

Mayor's 2013 Year End Report

2013 was another busy year in the City of Columbia:

- I, along with other Mayors, testified at the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency's public hearing regarding the Section 401 Water Quality Certification needed as part of the Metro-East's levee improvement project.
- Britta Krabill was hired as Columbia's Head Librarian.
- Columbia Kiwanis Club was recognized for its twenty years of service to our community.
- Immaculate Conception Church held its dedication ceremony – Bishop Braxton presided along with Father Carl.
- I attended the farewell party for Jorge Perez, the Executive Director of the YMCA of Southwest Illinois – the HTC Center Monroe County YMCA is part of that organization.
- I attended a meeting with school representatives to discuss economic opportunities for our community and how the City can assist with the school district's Farm Agricultural Program.
- It was an honor to extend the City's congratulations to Matthew Krippel as recognition of his Gold Medal performance at the 2013 Special Olympics World Winter Games in Pyeongchang, South Korea.
- The Columbia Middle School and the Columbia Music Boosters hosted the annual solo ensemble regional competition.
- 24 students visited from our Sister City of Gedern, Germany.
- A cumulative status report for the Admiral Parkway Redevelopment Area was approved; it's hard to believe that area was developed 18 years ago.
- Manav Misra presented the new Columbia Volunteer website to the City Council.
- Explore Columbia was adopted as part of the Columbia Master Plan.
- The Route 3/South Main Street Intersection Improvement Project was chosen as a Project of the Year by the Illinois Chapter of the American Public Works Association.
- Bob Brockland Buick GMC announced its plans to relocate to Columbia in a new dealership building to be constructed on Old Route 3.
- 47 visitors from our Sister City of Gedern, Germany came to Columbia to help celebrate the program's 20th anniversary.

- The loss of Cezar, Columbia's first police dog, left a void in the Columbia Police Department.
- Dennis Fassel, an employee with the City's Department of Public Works and a retired member of the Columbia Fire Department, passed away and was recognized for his 26 years of dedicated service to the city.
- After 20 years of service, Al Holden retired as the city's building inspector and code enforcement officer.
- Columbia Kiwanis held their inaugural Radtour bike ride and community event.
- The Illinois Municipal League, along with the Home Builders and many other groups, convinced the Office of the State Fire Marshal not to move forward with changes to the 2012 NFPA 101 Life Safety Code that would have cost homeowners, businesses and municipalities thousands of dollars.
- Justin Osterhage was hired as the City's building inspector and code enforcement officer.
- In August we closed on the American Legion Memorial Park property; it is now officially part of the City's parks system.
- Sue Hezel presented the Monroe County Barn Quilt project to the city council. This project provides an opportunity to get historic locations around Monroe County recognized.
- The City Administrator and I met with Good Energy personnel and representatives of other local cities to review and approve rates that will be in effect after June 2014 for the City's Municipal Electricity Aggregation Program. Homefield Energy was the successful bidder at \$.04660 per kWh for a 24 month period (after June 2014). We once again required that the electricity aggregation program rate be no higher than the rate charged by Ameren Illinois during the two year term with Homefield.
- The American Planning Association Illinois State Section Conference was held at the Falls. More than 100 planners from throughout the region attended and many stayed at the Hampton Inn.
- Songs-4-Solders was well attended. My guess is that well over 1,000 attended this event.
- The Valmeyer Road restoration and Valmeyer Road Bridge Rehabilitation projects were completed.
- The Columbia Sister Cities' organization was selected as the 2013 Sister City of the Year by the Illinois State Sister Cities' Association.
- American Legion Post 581 hosted a "Taste of Scouting".

- I was honored to be elected as a Vice President of the Illinois Municipal League Board.
- The Mouse races supporting Columbia's new K-9 Officer were held at the Falls on October 25th.
- The Columbia Heritage & Preservation Commission and member Dennis Patton received the Landmark Illinois' Dreihaus Preservation Award in the Education Category for their work in identifying, documenting and promoting the Kaskaskia – Cahokia Trails.
- Paul Ellis, the City's Director of Community & Economic Development, received an Outstanding Local Government Achievement Award from the East-West Gateway Council of Governments.
- The Monroe County Scavenger Hunt was a huge success.
- Santa Claus came to town and the Monroe County Welcome Center was full of Christmas cheer.
- New businesses welcomed into the city include: Missouri Energy, Mc2USA, Inc., Obregon & Associates LLC, The Corner Reef, Bare Hands Crossfit, Ole Tin Roof, Columbia Marine Service, Benchmark Auto Protection, Smiling Ma, A Wellness Within You by Dawn LaFata, New 2 You, Synergy Therapeutics & Smileology Dental, Rabbits & Rags, Merz on Main, Aftermath Services, The Vapor Warehouse, J&W Small Motors, Aunt Maggies on Main, KAT Jewelry Boutique & Gifts

Thanks to our residents and visitors for patronizing Columbia's businesses and for their support of other local merchants through the "Think Monroe County First" program.

Remember if you are not involved, you are missing out. Columbia is the "Outstanding Community Volunteerism" 2010 Governor's Cup Winner. So GET OUT and GET INVOLVED!

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.

Kevin Hutchinson, Mayor