

Southeast Missouri



The Southeast Missouri region has always been defined by and comfortable with the idea of motion. First came the movement of people and goods along the Mississippi River; later the movement was marked by the Interstate 55 highway. These transportation corridors have served the region well by allowing for easy movement of products for manufacturers, movement of people to jobs in and out of the region and movement of tourists to areas of historical and natural

significance.

But now a new kind of movement is required, a need for accelerating the movement of:

- Existing employers to innovative technology and higher productivity;
- Business ideas to market by fostering entrepreneurship and new business growth;
- Skills to workers that meet the demands of employers and accommodate new businesses; and
- Innovative ideas and strategies that will meet the region's economic goals and needs.

WIRED funding, along with leveraged resources, will serve as a major force in increasing the speed of movement. Thanks to regional leadership, the Southeast Missouri Region has a clear sense of direction for economic development priorities that will align efforts, unify a network of connectivity needed both internally in the region and externally to other regions, and create an innovation culture with employers and the workforce. Through a new, innovative economy, the region will create and maintain a high standard of living.

The Workforce Investment Board of Southeast Missouri will act as the fiscal agent ensuring that performance outcomes are met and compliance with federal laws and regulations is maintained. The initiative will revolve around opportunities in industry clusters identified in Southeast Missouri through the Missouri Department of Economic Development-Division of Workforce Development's Strategic Workforce Initiative because of their potential for high growth. The industry clusters identified are classified in two tiers based upon critical need and existing organizational structures.

- Tier I: advanced manufacturing, health care, biofuels
- Tier II: inter-modal transportation, agri-business, tourism



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The region's initial focus will be placed on the Tier I clusters with the creation of cluster-specific Employer Learning Networks (ELNs), a formalized vehicle for two-way communication between cluster employers and education/service providers.

The WIRED Initiative will be governed by a seven member leadership co-chaired by the Workforce Investment Board of Southeast Missouri and the Southeast Missouri Economic Development Alliance. The remaining five positions on the councils will be designated to stakeholder groups with appointed representation: economic development, K-12 and post-secondary education, entrepreneurial and employers. Additional teams will work in three defined areas:

- GrowSmart Team – local, county and regional economic development leaders who will work toward new business/industry recruitment and attraction to Southeast Missouri, as well as existing businesses in the implementation of innovative growth strategies.
- SkillSmart Team- educational leaders at the K-12, community college and 4-year college –level will develop programs around defined clusters and enhance exiting networks of delivery
- BizStart Team – entrepreneurial training providers and investors that will assist entrepreneurs in how to start businesses in the Southeast Corridor.

A SWOT analysis performed for the Southeast Missouri region along with the completion of an asset roadmap will provide guidance for developing initiatives. Known successful initiatives will be funded for expansion or replication (ex. Fastrac, Project Lead the Way, Dream It Do It., Jobs for Missouri Grads) and funding will go toward supporting regional initiatives to provide businesses in targeted industries with current and future workers with the skills and talent to compete in the global economy

