

Work begins on Huntley's downtown square upgrades, veterans monument

Article written by Madhu Krishnamurthy, Daily Herald, 4-4-16

Work has started on Huntley's downtown square improvements and a new veterans monument within the square.

Square upgrades include new planters, trees, walkways, benches and bike racks as part of the village's ongoing downtown revitalization.

Some unhealthy trees have been removed and replacement trees were planted within the square, and the concrete base for a new brick walkway has been laid down.

"There is a lot of activity going on right now," said Charles Nordman, the village's director of development services. "You will see the new benches in the town square, as well as the clock. going in within the next month."



New benches are part of the upgrades underway at Huntley's downtown square. Work also has started on a new Veterans Memorial to be located there.

Laura Stoecker | Staff Photographer



Work is underway on Huntley's downtown square and the new Veterans memorial. -

Laura Stoecker, Daily Herald, Staff Photographer

The village has allocated \$200,000 in this year's budget for square upgrades. The plan calls for removing four existing planter boxes and salvaging the stone for new planter areas, reconstructing the brick walkways to match new crosswalks downtown, and removing and replacing existing benches and trash receptacles to match those installed as part of the downtown streetscape project.

Crews also have taken down the James C. Dhamer Town Square sign to accommodate the Veterans' Memorial. Its new location will be near the center north-south walkway facing Main Street.

The upgrades are expected to be completed by mid-May, though officials have not set a date for ribbon-cutting.

Huntley's downtown revitalization, which began last year and involved spending nearly \$4 million, included upgrading infrastructure, relocating overhead and underground utilities, renovating stormwater and sewer lines, and improving landscaping and sidewalks near the downtown square. Work also involved widening sidewalks along Main Street, reconstructing streets, and adding signage.

Foundation work for a 25-foot-long, curved black granite Veterans Monument also has begun within the square. That project also is expected to be unveiled this spring, though likely after town square upgrades are completed, Nordman said.

It includes granite slabs recognizing each of the military branches and corresponding flags, as well as prisoners of war and Purple Hearts benches.

The Huntley Area Veterans Foundation is close to reaching its \$125,000 fundraising goal for the memorial project. As of March 1, the group had raised more than \$102,000. Memorial bricks are no longer available.

"We couldn't be more excited about the progress and to see the memorial starting to take shape in the town square," foundation president Dawn Ellison said. "We anticipate that the memorial should be completed on time for a July 2 dedication. There has been a great amount of community support for this project, and the heartfelt generosity of organizations, businesses and citizens who have contributed toward the memorial is greatly appreciated."