

FY-2025-2030
Comprehensive Economic
Development Strategy

South Central Illinois Regional Planning & Development Commission
Economic Development District

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents	ii
CEDS Committee.....	iv
Forward.....	v
Executive Summary	vi
I. Public & Private Partnerships	
a. History of the Development Organization.....	1
b. Governing Body	2
c. District Management	2
d. Partnership with Other Organizations	4
II. Economic Analysis	
a. Geography	6
b. Population.....	7
c. Median Age	8
d. Age Cohorts.....	8
e. Median Household Income & Per Capita Income	9
f. Poverty, Unemployment & Labor Force Participation	10
g. Educational Attainment	12
h. Crime	13
i. Employment by Industry	15
j. Innovation.....	16
III. Industry Cluster Analysis	
a. Methodology.....	20
b. Cluster Employment.....	21
c. Cluster Estimated Earnings.....	23
d. Location Quotients, change in LQ’s, and Competitive Advantage	24
e. Conclusion	27
IV. Infrastructure	
a. Roadway Infrastructure	28
b. Roadway Infrastructure Improvements	28
c. Rail Infrastructure.....	29
d. Air Transportation Infrastructure.....	30
e. Housing Resources	30

f. Water Resources.....	31
g. Wastewater Treatment Resources	32
h. Energy Distribution	33
i. Technology Infrastructure	34
V. Public Services & Resources	
a. Educational/Training Resources	36
b. Health Care Services	37
c. Police Protection.....	38
d. Fire Protection	39
e. Recreational/Cultural Opportunities	40
f. Community Planning Activities	43
VI. Action Plan	
a. CEDS Development Process	45
b. SWOT Analysis.....	46
c. Goal and Objectives.....	49
d. Alignment with State of Illinois Development Priorities	59
Appendix	
EDA Regulations: Part 304-Governing Body Membership Documentation.....	60
EDA Regulations: Part 303-Strategy Committee Membership Documentation	61
Resolution of the Board of Commissioner Approving and Adopting the CEDS	62

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Foreword

The South Central Illinois Regional Planning & Development Commission (SCIRPDC) submits a new Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) to the Economic Development Administration every five years to show the performance of the prior five years and to provide a new set of regional goals and objectives for the next three-year funding cycle. This document also aids the membership with the development and implementation of a regional plan of action and identifying investment priorities and funding sources for the Economic Development District (EDD).

The CEDS provides up-to-date demographic information for the region in order to paint a realistic picture of the current economic condition. The analyzed data were derived from the U.S. Census Bureau, the District's Cluster Analysis, and other government agencies.

It is SCIRPDC's goal to work together with public officials, community and private sector leaders, higher education institutions, and non-profit organizations in order to implement the CEDS. Ultimately, SCIRPDC envisions a living document that not only records past economic development efforts but also provides direction to foster a thriving economy in South Central Illinois.

South Central Illinois Regional Planning & Development Commission provides solutions to the challenges of local government. A multitude of programs and projects are initiated each year at the federal, state, regional, and local levels. Your regional planning commission creates the needed venue and framework to coordinate these programs and goals as a whole. It is the Commission's function to take the goals and objectives within this document and turn them into success for the five-county EDD of Clay, Effingham, Fayette, Jasper, and Marion, along with the governments and special taxing districts within.

Executive Summary

The South Central Illinois Region is made up of five counties (Clay, Effingham, Fayette, Jasper, and Marion) with a 2024 resident population of 114,109, a net decrease of 2,387 since 2020, on trend with the state population rate. The region's leading employment by industry includes Manufacturing, Agriculture, Mining, Quarrying, Oil and Gas Extraction, and Health Care and Social Assistance. The public infrastructure includes above average ground transportation with two interstates (I-57 & I-70) and four US Highways (US 40, 45, 50, 51) stretching through the five-county EDD, along with 10 combined Main Line and Short Line railroad companies, five general aviation airports and 11 formally established industrial or business parks.

The process of rewriting the previously published 2020-2023 CEDS document was accomplished through the generous volunteer participation and support of many civic leaders, local governments, development groups, affiliate state and federal agencies, etc. At the center of the local and regional public participation process for writing the 2025-2030 document is the District's CEDS Advisory Committee.

The central purpose of the CEDS is to provide up-to-date demographic information, review the region's economic development performance since the last regional CEDS publication, encourage the continued implementation of a regional plan of action, and identify and prioritize the investment opportunities and funding sources for the SCIRPDC region.

The SCIRPDC EDD, in collaboration with the District's Voluntary CEDS Committee, developed a SWOT analysis detailing the region's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The SWOT analysis is summarized below.

The next step in crafting an effective economic development strategy is leveraging the SWOT analysis to develop a regional strategic direction and action plan. To this end, the CEDS provides a list of eight essential economic development priorities for the South Central Illinois region created with the region's SWOT analysis in mind. Furthermore, within the CEDS, each priority is accompanied by several defined objectives to encourage achievement. Below is a sequential list of those top economic development priorities.

- (1) Quality of Life/Workforce Attraction**
- (2) Infrastructure**
- (3) Economic Development Competitiveness**
- (4) Workforce Development**
- (5) Technology**
- (6) Freight and Transportation**
- (7) Disaster Preparedness**
- (8) Conservation & Development**

The SWOT analysis, located below, and economic development priorities, discussed above, are the two most essential pieces of this CEDS document and put in place specific investment priorities for the region going forward. In summary, the South Central Illinois CEDS is a roadmap to encourage the diversification and growth of the regional economy and attempts to serve as a guide for future local, regional, state, and federal investment priorities in the SCIRPDC EDD.

SWOT Analysis Summary

Regional Strengths	Regional Weaknesses
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Local Economic Development Efforts 2. Workforce Development 3. Adequate Public Utilities 4. Private and Public Development Organizations 5. Transportation Infrastructure 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Need for Manufacturing Technical Training 2. Lack of Consistent Broadband Access 3. Lack of Adequate Housing 4. Lack of Local Government Participation 5. Lack of Entrepreneurship
Regional Opportunities	Regional Threats
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Career-Based Workforce Development 2. Focus on Regional Assets 3. Invest on Economic Strengths 4. Region-Based Thought Process 5. Encourage Entrepreneurs and Innovation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reduced State and Federal Funding 2. Regional Employers' Financial Burden 3. Population Decline 4. Lack of Technology-based Workforce 5. High Taxes

I. Public & Private Partnerships

a. History of the District Organization

The economic development planning and technical assistance function provided by the Economic Development District (EDD) to the public and private leadership within Clay, Effingham, Fayette, Jasper, and Marion counties is administered by the South Central Illinois Regional Planning and Development Commission (SCIRPDC). The Regional Planning Commission was established in October 1972 under the Illinois Regional Planning Act. The Economic Development District has its offices at 120 S. Delmar Avenue, Suite A, in the City of Salem, Illinois.

A three-county South Central Illinois jurisdiction comprised of Effingham, Fayette, and Marion Counties was formally recognized as an Economic Development District (EDD) by the Economic Development Administration (EDA) in 1976. The district received Section 301(b) planning grant funds from the EDA beginning in 1977 through 1982, at which time financial support for the regional organization was terminated.

The three-county area District Overall Economic Development Program (OEDP) document was not updated for nearly ten years after the termination of EDA planning funds. However, Fayette and Marion counties authored and maintained single-county OEDP documents, which were accepted by the EDA in 1991. In May 1992, the designated but unfunded Economic Development District received encouragement from the EDA to consider updating its earlier District OEDP document, which in turn would have several potential benefits for both the region and the District organization including: (1) qualifying all areas of the proposed three-county District for EDA financial assistance; (2) securing a 10% increase in any future EDA grants awarded to the District's participating local governments; (3) requalifying the regional organization for the possible future receipt of ongoing EDA Section 301(b) economic development planning grant funds; and (4) qualifying the regional organization for the possible future receipt of EDA Title IX Revolving Loan Funds to reinvest in business ventures proposed by qualifying local industrial firms.

A fully updated District OEDP document was submitted to the Chicago Regional Office of EDA in September 1993 and subsequently approved in November 1993. The regional organization's decision to update the District OEDP document also relieved municipal and county officials in Fayette and Marion counties from annually updating their single-county OEDP documents while providing them an opportunity for participation and input into the District OEDP development process.

Upon EDA's approval of the updated District OEDP document 1993, the regional organization officially requested EDA's consideration of a District Planning Grant, which, among other things, would be utilized by the regional organization to help finance requisite annual updates to the 1993 District OEDP document. Finally, Section 301(b) grant funds became available and were awarded to the District organization by the Chicago Regional Office of EDA in 1997. Prior to reinitiating EDA Section 301(b) planning grant funds, the District was the recipient of two separate \$300,000 EDA Title IX Revolving Loan Fund capitalization grants in 1994 and again in 1996, as well as an infrastructure improvement grant for the City of Vandalia in 1993.

In early 1997, a combination of factors caused the three-county regional organization to give serious consideration to expanding its traditional multi-county service jurisdiction. As a result, effective July 1, 1997, the South Central Illinois Regional Planning and Development Commission began serving a five-county constituency rather than a three-county area. The expanded District today includes the counties of Clay, Effingham, Fayette, Jasper, and Marion.

b. Governing Body

**Figure 1-1:
Board of Commissioners Membership**

Representing	Number of Appointees
County Board	3 Members
Two Largest Cities	2 Members
Smaller Villages	1 Member
Total Per County	6 Members

Source: SCIRPDC Bylaws

Membership on the SCIRPDC Board of Commissioners is equally allocated among the five-member counties and their respective local governments, as depicted in **Figure 1-1**.

The Commission's governing body, known as the Board of Commissioners, consists of thirty (30) voting members from the five-county area, along with the Executive Director, who serves as a non-voting, ex-officio member, to complete the thirty-one (31) member board. Presently, the Board of Commissioners consists of 12 local elected officials (40.0%); 5 appointed local officials (16.6%); 13 private sector representatives (43.4%), and the Executive Director (3.3%).

The Board of Commissioners broadly represents the varied interests of local units of government, the business community, educational institutions, the financial community, transportation and public utilities, the industrial sector, and agriculture. Currently, five (or 16.6%) of the Commission's thirty-one-member governing body are female.

c. District Management

The Board of Commissioners oversees and approves all official and/or advisory planning activities performed by various standing and ad hoc advisory committees and the regional organization's permanent staff of six individuals under the Commission's By-Laws. The thirty-one-member board also retains all policy-making authority for the Commission and can function in between regularly scheduled monthly business meetings via an eleven-member Executive Committee composed of five officers, five at-large members, and the Executive Director. Routine or day-to-day management of the Economic Development

District's business affairs is accomplished through the Executive Director and Office Manager/Bookkeeper. **Figure 1-2** depicts the current staffing of the Economic Development District.

**Figure 1-2:
SCIRPDC Staffing
(April 2024)**

Staffing Position	Individual	Tenure	Funding Sources
Executive Director	Luke J.L. Eastin	9 Years	EDA, SBA, RBI, CDI, Title IX & Local Funds
Office Manager/Bookkeeper	Sharon Briscoe	44 Years	Commission Funds
EDA Planner/Loan Portfolio Manager	Brooke Frederick	4 Years	RBI, EDA, CDI, SBA, Title IX and Local Funds, EDA 301(b)
Regional Human Services Transportation Planner	Terri Finn	15 Years	IDOT HSTP Funds
Assistant Regional Human Services Transportation Planner	Riley Anderson	3 Years	IDOT HSTP Funds
Economic Development Planner	Chirayu Patel	1 Year	Local Grant Management Contracts, EDA 301(b)

The Commission organization has four standing committees that assist the governing body in managing administrative processes and programmatic functions. The committees are comprised of the following, (1) the Executive Committee, which meets in the interim between Commission meetings to act upon such matters as necessary; (2) the Budget and Operating Committee, which formulates an annual agency-wide operating budget; (3) the Personnel Policy Committee, which develops and updates the Commission's Personnel Policies and reviews any grievances arising from its interpretation; and (4) the Area-wide Loan Review Committee which makes recommendations to the Board of Commissioners regarding all loan requests.

The Commission coordinates the formulation of its economic development vision for the region, with a five-county, 30-member CEDS Advisory Committee, which works directly with the District's Economic Development Planner and other professional staff members to prepare and maintain an up-to-date District CEDS document. This document reflects a wide spectrum of viewpoints regarding the analysis of local conditions, regional challenges, economic development opportunities, and a series of long-term economic development goals, along with short-term measurable objectives to foster the economic advancement of the five-county region.

This newly created District CEDS document represents an update to the earlier 2020-2023 District CEDS document and was primarily authored by the district's professional staff, incorporating local input from the five-county CEDS Advisory Committee. The approval of this District CEDS document is jointly vested in each of the five individual county boards, the thirty-one-member Board of Commissioners, in addition to the staff of the Chicago Regional Offices of the Economic Development Administration.

The Economic Development District's professional staff will be responsible for periodically reporting any progress on the attainment of the district's CEDS development goals, objectives, and implementation strategy to the Commission's governing body and the Economic Development Administration. Any necessary adjustments to the district's economic development strategy will be reflected in subsequent annual updates to the District CEDS document.

d. Partnerships with Other Organizations

In recognition of the organization's position to facilitate and enhance the economic development of the region, the Commission maintains working relationships with other local, regional, state, and federal organizations involved with planning, promotion, and economic development efforts for the five-county South Central Illinois region. These relationships range from the Commission serving strictly in an advisory capacity to more formal contractual agreements for specified services such as loan processing, grant writing, environmental reviews, and regional studies. Examples of such existing relationships include:

- The Commission has enjoyed a strong relationship with the Economic Development Administration (EDA). The EDA Planning Grant plays a critical role in the betterment of regional economic development efforts within the five-member counties. The Commission has utilized both EDA Public Infrastructure and Economic Adjustment Assistance Grants. Lastly, the Commission serves as a fiscal agent for EDA's Title IX loan program, which provides credit-worthy small businesses in the rural five-county area with access to affordable, fixed-rate financing and a source of small-scale capital.
- The Commission continues to function as the Intermediary Lender and administrator of an Area-Wide Revolving Loan Program under a designation from the United States Department of Agriculture, Office for Rural Development to provide credit-worthy small businesses within the rural five-county area with access to affordable, fixed-rate financing and a source of small-scale, urgent infrastructure financing for local governments within the district.
- The Commission continues to serve as a Section 504 Certified Development Commission (CDC) under a designation from the U.S. Small Business Administration to provide credit-worthy small businesses within the five-county region with access to affordable, long-term, fixed-rate, subordinated, fixed asset financing; and
- Because of loans, the Commission partners with regional banks to aid the private sector in helping to create and retain jobs in the five-county region.

- The Commission works closely with the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, which administers numerous funding programs from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). DCEO oversees a substantial number of grants annually and promotes various economic, community, and workforce development programs, services, and initiatives. DCEO partners with businesses, local governments, and nonprofit organizations. A few of the programs used by the Commission are under the Community Block Grant Programs, such as Economic Development, Housing Rehabilitation, and Public Infrastructure grants.
- The Commission has a contract with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) to provide Human Services Transportation Planning. The Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP) is a unified, locally derived, comprehensive strategy for delivering public and specialized transportation services that identifies transportation needs, specifically for people with disabilities, older adults, and individuals with limited incomes.
- In addition to HSTP, the Commission collaborates with IDOT through various programs that enhance transportation infrastructure for industries while also improving recreational and quality-of-life amenities through the construction and rehabilitation of greenways and byways throughout the five-county region.
- The Commission maintains an active association with regional economic development organizations such as the Southeastern Alliance of Illinois - SAIL (which includes Clay and Jasper counties), East Central Illinois Development Corporation - ECIDC (which includes Effingham County), the South Western Illinois Development Council (which includes Fayette County), a multi-county Bank CDC organization (which includes selected Marion County banks) Jasper Jobs, Inc. (which serves Jasper County), the various Chambers of Commerce serving businesses in the District's cities and villages, in an effort to communicate among the many development organizations functioning within the District.
- The Commission remains in close contact with the University Centers and other institutions of higher learning that operate economic development programming, such as the University of Illinois Extension Program, Purdue Center for Regional Development, Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville's Entrepreneurship Center, and Southern Illinois University at Carbondale's Global Institute for Business.

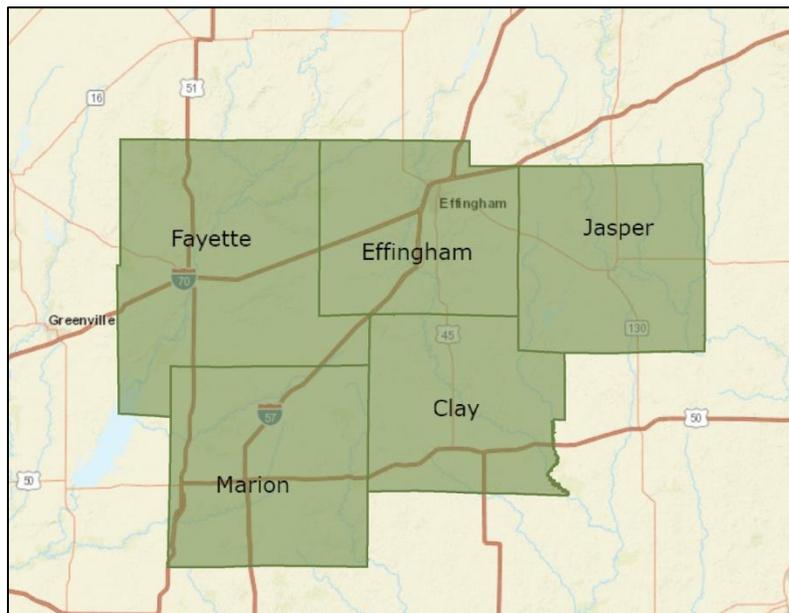
II. Economic Analysis

a. Geography

The State of Illinois is divided into 23 distinct Economic Development Districts (EDDs). These public entities were created to serve the counties, cities, towns, and villages in each region by promoting economic and community development through planning, coordination, and participation of citizens, local governments, public organizations, and private industries.

