

## Delphi Mayor: 'Stellar' Program Paying Dividends

*Posted: Oct 15, 2015 6:50 PM EDT*

*Updated: Oct 19, 2015 11:06 AM*

By Dan McGowan, Writer/Reporter

[dmcgowan@growindiana.net](mailto:dmcgowan@growindiana.net)

DELPHI - As the city of Delphi prepares for the grand reopening of one of its signature landmarks, Mayor Randy Strasser says his city's designation as a 2012 Stellar Community has generated a "tremendous amount of interest." The Delphi Opera House was a key piece of the Stellar pitch and will welcome guests this weekend after a more than \$4.3 million expansion and restoration. Strasser says the results of the program have far exceeded initial goals.

Delphi is one of the state's smallest cities with a population of just under 3,000. Strasser says, with a city utility and civil budget totaling around \$5 million per year, the investments involved in Stellar Communities and other downtown revitalization efforts are significant. Along with the more than \$4 million invested in the Opera House, approximately \$8 million has been pumped into the Canal Commons housing project, adding with other work that Strasser says combined for a total of \$25 million.

Strasser says the infusion generated by Stellar Communities came at the time of "a crossroad" for the Carroll County city. He says Delphi needed a "large influx" of capital in order to go forward with the kind of plans he and other leaders envisioned, particularly for downtown.

The projects have involved a number of Hoosier businesses, including Indianapolis-based HWC Engineering. The growing firm partnered with the city on the Opera House, streetscapes, facades, Gateway Trail and downtown apartment efforts.

The state says statewide Stellar investments to date from the Indiana Housing and Community Economic Development Authority, the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs and the Indiana Department of Transportation total \$58 million. The program is operated by the Indiana Lieutenant Governor's Office.

In all, communities have received the Stellar Communities Designation, beginning with Greencastle and North Vernon in 2011, then Delphi and Princeton, Bedford and Richmond, Huntingburg and Wabash, and last year's communities, Crawfordsville and North Liberty. The state says 21 strategic investment plans have been created as a result of 60 communities showing interest in the program.

The three-story Delphi Opera House is hosting its opening weekend festivities after the multi-million dollar investment nearly doubled its size. Improvements spearheaded by the Delphi Preservation Society include a fully-restored stage featuring original windows and wallpaper. The project's Stellar investment came to \$2.6 million. The venue was originally named the Assion-Ruffing City Hall and served as a grand event hall, hosting its first event (a ball for returning Civil War veterans) in 1865.

Delphi Mayor Randy Strasser tells Inside INdiana Business downtown development is at the heart of the revitalization efforts that are beginning to bear fruit.

[Original Article Link](#)