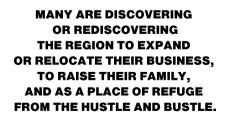
# SI NOW HAPPENING

LIVE HERE. WORK HERE. DO BUSINESS HERE.



### **TOP NEWS OF THE MONTH**

## **The Inaugural NOW! Magazine Has Arrived**



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The highly anticipated <u>NOW! magazine</u> is here. SI Now, in partnership with Arthur Agency and Jackson Street Publishing, set out to create a first-of-its-kind publication to expand the region's reach by telling the collective story of Southern Illinois. And we have a great story to tell!

**NOVEMBER** 

2023

Our region has a lot to be proud of. From the Shawnee National Forest to the many lakes that dot the landscape, Southern Illinois offers beautiful natural resources not found in other parts of the state. Its central location and 'R4 Advantage' provide unique transportation and logistics assets with four port districts, three interstate highways, four Class I railroads, and 10 general aviation airports plus commercial direct jet service to Chicago.

NOW! magazine's 10,000 print copies will be distributed throughout the region's business community, high-traffic areas, and visitor attractions. Additional reach includes national trade shows, site selector and commercial realtor mailings, and more. NOW! is also available anytime, anywhere through a digital version at southernillinoisnow.org. <u>Check it out!</u>



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



As of this newsletter's publication, we are *pedal to the metal* in showcasing Southern Illinois at the annual SEMA Show – the premier automotive trade show in the world! Organized by the Specialty Equipment Market Association (SEMA), the show provides opportunity to engage with companies representing the \$44.6 billion automotive aftermarket industry.

I am pleased to join an all-star team of Southern Illinois partners including the Southern Illinois Airport (SIA), SIU Carbondale's nationally recognized automotive technology program, Jackson Growth Alliance, and the City of Carbondale. Together, our team is sharing the tremendous assets and opportunities throughout Southern Illinois and specifically at <u>SIA's TechPark</u>. The 3rd busiest airport in Illinois, SIA's TechPark is home to SIU Carbondale's Glenn Poshard Transportation Education Center, 20 companies on the field, and the St. Nicholas Brewing Company's restaurant and on-site brewing! If you haven't been to the airport lately, it's a hidden gem and a MUST SEE!

From 2019-2022, a \$25 million expansion resulted in three new hangars, a new terminal building, and industrial park expansion. With 265 acres available for additional growth and a portion set aside for non-aviation development, the SEMA Show provides an ideal business attraction opportunity to continue building on the momentum and economic growth in Southern Illinois. *Check out highlights on SI Now's social media pages.* 



# WhySI?

#### **Timber Ridge Cabins/Garden of the Gods Outpost**

October paints Southern Illinois with its most breathtaking hues, as the Shawnee National Forest transforms from a sea of summer green to a canvas of vibrant reds, yellows, and oranges. For Andrew and Jessica Hoffman and their family, October 4, 2023, holds a special significance—a year since their daring move from Juneau, Alaska, to embark on a new chapter in Southern Illinois.

The Hoffmans, accompanied by Andrew's sister and brother-in-law, Anna and Daniel Schetky, brought their combined six children along on a journey that started with a dream and a desire to relocate to the heart of the country. **READ MORE...** 



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# **SI NOW IN FOCUS**

#### **Business Growth & Development**

In Summer 2023, SI Now was accepted as one of the Site Selector Guild's newest partners! This partnership provides increased access to and engagement with top site selector consultants who provide professional project location services to companies contemplating expansion, relocation, or consolidation of business opportunities. Business attraction is a key part of SI Now's mission with a focus on bringing high wage opportunities to Southern Illinois.

In early October, SI Now provided Guild members with an introduction to the region along with the 2023-24 Illinois Investment Guide featuring recent projects in Southern Illinois and throughout the state. This month, members will receive the NOW! Magazine followed by some of our best Southern Illinois made products in January 2024. If your business would like to participate by featuring an item in our SI Made boxes, simply reach out to Deb or Nick at 618-353-0100 or info@southernillinoisnow.org.



#### **Education & Workforce Development**



Construction has begun on Rend Lake College's (RLC) new Southern Illinois Manufacturing Academy (SIMA) in Mt. Vernon. Once completed, the SIMA will benefit students in programs such as culinary arts, business, industrial electronics, welding, and advanced manufacturing. **"This exciting project will feature high-demand industry skills training for well-paying manufacturing jobs. It will serve new and incumbent workers through hands-on application to validate learned skills"**, said RLC's Vice President of Instruction & Student Affairs, Lori Ragland. **"The training will be a direct correlation to the feedback received from employers in the manufacturing sector."** The SIMA is funded through a \$5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA) under the American Rescue Plan Economic Adjustment Assistance program. An additional \$1.2 million in matching local funds will support the programming necessary to address current skill gaps and the retirement-induced staffing crisis.

#### **Marketing the Region**

Tourism is a major economic driver in Southern Illinois and the **region's tourism industry experienced double-digit growth** in 2022. The latest numbers from Tourism Economics showed visitors spent a whopping \$856 million in 2022 in the SI Now 17-county area. That's an increase of \$94 million, or 12%, compared to 2021. **The tourism industry employs more than 5000 people in the area and contributed \$35.1 million in direct local taxes in 2022.** 

Southernmost Illinois Tourism Bureau, in partnership with Enjoy Illinois, just released the <u>Shawnee Forest Country magazine</u>. Available in print and digital copies, the magazine gives visitors a glimpse into what Southern Illinois has to offer, while also promoting the many communities and small businesses that depend on the tourism industry. It's a great guide for residents too!



# Tourism Dollars Spent in SINow Region 2022:







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# AROUND THE REGION

#### **NOVEMBER EVENTS**

- 3 Route 51 Farmhouse Market Du Quoin
- 4 Southern Illinois Chili Cook-Off Marion
- 4-5 Fort de Chartres Winter Rendezvous Prairie du Rocher
- 4-5 Heritage Festival Harrisburg
- 11-12 Tunnel Hill 100 Mile Run Tunnel Hill
- **18** Pope County Deer Festival Golconda
- **23** Happy Thanksgiving
- 24 Black Friday SHOP LOCAL!
- **25** Johnston City Hometown Christmas Johnston City
- 26 Very Merry Holiday Parade Marion



Fort de Chartres Winter Rendezvous

Pope County

Deer Festival

## **FIELD TRIP FRIDAYS - ENTER TO WIN!**

Congratulations to Union County's Carol Hoffman who correctly identified October's *Field Trip Friday* location as Timber Ridge Outpost and Cabins. Carol wins a Garden of the Gods mug and t-shirt from the Outpost! Learn more about Timber Ridge in this month's WHY SI feature (see page 2).

Can you guess where we visited in October? This location has a brick and masonry pump house that is the only one of its kind remaining on the Ohio River and is an exact replica of the U.S. Corps of Engineers logo. Enter the correct answer on our contest entry form and you'll be added to the drawing for this month's prize made right here in Southern Illinois!



A Southern Illinois Success Initiative





618-353-0100