The SCIRPDC EDD represents the five counties of Clay, Effingham, Fayette, Jasper and Marion (**Figure: 2-1**), along with the 44 incorporated communities, and 75 townships within those counties. The South Central Illinois EDD spans 2,749 square miles, extending approximately 42.11 miles north to south and 69.96 miles east to west. The smallest county, Clay, covers 469.59 square miles, while the largest county, Fayette, encompasses 716.48 square miles. As means of a comparison, the SCIRPDC EDD covers a land area larger than the entire state of Delaware and more than twice the size of Rhode Island.

Figure 2-1:
South Central Illinois Regional Planning & Development Commission
Economic Development District



Source: ESRI, Business Analyst Online

Figure 2-2 on the following page depicts two growth corridors, the first of which encompasses some 82.4 square miles and intersects Fayette, Effingham, and Jasper counties, from west to east, in the northern portion of the five-county Economic Development District. This growth corridor contains nine incorporated municipalities and extends along Interstate 70 and Illinois Route 33 from the City of Vandalia in the west to the City of Effingham and the Village of Teutopolis, and along Illinois Route 33 to the City of Newton in Jasper County.

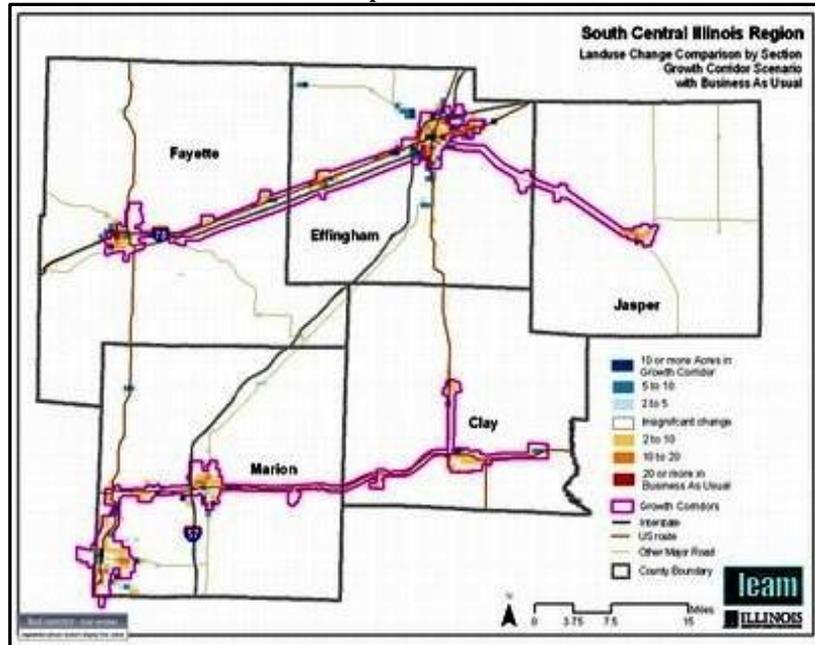
The second growth corridor spans 67.5 square miles and intersects Marion and Clay counties in the southern portion of the five-county Economic Development District. This growth corridor contains twelve incorporated municipalities and commences in the extreme southwest corner of Marion County within the Central City/Centralia/Wamac area. The southernmost growth corridor continues by extending northward through the Village of Junction City to the Village of Sandoval along U.S. Route 51 and eastward via U.S. Route 50 through the Village of Odin and the City of Salem. The growth corridor then extends from the City of Salem eastward along U.S. Route 50 towards the City of Flora, including the Villages of Iuka and

Xenia. It follows US Route 50 East of the City of Flora, Illinois, in Clay County.

b. Population

Between 1990 and 2016, the EDD experienced an overall population increase of 0.83%, with Effingham and Fayette counties showing population gains. While this growth rate is significantly lower than the State of Illinois and the United States, the region has maintained a degree of population stability. A notable population spike occurred between 1990 and 2000, primarily driven by significant growth in Effingham County. Since then, the region has experienced a general leveling effect, with population losses in Marion County offset by continued gains in Effingham County.

**Figure 2-2:
Redevelopment Corridors**



Source: University of Illinois LEAM Study

Looking ahead, despite projections indicating that three of the five counties within the EDD will continue to experience population decline, the overall population change from 1990 to 2030 is expected to result in a modest net increase of 984 residents. Figure 2-3 further illustrates these population trends over recent decades.

Figure 2-3: Population Estimates

	Population Estimates				Annual Growth Rate	Projections	
	2000	2010	2016	2020		2025	2030
Clay	14,560	13,815	13,648	13,079	-0.62%	12,251	11,771
Effingham	34,264	34,242	35,413	34,065	-0.02%	33,282	32,986
Fayette	21,802	22,140	21,600	21,264	-0.12%	21,254	20,981
Jasper	10,117	9,698	9,657	9,212	-0.45%	8,449	8,065
Marion	41,691	39,437	39,020	37,045	-0.56%	34,864	33,458
SCIRPDC	122,434	119,332	119,338	114,665	-0.32%	110,100	107,261
Illinois	12,419,293	12,830,632	13,022,485	12,590,000	0.07%	12,800,000	12,790,000
U.S.	281,422,000	309,330,000	322,921,516	329,500,000	0.85%	*340,400,000	*355,101,000

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ESRI Business Analyst Online

Note: Population projections estimated using Annual Growth Rate percent

* U.S. projections based on Census projection modeling data due to variability with national growth analysis

c. Median Age

According to the U.S. Census and shown in **Figure 2-5**, in 2021, Jasper County had the highest-age population in the EDD, at 44.1 years, followed by Fayette and Clay, at 42.1 and 41.8 years, respectively, Marion County, at 41.9, and Effingham County, with the lowest median age in the Economic Development District, at 39.3 years.

Projections from the State of Illinois indicate that by 2030, the median age will increase in every county within the SCIRPDC EDD. This trend aligns with national patterns observed through 2022, shown to the right. The forecasted increase is primarily driven by the aging population, a declining birth rate within the United States, as well as the out-migration of younger, working-age individuals to urban areas in search of higher-paying job opportunities.

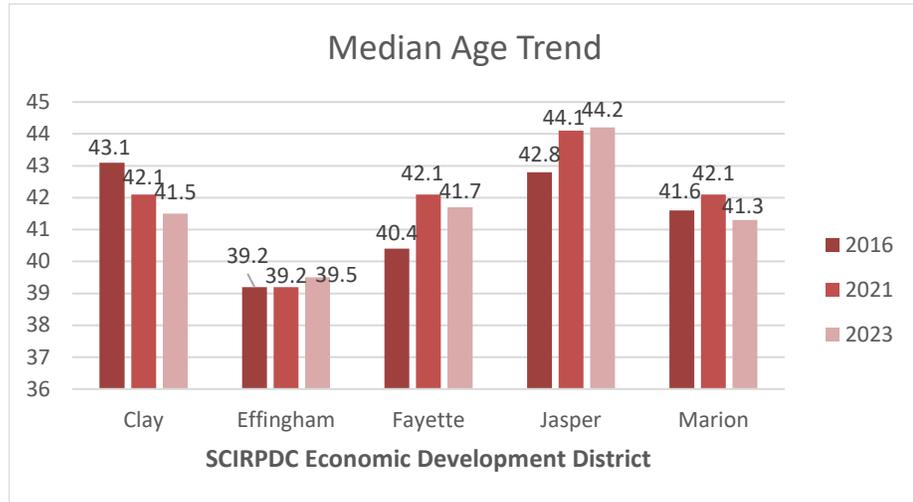


Figure 2-5:
Median Age Trend: 2010-2020
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ESRI Business Analyst Online

d. Age Cohorts

As illustrated in **Figure 2-3**, the Economic Development District as a whole experienced a 6.35% population decline between 2000 and 2020. The population cohorts by age, in **Figure 2-6**, highlight three key groups that significantly influence the social and economic livelihood of all regions of the United States.

The smallest population group is the 18- to 24-year-old category, primarily due to out-migration for higher education. Many students leave their hometowns to attend out-of-state colleges or universities in larger metropolitan areas. The average age groups in the region are those in the 25 to 34, 45 to 54, and 55 to 64 categories. The individuals represent most of the working classes.

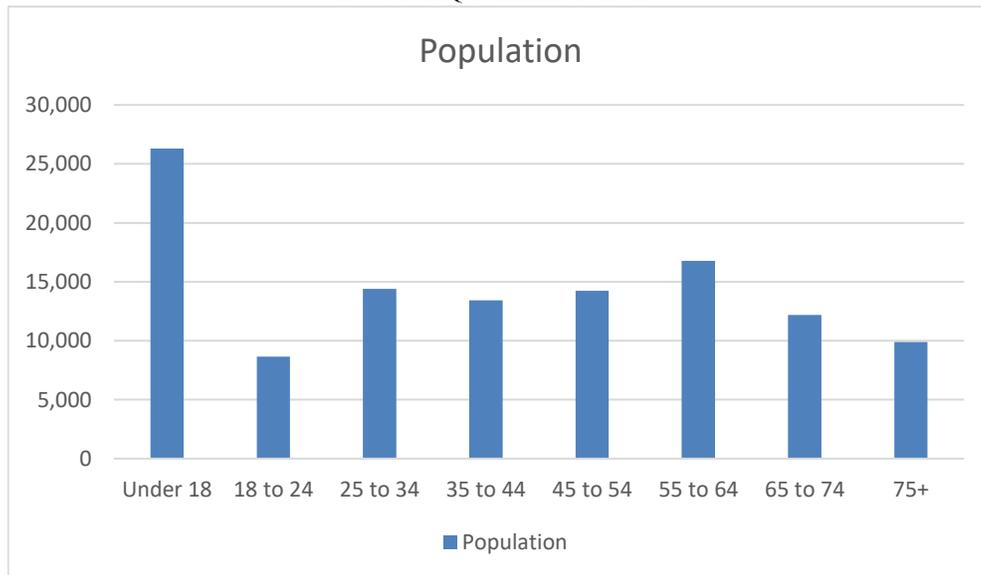
However, the 25-34 age group are becoming more nationally mobile, looking for more cultural amenities in their places of residence, along with higher skilled and paying jobs. The demographic profile indicates a decline in the economically active population and a corresponding increase in the proportion of elderly dependents. This changing population structure has implications for service provision in terms of educational, social, health, and recreational facilities.

e. Median Household Income & Per Capita Income

Median household income is commonly used to divide households into two equal segments, with the first half of the households earning less than the median household income and the second half earning more. From 2018 to 2022, the median household income in the EDD increased across its five counties. However, despite these gains, the region continues to lag significantly behind both the State of Illinois and national income levels.

Per capita income is often used as average income, a measure of the wealth of the population of a region, particularly in comparison to other areas, and is often also used to measure a region’s standard of living. It is usually expressed in terms of a commonly used international currency, such as the United States dollar, easily calculated from readily available GDP and population estimates, and produces a useful statistic for comparison of wealth between given territories. This helps each county or the Economic Development District to know their development status by their per capita income.

Figure 2-6:
Population Cohorts by Age
Source: JobsEQ Economic Overview



As illustrated in **Figure 2-7**, from 2018 to 2022, per capita incomes increased in almost all member counties within the EDD. The two largest increases in this timeframe came from Effingham County and Marion County, with increases of \$14,027 and \$12,393, respectively. The lowest increase came from Clay County with an increase of \$9,855. Similar to the median household income measurement, in terms of per capita income, the SCIRPDC EDD continues to trail both State and National levels, with zero counties meeting or exceeding the per capita income levels of Illinois and the United States from 2018-2022.

**Figure 2-7:
Economic Development Characteristics**

SCIRPDC Region: Selected Economic Characteristics						
	Median Household Income			Per Capita Income		
	2020	2022	2023	2020	2022	2023
Clay	\$ 59,602	\$ 55,282	\$ 54,837	\$ 43,445	\$ 50,214	\$ 53,329
Effingham	\$ 65,172	\$ 74,800	\$ 72,158	\$ 55,210	\$ 64,480	\$ 67,028
Fayette	\$ 49,030	\$ 57,729	\$ 61,952	\$ 40,043	\$ 45,766	\$ 46,554
Jasper	\$ 57,969	\$ 66,290	\$ 69,924	\$ 49,112	\$ 57,063	\$ 56,458
Marion	\$ 52,019	\$ 58,489	\$ 54,774	\$ 46,753	\$ 51,031	\$ 53,678
SCIRPDC	\$ 57,158	\$ 62,518	\$ 62,729	\$ 46,766	\$ 52,525	\$ 55,409
Illinois	\$ 74,330	\$ 78,020	\$ 87,820	\$ 61,550	\$ 68,287	\$ 71,676
U.S.	\$ 67,340	\$ 74,755	\$ 77,719	\$ 64,770	\$ 77,950	\$ 79,068

Source: US Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey (Not Inflation Adjusted), Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis FRED Data

Although the upward trend in both median household income and per capita income is encouraging, the region continues to struggle with economic disparity compared to the State of Illinois and the United States. This persistent gap has several implications for economic development. Not only is the EDD not keeping up with the development and income levels of other regions, but the EDD is often forced to attract business and industry based on less qualified and cheaper labor costs. This, as a result, causes the region to lag in wages and makes it increasingly difficult for those with higher levels of education to return to the region to work and raise families.

Overall, when examining these two particular statistics, it becomes apparent that families and individuals are not likely to spend money on luxury or other high-end retail products due to a lack of disposable income. Instead, they tend to spend it on the immediate needs of the household, therefore shrinking local markets and making it much more difficult to recruit and retain numerous high-end retail and wholesale establishments to locate within the SCIRPDC regional market. Putting a focus on workforce development needs through area educational institutions and recruiting the proper business and industry can help create a more developed region and continue to increase these upward-trending statistics.

f. Poverty, Unemployment & Labor Force Participation

Unemployment and underemployment lie at the core of poverty. For the poor, labor is often the only asset they can use to improve their well-being. Hence the reason the creation of productive employment opportunities is essential for achieving poverty reduction and sustainable economic and social development. It is crucial to provide decent jobs that both secure a higher income and empower the underserved and less affluent.

Rapid economic growth can potentially bring a high rate of expansion of productive employment, which can lead to a reduction in poverty. Nevertheless, the contribution of the growth process to poverty reduction does not depend only on the rate of economic growth, but also on the ability of the poor to respond to the increasing demand for labor in the more productive categories of employment.

**Figure 2-8:
Unemployment**

Unemployment Rate				
	2000	2010	2020	2025
Clay	5.6%	11.4%	9.4%	5.2%
Effingham	4.2%	7.9%	6.8%	3.8%
Fayette	6.0%	10.1%	7.7%	5.1%
Jasper	4.8%	9.0%	5.7%	4.0%
Marion	5.5%	11.0%	9.2%	4.9%
SCIRPDC	5.2%	12.4%	7.8%	4.6%
Illinois	4.5%	10.4%	9.3%	5.0%
U.S.	3.9%	9.3%	6.7%	3.7%

Source: Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis FRED Data; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

**Figure 2-9:
Poverty**

Poverty Rate (Individuals)				
	2000	2010	2020	2025
Clay	11.8%	15.3%	13.3%	14.9%
Effingham	8.1%	9.9%	9.3%	9.2%
Fayette	12.2%	15.8%	13.5%	11.8%
Jasper	9.9%	10.8%	9.6%	10.6%
Marion	11.3%	16.5%	14.2%	15.3%
SCIRPDC	10.6%	13.6%	12.0%	12.4%
Illinois	10.7%	15.3%	11.0%	11.9%
U.S.	11.8%	13.8%	11.4%	11.5%

Source: Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis FRED Data

**Figure 2-10:
Labor Force Participation**

Labor Force Participation Rate				
	2000	2010	2020	2024
Clay	60.2%	59.9%	49.0%	54.5%
Effingham	70.8%	68.8%	52.1%	64.7%
Fayette	57.5%	60.1%	43.3%	51.3%
Jasper	64.7%	66.4%	50.2%	62.2%
Marion	63.0%	61.5%	48.5%	55.3%
SCIRPDC	61.4%	64.4%	63.6%	63.2%
Illinois	66.4%	65.4%	64.5%	65.1%
U.S.	66.5%	67.1%	61.4%	62.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Joint Economic Committee, Illinois General Assembly, US Bureau of Labor Statistics

This is where the third related metric or measurement comes into play: labor force participation. For decent jobs to be attracted to a region, there must first be an active and accessible labor force to fill those new jobs. **Figures 8 through 10** provide a summary of these vital employment statistics.

The SCIRPDC EDD has, from 2000-2022, had higher levels of unemployment and lower levels of labor force participation when compared against the State of Illinois on average. This illustrates that while a portion of the unemployment problem in the five-county EDD is undoubtedly due to a lack of decent job opportunities, until the workforce population can see improvement, those businesses and companies may look to other areas of the state for higher levels of active workforce participation, depending on the particular industry.

