

Economic Development

Simply put, Carbondale's future, including its ability to implement the various recommendations of this plan, rests with its future economic performance. The plan's many recommendations in areas such as housing, land use, and public services all affect, and will be affected by, the City's ability to compete economically in a new global era. The City's economic "churn" will largely determine the pace of change and the nature of that change. It will also dictate the City's ability to provide the public services that will help retain, attract, and support future businesses and the people that fuel them.

In today's talent-driven economy, the City's ability to capture new opportunities will depend somewhat less on having the lowest business costs structures than on having a higher "quality of life" than its competitors. "Quality of life" is a highly generalized, and difficult to determine gauge of how the City measures up in things like neighborhoods, recreational opportunities, economic opportunities, schools etc.; but one that is increasingly important in helping to attract and retain the people that companies need. Therefore, the City's ability to advance economic objectives will depend largely on the region's ability to create conditions that help foster innovation and attract talent. As home to the region's biggest economic driver and talent source, Southern Illinois University, there are greater responsibilities and potentially greater gains that fall to Carbondale in helping to maximize these opportunities.

5.1 Introduction

Carbondale's economy doesn't exist in a vacuum. It is inextricably linked to the economic fortunes of all of Southern Illinois. The economic drivers that have historically sustained this regional economy, including manufacturing and agriculture, continue to experience major structural changes and are increasingly subject to global economic changes and influences. The City is home to a major university that has and will continue to buoy against some of the economic ups and downs experienced by other small Midwestern communities. Southern Illinois University is also taking aggressive strides to position itself among the nation's top tier research universities. These efforts will continue to cast favorable light on the City and create opportunities for new economic growth. It has been said that the City needs to work to diversify its economy since it can't be expected that everyone will be (or should be) employed in jobs that are directly or indirectly related to the university. The City must therefore continue to develop other opportunities related to its 'place-based' and human assets including its proximity to major recreational attractions; traditional land-based resources such as agriculture and bio-materials; and its location amidst a cluster of important large and medium-sized cities including St. Louis, Memphis, Indianapolis, and Chicago. The City's role in developing these opportunities absent a concerted regional effort; however, is somewhat limited.

As a larger regional economic development campaign continues to coalesce through the efforts of the Jackson Growth Alliance (JGA) and other regional organizations,

the City, in order to improve local economic opportunities, will need to work on the fundamental, neighborhood-level quality of life factors that come under the broader heading of “community development” - basic things such as infrastructure, housing, education, recreation, and public safety. These more commonplace things often get glossed over in heady discussions on economic development but are critical foundations for it. More importantly, these are the types of things that cities can work on by themselves as regional efforts take shape. Other, bigger-picture economic development efforts, such as major workforce development and infrastructure projects and technology-transfer initiatives, on the other hand, are more effectively implemented at a regional level among multiple, cooperating entities that brings greater attention and resources to address.

This isn't to suggest that the City should “back-seat” regional initiatives, but rather recognize the specific role that it plays within the region and focus its initial efforts on fulfilling that role. Carbondale's major assets (SIU and medical services), and limitations (lack of interstate access) suggest that its primary role is that of talent, knowledge, recreation, tourism and a service center. Much of the work involved in positioning the City to better fulfill this role can be done in tandem with regional efforts and will contribute to those efforts. Because the City is home to the region's main economic driver (SIU) and has historically served as a principal downstate commercial and intellectual center, a comparatively greater burden is placed on the City to take a central leadership role in “region building and collaboration”.

The City also needs to offer a full and focused compliment of business incentives that are specifically oriented to desired types of business that it can realistically vie for. These are the types of supports that businesses today have come to expect and are necessary to support business development and entrepreneurship. Even these however, should be developed with sensitivity to what neighboring communities are doing since predatory incentives and business poaching are one of the quickest ways to kill regional cooperation. Likewise, to the extent that the City decides in the future to direct greater resources on recruitment of new businesses, it would be wise to select sector targets that best align with existing assets and companies within those clusters that are located outside the region, the latter in the interest of maintaining good regional relations. Existing occupation strengths are listed in **Table 5.1, Occupations of Employed Persons** (on the next page).

5.2 Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to set forth actionable recommendations and implementation strategies to advance economic development efforts in the City. The main focus of the chapter is on economic development activities that the City can implement on its own while it continues to help advance regional efforts.

For the purposes of this plan, economic development is broadly defined to include those things that both directly and indirectly affect the City's economy. It is gauged not just by standard metrics such as: tax revenues, job and income growth, business start-ups and earnings; but also population and housing growth, educational performance, and the commercialization of intellectual property as measured by venture capital flows and licensing activity. It is intended that the goals and priorities recommended in this Chapter will be implemented through a combination of new policy and program changes.

Table 5.1
Occupations of Employed Persons (16+ years), 2000

<i>Occupational categories</i>	Workers	Jackson Co. %	Williamson Co. %	Illinois %
MANAGEMENT, PROFESSIONAL, & RELATED:	10,087	35.8%	28.4%	34.2%
Mgmt., business, & financial operations:	2,478	8.8%	10.6%	14.2%
Management (exc. farmers & farm mgrs)	1,554	5.5%	7.0%	8.9%
Farmers & farm managers	176	0.6%	0.5%	0.6%
Business & financial operations	748	2.7%	3.1%	4.7%
Professional & related	7,609	27.0%	17.8%	20.0%
Computer & mathematical	434	1.5%	0.6%	2.7%
Architecture & engineering	256	0.9%	1.3%	1.9%
Life, physical, & social science	385	1.4%	0.4%	0.9%
Community & social services	741	2.6%	2.0%	1.4%
Legal	225	0.8%	1.0%	1.2%
Education, training, & library	3,624	12.9%	6.7%	5.6%
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, & media	526	1.9%	1.0%	1.8%
Healthcare practitioners & technical	1,400	5.0%	4.7%	4.5%
SERVICE:	5,357	19.0%	17.8%	13.9%
Healthcare support	502	1.6%	2.4%	1.7%
Protective service	923	3.3%	3.1%	2.0%
Food preparation & serving related	2,011	7.1%	5.9%	4.5%
Building & grounds cleaning & maintenance	1,095	3.9%	3.6%	3.0%
Personal care & service	826	2.9%	2.7%	2.7%
SALES & OFFICE	7,575	26.8%	27.8%	27.6%
Sales & related	3,215	11.4%	12.1%	11.2%
Office and administrative support	4,360	15.5%	15.8%	16.4%
"BLUE-COLLAR:"	5,194	18.4%	25.9%	24.3%
Farming, fishing, & forestry	188	0.7%	0.3%	0.3%
Construction, extraction, & maintenance	2,057	7.3%	9.6%	8.2%
Construction & extraction	1,122	4.0%	6.0%	4.7%
Installation, maintenance, & repair	935	3.3%	3.6%	3.6%
Production, transportation, & material moving:	2,949	10.5%	16.0%	15.7%
Production	1,558	5.5%	9.0%	9.1%
Transportation & material moving	1,391	4.9%	7.1%	6.6%

SOURCE: CENSUS 2000

A summary of the key focus areas and strategies is as follows:

Focus Area 5.1: Maximize and leverage the resources of SIU to expand and enhance the economic growth of Carbondale and the region.

