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Donation

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be a recreation spot for Downtown dwellers, workers and visitors, officials said.

Houston-based CenterPoint bought Evansville's Vectren Corp. two years ago. Wednesday's announcement coincided with the name change from Vectren to CenterPoint becoming official.

"Creation of green spaces like this are great for communities," said Dave Lesar, CenterPoint Energy CEO.

"Connection is so important, and physically this space will connect our NoCo District and Haynie's Corner, the Ford Center and the Riverfront. Thousands of people are going to pass this park on a daily basis," said Candace Chapman, Downtown Evansville Development Corp. executive director.

"Relationally, public space brings us in proximity to people who may not live like us, look like us ... you're going to be coming into contact with people who don't know, maybe you do know. But those connections are going to grow right here," Chapman said.

The park property at Fourth Street used to have a carpet covered surface and a gazebo, and it had fallen into an unsightly condition.

City government acquired the land some time ago, fenced it off and sought a funding opportunity that meshed with the larger 5th & Main development plan. CenterPoint's \$1 million donation to the Evansville Parks Foundation fit the bill, Mayor Lloyd Winnecke said.

Domo Development, which is working with city government and Downtown Evansville Development Corp. on the 5th & Main project, plans to implore the 18-story tower on the block, tear down another building, and construct new retail and apartment property. Details are still fuzzy on when all of this will happen.

The state in March awarded \$10.5 million in tax credits for the tower's implosion, but more funding is needed to raze the other building on the block.

A principal in Domo Development is Eric Doden, who said last week he is running for governor as a Republican in 2024.



CENTERPOINT ENERGY SQUARE

CenterPoint Energy Square will host Evansville's Farmer's Market, as well as many other activities and events, officials say. DOWNTOWN EVANSVILLE DEVELOPMENT CORP.

"I talked to the developer last week; he is very excited about the progress they are making with building their capital stack," Winnecke said. "We suspect that within a matter of weeks we will know a more specific timeline on when the two buildings behind me will come down, but they will come down, and we hope that will happen as early as this fall."

"I know I've thrown out several timelines, but as you know, things take a little bit of time," Winnecke added. "... We feel very confident these projects behind me will happen."

Downtown resident Alyssia Oshodi, part of CenterPoint Energy's communications team and president of the area's neighborhood association, said she's enjoyed seeing Downtown's evolution over the last several years.

"The new developments, the events, it's just been amazing. And the 5th & Main development with CenterPoint Energy Square is just going to add to the vibrancy," Oshodi said.

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