On a more positive note, in the last several decades, the EDD has seen a rather steady poverty rate among individuals, although the years 2010 and 2020 saw increases for a number of reasons. While a decreasing poverty rate would, of course, be a worthy goal, the five-county region has consistently had similar poverty rates when compared to both the State of Illinois and the nation as a whole. Thus far, it does appear that the lower levels of labor participation and higher levels of unemployment have not equated to large poverty rates, and it is important to continue to work to improve these important employment statistics.

Given the importance of employment for poverty reduction, job creation should occupy a central place in poverty reduction strategies. SCIRPDC EDD employment strategies are often related to agricultural and rural development and include using labor-intensive agricultural technologies, developing small and medium-sized enterprises, and promoting micro projects in rural areas. Other possible strategies include promoting self-employment, non-farm employment in rural areas, targeted employment interventions, as well as microfinance and credit as means of employment generation, skill formation, and training.

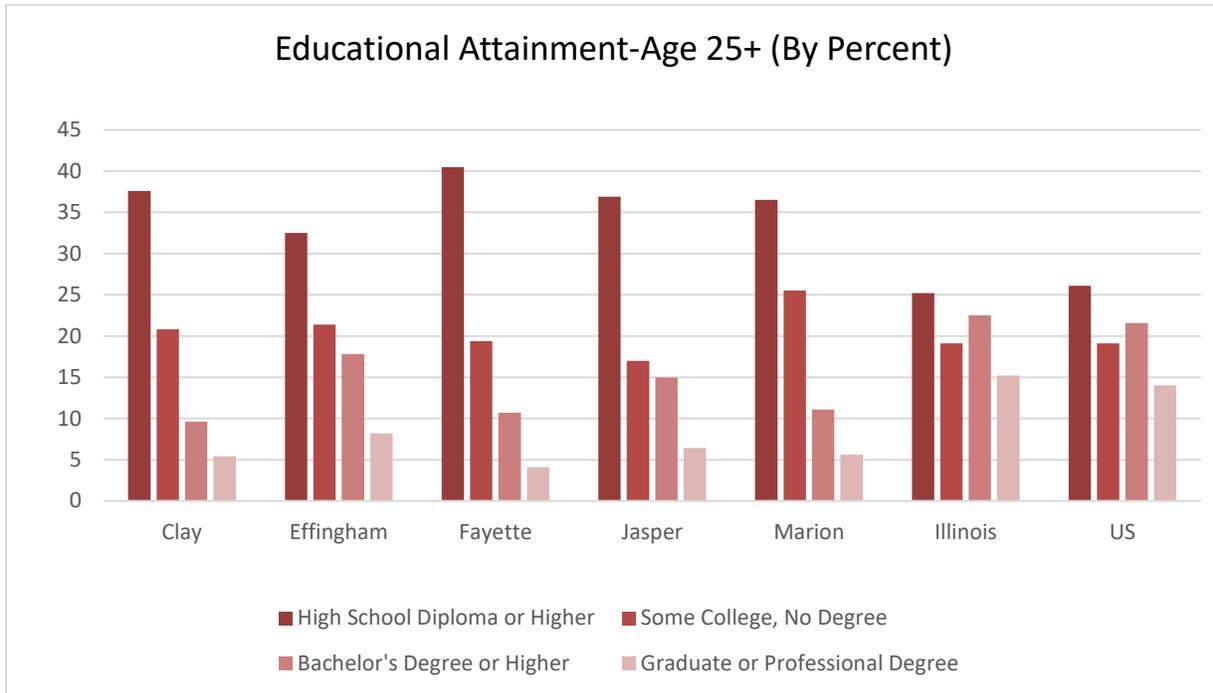
g. Educational Attainment

Each of the region's five counties has at least one satellite office of a community college, but only one full-sized college is located in the region: Kaskaskia College in Marion County. However, several larger universities are located in fairly close proximity to the region, for example the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Southern Illinois University in Carbondale and Edwardsville, Eastern Illinois University in Charleston as well as Indiana State University in Terre Haute, Indiana, the University of Southern Indiana and the University of Evansville in in Evansville, IN.

The relatively low educational attainment figures for the population in the SCIRPDC region offer an opportunity to begin a conversation about strengthening the structure and accessibility of the post-secondary education system and finding ways to encourage both adults and young people in the region to pursue further education, or at least a path of lifelong learning.

Among other topics in that conversation could be the development of arrangements between the community colleges and nearby universities to perhaps more easily accept transfer students from the community colleges into four-year university degree programs if such arrangements are not already in place.

**Figure 2-6:
Educational Attainment Comparison**
Source: JobsEQ Economic Overview



The EDD is actively working with the East Central Illinois Development Corporation (ECIDC) and 20 counties to strengthen workforce development through the ECI Super Region initiative. This initiative is dedicated to developing a trained industrial workforce and better preparing both young people and those currently in the workforce with the skill sets needed for today’s jobs. This begins by identifying the skill sets required in today’s business and industry sectors, bridging the gap between education and employment, and listening to the needs of employers to identify ways to collaborate and close those skills gaps. Having a common goal among institutions that can assemble quickly and assist in meeting employment needs is vital to advancing employment opportunities throughout the region.

h. Crime

Crime, although indirect, unquestionably has an influential impact on the economy. Although crime is by no means a serious problem in the district, as shown in **Figure 2-12**, and has decreased substantially in all member counties, it has risen in the lone category of drug-related crime. In summary, from 2000-2014, total reported crime has decreased substantially in the SCIRPDC EDD and the State of Illinois overall. This is a positive sign for the continued quality of life and development of the region. The Crime Rate Index in the figure below provides a good illustration of these declining crime rates. Although the table below demonstrates a decrease in crime rates, it is important to note that these are not the most recent figures, and some of the data may not accurately reflect the situation in both counties and the state. The best available information was used, but it was lacking.

These decreases in overall crime are important because not only can crime lead to financial or physical damage and increased prevention costs, but also indirectly influence the local/regional economy through a secondary economic impact. According to Detotto and Otranto (2010), “crime acts like a tax on the entire economy: it discourages direct investments”. On a more local and regional level, economists define the following types of impact:

- business impact (crime reduces the competitiveness of companies and investments);
- tourism impact;
- impact on quality of life/social capital; and
- impact on property value.

**Figure 2-12:
Crime by Category**

	Property Crimes*		Drug Related Crimes		Personal Crimes**		Domestic Crimes***		Crime Totals		Crime Rate Index****	
	2014	2021	2014	2021	2014	2021	2014	2021	2014	2021	2014	2021
Clay	162	150	71	73	6	12	40	NR	279	235	1,242.6	1,013.5
Effingham	565	481	359	372	69	74	294	NR	1,287	927	1,847.3	1,591.8
Fayette	342	24	95	42	27	5	192	NR	566	71	1,367.2	245.7
Jasper	84	4	37	19	4	2	19	NR	144	25	914.5	261.7
Marion	923	170	173	206	114	100	72	NR	1,282	476	2,688.5	1,182.1
SCIRPDC	2,076	829	735	712	295	193	617	NR	3,558	1,734	1,612.2	859.0
Illinois	261.6	NR	104.2	98.9	83.51	NR	149.9	1.32	517.3	NR	4,397.7	NR

Source: 2014 & 2021 Illinois State Crime Reports

Note: Illinois Crimes are in thousands (e.g. 462.7 X 1000 = 462,700 total crimes). NR is Not Reported

*Property crimes are inclusive of burglary, theft, motor vehicle theft and arson.

**Personal crimes are inclusive of murder, criminal sexual assault, robbery and aggravated assault/battery.

***Domestic crimes are inclusive of spousal abuse, hate crimes, crimes against children or crimes against school personnel.

****Crime Rate Index equates to Crime Rate per 100,000 persons in the population.

On a macroeconomic level, crime influences:

- economic growth;
- income;
- labor force and educational participation;
- income spent on security measures; and
- reallocation of resources, creating uncertainty and inefficiency.

i. Employment by Industry

Every region has its own specialized configuration of economic activity, and each region usually has a few areas of activity where it is more specialized than other regions, or even the nation. It is most often in these areas of specialization that the region's comparative advantages are found. This is as true of economic sectors as it is of industry clusters.

Figure 2-13, on the following page, clearly illustrates those six major economic sectors:

- Health Care and Social Assistance – 10,552 (18.9%) total jobs;
- Retail Trade – 7,005 (12.6%) total jobs;
- Manufacturing – 6,055 (10.9%) total jobs;
- Accommodation and Food Services – 4,366 (7.8%) total jobs;
- Educational Services – 4,311 (7.7) total jobs; and
- Government – 4,246 (7.8%) total jobs.

Conversely, the region is less specialized than the state or nation in a large number of higher-level service industries, including Real Estate, Rental and Leasing; Professional, Scientific and Technical Services; Management of Companies and Enterprises; and Administrative, Support, Waste Management and Remediation Services, among others.

In the regional economy, all of these sectors hold roughly half (or less) of the percentage share that they occupy in the state and national economies.

Figure 2-13, on the following page, provides a further illustration of EDD employment relative to the State of Illinois and the United States. Those industry sectors that are bolded in red display sectors that are performing at greater levels than both the state and the nation in terms of percent of total employment

**Figure 2-13:
Industry Sector Specialization**

NAICS	Description	SCIRPDC EDD		Illinois	U.S.
		2024 Jobs	% of Total	% of Total	% of Total
11	Crop and Animal Production	2,181	1.1	0.1	0.4
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extract.	306	0.3	0.1	0.3
22	Utilities	642	0.5	0.6	0.1
23	Construction	3,250	4.1	4.1	12.0
31	Manufacturing	8,981	10.9	8.1	3.8
42	Wholesale Trade	1,363	5.4	4.9	4.4
44	Retail Trade	7,029	12.6	10.5	10.2
48	Transportation and Warehousing	3,002	3.0	6.5	3.5
51	Information	564	1.3	2.8	1.4
52	Finance and Insurance	1,721	4.4	6.4	3.9
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	508	1.0	2.8	5.6
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	1,197	3.2	8.7	13.5
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	86	0.5	12.8	0.4
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	1,128	1.2	9.4	5.8
61	Educational Services	3,786	7.7	7.6	1.6
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	8,303	18.9	13.2	10.7
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	588	1.1	2.0	2.2
72	Accommodation and Food Services	3,647	7.8	7.8	8.8
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	2,798	6.3	4.1	11.3
90	Government	2,339	7.6	12.0	
99	Unclassified Industries	390	0.7	3.6	0.2
	Total	53,809	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: ARC GIS, IBISWorld, IDES and U.S. Census Data

Note: Industry sectors **bolded red** are performing at substantially greater levels than both the State and the Nation

j. Innovation

A final, but critically important, aspect of the SCIRPDC EDD regional economy is its innovation capacity (inputs) and innovation results (outputs). Although attempting to define such a multifaceted concept as innovation into one specific measurement is difficult, to say the least, **Figure 2-14**, on the next page, offers an attempt at doing exactly that.

This innovation index takes into account four separate variables or measurements of the regional economy and combines them together through a specified weight scale. Those other variables include Human Capital (30%), Economic Dynamics (30%), Productivity and Employment (30%), and Economic Well-Being (10%). Merging these four separate measurements of a regional economy into one singular index provides a basic, yet vitally important look at regional innovation capacity and results.

Interpreting this index can be complex due to the variety of factors involved. However, it is evident that the EDD as a whole lags behind the State of Illinois average in every category except for Economic Well-Being, an output measurement. Yet, because this category accounts for only 10% of the total Innovation Index, it does not significantly influence the overall score.

**Figure 2-14:
Regional Innovation Index**

Regional Innovation Index Measurement					
	<u>Inputs and Capacity</u>		<u>Outputs and Results</u>		Innovation Index
	Human Capital	Economic Dynamics	Productivity & Employment	Economic Well-Being	
Clay	99.2	89.8	102.7	108.2	92.5
Effingham	95.9	135.4	145.5	140.3	123.5
Fayette	86.3	111.6	132.9	123.0	104.9
Jasper	97.6	116.5	98.4	125.2	100.9
Marion	112.4	97.2	123.9	106.3	102.9
SCIRPDC	93.0	106.9	134.3	114.7	107.9
Illinois	106.7	84.6	95.6	109.5	101.7
U.S.	100.0	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Stats America Innovation Intelligence, 2023

Note: The United States is set at 100.00 in order to provide a region of comparison

**Figure 2-15:
Regional Comparative Innovation Performance**

Regional Comparative Innovation Performance					
	<u>Inputs and Capacity</u>		<u>Outputs and Results</u>		Innovation Index
	Human Capital	Economic Dynamics	Productivity & Employment	Economic Well-Being	
SCIRPDC	93.0	106.9	134.3	114.7	107.9
TREDD	88.4	79.3	109.0	125.6	93.6
SIMAPC	109.6	91.1	108.9	106.2	101.7
GERPDC	98.1	80.8	103.0	102.8	93.1
GWRPC	91.7	76.4	99.4	109.3	88.0
SFRPC	90.5	78.0	97.4	97.7	85.1
SIRPDC	97.6	74.3	80.3	90.1	83.8

Source: Stats America Innovation Intelligence, 2023

To take this one step further and to provide an even more relevant comparison, **Figure 2-15** compares the SCIRPDC EDD against six other close-proximity regional planning areas in Central and Southern Illinois.

What stands out immediately is that among these seven regions, SCIRPDC ranks first in the overall Innovation Index, with SIMAPC close behind at 107.2. This indicates that the SCIRPDC Region sits at the high end of the innovation spectrum in Southern Illinois, with well-above-average scores across nearly all innovation categories, possibly excepting Human Capital and Economic Well-Being. The category that most clearly distinguishes the EDD, along with SIMAPC, is the output measure of Productivity and

Employment. This includes metrics such as Gross Domestic Product per Worker, Job Growth, Patents per Worker, and High-Tech Employment.

A key question remains: how do these innovation measurements translate to real economic growth and stability within the region? To address this, the research team that developed the Innovation Index identified four indicators with a statistically significant relationship to economic growth. Two of these indicators—percent of the population aged 25–64 with some college or an associate’s degree, and the population growth rate for ages 25–44—fall under Human Capital. One indicator, the average number of small establishments per 10,000 workers, belongs to the Economic Dynamics category. The final indicator, from the Productivity and Employment category, is the change in the share of high-tech employment.

Another more specific innovation metric that can be useful to examine further is the issuance of utility patents. **Figure 2-16** provides some detail regarding the number of utility patents the region has received from 2000-2015. A utility patent can be simply defined as a patent that is issued by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) for the invention of a new and useful process, machine, manufactured product, composition of matter, or a new and useful improvement thereof.

**Figure 2-16:
Utility Patents**

Issuance of Utility Patents			
	2000	2007	2015
Clay	1	*	*
Effingham	27	11	17
Fayette	*	1	2
Jasper	1	1	*
Marion	3	*	2
SCIRPDC	6.4	2.6	4.2
Illinois	3,833	2,894	5,028
U.S.	157,494	157,282	298,408

Source: Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis FRED Data. United States Patent and Trademark Office

* No patents shown that year

When a business is truly innovative and puts great emphasis on research and development, what undoubtedly occurs is idea generation. From there, it is up to the development team to hone in on the idea that was created and turn it into a reality. Following testing and further development, the final product or process can then be sent in for a utility patent. Although this is a rather unsophisticated summary of how an idea can become reality, it is important to have a general understanding. Furthermore, utility patents are a direct link to innovation and therefore provide a good illustration of innovation. In sum, businesses that are able to patent their ideas are worth much more than just the goods and services they provide.

As shown on the previous page, the SCIRPDC EDD displays mixed results regarding the issuing of utility patents to regional businesses and industries. On average, the region has seen small decreases from 2000-2015, while the State of Illinois and the United States have steadily increased the number of utility patents, excluding the slight drop in 2007 for the State of Illinois. What is quite obvious is that the EDD is far behind the two larger reference regions in terms of the number of utility patents. Continuing to stress the importance of research, development, and idea generation will undoubtedly help to increase this slow-moving issuance of utility patents that is currently trending in the SCIRPDC EDD.

III. Industry Cluster Analysis

a. Methodology

Identifying and analyzing industry clusters in a region is a multi-step process that employs both quantitative and qualitative methods. This study began with the identification of regional clusters by examining NAICS industry employment data in the EDD. The information gathered from this examination, along with SCIRPDC EDD's familiarity with the industry sectors, was used to identify clusters in the region. Then, each identified cluster was analyzed using two principal methods of measuring and evaluating clusters:

- Location Quotient Analysis
- Shift Share Analysis

Location Quotient (LQ) is essentially a way of quantifying how concentrated a particular industry, cluster, occupation, demographic group, etc., is in a region as compared to the nation. The central objective of LQ analysis is to reveal what makes a particular region “unique” in comparison to the national average. In more specific terms, LQ is a ratio that compares one region to a larger reference region according to a particular characteristic or asset. **Figure 3-1** below summarizes both how the LQ is determined and some basic implications depending on the subsequent value of the LQ.

**Figure 3-1:
Location Quotient Analysis Explained**

Equation	Value	Implication
$LQ = \frac{\left(\frac{\text{Regional Industry Employment}}{\text{Regional Total Employment}}\right)}{\left(\frac{\text{National Industry Employment}}{\text{National Total Employment}}\right)}$	LQ > 1	Region has proportionally more workers employed in the specific industry cluster than the larger comparison area
	LQ ≥ 1.2	Regional industry cluster has the potential to be classified as an exporter
	LQ < 1	May indicate an opportunity to develop businesses in the local area

The central limitation of LQ analysis is that it describes the regional economy as if it were only a singular moment in time. For this reason, the shift share analysis provides the LQ with an excellent counterpart. Shift share gives life, so to speak, to the regional economy by providing a more malleable picture of the regional economy. Specifically, shift share analysis seeks to explain changes in an economy by decomposing actual changes that have occurred into three main sources:

1. The influence of national growth (or decline) on industry or cluster X. This is called the "national growth effect". For example, if total employment in the United States grew by 4% from 2007-2016, the national share factor would apply this 4% to cluster employment in the base year and estimate how local employment would be expected to change if the national influence had equally affected every industry in the cluster.

