

DECEMBER  
2023

# SI NOW HAPPENING



LIVE HERE. WORK HERE. DO BUSINESS HERE.



## TOP NEWS OF THE MONTH

### SI NOW ANNUAL MEETING CELEBRATES PROGRESS

“

**THERE ARE A LOT OF RESOURCES FOR BUSINESSES LIKE OURS IN THIS AREA. ONE OF THE BENEFITS OF BEING LOCATED IN SOUTHERN ILLINOIS IS OUR WORKFORCE. THEY'RE VERY MOTIVATED, HARDWORKING, HONEST.**

GREGORY SPREHE, COM-PAC INTERNATIONAL

”



On Wednesday, November 15th, SI Now hosted its Board of Trustees' Annual Meeting where more than 50 business and community leaders gathered to celebrate the organization's progress. In November 2022, SI Now was founded as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization for the purpose of promoting and facilitating positive economic impact for the 17 southern counties of Southern Illinois. Annual Meeting attendees learned of progress in each of SI Now's priority areas: business growth and development, education and workforce development, and marketing the region. Business attraction continues to be a main priority of SI Now, fielding 64 inquiries for businesses looking to expand or relocate in just the last six months. Workforce is a key asset for companies looking at Southern Illinois, and SI Now has prioritized working with the region's secondary and post-secondary institutions to ensure a strong talent pipeline for the future. Through marketing strategies including the inaugural NOW! magazine, SI Now is telling the region's collective story both internally and externally and building regional pride. If you missed the Annual Meeting, don't worry! We've compiled the KEY TAKEAWAYS [here!](#)

**SI NOW** A WIN FOR ONE IS A WIN FOR ALL OF SOUTHERN ILLINOIS !

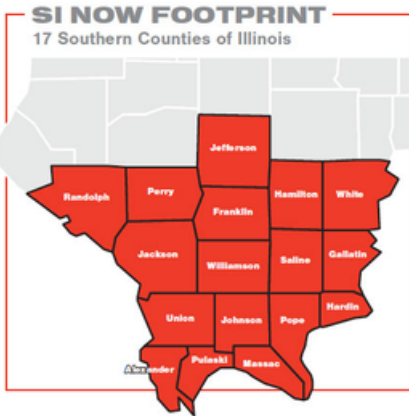
# A Note from SI Now's Executive Director

by Deb Barnett



The holiday season offers an opportunity to reflect, give thanks, and look to the future, and this year is no exception. At SI Now's November 15th Annual Meeting, we took time to **reflect on the past year** as SI Now became an organization, strategy and measurable metrics were established, and progress was made in our three priority focus areas. We took time to **give thanks** to business leaders who saw the vision for a regional, unified approach to economic development in Southern Illinois, who believe in our region, and have contributed to its future by supporting SI Now as a foundational investor.

As we **look to the future**, the momentum is clear! We are experiencing something special in our region - a renewed sense of optimism, a recognition of our collective assets, a collaborative, unified spirit - and others are taking notice. SI Now was envisioned by, founded by, and is supported by the Southern Illinois business community. We invite you to be part of this work by investing in YOUR region's future. Our investor tiers are designed to provide a place for any size business to be part of advancing our region now and for future generations. As you consider year-end, tax-deductible giving, we invite you to be part of the progress. Check out our [SI Now Info Packet](#) for details.



## WhySI?

### HoneyBeez Snowballz

While affordable, Southern Illinois offers a wealth of natural beauty, a strong sense of community, and access to various educational and recreational opportunities. Together, these factors create an environment that enriches our personal lives and also provides a nurturing backdrop for our family to thrive. In essence, Southern Illinois has become more than just a location on a map, it's where we've built our dreams, family, and business endeavors.

[READ MORE...](#)



HoneyBeez Snowballz Owner  
Syhemia Gray-Cruz

## Business Growth & Development

Can you feel it? There is so much momentum taking place in Southern Illinois. Big announcements are happening all across the region from north to south, east to west, and everywhere in between. Here's a small sampling of both public and private investments just in the past few months. And trust us, this does not even begin to scratch the surface on the growth we're seeing in the 17-county region. ➡

Have a success to share in your community or county? We want to hear about it! Visit [southernillinoisnow.org](https://southernillinoisnow.org) and click on *Connect with Us!* It's that easy!

