

# Aurora breaks ground on RiverEdge Park

BEACON-NEWS STAFF

AURORA — City and community leaders came together Friday to break ground on the city's new RiverEdge Park, intended to be a regional entertainment venue in Aurora's downtown.



Tom Weisner

RiverEdge Park will be along the Fox River between New York Street and Illinois Avenue in downtown

Aurora. The Music Garden, which will be the first phase of construction, will hold up to 9,500 people and serve as a cultural events hub within a natural setting of the Fox River and downtown, city officials said.

"RiverEdge Park will serve as a catalyst for creating new construction jobs today while spurring economic development and private sector employment, which will help strengthen the city's tax base for years to come," Mayor Tom Weisner said.

The city has received \$15 million in grant money for RiverEdge Park, including \$8 million from

the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity River Edge Redevelopment Zone program, \$3 million from the Fox Valley Park District, \$2 million from the Kane County Forest Preserve District and \$2 million from the Dunham Fund. The estimated cost of the first phase of construction is \$12.7 million.

The Music Garden, which is expected to be completed in October 2012, will host the Blues on the Fox and Downtown Alive! concert series and other community events.

Aside from the entertainment venue, other RiverEdge Park

amenities will include a children's play area, fountains, walking paths, a pedestrian bridge and open natural areas.

"The collaboration allowed the city and the Fox Valley Park District to fulfill their desires to protect riverfront property for public use," said Fox Valley Park District Executive Director Nancy McCaul.

The \$8 million DCEO grant also is estimated to create 150 construction jobs and spur new development, which is estimated to create 450 to 600 private-sector and non-retail jobs in Aurora, city officials said.