

EDITORIAL: EXCITING NEW CHAPTER FOR KALISPELL

January 15, 2017 at 5:00 am |

The final piece of the puzzle has fallen into place, and Kalispell's core-area redevelopment plan is now looking like a blueprint for success.

On Wednesday, the city of Kalispell and the Flathead County Economic Development Authority announced that they had reached a deal with Northwest Drywall to relocate the business to the Glacier Rail Park.

Northwest Drywall and CHS had been the last two businesses utilizing rail service in the BNSF rail corridor through downtown Kalispell. With the help of a \$10 million federal grant and literally thousands of hours of planning, negotiations and brainstorming, the historic rail line can now be removed from Kalispell's core area.

Congratulations and thanks are due to a whole host of people who have worked on the project, including our congressional delegation and representatives of the city and Flathead County Economic Development Authority, along with many others.

It is expected that the redevelopment spurred by this move will transform the area north of Center Street into a neighborhood suitable for residences, boutique retail, parks and bike paths, and major development.

The millions of dollars in new tax revenue that the city and county can expect to see in the near future more than compensates for the immediate investment of \$1.6 million needed to build Northwest Drywall a replacement facility in the rail park.

An added benefit is that the rail park will get a second tenant to join CHS, providing BNSF with assurances that the project will be economically viable and encouraging other businesses that need rail service to relocate to the park as well.

The tentative agreement will be placed before the Kalispell City Council at the Tuesday meeting, along with a resolution formally requesting BNSF to remove the downtown rail line.

We encourage a unanimous vote in favor of both issues as we make ready for this exciting new chapter in Kalispell's history.