

## Bray to receive Bell Public Partner Award

**Laura Bray**, executive director of **Menomonee Valley Partners (MVP) Inc.**, is the winner of the 2007 Robert B. Bell Sr. Best Public Partner Award.

The award is given annually by the Robert B. Bell Sr. Real Estate Chair at Marquette University and Small Business Times to a person in the public sector who is an advocate for commercial real estate development in southeastern Wisconsin.

With more than 13 years of experience in community and economic development, Bray has served as the executive director of MVP since September 2004. She leads a public-private partnership that works to redevelop Milwaukee's primary industrial district in a way that balances strong local economy and family-supporting jobs with environmental health.

Bray guides the work of more than 100 professionals and community representatives who contribute time to projects including infrastructure and real estate development, recreational trails and community art, green building and habitat restoration.

"This award goes annually to a public/quasi-public official that has changed our built environment," said **Mark Eppli**, chair of the Bell program. "Laura Bray certainly is one of those people. Laura's boundless energy, thoughtful discourse, and unique ability to get individuals with wide-ranging objectives and needs to the same table and hammer out an agreement has changed the face of the Menomonee River Valley."

Since 1998, MVP has helped leverage \$148 million in public infrastructure investments that have generated more than \$542 million in private investments (a return of \$3.66 in private investments for every \$1 in public investments).

The investments have created more than 2,100 new jobs, and another 2,000 jobs will be created through new projects that are being planned or are currently under construction in the valley.

Highlights of development in the valley have included: the Potawatomi Bingo Casino and its current expansion; the new Canal Street Commerce Center; the Harley-Davidson Museum that is under construction; the Badger Railing Inc. expansion; the new Caleffi Hydronics headquarters to be built; Taylor Dynamometer Inc.'s new production plant; Palermo Villa Inc.'s new production plant; Proven Direct Inc.'s new plant; the Canal Street extension; and the Hank Aaron State Trail.

Previous winners of the Robert B. Bell Sr. Best Public Partner Award have included: John Antaramian, former mayor Kenosha; Gordon Kacala, executive director of the Racine County Economic Development Corp. (RCEDC); Richard Maslowski, Glendale's city administrator; and West Milwaukee Village President Ronald Hayward and Village Administrator Tim Freitag.

The award is named after the late Robert B. Bell Sr., who was a significant developer of commercial real estate in northern Illinois. His son, Peter Bell, is developing the Pabst Farms project in Oconomowoc.

Bray will receive the award at the [fifth annual Small Business Times Commercial Real Estate & Development Conference, which will take place Thursday, Nov. 8.](#)