

Southern Illinois Delta

(Alexander, Johnson, and Pulaski Counties, Illinois)

Empowerment Zone Strategic Plan

Note: The following document is an electronic replication of selected sections of a Round II Rural Empowerment Zone strategic plan submitted by the applicant locality to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in early October 1998. At the request of USDA program officials, we have omitted several sections. Also, due to technical constraints, we are unable to digitize some maps and other large illustrations.

Southern Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone

CONTENTS OF STRATEGIC PLAN

Sections available here are printed in bold.
Please contact the USDA EZ/EC Office for details about other parts of the plan.

Nomination Forms and Table of Contents

Volume 1 – Documentation

Part 1 - Participants

Part 2 - The Planning Process

Part 3 - Eligibility

Part 4 - Economic and Social Conditions

Part 5 - Implementation

Part 6 - Public Information

Part 7 - Letters of Support

Part 8 - Other Attachments

Volume 2 – Strategic Plan

Part 1 – "Plan"

Section 1 – Vision and Values

Section 2 – Community Assessment

2a. Assessment of Problems and Opportunities

2b. Assessment of Resources Available to the Community

Section 3 – Goals

Section 4 – Strategies

Goal 1 – Infrastructure

Goal 2 – Economic Development

Goal 3 – Tourism Development

Goal 4 – Stronger Unity / Sense of Community
Goal 5 – Life-Long Learning and Education
Goal 6 – Housing
Goal 7 – Healthcare
Project Descriptions
Goals, Objectives and Benchmarks

Part 2 – "Budget"

Section 1 – Phase 1 Work Plan

Section 2 – Phase 1 Operational Budget

Section 3 – Uses of EZ/EC SSBG Grants

Part 3 – "Continuous Quality Improvement Plan"

Section 1 – Participation

Section 2 – Incorporations of Experiences

Section 3 – Benchmark Review

Section 4 – Benchmark Amendment

Part 4 – "Administration Plan"

Section 1 – Lead Entity

Strategic Planning Process Organizational Chart

Southermost IL Delta Empowerment Zone Organizational Chart

Section 2 – Capacity

Shawnee Community College Independent Auditors Report

Section 3 – Board Membership

Section 4 – Partnerships

Section 5 – Public Information

Section 6 – Public Participation

Nomination

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Rural Development
Office of Community Development

for Rural Federal Empowerment Zone Designation

Number of years of
designation requested
(maximum of 10 years):

10

Nomination Categories (mark as applicable):

Rural

Indian Reservation yes ___ no X

Part I: State and Local Government Identification

A. Nominating State Government(s), Tribal Governing Body, or State Chartered Economic Development Corporation

Name of Entity:

State of Illinois

Authorized Official:

Governor Jim Edgar

Contact Person (Name and Title):

Iris Lugo, IL Department of Human Services

Telephone Number:

217/782-0693

Address (Street! PO Box, City, State, & Zip Code):

300 Iles Park Place, Springfield, IL 62762

Name of Entity:

Authorized Official:

Contact Person (Name and Title):

Telephone Number:

Address (Street/PO Box, City, State, & Zip Code):

B. Nominating Local Government(s)

3

Enter the total number of nominating local governments.

Name of Jurisdiction:

Alexander County

Metropolitan Statistical Area Name (if in an MSA):

N/A

Chief Elected Official:

Charles Bonifield

Contact Person (Name and Title):

Louis Maze, County Clerk

Telephone Number:

618/734-7000

Address (Street / PO Box, City, State, & Zip Code):

2000 Washington Ave., Cairo, IL 62914

County:

Alexander

Name of Jurisdiction:

Pulaski County

Metropolitan Statistical Area Name (if in an MSA):

N/A

Authorized Official:

Jerry P. Thurston

Contact Person (Name and Title):

C.E. "Pete" Windings, County Clerk

Telephone Number:

618/748-9360

Address (Street/PO Box, City, State, & Zip Code):

P.O. Box 109, Mound City, IL 62963

County:

Pulaski

C. Applicant or Lead Implementing Entity (For questions concerning the nomination. This can be a nominating entity or one of the participating entities.)