- **Strategy 1:** Partner closely with SIU to improve the physical setting surrounding the campus including new on/off campus housing and upgraded infrastructure,
- **Strategy 2:** Maximize SIU's potential to spawn new businesses through working with the Entrepreneurship Center and Small Business Development Center.
- **Strategy 3:** Form Task Force to explore opportunities to encourage and support public / private ventures looking at examples of successful ventures initiated in other university communities.

Focus Area 5.2: Maximize the potential of Southern Illinois Healthcare and Memorial Hospital of Carbondale as an economic development tool.

- **Strategy 1:** Encourage the future growth and expansion of Memorial Hospital of Carbondale.
- **Strategy 2:** Develop a plan to link the Hospital with the downtown to integrate the hospital as a part of downtown.
- **Strategy 3:** Provide assistance with the location of an extended stay facility or the development of urban housing options for employees of the hospital.

Focus Area 5.3: Develop and expand the retail sales tax base and continue to build Carbondale as a regional center for retail and business.

- **Strategy 1:** Review current policies and practices to provide incentives including retail sales tax rebates to companies who wish to locate here.
- **Strategy 2:** Continue to support the Enterprise Zone and encourage the use of additional programs including TIF districts that would encourage new economic growth.
- **Strategy 3:** Encourage citizens to buy locally through a “buy local” campaign and other means of promotion.

Focus Area 5.4: Revitalize Downtown and connect the City’s major downtown institutions.

- **Strategy 1:** Redevelop the area connecting the downtown with the University, and Memorial Hospital. This includes, among other areas, “the Strip” and the Town Square.
- **Strategy 2:** Work to retain and expand existing storefront businesses and maximize adaptive reuse of upper floors for office and work / live lofts.
- **Strategy 3:** Expand the size and visibility of the City’s arts, culture, and tourism markets.
- **Strategy 4:** Improve the physical appearance of the streetscape and infrastructure through adoption of development standards that will lead to a consistent identity.
- **Strategy 5:** Continue supporting Carbondale Main Street in programs and services provided to market downtown for new business investments.

Focus Area 5.5: Expand the use of economic development tools and improve the business friendliness of the City.

- **Strategy 1:** Reevaluate, retool, and customize the City’s economic development programs.
- **Strategy 2:** Conduct a thorough review of City intake procedures for development projects, business permits and fee structures with a view toward adopting more expedited development standards and procedures, and permitting processes.

Focus Area 5.6 Bolster entrepreneurial activity in the city and encourage the private sector to become more engaged in leading economic development efforts.

- **Strategy 1:** Engage City institutions including the Chamber of Commerce and SIU on ways to foster and celebrate entrepreneurship in the City.

- **Strategy 2:** Actively cultivate, engage, and enlist leadership from among the City's business, educational, and non-profit institutions.

Focus Area 5.7: Demonstrate and exert leadership in regional economic development efforts and refocus initiatives to accentuate the attributes that the Region has to offer.

- **Strategy 1:** Lead, participate in, and help develop the specific cross-governmental campaigns of the Jackson Growth Alliance (JGA).
- **Strategy 2:** Demonstrate regional leadership in promoting Connect SI and efforts to expand and improve broadband service. See **Figure 5.3, Broadband Connectivity**.

Focus Area 5.8: Use the draw of the Shawnee Hills Wine Trail , Shawnee National Forest and the natural surroundings as a tool for economic development through ecotourism and outdoor recreation.

- **Strategy 1:** Work with the Carbondale Tourism Bureau to help promote the region and its many natural amenities including the branding of Carbondale as the Gateway to the "Shawnee Hills Wine Trail".
- **Strategy 2:** Support tourism efforts to help draw attention to local attractions including the R Buckminster Fuller (RBF) Dome Home, The African American Museum, and The Varsity Center for the Arts.
- **Strategy 3:** Collaborate with organizations such as "Food Works" and University of Illinois Extension Service to promote local, sustainable food systems development for Southern Illinois.

5.3 Recent and Current Economic Efforts

JACKSON COUNTY OPPORTUNITIES ANALYSIS, 2007

In 2007, the Jackson County Business Development Corporation (JCBDC) published a regional opportunities analysis cataloging the region's assets, challenges, and opportunities. The report set forth a set of actions to advance a regional economic agenda; however, it was never formally adopted by the municipalities within the region and seemingly, had little overall resonance. The recently reorganized Jackson Growth Alliance – a cadre of regional business and political leaders promoting regional economic development – is perhaps the most tangible outcome of the report.

The major assets identified in **Figure 5.1, Jackson County SWOT Analysis** include, among others, SIU, John A. Logan Community College, and the City's proximity to major outdoor recreation facilities. Weaknesses were determined to be the region's isolation and lack of interstate access; its over-dependence on SIU and lack of an entrepreneurial culture; an underdeveloped private sector; and its fragmented and generally under-funded economic development programs. Threats included demographic shifts showing that the county may be losing its standing as the economic epicenter of the region; brain-drain and challenges associated with attracting new talent; and globalization which will continue to put pressure on Midwest manufacturing and routine administrative work due to lower overseas labor costs.

Figure 5.1 | JACKSON COUNTY SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HIGHER ED: Southern Illinois University-Carbondale; John A. Logan College Regional labor market Young, educated workforce Regional transportation infrastructure (interstates, rail, airports) Quality of Place (cultural/recreational amenities, downtowns) Name recognition (SIUC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leveraging SIUC for economic development (technology transfer/ entrepreneurship) Attracting and retaining talent Southern Illinois Airport (business park) Research Park (new spec space) Unique industry targets Image enhancement Policy (transportation and more) Retiree and tourism attraction
WEAKNESSES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distance from interstate Stagnate population Distance from major metro areas Small "white collar" private sector No Jackson County image Limited economic development effort Lack of larger industrial/business sites Dependence on university Multiple taxing jurisdictions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued offshoring/outsourcing pressures in both manufacturing and services Continued lack of significant economic development efforts State fiscal health Competition from the South Continued loss of talent to metro areas

Potential opportunities identified in the report centered on the Southern Illinois Airport and SIU's Transportation Programs; talent attraction and retention with a particular emphasis on both retaining and luring back SIU graduates; and the commercialization of SIU-based research; particularly in the areas of advanced materials and renewable energy. The Southern Illinois Research Park and SIU Entrepreneurship Center were cited as potential catalysts to spawn new businesses by providing a supportive home for would-be entrepreneurs. These assets are highlighted in **Figure 5.2, Economic Development Opportunities**.

