



Lace 'em Up!

The city's magical skating spot has opened

The city's magical skating spot at the William E. Urschel Pavilion opened in November and has quickly become THE spot to see. "The skating pavilion is a gathering spot for our community," said Parks Director John Seibert. "It's also about driving business benefits downtown. We serve only very simple concessions, because we want to encourage people to visit our local businesses," he said.

The rink features fantastic lighting and sound, and the adjacent Indiana Beverage Activity Center offers restrooms, skate rental, and an excellent place to warm up and watch the skaters. The cost is \$5 to skate, with an additional \$3 to rent skates from the city's stock of 350 skates, sized from a child's 9 to adult 13.

At 80' x 120', the city's rink is larger than the one at Rockefeller Center in New York City, plus it offers the benefit of overhead shelter for the ice, which is 2" thick at its prime. To learn about lessons, hockey times, private rentals, and see a complete schedule of events, visit ValpoParks.org.

An Upswing in Upgrades

Multiple Valpo business sites are being reinvented

The city is seeing a series of sites transformed as businesses are upgrading old sites for new purposes. "We continue to work with new and expanding businesses to welcome new ideas, investment, and jobs to our city," said Patrick Lyp, Economic Development Director.

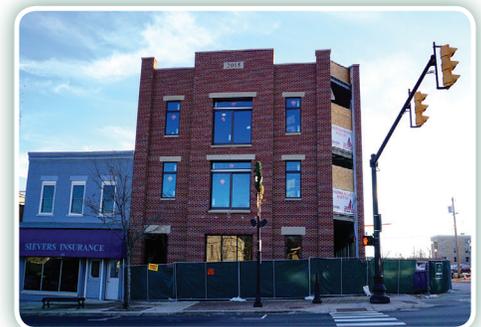
Here are some highlights of upgrades to existing business sites:



The former site of the Natural Ovens dome on State Road 49 is being redeveloped by Holladay Properties of South Bend. Holladay plans to break ground in the spring of 2016 on a 50,000 square foot building and expects two or three tenants to occupy the space, representing 50-75 new jobs for Valparaiso. "Not only do we like the location near roadways and the airport, but Valparaiso offers an excellent business climate that's attracting a lot of attention right now," said Mike Micka, Vice President of Development for Holladay Properties.

The former Fetla's building is being redeveloped by Wayne and Matt Welter and will be reopened in 2016 as FBM Home Acres Building Supply, a national company serving the building trades. The new location expects to hire 10-15 employees. "FBM was already actively serving the Northwest Indiana region. The Valparaiso location allows them to better serve their market," said Developer Matt Welter.

The long-vacant 3D building on the east end of Lincolnway has been demolished by Valparaiso University. The university is working on plans for the 6.5-acre parcel, which may include a mixture of commercial and residential uses. "We're looking to strategically develop the site to be something to benefit the city and complement the university," said John Palmucci, Senior Advisor for Valparaiso University.



The former Thormahlen building on Lincolnway is being rebuilt after being destroyed by fire in 2013. The new three-story building will also include underground parking. While the upper floors will be residences, the first floor will include at least four businesses, representing opportunities for new jobs. "We're encouraged by the direction that Valparaiso is headed and we wanted to be a part of it," said Peter Von Tobel, developer for the project.

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Dear Citizens:

Here's hoping this letter finds you well and looking ahead to positive things in this new year. So many great things are happening in our city. The new William E. Urschel Pavilion and Indiana Beverage Activity Center have added so much sparkle to our bustling

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downtown. The new space is so much more than a skating facility, but also a place for us to gather, extending the season for Central Park to year-round. We're so grateful for the partnerships that have made this facility possible.



We celebrate the preservation of historic Napoleon Street. How great that we were able to upgrade the underground infrastructure while preserving the historic look. We're also happy

to see our pathways expanding further with the new section on Evans Ave. And the new Altogether Taskforce is helping us work together to ensure Valparaiso is a welcoming and engaged community.

