



The Regional Link

Serving South
Central Illinois

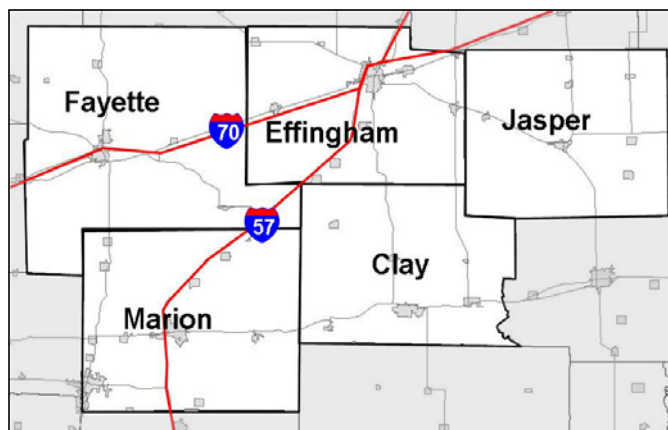
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May 2006

Welcome to the South Central Illinois Regional Planning and Development Commission Family

Welcome to the initial edition of "The Regional Link", the quarterly newsletter of the South Central Illinois Regional Planning and Development Commission (SCIRP&DC). Our purpose in offering this newsletter centers on our desire to maintain a more consistent and beneficial "line of communication" with our local elected and appointed public officials, our civic leaders, our financial community, our sister regional organizations and the state and federal elected officials and agencies that play an important part in shaping our economic future.

The electronic publication and transmittal of our newsletter is made possible by a combination of contributions from members of our "regional family" within Clay, Effingham, Fayette, Jasper and Marion counties and a District Planning Grant from the US Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA). It is our regional or-



The five counties served by the South Central Illinois Regional Planning and Development Commission

ganization's hope that, by sharing relevant information about: current problems and opportunities; applicable state and federal policies and programs; and meaningful local success stories, etc. that we can motivate you as a local leader, your governing body or private organization to get involved and mount a viable action plan to enhance your portion of our five-county region.

While we promise to avoid the temptation to use this newsletter as a "soapbox" to tout our accomplishments, we will be prone to giving recognition to our member local governments, development organizations and area businesses that have contributed to our quality of life or economic prosperity through noteworthy accomplishments or projects, etc. *(continued on last page)*

Why a Regional Perspective ?

Thinking regionally means thinking beyond single local political boundaries (a single community or single county) to the boundaries which define those other local governments sharing a common interest. It means understanding that planning

within a region is not synonymous with "regional planning", but instead means building coalitions of stakeholders that are often informal and tailored to specific projects focusing upon attracting private investment, job creation, tourism, transportation

issues, land use challenges, housing concerns or any combination of issues having an area-wide or regional implication. This is why SCIRP&DC was originally created and why to this day we continue to serve the South Central Illinois region.

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Upcoming Commission Events

- May 29th - Labor Day - Commission Offices will be closed
- May 30th—SCIRPDC Commission Meeting—Salem
- June 27th—SCIRPDC Commission Meeting—Effingham
- July 4th—Independence Day—Commission Offices will be closed
- July 25th - SCIRPDC Commission Meeting—Salem
- Late August - Completion of Family Income Surveys for CDAP Public Facilities Grants



DCEO Announces Changes to Public Facilities CDAP Grant Submission Timeframe and Traditional Ranking Criteria

2007 CDAP Grant Application Submission Dates	
Housing Rehab.	Nov. 14, 2006
Planning and Design Engineering	May 15, 2007
Public Facilities LMI Surveys Only for "Pre Approval"	Nov. 15, 2006
Public Facilities Construction	Feb. 20, 2007

2007 CDAP Scoring System

1. Financial Need: (50 points)
 - Audit Fund balances in Utility Fund and General Fund
 - Utility Rates
 - Corporate Tax level
2. Project Readiness: (40 points)
 - IEPA Permit
 - Progress on prior CDAP grants
 - Easements
 - Executed agreements
 - Site ownership
 - Leverage
3. Poverty (10 points)
 - 2.5% - 25%

When recently attending an Illinois Rural Water Roundtable meeting in Mt. Vernon, Illinois the Commission staff learned that several noteworthy changes have now been finalized by the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity as they relate to Community Development Assistance Program (CDAP) submission and ranking procedures. Commission has learned that, the CDAP grant application submission deadline for Program Year 2007 (PY-2007) "design engineering" and "public facility construction" grant requests will be moved back about one month from the second Tuesday of January 2007 (i.e., January 9, 2007) to sometime in mid February 2007 to avoid a work crunch which coincides with the Christmas Holiday season.

