



NEWS RELEASE

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EHLMANN CREDITS COUNTY PARTNERS FOR NEW POST OFFICE PROJECT

ST. CHARLES COUNTY, MO -- It's finally official. After more than 10 years of both informal and formal discussions with businesses and government officials, a new St. Charles branch of the United States Postal Service (USPS) at long-last has opened. Its new location at 1890 First Capitol Drive in University Commons opened on July 11.

Talks regarding SSM Health's acquisition of the former Post Office property at 112 South Fifth Street began numerous years ago as a solution to land-locked St. Joseph Hospital – St. Charles. Then, in 2007, Lindenwood University and The DESCO Group began discussing a development across from the university, which is now University Commons.

The development was approved in 2009 by the Lindenwood University Board of Directors and included relocation of the Post Office to that location. There were differences between SSM and the USPS at that time regarding the precise value of the property, but all parties were hopeful the issues would be resolved quickly.

St. Charles County Executive Steve Ehlmann says those involved with the Lindenwood Commons development approached him early in the process about the County being involved. "I told them, 'We are willing to support the project, but you need to work it out with the Post Office first because the federal government is slow,'" he recalls. "As it turns out, I was wrong. They are very, very, very slow."

Ehlmann says USPS officials in Washington, D.C., not locally, are to blame for the delays.

"Lindenwood donated the land for the Post Office, SSM built the building, the City of St Charles provided tax credits to DESCO, and the St. Charles County Road Board kicked in money for road reconfigurations," he continues. "The Post Office really got a sweet deal. In exchange for a little over two acres and a 1960s structure, they were given 3.83 acres and a new, 21,500-square-foot building constructed to their specifications."

Since the County's main concern was to give the SSM Health facility room to expand and remain in the City of St. Charles, the County Road Board funding was contingent on the Post Office accepting the transfer of the deed for the property, which was filed with the Recorder of Deeds on Wednesday, July 27, 2016. Those funds will be delivered to the City of St. Charles upon receipt of a final invoice.

"It took three and a half years of frustrating negotiations to get an exchange agreement signed," Ehlmann says. "That was in December 2012. In June 2013, the Post Office terminated the agreement without explanation. New plans were submitted to the Post Office in September of that year and the concept wasn't approved until June 2015. Ground finally was broken on October 29, 2015.

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“In St. Charles County, we worked together diligently to make this become a reality,” Ehlmann says. “I want to thank everyone at Lindenwood, SSM Health, DESCO and the City of St. Charles who, throughout the years, worked tirelessly on this project. No one gave up, even after years of frustration with the Post Office, and there’s a lot to be said for that. *That’s* how things get done in St. Charles County.

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