

FEBRUARY
2025

SI NOW HAPPENING



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BUSINESS GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT: SOUTHERN ILLINOIS CELEBRATES **BLACK HISTORY MONTH**

BLACK CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF SOUTHERN ILLINOIS PRESENTS

4TH ANNUAL TOGETHER WE RISE

BLACK BUSINESS EXPO

FEBRUARY 2025
10 AM - 3 PM

CARBONDALE CIVIC CENTER

\$25 - per table for members
\$30 - per table for non-members
<https://forms.gle/yieE9rdFJsW4HZhw7>

TO SIGN UP AND SECURE YOUR SPACE
SCAN QR CODE OR GO TO OUR WEBSITE

For more information: www.blackchamberofsi.com
bccshopbk618@gmail.com

For nearly 100 years, February has marked the celebration of the rich history, culture, and achievements of African Americans and other people of color worldwide.

Launched in 1926, Carter G. Woodson, the son of former slaves and the second African American to earn a Ph.D. from Harvard University, chose February to coincide with the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass, aiming to encourage the teaching of Black history across communities and public schools on a national scale.

Southern Illinois provides numerous opportunities to celebrate including the **4th Annual Black Business Expo on February 8, 2025, at the Carbondale Civic Center**. To attend this or other events sponsored by The Black Chamber of Commerce of Southern Illinois, visit <https://www.blackchamberofsi.com/>.

For additional regional events, see page 5 of this newsletter issue.

Source: <https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/moments/black-history-month-2025>



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

by Dr. Deb Barnett



Innovation and entrepreneurship is alive and well in Southern Illinois!

From Southern Illinois University (SIU) Carbondale's 25+ years of business development support through its Illinois Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and 55,000 square foot mixed-use incubator space, to the region's newest business incubator and coworking spaces at Marion's EThOs at the Citadel, **current and future businesses have numerous resources to help them grow and succeed.**

Additional SBDCs at Shawnee Community College and Southeastern Illinois College, combined with SIU's APEX Accelerator which provides government contracting assistance for companies throughout Southern Illinois, ensures that **the entire region is rich in access and support.** And that's not all!

Our region's local Chambers of Commerce provide valuable services to support businesses with networking, advocacy, and growth opportunities. In this month's issue, we celebrate the region's innovative, entrepreneurial spirit including how we foster our youngest entrepreneurs at local high schools. AND we've made it easy to reach out with our business services resource directory below.

ADVANCING SOUTHERN ILLINOIS: INNOVATION & ENTREPRENEURSHIP



Southern Illinois Company Awarded Innovation Funding

Southern Illinois based company, TERRY VENTURES, LLC, has accomplished what few achieve in the start-up world. Selected by the National Science Foundation in 2023 for a highly competitive Phase I STTR award and an Illinois Innovation Voucher in 2024, the company received non-dilutive funding to further its patented, innovative device designed to reduce falls among those facing mobility challenges.

Founder Blake Terry noted, **"The assistance from SIU's SBDC and APEX Accelerator was crucial to setting up a robust business structure and securing R&D support."** As a result, TERRY VENTURES is now exploring government contracts and preparing to launch its innovative GEORGE Feedback System in 2025. This device aims to enhance mobility and reduce fall risks among the elderly, showcasing the company's commitment to improving quality of life through cutting-edge assistive technologies.



TERRY VENTURES
ENGINEERING BETTER HEALTH



Resource Directory

-  [SBDC at SIU Carbondale](#)
-  [SBDC at Southeastern Illinois College](#)
-  [SBDC at Shawnee Community College](#)
-  [APEX Accelerator at SIU Carbondale](#)



Regional Development

by Nick Holdinghausen



Southern Illinois' blue-collar, humble mentality is a big asset for the region. It's provided resilience as the region's economy has shifted over the last few decades. From coal mining and all of the careers that surrounded that industry for decades, to healthcare, tourism, and advanced manufacturing in the 21st century. **That humble spirit can sometimes mean that we miss opportunities to highlight our area's successes.**

Some of the successes are easy to spot such as when you drive into Marion and see all of the dirt moving in the Star Bond District, or in the newly revitalized Tower Square. Or the cranes and trucks along Highway 51 just across the Du Quoin State Fairground as Prysmian undergoes its big expansion project. Those are just a few examples of the visible ongoing progress in Southern Illinois.

There is an extensive list of people who are working behind the scenes to make our region a better place to live, work, and do business. Communities are working to improve or expand their industrial parks in hopes they can lure a new business or expand the ones that are already thriving in the community. Volunteer organizations are working to **revitalize and promote vibrant downtowns**. Southern Illinois' port districts are actively looking to expand their presence. Tourism organizations are growing, highlighting the region's natural beauty and all of the amenities the area has to offer.

Providing support, without duplicating, is what Southern Illinois Now is all about and I'm so lucky to be a part of this wonderful organization that works to move the region forward.

Marketing the Region

Showcase YOUR Business and Support Southern Illinois

The NOW! magazine has gained significant popularity and effectiveness in highlighting the region's assets to both Southern Illinois residents and external audiences like site selectors and corporate executives. Consequently, we frequently receive inquiries about business advertising options, and we've streamlined the process to make it more accessible than ever.

Launching in 2025, SI Now is introducing a new partner program for businesses and organizations eager to help advance the Southern Illinois region.

This comprehensive SI Now Partner Program offers various benefit levels, including:

- Sponsor mention and logo at SI Now Partner events
- Linked company logo on SI Now's website
- Logo on the NOW! magazine's Partner page (linked in the digital version)
- Social media recognition as an SI Now Partner
- Reserved ad space in NOW! magazine

The Spring 2025 deadline is approaching.

Contact Deb at director@southernillinoisnow.org for details.