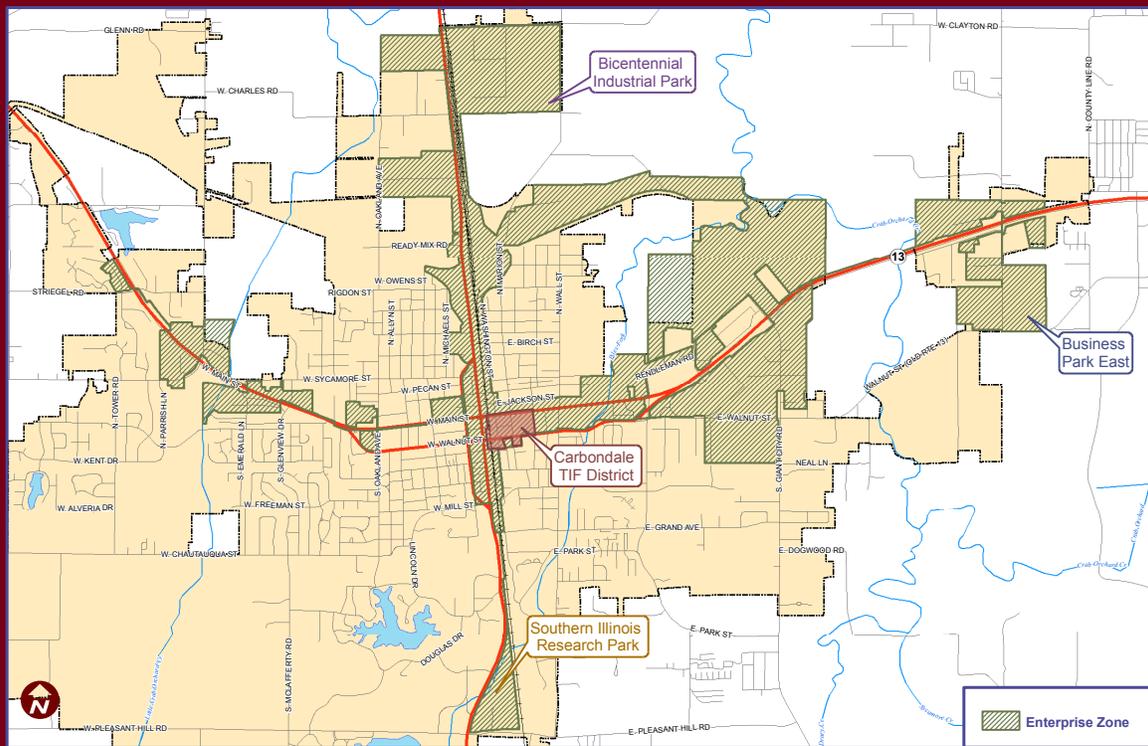
More traditional clusters that the region could potentially develop given its existing asset base were said to be: automotive and aviation-related industries and specialty foods. Other targets included professional & technical services, retail & leisure, and retiree attraction. All of these except professional services and retail are the types of coveted "export" industries that have the potential to bring new income into the region.

Regional goals from the Jackson County Opportunities Analysis are as follows:

1. "Support business development, innovation, and attract new industry."
2. "Grow, retain, and attract talent."
3. "Enhance and promote quality of place."

In addition, The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) initiated the "Opportunity Returns" program in 2003. Through the "Opportunity Returns" initiative the state was divided into ten regions. DCEO working with local governmental entities, business and community leaders and others created strategic plans for each region outlining tangible, specific actions and initiatives to make each region more accessible, more marketable, more entrepreneurial and more attractive to business.

Figure 5.2 | **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES**



Other opportunities and challenges mentioned separately in interviews for this plan included the lack of broadband capacity in the region, which is hampering research efforts at SIU, and the opportunity (need) to refocus the City’s economic development efforts more toward local business development over industrial recruitment.

5.4 Plan Focus Areas and Strategic Recommendations

FOCUS AREA 5.1 – MAXIMIZE AND LEVERAGE THE RESOURCES OF SIU TO EXPAND AND ENHANCE THE ECONOMIC GROWTH OF CARBONDALE AND THE REGION.

Strategy 1: Partner closely with SIU to improve the physical setting surrounding the campus including new on/off campus housing and upgraded infrastructure.

Rationale:

Carbondale lacks a strong “college town” atmosphere where the campus is tightly knit into the fabric of the community. This partly has to do with the scale of campus buildings and the different periods and styles of development immediately adjacent to it. It also has to do with the fact that the campus grew up around the City rather than the other way around. The result is a campus in the City but not of the City.

Although aesthetics and the physical environment can sometimes be overemphasized in terms of what they mean for economic development, they do affect the community's overall place-quality and have strong implications for talent attraction. A stronger town-gown relationship manifested in buildings, streets, and land uses that relate to each other and visually connect the City to the campus, would help Carbondale seem more collegial and would likely improve the flow of people and commerce between them. It may also help the City better capture the expenditures resulting from visitations to the campus.

There is strong evidence suggesting that prospective students, as well as campus-bound retirees, select not just the school, but the whole community. Therefore,

it seems plausible that a more integrated and unified urban environment with attractive and interconnected on-campus and off-campus districts would help attract more people to the community. As cited in *Chapter 2*, the Washington Street corridor is one opportunity area for connecting the University and Downtown (**Figure 5.3, Town-Gown Connections**). Additionally Illinois Avenue (known locally as "The Strip") lacks a unified identity and connectivity to the campus.

To create a stronger college town brand identity, the City and SIU must continue to work closely together on major development projects; particularly at the edges of campus. The goal would be to mesh boundaries, balance infrastructure needs, and ease movements

between the campus and the larger community. The ultimate goal is to help the campus realize its full potential as an economic driver, downtown redevelopment catalyst, and brand identifier for the City and region.

Actions and Initiatives

- Work collaboratively to redevelop the campus town area as a mixed-use, transit-served urban neighborhood facing Mill Street.
- Seek ways for the City and University to "go green" together by coordinating: recycling programs, the bulk purchase of fleet vehicles, the sourcing of local products and services, co-investing in redundant, clean energy and co-generation pilot projects, etc.
- Adopt a policy allowing (solicit) broadband vendors to place fiber-optic conduit in streets during major roadwork and utility extension projects.
- Seek State and Federal funding to establish a fully functioning downtown WI-FI district.
- Integrate the university's transit service into all corners of downtown. Coordinate this service with other transit modes (existing and planned).

Strategy 2: Maximize SIU's potential to spawn new businesses in the City through working with the Entrepreneurship Center and the Small Business Development Center.

Figure 5.3 | TOWN-GOWN CONNECTIONS



Off -site university facilities also help to integrate campus into the community and infuse vitality.

