

Mayor's Report for January 2014

Welcome to the Schnucks family. Schnucks opened its doors and had a formal ribbon cutting on January 16th. We are grateful that Schnucks decided to locate one of its stores in our city – we are even more grateful to Joe and Patty Koppeis and their Market Place family, and we're happy to recognize them as a caring and giving part of our community. We welcome Schnucks and give a huge "Thank You!" to the Market Place family – the legacy of the Market Place will long be remembered in Columbia.

I, along with several city employees, attended an Accountability luncheon with local business owners and professionals. The speaker gave insights on how to be accountable in business and in your daily life.

Along with many other local and state officials, I attended the annual meeting and installation of officers for the Home Builders Association of Greater Southwest Illinois. This group and their members are responsible for most of the home building in our city. I welcome and appreciate the relationship they have developed with various local officials – especially those in Columbia.

I attended a meeting with Brownie Troop 266 and spoke about citizenship and how local government operates. I was amazed with the questions that were asked and by the Troop's understanding of citizenship. What a great group of young ladies!

I participated in a conference call with Governor Quinn before his State of the State address. I'm hopeful for his support of legislation allowing municipalities to get their proper share of state income tax monies on a timely basis. Currently the state continues to be in arrears in its state income tax distributions to municipalities (including Columbia).

I attended the Southwestern Illinois Council of Mayors' meeting and its Executive Committee meeting – we are reviewing legislative issues to support or oppose in 2014.

The city continues in its efforts to present itself as a business friendly community. In that effort, Community and Economic Development Director Paul Ellis coordinated a Small Business Finance Fair to inform existing and new business owners of available financial resources they may be able to utilize. We want to give businesses the tools to succeed in Columbia.

Did you know that our city has a namesake submarine? The USS Columbia (SSN 771) is a Los Angeles fast attack submarine. The Commander and Chief of the Boat are going to be visiting Columbia in March. We are planning a dinner in their honor the evening of March 13th at the Columbia American Legion Post 581. Details can be found on the city website and at the American Legion. Hope to see you there.

Several legislative issues are at the forefront with the Illinois Municipal League. We are tracking roughly 240 bills that will have an impact on municipal governments. If you would like to see IML's position (and a short synopsis) on a bill you can go to <http://legislative.iml.org/ams/tl.cfm?job=half&ga=98&year=2> or the IML website <http://www.iml.org/> click "legislative" and click "tracked bills".

The state still owes the City of Columbia (and its taxpayers) over \$89,000 in past due income tax monies. It is unfortunate that the state continues to avoid its financial responsibilities and puts the burden back on the local community taxpayers. We (the Mayors of the Illinois Municipal League) continue to fight for your tax dollars and against unfunded mandates.

New Business Ribbon Cuttings

The Vapor Warehouse, 538 S. Main: The Hackmanns have created a warm and welcoming retail store specializing in premium e-cigarettes.

Roessler & Associates, 430 Columbia Centre: Mark Roessler has started an accounting firm in Columbia. He is branching out from Thoma & Associates where he worked for years. Welcome Mark.

Aunt Maggie's On Main, 230 N. Main: If you like home cooking and great fried chicken this is the place for you. You can't miss them on Main Street.

Upcoming Events

February

24 (2pm): AARP Tax Aide - Columbia Library

25: Large Item Trash Pick-Up - Curbside

March

1 (7pm): Art on the Bluffs Trivia Night – ICS Gym

3, 10, 24, 31 (2pm): Tax Aide - Columbia Library

8 (8am): Eagle Sprint 5K – Bolm-Schuhkraft Park

8: Helping Strays Bunco – St. Paul United Church of Christ

8 (7pm): Columbia Jaycees Sh-Boom - Turner Hall

13 (6pm): USS Columbia Dinner Reception – American Legion

15 (8am – 1pm): Computer & electronic recycle - Public Works

15 (2-4:30pm): Tile Wall Art & Pet Adoption – Monroe County Welcome Center

15 (7pm): Trivia and Silent Auction – St. Paul Lutheran Hall

22 (7pm): CVFD Mouse Races - Turner Hall

29 (9am): ICC 5K Fun Run & Walk - Immaculate Conception Church

April

5 (5:30pm): Helping Strays Dinner Auction – The Falls

10 (6-9pm): Monroe County Business Expo – American Legion

Remember if you are not involved, you are missing out.
So GET OUT and GET INVOLVED!

Columbia is the “Outstanding Community Volunteerism” 2010 Governor’s Cup Winner.

If you have any questions, concerns, comments or just want to chat please contact me at 281-7144 ext. 109, khutchinson@columbiaillinois.com or home at 281-5199

Sincerely,
Kevin Hutchinson, Mayor