

# Senator Martin A. Sandoval chairs first-ever Senate Transportation Discussion Panel

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**EDWARDSVILLE** -On Monday, the Leadership Council Southwestern Illinois, hosted the first ever Illinois Senate Transportation Discussion Panel on the campus of Lindenwood University in Belleville. Ill. Senator Martin A. Sandoval, Chairman of the

Illinois Senate Transportation Committee, was honored to chair the event and introduced a panel of respected speakers who are major influencers of Southwestern Illinois multi-modal projects.

“I respect the mission and values of the Leadership Council and will continue to support this region’s multi-modal transportation efforts, as they can serve as a model of how to strengthen and stabilize our economy by uniting a region for growth,” said Senator Sandoval.

The panelists included Illinois Senator Martin A. Sandoval, Illinois Department of Transportation Secretary Randy Blankenhorn, St. Clair County Chairman Mark Kern, Madison County Chairman Kurt Prenzler, Executive Director of the Leadership Council Ronda Sauget, President of the Terminal Railroad Association Mike McCarthy, Southern Illinois Transportation Enhancement (SITE) Committee Chair John Langa, SCI Engineering President Mark Harms, Executive Director of the St. Louis Regional Freightway Mary Lamie, Director of MidAmerica St. Louis Airport Tim Cantwell, and Executive Director of America’s Central Port Dennis Wilmsmeyer.

Each panelist gave a special presentation explaining current and upcoming multi-modal projects to a crowded auditorium consisting of VIP guests from the Illinois Transportation Committee, local elected officials, and business leaders of the Southwestern Illinois community. The multi-modal priorities that were discussed for 2017 were the widening of I-270 between Illinois 111 and Lilac Avenue in Missouri, Lenox Railroad Tower Upgrade, IL Route 3 Relocation in St. Clair County, I-255/Davis Street Ferry Road New Interchange in St. Clair County, and Falling Springs Road/IL 3 Railroad Bypass in St. Clair County.

"Our strength is transportation. That's what make us different than any other state in this country. Our local government partners, and our federal government, need to focus on our strength. That's where we need to invest, that's where we need put resources and that's where we need to work together to find solutions," said Illinois Department of Transportation Secretary Randy Blankenhorn.

Another major topic discussed was the role of SITE, a working group formed by the Leadership Council in 2011, composed of individuals representing rivers, rails, roads, transit, trucking and runways. SITE's mission is to drive economic development in Southwestern Illinois through transportation infrastructure.

“This event and our partnership with Senator Sandoval is a huge step in the right direction for the economy of our region, as we continue to grow our multi-modal strengths to benefit the long-term economic growth in Southwestern Illinois,” said Ronda Sauget, Executive Director of the Leadership Council Southwestern Illinois.

The corporate sponsor for the event was Lindenwood University and media sponsor was Cork Tree Creative, Inc. Other sponsors of the event include: America's Central Port, Bi-State

Development, Commerce Bank, Enterprise Rent-A-Car, Geotechnology, Inc, Gonzalez Companies, LLC, Hank's Excavating & Landscaping, Inc, Horner & Shifrin, Keely and Sons, Inc, Lochmueller Group, SCF Marine, SCI Engineering, Inc, Southern Illinois Builders Association, St. Louis Regional Freightway, Terminal Railroad Association of St. Louis, and Thouvenot, Wade & Moerchen, Inc.

The Leadership Council Southwestern Illinois is a member-based, economic development corporation representing Madison and St. Clair counties. The Council works to unite business, industry, government, education and labor for economic growth in Southwestern Illinois. These effective partnerships serve as a driving force behind successful economic development efforts throughout the Metro East region.