

MSDC supports mission, receives data

The Marshall Democrat-News: June 12, 2012.

Marshall-Saline Development Corporation discussed the old hospital building and space in the industrial park during the regularly scheduled board meeting on Tuesday, June 12.

MSDC Director Bill Riggins expressed his uncertainty regarding potential plans for both buildings. While he supports finding uses for the buildings, he wants to ensure both are used productively. Riggins said he hopes the hospital project will wait until after the economic development plan from Zimmer Real Estate Group is complete. He said Zimmer's research may lend to a more productive use of the old hospital.

"It'll be a low income housing project, if they do it," Riggins said.

The infrastructure committee also turned down an opportunity to turn a building in the industrial park into a storage business. Riggins explained this project does not necessarily support MSDC's mission.

"Our main purpose is to create jobs and enhance business," Riggins said.

Riggins also applauded an incoming barbecue restaurant at the corner of Lafayette and Morgan streets.

"Sounds like it's going to be a nice set up when it gets done," Riggins said.

Following the regular board meeting, MSDC hosted an update from Zimmer Real Estate Group's Troy Nash. Roughly two-dozen community members listened as Nash provided data regarding Saline County's economic status prior to the recession. The data illustrated that Saline County and Missouri as a whole had not been hit as hard as other parts of country.

"This is what investors would look to if they wanted to risk their capital," Nash said.

Nash noted the county's decline in employment, and the need to restructure the economy away from housing and consumers.

"Recovery has taken place," he said. "But it's slow, and it's painful."

He spoke about Saline County's willingness to accept globalization. While he insisted Saline County alone could never compete with China or India, the Midwest as a region could.

"You all are already an agriculture powerhouse," Nash said. "... The Midwest as a region at least stands a chance."

