

Study: Vermillion has 'virtually' no housing market

By Travis Gulbrandson

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That is one of the findings in a study commissioned by the city this summer, and which was presented to the city council in a special meeting Monday afternoon.

"You're going to have to act. You won't be able to keep doing the same thing and stay on the high road," said Mark Lautman, CEcD, CRE, who presented the findings to the council.

In July the city council pledged \$35,000 toward the Workforce Housing Analysis, which was completed by Community Housing Laboratory of New Mexico, with \$30,000 toward the study itself, plus an estimated \$5,000 in reimbursable expenses.

Issues such as the attraction of talent, as well as the development of a strategy for improvement were among the components of the study.

Lautman said that because of the lack of a housing market, the community is suffering in several areas.

"You've lost a lot of economic

opportunities in the past ... but the real harm is, with shortage in supply you end up with prices going up," he said. "That costs everybody. It costs families, it costs the workers' productivity, it costs the employers' productivity. It has an impact on the community's economy.

"If you don't solve the workforce housing issue, all of your economic development efforts are going to be for naught," he said.

Lautman said that this is a problem he's seeing all across the country right now due to ongoing problems in the economy.

Lack of housing isn't the only problem, he said.

"Every employer we talked to complained bitterly about their inability to attract talent and keep talent," Lautman said. "They all said it was getting worse, and we think the labor climate in general is going to make that even tougher.

"So, it's the biggest threat to the community's economic well-being and its ability to maintain its character and

improve over the next couple of decades," he said.

The report features a number of recommendations which advance toward solving the problem.

The first of these is getting a workforce housing market started with the aid of a developer "who is already invested in a land position in the community to start a homebuilding program immediately."

Lautman also suggested a "land bank program" to the council members.

According to the report, a local public/private land banking entity would "control, plan, entitle and market the first 200 to 400 acres of workforce housing lot inventory, including the land parcel owned by the production builder/developer."

"You're going to have to make this market," Lautman said.

The report also suggests an Integrated Community Advancement Program (ICAP) be designed and developed that would elevate and integrate community civic program efforts in the areas of economic

development, community development, workforce housing and talent attraction.

Recommendations for projects and programs for each of the four areas were provided in the report, as well.

"The ICAP should serve as the community's central clearinghouse for prioritizing, planning, managing and measuring of discretionary investment in areas strategic to the advancement of the community," the report said.

Lautman said several different committees can be established to do the planning for each specific area of the ICAP.

"You're going to want to show employers that you've actually got a plan and you're executing it," he said. "The second you resolve to do this, you've changed your position in the market. You go from a community that doesn't have a plan, hasn't been building houses up until now, probably never will, to, 'Here's a place that's moving forward.'"

Dig Purple for Payton on Oct. 25

Payton Hand, 12, has waged a miraculous fight after being diagnosed with leukemia last February, and the high school volleyball teams of Vermillion and Elk Point-Jefferson have planned a "Dig Purple for Payton" fundraiser to help her.

Payton was diagnosed

with Philadelphia Chromosome Leukemia Feb. 10, 2011. Prior to diagnosis, doctors simply could not figure out why the once audacious young girl had lost her spunk. Over the past 18 months, Payton has overcome almost insurmountable odds.

This February, doctors warned the family Payton may not have long to live

and that they should consider saying their goodbyes. However, Payton fought back through the spring and summer to allow for a second chance. In early August, Payton received her second bone marrow transplant and as of Sept. 4, is cancer free on the long road to recovery.

Recently, Payton was allowed to move into the Ronald McDonald House away from the constant monitors and alarms going off around her. Payton's courageous fight continues as she battles the side effects linked to transplants and

recovering from 18 months on and off chemotherapy.

To help Payton and her family in this fight, please consider donating to Dig Purple for Payton in the following ways: straight donation, or attending the Oct. 25 Vermillion/EPJ volleyball match in Vermillion and participating in several game time activities to help the family.

Payton would be a sixth grader at Vermillion Middle school this fall and has two young brothers who attend Elk Point Jefferson schools. Please help our communities help this fantastic young girl.

Candidate forum to be held today

The Vermillion Area Chamber & Development Company (VCDC) Legislative Affairs Committee is sponsoring a Clay County Commissioner and State Legislator Candidate Forum.

The forum is Tuesday, Oct. 23, at City Hall Council Chambers, 25 Center St., beginning at 7 p.m. It will be a question-and-answer forum.


The public is welcome and encouraged to submit

questions to the following candidates:

Clay County Commissioner - Two open seats: Ruth Bremer, Travis Mockler, Raymond (Dusty) Passick, Stanley Peterson and Leo Powell.

District 17 State Senator - One open seat: Tom Jones and John Chicoine.

District 17 State Representative - Two open seats: Marion Sorlien, Nancy Rasmussen and Ray Ring.



Saturday, October 27th
Please place this bag with food donations on doorstep or porch by 9:00am
Place monetary donations in envelope.

ALL donations are given to the Vermillion Food Pantry

Items needed most:

- Tuna and Other Canned Meats
- Macaroni and Cheese
- Chunky Brand Soup
- Pasta and Rice
- Crackers
- Cereal
- Hamburger Helper
- Canned Fruit
- Scalloped Potatoes
- Muffin Mix
- Mashed Potatoes (boxed)
- Peanut Butter and Jelly
- Chili

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Thursday, October 25th

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CLOSED DUE TO CONSTRUCTION

The Vermillion Public Library will be closed Monday, November 5 through Sunday, November 18, 2012*
Reopening at 10:00am on Monday, November 19 using the entrance at the northwest corner of the building.
*The Library and City staff will be working hard and will open earlier if possible.

Call 677-7060 or visit www.vermillionpubliclibrary.org for additional information.