The Commission also learned that, beginning in 2007, DCEO's traditional

heavy consideration of CDAP project's benefit to "low-to-moderate income" to existing or proposed water or sewer system users will be removed as a "ranking criteria", but remains as a basic "eligibility threshold" for the receipt of grant funding (i.e. the proposed project must still benefit at least 51 percent LMI persons, but no higher project ranking will be assigned by DCEO for projects that document an even higher level of benefit to such targeted individuals).

In addition, consideration of the CDAP project's ability to document and then convincingly address a serious public utility deficiency (or the complete absence of an essential public utility) which has continually contributed to serious illnesses, disease outbreak or serious environmental pollution problems thereby causing a "threat to the health and

safety" of local residents will also be removed by DCEO as a "ranking criteria", but remains as a basic "eligibility threshold" for the receipt grant funding (i.e., PY-2007 CDAP application must still include appropriate third-party documentation verifying that the proposed water or sewer improvements will address and effectively resolve a "severe threat to health and safety" but no higher project "ranking score" will be awarded as in the past for a particularly persuasive argument).

These and other important Program Year 2007 changes will be discussed in greater detail by DCEO officials at the annual "CDAP Grant Application Workshop" to be held at the Northfield Conference Center in Springfield on Tuesday, June 13, 2006 which will be attended by the Commission staff.

Potential CDAP Cutbacks

As many readers of this newsletter may be well aware of, the Federal Government is presently debating the FY-2007 Federal Budget. Such discussion includes a 25% decrease in the HUD, and more precisely the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. These funds are

an invaluable resource to the South Central Illinois area because they fund the state administered Community Development Assistance Program (CDAP) funds we are all more familiar with. As your regional planning commission, we are alerting you to this situation and encouraging all of our local

governments and organizations to voice their opinion on this issue to our appropriate federal representatives. Please feel free to contact us and request a sample letter making the process even simpler or if you have any questions.



A potential federal decrease in CDBG funds would result in a decrease of all CDAP funds.



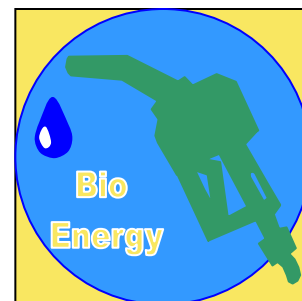
Bioenergy Arrives in South Central Illinois

Combined with recent price increases in petroleum and state and federal tax incentives, "bioenergy production" has come to the South Central Illinois Region with a bang. SCIRP&DC was first introduced to this rapidly emerging industry when Midwest Agri-Energy Production, LLC and Indeck Development, LLC announced in October of 2005 the selection of an industrial site west of Salem for the development of a,

\$103 million, 55 million gallon per year ethanol plant and a coal-fired steam energy plant. Since this announcement, the City of Salem and SCIRP&DC have worked in cooperation to help bring the ethanol plant development site into the Greater Salem Enterprise Zone.

In March of 2006, the City of Newton was informed by National Trail Biodiesel Group, LLC of their intent to construct a 30 million

gallon per year biodiesel production plant in the Southtown Industrial Park. Two months later in May 2006, National Ethanol optioned a 70-acre site for a 50,000 gallon per year ethanol processing plant in Vandalia. SCIRP&DC has and will continue to assist these bioenergy projects within the region. Look forward to more information on these projects in future editions of "The Regional Link".



By the summer of 2008, the South Central Illinois Region could be home for as many as three bioenergy production plants.