Rationale:

SIU is making important strides in ramping up their research profile and becoming a bigger player in the commercialization of university-based research; particularly in areas such as renewable energy, new materials, and other bio-technology spheres. SIU has seen increases in its research funding, as highlighted in **Table 5.2, Research and Commercialization Efforts** (see the following page). While there are various supporting roles it can potentially play, like helping to align political support and vying for funding, the City's main role in helping to advance these opportunities is mostly an indirect one – making sure that the City is a place where academics and entrepreneurs want to live and work in terms of cultural and recreational amenities, neighborhood vitality, housing choices, environmental quality, lifestyle diversity, and business cost structures.

The City's other main role rests primarily in its ability to provide infrastructure and other physical design improvements to assure that the University Research Park, and its future phases, are all state-of-the-art. There may also be a limited City role in helping provide venture funding through a revolving loan fund, and helping to locate permanent homes in the City for future "graduates" of the SIU's Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development Center and business incubator.

Finally, it isn't enough to have just a business idea without also having the business acumen and financing to make it happen. While the Small Business Development Center does a good job of providing basic technical assistance, more needs to be done throughout the education system to instill a culture of entrepreneurship in the City. SIU should be encouraged to provide leadership in thinking through how City institutions can become more business-minded starting from within the university system itself.

Actions and Initiatives:

- a. Schedule regular recruitment visits to the business incubator to meet promising business owners; impress upon them that the City wishes to keep them in the City as they grow to scale; and advise them of the potential locations, incentives, and assistance available through the City.
- b. Encourage entrepreneurship education/training at the high school and technical college levels.
- c. Talk with SIU, arts groups, and private developers on the potential for an arts incubator in the city – preferably located Downtown.
- d. Conduct regular dialogues with the Office of Regional and Economic Development on the need for business accelerator facilities to compliment the incubator. Work to locate sites and developers when the opportunities arise.
- e. Aggressively assist SIU in expanding or creating newer phases of the University Research Park as demand warrants; including assistance with land assembly and infrastructure. Demonstrate leadership in regional initiatives, such as Connect SI, that seek to expand local broadband services.
- f. Seek opportunities to joint-venture on shared City/campus cultural and recreational facilities.
- g. Solicit the development of a downtown hotel and supporting commercial and residential uses to better serve visitors to SIU and Memorial Hospital, and maximize the capture of visitor spending.

Table 5.2
Southern Illinois University
Research and Commercialization Efforts

Fiscal Year	Inventions Disclosed	Royalties	Licenses/ Options	US Patent Applications Filed	US Patents Issued
2009	23	TBA	7	14	3
2008	35	\$776,102	10	14	3
2007	21	\$524,584	5	18	4
2006	20	\$354,045	4	13	2
2005	19	\$466,300	5	9	4
2004	15	\$224,535	3	11	6
2003	17	\$157,726	6	6	5
2002	20	\$132,804	4	7	6
2001	18	\$108,630	4	6	4
2000	18	\$60,300	6	7	4
1999	19	\$48,245	6	6	0
1998	14	\$250,624	4	7	0
1997	14	\$235,047	5	5	0
1996	8	\$9,592	2	2	0

Strategy 3: Form a Task Force to explore opportunities to encourage and support public / private ventures looking at examples of successful ventures initiated in other university communities.

Rationale:

There are a number of Universities across the Country that have formed alliances and partnerships with the private sector and local governmental units to undertake projects to develop and redevelop areas on and adjoining the campus. Such projects include housing and mixed use developments serving the immediate areas of the university. Because universities have limited resources, emphasis is increasingly being placed on forming coalitions with public and private sector partners to leverage resources needed to fund new developments. The City has developed a strong partnership with SIU and is looking at ways to expand on the partnership. Opportunities to redevelop areas adjoining the main campus should be explored and acted on.

Actions & Initiatives:

- Collect case studies of successful projects in other University Communities and evaluate their applicability locally.
- Become joint members of the International Town & Gown Association.
- Review land use regulations and zoning designations of areas adjoining SIU campus and revamp as needed to allow desired development to be initiated.

FOCUS AREA 5.2: MAXIMIZE THE POTENTIAL OF SOUTHERN ILLINOIS HEALTHCARE AND MEMORIAL HOSPITAL OF CARBONDALE AS AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOOL

Strategy 1: Encourage the future growth and expansion of Carbondale Memorial Hospital.

Rationale:

Since opening their doors in 1959 Memorial Hospital of Carbondale has become a dominate employer for the community and region and has continued to expand their facilities and healthcare services. Memorial Hospital, as depicted in **Figure 5.4, Memorial Hospital**, is part of the Southern Illinois Healthcare System and is the largest facility in their system serving southern Illinois as a regional medical center. The Hospital is located on West Main Street just west of the downtown and is surrounded predominately by residential neighborhoods. As a major employer and healthcare provider for the region, and as a major generator of visits into the City, the Hospital is integral to the regional economy. Therefore, an ongoing dialogue with the Hospital administration and SIH management to discuss ways to enhance the hospital's plans to expand needs to be initiated as part of the City's own economic expansion plans.

Actions and Initiatives:

- a. Schedule periodic meetings (quarterly or semi-annually) with the Hospital Administration to develop strategies and initiatives that would mutually benefit the Hospital and the community.
- b. Review the existing zoning and land uses of the area bordering the Hospital and identify areas that may be suitable for future expansion of facilities.
- c. Consider infrastructure improvements in the area that would accommodate and support future Hospital expansion.

Strategy 2: Develop a plan to link the Hospital with the downtown to integrate the hospital as a part of downtown.

Rationale:

Memorial Hospital is strategically located in the core area of Carbondale immediately west of the downtown area. The Hospital fronts along West Main and University Avenue providing easy vehicular access to the Hospital complex. However there is a perceived disconnect to the downtown due to the location along two major highways with heavy traffic volumes. The large daytime population at the Hospital, including employees and visitors, should warrant some efforts to improve the connectivity of the Hospital to the downtown.

Actions and Initiatives:

- a. As part of plans to improve the streetscape of downtown, ensure that improvements extend along West Main Street to the Hospital.

Figure 5.4 | MEMORIAL HOSPITAL



Memorial Hospital of Carbondale is home to the leading open heart surgery and cardiac care program in southern Illinois, with outcomes that exceed national standards. The hospital is also home to a regional cancer treatment center, the only Level II-plus neonatal intensive care unit south of Springfield, and the only pediatric unit in southern Illinois. The hospital also features the area's most advanced imaging center with a new, filmless, digital picture archiving network that makes all images made at the hospital instantly available on secure computers throughout the SIH system. The hospital is affiliated with Southern Illinois University's Medical School through its Family Practice Residency Program.

- b. Improve street lighting to encourage walking and provide security.
- c. Coordinate a “shop and eat downtown” campaign with Carbondale Main Street geared toward Hospital staff, employees and visitors.
- d. Look at ways to enhance direct physical connections and linkages to the Hospital.

