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## Fresh investment and creative energy fuel Mineral Point *WEDC Deputy Secretary's visit spotlights community projects, new Vibrant Spaces site*

**MADISON, WI. May 14, 2025** – Mineral Point's historic downtown has welcomed tourists and locals with its blend of creative energy, rich heritage, and small-town charm. Now, the community is building on that legacy through a series of transformative projects that reimagine public spaces, expand local businesses, and invest in the future of that downtown.

In recent years, underused spaces in Mineral Point have been transformed to support the town's growth and strengthen its sense of community. Beyond improving buildings and parks, these projects aim to create a more connected downtown that meets the needs of both residents and visitors.

Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) Deputy Secretary and COO Sam Ridders visited Mineral Point Thursday to see the transformation in action, touring three sites that represent the community's vision for growth. WEDC has assisted in the transformation of these sites through Community Development Investment and Vibrant Spaces grants.

"Downtowns are the heart of communities across Wisconsin, and small businesses keep them thriving," said Ridders. "Investing in communities like Mineral Point supports individual projects and strengthens the entire ecosystem that makes them a vibrant place for people to socialize, shop, and call home."

A former medical office building, located at 110 High St., is being renovated into Staple & Fancy, a full-service grocery store on the ground floor with six additional rental housing units above.

"If we wanted some brand-new box store, we would have just purchased a lot out on the highway and built something brand-new," said Kassi Blanchette, co-owner of Staple & Fancy. "We really love Mineral Point and want to see it thrive. Bringing the focal point of the new store downtown is a great way to maintain traffic and contribute to fresh, new ideas."

The project fills a critical need in the community, as residents have gone without a local grocery store since 2021, often traveling 10 miles or more for basic necessities. By bringing fresh, locally sourced food back into the heart of downtown, Staple & Fancy's mission is ensuring that all Mineral Point residents have convenient access to healthy, affordable options, said Kassi Blanchette.

"When the clinic left, it created a large opening downtown," Mineral Point City Administrator Matthew Honer said. "There have been some new businesses filling in that open space, including a pharmacy and chiropractor, and it's been great so far. Brian and Kassi's grocery

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store really set the stage to encourage more business owners to explore the possibility of opening downtown.”

Additionally, the City of Mineral Point is receiving a \$50,000 Vibrant Spaces Grant to enhance Cornish Heritage Park with public art, new seating and a European-style garden. The improvements are designed to encourage residents and visitors to spend more time in the downtown area and strengthen connections within the community.

Mineral Point was one of 27 communities in Wisconsin that received \$1.1 million in Vibrant Spaces Grants last month. The city aims to use the park to support local events, gatherings, and recreation, said Chamber of Commerce representative and Cornish Heritage Park Committee member Kristin Mitchell.

“The goal of Vibrant Spaces grants are about helping communities create attractive public spaces for communities to boost involvement and nearby businesses,” said Ridders. “In Mineral Point, the transformation of Cornish Heritage Park is a great example of how investment can spark new energy and create spaces that reflect the community’s identity and values.”

Another stop on the tour included the American Wine Project, a small-batch winery that has become a regional destination for both wine lovers and curious tourists. The winery is housed in a renovated 6,000-square-foot building that previously operated as a garden center. With a \$250,000 Community Development Investment Grant, the space transformed into a welcoming tasting room and production facility.

Erin Rasmussen, owner of American Wine Project, explained that their goal has always been to produce exceptional wine in a place that feels approachable and deeply rooted in the community, adding that they’ve been fortunate to grow alongside other small businesses and contribute to Mineral Point’s local culture.

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