

Altoona announces completion of River Prairie

AIDAN SANFELIPPO

Leader-Telegram staff

ALTOONA — During the Eggs & Issues focusing on the state of the city of Altoona, Mayor Brendan Pratt announced that their mission with River Prairie was finally completed after 12 years of work.

Pratt said the final lot in River Prairie has been sold and one of the last structures is close to being finished.

“If you were around 12 years ago this area... was wooded,” said Pratt. “A lot of people would use it as a dump site... It’s great to see it transform from what it was to what it is now.”

The goal of River Prairie was to provide a space that people can use to work and live, said Pratt. It would also offer other opportunities like music in its park and restaurants.

“That’s the biggest factor here,” said Pratt. “To create a community within a community where they live, work, and play here.”

Pratt said the city planned to continue the tax increment district for one more year to help fund affordable housing efforts. They believe the TID will generate around \$6 million.

The money can go to many different things including short-term loans, building affordable housing, and helping people fix their homes, said Pratt.

“There are a lot of different possibilities that we can use that fund for but we don’t want to just go out and spend \$6 million...” said Pratt. “We want to be able to have that money return year over year or have people take out some small interest loans, and then pay it back. Then we can give out more loans to other people over time.”

Altoona as a whole has seen a rise in its population, which went from 8,293 in 2020 to 9,320 in 2023. According to City Administrator Mike Golat, the 12.38% addition is because of the planning they have done.

“Strategic planning is critical to making sure we are all on the same page,” said Golat.

Some plans of Altoona’s include working on ways to improve people’s quality of life. Golat said one plan they

are working on that has lasted longer than they have hoped is the Altoona container park.

The reason for this development was both to provide a space for people to enjoy but to also be a place for new businesses to come into the downtown area, said Golat. The park will be created with shipping containers and be home to multiple businesses.

The project has had some complications when trying to follow the regulations when building it, but Golat said Altoona plans to have it ready by the end of summer.

Some other issues the city has to deal with include rising costs, said Golat. One example he gave was an outfitted police cruiser that would have cost around \$45,000 in 2018 now in 2024 costs around \$70,000.

Through all of its challenges and plans, the City of Altoona has finally completed a large project and plans to continue to do work on affordable housing and the container park.

Mayor Brendan Pratt announced that their mission with River Prairie was finally completed after 12 years of work. Pratt said the final lot in River Prairie has been sold and one of the last structures is close to being finished. "If you were around 12 years ago this area... was wooded," said Pratt. "A lot of people would use it as a dump site... It's great to see it transform from what it was to what it is now." The goal of River Prairie was to provide a space that people can use to work and live, said Pratt. It would also offer other

Pratt said the city planned to continue the tax increment district for one more year to help fund affordable housing efforts. They believe the TID will generate around \$6 million. The money can go to many different things including short-term loans, building affordable housing, and helping people fix their homes, said Pratt. "There are a lot of different possibilities that we can use that fund for but we don't want to just go out and spend \$6 million..." said Pratt. "We want to be able to have that money return year over year or have

its population, which went from 8,295 in 2020 to 9,320 in 2023. According to City Administrator Mike Golat, the 12.38% addition is because of the planning they have done. "Strategic planning is critical to making sure we are all on the same page," said Golat. Some plans of Altoona's include working on ways to improve people's quality of life. Golat said one plan they are working on that has lasted longer than they have hoped is the Altoona container park. The reason for this development was both to provide a space for people to enjoy

The project has had some complications when trying to follow the regulations when building it, but Golat said Altoona plans to have it ready by the end of summer. Some other issues the city has to deal with include rising costs, said Golat. One example he gave was an outfitted police cruiser that would have cost around \$45,000 in 2018 now in 2024 costs around \$70,000. Through all of its challenges and plans, the City of Altoona has finally completed a large project and plans to continue to do work on affordable housing and the container park.



After 12 years River Prairie was announced to finally be completed by Mayor Brendan Pratt. The city plans to continue its tax increment district for another year in order to raise around \$6 million for affordable housing. BY AIDAN SANFELIPPO/LEADER-TELEGRAM STAFF

[Copyright \(c\) 2024 Eau Claire Leader-Telegram, Edition 4/15/2024](#)
[Powered by TECNAVIA](#)

Monday, 04/15/2024 Page .A01

Copyright (c) 2024 Eau Claire Leader-Telegram, Edition 4/15/2024