



2016–2021 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)



Southeastern Illinois Regional Planning and Development Commission

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SUMMARY AND INTRODUCTION

The 2016 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the Southeastern Illinois Regional Planning and Development Commission's District serves as the guide for community and economic development in the five counties comprising the Economic Development District. The service area includes the counties of Gallatin, Hamilton, Hardin, Pope and Saline. There are 24 incorporated municipalities within the region.

The document gives an overview of the general description of the area, natural resources, environmental issues, political geography, population and the labor force, economy, infrastructure and services, planning and economic development activities and evaluation of the existing and potential assets and liabilities of the area.

The document is used to guide the local units of government and to provide the governmental entities with a tool for long-range planning activities. The document also outlines the District's goals, objectives, development strategies and implementation plan.

SIRP&DC DISTRICT MAP



DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

The Southeastern Illinois Regional Planning and Development Commission serves the following five counties: Gallatin, Hamilton, Hardin, Pope and Saline. The office is located at 230 West Poplar Street in Harrisburg, Illinois

The Southeastern Illinois Regional Planning and Development Commission was established in accordance with the Illinois Compiled Statutes, as amended, and was given authority under these enabling statutes by specific resolutions passed by each of the governing boards of the participating counties. The current by-laws stand as amended by the Commission on October 27, 2010.

Governing Body

The Board of Commissioners of the Southeastern Illinois Regional Planning and Development Commission is the policy making body of the Agency. The Board recognizes that the Economic Development Administration is the cognizant agency of the Commission. The Commission appoints an Executive Director who has general supervision over the administration of its business affairs, subject to the direction of the Board of Commissioners. The Executive Director is charged with the management of the projects of the Commission. The compensation of the Executive Director is determined by the Board of Commissioners. The Commission employs additional personnel as it deems necessary to exercise its powers, duties and functions as prescribed by the statutes of the State of Illinois, applicable thereto, the resolutions of the governing bodies of the counties of Gallatin, Hamilton, Hardin, Pope and Saline. The selection and compensation of such personnel is determined by the Commission, subject to the laws of the State of Illinois. Under the direction of the Board, staff prepares an annual budget including Economic Development Administration planning grant assistance.

All members of the Board play an active role in the decision making processes. The commission's membership consists of five (5) representatives from each of the five counties, of which one is an ex-officio member and four are appointed members. The Chairman of the County Board or Board of County Commissioners of each county, or a written, elected designee of his/her choice, is an ex-officio member of the Commission, and is entitled to vote on all matters. The Chairman of each County Board or Board of County Commissioners appoints, subject to the confirmation of the County Board of his/her County, four members who are residents of the County they are chosen to represent. One of the four members is a County Board member or other elected official representing a unit of general local government within the County; two shall hold no elected office and are representative of a major citizen group in the County (e.g. persons representing a minority or low income group, or having special familiarity with the local issues such as housing, education, economic development, transportation, health, recreation/tourism or environmental problems); and one is a Village President or Mayor, or municipal board member selected by a Chairman of the county Board or Board of County Commissioners.

SIRP&DC STAFF

Alene Carr - Executive Director
Sarah Farmer - Economic Development Coordinator
Abbey Reeves - Regional Planner

THE COMMISSION'S GENERAL ACTIVITIES

Mission Statement:

Regional Planning and Development Commission is to provide professional quality service to the local governments and residents of our five-county region (Gallatin, Hamilton, Hardin, Pope and Saline counties) and to promote and foster growth, economic diversification and prosperity within the region by securing and administering grants for public works, housing rehabilitation, economic development projects and operation of the Revolving Loan Fund. SIRP&DC will also research, develop and implement strategies that will fulfill the needs of sustainable development.

The mission statement of Southeastern Illinois Regional Planning and Development Commission reflects the development issues of the region that are being addressed by staff. Economic and community development are key issues to achieving sustainable development. The SIRP&DC was formed in 1968 to serve the counties of Gallatin, Hamilton, Hardin, Pope and Saline. The Economic Development Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce designated the Southeastern Illinois Regional Planning and Development Commission as an Economic Development District in 1969. SIRP&DC's primary concern is the preparation and implementation of the District's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The District's CEDS is an analysis of the Region's strengths and weaknesses and lists the goals and objectives of the District. The CEDS Committee is composed of SIRP&DC's Board of Commissioners and private stakeholders in the community. This committee provides local input into the development, maintenance and adoption of the CEDS.

Since its inception, SIRP&DC has provided numerous services to the Region. The Commission serves as a center for district statistics and project information. As a part of this activity, SIRP&DC was designated as the regional clearinghouse for Gallatin, Hamilton, Hardin, Pope and Saline Counties. Local government units such as municipalities and county governments use the Commission as a liaison with the State and Federal agencies concerned with comprehensive planning and development in the District. SIRP&DC also serves as the Region's data census bank.

The priority goal of the Commission is to create new jobs and to stimulate private sector investment by making available long-term, low down-payment, reasonable priced financing for capital investment projects. In this capacity, SIRP&DC enhances the public/private partnership linkages in the five-county area and addresses the needs of the Region such as job creation, retention and business expansion.

The Commission provides technical advice, grant writing, and administrative services for several programs at the state level such as the Community Development Assistance Program (CDAP) from the Department of Commerce, Small Business Administration, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Illinois Department of Transportation Economic Development Program (EDP) and Truck Access Route Program (TARP). The Commission also provides technical assistance, grant writing, and administrative services for federal programs such as the USDA - Forest Service, USDA - Rural Development, Department of Justice, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Delta Regional Authority (DRA) and EDA Public Works projects. Eligible projects include: public facilities such as water, sewer, housing rehabilitation, workforce development, business retention and expansion, and community and economic development projects.

Revolving Loan Fund: The Commission's alternative financing system provides low cost financing for growth of the District's business community. A vital portion of our lending system is the Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) Program. The RLF Program was implemented in 1984 and has proven to be a very effective method of providing area businesses with the funds for expansion or start-up and job creation/retention. The fund initially consisted of \$500,000 from the Economic Development Administration and \$166,666 from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs. In June of 1990, the Farmers Home Administration granted SIRP&DC a \$100,000 Industrial Development Grant to recapitalize the RLF Program. SIRP&DC has received another Industrial Development Grant in the amount of \$119,500 from the Farmers Home Administration in 1992. In December of 1998, Rural Development approved an \$80,000 Rural Business Enterprise Grant for the recapitalization of the RLF. The Economic Development Administration approved a grant in the amount of \$170,415 to recapitalize the Revolving Loan Fund program. In addition, the Commission has received a \$30,000 grant from the State of Illinois and has provided \$43,035 to recapitalize the fund. The RLF has generated more than \$1.2 million in program income. Furthermore, over \$5.0 million has been lent out to 110 business start-ups and expansions while leveraging over \$23 million in private and public funds. What is more important, approximately 847 jobs have been saved or created through the use of the RLF. Of this aggressive portfolio, only \$709,650 has been written off for fifteen (15) lost accounts since 1984. That corresponds to an approximated default rate of 14%. These funds are available for business owner or investors locating in or located in the Southeastern District. Once a loan is made and repayment begins, the money is placed back into the fund so that it may accumulate and be loaned out again. The initial round of loans has been made and recaptured monies are accumulating. The Loan Review Committee, which is composed of five (5) members drawn from the Board of Commissioners and the Executive Director of the Commission (6 total), recommends action on each loan to the entire body of Commissioners. The RLF is the main incentive of our alternative financing system and it offers long-term financing at lower interest rates to businesses as an enticement to expand or locate in the southeastern District.

Administrative Services Program for Revolving Loan Funds: The Commission also assists the larger communities in the District to develop business location proposals and formal economic development programs and incentives. SIRP&DC has implemented Administrative Services Agreements with four (4) County municipalities and two (2) City municipalities which have recaptured Community Development Assistance Program Economic Development grant funds. This program known as a Revolving Loan Fund Program, consists of preparing applications, making formal recommendations, closing and servicing these loans for the governing entity. The SIRP&DC provides technical assistance to the counties and municipalities of the five-county region for their Revolving Loan funds. With technical assistance from SIRP&DC, the Administrative Services Program assists localities to successfully operate local Revolving Loan Fund Programs to stimulate the economy by providing low-interest business loans for job creation and retention activities. The program is established in the counties of Gallatin, Hamilton, Hardin, and Saline and in the Cities of Harrisburg and Eldorado. The Administrative Services Program allows District professional staff to participate directly in local economic development programs and financing efforts for economic development opportunities. We currently have 15 active loans in the portfolio.

Economic and Community Development: SIRP&DC publishes a quarterly newsletter for the Region. The newsletter is being produced in-house and is being distributed throughout the five-county region and to various state and federal agencies. This newsletter informs the community stakeholder on activities and projects in the 5-county community. It also helps to inform the communities of upcoming meetings and funding opportunities that are available to members of our District.

Micro lending Program: One of the most accessible lending programs offered by the Commission is a micro lending program. The Commission set up a Micro Loan Fund Program with \$30,000 from a Rural Business Enterprise Grant from Rural Development and a \$10,000 line item grant from the State of Illinois. This program allows for a client to borrow up to \$10,000 for equipment or working capital. There is no job creation or retention required and there are lower closing fees, which makes this loan program attractive for start-up businesses, home-based or cottage industries and entrepreneurs in the area. The initial funds from this program were loaned out and the Commission has received \$43,700 in Rural Business Enterprise Grant funds to recapitalize the fund. SIRP&DC has closed twelve (12) micro loan loans since inception. Seven (7) of these loans have been able to pay off, thus allowing more funds to be available.