2. The influence of Industry Share (also known as “industry mix effect”) on the growth (or decline) of industry or cluster X. Industry mix reflects the rate of change in each individual industry at the national level, for example, how much employment changed in all manufacturing industries throughout the nation from 2007 to 2016. It indicates how much of a local change in employment can be attributed to national growth or decline of the industry in question. As with the national component, the percent change in employment by the industry nationally is applied to the total change in local employment in the industry.
3. The “regional competitive effect” on the growth or decline of industry or cluster X. The national growth and the industry mix reveal the changes that would have occurred in the local economy if it corresponded exactly to national and industrial structure and trends. When these two computed shares are subtracted from the actual shift in employment locally, a residual change remains. This is the change in employment that cannot be explained by either general economic conditions (the national share) or industrial trends (the industry share). This change, the "regional share," reveals the effects of region-specific factors on local employment. The regional competitive effect shows which clusters or industries might have a competitive advantage in the regional economy, resulting from factors such as labor force skills, access to transportation, excellent supply chains, effective and efficient service delivery, and so on.

In addition to the size of LQs and their direction of growth, as well as a positive regional share effect, other factors that should be considered when evaluating the relative strength and potential of industry clusters include: the size of the cluster (number of employees); the average rate of pay in the cluster, its performance over time, and any available forecasts as to future demand for the goods and services that the cluster supplies. More recently, the levels of skill and knowledge embedded in industry clusters by reason of the occupational mix they utilize and the levels of training and education required from employees are becoming important for estimating capacity for innovation in the clusters.

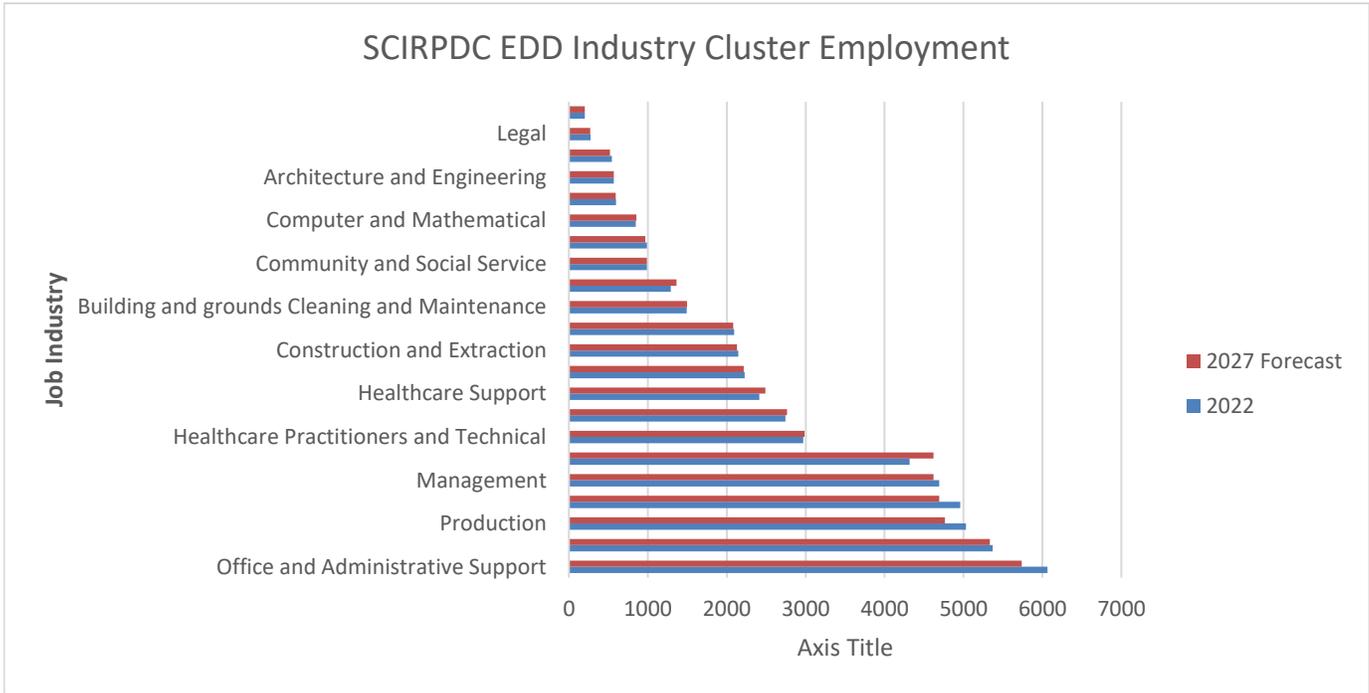
b. Cluster Employment

Figure 3-2 shows the relative size of each cluster in the SCIRPDC region and graphically displays the number of jobs in each regional cluster in 2022 and forecasted in 2027, together with changes that have occurred over the period. **Figure 3-3** provides a more detailed look at the changes in employment over the same time period.

The largest clusters as of 2022 include the office and administrative support, transportation and material moving, production, sales and related, followed by the management and the food preparation and serving cluster.

The top increasing industry clusters in terms of employment include food preparation and serving related, healthcare support, and personal care and services. Each of these three industry clusters has an anticipated employment increase of over 450 total jobs, with food preparation and serving leading the way with a 7-year estimated increase of 304 total new jobs.

**Figure 3-2:
Cluster Employment in the SCIRPDC EDD**



Source: JobsEQ, 2022

In terms of industry cluster employment decreases, the office and administrative sector looks to take the biggest loss of jobs over this time frame, with 326 jobs lost from 2022-2027. The production and sales, and related clusters come in closely with an anticipated 267 and 266 jobs expected to be lost, respectively.

Altogether, the SCIRPDC EDD is expected to lose 533 total jobs from 2022 to 2027. This is a tremendous trend change from the last industry cluster analysis conducted for the years 2010-2016, which illustrated extreme job increases numbering 2,073. This alteration in cluster employment may indicate that the SCIRPDC EDD hit a cluster employment low point period during the first decade of the 2000s, but is now on a positive track toward increased employment throughout the regional cluster groups and is experiencing a plateau. Comparative analysis will help create a clearer picture of the current industry cluster trends in the region relative to the nation. However, prior to examining this comparison, the next step is to examine the industry cluster average earnings for the SCIRPDC region.

**Figure 3-3:
SCIRPDC Regional Clusters-Employment Size and Change in Employment 2007-2016**

Cluster Name	2022 Jobs	2027 Forecast	2022-2027 Change	2022-2027 % Change
Office and Administrative Support	6,064	5,738	-326	-1.1
Trans. And Material Moving	5,371	5,332	-39	-0.1
Production	5,029	4,762	-267	-1.1
Sales and Related	4,957	4,691	-266	-1.1
Management	4,693	4,819	-74	-0.3
Food Preparation and Serving Related	4,315	4,619	304	1.4
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	2,970	2,987	17	0.1
Educational Instruction and Library	2,745	2,762	17	0.1
Healthcare Support	2,413	2,490	77	0.6
Install., Maint., and Repair	2,226	2,213	-13	-0.1
Construction and Extraction	2,148	2,129	-19	-0.2
Business and Financial Operations	2,092	2,082	-10	-0.1
Building/Grounds Cleaning and Maint.	1,493	1,498	5	0.1
Personal Care and Service	1,292	1,962	70	1.1
Community and Social Service	987	987	0	0.0
Protective Service	987	967	-20	-0.4
Computer and Mathematical	847	855	8	0.2
Arts, Design, Entertain., Sports, Media	595	593	-2	-0.1
Architecture and Engineering	567	568	1	0.0
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	545	519	-26	-1.0
Legal	272	268	-4	-0.3
Life, Physical, and Social Science	202	200	-2	-0.2
SCIRPDC EDD Cluster Totals	52,810	53,041	-533	-2.0

Source: JobsEQ, 2022

c. Cluster Estimated Earnings

Since individual industries can belong to more than one cluster (that is, some of the clusters overlap) it is not possible to estimate the average pay per worker for all clusters in the region. Average pay must be assessed on a cluster-by-cluster basis. Within clusters, too, average pay will vary according to the cluster's component sectors and the skill levels required for their work. In terms of the data provided in **Figure 3-4**, the mining cluster has the highest average earnings per worker at \$79,049. This is followed by machinery manufacturing, apparel and textiles, transportation and logistics, advanced materials, and fabricated metal products manufacturing.

The energy (fossil & renewable) cluster currently has by far the largest economic output in terms of total annual regional earnings (\$345,580,335), followed by the manufacturing super cluster, agribusiness, biomedical/biotechnical, and the transportation and logistics cluster.

**Figure 3-4:
Cluster Jobs, Average Earnings Per Worker, 2022**

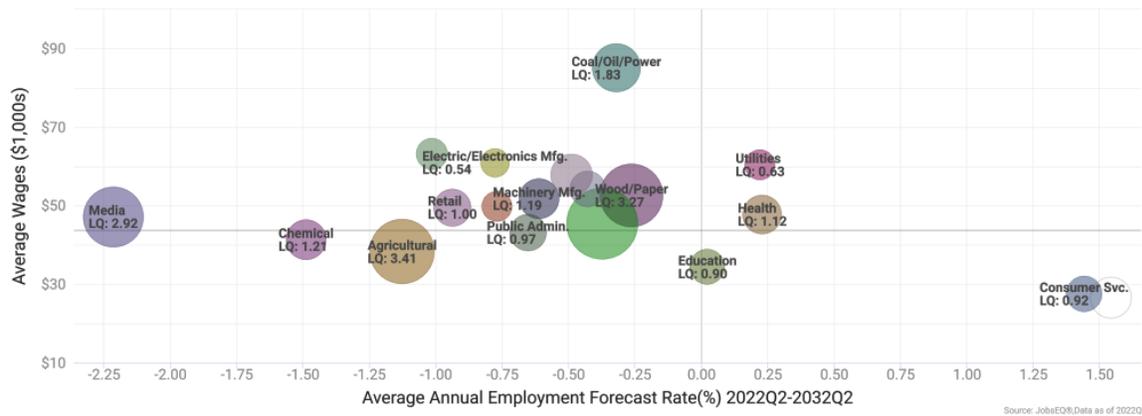
Cluster Name	Jobs	Earnings Per Worker
Office and Administrative Support	6,064	\$39,100
Trans. And Material Moving	5,371	\$39,800
Production	5,029	\$41,000
Sales and Related	4,957	\$37,900
Management	4,693	\$91,700
Food Preparation and Serving Related	4,315	\$26,500
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	2,970	\$78,800
Educational Instruction and Library	2,745	\$44,700
Healthcare Support	2,413	\$31,300
Install., Maint., and Repair	2,226	\$50,300
Construction and Extraction	2,148	\$57,000
Business and Financial Operations	2,092	\$68,200
Building/Grounds Cleaning	1,493	\$31,800
Personal Care and Service	1,292	\$31,100
Community and Social Service	987	\$46,500
Protective Service	987	\$52,900
Computer and Mathematical	847	\$78,500
Arts, Design, Entertain., Sports, Media	595	\$44,400
Architecture and Engineering	567	\$78,700
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	545	\$42,500
Legal	272	\$88,800
Life, Physical, and Social Science	202	\$70,800

Source: JobsEQ, 2022

d. Location Quotients, Change in LQs, and Competitive Advantage

Figures 3-5, located on the following page, is a bubble chart based on the JobsEQ matrix which enables a view of the region’s industry cluster location quotients and cluster size, as well as the kind of change that has occurred in the size of cluster location quotients over the study period. The bubble charts are useful for a quick visual scan of the relative strength of a region’s clusters. The vertical axis shows the size of the location quotients, and the horizontal axis shows the percent change in LQ size over time. Additionally, the actual size of the bubbles indicates the employment size of each cluster.

Figure 3-5:
Industry Clusters for South Central Illinois Regional Planning & Dev Commission a



Source: JobsEQ, 2022

Figure 3-5 shows the main clusters, while **Figure 3-6** is provided to show in detail the number of jobs in each cluster in 2022, the size of the location quotients in 2017, as well as the percent change in the location quotients of each cluster from 2017 to 2022.

Three clusters in the SCIRPDC region have location quotients greater than 1.2. These twenty-two industry clusters are further divided by the direction of change in their LQs. Three clusters in the SCIRPDC region have location quotients greater than 1.2, also considered “stars”. The “emerging” category includes seven industries that have an LQ between 1.0 and 1.2. Twelve clusters are considered to be “mature”, or an LQ lower than 1.0.

While decreasing LQs are always a negative indicator, increasing LQs are not necessarily always a positive indicator, as they may be increasing only because the national share of the cluster industries has decreased faster than the regional share of the cluster.

The SCIRPDC region’s “star” clusters as of 2022 are production, management, farming, fishing, and forestry. However, as **Figure 3-6** illustrates, transportation equipment and machinery are falling in the mature quadrant.

Seven clusters fall into the mature category. These clusters include transportation and material moving; sales and related; food preparation and serving related; personal care and service, healthcare support, installation, maintenance, and repair; and community and social service. At times, clusters will fall into this status due to “life-cycle” effects. For example, a company offering a new product or service will likely go through a period where its product is in very high demand due to its novelty and relative scarcity. This is the super-profit period. Gradually, this high-demand period diminishes and smooths out, and other companies join in the competition to sell the product, allowing prices to even out, and the industry becomes mature. The cluster may go into decline and die after a while, as demand for its products and services dwindle because of changes in taste or technology. Life-cycle effects also apply to individual industries.

Eleven clusters have location quotients less than 1.0 and fall into the lower right and left-hand quadrants of the bubble chart matrix. The lower right-hand quadrant includes clusters with lower LQs (not big enough to be termed specialized or concentrated), which nevertheless are increasing in size compared to the nation. These can be seen as “emerging” or at least potentially emerging clusters which may eventually become specialized in the region. In the SCIRPDC region, these clusters include office and administrative support; healthcare practitioners and technical support; and education instruction and library; construction and extraction; business and financial operations; building, grounds cleaning, and maintenance; protective services, computer and mathematical; arts, design, entertainment, and sports media; architecture and engineering; legal; and life, physical, and social sciences.

Policies and strategies developed for clusters that fall into any of these four categories will obviously vary, depending not only upon the location quotient position but also upon several other indicators, as well as such not-so-easily measured factors as business, government, and public support, sentiment, and ideas.

Cluster Name	2022 Jobs	2017 LQ	2022 LQ	Change in LQ
Stars (LQ.>1.2 and higher)				
Production	5,029	0.09	1.68	1.59
Management	4,693	0.09	1.80	1.71
Farming, Fishing, Forestry	545	0.01	1.59	1.58
Emerging (LQ between 1.0 and 1.2)				
Transp. And Material Moving	5,371	0.10	1.16	1.06
Sales and Related	4,957	0.09	1.00	0.91
Food Prep. And Serving Related	4,315	0.08	1.04	0.96
Personal Care and Service	1,292	0.03	1.01	0.98
Healthcare Support	2,413	0.04	1.04	1.00
Install/Main/Repair	2,226	0.04	1.05	1.01
Community and Social Service	987	0.02	1.05	1.03
Mature (LQ >Less than 1.0)				
Office and Admin. Support	6,064	0.11	0.93	0.82
Health. Practitioners and Technical	2,970	0.06	0.97	-33%
Educ. Instruction and Library	2,745	0.05	0.97	0.92
Construction and Extraction	2,148	0.04	0.90	0.86
Business and Financial Operations	2,092	0.05	0.52	.47
Building/Grounds Cleaning/Main.	1,493	0.03	0.86	0.83
Protective Services	987	0.02	0.88	0.86
Computer and Mathematical	847	0.02	0.47	0.45
Arts/Design/Entertain./Sports/Media	595	0.01	0.64	0.63
Architecture and Engineering	567	0.01	0.64	0.63
Legal	272	0.00	0.60	0.60
Life/Physical/Social Science	202	0.00	0.43	0.43

e. Conclusion

The central “driver” (i.e. exporting) industries at the heart of every cluster need other industries to support and supply them. These other industries, which may be numerous, can be very diverse. Not all of them can be expected to be found located in a particular geographic region, which means that some services, materials or products will have to be imported into the region. Even if – for example – a supply industry is present, it may not be capable of filling regional demand completely and the supply industry itself may need to import goods and services to fill the gaps in the supply chain.

Regional development requires increasing both export capacity and the volume of exports in regional cluster industries as well as strengthening and promoting growth in the support and supply industries so as to decrease their dependency on imports. At a very basic level, the overall aim is to reduce, as far as possible, the leakage of wealth out of the region that occurs when goods and services are purchased from outside, while at the same time increasing sales of the region’s own goods and services to external customers.

While there is no way to compel any of a region’s industries to purchase their inputs solely within the local region, the idea of activating the region’s clusters by facilitating and encouraging the creation of intra- and inter-cluster networks can be a useful and productive strategy. Many cluster industries in many regions are in fact “unaware” that they are in fact part of a geographically located industry cluster. It may take special efforts to gather the major stakeholders – business and industry leaders, local and regional government, chambers of commerce and other interested parties – together to demonstrate the potential synergies of collaboration to increase cluster strength.

