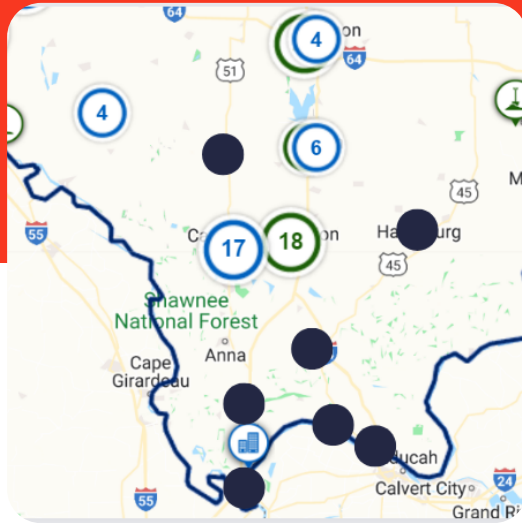


SI NOW HAPPENING

LIVE HERE. WORK HERE. DO BUSINESS HERE.



TOP NEWS OF THE MONTH

SI READY: SI Top 20 Project

Southern Illinois Now (SI Now), with assistance from the Greater Egypt Regional Planning and Development Commission, is the proud recipient of a **Delta Regional Authority (DRA) Strategic Planning grant**. The “SI Ready: SI Top 20 Project” will identify and assess the region’s top 20 development sites to increase industrial attraction and business development.

Site selection for companies looking to relocate or expand is a complex decision-making process. Factors such as proximity to raw materials, transportation infrastructure, labor availability, energy resources, and market access are all taken into account. Over the last six months, SI Now has been aggressively working to identify potential development sites in the region. From existing large warehouse spaces to vacant land, understanding what is available is the first step in the site selection process. Once a site is identified, the next step is recognizing what infrastructure is readily available and also learning more about what it may take to get certain utilities or transportation assets to the location.

SI Now’s 17-county region offers numerous development opportunities and assets. This DRA-funded project is an important step in targeting industries and creating high-wage jobs for Southern Illinoisans.

“

The Delta Regional Authority’s support will accelerate our region’s competitiveness with the goal of creating jobs, improving our communities, and creating a bright future for Southern Illinoisans.

DEB BARNETT
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, SI NOW

”



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

by Dr. Deb Barnett



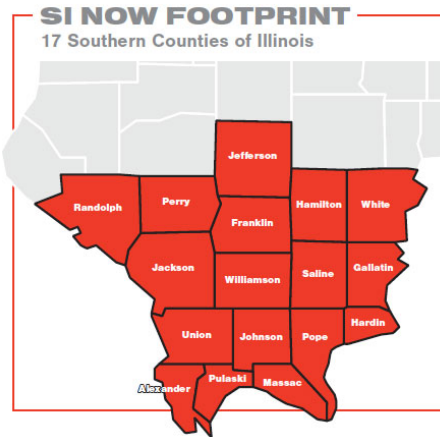
We continue to see great momentum throughout the region and are excited to share in and celebrate the state's success with its #2 ranking in the country for corporate expansions and relocations for the second straight year!

SI Now is building on that momentum with the support of the Delta Regional Authority and its Strategic Planning grant award. This nearly \$130,000 investment into Southern Illinois will accelerate our efforts to successfully compete for business development projects and job creation.

Not only are we growing in the region and throughout the state, but we are excited to announce that our SI Now team is also growing. It is my pleasure to introduce and welcome Tricia Edwards to the team! Tricia has extensive administrative experience, loves Southern Illinois, and has already been a tremendous asset to advancing our team's work. We are thrilled to have her on board.



Tricia Edwards (center) and family
Insert: Tricia and Kevin Edwards



WhySI?

Doc's Lakeside Cabins: Robert & Tanya Loveless

Tanya Loveless grew up in Union County, located in the heart of Southern Illinois. Her family has been in the hospitality industry for generations, from restaurants, rentals to retail. They would have never thought about offering a romantic getaway cabin as a business but living in the Shawnee National Forest in Southern Illinois, it just made sense. Southern Illinois has a lot to offer to residents and visitors alike. Guests can experience the Shawnee National Forest, Shawnee Hills Wine Trail, downtown shopping, and dining. The business organically pairs nicely with the surrounding area. Doc's Lakeside Cabin prides itself as providing a clean, well decorated, comfortable cabin nestled in the Shawnee National Forest. Owners Robert and Tanya Loveless aim to provide overnight accommodations great for honeymoons, anniversaries or guests just seeking to reconnect. [READ MORE...](#)



Business Growth & Development

Illinois has firmly established itself as a leader for corporate expansions and relocations, being ranked **#2 in the nation for the second consecutive year**. With its strategic location, robust infrastructure, and skilled workforce, Illinois continues to attract businesses seeking growth and opportunity. Moreover, the state's commitment to fostering economic development is underscored by its ranking as **#2 in projects per capita**. Several large projects in Southern Illinois have garnered global attention, including the Manner Polymers project in Mt. Vernon which has received a Community Impact Award from Business Facilities Magazine and is being featured in an article in the Japan Times. The Land of Lincoln has a lot to offer and companies are taking notice.