Strategy 3: Provide assistance with the location of an extended stay facility or the development of urban housing options for employees of the hospital.

Rationale:

The Hospital continues to add more professional medical staff and serves as a facility where doctors are completing their training in residency. As the hospital continues to grow, the demand for housing will grow as well. This demand will create opportunities to provide short term and long term housing options. Preferably such housing can be located in close proximity to the Hospital and the Downtown where essential services are easily accessible and many young professionals desire to live.

Actions and Initiatives:

- a. Form “task force” comprised of Hospital and City representatives to assess the needs for housing and explore options that could fill this need.
- b. Research financial programs that could be blended together to develop a multi-use project.
- c. Inventory and prioritize potential sites and locations.

FOCUS AREA 5.3: DEVELOP AND EXPAND THE RETAIL SALES TAX BASE AND CONTINUE TO BUILD CARBONDALE AS A REGIONAL CENTER FOR RETAIL AND BUSINESS

Strategy 1: Review current policies and practices to provide incentives including retail sales tax rebates to companies who wish to locate here.

Rationale:

The City has a number of financial programs and initiatives in place that have been used to promote and support new businesses development in Carbondale. Several of these programs are focused primarily on bringing new investments to the downtown. Given current economic conditions, businesses that have looked at new locations are reconsidering their options and plans. To better compete to attract new businesses, the City will need to become more aggressive and innovative in their approach and consider incentives and inducements that are considered essential in attracting new business investments.

Actions and Initiatives:

- a. Review current financial programs that are available by the City for business development and modify as needed to reflect the type of businesses that the City desires to attract.
- b. Continue to encourage new development on both the east and west side of Carbondale through the use of incentives. Development on the east side of Carbondale has been consistent for many years. Continue to focus on this area while at the same time emphasizing the importance of the west side.

Strategy 2: Continue to support the Enterprise Zone and encourage the use of additional programs including TIF districts that would encourage new economic growth.

Rationale:

The City of Carbondale has a state designated Enterprise Zone that encompasses part of the downtown as well as other major business and industrial areas within the City. Through the Enterprise Zone, businesses that locate or expand their facilities are entitled to certain local and state tax related benefits. In addition to the Enterprise Zone, the City established a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District in 2004 that encompasses 31 acres of the downtown. The TIF provides direct financial benefits focusing on bringing new investments to the downtown. Both of these programs have been successful in stimulating new business investments and are important components of the City's overall economic development program.

Actions and Initiatives:

- a. Develop guidelines for the redevelopment of properties owned by the City in the downtown and actively solicit developer proposals.
- b. Explore the expansion of the TIF District to include areas that are suitable for development.
- c. Consider forming public/private redevelopment organization with the authority to acquire property and advance projects.

Strategy 3: Encourage citizens to buy locally through a "buy local" campaign and other means of promotion.

Rationale:

The City of Carbondale serves as a major retail hub for southern Illinois and the region. Sales generated from local retail establishments provides the City with sales tax that is the principal source of revenue for municipal operations. It is important that programs and initiatives are put in place to ensure the dominance of Carbondale as a retail center to maintain and expand the tax base for the community.

Actions and Initiatives:

- a. Work with both the Carbondale Chamber of Commerce and Carbondale Main Street in support of programs encouraging residents to shop locally.
- b. Develop material that identifies the selection of goods and services available locally.

FOCUS AREA 5.4 – REVITALIZE DOWNTOWN AND CONNECT THE CITY'S MAJOR DOWNTOWN INSTITUTIONS

Strategy 1: Redevelop the area connecting the downtown with the University and Memorial Hospital. This includes, among other areas, "the Strip" and the Town Square.

Rationale:

As suggested elsewhere, Downtown Carbondale lacks a clear focal point and the kind of urban density that would make it truly active and explorable. The streets connecting its major features are thinly developed and carry high volumes of traffic, and most of the housing is of older stock and low value. All of this creates a

downtown that is attractive and interesting in certain spots, but not in totality. There is also a lack of synergy and economic spillover between some of the important attractions located in and near downtown, including the University and Memorial Hospital, resulting in a likely loss of economic capture from the tens of thousands of visitations to these institutions each year. Many of the recommendations below overlap with, or reiterate those cited in Focus Area 1, and *Chapter 2*.

Actions and Initiatives:

- a. Create a redevelopment agency to lead the redevelopment of catalytic projects downtown, such as new urban (market-rate) housing and mixed-use projects. Redevelopment should be targeted to sites that are clearly blighted and those that help fuse together important centers of activity within close proximity to major employment nodes.
- b. Work with Carbondale Main Street to put together an interactive database of downtown properties, their ownership, use, size, tax assessment, special features, and availability for rent or sale.
- c. Conduct a developers'/brokers' roundtable to assess developer interest in downtown and the type of desired City or redevelopment authority support.
- d. Identify potential sites and solicit interest in a new downtown hotel from developers and hotel operators.
- e. Work on aggressive code enforcement downtown to eliminate eyesores and encourage repairs and rehabilitation of older historic buildings.
- f. Expand or create a new TIF district, and look for opportunities to assemble larger redevelopment sites. Solicit developer interest in redeveloping larger parcels.
- g. Experiment with a peak-time shuttle-loop service connecting SIU, Memorial Hospital, the Town Square, and the Civic Center.

Strategy 2: Work to retain and expand existing storefront businesses and maximize adaptive reuse of upper floors for office and work / live lofts.

Rationale:

An effective way to revitalize downtown is to help existing retail businesses prosper and recruit new businesses to provide a service not previously existing. Many downtown businesses are one-of-a-kind and exhibit a uniquely local flavor. Basic efforts to help these businesses stay alive, through "buy local" campaigns and outreach programs intended to extend technical and financial assistance, are sometimes forgotten in communities' efforts to recruit new businesses. At the same time, upper floors are often under utilized and vacant. Adaptive reuse to apartments or office space can provide economic benefits to both the downtown and to those who own the building.

Actions and Initiatives:

- a. Work with Carbondale Main Street and the Carbondale Chamber of Commerce as a joint venture to encourage co-marketing and the promotion of special events, and to build support for a potential future Business Improvement District (BID).
- b. Expand/promote the City's façade loan program to include outright façade grants, and work to connect existing businesses to other available business development resources.

- c. Work to encourage the launch of a “buy local” campaign with the Carbondale Main Street.
- d. Highlight and recognize local businesses that choose to locate downtown.
- e. Identify buildings with under utilized upper floor space that could be converted to apartments or other suitable uses and help owners understand the benefits.

Strategy 3: Expand the size and visibility of the City’s arts, culture, and tourism markets.

Rationale:

The presence of SIU infuses the City with a cultural atmosphere that is unusual for a City of its size. As the main talent center for the region, Carbondale has the opportunity to exploit the cultural vibe already present in the City to new business and tourism opportunities. Building the City’s art and culture scene coincides with a focus on local entrepreneurship and is also an important piece of an overall talent attraction and retention strategy. A stronger arts presence would also strongly position Carbondale as the figurative “visitor center” for the region, supporting (and capitalizing on) its growing tourism and retiree markets.