OASIS OUTDOORS, LLC and MILLENIUM DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT, LLC  
FIRST ILLINOIS STAR BOND DISTRICT  
SEPT. 2023

WALKER'S BLUFF CASINO AND RESORT  
AUGUST 2023: \$147M

PRYSMIAN GROUP  
JULY 2023: \$64M

MANNER POLYMERS  
JUNE 2023: \$54M – 60 jobs

AISIN MARION LOGISTICS CENTER (Agracel)  
JUNE 2023: \$37.2M – 50 jobs

SALINE RIVER FARMS  
\$80M

KASKASKIA REGIONAL PORT DISTRICT  
SEPT 2023: \$24M – 50 Jobs  
JUNE 2023: \$17M

SHAWNEETOWN PORT DISTRICT  
NOV. 2023: \$10.1M (2022: \$14.1M)

ALEXANDER-CAIRO PORT DISTRICT  
AUGUST 2023: \$150K

VETERANS AIRPORT – DIRECT TO CHICAGO  
AUGUST 2023: \$21M

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS MULTIMODAL STATION  
JUNE 2023: \$21M

CITY OF RED BUD  
52-Acre Industrial Park Expansion  
\$4M Property Acquisition

For information on business opportunities in Southern Illinois, visit <https://southernillinoisnow.org/do-business-here/>

## Education & Workforce Development

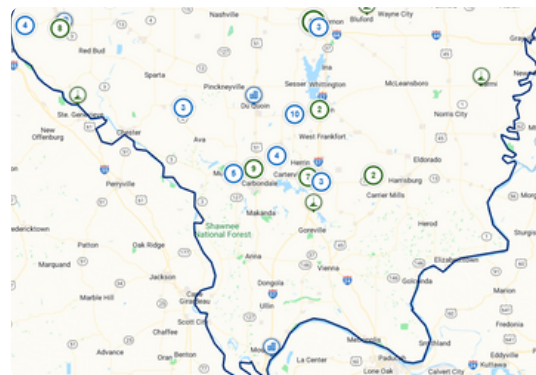
Congratulations to Vienna High School, the only Illinois recipient of a \$1.4 million award from the U.S. Department of Labor to provide career training and supportive services to help workers in Southern Illinois secure good jobs in stable, high-demand careers. In collaboration with Laborers' Local 773, high schools throughout the region including Vienna, Cairo, Carbondale, Goreville, Herrin, Marion, and Johnston City will participate with the goal of doubling the capacity of the cooperative high school program in Southern Illinois. The "triple credit" Laborers' High School Construction Craft Preparation Program allows high school juniors and seniors to attend daily training at the Laborers' Training Facility in Marion and complete their apprenticeship training and requirements while in high school. A partnership with Shawnee Community College allows for the students to accumulate college credit towards a degree in construction management while earning high school credit at the same time. "Each year more students apply to be in the high school program than we have seats for. This expansion will allow us to add more schools and students ensuring that we can get Southern Illinoisans connected with good jobs," said Jerry Womick, business manager for Laborers' Local 773.



## Marketing the Region

Southern Illinois has unique assets that we refer to as the R4 Advantage. Our central location and connectivity through the region's rivers, roads, rail, and runways create a competitive advantage for companies seeking to reshore, expand, or centralize operations. SI Now is engaged in a comprehensive strategy to market the region to site selectors that assist companies in expansion and relocation planning, but **we need your help to expand our site inventory.**

Know of a building or site suitable for industrial development?  
Let us know at [southernillinoisnow.org](https://southernillinoisnow.org) - *Connect With Us!*



# AROUND THE REGION

## DECEMBER EVENTS

- 1** Christmas in Carterville Parade - Carterville
- 1-3** Christmas on the River - Chester
- 2** McLeansboro Christmas Parade - McLeansboro
- 2** Christmas Light Fight Parade - Mt. Vernon
- 2** Lights Fantastic Parade - Carbondale
- 2** Metropolis Parade - Metropolis
- 9** Ridgway's Village Christmas - Ridgway
- 10** Santa's Sunday Funday (adults only) - Red Bud
- 10** Spirit of Christmas Parade - Benton
- 16** Lights Parade - Harrisburg
- 26** Candy Cane Lane - West Frankfort
- 30** Holiday Lights Fair - Du Quoin
- 31** The Lights at Cedarhurst - Mt. Vernon
- JAN** Christmas Lights of Hope - Carmi



Christmas on the River

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The Lights at Cedarhurst



Lights Fantastic Parade

## FIELD TRIP FRIDAYS - ENTER TO WIN!

Congratulations to Dori Bigler of Anna who correctly identified last month's *Field Trip Friday* location as Timber Wicket Dam in Golconda! She wins the *Gift of Flavor*, a holiday gift pack from local business owners James and Yemisi Anderson of [The Jay Effect](#).



Here's YOUR chance to WIN! During a recent *Field Trip Friday*, we visited one of the region's African American Museums that proudly displays this mural on its exterior.

Can you guess where we visited? 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. Good luck!

**A Southern Illinois Success Initiative**



**ENTER HERE**