

News

Hilltop CDC names first executive director

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The former Curry Out QC building at 1407 30th St. was razed recently, clearing the way for long-term investment in the College Hill District.

The removal of the former Curry Out QC building at 1407 30th St. marks a new beginning — opening space, both physically and symbolically, for growth in the College Hill District.

Leading this next phase is Jerry Lack, newly appointed executive director of the Augustana Hilltop Community Development Corporation (CDC). A lifelong resident of the Quad Cities, Lack brings decades of experience in economic development, labor leadership and public service. He is known for his ability to build trust, form cross-sector partnerships and move complex projects forward.

The Hilltop CDC was created through a partnership between Augustana College and the City of Rock Island to support neighborhood revitalization through housing, local business development and long-term investment in the College Hill District.

“In every aspect of my career, I have collaborated with others to bring new life to the places we call home,” said Lack. “The Hilltop CDC is about building opportunity and ensuring the future of this community reflects the voices and hopes of those who live, learn and work here.” Lack most recently served as executive director of the Tri-City Building and Construction Trades Council. He previously led the Illowa Construction Labor & Management Council and spent more than two decades working for U.S. Congressman Lane Evans, serving as district director

and economic and community development director. He holds a Master of Public Administration from Drake University.

“Jerry brings deep roots in this community and a track record of moving good ideas into action,” said Kirk Anderson, chair of the Hilltop CDC board and chief financial officer at Augustana College. “He’s a steady, trusted leader who understands both the complexity and the opportunity here. Under his leadership, the CDC can help spark meaningful, lasting neighborhood growth.”

Tom Weigand, a founding Noodles & Company partner and CDC board member, has worked in both national business and neighborhood development. “I know the right leadership is critical from the start,” he said. “Jerry understands that revitalization is about earning trust, listening first, and building with the community.”

Redevelopment plans for the Curry Out site are still in formation, and CDC leaders say they are prioritizing a space that reflects community pride and brings new energy to the area. Community members are encouraged to reach out, share ideas and be part of the vision.

The CDC and the hire of its executive director advance a key priority of Augustana’s Bold & Boundless strategic plan, to “connect through partnership” by activating campus edges, investing in adjacent neighborhoods and building prosperity in Rock Island. The initiative reflects Augustana’s commitment to being a place-based partner for growth — a pillar for regional collaboration, economic opportunity and neighborhood vitality.

Ways to follow updates and to connect with the Hilltop CDC are forthcoming.

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