Business & Community Development Fund: We have received a \$750,000 Intermediary Relending Program loan from Rural Development to set up our Business & Community Development Fund. The funds are to be used for eligible community development and business financing projects. These funds are available for new or expanding businesses, and in some instances, the retention of existing businesses. In addition, these funds are offered to units of local government, special taxing districts and public non-profit organizations for community development projects. The Commission has closed seven (7) business loans under the Business & Community Development Fund.

Enterprise Zone: The SIRP&DC has provided technical assistance to the Saline County Industrial Development Company (SCIDCo) in the creation, operation and expansion of the Saline County Enterprise Zone Program and acts as the Zone Administrator. Activities include assistance with marketing, expanding the boundaries of the Enterprise Zone and adding new taxing districts. An application to extend the termination date of the Enterprise Zone program was submitted and approved by DCEO until the year 2021.

Public Works: An EDA application for the City of Harrisburg for construction of a new waste water treatment for \$1,200,000 was approved in 2001. Construction on the \$3.57 sewage treatment plant began in 2003 and was completed November 2004. IEPA loan funds were secured for \$2.37 Million to leverage this project. The project included construction of a pumping station and force-main between the existing plant and lagoons, a discharge pumping station and conversion of the lagoons into sewage holding lagoons. Construction is complete.

An EDA application for the County of Hamilton for the upgrade of a township road to serve White Oaks Resources for \$1.2 million was applied for in 2015. Although the application was not awarded, SIRP&DC worked closely with the county, city and state officials to put the application together. Additional funds from IDOT TARP have been received and the project has been scaled work within the funds available to the county.

Miscellaneous Applications: The SIRP&DC provides technical assistance in the preparation of grant applications and administration for the following: Illinois Department of Natural Resources Boat Access, IDNR Open Spaces & Land Acquisition, Illinois Department of Natural Resources Bike Path, IDNR C2000 Watershed programs, Illinois State Wildlife Grants, USDA Forest Service Economic Recovery Program, Department of Justice LLEBG, Department of Justice COPS, Illinois Department of Transportation Truck Access Route Program and Economic Development Program, FEMA Fire Fighters Program, Homeland Security Assistance to Firefighters, Secretary of State Illinois State Library, IDOT Enhancement Program, Delta Regional Authority and Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity Program applications. The staff is assisting various municipalities and counties in the administration of legislative assisted grants.

REGIONAL ECONOMIC PROFILE

Background Information: The Southeastern Illinois Regional Planning and Development Commission are composed of the following counties: Gallatin, Hamilton, Hardin, Pope and Saline. This region has a severely depressed economy and a high incidence of underemployment and unemployment.

The rural and isolated nature of this region is the cause for several factors to the region's condition. This area has an extremely high concentration of elderly with increasing and unmet needs, poor and inadequate health care and inadequate childcare. The most isolated portions of the region are as much as 45 minutes from medical care of any kind. The region is severely lacking in hospital, nursing home and assisted living facilities. Daycare facilities are nearly as scarce as the health services. In addition, all of the childcare facilities within the region have standard hours; therefore, working, single parent mothers (this group makes up a large percentage of the population) cannot access employment opportunities that require shift work or odd hours. In addition to suffering long-term economic distress, the region has lost several major employers in the last several years. These losses have had a devastating effect on these counties in the loss of tax base and income for residents. Also, the loss of tax base has affected the ability of the local governments to provide even basic services to residents. The school districts are losing children and are struggling to survive and provide basic education. The loss of tax base has affected the infrastructure necessary for economic development. Deteriorating infrastructure is a continuing problem for not only the economic development of the region, but also the public health and safety of residents. Water and wastewater systems are aging and deteriorating. The local governments and water districts do not have the financial means to maintain and improve their systems.

General Description of Area: The Southeastern Illinois District consists of five predominately rural counties in the extreme southeastern portion of Illinois. The five counties (Gallatin, Hamilton, Hardin, Pope and Saline) consist of approximately 1,711 square miles and encompass 24 incorporated municipalities with a total population of 47,749. The Ohio River forms the eastern and southern boundaries of the Region and acts as the dividing line between Illinois and the states of Indiana and Kentucky; three counties (Gallatin, Hardin and Pope) lie on the western banks of the Ohio River.

The Southeastern Illinois Region is primarily composed of three physiographic regions: Mount Vernon Hill County, Shawnee Hills Section and Coastal Plain Province. The Mount Vernon Hill County occupies the northern half of the five-county region and extends to the southernmost limit of glaciation in the state. It is characterized by broad expanses of level to moderately undulating configurations of modest relief dissected by drainage ways with slight to moderately steep slopes. It passes sandstone, shale, coal, and limestone and clay formations, stemming from the Pennsylvania Period. The Shawnee Hills Section constitutes the bulk of the southern half of the Region. It intersects Saline and Gallatin Counties and includes virtually all of the area to the south with the exception of the southernmost tip of Pope County. This Region is largely consumed by the Shawnee National Forest. Its rolling hills are under laid by Pennsylvania and Mississippi limestone, sandstone, shale, clay and small deposits of Devonian and Silurian dolomite and limestone. The Coastal Plain Province occupies the southernmost tip of Pope County. Unconsolidated material covers older Paleozoic rock and produces a generally low, flat terrain which is drained by only a few scattered streams.

The five-county region features the humid continental climate typical of Southern Illinois, with its generally considerable variations in temperature. Precipitation is uniformly distributed throughout the year with slight maximums during March and April. Average annual precipitation varies from 38-46 inches, with precipitation tending to be greater to the South. Changes in the weather normally results from low pressure fronts moving east. Summers are typically warm and occasionally prolonged, with temperatures generally exceeding 90 degrees Fahrenheit. Winters are usually mild with the coldest weather occurring in December or January. An advantage to the Region's southern location are long growing seasons. The growing season ranges from 185-190 days in northwest Hamilton County to 205-210 days in extreme southern Pope County. The length of the growing season is conducive to agriculture diversification of crops.

Natural Resources: Natural resources include coal, natural gas, oil, limestone, sand, zinc, lead, fluorspar and timber. The demand for the region's high sulfur coal, which is primarily found in Hamilton, Saline and Gallatin Counties, declined in the 1990's due to the Clean Air Act of 1990. Currently due to efforts by the State of Illinois to diversify dependency upon foreign energy sources, the coal industry is steadily declining and more coal mines are being shuttered. Natural gas and oil exploration, which has primarily occurred in Gallatin, Hamilton and Saline Counties, has also declined in the area. Fluorspar deposits are mainly concentrated in Hardin County, although some fluorspar comes from Pope County. These counties had historically been the principal domestic suppliers of the mineral for the United States market. All of the local fluorspar mines have closed except for a few individual mining operations. The local fluorspar industry suffered major cutbacks due to stiff competition from Mexico and other foreign markets.

Forestry products have considerable economic importance for the Region. The Shawnee National Forest attracts a large number of tourists each year. In addition, the wealth of timber reserves in the region represents an important opportunity for local revenue. The Shawnee National Forest amended plan called for the harvest of approximately 3.4 million board feet of hardwood, 6 million board feet of pine and 600,000 board feet of pin oak. Reduced national forest harvest levels and wilderness designations have combined to lower the available resource base. There are 15 recognizable commercial forest types in the Shawnee National Forest. About 65% of the forest is oak-hickory and 15% is pine. The job sectors most affected by national forest management are timber, recreation, minerals and government employment. The unique natural features and historical points of interest existing in the Region have potential for supporting a tourism and recreation industry. The majority of these features lie within the Shawnee National Forest. Some of these features are as follows: Garden of the Gods Recreation Area and Wilderness Area, Williams Hill, Rim Rock Recreation Trail, Pounds Hollow Recreation Area, Cave-in-Rock Ferry, Rose Hotel and Golconda Marina. The Shawnee National Forest currently encompasses 144,228 acres of the total acreage of Gallatin, Hardin, Pope and Saline Counties. Of that total 144,228 acres, 17,365 acres are designated as wilderness area. There are four wilderness areas within the five-county region. The wilderness areas are as follows: 1) Burden Falls covers 3,565 acres in Pope County and 108 acres in Saline County; 2) Garden of Gods covers 289 acres in Gallatin County, 1,065 acres in Hardin County, 549 acres in Pope County and 1,608 acres in Saline County; 3) Bay Creek covers 2,866 acres in Pope County; and 4) Lusk Creek covers 6,838 acres in Pope County.

Listed below is the breakdown of the most recently documented Shawnee National Forest land in the Southeastern District.

COUNTY	ACRES IN COUNTY	ACRES WITHIN PROCLAMATION BOUNDARY*	TOTAL # OF SNF ACRES IN COUNTY	% SHAWNEE NATIONAL FOREST
GALLATIN	200,601	54,242	11,296	6.00%
HAMILTON	276,480	0	0	0.00%
HARDIN	115,200	98,820	27,501	24.00%
POPE	261,120	218,617	91,372	35.00%
SALINE	241,920	31,020	14,059	6.00%
DISTRICT	1,095,321	402,699	144,228	13.00%

The agriculture base continues to decline due to farmland consolidation and new technology. The statistics listed below are taken from the 2012 U.S. Census of Agriculture:

	# OF FARMS	AVERAGE FARM SIZE In ACRES
GALLATIN	203	917
HAMILTON	695	321
HARDIN	150	221
POPE	349	223
SALINE	483	290

These facts and amounts from 2012 are based on averages. In 2002, there were a total of 1,847 farms in the five-county region and in 2012 there is now 1,880 therefore, the total number of farms has increased by 33 in the 10 year period.

