

SI NOW HAPPENING

AUGUST
2024



LIVE HERE. WORK HERE. DO BUSINESS HERE.



TOP NEWS OF THE MONTH

2nd Annual Economic Development Day

“This is how it should be done. Very impressed with the event yesterday and more impressed with the support you just provided. We are much more successful as brokers when we have a strong economic development partner such as you. Keep up the great work!”

**STEVE ZUBER
BARBER MURPHY**

Southern Illinois Now's 2nd Annual Economic Development Day was a resounding success, drawing over 100 business and community leaders representing ALL 17 counties in the region SI Now serves. The event served as a vibrant platform for networking, learning, and collaboration, highlighting Southern Illinois' recent economic achievements and ongoing workforce initiatives. The atmosphere in the room was one of optimism and enthusiasm, as participants shared their experiences and ideas on how to sustain and accelerate the positive momentum in Southern Illinois. The day was capped with keynote speaker, Ross Patten, co-author of Economic Development is STILL Not for Amateurs.

While Southern Illinois is represented as one region, those of us who live here know that there are differences from east to west and north to south. It's truly an amazing time in Southern Illinois where communities from all over, some of which had local rivalries, are coming together for the common good of the entire region. At this year's Economic Development Day, the excitement displayed by the panels and the attendees underscored a shared vision for a prosperous future for Southern Illinois. The success of this year's event is one piece of the larger puzzle to lay a strong foundation for continued progress and economic vitality in the years to come.



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

by Dr. Deb Barnett



We're still receiving great feedback from SI Now's 2nd Annual Economic Development Day held on July 18th at the Diamond Club at Marion's Mtn. Dew Park. Attendees heard about exciting development projects, successful workforce strategies, and federal, state, and local resources available to help move projects forward. Attendees left equipped with talking points about *Why Illinois* and *Why Southern Illinois* that fostered an increased sense of pride about our region and state. They also left with an autographed copy of *Economic Development is STILL Not for Amateurs*, a must read for community leaders on how to achieve economic success.

Given limited space, the invitee list included SI Now's Board, business leaders' advisory council and task force members along with city and county leaders. We are already developing plans to expand next year's reach so that anyone who has an interest in advancing the Southern Illinois region will have an opportunity to attend. Until then, rest assured that Southern Illinois is ON THE GROW!

ADVANCING SOUTHERN ILLINOIS

PRIORITY ONE: BUSINESS GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Prysmian's Expansion Adds Jobs as Du Quoin Plant Looks to the Future

Just off of U.S. Highway 51 on the south side of Du Quoin, sits a cable manufacturing plant that's quietly been helping power some of the largest cities and states in the United States for decades. Prysmian, the world's largest cable manufacturer, took over the Du Quoin plant from General Cable in 2018. Now, the company is making a major investment in Du Quoin, to the tune of \$63.8 million to expand production, add employees, and ensure the plant's future in Southern Illinois.

"The ongoing expansion project is the largest economic investment in Du Quoin in decades," said Du Quoin mayor Josh Downs. "It represents an unparalleled commitment to the city by Prysmian and we couldn't be more thankful. We know that the good paying jobs at the facility are just what our city, and all of Perry County, needs to thrive in the long term. We are grateful to partner with Prysmian to continue to move their facility, and Du Quoin, forward for years to come."

In Du Quoin, Prysmian manufactures insulated medium voltage transmission cable, with some of the biggest customers being large cities such as Chicago, New York, and Detroit. [READ MORE..](#)



Regional Development

by Nick Holdinghausen



There is so much going on right now in Southern Illinois. Traveling across the region, it seems there's a lot of dirt moving for new projects in almost every corner of the area. From Prysmian's expansion featured above, to Manner Polymers putting the walls up on their new manufacturing facility in Mt. Vernon. If you're in Marion, you've probably noticed the restaurants going up along Route 13, but there's also construction on the ball fields to the north by The Pavilion. In Vienna, Samron is building a new asphalt plant. Near Red Bud, The Material Works has completed one expansion and is beginning another. In Hardin County, San Damiano Lodging & Retreat Center has new owners and new life. Sometimes,

when you live in an area, it's easy to take for granted all that is going on around you. Southern Illinois is receiving national attention for the region's ongoing developments and there is more to come in the future. For those of us that call this region home, it falls on our shoulders to change the narrative, internally and externally. When we hear someone knocking Southern Illinois or even the State of Illinois, it's our duty to correct them. Sure, we have our challenges, but this is a great place to live, work, and do business.

Marketing the Region



SI NOW DOWNTOWNS

From line-dancing on Marion's Tower Square Plaza to enjoying new murals along Murphysboro's Main Street, there is a palpable energy of pride and new possibilities across the downtowns of Southern Illinois. Previously sleepy downtowns are now reinvigorated, boasting modern and urbanized coffee shops, restaurants, boutiques, attractions, and gathering spots. These metropolitan-like offerings are providing larger city perks to our region's residents while still preserving the small-town charm of Southern Illinois that we know and love.

Check out all of this and more in Volume 2 of the NOW! Magazine available at a location near you or online at <https://southernillinoisnow.org/now-magazine/>

Education and Workforce Development



L-R: Task Force Chairs Josh Stafford (Vienna Superintendent) and Kathy Lively, Kyle Westbrook (Ed Systems), Leslie Bradley (Vienna HS), Ethyn Bradley (Vienna HS student), Edith Njuguna (Illinois Education and Career Success Network), Deb Barnett (SI Now), John Giffin (Vienna HS Principal), Phillip Hosfeldt (Vienna HS Dean of System Programs)

SI Now's Education and Workforce Development task force chairs recently met at Vienna High School with representatives from the Illinois Education and Career Success Network to review progress toward the Southern Illinois Region's Leadership Community goals. These goals were developed by the task force as a pathway to boost the region's talent pipeline while strengthening industry career connections in alignment with Illinois' PaCE Framework set for implementation in 2025. Visit <https://ilsuccessnetwork.org/leadership-communities/southern-illinois/> to learn more.

A Bright Future with D & D Electric



Imagine if the sun sent you a monthly bill for all the sunlight you use. Thankfully, it does not, and that's where solar energy comes in! Harnessing the power of the sun is like having an endless supply of free pizza delivered to your door – minus the calories and with a LOT more environmental benefits.

Thomas Edison once said “We are like tenant farmers chopping down the fence around our house for fuel when we should be using nature’s inexhaustible sources of energy – sun, wind, and tide.... I’d put my money on the sun and solar energy. What a source of power! I hope we don’t have to wait until oil and coal run out before we tackle that.”

Solar energy is rapidly gaining traction in Illinois, thanks to the state's commitment to renewable energy and the numerous incentives available for homeowners and businesses. [READ MORE...](#)

COST OF LIVING INDEX

Living in Southern Illinois offers advantages due to its lower cost of living. 15% lower than the U.S. average and also much lower than many large cities, residents can enjoy a higher quality of life with their income stretching further. For businesses, the lower cost of living in Southern Illinois provides a competitive edge. Lower operating costs, such as reduced office rent and utility expenses, contribute to a healthier bottom line. This economic advantage supports local entrepreneurship and encourages business growth, fostering a thriving economic environment that benefits both residents and enterprises alike.

COST OF LIVING COMPARISON



#SINowYouKnow