

Valparaiso is OPEN FOR Business

CITY TALK

a City of Valparaiso Quarterly Newsletter

Spring 2011

www.valpo.us

While many communities are seeing shuttered businesses and job losses, Valparaiso has recently welcomed new and expanding businesses and is posting the lowest unemployment rates in Northwest Indiana. “Our aggressive economic development approach has helped us to overcome a tough economy, attracting new businesses and creating jobs,” said Mayor Jon Costas. “We’re making economic development a top priority,” he said.

Local businesses have committed more than \$20 million to projects in Valparaiso in the past year alone, which will result in more than 50 new permanent jobs, in addition to the construction projects. Some of the most notable business additions include:

- **North Coast Distributing** will expand and relocate its facility to a 225,000 square foot warehouse and office facility to be built on Ind. 49, across from the Porter County Sheriff’s Department. The \$15 million project will retain 140 employees.
- **UGN Inc.** is investing \$3 million to add a 16,200 square foot warehouse to its facility in the Montdale Industrial Park, adding 28 new jobs to its current staff of 249.
- **Waste Revelation** is preparing to rehab the long-vacant Harvey’s building to house its business, as well as additional space for lease. The company will spend \$1.3 million and plans to more than double its staff to 20 within four years.
- **Sensit Technologies** is investing \$850,000 to nearly double the size of its Valparaiso operations, adding 10 new employees and expanding its market to 55 countries.



Waste Revelation is investing \$1.3 million in Valparaiso to rehab the long-vacant Harvey’s building for its business and additional rental space. The company plans to more than double its staff to 20 within four years.

“I like what I see happening in Valparaiso and the fact that the city is working proactively to bring in business, especially during a tough economy,” said Cole Doolittle, Owner of Waste Revelation, which has chosen Valparaiso for their new professional office facility. “I can’t see anywhere in the city that isn’t opening the door and saying ‘please come in.’ I work with a lot of municipalities in my business and I’ve never seen one that moves on action like I see Valpo doing,” he said.

Valparaiso’s investments in downtown streetscaping and the addition of 10 three-day liquor licenses are also paying off as Valpo has become a true dining destination. “Our downtown is busy every day of the week and we look forward to opening Central Park Plaza to host even more events,” said Tina St. Aubin, Executive Director of Valparaiso Community Festivals and Events. “Diners come to eat and to shop and enjoy our city,” she said.

“We have a lot to offer businesses and we gain from the added variety, jobs, tax revenue and positive thinking,” said Mayor Costas. “As we see the economy improving, we’re excited to have such positive things in place to offer new business. Stay tuned. More good things are coming,” he said.



D

ear Citizens:

Spring brings excitement and this year is no exception in Valpo. We're all itching to get outside and enjoy the new downtown park. Stroll by

Visit www.valpo.us for City News, Announcements & Events

often as it changes nearly daily. We hope to be celebrating its opening late this summer.



We're also excited to welcome a number of new businesses and expansions to our city. These businesses add new energy and new jobs and we welcome

both with open arms. Check out the good news on page one of this newsletter.

We're also getting revved up to see the new roundabout take place at Silhavy and Vale Park. The new design promises to make this an efficient and safe intersection.

We're unveiling a new logo, a new web site, some new pathways, and an excitement as we see the snow has melted and, perhaps, the economic winter the nation has seen as well. We welcome new businesses and ways of thinking.

Welcome Spring!

Jon Costas

Jon Costas
Mayor

Calling All Tree Huggers You Can Contribute to City Tree Fund

A new program by the Valparaiso Parks Department is making it possible to add more than 500 new trees to the city over the next three years. The program began, appropriately, with some seed money from an anonymous donor who offered up to \$5,000 per year in matching funds to establish a Park Tree Fund. Excited about the potential, the Redevelopment Commission offered to match the total amount donated by the residents and the grant combined and Mayor Costas agreed to match the total again, using funds from the Motor Vehicle Highway fund and economic development funds.

"When you start doubling donations over and over, it adds up pretty quickly," said Carrie Crisan, Assistant Director for Parks. "In fact, every dollar donated becomes an \$8 gift to the fund," she said. Residents can choose to donate \$1 or \$5 per month for at least a year, which is added to the household utility bill. By choosing to donate just \$1 a month, the Park Tree Fund receives \$96 a year, which just about covers the cost of one tree.

Already more than 100 residents have registered, donating \$161 dollars a month as part of their Utilities bill. "Every pledge counts. With the amount currently pledged, the Park Tree Fund will have \$15,456 in the fund on December 31, 2011," said Crisan. "This is a great example of the citizens and the city working together to keep our city vibrant and beautiful," she said.

If you would like to contribute to this "growing" fund, you can access a donation registration form on the park's website www.valpoparks.org and at the Park office at 3210 Campbell Street. For more information, call the Park office at 219.462.5144.



New Logo Sets City Apart

You may be noticing a new logo around the city these days. The city has adopted the new look to enhance its identity throughout the city and beyond. "We're surrounded by communications messages and a bold graphic visual helps Valparaiso to stand out in a rapidly-changing market," said Bill Oeding, City Administrator.