Environmental Issues: Timber production is an important benefit from the National Forests. The timber supplied from the Shawnee National Forest helps meet the public demand for wood products. There is disagreement about whether timber should be harvested from the Shawnee National Forest. Some believe that the Shawnee National Forest should make a contribution to meeting the nation's timber needs, while other believe that harvesting should not be allowed and argue over what methods should be utilized. Concerns include the effects of timber harvest on wildlife, water quality, visual quality and recreation. They also expect the Shawnee National Forest to show a profit when timber is sold. Other people are concerned that a reduced harvest from the Shawnee National Forest will hurt the local economy and the livelihood of sawmills in the Region. The Shawnee National Forest 1992 Amended Plan examined the following areas for environmental consequences: clear cutting or shelter wood timber harvest, selective timber harvest, open land management for wildlife, prescribed burning, filter-strip management, management within Forest Interior Management Units, management of candidate Wild and Scenic Rivers, Equestrian riding and riding of ATVs and OHMs, road and trails management, federal minerals management and management of candidate Wilderness Study areas. Effects were predicted for several physical, biological, economic and social resources. Of those who support timber harvest, some agree that methods such as selection harvest are needed in order to be environmentally sensitive and socially responsive. Some people support clear cutting

and want as much of the Forest as possible to be available for timber production in order to support the local timber industry or to provide the best wildlife habitat for game species. Beneath the Shawnee National Forest is a wealth of mineral resources owned by the federal government, corporations and private citizens. These minerals can provide important resources for our nation's industry and income to the federal and county governments. Mineral production usually requires some changes in the forest. Roads, mine shafts, drill rigs, tanks, pipelines, pumps or open pits may be needed to develop the mineral resource. There is concern about the effects of oil and gas leasing on the forest environment. Some people do not think that oil and gas development is an appropriate use. Others urge additional restrictions for special management areas and developed recreational sites. Still others want as much of the federal mineral estate as possible open to energy and minerals exploration and are concerned that unnecessary restrictions will compromise the ability to discover the resources vital to our nation's needs.

Political Geography: The Region is composed of five counties and 24 municipalities. Three of the five counties (Gallatin, Hamilton and Saline) operate under the township form of government and two counties (Hardin and Pope) have precincts; therefore, each county has a minimum of three levels of government: township/precinct, municipal and county. In addition, there is one river conservancy district (Saline Valley Conservancy District) that encompasses portions of the five counties.

Population and Labor Force: Since the 1960's the decline of employment opportunities in the District's main employment base (coal industry and agricultural sector) account for the majority of this population loss. There was a slight up-tick in the 1980's due largely to coal and fluorspar industry hiring. However in the past 40 years a much faster population decline has occurred. The age distribution of the population that is over 65 plays into the fact that the labor force has fewer individuals. Since the elderly are not in the labor force, this places a stronger portion of the growth potential onto the younger population. The district's historical population patterns are listed below:

	1960 Population	1970 Population	1980 Population	1990 Population	2000 Population	2010 Population	2014 Population
Gallatin	7,638	7,418	7,590	6,909	6,445	5,589	5,291
Hamilton	10,010	8,665	9,172	8,499	8,621	8,457	8,296
Hardin	5,879	4,914	5,383	5,189	4,800	4,470	4,129
Pope	4,061	3,857	4,404	4,373	4,413	4,320	4,276
Saline	26,227	25,721	28,448	26,551	26,733	24,913	24,612
Total	53,815	50,575	54,997	51,521	51,012	47,749	46,604

COUNTY	2014 POPULATION % AGE 65 AND OLDER
GALLATIN	21.9%
HAMILTON	19.9%
HARDIN	22.3%
POPE	20.8%
SALINE	18.8%
ILLINOIS	13.9%
U.S.	14.8%

The following is a breakdown of the population change by City in the SIRP&DC Region:

City Name	2010 Census	2014 Census
Gallatin County		
Village of Equality	595	643
Village of Junction	129	88
Village of New Haven	433	406
Village of Old Shawneetown	193	199
Village of Omaha	266	249
Village of Ridgway	869	741
City of Shawneetown	1,239	1,224
Hamilton County		
Village of Belle Prairie City	54	63
Village of Broughton	194	286
Village of Dahlgren	525	389
Village of Macedonia	63	52
City of McLeansboro	2,883	2,753
Hardin County		
Village of Cave-in-Rock	318	304
Village of Elizabethtown	299	255
City of Rosiclare	1,160	1,011
Pope County		
Village of Eddyville	101	85
City of Golconda	668	822
Saline County		
Village of Carrier Mills	1,653	1,813
City of Eldorado	4,122	4,139
Village of Galatia	933	808
City of Harrisburg	9,017	8,989
Village of Muddy	68	37
Village of Raleigh	350	272
Village of Stonefort	297	348

The Southeastern Illinois Regional Planning and Development Commission's counties have made significant gains in per capita income between 1996 to 2014. However, the District still falls below the state and national statistics. Recent Per Capita Income levels were as follows:

COUNTY	1996 PER CAPITA INCOME	1999 PER CAPITA INCOME	2005 PER CAPITA INCOME	2013 PER CAPITA INCOME	2014 PER CAPITA INCOME
GALLATIN	\$17,836	\$15,575	\$21,769	\$23,862	\$42,743
HAMILTON	\$17,984	\$16,262	\$24,656	\$21,960	\$40,904
HARDIN	\$15,214	\$15,984	\$22,000	\$22,366	\$33,435
POPE	\$13,588	\$16,440	\$22,455	\$20,448	\$29,850
SALINE	\$17,611	\$15,590	\$25,383	\$21,596	\$36,588
ILLINOIS	\$26,393	\$23,104	\$36,264	\$29,666	\$47,643
UNITED STATES			\$25,036	\$28,155	\$28,889

The continuation of the aging population trend and the population loss of the District, indicate that District per capita income levels have not increased as compared to the national and state figures. The District also has an extremely high number of individuals and families living below the poverty level. The following information reflects the percentage below the poverty level with children under 18:

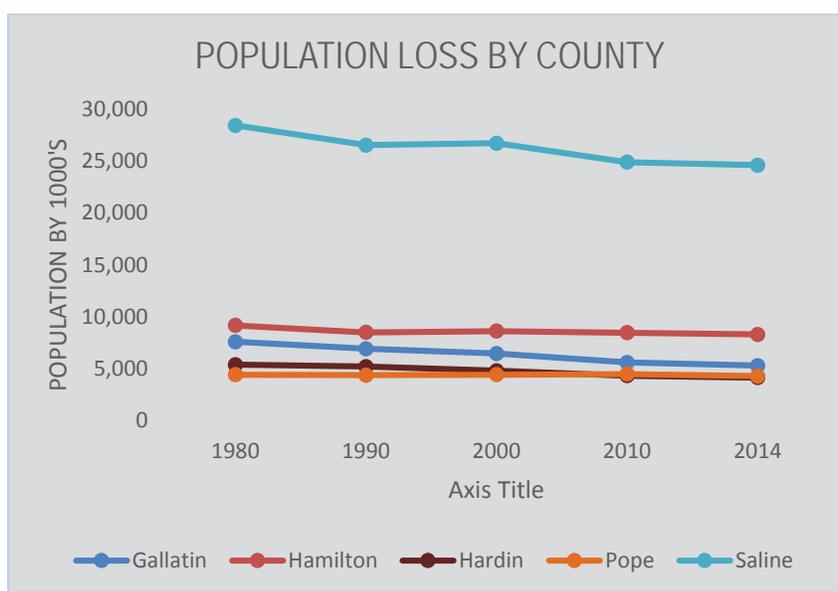
GALLATIN	27.9%
HAMILTON	20.5%
HARDIN	32.5%
POPE	30.8%
SALINE	31.9%
ILLINOIS	21.0%

The District also has an extremely high number of individuals and families living below the poverty level. The following information reflects the percentage below the poverty level:

	1999 Poverty Levels	2010 Poverty Levels	2014 Poverty Levels
GALLATIN	20.7%	16.7%	17.5%
HAMILTON	12.9%	16.6%	14.0%
HARDIN	18.6%	25.4%	20.6%
POPE	18.2%	16.5%	19.7%
SALINE	14.2%	21.3%	21.0%
DISTRICT	16.9%	19.3%	18.56%
ILLINOIS	10.7%	14.4%	23.7%

The Southeastern Illinois Regional Planning and Development Commission District lost 35% of its base population between the years of 1900 and 1970. The decline of employment opportunities in the District's main employment base (coal industry, forestry and agricultural sector) accounts for the majority of this 35% population loss. The population increase of 8.7%, which was revealed in the 1980 Census, reversed the 70-year trend of net population loss. The 2010 Census has revealed a slight loss with most of the Counties remaining relatively stable. This population increase suggests positive growth factors; however, these data are deceiving.

Population loss					
County	1980	1990	2000	2010	2014
Gallatin	7,590	6,909	6,445	5,589	5,291
Hamilton	9,172	8,499	8,621	8,457	8,296
Hardin	5,383	5,189	4,800	4,320	4,129
Pope	4,404	4,373	4,413	4,470	4,276
Saline	28,448	26,551	26,733	24,913	24,612
Total	54,997	51,521	51,012	47,749	46,604



The population in the 5 counties of the District has dropped almost 14% in the last 30 years. The Southeastern Illinois Regional Planning and Development Commission's counties have made significant gains in per capita income in the years between 1970 and 1996; however, in 1999, three counties (Gallatin, Hamilton and Saline) lost significant ground while Hardin and Pope had slight increases in per capita income. The 2014 per capita income showed the same downward trend and the District still falls significantly below the state level of \$47,643 and national statistics of \$28,889 for per capita income. Levels of income determine many things for residents; including quality of life and the amount of resources a resident can put back into the community.