Actions and Initiatives:

- a. Work with Carbondale Community Arts and other local arts groups to establish an arts guild. Determine interest in the formation of an arts co-op or arts incubator to be located in a visible downtown location.
- b. Work with Carbondale Main Street to sponsor an art walk and gallery night event, and special public art installations. A recent public art installation can be found at Friendship Plaza, as depicted in **Figure 5.5, Public Art Installation**.
- c. Support and promote the efforts of the Southern Illinois Music Festival in extending cultural music experiences to area residents of all ages and backgrounds. Encourage the use of venues throughout Carbondale and expand the tourism potential of this popular program.
- d. Encourage the small business development center to develop a special entrepreneurship module specifically oriented to artist-run businesses.
- e. Encourage local businesses to sponsor or commission special arts projects. Seek financing through local foundations, corporate sponsors, and TIF/BID revenues.
- f. Solicit developer interest in creating affordable artist (live-work) housing downtown with ground-floor gallery space.
- g. Consider public art displays to be exhibited on a rotating basis on the town square and other public places.

Strategy 4: Improve the physical appearance of the streetscape and infrastructure through adoption of development standards that will lead to a consistent identity.

Rationale:

The overall physical appearance of the downtown including streets, sidewalks, lighting and other public infrastructure is

Figure 5.5 | PUBLIC ART INSTALLATION



an important factor for businesses deciding on where to make investments. The present appearance of the downtown infrastructure lacks uniformity.

Actions and Initiatives:

- a. Develop design guidelines for new projects including uniform streetscape design standards.
- b. Prioritize streetscape improvements and seek funding programs to help cover the costs.
- c. Continue to provide funding to businesses for façade improvements.

Strategy 5: Continue to provide support to Carbondale Main Street in programs and services to market downtown for new business investments.

Rationale:

Carbondale Main Street (CMS) is an organization recognized by the City to promote downtown redevelopment and revitalization. The organization receives funding from the City along with tax revenue from a Special Service Area and membership fees and donations. Besides recruiting businesses and promoting the downtown for new investments CMS also hosts events to attract residents downtown.

Actions and Initiatives:

- a. The City should continue annual financial support to maintain the operations of Carbondale Main Street.
- b. Encourage City staff to participate by sitting on the Board of Directors and serve on active committees.
- c. Support the extension and expansion of the Special Service Area as a means to finance the operations of CMS.
- d. Continue the bi-annual downtown walk with City staff to help identify areas that require improvement.

FOCUS AREA 5.5 - EXPAND AND CUSTOMIZE THE USE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOOLS AND IMPROVE THE BUSINESS FRIENDLINESS OF THE CITY.

Strategy 1: Reevaluate and retool the City's economic development programs.

Rationale:

The City already offers a full compliment of economic development programs and incentives. The use of incentives seems to be limited, which could possibly be the result of their limited funding, limited knowledge of their existence, onerous eligibility requirements and/or because of perceived "red tape" as has been previously suggested. There may also be a mismatch between the particular orientation of the incentives (conventional industrial attraction) and where the City's needs and its competitive advantages actually lay (talent attraction, entrepreneurial development, downtown redevelopment, etc).

Actions and Initiatives:

- a. Create a Redevelopment Authority or Corporation to manage the revitalization of Downtown. This could involve changing the mission and funding structure of the City's existing Development Corporation, with initial capitalization coming from the sale of the remaining acreage in the Bicentennial Industrial Park.

EXISTING INCENTIVES AND PROGRAMS

(<http://www.explorecarbndale.com>)

There are a number of organizations and players that are involved in the overall economic development effort. Each has a number of economic development programs, many of which serve smaller niche functions within the overall economic development context. A few existing incentives and programs include:

- **Enterprise Zone** – the city of Carbondale is part of a larger zone that also includes a section of Murphysboro. Various tax incentives including property and sales tax abatements/credits, and fee waivers apply for new businesses in the zone.
- **Façade Loan Program** – FLP provides low interest loans for up to 100% of façade improvement costs for downtown properties.
- **Revolving Loan Program (RLF)** – RLF is a loan interest loan fund capitalized originally with state Community Development Assistance Program (CDAP) funds. It is used to provide gap financing for new or expanding businesses with eligibility tied to the amount of capital investment and job creation.
- **Main Street Program** – The City operates a downtown Main Street program under the aegis of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The program offers design and grant assistance and special event planning among other activities.
- **Tax Increment Financing (TIF)** – Carbondale’s TIF district is a 31-acre redevelopment area bordered by Main Street, Logan Avenue, Elm Street, and the railroad tracks. The TIF district was created in 2004 and has 17 years of remaining spending life. The TIF generated approximately \$131,000 of increment in FY 2008 with an estimated equalized assessed value (EAV) of \$2,770,000.
- **Carbondale Business Development Corporation** – This is a 501C-3 community development corporation originally formed to market the City’s Bicentennial Industrial Park. The organization was originally funded with private donations. Its assets currently consist of 125 remaining undeveloped acres at the industrial park.
- **SIU Small Business Development Center and Incubator Program** – SIU offers a full range of business start-up assistance programs at the Dunn-Richmond Economic Development Center in the Southern Illinois Research Park.



Figure 5.6 | TAX CREDITS



The New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) Program permits taxpayers to receive a credit against Federal income taxes for making qualified equity investments in designated Community Development Entities (CDEs). Substantially all of the qualified equity investment must in turn be used by the CDE to provide investments in low-income communities.

SOURCE: US DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

- b. Expand the use of TIF districts and seek more creative ways to apply TIF financing.
- c. Seek ways for private developers to tap into the Federal New Markets Tax Credits (NMTC) program as explained in **Figure 5.6, Tax Credits**. Create call-lists of designated Community Development Entities (CDEs) and tax credit developers in the region to identify potential developer recruitment targets.
- d. Maintain a current digest of State and Federal economic development programs and grant/loan funds. Create links to appropriate websites from the City webpage.
- e. Conduct regular business outreach to understand the plans and needs of area businesses and to troubleshoot potential problems.
- f. Consider creating a land banking program to hold, resell, and redevelop blighted redevelopment sites.
- g. Apply to the Community Development Assistance Program (CDAP) for additional capital for the Revolving Loan Fund (RLF).

Strategy 2: Conduct a thorough review of City intake procedures for development projects, business permits, and fee

structures with a view toward adopting more expedited and “business friendly” permitting processes.

Rationale:

The City has established a Development Review Committee (DAC) comprised of members from each individual department within the City to review all plan submittals. After the DAC members have had a chance to review the proposed plan, a meeting is scheduled with the developer to go over any concerns and provide feedback that will help the developer modify the plan to meet City Code. The DAC Committee is chaired by the Development Services Director and all correspondence is funneled through the Development Services Department. While this process is used to provide constructive feedback to developers, some find the process cumbersome.

