

SI NOW HAPPENING

OCTOBER
2023

SI
NOW

LIVE HERE. WORK HERE. DO BUSINESS HERE.



TOP NEWS OF THE MONTH

A WIN-WIN-WIN FOR MARION & SOUTHERN ILLINOIS

On September 12, 2023, history was made in Southern Illinois when the Marion City Council adopted an ordinance approving STAR Bond Project Plan #1. Following a multi-year process and in-depth economic analysis, this was the final hurdle to clear to begin implementing what is expected to be a transformational project for Marion and the entire region. As the project's Master Developer, Rodney Cabaness, and members of Millennium Destination Development have big plans to transform the former Illinois Centre Mall space and surrounding property into an entertainment, dining, and retail destination that is expected to draw thousands from outside Southern Illinois. Established in 2010 by the State's Innovation Development and Economy Act, STAR Bonds were authorized through legislation with the goal of promoting economic growth. Marion's project made history as the first approved in the State of Illinois.

"It's a win-win-win for our community, our region, and our taxing bodies," said Marion Mayor Mike Absher at the public hearing. Learn more at <https://cityofmarionil.gov/star-bonds/>.

“
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MARION MAYOR MIKE ABSHER

”

A WIN FOR ONE IS A WIN FOR ALL OF SOUTHERN ILLINOIS

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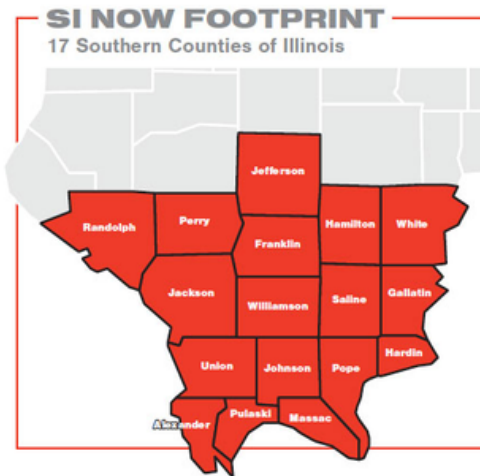
A Note from SI Now's Executive Director

by Deb Barnett



To say that there is a lot of momentum in Southern Illinois would be an understatement. From north to south and river to river, great things are HAPPENING in our region. As we travel throughout the area, there seems to be a renewed sense of optimism, collaboration, and collective spirit. Southern Illinois has always been a place where neighbors help neighbors, and that has extended to neighboring communities and counties helping each other like never before. People throughout the region are authentically voicing the message that *A WIN FOR ONE IS A WIN FOR ALL OF SOUTHERN ILLINOIS...*and they mean it!

Not only are we helping each other, but others are taking notice. In fact, this unified approach to problem solving and getting the job done with both our regional and state partners is what one company recently cited as a deciding factor in their upcoming expansion to Southern Illinois. Whether it's new companies, new residents, or an increase in visitors discovering our region, we have a lot to be proud of as Southern Illinoisans. And we're just getting started!



WhySI?

WANDER COMMUNITY ARTS STUDIO

One of the most important guiding principles I've had since dreaming about opening a small business is that you should "make the place you live into a place where you **want** to live." I moved to Southern Illinois for my husband's job and have been raising my children here for the last 10 years. I thought about what I wished to have in Du Quoin and a fun, vibrant space to be creative was at the top of the list. Combining my small business and art experience with Meg's own artistic talents and educational experience was the perfect way to bring a space like this to our small town. [READ MORE...](#)

Wander is a space that welcomes artists of all ages to take part in learning, playing, and exuberant projects right in the heart of downtown Du Quoin.



Business Growth & Development

With two major announcements in our region, it is clear that the Reimagining Energy and Vehicles (REV) Act is already paying dividends in Southern Illinois. Administered by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), REV offers competitive incentives for companies that manufacture parts to be used in electric vehicles (EV) or renewable energy such as wind and solar. With support from the REV Illinois incentive package, Texas-based Manner Polymers recently chose Mt. Vernon for its new state-of-the-art facility to manufacture PVC compounds for EVs and components for solar panels. Similarly in Perry County, Du Quoin's Prysmian Group announced a \$63.8 million dollar expansion with help from the REV program. This long-standing Southern Illinois cable manufacturer is expected to add 80 new jobs to increase its manufacturing capacity for the energy and telecom cable industries.



