is a comprehensive business development program, much more than a streetscape improvement program, Albrecht clarified. Partly because of its intended purpose to serve as a regional economic catalyst, Albrecht has been named its interim manager while also continuing in her role as executive director for JEDC Partners in Progress.

The mission behind the development of the Jerseyville Historic City Center District is one of creating a collective atmosphere that encourages the visitor while fostering a haven for the family and business development through history, growth, and assets.

“Essentially, it will be an atmosphere where visitors are encouraged to experience what the community has to offer and where young adults are excited to remain in the community and grow their families while also providing continued growth to our businesses,” said Albrecht.

The newly defined Jerseyville Historic City Center District encompasses 28 blocks of restaurants, entertainment, nightlife, shopping, history, greenspace, as well as office and residential spaces. Currently, there are 27 independent retailers, 23 small business restaurants, 14 small business bars, and 9 public parks and green spaces within the district.

Its general boundaries stretch from Route 16 north to Mulberry Street, to Jefferson Street on its east side, and to Liberty Street on its west side. “The district’s design is pedestrian-friendly, family-friendly, and visitor-friendly,” Albrecht noted. “Jerseyville

has the region’s largest walkable entertainment and shopping district with these 28 contiguous blocks. Nowhere in the region has anything close.”

“The Jerseyville Historic City Center District program is not merely the design of a geographic location, however, but also a destination-branding and small business development initiative intended to establish Jerseyville as the premier boutique shopping, dining, and entertainment choice in the region,” Albrecht further noted.

To spur expanded business development and continued economic growth through the district’s program, a host of business incentives and educational opportunities are being offered, including TIF and enterprise zoning, small and large commercial building improvement programs, small business development and design assistance, as well as seminars and workshops coordinated by the SBDC and the Illinois Restaurant Association.

“We see the City Center District becoming the cultural center of the community by offering a beautiful family-friendly atmosphere, business development programming, and a full calendar of events to help define it as a year-round visitor destination,” Albrecht added. “Within the digital web-based application developed as a part of the existing Explore Jerseyville tourism initiative, there will be elements featured within the app to specifically highlight the City Center District.”



There is an impressive list of goals guiding the rollout and progress of this initiative and its accompanying desire to create an atmosphere where everyone feels welcome. These goals include increasing sales tax revenues within the district as well as property values, enhancing it as a desired location for new business start-ups, and providing opportunities for business expansion within the district.

To further encourage visitors to Jerseyville and its newly developed district, opportunities are also being pursued for its destination highlighting through mapping and other online capabilities. One example of this came with the installation of the electric vehicle charging stations found in the downtown district. As a result, Jerseyville now has a presence as a part of a national charging station availability map published by Tesla.

City staff have also collaborated with representatives from Google to develop a more accurate representation of the Jerseyville community to visitors through the company's various applications. Digital wayfinding protocol has also been designed to make it easier to move around the Historic City Center District and know its offerings, along with free Wi-Fi available for visitors.

Parking has been enhanced and expanded throughout the district to accommodate both current and future needs, and there are planned upgrades to existing parks and greenspace encompassed by the district's general boundaries. A new greenspace development in the heart of the Jerseyville Historic City Center District is also in the works.

To further tie in the various aspects and features into one easily recognizable "look," the city is branding the Jerseyville City Center District through its intentional physical and aesthetic design as well. Cork Tree Creative of Edwardsville has been hired to develop a comprehensive branding campaign, tying all the goals and pieces of this initiative together to help Jerseyville to become known as this regional destination while continuing to honor its historic past.

Trees, planters, benches, trash receptacles, and lighting installed throughout will further help pull the district together under one unique, cohesive footprint. And with the added availability of free Wi-Fi, information kiosks, as well as online access to its mobile mapping and calendar of events, it is the ultimate intent behind the City Center District program for Jerseyville to become known as much as a desired destination as it already is for its rich multigenerational history.

A series of week-long events and activities were hosted in August, including an official dedication and ribbon-cutting ceremony, to officially mark the launch of the new Jerseyville Historic City Center District. To learn more about the district or for

information about the Jerseyville Economic Development Council, contact Shari Albrecht, sharialbrecht@jedc-il.us, 618/639-5332, or visit jedc-il.us online.