



Springfield Sangamon Growth Alliance Celebrates More Than \$1.5 Billion In Economic Development Opportunities Coming To Region

by Jessica Williams

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SPRINGFIELD - The Springfield Sangamon Growth Alliance (SSGA) is celebrating a record year in terms of advancing economic development and partnership opportunities across the region. SSGA was formed five years ago with the goal of promoting and pursuing economic development efforts in Springfield and Sangamon County.



CEO Ryan McCrady said SSGA has played an instrumental role in pushing forward several significant community projects including the Land of Lincoln Energy Center (LLEC), which has been issued its final construction permit and Double Black Diamond Solar, which will be the largest solar development in Illinois and recently broke ground. In addition, SSGA supported efforts for the SCHEELS Sports Park at Legacy Pointe and the University of Illinois Springfield Innovation Center. SSGA also partnered with the City of Springfield to fund the phase 2 environmental study of the Pillsbury Mills Site, an 18-acre development site in Springfield's north end which has allowed the demolition of the site to begin. These five projects alone are estimated to create an economic impact of more than \$1.5 billion to the region over the next five years.

“SSGA plays a critical role in helping developers navigate all aspects of bringing their projects from concept to construction,” said McCrady. “That includes assisting developers with behind-the-scenes coordination and helping expedite the process through resources and partners right here in Sangamon County. SSGA also works hard to ensure that projects meet the development goals of the community and local government leaders. The exciting part is that last year, we were able to help advance a lot of these projects, this year we'll be able to tell people they are actually happening.”

McCrady said in 2022 alone, SSGA visited with regional business leaders during more than 90 business retention and expansion visits in the community. SSGA also worked to strengthen connections with nearly 50 national site selectors and developers nationally who have expressed interest in Springfield and Sangamon County.

During the past year, SSGA and the City of Springfield, the Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln, Mid-Illinois Medical District and Downtown Springfield, Inc. collaborated to secure a \$150,000 grant to accelerate economic growth as part of the Downtown/Mid-Illinois Medical District Master Plan project. SSGA also supported Lincoln Land Community College in its efforts to secure a \$5 million grant to expand its workforce training services.

McCrady added his goal for the whole community is to feel the positive impact of Springfield's economic growth. According to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, unemployment locally in Springfield is at 3.9% compared to a statewide average of 4.4%. As of December 2022, Springfield has a total of 2900 more people employed than last year and wages have increased 20% since the pandemic began.

“As far as our goals for 2023, we want to continue to exceed expectations and not be comfortable with our success so far,” said McCrady. “I want our community to continue to expect that the years forward will not only be as good as we've had, but even better.

The SSGA ThriveInSPI campaign supports projects that help our community be proud of who we are and optimistic about what the future could bring in terms of potential growth.”

The public is invited to attend SSGA’s annual meeting this Friday, January 20 from 8 a. m. to 9 a.m. at the Memorial Learning Center located at 200 Miller Street. For additional details or to register for the event, go to www.ThriveInSPI.org.

The Springfield Sangamon Growth Alliance (SSGA) is committed to pursuing economic prosperity and growth for Sangamon County and the City of Springfield, Illinois. Founded in 2018, the public-private sector partnership is dedicated to advancing economic development efforts in Springfield and Sangamon County. Led by a volunteered, diverse, industry-driven board of directors, SSGA is helping create and market a financially sound community; able to attract new businesses and skilled talent, while retaining the innovative companies and local workforce who already make Sangamon County their home. For more information about SSGA, visit www.ThriveInSPI.org.