

ST. CLAIR COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

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2016 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Economic development activities and services provided in 2016 generally remained in these categories: 1) enterprise zone administration, 2) prospect handling, and 3) special projects.

The Department discontinued its traditional business loan program in 2016 due to lack of activity and other Federal and regional business financing products were available with fewer requirements. Since the inception of the business loan program 136 businesses located in 25 communities received 204 loans with more than \$14.4 million loaned under the program. Nearly 1,700 jobs were created. The program provided gap financing for fixed assets and equipment.

Staff continued to administer two of the six State certified enterprise zones located in St. Clair County. The *American Bottoms Enterprise Zone* includes parts of Sauget, Cahokia and Duplo and the *St. Clair County MidAmerica Enterprise Zone* includes parts of O'Fallon, Shiloh, Mascoutah, Lebanon, and MidAmerica St. Louis airport. In 2016 staff assisted 5 businesses located in these communities by issuing the building materials sales tax exemption certificate. The Department collected \$77,223.10 in issuance fees. Staff represented the County on municipal TIF Joint Review Boards. Working with our sister agency, the Intergovernmental Grants Department, HUD approved our \$15 million Section 108 Business Loan Pool allocation for significant projects. Special projects in 2016 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. Groundbreaking was in early November for Phase I. The project is a public-private partnership with the financial support of Cargill, the Casino Queen, and Bunge-SCF Grain.

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 2016.

Staff and the County Board Chairman continued to meet quarterly in 2016 with senior Boeing executives at their St. Louis headquarters to discuss issues of mutual benefit. These meetings will continue in 2017.

In 2016 staff provided direct technical assistance to 127 small business owners and startups seeking financing options (up from 110 in 2015). 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, Regional Port Working Group, City Club of Chicago, Kaskaskia-Cahokia Trail Coalition, Lower Kaskaskia Stakeholders, and many local chambers of commerce.