



LEADERSHIP COUNCIL RELEASES 2013 MARKET REVIEW & INVESTMENT UPDATE

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Report spotlights projects announced, under construction or completed during 2013; highlights the Council's three key priorities as it continues work to unite the region for growth

EDWARDSVILLE, Ill., October 31, 2014... The Leadership Council Southwestern Illinois has announced the release of the *2013 Market Review & Investment Update*, revealing significant continuing investment activity in Southwestern Illinois during the most recent calendar year and continuing into 2014.

“With the conclusion of several mega projects that had helped to fuel our economy during the height of the recession, many apprehensively wondered what our development and investment pipeline would look like in 2013,” noted Dennis Wilmsmeyer, President of the Leadership Council Southwestern Illinois, the member-based, economic development corporation that compiles the economic data for Madison and St. Clair Counties in Illinois. “The good news is there was still significant investment occurring across the region. Even better news, however, is that many of the projects underway were the types of foundational projects that have the potential to attract additional investments in the years to come.”

Among the foundational projects highlighted are the recently completed Stan Musial Veterans Memorial Bridge and the Metro East Levee improvements currently underway on the levee system protecting the American Bottoms in Madison, St. Clair and Monroe counties. Much work was completed on the design, planning and permitting for this critical project in 2013, and construction is on target for completion of the improvements and reaccreditation by the Federal Emergency Management Agency in 2015. It's now estimated that the work can be completed for a total of \$110 million, less than original projected. Work is also underway on upgrades to Ameren Illinois' systems. While those projects represent almost \$1 billion in investments throughout the company's Illinois service area, \$42 million is being invested in the electrical distribution system in the Metro East, and a portion of the \$330 million being spent to upgrade the natural gas infrastructure over the next 10 years will be invested in the Metro East. Other infrastructure improvements are being made by Illinois American Water Co., including a new \$12 million, 2.5-million-gallon clear well at its plant in Granite City.

While the report provides a sampling of dozens of other individual projects underway in Madison and St. Clair counties, this edition also looks at some of those projects and initiatives through the lens of the three priority areas for growth identified by the Southwestern Illinois Economic Development Leadership Team: Retention and Expansion of Industry; Transportation/Manufacturing; and Entrepreneurship and Innovation. Exciting things are happening in each of these areas that bode well for the future of the region.

This year's report reveals that, according to the Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center, a total of 425 manufacturing firms of all sizes currently operate in Southwestern Illinois, employing approximately 20,000 people. A snapshot of the top 50, ranked by number of employees, indicates that they account for almost 16,000 of those workers. Clearly, the industrial sector remains a vital sector of our economy, and retention programs are in place to better understand the issues these businesses face and to support their expansion opportunities. Among those expanding are Kraft Foods, which is investing \$40 million in its Granite City Facilities; West Star Aviation in East Alton, site of a \$5.8 million expansion, and Gundlach Equipment Corporation (Now Terra Source), which recently built a new \$5.1 million office building in Belleville to accommodate anticipated growth.

Retention and expansion efforts also are focused around Scott Air Force Base, which continues to attract new investments such as the \$65 million headquarters facility for the Defense Information Systems Agency, as well as new missions, such as the two new cyber protection squadrons bringing 320 new jobs to the base. And, one can't talk about expansion in Southwestern Illinois without noting the thriving healthcare sector, with both counties seeing significant investments in new hospitals and upgrades to existing

facilities. Examples include the new \$63 million St. Joseph's in Highland, the \$124 million Memorial East Hospital coming to Shiloh, plans for St. Elizabeth's new \$300 million hospital in O'Fallon and more than \$60 million in improvements underway or planned at St. Anthony's Health Center and Alton Memorial Hospital.

The Leadership Council's focus on Transportation/Manufacturing is centered on helping to fulfill the potential for growth of distribution and logistics jobs in the region. We have an exciting story to tell centered on the developments already underway or planned, including the \$40 million, 1.2 million-square-foot speculative facility being developed at Gateway Commerce Center, which has seen \$400 million in investments in the last 15 years, creating 4,600 jobs. Other noteworthy projects include the new \$23.5 million FedEx distribution center opening in Sauget Industrial Park, which is expected to create 25 full-time and 150 part-time jobs. The region's tremendous infrastructure, coupled with available, affordable property, has attracted over 14 million square feet of distribution/logistics space for a host of companies as well known as FedEx, including Walgreens, Dial, Hershey's, World Wide Technologies, Procter & Gamble and many more. The recently launched multimodal branding initiative, *St. Louis Gateway*, is a joint effort by the Leadership Council and the St. Louis Regional Chamber to solidify the region's position as a multimodal hub poised for growth. More details are available at www.stlgateway.com.

The Leadership Council's work to advance entrepreneurship and innovation in the region is in the early stages, but the Market Review provides an overview of the existing resources already available to help accommodate the growth of startups in the Metro East. Among those are the SIUE Small Business Development Center, the Metro East Start-Up Challenge, River's Edge Enterprise Center, the new incubator space being incorporated into the Historic Turner Hall building in Downtown Belleville and the Great Rivers Market Fresh Network in Alton.

Millions of dollars continue to be invested in the education sector and the 2013 report includes a sampling of many of these, as well as a spotlight on our region's institutions of higher learning. Several of these can be found on the Top Employers List, which is another popular section of the Report. The positive trends in single family home sales is shown, with Madison and St. Clair counties sales up 13 percent and 17 percent respectively from 2012 to 2013. Various other information pertaining to demographics, labor force and employment also is included, making the publication a valuable resource for community and economic development professional across the region.

"The Leadership Council is pleased to provide a snapshot of the continuing investments and construction activity in Southwestern Illinois," noted Wilmsmeyer. "Yes, the

landscape is different than it was a few years ago, but the seeds for future growth have been planted, and we remain confident that they will bear fruit for our region in the years to come.”

The PDF version of the complete *2013 Market Review & Investment Update* is now available online at www.leadershipcouncilswil.com.

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.