Brownstown Adds Residential Incentives

Brownstown, Illinois has been a part of the Vandalia/Fayette County Enterprise Zone for about six years, but has never been able to take full advantage of the zones commercial and industrial tax incentives. To address this fact, Village officials recommended adding residential incentives to help improve the community. A public hearing held

in late February 2006 and facilitated by South Central Illinois Regional Planning and Development Commission staff, at the Golden Years Club building was the next step in adding residential incentives to those offered through the Enterprise Zone. The residential incentives that Brownstown wants to offer include: (1) real estate tax abatement

on the amount of increased assessments that resulted from new construction or qualified expansion projects in which at least \$3,500 worth of materials are used; and (2) retail sales tax exemption on materials for new construction and qualified expansion and renovation projects that are permanently affixed to residential properties.

"We believe in our town, and we want to do whatever we can to improve it,"
Brownstown Village
President Chuck Fitch.

*Vandalia Leader-Union
Monday, March 20, 2006*

DeMoulin Completes Move

DeMoulin Inc. completed the move from its old plant into the former Moore Brothers building in Centralia Industrial Park No.1 in late November in only days. DeMoulin, a manufacturer of band uniforms and other apparel products incorporated in 1905, with the cooperation

of ROI International, property management, received a CDAP loan of \$162,000 from Centralia's RLF fund, for the purchase of the property, moving expenses, and purchase of a new air compressor. This project was also aided by an Economic Development loan of \$129,600 at 4.5

percent interest for six years. The combination of the retention of 46 jobs, creation of 9 additional jobs and the move to a modern corporate owned facility reinforce the firm's ties with the region, are the reasons why the project was financially supported by SCIRP&DC.



DeMoulin Inc. offers off the shelf and custom uniform designs.



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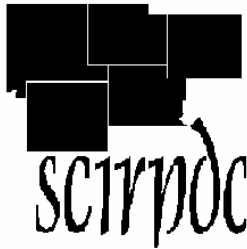
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Providing the South Central Illinois Region with planning staff, technical assistance, businesses services, and grant writing and management services since 1972.



Is on the web at:

www.SCIRPDC.com

Welcome Continued

In closing, it is our belief that most of you receiving this electronic newsletter already have at least a general understanding of our regional organization and the planning assistance; technical staff assistance; grant writing and management; and variety of business and community development financing programs we offer our constituents. However, for those we have yet to meet and assist, we invite you to visit our web site at www.scirpdc.com and learn more about us and how you can participate and benefit.

Looking For Your Good News and Emails

If you or someone you know is interested in receiving our newsletter or sharing a positive story or article, please let us know at news@scirpdc.com. We would also love to hear from you about how to further improve our newsletter.

ULWEP Receives Additional C2000 Grants

SCIRP&DC is a member of and serves as staff support for the Upper Little Wabash Ecosystem Partnership (ULWEP) a diverse collection of local stakeholders united to address common concerns facing the Upper Little Wabash Watershed. In early April 2006, two stakeholders in the Upper Little Wabash Ecosystem Partnership were awarded \$48,150 by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. The recipients will utilize such state grant funds to help fund local programs ranging from education to environmental

assessment. The grant funding is made possible by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources' (IDNR) Conservation 2000 (C2000) program which provides assistance to local organizations for natural resource management. The two latest recipients receiving funding are:

- Ballard Nature Center, \$38,150.00 - Bring Back the Herps
- George P. Irwin Conservation Education Station, \$10,000.00 - Shallow Water Wetlands Enhancement Project

The April announcement is the second round of C2000 grants for FY'06 awarded by IDNR. In late November, 2005 stakeholders within the partnership were awarded \$140,630 for three programs. The largest of which, \$65,400, is directed towards the Ballard Nature Center to survey the fauna of the Upper Little Wabash. The project is meant to determine fauna distributions and identify priority sites for management and protection. The Upper Little Wabash Ecosystem Partnership encompasses 1,600 square



miles in Clay, Coles, Cumberland, Effingham, Fayette, Jasper, Marion, and Shelby counties. Designated in 2002, the Upper Little Wabash Partnership members are very active in the Conservation 2000 program and have previously received IDNR funding for the creation of master watershed management plan.