



## Our view: Next mayor must build on recent growth

Downtown finally beginning to show signs of progress

### **GateHouse News Service**

Posted Sep 06, 2011 @ 09:00 PM

Recommend

Be the first of your  
friends to recommend  
this.



Part of Mayor David Roefaro's legacy will be the roundabout at Oneida Square — a project currently under way and one that has been roundly criticized in the community as being disruptive and a waste of taxpayer dollars. But the final chapter on that hasn't been written yet — completion is expected this fall — and we maintain that the end result will be better than the obnoxious tangle of lights that once dominated that spot. Time will tell.

But one part of Roefaro's legacy that critics should not argue with is his commitment to development over demolition. The evidence is clear.

The key will be for Utica's next mayor — be it Robert Cardillo, Michael Cerminaro or Rob Palmieri — to continue what in recent months has been notable progress. This can't be about personalities or political feathers in caps; in the end what really matters is that after many stagnant years, downtown revitalization finally appears to be headed in the right direction. Consider:

\* Black River Systems, a company that designs and analyzes sensor systems and the high-performance software that goes with them, has expanded to more than 50 employees, most of them at the company headquarters at 162 Genesee St. It has outgrown its space there, but is in the midst of a major renovation of the building next door so it can accommodate the additional workers — all in downtown Utica.

\* Architect David Bonacci is refurbishing a building at Bleecker and John streets into a mix of office and residential space. His firm and an insurance office will do business on the lower floor, while Bonacci and his wife will live in an upper-floor loft. Next door, private developers have purchased and rehabilitated three adjacent buildings. They include a martial arts studio, several bars and upper-floor residences. That entire block had been slated for demolition.

\* Accountant Craig Podosek plans to convert two floors in the Winston Building at 230 Genesee St. into apartments and one floor into office space. Meanwhile, Tom Torchia of Pizza Classic at 180 Genesee St. plans to update the kitchen and renovate the second and third floors of the building he owns next door for use by a business.

Add to this recent development of the former Doyle Hardware building, planned development of the Trackside Tavern at Bagg Square, along with a remodeled Cobblestone Building at 401 Broad St., which now includes businesses, loft apartments and a café.

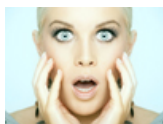
To be sure, there's work to be done. A pharmacy is desperately needed. Roefaro had promised to secure another one when Rite Aid pulled out in 2007, but nothing came of it. A convenience store where downtown dwellers can buy basic groceries is needed, too. With more people moving into loft apartments, these two staples should be high priority for the next mayor.

And then there's parking. That, too, has eluded the Roefaro administration, beginning with a ditched plan to build a garage in the Charlotte/Elizabeth/Bleecker streets area followed by several other half-baked plans that fortunately fizzled. A solid parking plan is needed, especially if the city expects to lure tenants to the City Center building on Genesee Street.

But there is a foundation to build on. Most of the new projects — and some waiting in the wings — have received partial government funding, but developers' willingness to become partners indicates a belief that downtown Utica can come back. And that can be a catalyst for more growth. The next mayor needs to advance the ball.

Copyright 2011 The Observer-Dispatch, Utica, New York. Some rights reserved

Advertisement



These 4 things happen right before a heart attack.



How this strange African fruit is making Americans skinny.



New York: Is it a scam? We investigated a work at home story and what we found may shock you!



Read our shocking news report on e-cigarette. You will be surprised what we found.

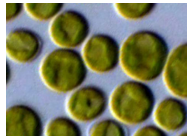


Utica - New trick now allows New York drivers to cut their insurance cost in half.



Millions shocked at how bad their credit scores are. Instantly see how bad your score is.

## Popular Videos



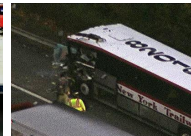
Seaweed Eyed As a Green Fuel Source



Boston firefighter catches boy after 3-story drop



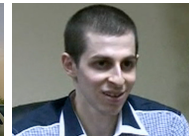
Drunken Dad Allegedly Forces Daughter, 9, to Drive



Raw Video: Passenger Bus Crashes in New York



Raw Video: Dust Storm Rolls Through Texas



Military: Gilad Schalit Now in Israel

### **HOT Stock To Watch EMBA**

This penny stock could make your other stocks rise in  
[www.TechStockWire.com](http://www.TechStockWire.com)

### **The Next Internet Boom**

Stock Investment With 1,000% Potential Gains  
[www.smauthority.com](http://www.smauthority.com)

### **Dove® For Women**

Beauty Is Skin Deep - Explore Our Range of Products Today!  
[www.Dove.us](http://www.Dove.us)

Ads by Yahoo!

Loading commenting interface...

[Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms of Service](#) | [About our Ads](#)

The Observer-Dispatch, Utica, New York | (315) 792-5000 | 221 Oriskany Plaza Utica, NY 13501

Copyright © 2006-2011 GateHouse Media, Inc. Some Rights Reserved.

Original content available for non-commercial use under a [Creative Commons](#) license, except where noted.

[SEO by eLocalListing](#) | [Advertiser profiles](#) | [RadarFrog Merchant Directory](#) | [Contest Rules](#)