

HUGE IMPACT: Work progresses on Lloyd Hopkins Field for American Legion tourney event

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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Spring is in the air and with it talk turns to baseball.

Baseball will have a direct economic impact on Alton/Godfrey area this summer when the American Legion Baseball Great Lakes Regional Tournament will be held Aug. 6 through 10. Alton will also host the tourney again Aug. 4 through 8 in 2016.

Alton Mayor Brant Walker estimates the economic impact of the four days will be in excess of \$750,000 to the region, which he said is a “huge business impact.”

“It (the American Legion tournament) is a big event and it will impact the whole region,” Walker said. “Bob Barnhart’s group has done a tremendous job getting the field back in shape. This goes back to what I have been talking about in the big umbrella of quality of life issues. It is definitely good for Alton and the region.”

The mayor said renovation work on the Lloyd Hopkins Field area is coming along at a solid pace.

Alton Public Works Director Bob Barnhart agreed that progress is coming along well on the field and it will be completed despite state funding being stalled for work on other parts of the park.

“We have redone the field,” Barnhart said. “We have stripped the old sod on the field and re-sodden it. We will have more work to do in the spring. We are shoring up the stands and replacing steps.”

Over the winter months, Barnhart’s crew replaced fencing around the field, reroofed the dugouts and press box areas and plans to pour concrete pads near the dugout to keep water out. Madison County Community Development funds have been used in the project. Last year, Alton received \$111,000 and this year is getting \$138,000.

Brett Stawar of the Alton Convention & Visitor’s Center, said the economic impact of the American Legion tourney will mean hundreds of thousands of dollars flowing into the region.

“We are excited about the tourney coming to town that will bring in 10 teams throughout the Midwest and make nice use of Lloyd Hopkins Field,” he said.

Dennis Sharp, general manager of Alton American Legion Post 126 Senior Legion team, said there is considerable work that has been done for the tourney and continues on putting together plans for hotel, transportation, field, etc. He said national inspectors

with the tournament will come to Alton on April 5 to check the hotel and transportation arrangements, the field condition and more.



Barnhart emulated what Walker said that repairing the diamond and doing the Gordon Moore Park repairs are important in regard to quality of life issues in the community.

“We have beautiful gems of parks in Alton and with a little maintenance, we want to get families back in the park and sharing weekends together.”

Alton Park and Recreation Director Mike Haynes a goal of bringing more tournaments like the one in August to Alton, Walker said. Each tourney has significant economic impact.