Manner Polymers' new PVC compounding plant in Mt. Vernon will have a 15-acre solar farm.



Education & Workforce Development

The Southern Illinois Region is officially on the map as the newest “Leadership Community” added to the Illinois Education and Success Network. Led by SI Now and its Education and Workforce Development Task Force, the Leadership Community’s goals include workforce pipeline development strategies to help support current and future Southern Illinois businesses. A Leadership Community is recognized as having systems in place to drive meaningful and equitable postsecondary degree and credential attainment. The Southern Illinois Region’s objectives, as established by the task force consisting of local educators and business leaders, prioritize high school career exploration activities, employer engagement opportunities, and career development experiences to create stronger career connections and pathways. Learn more at <https://ilsuccessnetwork.org/leadership-communities/southern-illinois/>.

Marketing the Region

For the first time, Southern Illinois will be represented at the largest automotive trade show in the country! As a collaborative regional effort, SI Now executive director Deb Barnett, PhD will travel to the SEMA Trade Show in Las Vegas in late October alongside representatives from the City of Carbondale, Southern Illinois Airport (SIA), Jackson Growth Alliance and SIU’s School of Automotive, considered the premier automotive technology program in the nation. With expectations of more than 2,400 companies and 160,000 attendees from the U.S. and internationally, the SEMA (Specialty Equipment Marketing Association) Show presents a tremendous opportunity to showcase SIU’s nationally recognized automotive program and the SIA’s growing TechPark. The TechPark is an economic engine, and with strategically located shovel-ready development sites and a workforce pipeline for automotive and aviation businesses, it’s an opportunity that is not replicated anywhere else in the country.

“The upcoming SEMA Show is an opportunity ripe with potential to showcase not only the rich pipeline of qualified workforce graduating out of SIU automotive programs but also for automotive industry businesses to expand, develop or relocate to Southern Illinois,” said Alyssa Connell manager of communication at SIA.



AROUND THE REGION

OCTOBER EVENTS

- 7 ANNA COLORFEST - ANNA
- 7 FLUORSPAR FESTIVAL - ROSICLARE
- 7 SASQUATCH FESTIVAL - HARRISBURG
- 7 BIG MUDDY MONSTER BREW FEST - MURPHYSBORO
- 6-8 LITTLE GRASSY GET DOWN - MAKANDA
- 6-7 JOHNSON COUNTY FALL FESTIVAL - VIENNA
- 12-14 CORN DAYS - CARMi
- 14 PLANES, TRAINS, & AUTOMOBILES CAR SHOW - MT. VERNON
- 15-17 AMERICAN THRESHERMAN FALL FESTIVAL - PINCKNEYVILLE
- 21-23 FT. MASSAC ENCAMPMENT - METROPOLIS
- 20-22 FAT TIRE FEST - OZARK
- 20-22 CHESTER FALL FESTIVAL - CHESTER
- 21-22 VULTURE FEST - MAKANDA
- 21-22 FALL COLORS AT THE CROSS - ALTO PASS
- 26-28 WILLOW SPRINGS FALL UP FEST - TAMMS
- 28 PINCKNEYVILLE MARDI GRAS - PINCKNEYVILLE



Corn Days

OCTOBER 2023

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Fat Tire Fest



Ft. Massac Encampment

FIELD TRIP FRIDAYS - ENTER TO WIN!

During a recent *Field Trip Friday*, we visited a popular visitor destination with a lodging experience like no other in Southern Illinois. These treehouse cabins can only be found in one location! Do you know where this one is located? Enter the correct answer on our contest entry form and you'll be added to a drawing to win this month's prize made right here in Southern Illinois!

Look for the full story on these treehouse cabins and the people who own them in next month's SI Now Happening!



A Southern Illinois Success Initiative



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