

New SIUE Fire Station will enable Edwardsville to better serve university, nearby businesses

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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After many years of planning and discussion, the fire station on the Southern Illinois University Edwardsville campus is about to become a reality in coming months.

Several leaders from the City of Edwardsville, state legislators and fire department, emergency personnel and community members attended a groundbreaking Saturday

morning where the new fire station will be located. The location is close to the SIUE Water Tower and just off Northwest University Drive on campus.

Edwardsville Mayor Hal Patton said the location of the fire station will not only better service the nearby university but the Gateway Commerce Center area and the new construction going up for future businesses. He said there are 4,500 employees in that area now and that number could double in coming years with the new additions.

“The new fire station means a lot to the whole Edwardsville community,” Patton said. “Safety is our number one priority and we will be closer to the scenes the firefighters and rescue people need to get to. We worked together with the SIUE Board and architects with support of counsel. Now we have the location and we will be putting the professionals to work building it.”

Patton said it is a relief to him that the station will be close to the businesses in the Gateway Commerce Center complex area and the new businesses that are coming. He added that tax revenue generated from the new warehouse businesses will go toward paying for the new station.



SIUE Edwardsville Fire Chief Rick Welle said the earliest that this particular site was considered for a fire station was in 1991.

“This will be a great site for both the university but the entire warehouse distribution center on the west cutting response time for emergencies down,” he said. “The university is expanding and the warehouse area is also expanding so this is a perfect location. We can be on campus in a matter of moments. We can be there in three to five minutes and that improves outcomes for both EMS and fire calls.”

Welle said SIUE campus and warehouse calls represent 14 to 16 percent of Edwardsville’s Fire Department calls.

“It is a big portion of what we do,” he said. “Overall, we feel we will be meeting the needs of the university and still meeting the needs of the community as a whole with the new fire station.”

SIUE Interim Chancellor Dr. Stephen Hansen thanked the mayor, the city and his team at SIUE and the legislators for making the day possible for the new fire station.

“SIUE and the city of Edwardsville are rated as one of the safest cities, college towns in the country and that is because of the cooperation of the city and university,” he said. “This will only enhance that.”

Sen. William Haine said the effort to facilitate legislation for funding the project results in a safer campus and safer city.

“Our job is to pass laws for common good,” he said. “The safety of the people is the law above everything else we do in Springfield. This is one example of that.”

Haine personally thanked the firemen and other rescue personnel for their efforts to keep the Edwardsville area safe.

State Rep. Dwight Kay also thanked the people who put their lives on the line each day to keep the Edwardsville area residents safe.

“I think we have two major jobs to provide in Springfield and that is to provide opportunity for people in the state of Illinois and security,” he said. “That comes in a lot of different forms. This will provide security for a lot of students who come to a great university. This is just the right thing to do.”

Patton summed up best what the new SIUE Fire Station will mean to Edwardsville and the surrounding area: “We have a responsibility to protect and serve the citizens and businesses and this will help us better serve them.”

