

# Mayor's 2014 Year End Report

2014 was another busy year in the City of Columbia:

We welcomed the Schnucks family to our fine city. They opened their doors and had a formal ribbon cutting on January 16. That day marked the end of the Market Place legacy. The Market Place family was more than a community grocery store, they were a caring and giving part of the community.

In an effort to be more business friendly, we held a City Entrepreneur Fair to educate existing and new business owners of available programs. We want to give businesses the tools to succeed in Columbia.

We had the pleasure of hosting the Commander and Chief of the Boat from our namesake submarine the USS Columbia (SSN771). The boat is currently stationed in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. We held a luncheon with the original USS Columbia committee members. In the evening, we hosted a dinner open to the public. It was very interesting to hear the stories of submarine life.

The YMCA HTC Center joined forces with the Greater St Louis YMCA organization. We now have one membership to use in the Illinois and Missouri YMCA's in the St Louis Area.

We hosted the Mo Co Expo on April 10 at the American Legion in Columbia. There were numerous business represented from around Monroe County. This was a great event to discover a variety of retailers and service businesses in our county. "Think Monroe County First" – please think of our local restaurants, retailers and services -- spending keeps money in Columbia and helps support local government.

The Southern Illinois Police Chiefs Association had their annual lunch meeting in Columbia at The Falls. This group is just as concerned as the Mayors with the state legislature mandating activities that cost extra time and money without the approval of the Chiefs of Police. How does a legislator know more about best practices in law enforcement than all of the Illinois Chiefs of Police?

Our dedicated City Clerk, Ron Colyer passed away this year. Ron faithfully served as the City Clerk since 2009.

We appointed Wes Hoeffken as City Clerk. Wes has 16 years' experience and was able to step into the position with little training. Wes will serve as City Clerk until the next municipal election.

We dedicated the Sesquicentennial Pavilion in Metter Park. During the dedication, we reflected on the 150-year history of Columbia and all of the great leaders and citizens that have contributed to the great community we enjoy and love.

Columbia is part of the Illinois Main Street Program. Illinois Main Street is part of a successful national movement to revitalize America's traditional downtowns, neighborhood business districts, and urban corridors. Illinois Main Street gives value as it works with Illinois' communities to provide technical and consultative assistance,

training and resources to improve the economic, social, cultural and physical aspects of each unique commercial area.

We officially adopted the Main Street District Plan as part of the Columbia Comprehensive Plan. We recognize the importance of preserving Main Street while still promoting commercial growth that works with the historic small town charm of Main Street.

We adopted the Community Preservation Plan as part of the City of Columbia's Comprehensive Plan. This plan outlines concepts and direction on preserving our history.

Columbia hosted the Downstate Illinois Alliance Luncheon at the Falls Banquet Center. We had regional and national retailers, planners and developers in attendance. They spoke on the current development and planning climate in the St Louis region and around the nation. They also talked about how Illinois and the St. Louis Metro East fits into their planning and site selection process for future expansion and growth.

We approved the Historic Preservation overlay district for the Miller-Fiege home, James Piggott's land claim, Schneider Farmstead, Shoemaker School and the Waterman Cemetery.

Jackie Hausmann, our Special Events Coordinator and Administrative Assistant moved to part-time employment. She job shares with Nancy Long who was hired in August in a part-time capacity as well.

The Columbia Khoury League and the Columbia Athletic Association received a Sophia and Elmer Oerter Foundation grant to light some of the fields at the American Legion Memorial Park.

The trail on the old railroad right-of-way was named the "GM&O Heritage Trail."

I attended the Costello Expressway dedication just east of the new Mississippi River Bridge. I had a chance to talk to Governor Quinn and other state and federal officials about the transportation needs in Columbia.

On September 10-11 the Boy Scouts put up flags on Main Street and 684 flags on Art Hill in St. Louis. The flags on Art Hill were for the book launching Under of Flag. Local Author and photographer Tom Rollins was a driving force behind the story. Go to [www.underoneflagbook.com](http://www.underoneflagbook.com) for more details.

We approved an annexation agreement for the new medical building on the north side of Columbia. The developer plans to build an eight-story building that will house medical and business office exposures. This will be an attractive addition to our city..

We approved new lighting at the Columbia American Legion Memorial Park fields. The Columbia Athletic Association received a grant to pay for the lighting -- brighter days or nights for baseball in Columbia.

Our City Administrator, Albert Hudzik, retired in October. Al retired to spend more time with his wife and family.

We officially appointed Jimmy Morani as City Administrator, Budget Officer, and Health Officer of the City of Columbia effective October 20, 2014.

Bob Brockland Buick GMC opened their doors in Columbia. We are pleased to have this great business in our community.

Mr. Bill Fitzgerald, Director of Southwestern Illinois Law Enforcement Commission, presented an award to Chief of Police Joe Edwards and Deputy Chief Jerry Paul in recognition of the Columbia Police Department Officers and Telecommunicators for their completion of the Project 16 Training.

The city was presented with the 2014 Best Practice Award by the American Planning Association Illinois Chapter for our Community Preservation Plan.

The City will receive \$158,949.00 from the Illinois Department of Transportation to add sidewalks, curb, and gutter along the existing street and also create a new trail to link Main Street and the Columbia Middle School to allow safe travel for pedestrians and bicyclists.

City Engineer Ron Williams resigned and accepted a position closer to his home in Franklin County, Missouri.

Congratulations to the Columbia High School Boys Soccer team for winning the State Championship.

Forty-one new homes were built in Columbia; we welcomed 25 new businesses.

Seven young men earned the rank of Eagle Scout.

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

If you have any questions, concerns, comments or just want to chat please contact me at 618-281-4177 ext. 109, [khutchinson@columbiaillinois.com](mailto:khutchinson@columbiaillinois.com) or home at 281-5199.

Sincerely,

Kevin Hutchinson, Mayor