

Vote is in Home Stretch for Metro East Project as Nation's Best

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COLLINSVILLE – Just one week is left to vote for an Illinois Department of Transportation effort with Missouri as the top transportation project in the country. On the line is prestige and \$5,000 in prize money that IDOT will award to Southern Illinois University Edwardsville's Upward Bound program.

“At IDOT, we take great pride in our mission to plan, build and maintain a multimodal system of transportation that's safe, reliable and improves quality of life,” said Acting Illinois Transportation Secretary Omer Osman. “We urge the public to vote and bring this award to Illinois, where it belongs.”

The departments of transportation in Illinois and Missouri are in the running in the online vote for the People's Choice honor in the 12th annual America's Transportation

Awards, hosted by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), AAA and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

Votes can be cast once a day by clicking [here](#) or visiting www.americastransportationawards.org through Oct. 6.

The [partnership](#) between IDOT and MoDOT produced several bridge projects over the past decade to improve connections in the metropolitan area with jobs and tourist destinations.

In addition to the People's Choice Award, the IDOT-MoDOT entry is competing for the national Grand Prize, which is selected by an independent panel. Both awards come with \$10,000 in prize money for a charity or nonprofit selected by the winning states.

The Upward Bound program at SIUE has been designated by IDOT to receive \$5,000 if it wins either award. The program provides educational opportunities for middle and high school students in District 189, Cahokia, SIUE East St. Louis Charter, Brooklyn and Madison, with a focus on encouraging low-income, first-generation college students to seek post-secondary education. Upward Bound and IDOT have long partnered to teach kids about engineering careers.

In last year's America's Transportation Awards, the Interstate 55-Lake Shore Drive interchange in Chicago took home the Grand Prize, a first for IDOT.