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Dexter Chamber 2023 Organization of the Year - Dexter Friends of the Park

MARCH 22ND 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

Dexter Chamber 2023 Organization of the Year - Dexter Friends of the Park

The Dexter Chamber of Commerce held their annual awards banquet on Friday, March 22, 2024. Since the Chamber began 80 years ago, the theme was the 1980s. Members dressed in their best 80s themed clothing and the Elks Lodge was decorated in 80s theme!

Kim Williams, Chamber Director presented Organization of the Year.

In 2016, the seeds of change were sown by a retired special education teacher named Vicki Windham and two other retired special education teachers.

Their vision took root when they approached the Dexter Parks and Recreation board with a heartfelt request – playground equipment designed specifically for individuals with physical handicaps.

At that time, those facing mobility challenges found themselves excluded from public parks due to their wheelchair disabilities. However, the stars aligned, for unbeknownst to them, the Dexter Parks and Rec Department had already embarked on a mission to create universal playground equipment.

The convergence of these efforts led to the establishment of the Dexter Friends of the Park in April 2017.

This dedicated organization convened to address the pressing need for playground equipment catering to individuals with physical handicaps.

Extensive research revealed that over 700 students in Stoddard County Schools were disabled, underscoring the urgency for change. And so, the Boon Park Universal Playground was conceived.

The Dexter Friends of the Park set an ambitious goal – to create a playground that not only caters to all abilities but also fosters social, physical, emotional, cognitive, and sensory development. Their mission was clear: inclusivity for all.

Recognizing the vital role a universal playground plays in promoting community unity, social interaction, and physical well-being, the Dexter Friends of the Park became a driving force behind this transformative initiative.

This visionary organization, now comprising over 20 dedicated committee members, persevered in making the Boon Park Universal Playground a reality.

Since 2016, they organized more than 40 fundraisers, coupled with generous donations, raising an impressive sum of over \$160,000. Their commitment was further fortified by a grant from the Missouri Department of Natural Resources Land and Water Conservation Fund.

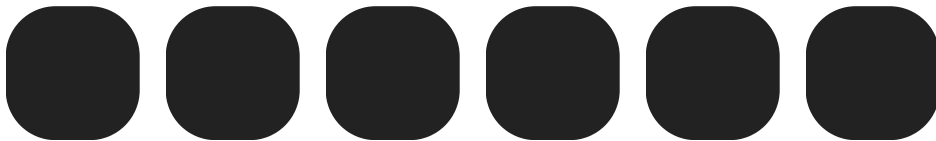
Finally, on November 1, 2023, the community officially celebrated the grand opening of the much-anticipated Boon Park Universal Playground.

Today, we stand here not just to acknowledge their accomplishments but to honor the Dexter Friends of the Park as the well-deserved 2023 Organization of the Year.

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New Hampton Inn & Suites by Hilton Breaks Ground In Dexter, MO

MARCH 20TH 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

New Hampton Inn & Suites by Hilton Breaks Ground In Dexter, MO

What a momentous occasion the city of Dexter!

The Dexter Hotel Group LLC, First Call Hospitality, and local members of the Dexter Community broke ground on the new Hampton Inn & Suites by Hilton located in one of the city's new mixed-use developments off Highway 60 being designed as I-57. This prime location will see an increase in out-of-state travelers passing through for shopping, dining, and overnight stays in Dexter, which should elevate the economy in the region.

Keith Davidson, local Dexter businessman and member of the Dexter Hotel Group LLC said:

“It is exciting to bring a new branded hotel to Dexter and the region. The partnership between the city and county have been critical in getting this project to today's groundbreaking.”

Alisha Trammell, Executive Director of the Dexter Chamber of Commerce was a key player in the development and execution of the project with which has been in the works over the last year. Trammell said of the project: “I am delighted to acknowledge the pivotal role played by our local partners-the City of Dexter, Stoddard County, and the Stoddard County Industrial Development Authority. Their unwavering commitment to our community has manifested in the allocation of crucial funds towards the infrastructure of this hotel. Their support has been instrumental in ensuring that our community not only welcomes a new hotel but also lays the foundation for future growth and prosperity.”

The new hotel will feature 81 guestrooms and suites, with an indoor pool, spa, fitness center, and business center. The hotel will also feature a small bar along with a meeting room for business or social gatherings. Guests will also enjoy complimentary, hot breakfast service each day. Free Wi-Fi in all guestrooms and public areas will be available, as well as free coffee and tea service in the lobby.

Hampton by Hilton fosters a unique culture of hospitality - called "Hamptonality." This term describes each hotel's approach to friendly customer service, anticipating guests' needs and providing travelers with helpful suggestions about area attractions, historical facts, and fun things to do around town. Additionally, hotels are infused with local photography and artwork, highlighting each property's connection to its own community.

