

SIUE's Sullivan talks of changing times in workforce, sees economic growth ahead in region

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
February 9 2017 7:03 AM



EDWARDSVILLE – Dr. Timothy S. Sullivan, Ph.D, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville School of Business, said the economic forecast for the area is dependent on several factors, but he sees a bright future ahead this year and in coming years.

Sullivan was a key presenter at the annual Edwardsville Breakfast this past week at Wildey Theatre in Edwardsville.

He showed some various slides that showed growth of about 3.5 percent of the national economy over the last 10-15 years. That growth has slowed in recent years and since 2000 grown at an average rate of about 1.8 percent.

Sullivan's prediction is for likely more of the same this year nationally and throughout the Madison County region, but he said that is dependent on several factors, including an Illinois State budget or not and what happens in Washington, D.C., in coming months with trade and many other changing factors. Sullivan pointed out an interesting factor that there have been 11 recessions since World War II, something that might take some by surprise.

Since 2000, Madison County and Illinois in general have grown at an average rate of 0.8 percent, he said. The St. Louis Metropolitan area has grown at 0.7 percent and the U.S. economy as stated before has grown at 1.8 percent.

The 2017 forecast by Sullivan is 2.3 percent national growth, 1.3 percent in Illinois, 1.0 in the St. Louis metropolitan area and 1.5 percent in Madison County. The Wall Street Journal predicts 2.4 percent growth, so Sullivan's predictions mirror others nationally.

Since 2000 the workforce nationally has declined about 3 percent for men and women, he said, translating into several million lost jobs.

Sullivan told the audience that going forward, he expects businesses to find workers in a different way, not as much through conventional newspaper classified listings but postings on the Web and social media, along with contact with community organizations, placement agencies and even churches.

He stressed this is a changing time in the American workforce and employers must adapt with it to obtain the best possible workers.