District unemployment rates have exceeded both the state and national figures for over the past two decades. Four of the five counties have been designated as Labor Surplus Areas (areas of substantial and persistent unemployment). All four of these counties have had this distinction since 1967. Unemployment rates have fluctuated sporadically in the District due to seasonal employment opportunities and through unemployment calculation methods. The District believes that two unemployment rates are promoted and District unemployment rates. They are the statistical rate and the perceived rate. The statistical unemployment rate reflects the Illinois Department of Employment Security calculations where unemployment claims, job applications and other information is used to calculate an unemployment rate according to the U. S. Department of Labor Standards. These unemployment rate calculation methods have calculation assumptions which distort the true situation. An example is that a person is discounted from the unemployment rolls due to the length of time being counted or failure to make a claim. These calculation assumptions skew District unemployment rates downward. Therefore, a perceived unemployment rate may be more realistic than the statistical unemployment rate of the Department of Employment Security. The perceived unemployment rate does not allow employed person to "fall through the cracks" of the Department of Employment Security.

The perceived unemployment rate is generally four percentage points above the statistical unemployment rate. Recent Annual Average Unemployment Rates are listed below:

2015 Unemployment					
Gallatin	6.7	Pope	6.5	District	6.6
Hamilton	5.1	Saline	7.2	Illinois	5.9
Hardin	7.5	District	6.6	U.S.	5.3

District private sector employment opportunities are based largely on the following sectors: agricultural, mining, retail trade and service industries. The largest sources of employment throughout the State of Illinois are in the manufacturing, trade and service industries. The District's employment in the service sector contradicts with the state sector employment levels. In the Southeastern Region, employment in the service industries is usually associated with seasonal and/or part-time employment. The instability of the District's employment patterns are contributed to the lack of a diversified employment base and low education achievement of the population base.

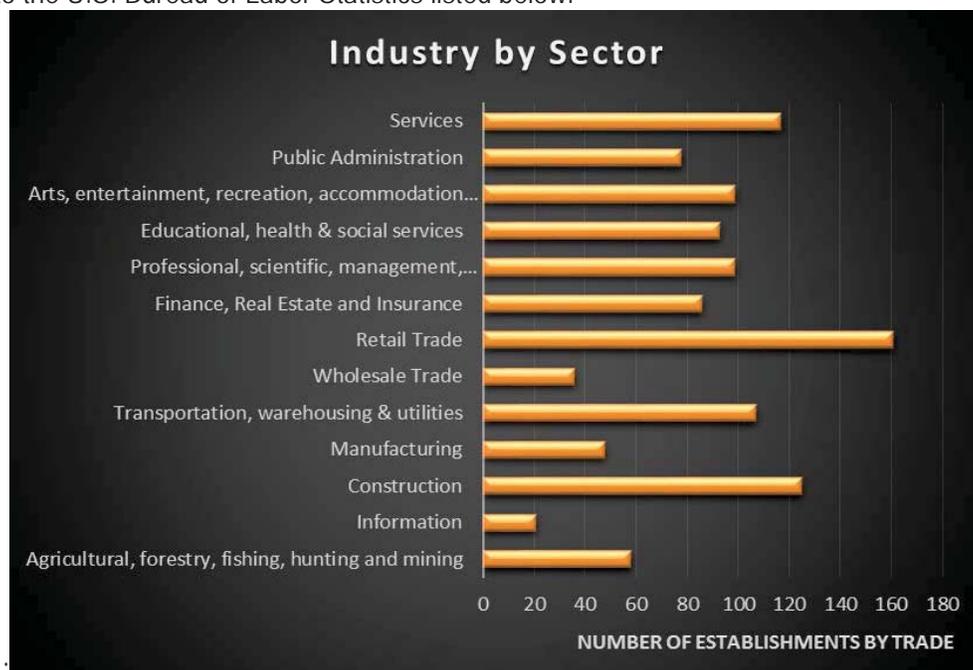
District labor force strengths include a manually skilled workforce and low wage rates as compared to other areas. This combination strongly supports the location of a low-technology manufacturing facility. The District has a large supply of manually skilled, but undereducated laborers. The changing marketplace

Increases the need for the District's labor force to obtain basic educational and marketable job skills. Wage rates in the District are much lower than the available state-wide wage statistics.

Education is a social characteristic that affects the labor force and economic levels of the Region's residents. Among the District's population aged 25 and over in 2014, 84.46% were at least high school graduates as compared with the state at 88.2%. In 2014, 12.94% of the District's population, age 25 and over, had a bachelors degree or higher as compared to 32.8% of the state's population. The annual enrollment for part-time and full-time students at Southeastern Illinois College is approximately 5,000.

2015-2016 Enrollment Information					
County	School	Pre-K	Elementary	High School	Total Enrollment
Gallatin	Gallatin CUSD 7	113	474	188	775
Hamilton	Hamilton Co CUSD 10	166	730	345	1,241
Hardin	Hardin County CUSD 1	61	360	173	594
Pope	Pope Co CUD 1	67	307	155	529
Saline	Galatia CUSD 1	63	255	116	434
Saline	Carrier Mills-Stonefort CUSD 2	75	250	125	450
Saline	Harrisburg CUSD 3	209	1,247	557	2,013
Saline	Eldorado CUSD 4	198	671	347	1,216
Total		952	4,294	2,006	7,252

Economy & Industry Sectors: The major economic industry sectors of the economy of the five-county region are retail trade, construction, transportation, warehousing and utilities. Other emerging sectors include recreation, accommodation and food services as the tourism industry continues to grow in the region. Four of the five counties (Gallatin, Hardin, Pope and Saline) are in the seven-county Ohio River Scenic Byway and Southernmost Illinois CVB. These areas are viewed as providing a major boost to the development of the tourism industry sector of the economy within the region. The Employment by sector according to the 2014 according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics listed below:



Over 45% of the land in Pope County and over 24% of the land in Hardin County is within the Shawnee National Forest. The economies of these Counties are strongly influenced by the National Forest. The Shawnee National Forest directly contributes to the economy through the jobs and income generated by recreation use, timber production, mineral production, and the Forest Service payroll. Twenty-five percent of the receipts generated on the Forest are paid to the counties as well as payments in lieu of taxes. The Forest provides many other benefits to the local economies such as road maintenance, bridge repair, and cooperative law enforcement programs. The Forest also provides a desirable setting attractive to companies that may consider moving to the area. Employers want to provide a high quality of life for their associates, and are attracted by the natural setting and recreation opportunities provided on the Shawnee National Forest. Most people also recognize the important role that the Shawnee National Forest plays in the economy of Southern Illinois; however, there is disagreement about how the Shawnee National Forest can best support the local economy.

The Shawnee National Forest plays a primary role in recreation and tourism. However, some people feel that commodity production will hurt tourism and that tourists will not come to the Shawnee National Forest if there is any sign of timber harvest, mining, or drilling for oil and gas. Others feel that timber and mineral production will not harm tourism as long as it is done in a way that is sensitive to the environment.

The capital markets in most of rural America are dominated by commercial banks. They are the depositories for the funds of numerous individuals, business units and the government. Through their lending and investing activities, they provide substantial financing to all major sectors of the economy. Commercial banks play in the supply of credit to rural areas. There are two primary types of bank organization, holding companies and independent banks. Holding companies are corporations that normally have many subsidiary banks under their control. The independent bank is typically a locally owned and operated business without subsidiaries or affiliates. The Banterra Cooperation owns eight banks in the Region. The eight banks are located in McLeansboro, Ridgway, Harrisburg, Eldorado, Rosiclare, Elizabethtown, Cave-in-Rock and Golconda. Legence Bank in Harrisburg, Eldorado and Galatia are owned by the same holding company. The Peoples National Bank in Harrisburg and McLeansboro are also owned by the same bank holding company. The First Mid-Illinois of Harrisburg is now owned by a Mattoon, Illinois based company. Other banks in the district are Farmers State Bank in Harrisburg, First State Bank of Eldorado (branch in Equality) and the Bank of Marion in Carrier Mills. Loans are the primary source of investment income for banks. Loans are classified into three major categories. Consumer loans are extended for such things as home mortgages, automobile purchases and other personal non-business uses. Loans to finance agricultural production are business loans to farmers for production of agricultural commodities. Commercial and industrial loans are business loans for other than agricultural enterprises. The banks in the area usually deal with personal loans for homes, cars, etc. rather than business loans. There does not appear to be a shortage of loans for personal use in the region. Commercial banks in the region have increased investment in securities and decreased investment in commercial and industrial loans. This decreased activity is due to the tighter credit lines offered by the small banks in the region. The commercial banking sector appears to have the capacity to serve existing credit demands from business and industry. This is apparent from the modest growth in total deposits, total securities and total loans. Other factors influencing lending practices are state and federal regulations. Specific examples include the following: Community Reinvestment Act, Federal Truth in Lending Act and Environmental Protection Agency regulations.

Infrastructure and Services: An excellent measure of an area's economic stability is the supply and demand for housing. According to the U.S. Census Bureau in 2014, there were 4,096 vacant homes in the Region or 17% of the total 23,419 homes. Of this total, 20.2% of the homes in Pope County and 12.6% of the homes in Hardin County are for seasonal, recreational or occasional use. In Gallatin, Hamilton and Saline Counties, the percentage is averaging 2.6% for recreational housing. The median value of a house in the district is \$41,443.40.

The number of substandard housing units in the Region is increasing as compared to the state. In addition, 11,268 or 48% of the homes in the district were built prior to 1960. It is estimated that in excess of 60% of the houses in the district are in need of housing rehabilitation. The reasons for the increasing sub-standard housing rate can be tied directly to the economy of the Region. Many residents of the sub-standard housing units are elderly, who are on a fixed income, female-headed households and the long-term unemployed. These groups are not financially able to maintain and upgrade their housing units.

