

City, college point out common goals

By Whitney Helm Staff writer | Posted: Saturday, September 19, 2015 10:00 am

Why Beloit?

That was the question answered as the City of Beloit and Beloit College united to discuss its intersectional relationship for the first time.

The inaugural city-college conference, "The College and City: Sharing a Name, Sharing a Future," featured presentations by Beloit City Manager Lori Curtis Luther, as well as representatives from Hendricks Commercial Properties, Downtown Beloit Association, Beloit Health System, Comply365, The Stateline Family YMCA, Alliant Energy, Greater Beloit Chamber of Commerce, School District of Beloit as well as several other organizations and businesses.

"We share a history, we share a name, we share a future" said Beloit College President Scott Bierman, while pointing out the connections of entrepreneurship and education through individuals such as Sereno T. Merrill, Harry Moore and others. These individuals then created organizations that benefited both the college and the city.

The conference brought one major announcement from Hendricks Commercial Properties: IronTek.

"IronTek really represents what Beloit is all about. It's a tech incubator and a co-working space," said Isaac Bamgbose, an asset manager for Hendricks Commercial Properties.

Bamgbose said the project is currently under construction at the IronWorks Complex in downtown Beloit.

"Its creating a cluster that helps provide an atmosphere for entrepreneurship in Beloit," he added.

Another major announcement was a new scholarship program at the college. The Wisconsin Distinguished Scholars Award will be available to all admitted Wisconsin applicants with a 3.5 high school GPA. The award will be for \$25,000 a year, totaling \$100,000 for four years. This assumes the student remains in good academic standing during his or her time at the college.

MacArthur Fellow and Architect Jeanne Gang of Studio Gang Architects presented models on another major Beloit College project: the Powerhouse Project. The project will convert a former powerplant along the Rock River into an activity and recreation center for the college. The project is a partnership between Alliant Energy, Beloit College and the City of Beloit. The project was announced in 2013 and it will cost about \$38 million to renovate the building. The college hasn't released updated figures on where fundraising for the project stands.

Gang showed designs for a track, a swimming pool and activity center during her presentation.

"A student union and a recreation center, with a connection the river and college — (It's a) a 21-century partnership," Gang said.

Presenters talked about other upcoming moves, such as the "Heart Hospital" — a \$13.2 million project to establish a heart hospital on the fourth floor of Beloit Memorial Hospital.

"When I was asked 'what are you most proud of in your career?' Without hesitation I said 'the 50 lives we saved last year through out cardiac services,'" said Tim McKeveitt, president and CEO of Beloit Health System.

Other exciting happenings in the city include the much anticipated Stateline Family YMCA move to IronWorks Complex. The family friendly site will expand to 80,000-square-feet and include two levels with a full day care and in-door waterpark, and more.

Business is doing well in the Beloit area as Andrew Janke, executive director of the Greater Beloit Economic Development Corporation, recapped expansions and new businesses that came to the area this year, including a Frito Lay expansion, and new businesses such as Chicago Fittings, Pratt Industries and NorthStar.

Patricia Kampling, chairman, president and CEO of Alliant Energy, discussed the pending \$750 million Riverside Energy Center, a 650-megawatt power station in the Town of Beloit.

"When I retire as CEO of Alliant Energy, this will be one of my proudest moments," Kampling said.