



Alton Mayor Tom Hoechst's December Report: Looking Back On 2010

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This is the time of year for reflecting on another year completed. We in city government spend many hours throughout the year dwelling on what needs improvement in our community. I thought this would be a good time to focus on the positive changes and the good things which happened in 2010.

The Parks and Recreation Department completed Olin Park with a basketball court, lighted walking pathway, new playground equipment and two picnic shelters. The concert series at the Amphitheater was very successful thanks to the hard work of Parks and Recreation employees, volunteers, and the many corporate sponsors. A new pedestrian bridge opened to connect downtown with the riverfront.

On energy related issues, the City saved over \$300,000 on our energy bills this year reducing our carbon footprint drastically.

Our history was highlighted in 2010. A new mural depicting life on the river, donated by the Alton-Godfrey Rotary, was christened this year. Renovation started on the Sears-Snyders Buildings, enhancing and saving one of Alton's more historic structures and adding a very successful new retail component to the downtown area, a source of new jobs, and increased parking for downtown businesses. Also, Alton became a member of the Lincoln Heritage Trail and will have access to additional tourism revenue sources.

Education and its impact on our community, nation, and world were at the forefront of 2010. The community rallied together for the Pepsi Refresh Program. Alton High School was recognized as a top performing school by U.S. News and World Reports. Alton Middle School received a 2010 Illinois Horizon Schools to Watch Award. Annice Brave was named Illinois Teacher of the Year. Marquette Catholic

High School experienced continued enrollment growth and is preparing for a major expansion. Lewis and Clark Community College and the University of Illinois teamed up and dedicated the National Great Rivers Research and Education Center, a state of the art facility for studying fresh water rivers, in honor of Congressman Jerry Costello.

Healthcare played a major role in Alton during the previous year. Alton Memorial Hospital expanded with a multi-million dollar new Duncan Wing. Saint Anthony's Health Center invested millions of dollars in new technology and improvements to their facilities. Community Counseling Center undertook a \$7 Million expansion of its facilities. Also in the area of healthcare, a new pharmaceutical drug drop box, which gives people an opportunity to properly dispose of unwanted drugs instead of placing them in our streets or our waterways, debuted at the Police Station.

Private sector and non-profit investments also occurred in Alton in 2010. Some of the highlights included the Riverbend.com Community Center continued to offer new and additional programs for our youth. Remodeling of Ramada Inn started in 2010. Wendy's returned to the Beltline and Enterprise Leasing moved to the Beltline. ConAgra started work on improvements to their facility, an approximately \$1 Million investment. The Simmons Law Firm finalized a \$6.6 Million investment in Alton. Lastly, the City purchased the Great Central complex which will allow the City to have greater control over the development of the riverfront.

This past year was a time of exciting changes in our community. I believe we will witness even greater happenings in 2011.

I hope you have a happy and prosperous new year.