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## Moline hopes to get stalled projects going within a year

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MOLINE — The down economy, combined with caution by developers, has delayed several projects in which the city is involved, but a development official expects much of construction to begin within the next year.

Economic development director Ray Forsythe said the projects, including five within the downtown area, will bring new residents to Moline, keep employees working and create construction jobs.

"It all will help the economy," he said.

Gorman & Co. plans to build the \$11 million Moline Enterprise Live Work Lofts, a development of 69 apartments and up to 3,000 square feet of ground-floor retail space, at the corner of 19th Street and River Drive.

Construction was scheduled to begin in April but is delayed until at least September while the developer awaits money promised by the state.

"Within the next couple of months the project should be fully funded and started," Mr. Forsythe said. "Gorman has applied for all building permits, and they have been issued. The project is ready to go,"

Gemvision, a software developer and a hardware and equipment manufacturer for the jewelry industry, proposed a \$5.9 million project in the 1200 block of 4th Avenue in April 2006.

The development agreement between the city and Gemvision calls for the company to renovate the six-story O'Rourke building at 1201 4th Ave. into its headquarters. The company possibly would rent some to retail or residential tenants.

Gemvision also would tear down a building at 1202 4th Ave. and make it into a parking lot. It also plans to create parking at 1224 4th Ave. and 323 13th St.

### City of Moline building projects



- Kermit Stevenson / staff
- 1 Gem Vision • 1200 block of 4th Avenue
  - 2 KONE Centre • Bass Street Landing
  - 3 Washington Square Apartments • 316 17th Street
  - 4 Court Annex Building • 525 16th Street
  - 5 Enterprise Live-Work Lofts • Corner of River Drive & 19th Street
  - 6 RiverTech • 16-acre site beginning at 2500 River Drive
  - 7 Industrial Park • 50-acres north of Indian Bluff Rd. on 47th Street

Photo: Kermit Stevenson

Mr. Forsythe said the project was to be completed this year, and some of it has been — the training facility and sales staff have been moved to Moline — but the rest of the project is on hold because of the economy.

RiverTech is a planned development on a 16-acre city-owned site starting at 2500 River Drive. The city plans to raise the site by at least four feet, build RiverTech Boulevard and streetscape the area in preparation for the multi-building development.

That work should begin this summer and be completed next year, Mr. Forsythe said.

The first building to go up likely will be FlexTech, a 75,000-square-foot office and warehouse space.

Last November, the city was negotiating with a developer to construct the FlexTech building. At the time, the developer was talking with up to four companies interested in space.

Mr. Forsythe said the city is still in negotiations with the developer, but it, and the main tenant, have put the projects on hold.

Plans envision RiverTech containing several other buildings, including one with market-rate apartments and retail/restaurants and one to be an intellectual property institute focusing on patents.

There are no immediate plans for constructing those buildings.

Developer Mike Reddish bought the former court annex at 525 16th St., from the city for \$250,000 to rehabilitate the property and convert the upper story into three market-rate apartments.

Mr. Forsythe said the developer has an architect working on the plans.

The city is actively marketing the Washington Square Apartments at 316 17th St., looking for a developer to rehabilitate the apartments. Mr. Forsythe said the city continually is showing the property, and there is some interest on the part of one developer.

"We are waiting for the developer to come back to us with the plans," he said.

KONE Centre is an up to 20-story retail/office/residential development to be built north of River Drive and west of Stoney Creek Inn at Bass Street Landing by Financial District Properties K.P. LLC.

The developer is working to secure the final financing needed to build the \$40 million structure, and a groundbreaking is planned for this winter.

This spring, the city began marketing an almost 50-acre industrial park north of Indian Bluff Road on 47th Street.

Hopes were to get companies to build on the leased land — owned by the airport — to expand Moline's tax base. The city is landlocked, and it is difficult for Moline to find room for an industrial park.

Mr. Forsythe said the city is actively advertising the property but at this time has no prospects.

He said there is a lot of construction that should be under way next year — RiverTech Boulevard, streetscaping, KONE Centre, the Enterprise Lofts — which will help the economy and keep people employed.