Name of Entity:

Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone Steering Committee

Contact Person (Name and Title):

Lisa D. Thurston, Chairperson

Telephone Number:

618/634-2284

Address (Street / PO Box, City, State, & Zip Code):

219 Rustic Campus Drive, Ullin, IL 62992

Attach separate sheet(s), as necessary, to provide identical information for all governments nominating the area.
Number the additional sheets Ia, Ib, etc.

Part II: Eligibility Information

This form incorporates the information necessary to demonstrate that the nominated area meets the statutory eligibility requirements for consideration and designation. Procedures for identifying the population and poverty rate data are given in Part IV. Use the results to answer the appropriate items A through E below.

		Yes	No			Yes	No
A. Size & Location of the Nominated Area				2. From the Part IV Rural Population Data Worksheet, provide the following information for the entire area nominated:			
1. What is the square mileage of the nominated area?		449.1		a. Total 1990 census population		18,743	
2. Is the nominated area located wholly within the jurisdiction of the legal government(s) listed in Part I?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		b. Do all census tracts or block numbering areas of the nominated zone have a poverty rate of not less than 20%?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. How many States are in the nominated area?		1		c. Do at least 90% of all the census tracts in the nominated area have a poverty rate of not less than 25%?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. Is the boundary of the nominated area continuous?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		d. If the answer to b or c is "no," would the answer(s) to b or c otherwise be "yes" if developable sites were not taken into account?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5. Does the nominated area, including developable sites, consist of not more than three noncontiguous parcels?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		3. Is the entire nominated area eligible under the emigration criteria established by the Secretary of Agriculture?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
6. a. Does the nominated area include developable sites?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		C. Distress of the Nominated Area			
b. If "yes," are there no more than three?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		The major indices of distress are pervasive poverty, unemployment, and general distress.			
c. If "yes," do they exceed 2,000 acres in the aggregate?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		1. Is the pervasive poverty of the area detailed in the Strategic Plan and certified in Part III?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7. a. Is the nominated area wholly outside a Metropolitan Statistical Area?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		2. Is the unemployment of the area detailed in the Strategic Plan and certified in Part III?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
b. If "no," does the nominated area have a population density less than or equal to 1,000 persons per square mile, and is the land use primarily agricultural?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		3. Is the general distress of the area, including the physical and social conditions that demonstrate it, detailed in the Strategic Plan and certified in Part III?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8. a. Are there any census tracts within a central business district?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		D. Alaska and Hawaii Nominations Only			
b. If "yes," is the poverty rate not less than 35% for such tracts?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		1. Do at least 20% of the families in each census tract or block group within the nominated area have incomes at or below 50% of the statewide median family income?			
9. a. Does the nominated area include any portion of an area included in a previously designated Enterprise Community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
b. If "yes," is the entirety of the subject Enterprise Community included in the nominated area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					
B. Population & Poverty Rate of the Nominated Area				E. Mixed Poverty/Emigration Eligibility			
1. a. Do any of the census tracts included in the nominated area have no population or a population of less than 2,000?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		(where the nominated area consists of two or three noncontiguous parcels)			
b. If "yes," is more than 75% of the tract zoned commercial/industrial and certified in Part III?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		1. Does each parcel qualify under either the poverty rate test specified in B.2.b. and B.2.c. or the outmigration test specified in B.3?			
c. If "yes," is the tract contiguous to one or more other census tracts that have a poverty rate of not less than 25% as reported by the U.S. Bureau of the Census?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		2. Does any parcel qualify under both the poverty rate test specified in B.2.b. and B.2.c. and the outmigration test specified in B.3?			

Nomination Ia

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Rural Development
Office of Community Development

for Rural Federal Empowerment Zone Designation

Number of years of designation requested (maximum of 10 years): <input type="text" value="10"/>	Nomination Categories (mark as applicable): Rural Indian Reservation yes <input type="checkbox"/> no <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Part I: State and Local Government Identification

A. Nominating State Government(s), Tribal Governing Body, or State Chartered Economic Development Corporation

Name of Entity: State of Illinois	Authorized Official: Governor Jim Edgar
Contact Person (Name and Title): Iris Lugo, IL Department of Human Services	Telephone Number: 217/782-0693
Address (Street / PO Box, City, State, & Zip Code): 300 Iles Park Place, Springfield, IL 62762	
Name of Entity:	Authorized Official:
Contact Person (Name and Title):	Telephone Number:
Address (Street / PO Box, City, State, & Zip Code):	

