

Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Geoff Mearns, and I have the good fortune to serve as the president of Ball State University. It's my pleasure to welcome you to today's ceremony.

This is another exciting day for our campus and our community.

We are here to celebrate the official groundbreaking of Site 5 of our Village Revitalization Plan—a site that will become the location of 25 new residential homes built to accommodate a variety of preferences and price points for some soon-to-be lucky families.

These new residential options would not be possible without our University's partnership with Trademark Construction. I know I speak for everyone here when I say how grateful we are for the role Trademark has chosen to play in helping us to advance our vision for The Village. Terry Robinson is here today on behalf of Trademark, and I want to thank him for coming.

In a moment, I will invite Terry up to the podium to say a few words. But before I do that, I'd like to recognize a few more of our guests.

First, I want to recognize members of our Board of Trustees. I am grateful for their ongoing support of both the development and the implementation of this ambitious project.

I am also grateful to our city officials and to our state legislators who continue to support our redevelopment efforts. Like us, they understand and appreciate how the changes we are adding to The Village will enhance quality of life and quality of place for people all across East Central Indiana.

Thank you to the members of our Foundation Board of Directors who are here today, as well as my colleagues from the University leadership team and Business Affairs. One of those colleagues is Chris Palladino, who has played a leadership role in the successful implementation of this project.

I know Chris is as excited as I am—as all of you are—for the work that is about to get underway on this construction site behind me.

As many of you know, the primary reason we included Site 5 in our development plans for The Village is because of the need for more quality housing options in our city.

We anticipate that the townhomes and single-family homes that will be built on this site will be attractive to employees of our University, to employees of Ball Memorial Hospital, and to members of the broader community overall.

But because of challenging market conditions in Muncie, our University is also providing financial support to make this residential development a viable project. We feel confident in our investment because we have such great trust in the quality of homes built by Trademark. We are proud to work with this local homebuilder—a homebuilder that, like us, is invested in the long-term future of our community.

I'd now like to invite Terry Robinson to the podium to say a few words of his own.

Thank you, Terry. I'd now like to ask you and your colleagues from Trademark Construction, along with Chris and our elected officials, to please join me in taking a shovel.

Thank you all for coming out today to celebrate this milestone with us.

Days like today remind me not just of our bright future, but of why I am so very grateful to serve as the President of this University.

Please enjoy some light refreshments prepared by our catering staff before you leave.