Actions and Initiatives:

- a. Consider conducting customer service training for front desk personnel and other key staff members and implementing a survey tool to monitor customer satisfaction.
- b. Rewrite the land development regulations to allow more flexibility and increased certainty of approval.
- c. Refine the development checklist that will serve as an easy-to-follow guide for developers and others that are looking at making investments in the community.

REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Unlike most TIF joint review boards, which are mainly involved in the technical aspects of district management and periodically responding to funding requests, a Redevelopment Authority is typically charged with actually leading the implementation of a downtown master plan. Working as an arm of City government, and with the assistance of City staff, they are actively involved in such things as: land development strategy, property acquisitions, deal structuring, loan underwriting, developer recruitment, and the negotiating of developer agreements. They are not building developers or property managers in the typical sense, but instead work on the land assembly and financing side of development. However, in cases where public buildings are planned, they may act as project developer of record.

Most redevelopment authorities operate as an agent of the City and serve at the pleasure of the Mayor and City Council. In some cases, they have bonding and condemnation authority, although this is usually the exception and not the rule.

Board members consist of council members and other motivated advocates for Downtown who can contribute valuable knowledgeable in areas such as business planning and development, financial management, real estate development, construction management, legal, marketing and promotions. Redevelopment Authority boards generally serve under the aegis of the City Council and are supported by dedicated community development staff. Their funding typically comes from TIF revenues, block grants, and development fees.

The advantage of redevelopment authorities is their power to act on behalf of (and sometimes with the full faith and credit of) the City and their dedicated funding streams. Disadvantages include their beholdeness to public process, which can prevent them from acting quickly or with confidentiality as opportunities arise, and can expose their dealings to City "politics".

- d. Update website to make it easier to access information required by the public to secure approval for projects.
- e. Hold periodic informational meetings with local and area developers to discuss relevant issues impacting development and maintain a dialogue to follow up on recommendations.

FOCUS AREA 5.6 - BOLSTER ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITY IN THE CITY

Strategy 1: Engage City institutions including the Chamber of Commerce and SIU on ways to foster and celebrate entrepreneurship in the City.

Rationale:

Several sources including the Jackson County Opportunity Analysis, 2007, suggest that the best way to grow the regional economy is to concentrate on growing and developing local businesses as opposed to trying to recruit them from the outside. This is an attitude that is beginning to resonate more and more nationwide as business recruitment campaigns have become increasingly competitive and costly. Some of these same sources however, while lauding the business generating opportunities available in the region, also cite lack of an entrepreneurial climate as evidenced by the lack of new business start-ups; the lack of demand for business counseling services; and the inability of would-be entrepreneurs to translate ideas into actual business plans.

Figure 5.7 | COMMUNITY INVESTMENT



The Community Reinvestment Act is intended to encourage depository institutions to help meet the credit needs of the communities in which they operate, including low- and moderate-income neighborhoods, consistent with safe and sound operations. It was enacted by the Congress in 1977 and is implemented by Regulation BB (12 CFR 228). The regulation was substantially revised in May 1995, and was most recently amended in August 2005.

SOURCE: FEDERAL RESERVE BOARD

Actions and Initiatives:

- a. Coordinate with SIU, the Chamber of Commerce, and other partners to work with the school district to introduce entrepreneurship education modules at the elementary and high school levels.
- b. Encourage the sponsorship of an annual business plan competition among local educational institutions and entrepreneur networks. Seek prize money (in cash or in-kind services) from local and national foundations and organizations such as the Kaufman Foundation and Small Business Administration (SBA).
- c. Assist in leveraging existing state and federal programs that offer business start-up assistance. Examples include the Small Business Innovation Research Program and Small Business Technology Transfer Program .
- d. Encourage the formation of entrepreneurs and angel networks.
- e. Develop a local media campaign celebrating local entrepreneurial success stories.
- f. Work with area lenders to create a loan pool to assist start-ups as a way to boost

their Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) ratings (**Figure 5.7, Community Investment**).

- g. Expand, promote, and reevaluate the underwriting guidelines of the City's revolving loan fund. Seek additional capitalization from local banks, CDAP, foundations, and TIF revenues among other possible sources.
- h. Aggressively promote and support the services offered through SIU's Office of Regional and Economic Development.
- i. Encourage the development of new multi-tenant starter space for micro businesses.

Strategy 2: Actively cultivate, engage, and enlist leadership from among the City's business, educational, and non-profit institutions.

Rationale:

City government can't be expected to shoulder the entire burden of managing the City's economic future. Most successful cities have well developed groups of business leaders and young professionals who carry out special programs, mentor young leaders, form professional networking groups, and generally help champion the community. These organizations can bring a lot of talent, energy, and financial resources to the table.

Actions and Initiatives:

- a. Work with the Chamber of Commerce to support the further development of the 13Pro young professionals groups.
- b. Convene regular roundtables of the City’s business leadership to raise awareness of “happenings” in the City and to spur the sponsorship of special initiatives.
- c. Work with SIU and the Chamber to form a future leader’s academy where matriculation is earned through the completion of an important team community development project.
- d. Support and/or participate in the Jackson Growth Alliance.

FOCUS AREA 5.7 – DEMONSTRATE AND EXERT LEADERSHIP IN REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS AND REFOCUS INITIATIVES TO ACCENTUATE THE ATTRIBUTES THAT THE REGION HAS TO OFFER

Strategy 1: Lead, participate in, and help develop the specific cross-governmental campaigns of the Jackson Growth Alliance.

Rationale:

As stated earlier, the fate of Carbondale is very much bound in the fate of the region. Similarly, it will take a strong regional voice for “game changing” things to happen. The City’s relatively small size and its physical isolation make strong regional dialogue and cooperation especially important since some of things that can put the City on a new economic footing will need to occur mostly outside of the City. Such is the case with the Southern Illinois Airport, which is managed under the auspices of the Southern Illinois Airport Authority.

Extending linkages in both transportation and in the transmission of information, will help diminish the City’s isolation (in both the physical and virtual realms), and help the university reach its goal of becoming a top tier research institution. Carbondale, perhaps more than any other City in the region, stands to economically benefit the most from these improvements.

Actions and Initiatives¹:

- a. Maintain a strong leadership role in Jackson Growth Alliance and Connect SI to facilitate infrastructure projects including highway improvements and broadband that are critical to the region.
- b. Encourage local leaders to participate in a regional entrepreneurship task force.
- c. Encourage the formation of a University/ Business Alliance to explore ways for the region to both leverage and support SIU.