The quality and availability of medical care in the District has declined. Existing hospitals are located in Harrisburg, Rosiclare, Eldorado and McLeansboro. Through joint efforts, the hospitals have been able to upgrade equipment and the accessibility of medical services and specialists. Harrisburg Medical Center closed its obstetrical unit in 1987. With this closure, there is not a single hospital in southeastern Illinois that delivers babies. The Primary Care Group in Harrisburg does provide obstetrical care, but patients have to go to Carbondale or Marion, Illinois or Paducah, KY for the delivery. The population of the region is aging. Approximately 20% of the population of the region is over age 62. With the increased elderly population, it is anticipated that the need for medical services will continue to increase. Other medical services available in the region include the following: dental, orthodontics, eye care, dialysis and cancer treatments. Health clinics are located in Saline, Pope and Hardin counties.

The infrastructure of a community is essential in developing a growing, vital community. Infrastructure consists of water, sewer, transportation and police and fire protection. Water and sewer system improvements are a top priority for the District in promoting economic and community development. Rural fire districts exist in Pope County and the Dahlgren area in Hamilton County. The creation and expansion of rural fire districts is needed. Police protection by municipalities and sheriff's departments is limited due to budget constraints. All state and federal law enforcement agencies are stationed in or readily available to the region.

The Southeastern Region is served by one conservancy district and twelve water districts. They are as follows: Saline Valley Conservancy District, Hamilton County Water District, Illinois American Water Company, Prospect Water District, Dale Water District, Hardin County Water District, Liberty-Ledford Water District, Mitchellville Water District, Corinth Water District, Gallatin-White Water District, Fort Massac Water District, Raleigh Water District and Millstone Water District. Approximately one-half of the 24 municipal water systems own their source of water and the other half purchase water from another source. Of the 24 municipalities in the Southeastern Region, only four (Junction, Macedonia, Omaha and Old Shawneetown) do not have sewer services. None of the remaining communities are on the EPA restricted list. Improvements are needed in many of the individual systems.

Transportation: Four main highways surround the Region. They are: Interstate 57 to the west; Interstate 64 to the north; Interstate 24 to the south; and U.S. 41 to the east. These main highways are easily accessible from the area on state highways that are in good to fair condition. Illinois Route 13, which cuts through the region into Williamson County, is one of the major highways for persons moving in and out of the District. Route 13 was recently converted to a four-lane to the Saline County line. Illinois Route 1 runs north and south through Gallatin and Hardin Counties. Illinois Route 45 is also a high traffic highway in the District. The Ohio River provides a natural vein of a transportation system. The nearest SMSA's to the Region are St. Louis, Missouri at 130 miles; Evansville, Indiana at 50 miles; Nashville, Tennessee at 180 miles; Louisville, Kentucky at 140 miles; and Chicago, Illinois at 350 miles; The Shawnee Hills on the Ohio National Scenic Byway winds through the beautiful scenery and historical attractions in Saline, Gallatin, Hardin and Pope Counties.



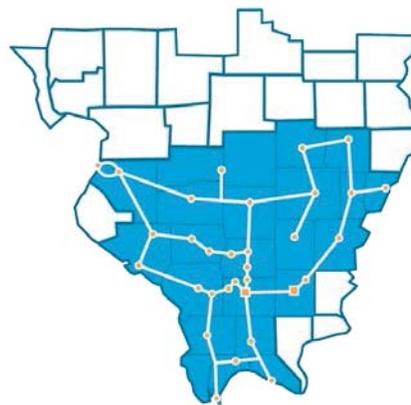
Conservation areas are located in Hamilton County and Saline County. The Dolan Lake Conservation Area is approximately 34 miles southeast of Mt. Vernon, Illinois. The Saline County Conservation Area is located approximately 12 miles southeast of the City of Harrisburg.

The Saline County Industrial Company owns and maintains two industrial parks in Saline County. Industrial Park #1 is located in Harrisburg and is full. Industrial Park #2 is located on Route 34 between Harrisburg and Raleigh. Approximately 40 acres are available for development in the full service park. These 40 acres are included in the Saline County Enterprise Zone Program and are accessible by rail. The Saline County Industrial Development Company is in the process of acquiring additional acreage for a new industrial park on the west side of Harrisburg. The City of Harrisburg and the City of Eldorado and the County of Saline have small plots available for industrial development.

Communications: The five county region knows and understands the role technology plays in the economic development of the region. The quality of life that its citizens enjoy and come to expect. Access to future technology is critical and tied to the ability to send and receive information. As broadband capabilities become critical infrastructure in the region, the five-county region has a strong backbone in voice, broadband and fiber network to generate additional economic growth in the region.

Telecommunication Service Provider: Clearwave Communications - In August of 2010, Clearwave Communication, as part of the Illinois Broadband Opportunity Partnership (IBOP) received one of only a handful of grants awarded by the National Opportunities Program (BTOP) to develop rural broadband. Located in Harrisburg, Illinois since 1996, Clearwave Communications has become a new-generation communications company offering a complete package of telecommunications services for business and residential users, including a full-suite of voice solutions, high-speed data and Internet access and Internet services-all from one source, on one easy-to-understand bill, with just one number to call for all your needs. Not just another reseller, Clearwave Communications is a facilities-based service provider that owns and manages its own network equipment, which means more responsive and reliable service for you. In addition to our full line of Clearwave voice and data services, we offer a number of other products and services that help people communicate or improve their quality of life. With the help of these federal and state grants, as well as private funding, Clearwave will be building much needed middle-mile infrastructure to make broadband accessible in the rural areas of southern Illinois, as well as directly connecting colleges, K-12 schools, libraries, health care providers and public safety entities. Since 2013, the Illinois Broadband Opportunity Partnership-Southern has laid more than 740 miles of fiber optic cable through 23 counties and connected 232 community anchor institutions to the next generation network.

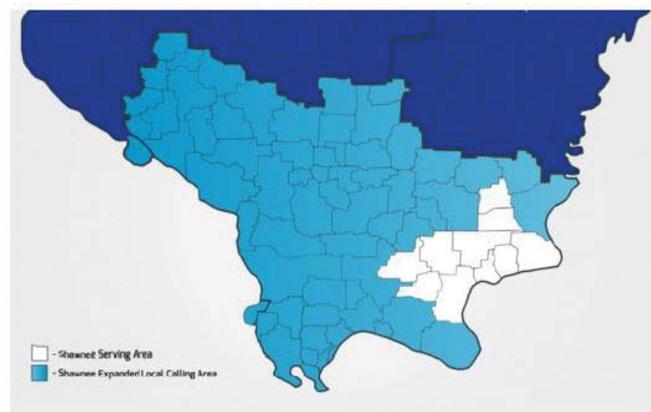
Hamilton and Saline Counties are serviced by Clearwave



Clearwave Service Area

Telecommunication Service Provider: Shawnee Communications - Also In 2010, an additional telecommunications supplier in the district, Shawnee Telephone Company, received grant and loan funds through USDA's Rural Utility Service and USDC's National Telecommunications Information Administration to upgrade broadband capability in Hardin County. Through the ARRA/BTOP stimulus grant, they were able to build fiber throughout the community. Additionally, the counties of Hardin, Pope and Gallatin have many pockets of dead cellular service. For most of the county the voice and internet services provided by Shawnee Telephone Company are the only reliable source of connectivity. Shawnee Telephone Company (RUS Designation, IL-538) was originally incorporated in 1948 under the name of Equality Telephone Company (RUS Designation, IL-557). In 1966 Equality Telephone purchased Hardin County Telephone, and almost since inception Shawnee initiated its long and prosperous relationship with the Rural Electric Administration (REA) and Rural Utility Service (RUS). This long partnership between Shawnee and RUS continues to ensure a high level of service quality and commitment of telecommunication access to the citizens in one of the most remote areas of the country.

Hardin, Pope and Gallatin are serviced by Shawnee Communications



Shawnee Communications Service Area

Other Development Activities: The Southeastern Illinois Regional Planning and Development Commission provides professional planning and community and economic development services for the five counties of Gallatin, Hamilton, Hardin, Pope and Saline. SIRP&DC was formed in 1968 and is an Economic Development District designated in 1969 by the Economic Development Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce. All five counties are active participants in the Commission. The Commission covers the areas of public facilities, housing rehabilitation and community and economic development. The Saline County Industrial Development Company operates and maintains the 3 industrial parks in Saline County and serves as the lead organization for the Saline County Enterprise Zone. The Hamilton County Economic Development Commission is composed of volunteers and serves as the lead organization for the Rural Partners Program in Hamilton County and operates the Enterprise Zone Program in Hamilton County. The group hired a part-time employee in the fall of 2003. The Chambers of Commerce in the area are composed primarily of volunteers and part-time clerical staff. The following localities have Chambers of Commerce: Saline County and Hamilton County. Other community programs include the Hardin County Main Street. Hardin County Main Street was established in 2000 as a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation. Main Street serves as an umbrella organization for groups seeking to do community development in Hardin County. It is the only county-wide Main Street organization in the State of Illinois. The main thrust of the organization's economic development efforts have been in the form of tourism promotion. In addition to Hardin County Main Street, Golconda and Eldorado Main Street group operates with only volunteers.

