In the last Update, we discussed the East Side Enterprise Center's (ESEC) move to new quarters. The grand opening, originally planned for September, will now take place in October due to construction delays. Dayton's Bluff District Council (DBCC) Executive Director Deanna Abbott-Foster, Administrative Coordinator Nicole Pressley and the DBCC Communications Committee are planning a festive occasion for the whole community.

As part of the new look for the DBCC, the “new” Dayton's Bluff website has gone live. It's at the same web address as before, but all spiffed up and a huge improvement on the old site. Take it for a spin and let us know what you think.

This week Deanna has been occupied with one of the necessary, but not so exciting, parts of her job: writing reports to funders about how their money is being used. Here's a list of our 2014 benefactors:

- McKnight Foundation
- Otto Bremer Foundation
- McNeely Foundation
- Nexus Community Partners
- Central Corridor Funders Collaborative
- City of St. Paul district council contract
- City of St. Paul Cultural STAR grant
- City of St. Paul Neighborhood STAR grant
- The St. Paul Foundation
- F. R. Bigelow Foundation

When the reports are finished, Deanna will compile a comprehensive report for the funders and the community on how it all works together to support DBCC and East Side programs.

Some of the results are now being seen up and down East 7th Street as a result of the three-year Neighborhood Star Grant that DBCC received in 2013. That $500,000 generated a match from the McKnight Foundation to create the “Million will Make it Happen on East 7th.” Loans and grants are being used to generate new small business space, create more attractive storefronts and facades, and in some cases, for businesses to purchase their own buildings.
One example of how the money was used can be seen at 776 East 7th in the old McCarty building – formerly owned by the family of flamboyant former St. Paul Mayor Charlie McCarty. The run-down building was purchased by Minnesota Builders’ owner Nicolai Avdulov who now runs his contracting business at the site and rents space to businesses like Ms. Neicy's clothing store.

Another example is Rogers Printing, a long-time family-owned business at 790 East 7th, which is turning unneeded building space into new facilities it can rent out to other small businesses like a restaurant or a bookstore. The building's facade has been removed to reveal historic copper-clad transom windows that the owners are hoping to preserve in some way. The picture on the right shows what it looks like now. The one below shows one of the possibilities currently under consideration for its new look.

Currently, Deanna is also working with two minority-owned businesses renting space on East 7th to purchase their own buildings. Owning rather than renting can be a big advantage for a small business as it accrues value and is saved from having to deal with unfavorable leasing arrangements. It also benefits the neighborhood by creating long-term community stability.

Deanna says that as word gets out about the new opportunities in Dayton's Bluff for business owners, each week brings in more people who are contacting DBCC to see how their businesses might fit into the new streetscape.

Another ongoing project is East Side Transit Equity – “ESTE” (both an acronym and also Spanish for “east”). This group of four community organizers is holding neighborhood meetings all over the East Side to talk about transit – what people need in terms of getting to jobs and school, the value of transit to the community – all focused on underrepresented communities. The ultimate goal is to make sure that with all the new transit corridor activity, the voice of the East Side (see below) is heard.
And last, but not least, “The Voice of the East Side” has been picked for our new East Side radio station, WEQY, 104.7 FM. Check the forthcoming September issue of the *Dayton's Bluff District Forum* newspaper for an article on what's happening and about plans to be on the air before the end of September.