Take a look at these pages to see some of the positive projects we're celebrating this season. And see if you don't think Valparaiso deserves to be named America's Best Community (see back page for details).

Sincerely,

Jon Costas

Jon Costas, Mayor

An Upswing in Upgrades

Continued from front page

Known as the old "Harvey's" building, 455 W. Lincolnway will be the new site of the College of Court Reporting, relocating from Hobart. When complete this year, the new building will be 12,000 square feet of technology-driven space for administrative offices, software development, online instruction, and include 36 employees. "We were attracted to Valparaiso, because it offers a great downtown, the nearby VU campus, and the proximity to the courthouse is an excellent opportunity for us in terms of an instructional setting," said Jeff Moody, President of the College of Court Reporting.



Family Express will acquire the former Urschel Laboratories property on Calumet Avenue with plans to build a new prototype store with a Valpo Vikings theme, which will employ 10. The nearly 15-acre site offers room for further development. "Our priority was to secure the property, which is zoned for fueling and offers excellent access," said Gus Olympidis, Family Express President and CEO.



Most recently owned by Porter Regional Hospital, 1401 Calumet Ave. was once an A&P store. This spring the building will become the 12,000-square foot home for the Porter County Community Foundation and the Center for Community Philanthropy, a dedicated space for nonprofits to advance their own causes. "After 20 years, the Foundation is very excited to have a permanent space in a highly visible location to serve the entire county," said Barb Young, Foundation President.

These upgrades are in addition to Pratt Industries' 100 percent-recycled paper mill, which became operational in September 2015. The \$260 million Valparaiso facility is the world's most technologically advanced recycled paper mill and employs more than 120 full-time employees. It is located on the same site as the company's corrugated box factory—the world's largest.

Neighbor Notes

Please keep sidewalks clear for neighbors

The city's snow removal team works to clear more than 150 miles of roadway and 134 cul-de-sacs, plus pathways. Please do your part by keeping your sidewalks clear of snow and ice.

For information about the city's snow response, visit www.valpo.us. Click on "Public Works" and then "Snow Response."

Improving the character and safety of our city





One Sweet Street

Napoleon Street gets an upgrade and an old look

Just north of Lincolnway, Napoleon Street has been a brick street for about a hundred years. So when the street started to deteriorate and the underground utilities needed replacing, many cities would have sent in the jackhammers and then an asphalt crew. “We saw this as an opportunity to upgrade infrastructure while preserving history,” said Mayor Jon Costas.

The result is a roadway with upgraded underground utilities, including a new water main, sewer line, and storm sewer, beneath vintage brick. And the best part is that it will last another hundred years. When Valparaiso’s Deputy Engineer Adam McAlpine began designing the project, he consulted a book written in 1914 entitled *Specifications for the Construction of Vitrified Brick Street Pavements and Vitrified Brick Highways*. “I found the information to be of great value and insight. Obviously, construction equipment and methods of installation have changed over the years but the fundamental construction principles remain the same,” said McAlpine.

The finished roadway uses roughly 50,000 vintage bricks. To keep the project on schedule, most of the bricks actually came from Rex Construction’s in-house stock of vintage bricks. It’s thought that the “new” old bricks were salvaged from a Lake County roadway project in East Chicago or Hammond. The original bricks removed from Napoleon Street will be reused for city projects.

The replacement bricks are marked “Metropolitan.” Research shows that Metropolitan Brick Co. of Belden, Ohio was the nation’s single largest producer of paving brick. In 1923, the company produced 93 million pieces. Metropolitan’s Ironrock Street Paver bricks were used to help build New York City’s Queens Midtown and Holland tunnels, the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, and parts of the old Lincoln Highway.

Valparaiso Named Indiana’s Google eCity

Google has named Valparaiso the winner of Indiana’s eCity Award. The award recognizes the strongest online business community in each state. “Being named Indiana’s eCity reflects Valparaiso’s innovation and dedication to being technologically savvy. We’re particularly excited about this award, because it further demonstrates that our local businesses are succeeding,” said Mayor Jon Costas.

