

MSDC considers proposal for implementation of development plan

By Sarah Reed. The Marshall Democrat-News: November 28, 2012.

Marshall-Saline Development Corporation received proposals that could help the group continue to bring its new economic plan to fruition.

During a meeting Tuesday, Nov. 13, MSDC board members had their first glance at the proposals. It's possible they will hire both Sterling Consulting and Troy Nash of Zimmer Real Estate on retainer after the economic development plan has been finalized in January.

Nash has helped lead the way for the county's economic research and plan this past year, and Sterling's main purpose is to help the organization increase operating funds, specifically through grant writing.

"This plan that we're working on is not worth much if we just got a piece of paper and didn't do a whole lot with it," Riggins said.

The proposed costs are \$1,500 per month for Nash and \$2,000 for Sterling.

"I highly recommend we do it," he suggested.

Board members will review the proposal and may hold a special meeting this month to make a decision. If approved, those contracts would go into effect Jan. 1, 2013.

Several projects have been developed while others are making progress. Riggins announced GE in Slater will have a ribbon-cutting ceremony at 10 a.m. Nov. 30, and construction at Fitzgibbon Hospital is underway.

Stan Moore, of MSDC, noted they're also working to become one of a handful of counties to offer career readiness testing and certificates -- geared toward high schoolers and recent high school graduates. The assessments are focused on three key areas: reading for information, applied mathematics and locating information.

According to Missouri Career Center, the state was chosen as one of the first four states to implement the Certified Work Ready Communities program. The four-hour test awards several levels of assessment including "platinum," meaning the participant has skills for 99 percent of the jobs in the ACT's database of occupational profiles, "gold" reflects the participant tested at 90 percent, "silver" reflects 65 percent and the "bronze" level is 35 percent.

MSDC must still apply in order for Saline County to become a participating location. Moore hopes to have 30 businesses recognize the certification; however, it won't be mandatory for applicants or employers.

The board went into closed session. The next regular meeting is scheduled for 7 a.m. Tuesday, Dec. 11.