

# ST. CLAIR COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

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## 2015 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Economic development activities and services provided in 2015 generally remained in these categories: 1) enterprise zone administration, 2) prospect handling, 3) business loans/revenue bond issues, and 4) special projects.

Near the end year of 2015, the Department's loan portfolio consisted of 9 businesses with an outstanding loan balance due of \$375,962 (down from \$1,026,960 at the end of 2014). In 2015 seven loans were paid in full. Since the business loan program inception, 136 businesses have received 204 loans with more than \$14.4 million loaned under the program which created 1,682 jobs for low to moderate income persons within 25 different communities in St. Clair County. Most local and regional banks have participated since the creation of the loan program as have other statewide and regional development agencies. The Department provides gap financing for fixed assets and equipment.

Staff continued to administer two of the enterprise zones located in St. Clair County. The *American Bottoms Enterprise Zone* includes parts of Sauget, Cahokia and Dupon and the *St. Clair County MidAmerica Enterprise Zone* includes parts of O'Fallon, Shiloh, Mascoutah, Lebanon and MidAmerica St. Louis airport. In 2015 staff assisted 11 businesses located in these communities by issuing the building materials sales tax exemption certificate. The Department collected \$81,655.88 in issuance fees. The fees ranged from \$225.00 to \$50,000.00 (LD Commodities, a European logistics/commodities business expanding on the Cahokia riverfront).

Special projects in 2015 included the River Bridge District along Front Street in East St. Louis. The Department successfully applied for a \$3.5 million EDA grant as part of that \$8 million project. Construction begins in 2016. The project is a public-private partnership with the financial support of Cargill, the Casino Queen, and Bunge-SCF Grain.

The Department also worked extensively on the County's NGA site efforts.

Staff continued to handle leads/prospects and worked closely with site consultants and commercial/industrial realtors. Staff worked some prospects internally and others with the support of IL DCEO. Staff continued to e-mail such leads/prospects to communities and commercial realtors in the County. Staff continued to provide detailed, customized demographic data to site selection firms, realtors, lenders and developers. Staff continued to make presentations to regional and local civic organizations in 2015.

Staff and the County Board Chairman continued to meet quarterly in 2015 with senior Boeing executives at their St. Louis headquarters to discuss issues of mutual benefit. These meetings will continue in 2016.

In 2015 staff provided direct technical assistance to 110 small business owners and startups seeking financing options (up from 90 in 2014). Staff referred many of these to the Small Business Development Center at the SIU-E East St. Louis campus and Justine Petersen for additional assistance.

The Department continued to use social media (Facebook: St. Clair County Economic Development and Twitter: @SCCEconDev).

Staff continued to participate actively in many organizations and trade associations including: Scott AFB Retention Task Force (*Co-Chair*), Association of Defense Communities, International Economic Development Council, Illinois Enterprise Zone Association, Illinois Ventures for Community Action, Southwestern Illinois Trade Council, MidAmerica Workforce Investment Board, Belle-Scott Committee, Mid-America Medical District Commission, Regional Port Working Group, City Club of Chicago, Kaskaskia-Cahokia Trail Coalition, Lower Kaskaskia Stakeholders, and many local chambers of commerce.