ECIA Member Communities Receive $100K Catalyst Grants

Five communities recently received Iowa Economic Development Authority Community Catalyst Grants to provide necessary environmental remediation of contaminated sites in their communities. The sites include: the Preston Times building in Preston, the Ackerman building in Sabula, the Mitchell-Maskrey Mill building in Maquoketa, the Hardware Theatre in Tipton, and the demolition of a downtown building in Delhi for a new retail opportunity. ECIA staff worked and reviewed these successful applications.

The Preston Times project will consist of a complete rehab including mitigating structural issues, restoring historic interior, removing metal siding, and restoring the original brick façade. To keep with Preston’s rich history, the site will be returned to building designs of the early 1900s so that it retains the key character-defining features of its property type. The total estimated project cost is $277,072.

The Ackerman building in Sabula, built in 1895, is a community landmark with rich history and was a grocery store until 2006. It will be restored to four apartments on the second and third floors, and white-boxed for commercial and retail space on the main level. To keep with Maquoketa’s rich history, the Ackerman building will be returned to building designs of the 1880s so that it blends into the downtown district. The total project cost is $1,422,900.

Last, but certainly not least, is the iconic Hardware Theatre rehab project, which has been a community priority over the last several years. The Board and project partners ultimately want to restore the entire theater but know it must be done in phases. The $100,000 Catalyst grant will go toward the construction of two 1,110 sq ft apartments on the second floor. The total project cost for this portion is $532,000.

For more information on this program and grant writing services, please contact Maria Quinn at mquinn@ecia.org or 630-690-5703.

ECIA Receives $600K Brownfields Grant

In May, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) awarded ECIA a $600,000 Brownfields Assessment Coalition Grant. The EPA has dedicated approximately $287 million in Brownfields grants directly to communities and nonprofits for cleanup and redevelopment, job creation, and economic development through the award of over 948 grants.

Community-wide grant funds will be used to conduct up to 24 environmental site assessments to prioritize sites within assembled communities. These grants will also be used to develop up to 15 cleanup plans and support community outreach activities. While assessment activities will focus on the ECIA-Catalyst Grant sites, the funding purpose also includes assessments in other cities, in Clinton, Delaware and Jackson counties that lie in Qualified Opportunity Zones. Delta priority sites include the former Clinton Engine plant site in Maquoketa, Jackson County Regional Health Center, Walker’s Salvage site in Dubuque, former U.S. Post Office Clinton, former Tyco Water and Controls building in Maquoketa, and former Lincoln School in Manchester.

ECIA is thrilled to again partner with EPA to provide assistance to our rural communities in not only identifying and assessing potentially hazardous contaminated properties but in guiding local communities in developing reuse plans for these sites,” said ECIA Brownfields Project Manager Dawn Danksirk. “Many of our communities deal with abandoned, disused and underutilized properties, and this funding is vital to encouraging public and private reinvestment in these properties boosting local economies and leveraging jobs while protecting the most vulnerable groups within the community. Nearly 30% of the communities announced nationwide today will receive Brownfields funding for the first time. Of the 151 communities selected, 118 can potentially assess or clean up brownfield sites in census tracts designated in Opportunity Zones.

Awarded EPA’s Brownfields grants provide communities with an opportunity to transform contaminated sites into community assets attracting jobs and achieving broader economic development outcomes, while taking advantage of the biocell rain garden system.

Bear River Drive Street Complete at PN

The Bear River Historic District pocket neighborhood in Maquoketa has recently finished its Bear River Drive Street completed as well as the exterior for lot Lots 3 and 4 we underway in development with the foundation being completed on each. The Biocell Rain garden will start planting soon and all retaining wall work is complete.

Please contact Carl Reimer at creimer@ecia.org or 630-690-5732 if you’re interested in one of these beautiful $150,000 two or three bedroom homes.

ECIA Business Growth offers new lending opportunities

ECIA Business Growth partnered with Dubuque Initiatives, Dubuque County Board of Supervisors and Jackson County Board of Supervisors to implement three separate loan programs to assist small businesses that are struggling due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The loan programs provide a three-year loan in the amount of $5,000 up to $50,000, 0% interest, 2,408 payments for the first six months and then fixed for principal and interest payments at an interest rate of 1% for the remainder of the loan. Loan funds may be utilized to cover ongoing monthly operating expenses, remodeling of supplies and inventory, and/or expenses incurred related to COVID-19 pandemic. There is no fee to apply for the loan.

These programs have provided financing of $655,600 assisting 66 businesses supporting 419 jobs within the communities to date.

For more information contact Matt Specht at 630.690.5721 or mspecht@ecia.org.

Alcohol License Extensions Expedited

The Iowa League of Cities has been working with the Iowa Alcoholic Beverage Division (ABD) to provide flexibility and expedited response to alcohol licensees seeking to add or extend their alcohol licenses for sale or serving alcohol outdoors. The application will require local authority approval, draft-sign, city council endorsement, and ABD approval.

Any area added to the licensed premises must meet the following requirements:

• Area must touch or share a common property boundary with the currently licensed premises.
• Area must be outdoor or under the control of the licensee. Control can be demonstrated through lease or other written agreements.
• A sketch or diagram of the outdoor service area must be submitted and approved by the local authority.
• Local ordinances and restrictions on outdoor service areas must be reviewed and apply within their respective jurisdiction.

More information can be found at https://bit.ly/2XOuvho or by contacting Licensing@IowaABD.com.