“These cities’ businesses are using the web to find new customers, connect with existing customers and fuel their local economies,” according to the eCity report. Valparaiso is in excellent company for the reward, which also recognizes cities like Boston, Beverly Hills, and Denver. In choosing the nation’s 50 eCities, Google and independent research firm Ipsos MORI analyzed the online strength of local small businesses nationwide. In each state, the city with the highest score was designated a Google eCity.



Altogether Taskforce Promotes Diversity in Valparaiso

The City of Valparaiso has a new taskforce to promote community-wide inclusiveness. “As our community grows in size and diversity, we want to promote messages and policies that welcome people from all walks of life,” said Mayor Jon Costas.

Altogether Valpo will research best practices, enlist citizen input, and make recommendations to the City Council in these three areas:

1. Hiring practices

Reviewing existing practices and researching best practices to promote a diverse workplace

2. Affordable housing

Reviewing current housing and comparing Valparaiso to other Midwestern cities of similar size, especially other university towns

3. Inclusion

Considering ways to promote Valparaiso’s welcoming spirit by reaching out to the community to learn what inclusion means to a diverse audience and how to best promote an environment of inclusion

The taskforce reaffirms the city’s core vision from the recent ValpoNext planning effort in which the community came together and defined the city’s vision as “to be the most civically engaged city of its size.” The public is invited to attend Altogether Valpo meetings and participate in its committees. To learn more, including the meeting schedule, visit <http://www.ci.valparaiso.in.us/altogethervalpo>

Valpo Advances in \$10 million America's Best Communities Competition

Plan for Creative District distinguishes city

Valpo continues its journey toward winning the top prize in the \$10 million America's Best Communities competition as the city was named one of just 15 semifinalists nationwide on Jan. 14, 2016. Sponsored by Frontier, DISH Network, CoBank and The Weather Channel, America's Best Communities is inspiring communities nationwide to submit innovative plans for their futures.

About 350 communities across the country entered the competition and the field will be narrowed to just eight after the America's Best Communities Summit late in April. "After achieving this milestone, it is clear Valparaiso isn't just a great community – it is one of America's best," said Domenico Fornaro, general manager for Frontier Communications in Valparaiso.

When it came time to develop Valpo's bold plan to advance in the competition, the city had an edge: the ValpoNext Citywide Vision Plan. "Fortunately for Valpo, we'd already asked ourselves many of the questions the ABC committee asked," said Valpo City Planner Tyler Kent. "One idea rose to the top as a favorite among the hundreds of Valpo residents who participated in the visioning process. The idea was to develop a Creative District."



Here are some frequently asked questions about the plan to develop a Creative District:

Q: What is the Creative District?

A: The creative district is a special place for activity focusing on arts and culture, which will engage all ages and encourage economic activity in the downtown by attracting customers and additional businesses. The district will connect people, including forming a closer connection between the city and Valparaiso University. Plans include maximizing new technologies, such as digital media, to make the city even more dynamic, and offering a place for people to gather, interact, and find meaningful work.

Q: Where will the Creative District be?

A: Current plans call for the Creative District to be along Indiana Avenue, one block south of Lincolnway and between Valparaiso University and the city's proposed new Transit Oriented Development. The core district would be the five-block portion of Indiana between Napoleon Street and Morgan Boulevard.

Q: What will the Creative District look like?

A: Current plans include infrastructure for pedestrians and bicyclists, plus amenities, such as quality lighting, street furniture, free Wi-Fi, and public art. Creative offerings may include theatrical performances, museum exhibitions, artists' studio and gallery activities, arts and crafts classes, live music performances, and interactive art.

Q: What happens to the Creative District plan if Valpo doesn't win funding through America's Best Community?

A: "There is enough enthusiasm for the Creative District, that the city intends to move forward with plans with or without funding from the ABC program, however the ABC funding would certainly expedite the implementation," said Kent.



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