1 Most of the following recommendations are adapted from the *Jackson County Opportunity Analysis, 2007*.

Figure 5.8 | BROADBAND CONNECTIVITY



Connect SI is a collaborative, regional economic strategy for southern Illinois focused on broadband connectivity. The initiative strives to accomplish three things: 1) encourage investment in broadband infrastructure, 2) convince Southern Illinoisans that they need high speed broadband access, and 3) encourage residents to use this infrastructure to grow our economy.

- d. Encourage annual workforce development conferences involving John A. Logan Community College, Man-Tra-Con, and area businesses to discuss needed skills and training modules.
- e. Participate in a regional ambassador's team to respond to business relocation inquiries.
- f. Work to launch, enlarge, and formalize a young professionals group with a regional reach.

Strategy 2: Demonstrate regional leadership in promoting Connect SI.

Rationale:

The lack of broadband access is one of the critical problems facing the City and SIU. The University's ability to conduct major research and to participate in

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Development Corporations are sometimes structured the same way as redevelopment authorities and can be involved in the same types of activities. The term "development corporation" however, usually connotes a higher degree of autonomy from City government and is often structured as a private or public-private non-profit organization. They sometimes operate with a board that is independent of City government and rely more heavily on creating and managing their own sources of operating capital. It is also somewhat more common for corporations to be involved in activities other than just real estate development to include the administration of low-interest loan pools that support business and economic development.

Operating capital often derives from the ownership and management of real estate assets, private donations, development and financing fees, and fees from tax exempt bonds and special taxes. The Carbondale Business Development Corporation (CBDC) is an example of a development corporation already established in Carbondale.

Advantages of development corporations generally include their ability to act with greater confidentiality and speed; especially when it comes to real estate deals where agility and privacy can be very important. When they are structured autonomously from City government, development corporations can also help take some of the politics out of public-private joint ventures and can operate more effectively in the tax credits markets where they can act as syndicators. They can also solicit tax deductible donations from foundations and other philanthropic entities whereas most purely public entities are prohibited from doing so. They are also frequently used as pass-through vehicles for tax-exempt government bonds.

Disadvantages of the typical development corporation structure include their self-supporting nature and frequent lack of dedicated public financing. This often means a precarious financial existence and sometimes a greater amount of time and energy spent raising money and managing overhead than actually doing deals. Finding solid leadership can also be a problem, especially in communities with a weak culture of community involvement and leadership outside of regular government channels. Some development corporations are off-shoots of existing organizations, such as special councils and chambers of commerce.

inter-institutional collaborations is hindered by the region's lack of bandwidth capacity. The ability of SIU to recruit top researchers and spawn technology-based companies may be significantly hampered if this deficiency persists. (see **Figure 5.8, Broadband connectivity**, page 5.21)

Actions and Initiatives:

- a. Work with SIU, state representatives, and other regional partners to seek State and Federal funds to extend "middle mile" and "last mile" service.
- b. Continue to develop relationships and solicit proposals from vendors and service providers to enhance broadband internet access.
- c. Seek State and Federal funding to improve the downtown WI-FI district.

FOCUS AREA 5.8 USE THE DRAW OF THE SHAWNEE HILLS WINE TRAIL, SHAWNEE NATIONAL FOREST AND OTHER ATTRACTIONS AS A TOOL FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH TOURISM AND OUTDOOR RECREATION

Strategy 1: Work with the Carbondale Tourism Bureau to help promote the region and its many natural amenities including branding of Carbondale as the "Gateway to the Shawnee Hills Wine Trail".

Rationale:

Carbondale's strategic location in southern Illinois at the edge of the Shawnee National Forest provides great opportunities for promoting the wide variety of recreation and tourism attributes including the "Shawnee Hills Wine Trail." Over the past ten years there have been a number of wineries established in the area which has become a major tourist designation. Carbondale can and should capitalize on this asset through marketing and promotions with local businesses.

Actions and Initiatives:

- a. Continue to fund the Carbondale Tourism Bureau to market and promote the community for tourism and overnight stays.
- b. Reach out to local businesses through the Chamber of Commerce to develop packages to attract visitors to the area.
- c. Explore opportunities for new businesses that cater to "outdoor enthusiast" that visit the area.
- d. Work with SIU to assess economic impact of ecotourism on the local and regional economies.

Strategy 2: Support tourism efforts to help draw attention to local attractions including the R Buckminster Fuller (RBF) Dome Home, The African American Museum, and The Varsity Center for the Arts.

Rationale:

The City of Carbondale served as the home of R Buckminster Fuller from 1959-1969, during this period Mr. Fuller constructed a geodesic dome for he and his wife to reside in. This home is still intact and is currently undergoing renovation efforts. The RBF Dome Home along with the African American Museum and the Varsity Center for the Arts, among others, provide unique tourism opportunities for the City.

Figure 5.9 | FOOD WORKS



Food Works was formed to draw attention to local food, local farmers and issues of social, physical and environmental health. Their mission is “Local, sustainable food systems development for

Southern Illinois.”

Food Works is involved in several programs and activities related to local food system development and community engagement. They work with local and state-wide businesses and organizations to educate about and promote local food issues.

In 2010, Food Works will focus on developing a new and transitioning farmer training program for Southern Illinois, as well as a regional branding program to draw attention to the bountiful produce, meats and dairy products grown and produced in the region.

Source: eatsouthernillinois.org

Actions and Initiatives:

- a. Provide support through the City of Carbondale Preservation Commission to help draw attention to the unique history of the City and the tourism opportunities it presents.
- b. Support tourism efforts of local organizations by expressing support for grant nominations and other requests.

Strategy 3: Collaborate with organizations such as “Food Works” and University of Illinois Extension Service to promote local, sustainable food systems development for Southern Illinois.

Rationale:

There is a movement nationally on “Sustainable Food Sources” that promotes the consumption of more locally generated food. The American Public Health Association (APHA) defines a “sustainable food system” as “one that provides healthy food to meet current food needs while maintaining healthy ecosystems that can also provide food for generations to come with minimal negative impact to the environment. A sustainable food system also encourages local production and distribution infrastructures and makes nutritious food available, accessible, and affordable to all.” Given the rural location of Carbondale and strong presence of agriculture in the region there are a number of small local farmers that are providing food sources on a small scale directed toward local consumers.

A number of local organizations such as “Food Works” were formed to promote local food, local farmers and issues of social, physical and environmental health.

Actions and Initiatives:

- a. Support initiatives of organizations such as “Food Works” in promoting local sustainable food systems for southern Illinois. (see **Figure 5.9, Food Works**)
- b. Link local farmers and value-added food producers with the resources of SIU’s Small Business Development Center and Entrepreneurship Center.
- c. Support efforts to expand the seasonal farmers market and encourage the development of an indoor off-season market.
- d. Encourage local restaurants and institutional food buyers including SIU, local school districts, and Memorial Hospital to purchase their food from local sources whenever possible.
- e. Investigate ways to capitalize on the growing agri-business and eco-tourism industry. This growing industry could potentially play a major role in the local and regional economy.