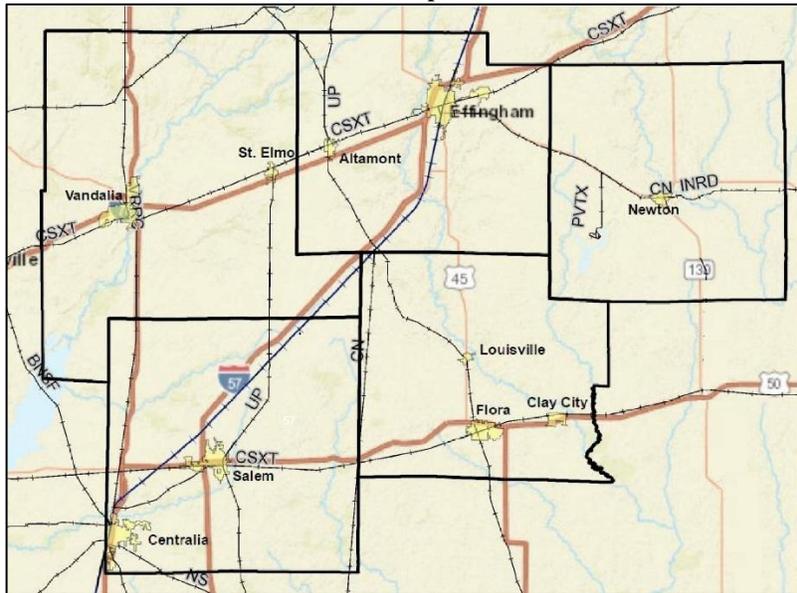
In many cases cluster self-awareness will not occur without facilitation by someone or some group that can be seen as disinterested and neutral. Many industries and businesses, for example, believe that sharing information weakens their own competitive advantages rather than providing opportunities for synergy and innovation, and they may be suspicious of any effort to get them talking with other competitor industries

IV. Infrastructure

a. Roadway Infrastructure

When considering the variety of factors upon which to reach an investment decision for a new business or operation, the presence of efficient transportation facilities and services is often of high importance. Lower transportation costs can play a major role in luring new firms as an outgrowth of the efficiencies gained by convenience and timely access to commercial, industrial, and consumer markets as well as raw materials and/or component parts.

Figure 4-1:
SCIRPDC EDD Transportation Network



The SCIRPDC EDD is fortunate to have above-average ground transportation access, such as Interstate 57 connecting Chicago, Illinois, and Memphis, Tennessee, and Interstate 70, which directly connects Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, with Denver, Colorado. Interstate 64, immediately south of the five-county region, Interstate 24, and Interstate 55 are also within reasonable proximity to the district and, in conjunction with I-57 and I-70, give ground transportation linkage to the majority of the Midwestern U.S. metropolitan markets and beyond.

U.S. Routes 40, 45, 50 & 51 provide yet another accessible means of transportation within EDD and linkages to other intermediate destinations within Illinois and adjoining states. Furthermore, a network of state routes and Illinois Routes 32, 33, 37, 49, 128, 130, 140, 161, and 185 provides an additional transportation network that further connects the district's incorporated areas throughout the region.

b. Roadway Infrastructure Improvements

Community leaders from throughout the district have undertaken regional efforts to expand and improve existing roadways, and major federal routes such as widening and resurfacing of Interstate 57 near Centralia and Effingham, and Interstate 64, again, near Centralia, and 57/70 near Effingham and Altamont. Additionally, emphasis has been placed on widening U.S. Route 51 as it passes between Centralia and Pana, Illinois. More recently, the new roadway replacement of I-57, both north and south, will improve conditions once completed.

The continuing improvements to the district's roadways include numerous townships, municipal, county, state, and federal projects that would make this document too voluminous were they to be included.

However, the projects as implemented by the state are often augmented by further local roadway improvements, state projects are sometimes a catalyst for future transportation improvement projects at the local level.

Directly related to the highway and interstate system in the SCIRPDC EDD, is trying to ascertain how these major roadways impact the regional economy. In 2015, SCIRPDC staff members developed a Regional Freight Truck Analysis to analyze and discuss the movement of commodities via freight truck throughout the EDD. This analysis, publicly available via the SCIRPDC webpage, provides a detailed analysis of freight truck and commodity movement in and out of the EDD.

c. Railway Infrastructure

Within the District, no less than eight major railroad companies provide mainline service. The number of daily movements and service reliability are generally considered to be adequate for the inbound shipment of raw materials and component parts and the outbound shipment of finished goods to their ultimate market destination.

Figure 4-2 provides a listing of the rail freight services available to businesses choosing appropriate locations within the Economic Development District.

Three of the major rail lines serving the district continue to operate intermodal facilities within proximity of the five-county region. Because of the importance of the East St. Louis, Illinois area, located approximately one hour west of the district, as a major Midwestern U.S. rail freight center, a majority of the district’s intermodal service needs would likely be accommodated by these facilities.

Other intermodal services are located in Decatur and Peoria, Illinois, located approximately one and a half and three hours north of the five-county District, respectively.

The availability of passenger rail service is another vital component to the transportation infrastructure of the district. Amtrak passenger trains offer boarding service at the Centralia and Effingham stations with routes running as far north as Chicago, Illinois and as far south as New Orleans, Louisiana. The historic City of New Orleans train, originating in Chicago, passes through the district twice daily. Additional train routes and services are provided via the Carbondale, Illinois routing facility.

**Figure 4-2:
Rail Road Companies within the EDD**

Railroad Company	Classification	Direction
Burlington Northern/Santa Fe	Main Line	North/South
Conrail	Main Line	NE/SW
CSX System	Main Line	East/West
Chessie System (B & O)	Main Line	East/West
Canadian National	Main Line	North/South
Indiana Railroad Co. INRR	Main Line	North/South
Norfolk Southern Corp.	Main Line	East/West
Union Pacific System	Main Line	NE/SW
Effingham Short Line	Short Line	Industrial Park
Vandalia Railroad Corp.	Short Line	Local CSX Service

Source: Survey of local officials

d. Air Transportation Infrastructure

As depicted in **Figure 4-3**, which follows, four of the district’s five largest communities contain a general aviation airport. General aviation facilities offer a cross-runway in addition to the primary runway, a passenger terminal, refueling facilities, and general repair facilities. Furthermore, most of the district’s fixed-base operators provide charter flights, air taxi services, flight instruction, hangar storage, and tie-down facilities.

**Figure 4-3:
Airport Transportation Information**

Municipality (County)	Airport	Primary Runway	Aircraft Operations*
City of Centralia (Marion)	Centralia Municipal	5,000 Foot Surface	77/Day
City of Effingham (Effingham)	Effingham County Memorial	5,000 Foot Surface	68/Day
City of Flora (Clay)	Flora Municipal	5,000 Foot Surface	27/Day
City of Salem (Marion)	Salem-Leckrone	4,100 Foot Surface	52/Day
City of Vandalia (Fayette)	Vandalia Municipal	4,000 Foot Surface	25/Day

Source: www.airnav.com

Note: *Data comes from recent annual averages computed by airnav

The majority of employers within the district note their dependency upon Lambert International Field in St. Louis, Missouri, for regularly scheduled commercial air services. This major commercial airport places the district within a ninety-minute drive of 259 daily commercial flights offered by 78 commercial carriers. Mid-America Airport, located at the intersection of U.S. Route 50 and Interstate 64, approximately one hour west of the district, continues to provide the region with additional reliable commercial air services both for commercial freight and some individual transportation needs.

Additionally, for more information regarding the SCIRPDC EDD airports, SCIRPDC staff conducted Regional Aeronautic Economic Impact Studies for each of the EDD airports in 2022. These studies provide a detailed analysis of how these regional airports impact the EDD’s economy both directly and indirectly, and are publicly available via the SCIRPDC website.

e. Housing Resources

Given the ever-increasing importance associated with satisfying the lifestyle expectations of a highly skilled workforce, an area’s ability to offer a suitable array of affordable housing types is an assumed importance. The overall character of an area’s housing stock can also provide insights relative to the long-term stability of the region and the economic fortunes of its local residents.

In 2023, the five-county Economic Development District contained 53,318 housing units, of which 98.8% were occupied. The district’s vacancy rate of 1.7% is slightly higher than the statewide and U.S. averages at 1.6% and 1.4%, respectively. Some 77% of the district’s occupied housing units were owner-occupied by comparison with only 66.4% on a statewide basis. While the District’s higher owner-occupied housing percentage suggests stronger ties to the area by its residents, and therefore an implied hedge against spontaneous out migration, it should also be noted that the state’s substantially lower percentage is reflective of trends in more metropolitan areas favoring the development of large-scale rental complexes

such as condominiums, townhouses, etc. **Figure 4-4** provides a general comparison of the housing statistics between SCIRPDC, the state, and the U.S. in 2023.

**Figure 4-4:
Housing Unit Totals**

	Total Units	Occupied Units	Vacant Units	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied
	2023	2023	2023	2023	2023
SCIRPDC	53,318	52,681	637	41,118	10,893
Illinois	5,373,385	5,319,155	54,230	3,567,800	1,646,283
U.S.	138,432,751	137,302,996	1,129,755	91,045,600	43,552,843

In sum, this data does provide some insight as to potential housing problems, which could be confronting some residents within the five-county Economic Development District. Specifically, such problems could be associated with: (1) the advancing age of the housing unit; (2) the lack of some central, modern housing amenities; and/or (3) home values that are less than the state median.

f. Water Resources

Although it is not always considered a dominant part of the location decision-making process, private sector investors must remain sensitive to the availability and cost of public utilities. Recognizing that private sector investors must restrict facility locations to areas that demonstrate the capacity to meet both present and future utility requirements, this section attempts to address these issues.

Figure 4-6 provides an overview of the water resources available to meet the demands of the Economic Development District's population centers. In general, the district's larger communities have found it possible to tie their water system into a municipally owned reservoir, a major river, or a state or federally maintained lake, thereby providing a highly dependable source of raw water. These same communities have a combined treated water storage capacity via elevated and ground-level storage tanks and clear wells, which gives the equivalent of at least a one-day supply or more of treated water to accommodate drought conditions or emergency requirements.

**Figure 4-6:
Water Supply/Storage Characteristics**

Municipality	Raw Water Supply	Gallons Per Day
Altamont	City Reservoir	240,000
Centralia	Lake Centralia/Raccoon Lake	3.9 million
Effingham	CIPS Lake/Lake Sara/Little Wabash River	2.3 million
Flora	Little Wabash River/Carlyle Lake	623,000
Newton	Five City Wells near Embarrass River	258,237
Salem	City Reservoir/Carlyle Lake	1.1 million
St. Elmo	Fayette Water Company/City Well	Est. 250,000
Vandalia	Vandalia Lake/Kaskaskia River	750,000

Source: IEPA, Source Water Assessment and Protection (SWAP), 2015

Given the rural nature of the five-county District and its somewhat limited user base, water rates on the whole are consistently higher than those found in metropolitan areas. To combat this fact, most of the district’s larger municipalities, which are actively encouraging economic growth, have structured water rates in such a fashion as to offer quantity discounts for high-volume industrial users.

The continuing expansion of existing regional water companies/cooperatives has increased the availability of potable water to many of the district’s rural communities. The five-county region is served by a number of regional water companies/cooperatives including: Raccoon Water Company (southern Marion County); Northeast Marion County Water Company; E.J. Water Company (central and southern Effingham and Jasper Counties); Clay County Water Company (southern Clay County); and Fayette County Water Company (northern and central Fayette County).

In conclusion, while the rural water companies/ cooperatives continue to expand and provide water to the most rural areas, it is true most of the district’s incorporated communities have municipally owned water systems which are capable of accommodating the present demands of residents and industry. The downfall of the situation is the overall fiscal condition of local government, and that state or federal financial assistance will be required to support major upgrades or expansions to such utility systems. However, the completion of such major capital improvements will be phased over a period of years, even decades.

g. Wastewater Treatment Resources

The preceding page has discussed the importance of the district’s ability to provide residential, commercial, and particularly industrial users with a dependable supply of high-quality, potable water. Equally significant, however, is the area’s ability to effectively dispose of wastewater not consumed in the production process, along with both domestic and industrial effluents and stormwater. Collectively, public utilities such as water and sewer services can be characterized as the lifeline of the industrial sector, remaining a vitally important consideration in the location process.

**Figure 4-7:
Sewage Treatment Capacities**

Municipality	Treatment Process	Design Capacity	Average Demand	Reserve Capacity
Altamont*	Two Cell Lagoon/Filter	3.43 MGD	0.59 MGD	0.00 MGD
Centralia	Activated Sludge	4.50 MGD	3.15 MGD	1.35 MGD
Effingham	Oxidation Ditch	9.00 MGD	2.50 MGD	6.50 MGD
Flora	Activated Sludge	1.80 MGD	0.50 MGD	13.00 MGD
Newton	Activated Sludge	2.6 MGD	0.8 MGD	70% remaining
Salem	Oxidation Ditch	7.02 MGD	124 mg/L	950,000 Gallons
St. Elmo	Four Cell Lagoon	1.37 MGD	0.40 MGD	0.00 MGD
Vandalia	Lagoons/Sediment	1.50 MGD	1.00 MGD	0.50 MGD

Source: DCEO Community Profiles

Note: Altamont recently constructed a new sewer treatment lagoon, design and reserve capacity numbers are likely larger than what is shown here.

h. Energy Infrastructure

The five-county Economic Development District is provided with electrical power via two public utility companies and several electrical cooperatives. Both Flora and Salem own their own natural-gas distribution systems. Specifically, the majority of the incorporated areas of Centralia, Salem, and Vandalia are served by the Illinois Power Company, while Ameren/CIPS via IEMA is the primary source of power for both the cities of Effingham and Altamont. Segments of the District’s largest eight communities are also served by the Southwestern Electric Cooperative, Tri-County Electric Cooperative, Clay Electric Cooperative, Norris Electric Cooperative, and the Illinois Municipal Electric Agency.

Base load power generation plants located in Newton, Baldwin, Coffeen, and Clinton, Illinois, which are owned by Illinois Power Company, Ameren/CIPS, and the Soyland Power Cooperative, provide the basis for electrical service distribution. Collectively, the three public utility companies have a combined generating capacity of approximately 9,890 megawatts compared with the peak demand of approximately 7,516 megawatts. Therefore, the generating capacity to accommodate new loads for the immediate future appears to be present for the district.

The region has also witnessed the development of several natural gas peaking plants in or adjacent to the district. Aquila constructed a 334-megawatt, natural gas, electrical generation plant in rural Clay County and brought the facility online in 2002. Reliant Energy constructed a similar facility in Shelby County, Illinois, immediately north of the district, and similar plants have also been constructed in St. Elmo in Fayette County and Patoka in Marion County.

As depicted in **Figure 4-8**, private companies serve as the principal suppliers and distributors of natural gas services within the district’s largest communities. However, the City of Salem, which purchases natural gas on a wholesale basis from the Natural Gas Pipeline of America, and the City of Flora, which likewise purchases natural gas on a wholesale basis from Utility Gas Management, which also provides local service to its customer base through a municipally owned distribution system.

**Figure 4-8:
Natural Gas Service**

Municipality	Supplier	Distribution
Altamont	Atmos Energy	Atmos Energy
Centralia	Illinois Power Company	Illinois Power Company
Effingham	Ameren Illinois	Ameren Illinois
Flora	Utility/Gas Management	Municipal Distribution
Newton	Ameren Illinois	Ameren Illinois
Salem	NGP of America	Municipal Distribution
St. Elmo	Atmos Energy	Atmos Energy
Vandalia	Liberty Utilities	Atmos Energy

Source: DCEO Community Profiles Survey of District Development Professionals.

i. Technology Infrastructure

Broadband and high-speed fiber-optic infrastructure allow regions and communities to compete globally, attracting new firms, investments, and jobs with next-generation communications infrastructure. Looking ahead, American communities without broadband will find themselves left out of the digital movement. Local economic development plans and federal programs must take this into account when assessing the economic prospects of a community.