District SWOT

The CED's committee evaluated six (6) individual capital categories to develop the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT)

1) Social/Cultural:

Strengths:

- Large network of community organizations, churches, schools and foundations with many volunteers
- Strong resilient communities
- Cross boundary projects
- Lots of history in the region
- Quality of life (small hometowns)
- Centrally located within driving distance of larger metro areas

Weaknesses:

- Lack of funding to help organizations and communities provide additional services to their patrons
- Population decline in the region
- Lack of funding to create cultural experiences
- Lack of local ownership
- Lack of lodging for tourist and visitors to the region

Opportunities:

- More volunteer and/or manpower to conduct projects
- Enhancement of local emerging tourism industry
- Enhancement of local chambers and CVB's
- Attract more upscale lodging establishments (hotels and bed & breakfasts)

Threats:

- Lack of prioritization of resources for the region

2) Natural:

Strengths

- Abundance of natural resources including land, water, air, aggregate rock, and coal
- Scenic beauty

Weaknesses:

- Maintenance of facilities in Shawnee National Forest and state park locations within the five-county region
- Underutilization of regions tourism sites

Opportunities:

- More markets for aggregate rock
- Marketing of locally grown produce to institutions such as colleges, hospitals, nursing homes and others
- Agricultural diversification within the regions farming community
- Processing plants for locally grown foods
- Shawnee National Forest tourism opportunities
- Tourism within the regions forests, state parks and Ohio River
- Search for alternative cleaner uses for fuel/coal/petroleum

Threats:

- Legal restrictions on usages of the Shawnee National Forest areas
- Over reliance on few water systems
- Downturn of coal industry and regulations
- External businesses from out of the region

3) Individual/Intellectual:

Strengths:

- Well-trained work force with strong work ethics
- Availability of services through local hospitals, rural health clinics and health departments
- Local Community College (Southeastern Illinois College)
- Access to broadband mostly throughout region

Weaknesses:

- Lack of job opportunities for highly educated individuals
- High number of population with no high school/ GED diplomas
- Lack of civic-minded younger individuals
- Lack of specialized healthcare services such as cardiology, cancer, and obstetrics
- Lack of quality transportation for healthcare
- Drug and substance abuse in rural areas
- Access to specialized mental health services
- Few outlets for local entrepreneurs
- Rural regions without connectivity

Opportunities:

- Expanding access to public transportation
- Rehabilitation facilities for drug and substance abuse
- Recruitment of higher skilled medical specialists for local hospitals, clinics and centers
- Encourage more involvement with local leadership training for younger population
- Develop more classes for small business and low income students with emphasis on online/internet sales
- Develop more fiber/broadband connections for fringe areas within district
- Create more job opportunities for unemployed/underemployed work force

Threats:

- Lack of stable funding/adequate funding for medical services
- Surrounding states providing greater incentives for businesses and college graduates

4) Financial:

Strengths:

- Many large financial institutions

Weaknesses:

- Not enough local opportunities to invest in small communities
- Impoverished region of the state

Opportunities:

- Access to capital through other avenues such as Angel and Capital investors

Threats:

- High poverty levels and individuals with low wages
- Restrictions on loan job creations/retention

5) Political:

Strengths:

- Communities work well with local state representative and elected officials
- Strong elected official presence in the region

Weaknesses:

- District boundaries with one representative for one large geographic area. Distance and location prohibit long visits to communities

Opportunities:

- Encourage region to collectively care about legislation that improves district
- Close relationships within district means issues can be brought to state and federal legislators

Threats:

- Lack of political pull as a small region to heard in statewide and national issues

6) Built:

Strengths:

- Available buildings for re-purposing
- Good broadband/fiber networks in communities
- Many communities with TIF and Enterprise Zones
- Well maintained main highways

Weaknesses:

- Declining populations for repayment of loans for infrastructure upgrades
- Aging infrastructure in all communities
- Lack of sidewalks (walkable communities)
- Non ADA compliant buildings within district
- Poor lighting in residential areas

Opportunities:

- Seek funding for replacement of aging infrastructure through federal EDA, EPA, USDA, DRA and state resources
- Enhance bike paths and trails

Threats:

- Declining population in all counties in the district
- Old unusable buildings for new development
- Decreasing motor fuel tax funding for community use on projects

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following list of goals, objectives and policies have been identified and adopted by the CEDS committee which are used to guide the District's community and economic development programs.

PRIMARY GOALS

GOAL 1: MODERNIZATION AND EXPANSION OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES, INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORTATION

OBJECTIVE: Expand and/or upgrade existing or nonexistent water and sewer systems, assist in obtaining funds for the construction of community buildings, sidewalk repairs, parking facilities, courthouse renovations and jail facilities and assist local governments and water districts to comply with the regulations of the Clean Water Act of 1986. Promote upgrades to the Region's transportation network.

Further improvement planning in the region, providing county and city governments the technical assistance needed to develop and maintain the region's essential infrastructure and transportation system. Work with cities, municipalities, counties and rural districts to help access financing to address the needs of roads and bridges along with water and sewer systems.

POLICIES:

1. Identify the essential water and sewer systems in each member county.
2. Identify the essential roads and bridges present in each member county.
3. Prioritize and promote the development and improvements of all infrastructure that serves counties, cities and multiple locations.
4. Improve municipal water systems, rural water district systems, sewage treatment facilities.
5. Work with communities to construct community and civic centers, or multi-purpose buildings and/or improvements.
6. Work with communities to improve flood control procedures and develop flood control projects.
7. Promote and encourage necessary repairs of the Regions state highways and secondary roads.
8. Promote improvements to Illinois Routes 1, 34 and 145.
9. Promote regular maintenance of the Regions secondary roads and promote cooperation agreements with counties, cities, villages and United States Forest Service.
10. Promote public transportation systems for the elderly, students and low-income residents of the district.
11. Promote cooperation between county road officials and district road officials to coordinate a long-term road maintenance program.
12. Promote runway enlargements and other improvements for Harrisburg-Raleigh Airport.
13. Encourage improved maintenance of township roads.
14. Work with County Engineers to pursue various grant programs.
15. Work with County Engineers to upgrade portions of the designated National Scenic Byway
16. Work with communities and providers to ensure quality fiber and broadband connections to all residents.

GOAL 2: SUPPORT NEW JOB GENERATION AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

OBJECTIVE: Create an environment in which existing businesses and aspiring entrepreneurs are able to access the ideas, services, capital, labor and infrastructure needed to achieve success in their business ventures. Utilize the Revolving Loan Fund and Micro Lending Programs to lower the Region's unemployment rate.

POLICIES:

1. Promote the use of training programs as economic development incentives
2. Address the need for unskilled and semi-skilled labor in Southeastern Illinois by working with the local community college and Small Business Development Center in offering services the region and local economic development organizations related to business assistance services. Make SBDC staff and local development groups aware of the various programs SIRP&DC has in place for funding of small businesses.
3. Identify the business service limitations of the SBDC and seek to establish or implement other programs that address those gaps.
4. Promote the retraining of the Region's coal miners for other job classifications. Work with the coal industry to utilize existing reserves and to create/retain jobs in the region.
5. Use the regional and local Revolving Loan Fund Programs, Business Community & Development Loan Program, Micro Lending Program and other state and federal business loan programs to induce economic development within the District. Encourage localities to include regional loan funds in local economic development proposals and to pursue additional funds for business development.
6. Interact with other economic development groups both in and out of the District. Coordinate and cooperate with other Economic Development Districts in Southern Illinois and in the State of Illinois in order to promote state funding for Economic Development Districts and Southern Illinois Regional Planning and Development Commissions. Participate with the tourism groups for economic development and tourism projects for the region.
7. To work with and provide technical assistance to the District's chambers of commerce and the economic development groups of the District.
8. To work with the representatives of utility companies to increase economic development expertise and to combine economic development resources.
9. Use the Administrative Services Program to induce local economic development. To expand the Lender Commitment Program throughout the District. To encourage District banking institutions to consider longer financing terms for economic development projects.

GOAL 3: STRENGTHEN MUNICIPAL AND COUNTY GOVERNMENTS

OBJECTIVE: Assist local units of government to stay abreast of new legislation and assist in the promotion of new technical improvements in order to provide the District's residents with up-to-date police and fire protection. Provide technical assistance to units of local government concerning state and federal legislation. Provide technical assistance to units of local government on the process of formulating goals and capital improvement plans and budgets. Provide training for elected and appointed officials of the Region on relevant topics.

POLICIES:

1. Encourage local elected officials to attend workshops relating to the operation of municipal governments and other regulatory topics such as solid waste management.
2. Encourage the establishment of a permanent surcharge for use by local governments.
3. Promote the adoption of personnel policies and safety plans to limit the liability exposure of local governments.
4. Work with local governments to obtain state and federal funding for community facility projects.
5. Assist local governments in the budgeting process and inform local officials on new government financing techniques and of the opportunities involved with privatization of local government services.
6. Act as a liaison agency to promote local needs at the state and federal level.
7. Assist local governments with solid waste management activities and encourage the establishment of intergovernmental groups to address solid waste management.

OBJECTIVE: To protect the residents of the region.

POLICIES:

1. Promote county-wide 911 communications systems and networking possibilities for multi-county systems.
2. Increase police protection in the District communities and counties.
3. Promote the modernization of local firefighting equipment.
4. Promote the establishment of county-wide fire districts and intra-county networking.
6. Promote the establishment of centralized dispatching.
7. Promote the establishment of fire hydrants in rural areas.
8. Promote Emergency Services Disaster Agencies and encourage the exploration of grant funds for equipment, etc.
9. Work with fire departments to address potential legislation affecting equipment and training requirements.
10. Assist fire districts in the application processes for grant funds.
11. Promote drug and gang awareness programs.
12. Promote the use of the COPS and other Department of Justice Programs.
13. Promote the DARE program in the School Districts.

GOAL 4: IMPROVE QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF HOUSING

OBJECTIVE: Promote the quality and quantity of housing in the Region in order to meet the needs of the Region's residents. Increase the quality and/or quantity of housing in the Region by the year 2020.