Heidi Wilcox, CEO and President of First Call Hospitality, Inc, the management company, said: “We are extremely excited to break ground on this project and to be involved in the development and management of the project Hampton by Hilton

properties are designed to accommodate both business and leisure travelers. With amenities like complimentary, hot breakfast, complimentary Wi-Fi, Hampton Inn & Suites by Hilton Dexter will provide all the services and value-added amenities desired by those traveling to this growing area."

The hotel is looking to open and taking reservation in early 2025

About Hilton

Hilton (NYSE: HLT) is a leading global hospitality company with a [portfolio](#) of 22 world-class brands comprising nearly 7,530 properties and nearly 1.2 million rooms, in 122 countries and territories. Dedicated to fulfilling its founding vision to fill the earth with the light and warmth of hospitality, Hilton has welcomed more than 3 billion guests in its more than 100-year history, earned a top spot on *Fortune's* 100 Best Companies to Work For list and been recognized as a global leader on the Dow Jones Sustainability Indices for five consecutive years. Hilton has introduced several industry-leading technology enhancements to improve the guest experience, including Digital Key Share, automated complimentary room upgrades and the ability to book confirmed connecting rooms. Through the award-winning guest loyalty program Hilton Honors, the nearly 170 million members who book directly with Hilton can earn Points for hotel stays and experiences money cannot buy. With the free [Hilton Honors app](#), guests can book their stay, select their room, check in, unlock their door with a Digital Key and check out, all from their smartphone.

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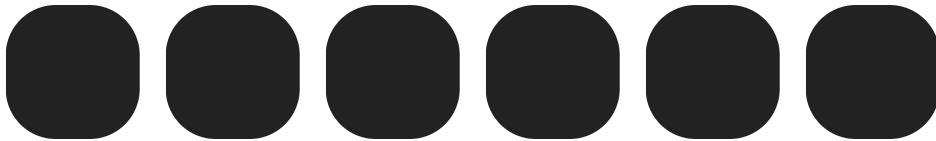
About Hampton by Hilton

As the No. 1 ranked lodging franchise for the last 13 years by Entrepreneur®, [Hampton by Hilton](#) — including Hampton Inn by Hilton and Hampton Inn & Suites by Hilton — serves quality-driven and value-conscious travelers at more than 2,780 properties in 33 countries and territories around the globe. The brand continues to lead its segment by providing guests with high quality, thoughtfully designed accommodations, and amenities, such as modern and spacious rooms, complimentary Wi-Fi, and free hot breakfast. Hampton by Hilton is committed to delivering an exceptionally friendly and authentic service all backed by the 100% Hampton Guarantee™. Experience a positive stay at Hampton by Hilton by booking at hampton.com or through the industry-leading [Hilton Honors app](#). [Hilton Honors](#) members who book directly through preferred Hilton channels have access to instant benefits. Learn more about Hampton by Hilton at newsroom.hilton.com/hampton, and follow the brand on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).

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Daniel Robey Named Dexter Firefighter of the Year 2023

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[Daniel Robey Named Dexter Firefighter of the Year 2023](#)

The Dexter Fire Department held their annual Awards and Christmas Banquet at the Hickory Log on Tuesday, December 19, 2023.

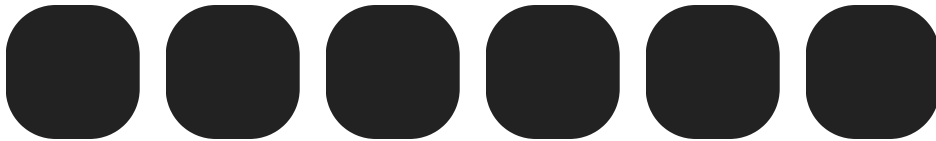
Daniel Robey was named the 2023 Dexter Firefighter of the Year.

Robey was presented with the award by the 2022 recipient Joe Lovins.

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Allen Malloy Receives 10 Year Pin with the Dexter Fire Department

JANUARY 08TH 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

[Allen Malloy Receives 10 Year Pin with the Dexter Fire Department](#)

The Dexter Fire Department held their annual Awards and Christmas Banquet on Tuesday, December 19, 2023 at Hickory Log.

Three firemen received their commemorative star pins for 10 years of service with the fire department.

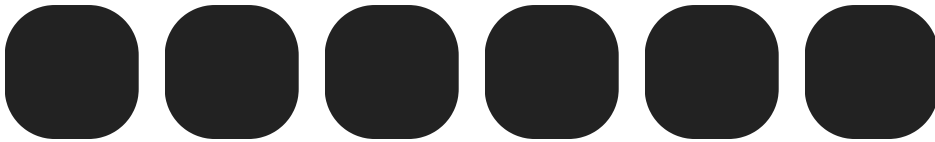
Fire Chief Don Seymore presented Allen Malloy with his 10 year pin.

Not available for a photo was Andrew Juden.