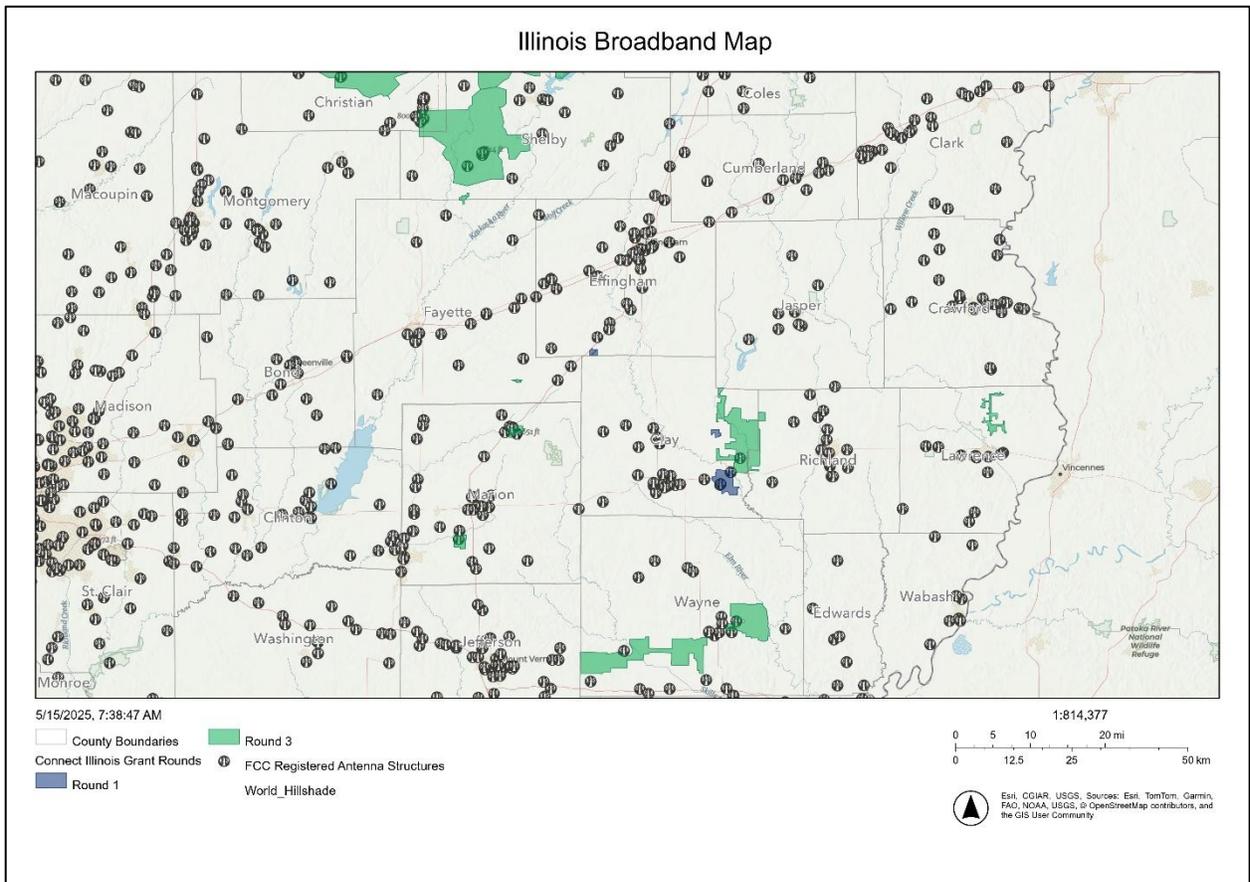
With increasing occurrences, the general public is realizing that the nation’s economy and that of the five-county district as well are slowly transitioning from a manufacturing-based system toward a digital/technology-based economy. Accordingly, the digital capabilities present within the region can be expected to play an increasingly important role in future location considerations of more highly technology-based companies.

Internet services for an individual consumer within the district are largely provided through one of the larger companies. However, several smaller, locally based Internet service providers exist within the district. These smaller companies are becoming increasingly responsible for adding the last-mile fiber optics or other high-speed infrastructure so it may be utilized at a local level.

**Figure 4-9:
Telecommunication Infrastructure**

County	Fiber Optics	Digital Switching	25+ MBPS	100+MBPS
Clay	Yes	Yes	85.9%	84.5%
Effingham	Yes	Yes	91.0%	87.7%
Fayette	Yes	Yes	59.0%	55.9%
Jasper	Yes	Yes	69.5%	59.2%
Marion	Yes	Yes	77.3%	74.5%
SCIRPDC	Yes	Yes	76.54%	72.36%

Source: Broadbandnow. Illinois, 2024; MBPS = Megabytes per Second



Source: Illinois DCEO, Illinois Broadband Map

V. Public Services & Resources

a. Educational/Training Resources

Measurements of the quality of education among school Districts often rely upon such statistics as pupil/teacher ratios and the level of expenditures per student, etc. However, it is recognized that there is considerable debate among professionals within the educational community as to how to accurately measure student performance and school district performance. Given the nature of this debate, this document makes no attempt to measure the success or failure of schools and/or students within the district, but rather focuses only on some very basic measurements. **Figure 5-1**, which follows, depicts the number of elementary and high school students present within each of the public-school districts serving the five-county Economic Development District.

**Figure 5-1:
Elementary/Secondary Education**

Public Schools in EDD					
County	School District	# of Schools	Student Enrollment	Average Pupil/Teacher Ratio	Average Pupil Spending
Clay	Clay City CUSD # 10	3	259	18:1	\$17,000
	Flora CUSD # 35	3	1,326	17:1	\$12,000
	North Clay CUSD # 25	2	542	13:1	\$15,000
Effingham	Altamont CUSD # 10	2	677	15:1	\$11,000
	Beecher City CUSD # 20	2	362	13:1	\$13,000
	Dieterich CUSD # 30	2	601	17:1	\$11,000
	Effingham CUSD # 40	6	2,195	16:1	\$15,000
	Teutopolis CUSD # 50	3	1,112	17:1	\$9,300
Fayette	Brownstown CUSD # 201	3	415	13:1	\$14,000
	Ramsey CUSD # 204	2	391	13:1	\$14,000
	St. Elmo CUSD # 202	3	395	14:1	\$13,000
	Vandalia CUSD # 203	3	1,452	14:1	\$13,000
Jasper	Jasper County CUSD # 1	4	1,171	17:1	\$12,000
Marion	Centralia H.S. Dist. # 200	1	868	15:1	\$19,000
	Centralia School Dist. # 135	5	1,051	17:1	\$17,000
	Central City Dist. # 133	1	295	16:1	\$13,000
	Iuka CCSD # 7	1	245	21:1	\$13,000

Figure 5-1 cont.

Public Schools in EDD					
County	School District	# of Schools	Student Enrollment	Average Pupil/Teacher Ratio	Average Pupil Spending
Marion cont.	Kell CONS SD # 2	1	71	10:1	\$17,000
	Odin PSD # 722	2	232	9:1	\$16,000
	Patoka CUSD # 100	3	222	12:1	\$17,000
	Raccoon CONS SD # 1	1	209	16:1	\$15,000
	Salem CHSD # 600	1	695	18:1	\$13,000
	Salem SD # 111	2	959	18:1	\$11,000
	Sandoval CUSD # 501	3	422	15:1	\$16,000
	Selmaville CCSD # 10	1	236	16:1	\$14,000
	South Central CUD # 401	3	627	14:1	\$14,000
SCIRPDC EDD	26 School Districts	61	17,030	15:1	\$14,011.54

Source: Illinois Department of Education, Illinois Report Card 2023-2024

The average reported student/teacher ratio for the district’s 26 public school districts was 15:1, which was significantly below the state average of 17 students per teacher. Similarly, although not shown in the preceding chart, the expenditure per pupil level for these same 26 school districts was lower than the statewide average of \$28,588 by over \$15,000.

b. Health Care Services

Given the sparsely populated rural nature of the Economic Development District, the area is gifted with acute medical care facilities. Specifically, each of the five largest municipalities within the district contains a modern, acute care facility capable of providing basic diagnostic, general surgery, laboratory testing, x-ray, nuclear medicine, and pulmonary care services for local residents.

Figure 5-2:
Hospitals and Nursing Staff Availability

Municipality	Hospital	# of Beds	RN Nursing Hours per Patient Day (Medical-Surgical)	RN Nursing Hours per Patient Day (Critical Care)
Centralia	St. Mary’s Hospital	116	8.26 hours	16.12 hours
Effingham	St. Anthony’s Hospital	133	3.82 hours	5.32 hours
Flora	Clay County Hospital	20	16.91 hours	N/A
Salem	Salem Township Hospital	25	10.88 hours	25.85 hours
Vandalia	SBL Fayette County Hospital	110	5.68 hours	N/A
SCIRPDC	5 Hospitals	404		

Source: Illinois Healthcare Report Card

Collectively, the District's five acute care hospitals are capable of providing a reasonable range of health care services in concert with privately owned medical clinics, and publicly and privately owned long-term care and rehabilitation facilities. The City of Newton and Jasper County in general are the only area of the district not directly served by a community hospital; however, Jasper County is served by Newton Community Medical Center in Newton, Illinois, and St. Anthony's Hospital in nearby Effingham.

In general, the medical personnel serving the rural Economic Development District represent a relatively broad range of specialties and can accommodate the vast majority of local health care needs. Highly targeted specialties, such as brain surgeons and open-heart surgeons, visit the district's hospitals on a regular basis and can also be found in the St. Louis medical community and facilities located in Evansville, Indiana. District residents also consult pulmonary care specialists at St. John's Hospital in Springfield, Illinois, and utilize the hospital for such invasive procedures as heart bypass and heart valve replacement surgery, as well as at SSM Health Good Samaritan Hospital in Jefferson County.

Many of the EDD's hospitals maintain relationships with other health care facilities in and adjacent to the region. Such collaborative efforts have included St. Mary's Hospital in Centralia and Good Samaritan Hospital in Mt. Vernon, which have implemented joint purchasing agreements in order to maximize savings and improve efficiency in the provision of health care. Additionally, the Clay County Hospital, Salem Township Hospital, and Fayette County Hospital have established ties with the world-renowned Barnes Children's Hospital in St. Louis, Missouri, for the treatment of medical care needs unique to children.

Two important trends have continued with number three on the list being the only new emerging issues within the district's five rural hospitals, including; (1) the inclusion of innovative new, money-making health care service programs ranging from psychiatric care to day-care services; (2) aggressively marketing their health care services to major employers; (3) implementation of the Affordable Care Act for those individuals and families who have no medical insurance.

c. Police Protection

A private sector investor electing to locate within the EDD will make a sizable capital investment in property, facilities, equipment, and inventory. Therefore, a community's ability to protect such business investments from vandalism, theft, and loss by fire represents still another factor in the facility location process.

**Figure5-3:
Law Enforcement Personnel**

County	Sworn Full-Time	Civilian Full-Time	Sworn Part-Time	Auxiliary Officers	Total	Law Enforcement Ratio/1,000
Clay	12	0	0	1	13	1.3
Effingham	22	28	15	0	65	6.5
Fayette	10	17	6	0	33	3.3
Jasper	11	5	8	0	24	2.4
Marion	16	0	2	0	18	1.8
SCIRPDC	162	125	66	17	370	3.1

Source: Illinois State Police, Crime Report Index

Two factors are traditionally utilized to characterize a locality’s effort to deter crime and its effectiveness in accomplishing such objectives. Specifically, (1) the number of law enforcement personnel; and (2) the community's overall instances of criminal activity. **Figure 5-3**, on the previous page, expresses the number of local law enforcement personnel serving and protecting each of the five counties comprising the Economic Development District. Also shown is the number of law enforcement personnel for each 1,000 residents within each of the respective counties.

While most of the district’s larger communities maintain municipal police departments, quality policing is not restricted to these communities alone. Many of the smaller municipalities within the district also employ the services of full-time, part-time, or auxiliary police officers. The district’s police departments employ the latest forensic and crime scene investigative technology available, often augmenting local resources through the services of the Illinois State Police Crime Scene Investigation Service and Laboratory.

d. Fire Protection

As corporate representatives must consider a locality’s ability to offer a relatively crime-free living environment for both business operations and the lifestyles of its employees, an area’s ability to provide protection of life, personal property, and real estate from fire is also an important location consideration.

Figure 5-4 on the following page provides an illustration of each of the eight largest fire departments in the SCIRPDC EDD and displays personnel details for each.

**Figure 5-4:
Fire Protection Service**

Municipality	Fire Department	Department Type	Career Firefighters	Volunteer Firefighters	Firefighters Paid per Call	Total
Altamont	Altamont Fire Protection Dist.	Volunteer	0	0	30	30
Centralia	Centralia Fire Dept.	Career	16	0	5	21
Effingham	Effingham Fire Dept.	Mostly Volunt.	17	0	20	37
Flora	Flora Volunt. Fire Dept.	Volunteer	0	34	0	34
Newton	Wade Comm. Fire Protection Dist.	Volunteer	0	0	30	30
Salem	Salem Fire Prot. Dist.	Mostly Volunt.	4	0	44	48
St. Elmo	St. Elmo Fire Prot. Dist.	Volunteer	0	31	0	31
Vandalia	Vandalia Fire Dept.	Volunteer	0	32	0	32
SCIRPDC	8 Largest Depts.	-	37	97	129	263

Source: U.S. Fire Administration

Clearly, the District relies heavily upon volunteer firefighters for the provision of essential fire protection, fire control, and suppression services, as evidenced by a ratio of 2 volunteers to each full-time paid firefighter. This ratio is higher than that found in more metropolitan areas and reflects the region's ongoing commitment to provide essential public services in the most cost-effective manner possible.

The fact that 37% of the district's firefighting personnel are unpaid volunteers should not, however, be interpreted to mean that the level of protection afforded is somehow second-class. To the contrary, the level of required education of volunteers is exceptional, and their ability to perform essential and dangerous functions effectively is further enhanced by ongoing fire suppression and emergency rescue training and access to today's modern equipment.

e. Recreational/Cultural Opportunities

While as individuals we do not usually tend to think of recreational and cultural opportunities as being of equal importance as food, warmth, and shelter, our service-oriented society continues to realize that a quality lifestyle consists of more than just satisfying basic necessities. Given a business's need to successfully recruit mid and upper-management personnel, corporate officials sometimes give consideration to an area's leisure time opportunities as part of the facility location process. **Figure 5-5** provides detailed recreational activities available to the public at the six state parks or nature areas maintained by the State of Illinois within the District.

**Figure5-5:
State Parks and Natural Areas**

Recreational Area	Locale	Boating	Hiking	Fishing	Camping	Hunting	Horseback Riding
Ballard Nature Center	Altamont		X	X			
Newton Lake	Newton	X	X	X		X	X
Prairie Ridge State Natural Area	Jasper/Marion		X				
Ramsey Lake St. Park	Fayette	X	X	X	X	X	
Sam Parr St. Park	Newton	X	X	X	X	X	X
Stephen Forbes St. Park	Omega	X	X	X	X	X	X
Wildcat Hollow	Kinmundy		X			X	

Source: Illinois State Department of Natural Resources, 2024

Considering the natural beauty and abundance of man-made lakes within or near the five-county district, the area clearly has a satisfactory amount of outdoor recreational opportunities. Three of the state’s largest water-based recreational complexes are situated in South Central Illinois and include: (1) Rend Lake, located in the southern extremities of Jefferson County just south of the district; (2) Carlyle Lake, intersecting the south-western portion of Fayette County; and (3) Lake Shelbyville, located approximately twenty minutes north of the five-county District.

All of the District’s medium and larger-sized communities have at least one publicly-owned park and in some instances, a network of parks, which has been developed in order to provide outdoor recreational opportunities to varying degrees. Only the region’s smallest municipalities lack such facilities. Many of the district's communities have undertaken improvements to their existing recreational infrastructure.

In general, the area’s parks and recreational facilities offer the following types of recreational activities: swimming, baseball, softball and soccer fields, picnic areas, hiking, bicycling, fishing, boating, water skiing, camping and limited horseback riding facilities. The number of bicycling paths and/or pedestrian walkways/trails has grown within the region over the past years, but considerable room for enhancement of inter-community paths and trails still exists and should be explored further. These trails provide both recreational opportunities and relieve some forms of localized traffic congestion within the district’s larger municipalities.

The five-county Economic Development District offers a reasonable array of cultural opportunities to local residents through cultural societies and/or artistic groups. For example, the Effingham Performing Arts Center showcases big name live arts and entertainment, Pittenger Bandshell facilities in Centralia, Illinois, serve as the site for multiple concerts throughout the year, and the City of Salem hosts several shows in a recently renovated community theater in a building formerly used as a movie house. The Mitchell Museum, located 20 minutes south of the District within the Cedarhurst Complex in Mt. Vernon, Illinois, is an example of one of downstate's premier arts and crafts centers.

The second state capital of Illinois is located within the City of Vandalia's central business district and annually becomes the focal point for a historically-oriented festival known as the Grand Levee ceremonies. This important piece of early Illinois history was reopened for visitors in 2002 after undergoing an extensive, multi-year restoration project that returned the Capitol Building to its former grandeur. Both the Vandalia State House and the birthplace of William Jennings Bryan, located near the central business District in Salem, Illinois, are additional examples of a dozen or more historic sites within the district to be placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Local historic preservation groups remain active, having placed several historical brick streets in Vandalia, Illinois, on the National Register of Historic Places. Similar community-based groups have also formed for the promotion of tourist activity along State Route 40 in Fayette County. The route was paved using the former settlement trails of early pioneers, marking an important aspect of the early development of South-Central Illinois. Placement on the National Register of Historic Places is important to the restoration and preservation of the area's identity, as it often enhances a community's ability to secure state and federal grant funds. The availability of funds has proven vital to the continuation of preservation efforts, most notably the brick street restoration project in Vandalia that was the recipient of a state grant.

Other recreational opportunities occur on a regularly scheduled annual basis within the District and include: (1) a Hot-Air Balloon Fest held in Centralia, Illinois; (2) the Schutzenfest in Altamont, Illinois; (3) Corvette Fun Festival in Effingham, Illinois; (4) the previously mentioned Grand Levee Festival in Vandalia, Illinois. Each of the counties comprising the district also annually sponsors a county fair during which nationally recognized entertainment is typically featured.

The area continues to honor its heritage, both natural and historical, with residents actively participating in the preservation of regional historical landmarks and natural sites. Residents in the community of Iuka (Marion County) have raised private funds for the preservation and restoration of the historically significant Halfway House Tavern. The tavern represents an important piece of the area's early settlement history as it was built in an area halfway between the former trading posts of St. Louis, Missouri, and Vincennes, Indiana, hence the name Halfway House Tavern. Restoration has also been completed on two of the district's most impressive and functional landmarks tied to the area's earlier influence by railroads, mainly the wooden water towers in Kimmundy and Centralia (both Marion County).

