

For Immediate Release

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Jayne and John Simmons Discuss Big Ideas with Business and Civic Leaders About the Future of Downtown Alton

Wouldn't you want to live in the Happiest and Healthiest City on the Mississippi River? We would!

Alton, IL – April 30, 2019 – If someone told you that you could live in a community that strives to be the happiest and healthiest city on the Mississippi River, would you want to live there? Well, a group of big dreamers, thinkers and doers led by local residents and business owners Jayne and John Simmons, think so. They have joined forces to reimagine the future of downtown Alton and “Transform the City of Alton into the Happiest and Healthiest City on the Mississippi River by 2029.”

“We believe Alton has all the qualities that people want in a community,” said John Simmons. “Many people I’ve spoken to see the potential of downtown Alton and understand that a strong downtown is the foundation of a strong community.” With the abundance of natural assets within and surrounding the city, the Simmons believe Alton is perfectly positioned for a renaissance.

This isn’t the first time a group of citizens has rallied together to tap into the assets of downtown Alton. According to a book published in 1912 by the Secretary and Manager of the Alton Board of Trade George H. Mosser, a “get together” of Alton residents, civic and business leaders created a movement to promote the natural and human assets of Alton and introduce the world to the city.

“John and I love Alton,” said Jayne Simmons. “We believe Alton is the perfect-sized city to remake one building, one park, one street and one opportunity at a time. By focusing on downtown Alton, we hope to improve the lifestyle of everyone in Alton.” For the Simmons, the first step in imagining a new downtown Alton was to acquire properties to protect them and the beautiful architectural heritage of Alton. The Simmons’ have invested in more than two dozen properties including landmark buildings such as the Old Post Office, the Jacoby, The Grand Theater, and the Stratford Hotel, among others.

The Simmons know to revitalize a community is not an easy task, which is why they met with business leaders Tuesday night to introduce their visionary concepts. “We know there will be some people who will want to see the revival in action before they believe it,” said John Simmons. “That’s understandable. What we are doing right now is talking with people about some big ideas and soliciting their feedback on what they would like to see in Alton. The Simmons are hosting a series of conversations with business and civic leaders, friends, family and citizens to gather feedback and talk to people about what they want to see in Alton.

“We are asking people to open their hearts and minds to a new way of envisioning downtown Alton,” said Jayne Simmons. “There is so much potential here that could benefit the entire community. The revitalization will take community collaboration, a planful approach and will occur over the next 10 years and beyond.”

The next community conversation will be held on May 7th at the Jacoby Arts Building, part of the Alton Main Street meeting. Another conversation will be held on May 8th at the Alton City Council Meeting, where the Simmons’ team will introduce some of the exciting new concepts to city leadership for feedback.

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