B. Nominating Local Government(s) Enter the total number of nominating local governments.

Name of Jurisdiction: Johnson County	Metropolitan Statistical Area Name (if in an MSA): N/A
Chief Elected Official: Max Ray	
Contact Person (Name and Title): Robin Harper-Whitehead, County Clerk	Telephone Number: 618/658-3611
Address (Street / PO Box, City, State, & Zip Code): P.O. Box 96, Vienna, IL 62995	County: Johnson
Name of Jurisdiction:	Metropolitan Statistical Area Name (if in an MSA):
Authorized Official:	
Contact Person (Name and Title):	Telephone Number:
Address (Street / PO Box, City, State, & Zip Code):	County:

C. Applicant or Lead implementing Entity (For questions concerning the nomination. This can be a nominating entity or one of the participating entities.)

Name of Entity: Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone Steering Committee	
Contact Person (Name and Title): Lisa D. Thurston, Chairperson	Telephone Number: 618/634-2284
Address (Street / PO Box, City, State, & Zip Code): 219 Rustic Campus Drive, Ullin, IL 62992	

Attach separate sheet(s), as necessary, to provide identical information for all governments nominating the area. Number the additional sheets Ia, Ib, etc.

Part III: Certifications

I hereby certify that the portion of the nominated area that I represent meets all Federal eligibility requirements and that to the best of my knowledge and belief:

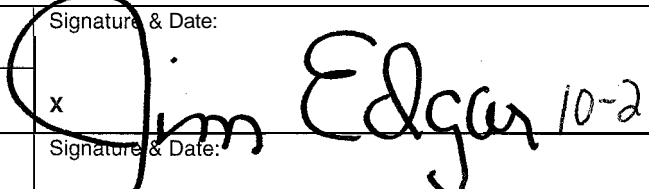
- a. the information in this nomination is true and correct;
- b. each nominating government has the authority, with respect to the nominated area, to:
 - (1) nominate such area for designation as an Empowerment Zone;
 - (2) make the State, local, or tribal commitments that the Strategic Plan will be implemented; and
 - (3) provide assurances that such commitments will be fulfilled;
- c. the nominating governments shall comply with State, local, and Federal program requirements and have agreed in writing to carry out the Strategic Plan if the application is approved;
- d. no action will be taken to relocate any business establishment to the nominated area;
- e. the nominated area meets each of the eligibility criteria set forth in the program regulations, including:
 - (1) the population of the geographic area does not exceed 30,000;
 - (2) the geographic area is one of pervasive poverty, unemployment, and general distress;
 - (3) the geographic area meets the size and boundary test; and
 - (4) the geographic area meets either the poverty rate test or emigration criteria.

(in the case of Alaska and Hawaii only), the geographic area meets the test that at least 20% of the families in the geographic area have incomes at or below 50% of the State median income and the population of the geographic area does not exceed 30,000;


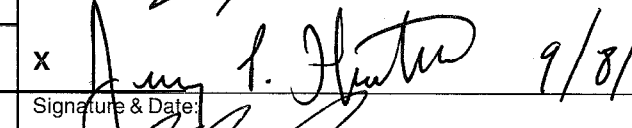
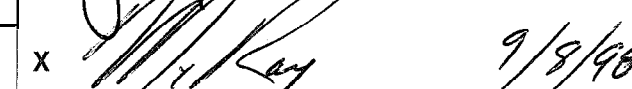
- f. each noncontiguous area (except for noncontiguous parcels identified as "developable sites" as referred to in question A.6. of Part II) being nominated separately meets the poverty rate test or the emigration criteria specified by the Secretary of Agriculture;
- g. the amounts provided to the State for the area under section 2007 of the Social Security Act will not be used to supplant Federal or non-Federal funds for services and activities that promote the purposes of section 2007;
- h. the nominating governments, tribal governing body, or corporations agree to make all the information available as requested by the designating Secretaries to aid in evaluation of progress in implementation of the Strategic Plan and reporting on the use of EZ SSBG funds;
- i. the nominating State agrees to distribute the EZ SSBG funds in accordance with the Strategic Plan submitted by the designated zone or community; and
- j. no portion of the nominated area is included in an Empowerment Zone or any other area currently nominated for designation as an Empowerment Zone and, (applicable only where the nominated area includes area from within a Round I EC), a Round I EC is included in its entirety in the nominated area.