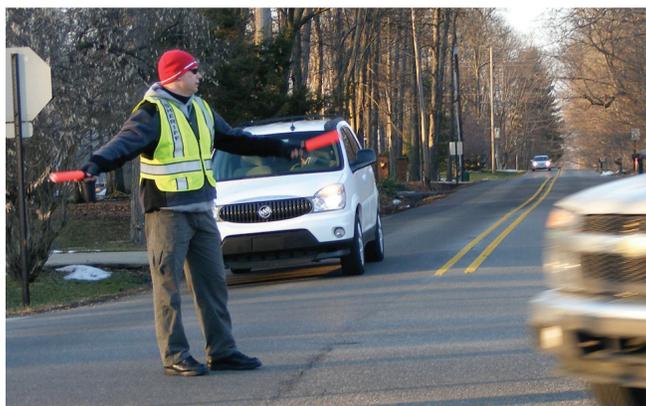
The new look will not replace the traditional city seal, but will rather be used in places where a bold graphic is preferred – such as web sites, signage, and certain printed pieces. "We were encouraged to adopt something more modern that communicates quickly and we feel it sets us apart," said Oeding. The new logo will be especially useful in the tourism market and will help promote the city as a destination.



Rounding the Bend Silhavy roundabout moves ahead

Plans are in place for construction to begin this August on the city's newest roundabout, at Silhavy and Vale Park roads. "We expect the project to be substantially complete by November," said Tim Burkman, Valpo's City Engineer.

Construction will require a shutdown of Vale Park Road east of Silhavy, but a majority of the new roundabout will be constructed southeast of the existing intersection. Traffic north and south on Silhavy and west on Vale Park will be maintained throughout a majority of the project.



The new roundabout at Silhavy and Vale Park will be a safe and efficient way to move traffic. It should be substantially complete by fall.

Once complete, the new roundabout will be a safe and efficient way to handle traffic, without the need for the traffic director currently manning the intersection during the evening rush. "Before we had officers out there, traffic was backing up as far as 49 on Vale Park," said Burkman. The \$1.5 million project will be 80 percent paid for through federal funding. The city's existing roundabout transformed the awkward triangle intersection at LaPorte, Lincolnway, and Sturdy roads. In 2006 there were 29 accidents at the old intersection, resulting in 13 personal injuries. Last year accidents were down to 20, and there were no injuries.



Shaping a fit city



Since Mayor Costas first introduced the Fit City initiative in 2005, more than 5,000 of us have participated in programming to make us healthier and more active. "It's all about encouraging each other to do more today than we did yesterday," said Costas. "As a city, we can work together to provide pathways and parks and programs designed to make us a fitter city," he said. Fit City activities have included walking programs, bike rodeos, fitness challenges, speakers and workshops, and wellness fairs. A Community Garden will be added this spring and walking programs begin in June.

The city's pathway system is one of the ways Valpo is encouraging activity and interaction. The rapidly growing trail system has nearly tripled since 2004. With the addition of two new pathways along Lincolnway and Bullseye Lake Road last year, the city now has nearly 10 miles of pathways. This year, with the support of the city's Redevelopment Commission, Valpo Parks will add three more miles of pathways, running along Silhavy and Vale Park to connect with existing pathways.

Fit City is an initiative between the City of Valparaiso, the Mayor's Office, and the Valparaiso Department of Parks and Recreation. A committee of representatives from 14 community organizations and a partnership with Porter Hospital organize the initiative. To learn more, visit valparaisoparks.org and click on "Fit City" under "Classes and Programs."

FIT CITY BY THE NUMBERS

5,000+

participants in Fit City programs since 2005

nearly 10

miles of pathway currently in the city

3

miles of pathway will be added in 2011

1,700+

pounds shed in the city's Biggest Winner challenge (as part of Fit City)

400

people have participated in the Biggest Winner since 2007



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VALPO TO HOST ANNUAL

July 4th BLAST

Seeking Sponsors for Community Event

Valparaiso's annual Valparaiso July 4th Blast Celebration will be **Sunday, July 4th at Thomas Jefferson School.** "This event has been an overwhelming success and we are excited to bring our citizens another extraordinary show," said Mayor Jon Costas.

Traditionally, businesses, vendors and individual citizens have under-written the costs of the July 4th festivities. Sponsors are acknowledged during the event and in all promotions.

Please consider a gift at the following levels:

- \$1,000 Patriot Sponsor
- \$500 Stars and Stripes
- \$250 Red/White & Blue
- \$100 Friends of the 4th, or...
- any other contribution

Checks may be made payable to City of Valparaiso with "Blast" on the memo line. Please direct your contributions to: July 4th Blast – City of Valparaiso, 166 Lincolnway, Valparaiso, IN 46383. You may direct questions to Lori Good at 219.462.1161.

City's Website Gets an Upgrade User-Friendly Site Serves 24/7

The city debuts a newly enhanced website this spring, designed to be easier to use and easier on the eye. "The new site will be sleeker and less cluttered, but will offer more information than ever," said Ron Ziolkowski, the city's Director of Information Technology.

With the growth in computer usage, the city's site had expanded to include many layers of information and the old site required multiple clicks to access common information. The new design features drop down menus and buttons that allow for easier navigation so users can quickly access meeting minutes and agendas, calendars, forms which can be completed online, learn the materials the city recycles, and much more.

The new site will also be more current and responsive for users. "In the past, one person was in charge of maintaining the entire site for every city division and department," said Ziolkowski. "The new site gives each department its own page and its own person in charge of regulating that page, which means updates can happen in real time." The city chose CivicPlus to help with the new site, learning from the company's 10 years of experience in designing sites for municipalities.



Check us out!

Use this code with your smartphone to access the city's new site or visit

www.valpo.us



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