The preservation of the district's natural areas has also been improved upon with the creation and continued expansion of nature paths encircling the Salem Reservoir. Additionally, the creation of nearly 50 acres of wetlands on what was formerly agricultural land is progressing in the community of Centralia. The wetland site hosts a pond, wetland fauna, walking paths, and wildlife viewing areas.

Beyond the recreational and cultural opportunities provided via facilities situated within the five-county District, local residents are within a 90-minute drive of the cultural opportunities available within the St. Louis Metropolitan Area and Evansville, Indiana. These opportunities include major sporting events, street festivals, art museums, a zoo, a theater, and an opera house.

Additionally, SCIRPDC staff have recently completed the Clay County Greenways and Trails Plan, providing a document outlining present and future plans for recreational growth. It is our hope to eventually provide plans for each of our five counties and one day connect these plans with regional hiking/biking pathways.

f. Community Planning Activities

This section will briefly look at the level of planning activities currently underway at the municipal, county, regional, and state levels. While private sector investors recognize that accommodating local development regulations can increase their front-end construction costs, the presence of reasonable land use regulations and other functional planning efforts also notes a level of sophistication within the locality capable of helping protect the future long-term integrity and market value of the chosen development site.

As reflected in **Figure 5-6**, on the following page, which follows each of the district's largest municipalities, currently employ land use regulations consisting of a land-use plan, zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations, and in most instances, minimal housing codes. These communities also develop at least an informal budget for capital improvements on an annual basis and have recently undertaken other functional planning efforts, targeting more narrowly upon transportation, water and sewer, recreational facilities, or other areas of consideration.

Economic development activities in the district's municipalities are primarily facilitated through the city manager/administrator; however, the cities of Centralia, Salem, Effingham, and Flora employ the services of a full-time community/economic development professional to implement these activities as well. Newton, Illinois, while not directly employing a full-time municipal economic developer, does utilize the services of the Jasper County Chamber of Commerce and Jasper Jobs, Inc., for the coordination of its marketing and development programs.

**Figure 5-6:
Community Planning Activities**

Municipality	Land Use Regulation	Capital Improvements	Economic Development Staffing	Functional Planning*
Altamont	Yes	No	No	Yes
Centralia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Effingham	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Flora	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Newton	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Salem	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
St. Elmo	Yes	No	No	Yes
Teutopolis	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Vandalia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Source: DCEO Community Profiles

Note: *Includes transportation, housing, water and sewer, recreation and emergency preparedness

As noted earlier in this District CEDS document, the rural nature of Clay, Effingham, Fayette, Jasper, and Marion Counties has restricted their involvement in the direct delivery of some categories of public services, and therefore it is not surprising to find an equally narrow range of county-level planning activities. For the most part, county-level planning activities within the five-county District have focused upon: (1) transportation planning through the respective county highway departments including field reference systems programs, etc.; (2) the provision of law enforcement and detention facilities (3) animal control services; (4) property assessment and valuation systems for taxation purposes; and (5) emergency telephone systems.

VI. Action Plan

This section provides an updated action plan for the CEDS use in the five-county South Central Illinois Economic Development District, beginning with a brief analysis of the process used by the District's CEDS Advisory Committee in the preparation of the 2025-2030 District CEDS document. The chapter begins with an objective assessment of the development strengths and weaknesses of the five-county District as perceived by the district staff, advisory committee members, governing body, and associated agencies with which the regional organization frequently engages.

a. CEDS Development Process

The process of re-writing the previously published 2020-2022 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) document was accomplished through the generous volunteer participation and support of many civic leaders, local governments, development groups, and affiliate state and federal agencies, etc. However, at the center of the local/regional public participation process for writing the 2023 document is the District's CEDS Advisory Committee.

The district staff established and maintained periodic contact with the members of the District's CEDS Advisory Committee beginning in the summer of 2022, and the committee's direct input into the updated 2025-2030 District CEDS document culminated in the latter part of Summer 2023. Comprised of 30 voting members, the committee included six members from each of the five counties in the district, which were invited to participate by the district organization in an effort to ensure that all important economic sectors of the region's economy were represented.

b. SWOT Analysis

Beginning in the summer of 2022, the South Central Illinois Regional Planning and Development Commission (EDD) began conversations with regional officials along with the CEDS Committee. These discussions produced the subsequent SWOT Analysis (the central points are summarized in **Figure 6-1**). Following the SWOT analysis section are the regional goals and objectives, which were developed and ranked by the CEDS Committee.

Regional Strengths:

1. Local economic development officials have enhanced the region's overall attractiveness to prospective industrial and commercial investors. The efforts shown by the local elected official and economic development professional have been instrumental in the use of state and federal grant and loan programs, along with the continued use of TIF districts and enterprise zones.
2. Workforce development has come to the forefront of many of the District's priorities. ECI Super Region is working with six community colleges and 25 counties to survey the needs of the manufacturers and train the workforce accordingly.

3. Public utilities and related facilities, such as water, sewer, roads and bridges, airports, and rail transit systems, are generally adequate to support new development.
4. Availability of private and public development organizations using their financing programs in conjunction to provide competitively priced, fixed-rate financing for fixed assets, inventory, and working capital needs.
5. The transportation infrastructure in the region, in terms of proximity to major roads, maintenance of routes, and the variety of ways to get around, is a benefit to both individuals moving to the region and businesses.

**Figure6-1:
SWOT Analysis Summary**

Regional Strengths	Regional Weaknesses
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Local Economic Development Efforts 2. Workforce Development 3. Adequate Public Utilities 4. Private and Public Development Organizations 5. Transportation Infrastructure 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Need for Manufacturing Technical Training 2. Lack of Consistent Broadband Access 3. Lack of Adequate Housing 4. Lack of Local Government Participation 5. Lack of Entrepreneurship
Regional Opportunities	Regional Threats
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Career-based Workforce Development 2. Focus on Regional Assets 3. Invest in Economic Strengths 4. Region-based Thought Process 5. Encourage Entrepreneurs and Innovation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reduced State and Federal Funding 2. Regional Employers' Financial Burden 3. Population Decline 4. Lack of Technology-based Workforce 5. High Taxes

Regional Weaknesses:

1. Throughout the document, it can be said that most of the Economic Development District’s rural towns and counties are experiencing declining or slow gains in population. Rural towns continue to search for economic growth, mostly in the form of smokestack chasing, which is difficult given the declining population base of younger and more educated age cohorts, which are the age cohorts that businesses and manufacturers look for when selecting a location.

The problem in the EDD and throughout the Midwest is the shift from agriculture to factory work. As we know, manufacturing bottomed out in the recession, and still has not fully recovered. Now that an evolution in manufacturing is taking place, the sector is looking for more technically trained employees.

2. Even though the redevelopment centers in the region all show having access to fiber optics, broadband access is still spotty, allowing the more sophisticated businesses to locate in the larger cities, along with the talent and staffing required for this type of business.
3. As shown in Table 4-4, the region has a severe lack of available housing. While, in theory, a low vacancy rate sounds like a good thing, many of our communities do not have residences available to those moving to the region. This makes it difficult for industries to expand, knowing that their new employees will struggle to find housing. Knowing the limited availability of residential properties, individuals are deterred from moving into the region.
4. A lack of public involvement in the processes of local government has made it somewhat difficult to ensure local government decisions are being made with proper public input. While all attempts are made to involve the public in most local decision-making processes, public apathy towards the inner workings of their respective local governments has made effective governing much more challenging.
5. There continues to be a lack of entrepreneurs not only in rural areas such as South Central Illinois, but within the United States as a whole. Entrepreneurs are the people in communities who take financial risks and are more likely to create jobs than manufacturing firms. Recent trends indicate that the number of new jobs in entrepreneurial-based jobs is declining, and therefore, more investment is necessary in the area of entrepreneurship.

Regional Opportunities:

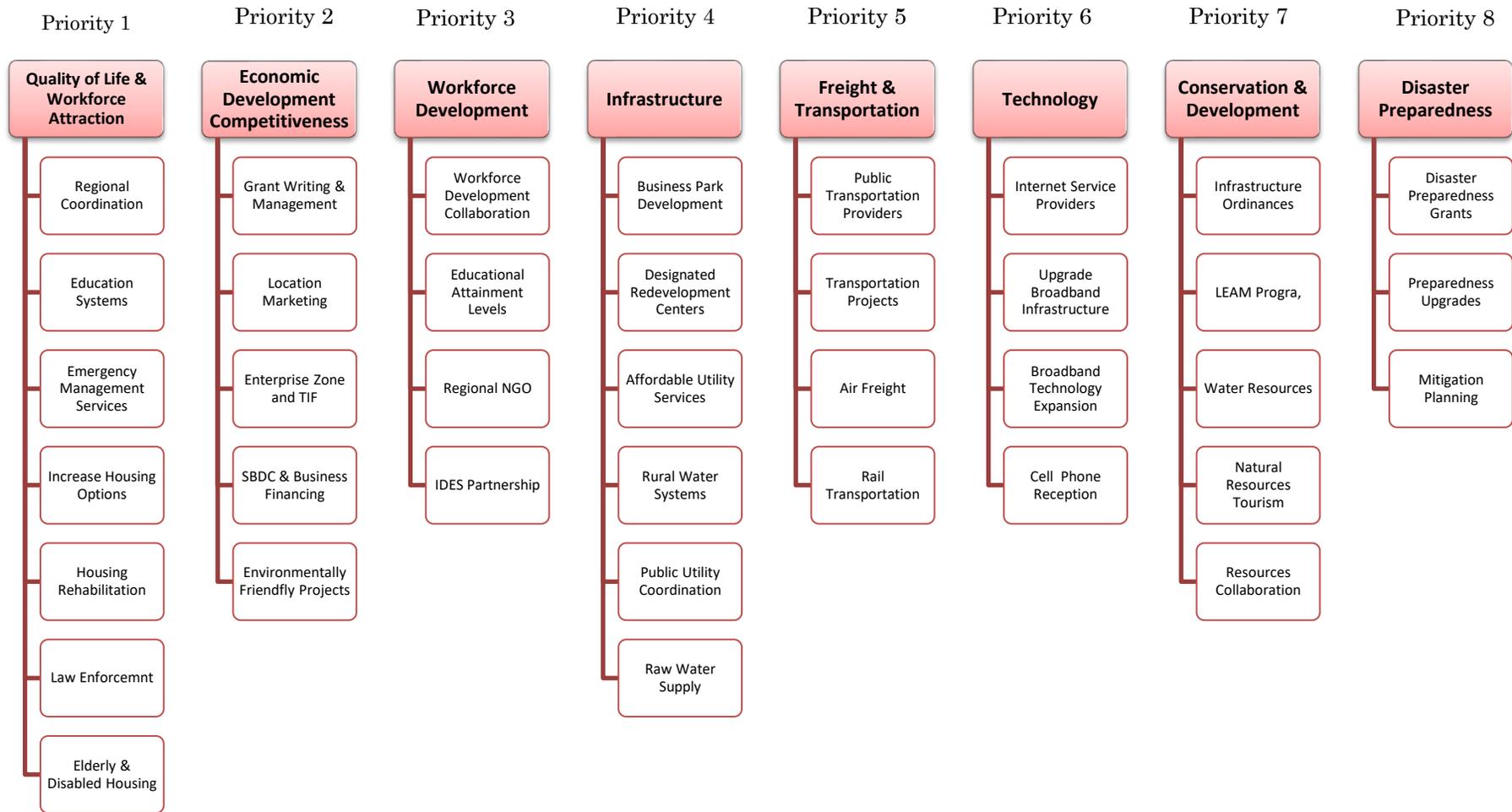
1. Continue to work with the evolving manufacturers and educational institutions to ensure that the workforce is being trained according to the manufacturer's needs.
2. Look at regional assets instead of local assets when marketing the area for business and other development projects.
3. Base investment on actual regional economic strengths, not solely on cheap labor or site amenities.
4. Change the local thought process from local to a regional thought process.
5. Encourage and cultivate innovators and entrepreneurs, and nurture innovation that leads to new business.

Threats to the Region:

1. Since the recession of 2008, both the State of Illinois as well as the Federal government have eliminated or greatly reduced funding sources that historically would have been used to attract private-sector investment.

2. Employers within the District are burdened by the increasing cost of employer benefits, state workers' compensation, unemployment insurance, and the unknown cost of the Affordable Care Act. Worsening the business environment, the State of Illinois' pension crisis, in addition to recent tax hikes, makes Illinois an unfriendly business state.
3. For a number of years, both the region and the state have experienced a decline in population. This poses a problem for our area in particular, as we serve all rural communities. These municipalities and counties already have a small population base covering a sizeable tax burden, and with younger individuals continually choosing to leave the region for college and not come back, it is becoming an even bigger problem. With that being said, many industries don't want to move into a region with a population that is constantly getting smaller.
4. The region continues to lack technically skilled and qualified workers to fill technology-based employment opportunities capable of creating jobs that could help retain the area's younger age cohorts, 22-34, which includes younger college graduates starting families.
5. Both the state and our region have higher taxes than their neighboring counterparts. With higher taxes, neither individuals nor new businesses want to move to the region when they can save by being located elsewhere.

c. Goals and Objectives



Priority # 1: Quality of Life / Workforce Attraction	New Rank	Prior Rank
Offer an overall quality of life that is acceptable to relocating people and families, as well as the higher-skilled and often better-educated workforce participants. This includes the provision of amenities that aid in attracting employees and employers, the area needs to continue to compete in the global marketplace.	1	1
Objectives:	New Rank	Prior Rank
Foster increased collaboration between the district’s five county sheriff departments, municipal police, fire departments, first responders, and medical facilities as a means of improving regional coordination during emergencies or other events.	1	8
Aid in the provision of a quality education system through regional school districts to provide the basic educational foundation. This foundation will lead to continuing education in vocational skills, community colleges, and universities that offer more advanced programs to meet the specific needs of present and future employers. Encourage the educational institutions to quickly employ training curricula and the required skill sets sought by regional employers.	2	1
Provide an adequate and appropriate level of fire protection and related emergency care services throughout the district in the most cost-effective manner possible. Create a local environment that is conducive to both the safety and welfare of the general public.	3	7
Encourage the provision of a variety of single and multi-family affordable housing units for purchase or rent within the five-county district to help accommodate existing and projected demands and help to attract educated young families to stay or relocate in the district.	4	2
Foster the rehabilitation of older, substandard, single-family, owner-occupied housing stock within the declining older neighborhood settings. This will allow families with limited incomes to bring such structures into housing code compliance and remain in their residences while stabilizing and revitalizing neighborhoods.	5	3

Priority #1 Objectives cont:	New Rank	Prior Rank
Provide appropriate levels of criminal justice and law enforcement services through the district in the most cost-effective manner possible. Maintain staffing levels that are conducive to the safety and welfare of the general public and provide assurance to investors regarding the protection of their capital investments in the region.	6	5
Promote the development of specialized housing complexes that are designed to accommodate the residential living of the district's less mobile, yet independent elderly residents and individuals with physical or developmental disabilities.	7	4

Priority #2: Economic Development Competitiveness	New Rank	Prior Rank
Remain vigilant in improving the district’s ability to compete economically with locally offered tax incentives and other inducements in concert with available local, state, and federal financial assistance programs to attract private sector investments that create and retain higher-skilled employment opportunities.	2	3
Objectives:	New Rank	Prior Rank
The provision of locally accessible grant writing and management services to member local governments and economic development organizations in order to enhance the District’s effort to solicit desirable firms, especially those recently identified in the cluster analysis process, interested in operating within the five-county District.	1	3
Strengthen the capabilities of local governments and economic development corporations relative to their efforts to identify and successfully market their location to desirable firms interested in initiating new or expanding existing operations.	2	2
Improve the capabilities of local governments and economic development corporations relative to their effective use of Enterprise Zone and TIF District incentives to provide local tax abatement and other inducements to attract desirable firms interested in initiating new or expanding existing businesses in the five-county District.	3	1
The provision of accessible, affordable business counseling services in cooperation with regional Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) and the regional financial community to both existing and start-up businesses interested in starting or expanding business operations. This includes guidance regarding the successful use of locally available revolving loan funds and/or regional business development financing programs designed to stimulate private sector investment, build the local tax base, diversify the local economy, and create or retain jobs.	4	4
Encouragement of environmentally friendly projects within the district, which make effective use of the area’s native natural and man-made attributes in a manner that simultaneously promotes both sustainable growth and development. Aid in the maintenance or improvement of the region's natural resources and ecosystems while also fostering a higher level of business innovation and an entrepreneurial spirit.	5	5

Priority # 3: Workforce Development	New Rank	Prior Rank
Provide a District that offers a motivated, work-ready, and productive labor force along with flexible vocational training programs that are capable of delivering vital skill sets and a proper work ethic essential to long-term business success.	3	4
Objectives:	New Rank	Prior Rank
Continue to collaborate with the staff of regional development corporations, community colleges, and workforce development to share proprietary information and strategies regarding the area's labor force and vocational needs in order to promote consistency and agreement in the respective strategies.	1	3
Continue collaboration to bring about a gradual improvement in the overall educational attainment level of the area's workforce participants and regularly evaluate the regional workforce's job readiness to elevate their attractiveness to existing and prospective regional employers.	2	2
Maintain collaboration with regional development corporations, community colleges, and workforce development to create a non-governmental organization for establishing broad-based regional development goals and serving as a possible applicant for a Regional Innovation Grant from the US Department of Labor or EDA, or other related funding sources to fund workforce planning activities.	3	4
Continue to collaborate with the Illinois Department of Employment Security to compare the area workforce's present vocational skills with existing and projected vocational skill sets. Evaluate the local employment opportunities within the District as a basis for tweaking the range of vocational and classroom training curricula offered at area educational institutions and vocational centers.	4	1

