

EXTENSION SNAPSHOT

Fulton-Mason-Peoria-Tazewell Unit



COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL CONSUMER &
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Kathie Brown, CED educator, partnered with Bradley University on a project that helped Delavan, IL create new business development strategies. The overall work included partnerships with multiple universities, action research with residents and businesses, plus study of similar small town successes.

Market Analysis Project Assists Delavan with Big Ideas to Improve their Small Town

There are tremendous opportunities in small town's historic downtowns. This past fall University of Illinois Extension partnered with a Bradley University marketing class to implement a market analysis that will help Delavan, IL identify business opportunities in their community.

Through the course of the semester, students engaged community residents and businesses in a study process to understand local market strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities. The students conducted extensive qualitative research through personal interviews. This type of research guides business decision making for large retail chains. Small towns need access to the same high quality market information.

Working with Extension community and economic development educator Kathie Brown, students developed residential and business surveys. Through conversations with the Delavan residents and reviews of community case studies provided by Extension the student teams developed and implemented a survey process that will shape future directions for the city.

The primary survey and demographic data collected for the Delavan community generated valuable ideas. The following big ideas emerged as action items:

1. Bring a grocery store back into the community
2. Reopen the community pool
3. Pursue strategies to fill vacant downtown buildings
4. Develop a 'community based' marketing plan

Actions have already been taken to develop strategies for implementing a community market. In December, Delavan City Administrator Matt Fick visited Great Scott Community Market in Winchester, IL to learn more about the local business development and operations strategy. University of Illinois Extension provided demographic analysis showing support for this concept. Further study and development of the business structure to support a similar project is underway working with Cooperative Development Center at Western Illinois University and Greater Peoria Economic Development Council. City of Delavan has started testing the concept of a local market, with the sale of frozen meat through the local coffee shop Common Ground.

Winchester's experiences offer a number of great illustrations for Delavan—local investment through purchased shares in the business, volunteer labor, and community based events all contribute greatly to the success of the community.

During the spring semester, University of Illinois Landscape Architecture Studio will be working with Delavan to create landscape design for a park area including the pool.



Photo provided by Great Scott Community Market

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