

Residents Share Memories As Old Citizens Savings & Loan Bank Is Demolished On Thursday, Nov. 2, 2023

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EAST ALTON - The demolition of the old Citizens Savings & Loan Bank at 700 Berkshire Blvd. in East Alton began Thursday morning, Nov. 2, 2023.

By 9:30 a.m., the demolition was in full gear and shortly after a crowd collected in a parking lot across the street to take photos, video and simply reminisce about yesteryear with the historic bank.

The Citizens Bank was built in 1964 and the architect was Alvin K. Stolze.

Russ Colona, the long-time track and field and cross country coach at East Alton-Wood River, lives down the street from the old Savings and Loan. He said, "We moved here in 1982. It is kind of sad. It was about a quarter a mile around it to go by my house and my kids used to do hill training here. I also used the round building as a landmark to tell people how to get to our house. I am right behind it. The father of Kathy, my wife, banked here. It is a neat thing the architecture used on it. I feel they are taking a piece of history away, I think."

Christine, another visitor to observe, said she drove by the bank a lot when she was younger.

"It is sad to see it go down, it is part of the East Alton community," she said. "Hopefully they will do something good here after it is torn down."

Jim Murphy, owner of Murphy's Lawn Care for more than four decades, agreed it is sad to see the old bank go, but he said it is probably the best thing.

"The building is full of mildew and mold," he said. "My grandparents banked there. I can remember going there when I was a kid. It will be weird after it is torn down and gone."

East Alton Mayor Darren Carlton said previously the city had been trying to get the bank torn down since 2017 since it was in such poor condition inside and it had been neglected to a point beyond repair. It would have taken a fortune to revitalize the bank, he said.

Carlton said the village will work to see if someone is interested in the location and make good use of the spot.