Priority #4: Infrastructure	New Rank	Prior Rank
Strive to maintain, modernize, and expand its current public utilities, facilities, and services to accommodate current and projected future demands that are triggered by private sector industrial and commercial investment.	4	2
Objectives:	New Rank	Prior Rank
Aid in the effective promotion and development of existing industrial, business parks, and technology centers. Market zoned industrial sites within the district as a means of attracting major private sector investments and reinvestment capable of diversifying the area's economy. Help to rebuild the area's tax base through generation and/or retention of higher-skilled, better-paying employment opportunities for area residents.	1	2
Encourage the continued improvements to the infrastructure serving the District's Designated Redevelopment Centers and related communities to accommodate the majority of the future industrial and commercial development.	2	1
Promote efforts to increase the region's ability to offer more affordable regional solutions to the long-term provision of modern, compliant utility services and appurtenances.	3	3
Foster continued improvement to the rural water systems serving the district's unincorporated residents and farmsteads as a means of providing access to a source of safe and reasonably affordable drinking water.	4	5
Examine the opportunity for collaboration between utility service providers as a means of maximizing the benefits of public utility investments and jointly improving service reliability within the unincorporated and more sparsely populated areas of the district.	5	7
Promote efforts to increase the region's access to affordable, sustainable, and quality raw water supplies.	6	4

Priority # 5: Freight & Transportation	New Rank	Prior Rank
Continue to improve the District’s accessibility to external markets through various ground, air, and rail transportation, along with other related alternatives, that can safely and efficiently move people as well as products within the five-county region and beyond.	5	6
Objectives:	New Rank	Prior Rank
Offer technical, planning, and coordination assistance, and collaborate with existing public transportation service providers to address geographic and functional service gaps within Human Services Transportation Regions 9, 10, and 11. Continue to evaluate public transportation services designed to meet the mobility needs of the district’s economically disadvantaged, elderly, and physically disabled residents.	1	2
Promote advanced planning to increase the opportunity for state and federal funding to complement local resources for essential road, bridge, and rail projects intended to improve inter- and intra-community movement of people and goods. Specific attention should be given to critical access roads for farm-to-market, industrial to business parks, and other desirable commercial development areas.	2	1
Continue to encourage physical improvements and contractual agreements designed to ensure that air freight services are provided from the district’s five public airports.	3	3
The provision of assistance to local governments in the preservation and stabilization of the area’s rail transportation system, including continued support from AMTRAK passenger services and terminals in Centralia and Effingham. Promote the adaptive re-use of existing terminals and the construction of rail spurs at the District’s Industrial and Business Parks to encourage and aid in the shipment of goods.	4	4

Priority # 6: Technology	New Rank	Prior Rank
Strive to improve competition with external markets through a variety of communication methods that are essential to today's technological global economy.	6	5
Objectives:	New Rank	Prior Rank
Encourage Internet service providers to upgrade the technological broadband infrastructure and complementary telecommunications and data services to improve the region's connectivity with external markets.	1	1
In cooperation with other Internet infrastructure investors, the district will continue to examine an appropriate role for it to assume with local officials and Internet service providers to upgrade the technological broadband infrastructure and complementary telecommunications and data services to improve connectivity with external markets.	2	2
Continue to utilize staff to investigate the feasible expansion of broadband technology into the redevelopment centers and growth corridors within the district.	3	4
Continue to provide staff planning and coordination assistance to cooperatively assess, with local officials and service providers, the level of progress made to improve the level of cell phone reception within more remote areas of the five-county District.	4	3

Priority # 7: Conservation & Development	New Rank	Prior Rank
Recognize the importance of the district’s soil, water, biological, and natural resources, and attempt to balance the desire to attract private economic investment with the need to preserve finite resources.	7	8
Objectives:	New Rank	Prior Rank
Provide the counties and the related municipalities with the tools to create ordinances and regulations needed to safeguard the current infrastructure, while allowing for oil and gas extraction-related economic development to occur.	1	1
Utilize the capabilities of the Regional LEAM Program efforts to evaluate, assess, and generate, when necessary, a geographic model of the probable land use implications associated with various future major physical development projects within the district.	2	4
Encourage the sensible management and conservation of the area’s water resources, including the identified significant stream segments with the district, and maintain/improve the water quality, as well as promote a reduction in soil erosion and sedimentation to mitigate future uncontrolled localized flooding.	3	3
Attempt to capitalize upon the area’s native economic development potential as a result of its existing flora, fauna, and other natural resources as a secondary basis for attracting tourists to the five-county district.	4	5
Encourage the location of future physical developments within the district in a manner that considers its compatibility with identified soil associations, as well as known flood plains, wetlands, and the habitats of endangered and/or threatened species.	5	2

Priority # 8: Disaster Preparedness	New Rank	Prior Rank
Be aware of potential threats of significant losses from both natural disasters and acts of terrorism. Continue to assess and plan for such possibilities and therefore, improve our ability to respond to and mitigate their consequences.	8	7
Objectives:	New Rank	Prior Rank
Utilize the staff's technical expertise to monitor the availability of any state or federal financial assistance programs designed to ensure the overall coordination and consistency of locally developed emergency preparedness. Ensure that response plans are up to date at the regional level, along with their compatibility with state mitigation plans and strategies.	1	3
Continue to monitor availability of funding for state or federal programs designed to assist city and county Emergency Service Disaster Agency coordinators, law enforcement, and firefighting organizations in upgrading their abilities to prepare and respond to natural or man-made disasters that realistically could occur within the district.	2	1
Utilize the staff's technical expertise to monitor the availability of any state or federal financial assistance programs that would offset the costs of developing a county-by-county or regional hazard mitigation plan that would include resilience planning relative to natural disasters and/or the closing of a large regional employer	3	2

d. Alignment with State of Illinois Development Priorities

In October of 2019, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity released the “Plan to Revitalize the Illinois Economy and Build the Workforce of the Future Executive Summary” under Governor J.B. Pritzker. This 2019 economic development plan is still the latest and most recent economic development plan released by the State of Illinois. The South Central Illinois Regional Planning & Development Commission has chosen economic goals and objectives for the 2025-2030 CEDS that are closely related to the foci put forth by the 2024 Illinois Economic Growth Plan. The Illinois Economic Growth Plan can be found [here](#).

Figure 6-2
Main focus on Illinois Economic Development Efforts

Initiative	Description
1	Investing in technology adoption for Agribusiness
2	Investments in Green Infrastructure
3	Pursue top tech talent and companies
4	Build out infrastructure and facilities for Life Sciences and Healthcare
5	Recruit and Train Manufacturing Workforce
6	Pursue innovative and effective ways to improve transportation and logistics
7	Expand access to opportunities for small businesses

Source: Illinois DCEO 2024 Economic Growth Plan

While the Illinois Economic Development Plan Executive Summary does provide much detail regarding specific target objectives and measures within each of these seven initiatives, these broad goals align quite well with those goals and objectives put forth in this CEDS document for the South Central Illinois Region. Specifically, those areas of similarity include the following:

- Strengthening ongoing business attraction, retention, and support initiatives;
- Promoting economic development on a regional level;
- Increasing workforce capacity;
- Increasing fairness and opportunity;
- Driving innovation and entrepreneurial ventures; and
- Modernizing the current public infrastructure

EDA Regulations: Part 304 - Governing Body Membership Documentation

The District Organization (SCIRPDC) must demonstrate that its governing body is broadly representative of the principal economic interests of the (five-county) region, including the private sector, public officials, community leaders, representatives of workforce development boards, institutions of higher education, minority and labor groups, and private individuals. In addition, the governing body must demonstrate the capacity to implement the EDA-approved CEDS.

In accordance with Article 3 of the SCIRPDC "By-Laws", the SCIRPDC governing body, known as Board of Commissioners, is comprised of six (6) representatives from each of the five (5) participating counties plus the appointed Executive Director as an "ex-officio member" for a total of thirty- one (31) members.

SCIRPDC Governing Body Membership Information as of 2025

Name	Date Appointed	Organization	Economic Interests
Clay County, Illinois			
David Johnson	07/13	County Board Member	Public Officials
Mike Stanford	09/22	City of Flora City Mgr./EDD	Community Leader
Mike Delonshaw	06/23	Clay City Mayor	Public Officials
Barry Adair	12/19	Mgr. of Wabash Communications	Private Sector
Herb Henson	02/05	Clay City Banking Co., President	Private Sector
Michael Gill	09/22	VP of Flora Bank & Trust	Private Sector
Effingham County, Illinois			
David Campbell	12/16	Ad Works Publishing, Inc., Owner	Private Sector
Mike Brown	10/00	Real Estate/Property Rental	Private Sector
Bob Bohnhoff	10/23	Retired	Private Sector/Individual
Norbert Soltwedel	06/11	Retired USDA, Supervisor	Community Leaders
Sasha Althoff	03/15	City of Effingham Economic Development	Community Leaders
Larry Taylor	01/03	Retired Illinois Dept. of Transportation	Community Leaders
Fayette County, Illinois			
Jessica Barker	03/23	County Clerk	Public Officials
Mack Payne	02/23	County Board	Public Officials
Michael Kleinik	2/23	President, Macis Group, Inc.	Private Sector
John Lotz	08/12	Fertilizer Company, Co-Owner	Private Sector
John Roberts	06/85	St. Peter Village President	Public Officials
Jasper County, Illinois			
Angela Fehrenbacher	01/15	Secretary of State's Office	Community Leader
RJ Lindemann	05/22	City Councilman	Public Officials
Karen Booker	12/19	Home Health Caregiver	Public Officials
Ben Bollman	7/22	Farmer	Private Sector
Thomas H. Brown	6/01	Retired IDOT	Public Officials
Mike Hall	6/17	Retired Ameren	Private Sector/Individual
Marion County, Illinois			
Gary Purcell	5/21	Marion County Treasurer	Public Officials
Tony Smith	11/22	Ag Loan Officer	Private Sector/Individual
David Armbrust	07/14	Health Care Management	Private Sector/Individual
Debbie Smith	03/19	Marion County Board	Public Officials
Regional/Ex-Officio Member			
Luke Eastin	10/23	EDD Executive Director	SCIRPDC Staff

EDA Regulations: Part 303 - Strategy Committee Membership Documentation

The Planning Organization (SCIRPDC) must appoint a Strategy Committee that represents the main economic interests of the Region, including the private sector, public officials, community leaders, private individuals, representatives of workforce development boards, institutions of higher education, minority and labor groups, and others who can contribute to and benefit from improved economic development in the Region. In addition, the Strategy Committee must demonstrate the capacity to undertake a collaborative and effective planning process. The SCIRPDC Board of Commissioners, upon the advice of their professional staff, hereby appoints the following individuals to serve as the Strategy Committee for the purposes of implementing, annually revising, and updating the organization's document entitled, District Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

SCIRPDC Strategy Committee Membership Information as of June 2024

Name	Date Appointed	Organization	Economic Interests
Clay County, Illinois			
David Johnson	07/13	County Board Member	Public Officials
Mike Stanford	09/22	City of Flora City Mgr./EDD	Community Leader
Mike Delonshaw	06/23	Clay City Mayor	Public Officials
Barry Adair	12/19	Mgr. of Wabash Communications	Private Sector
Herb Henson	02/05	Clay City Banking Co., President	Private Sector
Michael Gill	09/22	VP of Flora Bank & Trust	Private Sector
Effingham County, Illinois			
David Campbell	12/16	Ad Works Publishing, Inc., Owner	Private Sector
Mike Brown	10/00	Real Estate/Property Rental	Private Sector
Bob Bohnhoff	10/23	Retired	Private Sector/Individual
Norbert Soltwedel	06/11	Retired USDA, Supervisor	Community Leaders
Sasha Althoff	03/15	City of Effingham Economic Development	Community Leaders
Larry Taylor	01/03	Retired Illinois Dept. of Transportation	Community Leaders
Fayette County, Illinois			
Jessica Barker	03/23	County Clerk	Public Officials
Mack Payne	02/23	County Board	Public Officials
Michael Kleinik	2/23	President, Macis Group, Inc.	Private Sector
John Lotz	08/12	Fertilizer Company, Co-Owner	Private Sector
John Roberts	06/85	St. Peter Village President	Public Officials
Ricky Gottman	04/10	City of Vandalia Mayor	Public Officials
Jasper County, Illinois			
Angela Fehrenbacher	01/15	Secretary of State's Office	Community Leader
RJ Lindemann	05/22	City Councilman	Public Officials
Tom Brown	06/01	Retired Illinois Dept. of Transportation	Community Leaders
Karen Booker	12/19	Home Health Caregiver	Public Officials
Ben Bollman	7/22	Farmer	Private Sector
Mike Hall	6/17	Retired Ameren	Private Sector/Individual
Marion County, Illinois			
Janie Grimes	09/16	Village of Iuka, Mayor	Public Officials
Gary Purcell	5/21	Marion County Treasurer	Public Officials
Tony Smith	11/22	Ag Loan Officer	Private Sector/Individual
Derek Sherman	06/21	City of Centralia EDD	Community Leaders
David Armbrust	07/14	Health Care Management	Private Sector/Individual
Debbie Smith	03/19	Marion County Board	Public Officials
Regional/Ex-Officio Member			
Luke J. L. Eastin	10/23	EDD Executive Director	SCIRPDC Staff

Note: The SCIRPDC Governing Body and Strategy Committee have been chosen to be one and the same. Since it has been determined that the SCIRPDC Governing Body has no less economic development knowledge or interest than any other group of professionals in the five-county EDD, it was determined that in order to ensure the most effective and consistent communication regarding the CEDS document, as well as its implementation and periodic update, the most useful Regional CEDS should be created and applied by those individuals with first-hand knowledge of how to successfully implement the CEDS.



RESOLUTION APPROVING AND ADOPTING THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT'S 2025-2030 COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR THE FIVE-COUNTY SOUTH CENTRAL ILLINOIS REGION

WHEREAS, the South Central Illinois Regional Planning & Development Commission was jointly created in October of 1972, under enabling state statute, and by joint action of the Effingham, Fayette and Marion County Boards to serve the local governments contained therein; and

WHEREAS, the Commission was charged at that time with the responsibility for conducting area-wide economic development planning activities intended to strengthen the local economy and create or retain local employment opportunities; and

WHEREAS, the Commission amended its service region in 1997 to include the counties of Clay and Jasper, thus ensuring a more regional approach for addressing the economic development needs of South Central Illinois; and

WHEREAS, the Commission was formally recognized by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA) as an *Economic Development District* (EDD) in August of 1975 and subsequently prepared an initial District OEDP report in October of 1977 which was rewritten in subsequent grant cycles and accepted by its member county boards, the EDD organization and the Economic Development Administration (EDA); and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners has directed the planning staff to author a complete 2025 revision of the 2020 District *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy* (CEDS) document in accordance with the most current EDA guidelines giving direction to the area's future economic development efforts in a coordinated manner and maintain eligibility for the EDD and its local governments for potential future EDA financial assistance to support local and regional economic development endeavors; and

WHEREAS, review drafts of the 2025 District CEDS document have been shared with the membership of the five-county, thirty (30) member CEDS Advisory Committee for local input and guidance to ensure its responsiveness to the area's most current development issues, etc.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of Commissioners of the South Central Illinois Regional Planning and Development Commission as follows:

Section 1: that the publication entitled FY-2025-2030 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the South Central Illinois Region, prepared by the staff with input and guidance from the District CEDS Advisory Committee, is hereby formally adopted by the EDD for the subsequent submission to each of the member county boards and upon their acceptance, submitted for review and certification by the Chicago Midwest Regional Office of the EDA;

Section 2: that the aforesaid District CEDS document and the District Development Strategy contained therein shall be used by the EDD as a reference guide in fostering the future coordination and collaboration of local and regional economic development endeavors within the five-county service jurisdiction and shall be annually updated by the EDD planning staff so as to reflect emerging economic development problems and opportunities and maintain the area's continuing eligibility for federal grant-in-aid funds;

Section 3: that the recently completed 2025 District CEDS document shall continue to recognize a *northern growth corridor* and a *southern growth corridor* that are identical to those designated in the 2009 District CEDS and reiterated in the 2020 District CEDS by the EDD which encompasses a majority of the area's realistic potential for future economic growth and prosperity; and

Section 4: that, consistent with EDA's current designation of Clay, Effingham, Fayette, Jasper and Marion County as redevelopment areas, the EDD hereby continues its designation of the cities of Centralia, Effingham, Flora, Newton, Salem and Vandalia as redevelopment centers based upon their respective histories and perceived future capabilities to successfully attract private sector investments in today's global economy, which, in turn, can be expected to result in the creation or retention of higher organizations.

PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS THE 24th DAY OF JUNE, 2025 A.

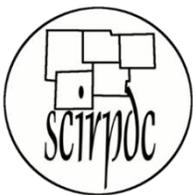
APPROVED:

ATTEST:

Larry Taylor, Chairman
SCIRPDC Board of Commissioner

Doug Knebel, Corporate Secretary
SCIRPDC Board of Commissioners

Yes Votes: 17
No Votes: 0
Absent: 13
Abstentions: 0



This **2025-2030 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Document** was prepared by SCIRPDC Economic Development Staff with input from the District CEDS Committee, confirmed by the member county boards, adopted by the SCIRPDC Governing Board, and has been submitted for approval by the Economic Development Administration, a Department of the U.S. Department of Commerce.