POLICIES:

1. Promote utilization of public housing to meet the public housing needs throughout the Region.
2. Promote private development of housing units and subdivisions.
3. Promote housing rehabilitation projects for low-to-moderate income persons utilizing the Illinois Community Development Assistance Program, Rural Development housing programs, Illinois Housing Trust Funds, etc.
4. Increase the number of housing units for the elderly.
5. Work with the Illinois Housing Development Authority and others to develop programs to assist first-time homeowners, etc.

GOAL 5: PROMOTE NATURAL RESOURCES AND TOURISM INDUSTRY

OJECTIVE: Expand the job opportunities of the area through the promotion of tourism. Assist local governments to promote and businesses to utilize the natural resources of the District and promote the diversification of the agriculture and agri-business industries.

POLICIES:

1. Promote large scale tourism development in southeastern Illinois.
2. Promote the increase of signage of the Shawnee National Forest.
3. Work with Southern Illinois Tourism and Convention Bureau and Southern Illinois Tourism to promote Southeastern Illinois
4. Encourage development of brochures and other advertising measures to promote tourism.
5. Encourage development and/or improve water access facilities at the following:
 1. City of Rosiclare
 2. Village of New Haven
 3. Village of Cave-in-Rock
 4. Village of Elizabethtown
 5. City of Golconda
 6. Village of Old Shawneetown
6. Promote the establishment and expansion of tourism centers in Harrisburg, Gallatin, Pope and Hardin counties.
7. Promote historical preservation from the State at the following sites within the region:
 - a. McCoy Library in McLeansboro
 - b. Saline County Historical Museum
 - c. Mansion in Golconda
 - d. Marshall House Bank and First National Bank in Old Shawneetown
 - e. Rose Hotel in Elizabethtown
 - f. St. James Episcopal Church in Hamilton County

- g. Dahlgren Depot
 - h. Dam 51 Houses in Golconda
 - i. Westwood Cemetery in Gallatin County
 - j. Cave-in-Rock
 - k. Battery Rock in Hardin County
 - l. Camp Mather/Camp Logan near New Shawneetown
 - m. Crenshaw House (Old Slave House) in Gallatin County
8. Promote recreational facilities to compliment the Golconda Marina and other sites in Gallatin, Hardin and Pope Counties.
 9. Work with other agencies in promoting tourism and encourage local tourism groups to utilize public dollars to develop brochures and response centers to receive information requests for prospective visitors.
 10. Provide technical assistance and seek funding for the establishment of and/or improvements to parks within the Region utilizing the state Land and Water Conservation Fund Program.
 11. Promote the development of additional lodging facilities throughout the five-county region.
 12. Promote the Ohio River Scenic Byway in its promotion of the river region.
 13. Promote the National Civil War Trail development and the development of the Lewis & Clark Trail.

OBJECTIVE: To provide information on regulation of local natural resources and to coordinate development activities with citizens and governmental agencies. To sustain and further develop the agriculture industries to further coordinate agriculture opportunities and government policies to District citizens.

POLICIES:

1. Encourage development of business/industry for alternative uses for coal, fluorspar, oil and other minerals and at the same time protect the environment.
2. Use environmental conservation efforts to protect and preserve the existing environment.
3. To promote good forest management and multiple forest uses for the Shawnee National Forest.
4. To promote the natural resources of the area by soliciting secondary natural resource processors.
5. Promote efficient and profitable production of traditional crops and livestock with an environmentally sound management system.

GOAL 6: STRENGTHEN THE REGIONS ECONOMIC RESILIENCY

OBJECTIVE: Assist local governments, communities, business and organizations to develop goals, strategies and actions that can mitigate the effects of an economic incident, natural disasters or climate impacts.

POLICIES:

1. Engage and undertake appropriate community planning for pre-disaster recovery and mitigation planning
2. Participate and encourage implementation of business succession / rebuilding efforts
3. Provide communication between local government and the local business community
4. Assist local government in efforts to restore all sectors of the community, including critical infrastructure, essential services, business retention and the redevelopment of damaged housing units.
5. Coordinate services between local, state and federal resources
6. Assist in business financing with Revolving Loan Funds after a disaster
7. Ensure resources are available for those who are younger and weaker such as the aged populations and special needs residents. Work with the local chapters of the American Red Cross and local ministerial alliances to provide resources where needed during and after a disaster.

GOAL 7: PROMOTE SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL AND RECYCLING PROGRAM

OBJECTIVE: Promote the establishment of solid waste disposal and recycling programs in the Region.

POLICIES:

1. Encourage and assist in the set up and implementation of recycling programs in the region.
2. Promote recycling grant programs to businesses in the district.

GOAL 8: IMPROVE HEALTH CARE SYSTEMS

OBJECTIVE: Promote the expansion of health care facilities in the Region. Provide health care facilities to the Regions residents. To strengthen the Districts health care systems and health care providers. To expand and upgrade the Districts ambulance services.

POLICIES:

1. Pursue grants for the Harrisburg Medical Center, Hamilton Memorial Hospital, Hardin County Hospital and Ferrell Hospital.
2. Promote the establishment of a regional hospital system with networking capabilities to serve rural counties.
3. Encourage development of and/or expand home health care services.
4. Encourage cooperation among health planning organizations.
5. Support emergency room service and ambulance services throughout the Region.
6. Encourage changes in legislation to stabilize insurance rates for health care personnel and facilities.

7. Support and encourage adequate health care and emergency services for residents of the Southeastern Region.
9. Encourage and foster quality health care at a reasonable cost.
10. Encourage the upgrade and expansion of the Regions nursing homes, adult day care and assisted living facilities.
11. Increase public/private partnership programs for disease, chemical and physical abuse victims to improve the general well-being of residents and reduce stress and all kinds of abuse throughout the Region.
12. Promote the establishment of obstetrical care in the Region.

GOAL 9: DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY EXPANSION

OBJECTIVE: Prepare residents to successfully compete for employment opportunities, both inside and outside of the Region, including retraining to meet the new and changing demands in business and industry. Increase the educational level of the Region's residents. To place the region's unemployed and underemployed in classroom and work-site training programs and to increase the overall employee skill level which will encourage economic development. Provide the labor force with educated and trained workers. To strengthen the Districts school systems and junior college to increase the basic education and skill level of the District.

POLICIES:

1. Promote programs which can draw into the labor force the untapped, unskilled and semi-skilled persons in the region.
2. Support the efforts of agencies which have the mission and resources to implement the necessary educational/training and job placement activities to create a more skilled labor force.
3. Promote labor management groups to increase open communications and increased job opportunities.
4. Promote the diversification of available technical training.
5. Encourage the development of additional trade school offerings to certificate, journeyman and/or associate degree level at Southeastern Illinois College.
6. Encourage the region's high schools to upgrade and expand vocational training programs.
7. Promote the programs offered by the SIC Small Business Development Center.
8. Promote vocational training to targeted industries of the District.
9. Provide technical assistance for the modernization and expansion of the Region's educational and vocational facilities.
10. Promote programs to reduce the number of high school drop-outs.
11. Create a climate within the school which will decrease negative environmental influences and allows students to reach their educational potential.
12. Provide educational opportunities to create a skilled work force.
13. To offer educational programs that will enhance the economic development of the Southeastern Illinois Region.
14. Increase the education level of all citizens in the Region in order to enhance basic education, improve learning ability and improve the Southeastern Regions labor market.

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The following strategies correspond with the stated and adopted goals and objectives of the Southeastern Illinois Regional Planning and Development Commission and outline the implementation of the economic development program of the Southeastern Illinois Regional Planning and Development Commission.

The Southeastern Illinois Regional Planning and Development Commission staff and board will participate in a joint effort with other local and statewide agencies toward achieving the goal of decreasing the unemployment rate of the region. The staff will pursue funding for the development of industrial parks and sites as locations for industrial development. The Southeastern Illinois Regional Planning and Development Commission will utilize the regional and local revolving loan funds and other incentive programs to induce economic development. The availability of funds will be publicized through personal contacts, newspaper articles and interaction with economic development groups. District staff will continue efforts to recapitalize the District Revolving Loan Fund. Staff will continue to work with local tourism groups to expand the tourism market of Southeastern Illinois.

The Southeastern Illinois Regional Planning and Development Commission will work with local municipal and county governments to obtain funding for community facility improvements through the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Economic Development Administration, Rural Development, Delta Regional Authority, Illinois Rural Bond Bank, Department of Justice, FEMA and Illinois Development Finance Authority. Community facility projects include water, sewer, public buildings, and public safety and flood control projects.

The Southeastern Illinois Regional Planning and Development Commission will participate in a joint effort with local, state and federal agencies in an effort to meet the housing needs of the Region's residents, promote increased funding for homeless problems in rural areas, assist local units of government in pursuing housing rehabilitation grants and work with District financial institutions to establish loan programs to encourage housing rehabilitation and development. Funds will be pursued through the Illinois Housing Development Authority and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.

The Southeastern Illinois Regional Planning and Development Commission will work with local governments in order to strengthen the local units of government and will act as a consultant to assist the local units of government to establish standard operating procedures in personnel and safety. SIRP&DC will provide technical assistance to local units of government pertaining to legislation, contact with our legislators and in formulating capital improvement plans for water and sewer improvements.

The Southeastern Illinois Regional Planning and Development Commission will work with local officials, state and federal agencies in the promotion of the District as a tourism destination. Specific tourism development projects have been identified and funding will be pursued for the implementation of these projects. The Commission will work with Hardin County Main Street, Main Street Golconda, Inc., Saline County Tourism, Southernmost Tourism and other entities to promote the National Scenic Byway and Ohio River Scenic Byway, Shawnee National Forest and other tourist destinations within the region to spur economic development.

