



The Republican.

Springfield needs to tap potential

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Unlike his predecessor Gov. W. Mitt Romney who viewed Springfield as a "problem child," Gov. Deval L. Patrick views the city as a forgotten child - one with growth potential.

It's a much kinder and, we believe, truer view of the city's prospects.

And recognizing that the city's potential as the economic hub of Western Massachusetts can't be realized without state investment, Patrick yesterday announced grants totaling \$2.1 million and designated two major corridors in Springfield as "Growth Districts."

The announcements, which the governor delivered in person following a walking tour of the city's South End, included a \$2 million grant to improve Armory Street from the Interstate 291 rotary to Federal Street. The Massachusetts Opportunity Relocation and Expansion grant will allow re-milling and paving of the roadway, signal improvements at the intersection of Genesee, Taylor and Worthington Streets, installation of additional catch basins and installation of sidewalks, crosswalks and trees.

In addition, Patrick designated the Main Street and State Street corridors, totaling more than 1,000 acres, as growth districts. Under the designation, the state's Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development will provide resources to ensure that the area will be ready when developers come knocking.

The governor also sent a signal that the state also values the region's human potential, announcing workforce training grants totaling \$164,350, to train 116 workers at Hampden Bank, Thorn Industries and Hayden Corp.

The governor said he wants Springfield to thrive, not just survive. Patrick's commitment to the city has been a welcome change from the past, when the governor's office and the Legislature viewed the western part of the state as a forgotten outpost.

Springfield isn't without its problems - from poverty to crime and blight. But with yesterday's announcements, the city's future can't help but seem a little brighter.

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