

For Immediate Release

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Alton Residents Get Up-Close Look at the Big Ideas for Downtown Alton

The Grand will be reopened on December 4, 2020 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the old theater!

Alton, IL – May 8, 2019 – You may have recently heard a lot of exciting talk around town about the future of downtown Alton. If you were at the Alton Main Street What's Up Downtown meeting tonight at the Jacoby Arts Building, you got an up-close look at what some city and civic leaders have in mind.

Longtime Alton residents Jayne and John Simmons spoke to a crowd of about 200 people tonight about some exciting plans they and a team of big dreamers have for downtown Alton. The main message of tonight's presentation? Alton is perfectly situated for a renaissance and the people of Alton are encouraged to be a part of this. Together, Alton can become the "Healthiest and Happiest City on the Mississippi River by 2029.

Beautiful color renderings were on display throughout the Jacoby Arts Center, and an inspirational video painted a picture of what Alton could be. A team of professionals working on the project were on hand to answer questions and encourage citizens to share their ideas.

"There are so many people who love the city of Alton like Jayne and I do," said John Simmons. "We think it's a great time in our city's history to gather all types of people together and invest our time, energy and passion in helping this wonderful city reach its potential."

Downtown Alton is the perfect-sized city to remake one building, one park, one street and one opportunity at a time. 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.

Renovation will begin on the Grand, Jacoby Arts Center, Pocket Park, the Wedge, and Elfgun buildings as well as the building that houses Lucianna's late this year, among others. The goal of renovation is to preserve the historic architecture of the buildings and transform them for modern use. The official grand reopening for the Grand will be held on December 4, 2020 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the opening of the theater.

For citizens who want to get involved in this long-term revitalization project, there will be a variety of community engagement opportunities offered this summer for city leaders, business leaders, and groups of all kinds to share their ideas about what they would like to see in the future of Alton.

The team will also launch a website, social media and other interactive media to keep people up to date and gather feedback and ideas.

The Simmons will also be speaking at the May 8th Alton City Council Meeting at 101 East Third Street. The public is invited and welcome to attend. (City Hall has a limited amount of seating, so please plan accordingly.)

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