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## City officials break ground on Fountain Street extension

Thursday, May 20, 2010

By Melissa Miller ~ Southeast Missourian



The Fountain Street expansion project kicked off with a groundbreaking ceremony Wednesday at Morgan Oak Street across from the River Campus. From left are Tim Arbeiter of the Cape Girardeau Area Chamber of Commerce, Ward 6 city council member Kathy Swan, Ward 3 city council member Debra Tracy, Mayor Harry Rediger, city manager Scott Meyer, Nip Kelley Equipment Co. president Vince Kelley and Old Town Cape President Kent Zickfield. (Fred Lynch)

City officials broke ground Wednesday on a \$1.2 million extension of Fountain Street that will serve as a gateway to Cape Girardeau's downtown.

The new road will connect Highway 74 and Southeast Missouri State University's River Campus from Morgan Oak to William streets.

"This whole area will open up for any kind of commercial development," said Cape Girardeau Mayor Harry Rediger. Some of the property is owned by Southeast and will be used for parking, he said.

Rediger said this is an exciting project for him, having served previously on the city's planning and zoning board and working with its Transportation Trust Fund.

A total of \$300,000 for the project came from the city's TTF-3 initiative.

Other funding sources were:

\* \$400,000 Missouri Department of Economic Development Community Development Block Grant

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\* \$105,000 Missouri Department of Transportation Enhancement Grant

\* \$419,964 federal grant.

The new road, 1,300 feet long, will be built on an abandoned railroad bed and finished with brick pavers in a herringbone pattern. The boulevard-style street will have an eight-foot landscaped median and a roundabout at the intersection of Morgan Oak and Fountain streets. Decorative street lights also are called for in the project plans.

"The center area will be a focal point as people come down Fountain Street," Rediger said. "It will provide for a nice traffic flow without stop signs."

It's yet to be determined what will be placed in the center of the roundabout.

"That's something we can dream about," Rediger said.

Missouri's Downtown Revitalization and Economic Assistance for Missouri program helped secure grant funding for the project. Cape Girardeau was one of the first cities to be selected for the state-funded **DREAM Initiative**.

When the TTF-3 measure was passed, it included funds only for a basic street, nothing like the boulevard with decorative lighting that runs in front of the River Campus, which the Fountain Street extension will resemble.

"It was a challenge to seek other funding sources for the enhancements we wanted," said Tim Arbeiter, vice president of community development at the Cape Girardeau Area Chamber of Commerce. He first worked on the project as executive director of Old Town Cape in 2004.

Nip Kelly Equipment Inc. was awarded the bid for the Fountain Street extension in March. Work is expected to take about seven months to complete, said city manager Scott Meyer.

There will be two phases of construction, one block each from William to Good Hope streets and from Good Hope to Morgan Oak streets. Traffic passing through the area will be disrupted at times as construction progresses, said David Whitaker, assistant city engineer.

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Some of the property is owned by Southeast and will be used for parking.



Imagine that. Parking or "water features" are about all you can expect from Southeast.

-- Posted by **vulcan2004** on Wed, May 19, 2010, at 8:45 PM

I have a GREAT idea....how about a statue of our ex mayor, Mr. Knudtson in the center of the roundabout??

Just an idea.....

-- Posted by **2wheeler** on Thu, May 20, 2010, at 7:25 AM

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Another 1.2 million dumped into downtown. Who will this project benefit? Why don't the downtown merchants just provide a bus service from the parking lot at the mall to downtown and back about every two hours? I know this is ridiculous, but just a thought.

-- Posted by **howdydooty** on Thu, May 20, 2010, at 7:48 AM

any way we an extend it straight to the new casino opening soon..?

-- Posted by **peter\_grant** on Thu, May 20, 2010, at 8:10 AM

That's a good idea howdydooty, except I see more cars in the Walmart parking lot than I do the mall, maybe the shuttle should run between Walmart and downtown. \$1.2 million is hardly a start in cleaning up the downtown. I, for one, prefer downtown shopping as I am a little more partial toward the local merchants. I just can't wait to drive on that stretch and have a look at the beautiful SEMO parking lot - NOT! I wish there was a way the town could tell that college ENOUGH ALREADY WITH ALL THE PARKING LOTS AND WATER FOUNTAINS! I know the town doesn't like parking garages because of the perceived lack of familiarity with navigating through a parking garage in this town, but this is what you get in lieu of that - a bunch of gravel or cracked and run down parking lots. As for extending it to the new casino - I'm not aware of any plans for any casino in that part of town.

-- Posted by **Beaker** on Thu, May 20, 2010, at 10:19 AM

I understand that parking lots are not nice to look at, but as a SEMO student myself there are not enough parking places and we pay lots of money to park in lots that are already full. The water fixtures are stupid. Does anyone know if Fountain street in front of the new Autism Center is going to be nice? I think the Autism Center is a great place and it is going to be so helpful to many of our local community members.

-- Posted by **LuckyOne11** on Thu, May 20, 2010, at 10:49 AM

That area of town looks much, much better than it used to. I saw that a good number of dilapidated houses are being torn down and lots cleared off. Looks like a big improvement to me. Would be nice to have a small hotel on that corner.



-- Posted by **longtime\_cape\_resident** on Thu, May 20, 2010, at 11:34 AM

Great!! \$924,964 in free money!!

-- Posted by **malan** on Thu, May 20, 2010, at 1:15 PM

Beaker, I completely agree with your post.



Well said.

-- Posted by **GREYWOLF** on Thu, May 20, 2010, at 3:23 PM

there is a hotel near there!!!! hahahah rooms by the hour right???

-- Posted by **TommyStix** on Thu, May 20, 2010, at 4:32 PM



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