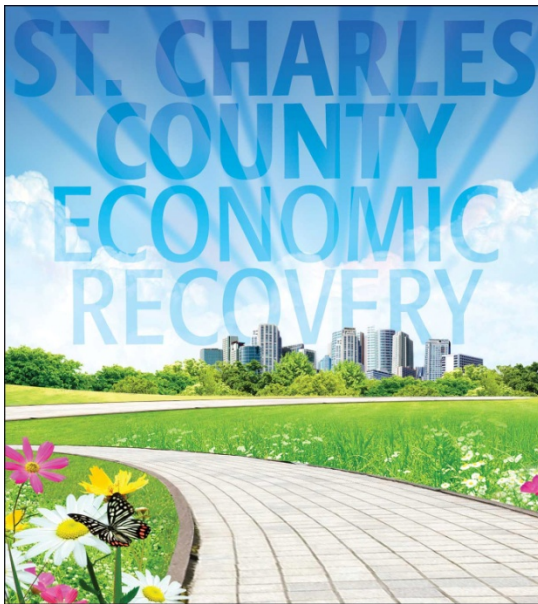


## **Watching the signs of economic recovery bloom in St. Charles County**



Like colorful flowers blooming after a hard winter, the welcome signs of economic recovery are starting to emerge around St. Charles County and the metropolitan region.

One example is Alpla, an Austrian-based plastics container manufacturer that is in the midst of opening their doors in St. Peters, Missouri. With an estimated investment of more than \$12 million, the company purchased and is renovating an 83,500-square-foot industrial facility. They plan to be fully operational with 50 employees this summer. The company's projections for the next decade call for growing to 150 employees and an investment of up to \$25 million.

MasterCard Worldwide in O'Fallon, Missouri, will soon be one of four sites around the world to house a MasterCard Lab, a new research and development arm of the global credit card company.

Elsewhere along the newly reconstructed Highway 40 corridor in St. Charles County, Centene Corp. is working with O'Fallon city officials on a possible \$24 million public assistance package. The first phase calls for constructing a 10,000-square-foot data center and creating 10 IT jobs. Centene would later develop a "back office" facility at the site with 200 to 300 employees.

At Barnes-Jewish St. Peters Hospital, a \$7.2 million expansion was recently announced for the Siteman Cancer Center. Construction will begin this summer and plans call for adding nearly 5,500-square-feet to the facility.

Work is set to begin as the St. Charles City-County Library District replaces the Spencer Road Branch with a two-story, \$5.5 million facility built with "green building practices." This new 55,000-square-foot is slated to open summer 2011.

Initial ground work is underway at the Streets of St. Charles project at I-70 and Fifth Street after city officials backed \$40 million in bonds for the \$385 million mixed-use development. The former Noah's Ark site is envisioned to have 250,000-square-feet of retail space, 150,000-square-feet of office space, and 540 residential units overlooking the highway and river.

Another bright spot is how new home construction continues to pick up and outpace last year. From January through April 2010, a total of 637 single and multi-family housing units were permitted in the county. That's a 63 percent increase over the same period in 2009 when only 391 permits were issued.

These and other developments are bursting to life in St. Charles County as the signs of economic recovery begin to flourish throughout the St. Louis region.