

Memories and milestones: A recap of Albion's progress in 2018

By DR. BILL DOBBINS
CEO, Caster Concepts
and
CAROLINE
DOBBINS-HURTEAU
Community builder



Dr. Bill Dobbins
CEO, Caster Concepts

2018 was a year of continued forward progress in the community of Albion. In places where many others might give up, critical members of the Albion community continue to give back. New businesses have opened, community members have come together to celebrate successes, and confidence continues to build about the bright future of this town.

Many individuals have played a part in the city's revitalization. And with thanks to all the unsung heroes, here is a quick recap of some of the highlights from 2018:

Taking center court. After more than a year of construction and many more years of planning, the Courtyard by Marriott opened to the public in March. The stunning 75-

room hotel has become a place for visitors to stay as they enjoy the sights and sounds of Albion. Located in the heart of downtown, it has also become an excellent venue for community members to host birthday parties, meetings, and the always popular holiday party.

Business is brewing. The summer also saw the opening of new stores along Superior Street. Albion Malleable Brewing Company, Pure Albion and The Office Albion all opened in May to great reviews. Each of these businesses fills a unique need in the commu-



Caroline Dobbins-Hurteau
Community Builder

nity and have been well received by residents and visitors alike.

Luxury living. Peabody Lofts, another development in the 400 Block of Superior Street, opened in September as downtown Albion's premier rental property. These 2-bedroom, 2-bath apartments were renovated by ACE Investment Properties with the support of an \$800,000 grant from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. The historic renovation of the Peabody Block building (Albion's oldest brick building, built in 1852) ensures

that another historic landmark will remain in downtown Albion for another 100-plus years.

Big Albion Plan. In November, Albion Reinvestment Corporation hosted a community celebration and open house to share the progress and the vision of the Big Albion Plan. This critical initiative will transform about thirty storefronts and create 55 upper-level apartment units on Superior Street. The open house unveiled the initial renderings for the restored storefronts as well as the proposed floor plans for the 1- and 2-bedroom apartments.

A's all around. In 2018 Albion College continued to build strong ties with the Albion community. In June, Albion College announced that they would welcome their largest class of Build Albion Fellows since the program's inception. Thirteen students, many graduates of Marshall High School, joined the previous three cohorts of students on campus this fall with a mis-

sion to make a positive and productive impact on the community.

It takes a team. Marshall-based Oaklawn Hospital also teamed up with Albion College to create an after-hours clinic that will be open to both residents and Albion College students. Construction began in the fall of 2018, and the clinic is expected to be completed in early 2019.

In addition to the many significant developments springing up around downtown Albion, the entire community has been busy with numerous events that continue to gain popularity. The Run Albion 5k & 10k series, Festival of the Forks, Walk the Beat Albion and Albion Aglow are a few prime examples.

Looking forward to 2019. The new year kicks off with a bang with many exciting things happening. Foundry Bakehouse and Deli is expected to open early in the year with fresh baked goods, soups, salads, and sandwiches, and is the

culmination of the Peabody Block project for ACE Investment Properties. On Jan. 15, the documentary film *A Common Thread* will premiere at the Bohm Theater. This film showcases the common threads shared between the Albion and Marshall communities.

Albion Reinvestment Corporation (ARC) will move forward with the Big Albion Plan by seeking capital investment, community input and grant dollars from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation.

Believing in the people and building a community is a vision shared by many in Albion. And while not everyone could be highlighted for 2018, their efforts haven't gone unnoticed. There is a lot of pride for the many successes accomplished in 2018, and 2019 will bring even more progress for the entire community. It is an exciting time to be part of the Albion adventure.