

MirrorImage

*Working Together
on the
Mississippi River Urban
Technology Corridor
Initiative.*

**Renew Moline
Bettendorf Development Corp.
City of Moline, Illinois
City of Bettendorf, Iowa
Bettendorf Chamber
Illinois Quad City Chamber**



- Developing further our educated workforce while utilizing existing information technology assets to better attract targeted business sectors.
- Building upon the tourism attraction qualities of our collective downtowns which are joined by the world famous Mississippi River.
- Creating reasons for local residents to return to our beginnings along the Mississippi River to learn, work, enjoy life and prosper.



MirrorImage

Issue

In the not too distant future, the new “true arch” I-74 Bridge will be a reality, at which time the riverfronts and downtowns of Moline, Illinois and Bettendorf, Iowa will be on either end of a work of art that will serve as the major transportation link for the Quad City region and beyond. The MirrorImage Initiative includes the coordinated attraction of the Western Illinois University (WIU) Riverfront Quad Cities Campus to Moline and the coupling of it with Bettendorf’s Multi-Redundant Fiber Optic Sonet (Gigabit Ethernet), while both communities incorporate the use of wireless Internet access (WiFi). Our unified goal is to work together to utilize and expand upon the educated workforce of the QCA to diversify our economy, while simultaneously improving upon the appearance of our most prized possession, our riverfront gateway.

Background

Over the last year, representatives from both city governments, the chambers of commerce and the private sector development corporations have gathered to explore the potential of working together. The MirrorImage Initiative is a concept centered on the proposed I-74 bridge crossing that is both a gateway to and a link between Bettendorf and Moline.

In the past, Bettendorf and Moline have independently committed significant resources to reinventing their downtowns and riverfronts. Each community’s downtown has evolved into service-oriented and tourism destinations. Bettendorf is anchored by the Isle of Capri while Moline is home to the Mark of the Quad Cities. Although many citizens would say they have both been successful in their efforts, community leaders know they have only scratched the surface in completing their goals.

It is not just our proximity to each other, it is the similar traits and goals that bind the two communities together to help the entire Quad City area. Moline and Bettendorf are now prepared to take the next logical step by working together in order to transform our economy into a high tech/education nexus that will attract the next generation to our region by creating high paying high tech jobs on both sides of the Mississippi River.

Technology Initiative

With support from the entire region, Moline is preparing a site for the Western Illinois University riverfront campus directly across from Bettendorf. As one of the largest metropolitan areas without a public four year college, it is estimated that the new campus will serve 5,000 students. It will offer degrees in technology related disciplines for juniors, seniors, and graduate students. Scott Community College located in the Iowa Quad Cities already has a reciprocal agreement with WIU and will be a feeder school along with Blackhawk College which is based in Illinois.

In addition to attracting and retaining young professionals and raising the education level of the region, the WIU campus will spur job creation. Immediately adjacent to the proposed campus, will be a mixed-use development. Entitled RiverTech, it will be home

to the Intellectual Property Management Institute. Teaming with WIU, the Institute will market patented technologies for companies in non-competing industries. As Moline is landlocked, another option for start up high tech companies is to locate in Bettendorf in order to take advantage of available land and its IT infrastructure. Bettendorf provides a gigabit ethernet which essentially provides unlimited network capacity and redundancy. This capability is one of the reasons Bettendorf was recently awarded a Smart21 Intelligent Communities Award for 2007 by the Intelligent Community Forum. Bettendorf is one of only 21 communities so recognized internationally.

Tourism Expansion

In addition to working together on our technology corridor initiative, we see many ways in which our two downtowns / riverfronts can work together to attract tourism business. Attendees at conferences brought to the Bettendorf Event Center could easily be transported by bus to Moline’s riverfront to enjoy a concert at the Mark or a tour of John Deere Commons. In reverse, concert goers attending an event at the Mark could easily take a water taxi to the Isle of Capri Casino for various forms of entertainment. The two event centers, as well as the entire downtown / riverfront corridor, will share in marketing efforts, all of this to expand upon the time tourists spend in the QCA. Tourists from outside a fifty mile radius will be contacted through the efforts of the Quad City Convention and Visitors Bureau. The tourists will be encouraged to see the Figge Art Museum, the IMAX in Davenport, and Rock Island’s Botanical Center to further enhance their positive impression of what the QCA has to offer. Lastly, and just as important, our local residents will further gain access to our asset known world wide as the Mississippi River.

Conclusion

Similar to many communities across the nation working on their own agenda, Moline and Bettendorf have separately experienced positive results. Building on their shared goals of providing increased access to higher education and creating knowledge-based jobs in high tech industries, Bettendorf and Moline are working together to position the Quad Cities to be able to compete in the global economy.

Request

The City of Moline and the City of Bettendorf requests funding for the following:

A land use and economic development planning initiative	\$250,000
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