

Daily Chronicle

# DeKalb receives \$50K through America's Best Communities competition

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DeKALB – DeKalb has advanced to the quarterfinals in a national competition designed to foster economic revitalization in small towns.

As one of 50 quarterfinalists in the America's Best Communities competition, DeKalb will be awarded \$50,000 to create a plan to accelerate the local economy and improve the quality of life for residents.

Frank Roberts, vice president of Castle Bank and chairman of the work team that submitted the grant, said the money will be used to put together an economic development plan.

"It's a great day for DeKalb," Roberts said. "I'm pleased that we have made it to the next level."

Making it to the quarterfinals is "in part, a recognition of the past work that has been done by many in our community to make DeKalb a great place to live, work, and raise a family," Roberts said in a statement.

He added: "Re:New DeKalb looks forward to working with the city and various stakeholders throughout the next stage of [the competition]."

Re:New DeKalb, a local nonprofit, is providing a \$15,000 matching grant, said DeKalb Community Development Director Ellen Divita. She said consultants would likely help in putting together a plan for the next stage of the competition.

The \$10 million initiative, sponsored by Frontier Communications, CoBank, Dish Network and the Weather Channel, is intended to stimulate economic revitalization in small towns and cities.

Quarterfinalists were selected from an initial pool of applicants based on their ability to demonstrate the greatest potential for revitalization. Some of the criteria included context and commitment, community identity, economic development, and vision and impact according to the competition's website, [americasbestcommunities.com](http://americasbestcommunities.com).

DeKalb's grant application underscored the community's agricultural legacy and growth. It also highlighted assets such as Northern Illinois University, Kishwaukee College, a mix of industrial and medical jobs and downtown investment, according to a news release.

"[The grant] is a great opportunity to focus collaboration across the community," Mayor John Rey said in a statement. "I am pleased to be among 50 cities selected for the next level in the application process. This gives us the benefit to direct energy on projects in an organized

fashion and leverage local resources.”

Up to 15 semifinalists will be selected, according to the information on the competition's website. The first-, second- and third-place finishers will receive grants of \$3 million, \$2 million and \$1 million, respectively.

Two other Illinois communities that landed on the quarterfinalist list were Carbondale and Monmouth.

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