Education and Workforce Development

Entrepreneurship Creates Opportunities



Innovation and entrepreneurship is thriving throughout the state of Illinois, and Southern Illinois is no exception. Coming in April 2025, the upcoming NOW! magazine will highlight the region's rich entrepreneurial programs and resources, including those for some of our youngest entrepreneurs at area high schools. Until then, learn more about the region's youth opportunities at the [Midland Institute for Entrepreneurship](#) and [Franklin County EDGE](#),

Image Source: <https://www.jacksonceo.org/about-us>

THE JAY EFFECT



The JAY Effect is a family-owned business that specializes in low-salt seasoning blends free from artificial ingredients. Their journey began after months of prayer and seeking God's guidance, culminating in a virtual grand opening on Facebook and Instagram Live in February 2021. **The inspiration for the business came when Yemisi's husband, James, needed a consistent, low-salt seasoning blend as a healthier option.** Yemisi suggested they create their own seasonings to meet their needs. Although James was initially hesitant, he embraced the idea after receiving positive feedback from customers. What started as a solution for their catering business and their own home has evolved into a company with customer in nearly all 50 states and beyond.

They love cooking for others, and their spice blends allow them to share that passion even when they're not in the kitchen. **READ MORE** at <https://southernillinoisnow.org/why-si/>

FEBRUARY IS BLACK HISTORY MONTH

BLACK CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF SOUTHERN ILLINOIS
2025 BLACK BUSINESS SEMINAR
Kick off Black Expo weekend. Join us at our business workshop designed to assist you with some tools to establish and sustain a thriving business or non profit.

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 7, 2025
Dunn - Richmond Development Center
Illinois Small Business Development Center
1740 Innovation Dr, Carbondale, IL
Doors open at 8:00 am
Morning - Session 1 8:15 am - 12:45 pm
Afternoon - Session 2 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm

ADVANCE REGISTRATION REQUIRED
<https://forms.office.com/r/T8HCUSWcu@>

Key Discussions & Insights:
Social Media and Marketing, Website Design, Funding, Financial Literacy, Customer Service, and more.

More information www.blackchamberofsi.com
bccsishopbik618@gmail.com

Southern Illinois has a rich history of Black entrepreneurship and dedicated resources to help minority-owned businesses thrive!

Established in 2021, the Southern Illinois Black Chamber of Commerce provides resources and networking opportunities to help Black entrepreneurs grow and succeed. In addition, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) has launched Economic Empowerment Centers throughout the state, including one at SIU Carbondale.

By recognizing and supporting these businesses, we honor the legacy of Black entrepreneurship and contribute to the economic growth and development of our region.

#SINowYouKnow

2025 BLACK HISTORY MONTH AFRICAN AMERICAN AND LABOR



Friday, 31st Jan

BSFC Meet & Greet
5-7:30 pm
Student Center Bowling Alley

Saturday, 1st Feb

Labor of Love Art Exhibit - Alumna DeSande R
February & March
Sharp Museum - SIUC

Monday, 3rd Feb

Kickoff - History of Black History
5-7 pm
Guyon Auditorium - Morris Library

Tuesday, 4th Feb

Resume Writing Workshop
Noon-1:30 pm
Morris Library Rm 139

Wednesday, 5th Feb

Etiquette Dinner
4:30-7 pm
Old Main Lounge - 2nd Flr Student Center

Tuesday, 6th Feb

Lunch & Learn - Cultural Compression
11:30 am-12 pm
Student Services Bldg Rm 150/160

Light of Truth Screening - Documentary

5:30-7:30 pm
Guyon Auditorium - Morris Library

Tuesday, 7th Feb

Beauty In Black - Laboring For The Right To Own Our Beauty
2-4:30 pm
Student Services Bldg Rm 150/160

Tuesday, 7th Feb

African American Museum of Soul Food Dinner - \$15/order
4-6 pm carry out
Elks Lodge - 220 W Jackson, Carbondale, IL
7-8 pm dine in

Saturday, 8th Feb

Black Business Expo 2025 - Black Chamber of Commerce
10 am
Civic Center - 200 S. IL Ave, Carbondale, IL

Monday, 10th Feb

Career Development - Teaching Students Best Practices For Researching The Workforce
Noon-1:30 pm
Morris Library Rm 139

Tuesday, 11th Feb

Video: Countering The Conspiracy To Destroy Black Boys
4-6 pm
Guyon Auditorium

Tuesday, 13th Feb

Financial Literacy
5:30-7:30 pm
Student Services Bldg Rm 150/160

Friday, 14th Feb

Day of Remembrance: Black Lives Matter
9 am-1 pm
Student Services Bldg Rm 170

Monday, 17th Feb

Legacy: African Americans Making History Through Lineage
Noon-1 pm EST
Virtual

Tuesday, 18th Feb

Blacks In Medicine
2-4 pm
Student Services Bldg Rm 150/160

Wednesday, 19th Feb

Mental Health Access, Treatment, and Success Rates Amongst The Black Community
4-6 pm
Student Services Bldg Rm 150/160

Sunday, 23rd Feb

Variety Show
4:30-7 pm
Ballroom D

Monday, 24th Feb

Being Black and Queer
3-7 pm
Guyon Auditorium - Morris Library

Tuesday, 25th Feb

Planned Giving Seminar
Noon-1:30 pm Virtual

Wednesday, 26th Feb

Media Day - Fireside Discussing DEI
Noon-1:30 pm
Guyon Auditorium - Morris Library

Friday, 28th Feb

Perseverance: Black Women In Leadership
11 am-12:30 pm
Morris Library Guyon Auditorium

For disability accommodations call 618/453-5738



SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
**VICE CHANCELLOR FOR ANTI-RACISM,
DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION**



SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
BLACK RESOURCE CENTER