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Forward Together: SoutheastHEALTH Joins Mercy

JANUARY 03RD 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

[Forward Together: SoutheastHEALTH Joins Mercy](#)

SoutheastHEALTH has joined Mercy after receiving all necessary third-party regulatory approvals. The first noticeable change for patients and the community of these organizations moving forward together starts this week with the placement of new Mercy signage at locations across southeast Missouri.

“Being called to serve southeast Missouri is an honor for us,” said Steve Mackin, Mercy president and CEO. “It’s an important opportunity to expand our value-based care approach south along the I-55 corridor to this very key part of the state. Improving patient

access, focusing on preventive and proactive care while keeping patients healthy and out of the hospital, is our focus. It enables us to provide lower-cost and higher quality health care in the communities we serve. We're excited to bring this value-based care approach to a new part of Missouri for Mercy, one that can significantly benefit from it."

The two health care systems signed a definitive agreement in August for SoutheastHEALTH to become a member of the Mercy system strengthening health care delivery across southeast Missouri through increased patient access to high quality care.

"When we talk about moving forward together, we're talking about the monumental opportunity to transform Cape Girardeau into a regional health care hub," said Ken Bateman, Mercy Southeast CEO. "Because Mercy is one of the largest and highest rated health care systems in the country, we will have the ability to ensure our community has access to the very best care available."

Co-workers with SoutheastHEALTH are now Mercy co-workers. Southeast Hospital in Cape Girardeau is now called Mercy Hospital Southeast, **while Southeast Health Center of Stoddard is now Mercy Hospital Stoddard.**

Other former SoutheastHEALTH facilities and services have also been renamed, including SoutheastHEALTH Foundation. The foundation is now named Mercy Health Foundation Southeast. All donations to the foundation will continue to remain local, just as they always have been, to support patients in southeast Missouri.

SoutheastHEALTH College of Nursing & Health Sciences also is part of Mercy and will continue to educate the next generation of nurses and allied health professionals. It is keeping its existing name for the time being. Mercy is excited to have such a great educational resource join the system and help continue meeting the needs for exceptional clinicians in the region and across Missouri.

Public celebrations with Mercy's traditional blessing and a ribbon cutting are set for Jan. 11, 2024. The Cape Girardeau event will start at 10 a.m. at 650 S. Mount Auburn Road. Another blessing and ribbon cutting will be held at 3 p.m. at Mercy Hospital Stoddard.

When joining a new community, Mercy hosts roundtables to learn how to best serve the needs of the community and hear how residents envision the future of health care. Those forums will be held in Cape Girardeau and the surrounding region.

“Every community is a reflection of the people who live and work within it. These roundtables help us learn what residents and co-workers value, providing invaluable feedback for how we can continue the Sisters of Mercy’s legacy of service. It’s a tradition that ensures we keep the community’s needs at the heart of all we do,” Mackin said.

Mercy has already committed to significant investments in southeast Missouri, including switching all Mercy Southeast facilities to Epic, Mercy’s electronic health record system. This state-of-the-art system provides one medical record available to all Mercy health care providers, ensuring care continuity for all patients Mercy serves. It also offers patients online appointment scheduling, access to their records, contact with their physicians, online bill payment and more through the MyMercy patient portal and the MyMercy app (available in the Apple App Store and Google Play.) These features will be available following the transition to Epic scheduled for fall 2024.

“It’s important to the entire region that this transition goes smoothly. We are committed to continuing to provide outstanding care to our patients and to ensuring our co-workers are in the best position possible to make that happen. I am excited to play a part in it all,” Bateman said.

Bateman is delaying his planned retirement until late 2024, continuing as Mercy Southeast CEO to help lead the transition. He has stepped down from his role as president.

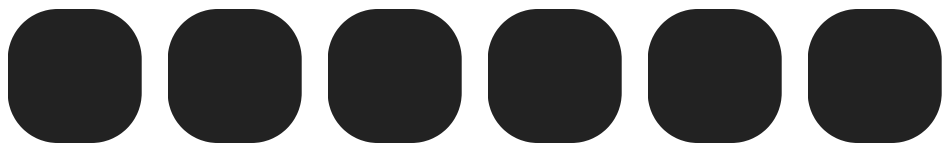
Bateman is working alongside Eric Ammons, Mercy regional president, and Ryan Geib, Mercy Southeast community president. Geib, who has been with Mercy for four years, most recently served as chief operating officer for Mercy Fort Smith community.

Mercy, one of the 20 largest U.S. health systems and named the top large system in the U.S. for excellent patient experience by NRC Health, serves millions annually with nationally recognized quality care and one of the nation’s largest Accountable Care Organizations. Mercy is a highly integrated, multi-state health care system including more than 50 acute care and specialty (heart, children’s, orthopedic and rehab) hospitals, convenient and urgent care locations, imaging centers and pharmacies. Mercy has over 900 physician practice locations and outpatient facilities, more than 4,500 physicians and advanced practitioners and more than 47,000 co-workers serving patients and families across Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri and Oklahoma. Mercy also has clinics, outpatient services and outreach ministries in Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas.

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