The Southeastern Illinois Regional Planning and Development Commission will participate with other local, area wide and statewide agencies toward achieving the development of the human resource base of the District.

The Southeastern Illinois Regional Planning and Development Commission will develop economic development information concerning the educational institutions of the area, involve job training officials with economic development location clients to provide job-training needs, encourage legislation to prohibit drop-outs under the age of 18 from obtaining a driver's license, promote drug and alcohol abuse programs in the schools, promote sex education in local schools aimed at the prevention of teenage pregnancy, promote day care centers at local high schools to encourage teenage parents to stay in school and to teach other students the responsibilities of being a parent, promote additional social counseling programs, promote vocational training in local high schools, vocational centers and junior colleges, encourage educators to work with area industries to determine labor force requirements, promote work/study programs, promote literacy programs and encourage adults to utilize the junior college system to expand educational opportunities.

The Southeastern Illinois Regional Planning and Development Commission will work with local, state and federal agencies in order to improve and upgrade the transportation network of the District. The Commission will work with the County Engineers to take advantage of potential funding sources.

The Southeastern Illinois Regional Planning and Development Commission will promote and assist the local units of government to establish solid waste disposal and recycling programs in the District and will assist the local units of government in the preparation of Solid Waste Management Plans. SIRP&DC will conduct research into the cost effectiveness of various recycling programs.

The Southeastern Illinois Regional Planning and Development Commission will work with the health care facilities of the Region, state and federal agencies and local governments to achieve the expansion and upgrades of health care facilities in the District. SIRP&DC will encourage state legislation that will decrease the financial risk of providing medical services in rural areas and support regional health department programs and clinics for rural areas.

The Southeastern Illinois Regional Planning and Development Commission will work with local, state and other officials to provide the Districts residents with up-to-date police and fire protection, promote the federal surplus equipment program and fire equipment grant programs, promote the establishment of rural fire districts and promote the upgrade of equipment in existing municipal fire and police departments and County Sheriff's offices.

The Southeastern Illinois Regional Planning and Development Commission will promote the utilization of the natural resources of the Region, encourage strong working relationships between local, state and federal environmental officials, encourage the development of Shawnee National Forest potential for recreation, tourism, timber and other multi-use purposes, support agricultural infrastructure, encourage the development and utilization of agricultural services and centers, support farm credit system and encourage financial institutions to make credit available to farmers and agri-business, support agricultural production research and diversification and work with local Soil and Water Conservation Districts to improve water quality and preserve the soil. The Commission will work to promote the Coal Infrastructure Program through the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. The SIRP&DC will work to establish the Saline Basin Watershed Partnership to promote the Illinois Department of Natural Resources C2000 Program.

The Scope of Work for the District is composed of projects that are both short-term and long-term and of an ongoing basis. The planning process includes the establishment of goals and objectives and an evaluation of the process. Listed below is the Scope of Work:

I. Planning Projects

A. Business Programs

1. Continue to provide assistance to municipalities and counties to develop formal economic development industry expansion and retention programs.
2. Continue to work with other local, state and federal agencies in the development and promotion of economic and community development policies and strategies for regional development.
3. Continue to work with various tourism groups to promote the National Scenic Byway and Ohio River Scenic Byway.

B. Preparation of Community Profiles

1. Continue to prepare and update community profiles of District localities.
2. Continue to prepare and update Enterprise Zone brochures.
3. Continue to update and maintain a building and site information file.
4. Continue to work with tourism groups to develop brochures.
5. Maintain a website.

II. Planning Activities

- A. Continue to promote the goals and strategies of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).
- B. Continue to provide assistance to county and municipal governments in the areas of planning, implementation, guidelines, legislation interpretation and grant application preparation and administration.
- C. Continue to provide assistance to economic development groups, tourism groups and special purpose districts.
- D. Continue to provide grant alerts to local units of government.

III. Administrative Planning:

- A. Staff will continue to prepare and submit an annual CEDS Update.
- B. Staff will prepare one Annual report for submittal to the Economic Development Administration for required submittal periods.
- C. Staff will prepare quarterly Financial Reports for submittal to the Economic Development Administration and will have an annual audit as required by Planning Grant and Office of Audits, Inspector General's Office.
- D. Staff will continue to administer the Revolving Loan Fund and will submit two semi-annual RLF reports to the Economic Development Administration and to the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.

E. Staff will supply information concerning plant closings and the status of industrial development within the District annually and as required by the Economic Development Administration.

F. Staff will continue to prepare grant applications and administer grants on behalf of district local units of government, special district and not-for-profit organizations.

G. Staff will continue to administer the Micro loan Program and the Business and Community Development Fund.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES EVALUATION

The Southeastern Illinois Regional Planning and Development Commission have identified goals and objectives and will evaluate the accomplishments of the District on the following levels:

- 1) Increase in the employment level of the region.
- 2) Increase in the average wage of the region.
- 3) Increase in per capita income levels of the region.
- 4) Increase in public and private sector investments in the region.
- 5) Level of technical assistance provided to local governments and organizations in the region.

For items 1 thru 4, documentation can be gathered to show the increases in employment, average wage, per capita incomes and the amount of public and private sector investments.

Increases in the employment levels and average wages are tracked thru the various loan programs that the agency operates and thru the input data from the Illinois Department of Employment Security.

Increases in per capita income levels can be tracked through census data.

For public and private sector investments, levels are tracked thru the various grants and projects that the agency prepares and administers. Private sector investments can also be tracked to determine increases in property tax valuations.

Technical assistance is provided to local governments and not-for-profit groups in the five county region and can be tracked by the number of inquiries and responses.

The SIRP&DC realizes that not all evaluation methods can show the benefits and for some items, the evaluation process is subjective and cannot be quantified. Many projects that the agency is involved with improve the quality of life for the residents which in many ways is difficult to quantify. These items will be used to evaluate the activities of the District on an annual basis.

2016
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

Appendix

Regional and State Partners

Illinois Department of Commerce

Saline County Industrial Development Company

Saline County Chamber of Commerce

Small Business Development Center

Southeastern Illinois College

Egyptian Health Department

Southern Seven Health Department

Hamilton County Economic Development

Ameren Utilities

Southeastern Illinois Electric Cooperative

Clearwave Communications

Shawnee Communications

U.S. Department of Agriculture – Rural Development

U.S. Forest Service – Shawnee National Forest

Southernmost Illinois Convention and Visitors Bureau

Hardin County Main Street, Inc.

Golconda Main Street

Ohio River Scenic Byway

Stronger Economies Together Group

University of Illinois Extension Services

Rides Mass Transit District

NAMES AND AFFILIATIONS OF BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Chairperson – Glenn Miller, Hamilton County
 First Vice-Chairman – Larry Richards, Pope County
 Second Vice-Chairman – Phyllis Ferrell, Saline County
 Secretary – Charles Soward, Hardin County
 Treasurer – Ron Woods, Gallatin County

Name	County	Economic Interest
Carolyn Baltimore	Gallatin	Private Sector - Higher Education / Tourism
Harve Fuhr	Gallatin	Workforce Development
Tracey McQuire	Gallatin	Government Employee
Ron Woods	Gallatin	Public Official
Mark York	Gallatin	Public Official / Retired Teacher / Tourism
Brad Cross	Hamilton	Public Official / Manufacturing
John Chapman	Hamilton	Public Official / Private Sector - Insurance
Dick Deitz	Hamilton	Public Official
Joe Bernard	Hamilton	Public Official / Private Sector
Glenn Miller	Hamilton	Agriculture
Rhonda Belford	Hardin	Private Sector - Medical / Tourism / State Employee
Michael Johnsey	Hardin	Private Sector - Corrections
David Robinson	Hardin	Public Official
Charles Soward	Hardin	Private Sector / Finance
Larry Steward	Hardin	Public Official / Workforce / Higher Education
Herman Adkerson	Pope	Private Sector
Les Hardin	Pope	Private Sector
Vacant	Pope	
Larry Richards	Pope	Public Official / Agriculture
Neil Waggoner	Pope	Private Sector - Higher Education / Workforce
Ollie Brown	Saline	Public Official
Joey Deneal	Saline	Private Sector - Corrections
Otis Reynolds	Saline	Private Sector - Transportation
Vacant	Saline	
Phyllis Ferrell	Saline	Private Sector - Education

COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

	Member	Area of Interest
1	Angie Hampton – CEO Egyptian Health Dept. (618) 273-3326 ext 2119	Public, Behavioral, and Environmental Health – Ms. Hampton is the CEO of a 3 county Health Department that offers over 30 different programs in the fields listed above. She currently supervises 140 employees and has a budget of over \$6M
2	Lori Cox	Executive Director, Saline County Chamber Director of Small Business Development Center
3	Dale Fowler Business Development Officer – Peoples National Bank Mayor of Harrisburg, IL	Finance Industry, Economic Development – Mr. Fowler is the Business Development Officer of Peoples National Bank. Serves as Mayor for the City of Harrisburg.
4	Scott Spears	CFO – Hamilton County Coal
5	Todd Carr Quality Improvement Director – Hardin County General Hospital 618-285-6634	Health Care – Mr. Carr is the Quality Improvement Director for Hardin County General Hospital – a 25 bed critical access hospital in Hardin County. President of Hardin County Main Street Chairman of Southernmost Tourism Bureau Village of Elizabethtown Trustee Chairman of Hardin County Historical Society
6	Susan Odum Extension Educator	University of Illinois Extension Educator – Community & Economic Development Stronger Economies Together Group
7	Larry Richards	Economic Development – Appointed County Official
8	Ron Woods	Economic Development – Appointed City Official