ILLINOIS IS
#2 IN THE U.S.
FOR CORPORATE EXPANSIONS & RELOCATIONS
FOR SECOND CONSECUTIVE YEAR (Site Selection Magazine)
#2 in the nation in projects per capita
552 businesses expanded or relocated in Illinois in 2023

SI NOW

Education & Workforce Development



Marion High School students toured Aisin Manufacturing in Marion

Marion High School students recently participated in a unique educational experience by visiting Aisin Manufacturing as part of the Local Works Program. The visit offered students insights into the manufacturing industry, allowing them to witness firsthand the processes involved in producing automotive components. The visit included guided tours of the facility, interactive sessions with Aisin employees, and an enhanced understanding of the processes on the factory floor through virtual reality headsets. **By engaging with Aisin Manufacturing, Marion High School students not only expanded their knowledge but also gained a glimpse into the diverse career opportunities within Southern Illinois.**

Man-Tra-Con Corporation is spearheading the Local Works Program in its Southern Illinois service area. The program was developed from supplemental grant funding designed to connect young adults with local employers in the area and raise awareness about potential job and/or apprenticeship opportunities available after graduation. Through the Local Works Program, Du Quoin High School visited Prysmian Group and Frankfort Community High School recently visited Continental Tire.

Marketing the Region

The NOW! Magazine cover photo has been selected. Follow SI Now on social media for the big reveal! Until then, the NOW! Magazine is designed to tell our region's collective story by sharing the inspiring ways in which individuals, businesses, and communities make Southern Illinois a great place to live, work, and do business. If you missed the last edition, check it out online at <https://southernillinoisnow.org/now-magazine/>.

NOW
COMING
MAY
2024

AROUND THE REGION

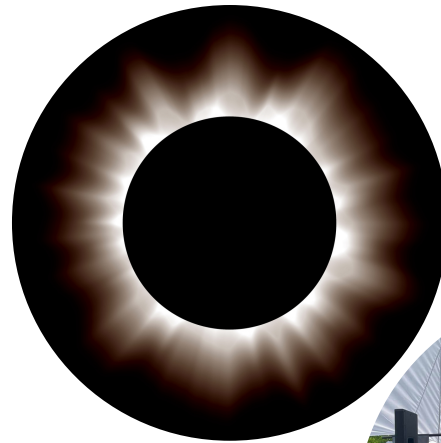
APRIL EVENTS

- 6** Carmi Music Festival - Carmi
- 8** Total Solar Eclipse
- 27** Family Eco Festival - Alto Pass
- 27** Oak Street Art Fair - Murphysboro
- 27** Southern Illinois Irish Festival - Carbondale

Check out the Southern Illinois Crossroads Eclipse Festival hosted by SIU Carbondale in partnership with NASA at eclipse.siu.edu.

LOOKING AHEAD

- MAY 1-4** Rend Lake Water Festival - Benton
- MAY 2-4** Sugar Creek Family Jam - Vienna
- MAY 3** CarbondALE Brew Fest - Carbondale
- MAY 3-4** Vintage Market in the Ville - Pinckneyville
- MAY 9-12** Old King Coal Festival - West Frankfort



Southern Illinois Irish Festival



Old King Coal Festival

FIELD TRIP FRIDAYS



MCLEANSBORO, IL

What does San Diego's legendary Hotel del Coronado and the Cloud State Bank building in McLeansboro have in common? They were both designed by the Reid Brothers of Evansville, Indiana. Between 1880 and 1882 the bank building was constructed. The Hotel del Coronado was designed by the Reid Brothers just five years later in 1887, using some of the same details used in McLeansboro. During a recent Field Trip Friday, we were left in awe at the beautiful architecture on the city's downtown square.

Did you know that McLeansboro is also home to one of the newest disc golf courses in Illinois? Drawing teams from throughout the country, the [Fox Prairie Disc Golf Course](#) provides a new outdoor activity for the community and is drawing hundreds of visitors to the city each year. Congratulations, McLeansboro!