OR

Authorized Nominating State, Tribal Governing Body, or State Chartered Economic Development Corporation Official(s) type or print

Name of Entity: <u>State of Illinois</u>	Signature & Date: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  10-2-98
Name of Authorized Official & Title: <u>Jim Edgar, Governor</u>	
Name of Entity:	Signature & Date:
Name of Authorized Official & Title:	

Authorized Nominating Local Government(s) and Official(s) type or print

Governmental Unit & State Name: <u>Alexander County, Illinois</u>	Signature & Date: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  9/9/98
Official Name & Title: <u>Charles Bonifield, Board Chairman</u>	
Governmental Unit & State Name: <u>Pulaski County, Illinois</u>	Signature & Date: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  9/8/98
Official Name & Title: <u>Jerry P. Thurston, Board Chairman</u>	
Governmental Unit & State Name: <u>Johnson County, Illinois</u>	Signature & Date: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  9/8/98
Official Name & Title: <u>Max Ray, Board Chairman</u>	

Attach separate sheet(s), as necessary, to provide identical information and official signatures for all governments nominating the area. Number the sheets IIIa, IIIb, etc.

Part IV: Rural Population Data Worksheet

Duplicate this page if needed. Number the added pages IVa, IVb, etc. Use only one line per census tract/block numbering area. Enter the total number of census tracts/block numbering areas listed on all pages in the block to the right. The tracts in each parcel should be grouped separately below.

6

P A R C E L S	1	2	3	4. Poverty		5. Land Area			6	7	
	State and County FIPS Code (5-digit)	Census Geographic Area Census Tract Code/Block Numbering Area	1990 Population	4a. Number of Persons in Poverty	4b. Percent of Persons Below the Poverty Level	5a. Total Land Area in Census Tract (sq. miles)	5b. Excluded Area (sq. miles)	5c. Net Area of Tract (sq. miles) or Developable Site, as applicable	Code	Check if this tract is included in a current EC	
	1	17003	9579	2607	1142	46.4	4	0	4		
P	2	17003	9578	2832	1006	35.8	16.1	0	16.1		
A	3	17003	9577	2408	813	32.7	106.9	0	106.9		
R	4	17153	9711	4075	1281	32.2	94.9	0	94.9		
C	5	17153	9710	3448	965	27.8	105.9	0	105.9		
E	6	17087	9778	3373	658	20.1	121.3	0	121.3		
L	7										
	8										
A	9										
	10										
	1										
P	2										
A	3										
R	4										
C	5										
E	6										
L	7										
	8										
B	9										
	10										
	1										
P	2										
A	3										
R	4										
C	5										
E	6										
L	7										
	8										
C	9										
	10										
Eligibility Data for Each Parcel									Parcel A	Parcel B	Parcel C
Number of census tracts/block numbering areas with poverty rate(s) of 25% or greater.									5		
Number of census tracts/block numbering areas with poverty rate(s) of 20% or greater.									6		
Number of census tracts/block numbering areas with a population of less than 2,000.									0		
Number of census tracts/block numbering areas with no population.									0		



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY August 17, 1998
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

Lisa D. Thurston
219 Rustic Campus Drive
Ullin, IL 62992

Dear Lisa D. Thurston:

This is to certify that your request for pre-certification of a Round II applicant area, dated 8/14/98, has been approved as submitted. As a result, you may proceed to develop your community's long-term strategic plan for development with the assurance that it will not be disqualified on this basis at a later time.

In order for this pre-certification to remain valid, you must not change any portion of the applicant area included in your application. If you do so, this pre-certification will become invalid, and you will need to obtain another pre-certification for the altered area. This pre-certification applies to the following census tracts or equivalent areas:

FIPS State Code	FIPS County Cod	Tract Number
17	003	9579
17	003	9578
17	003	9577
17	087	9778
17	153	9711
17	153	9710

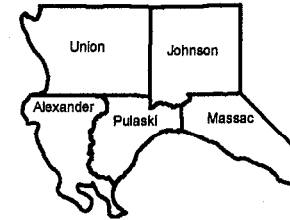
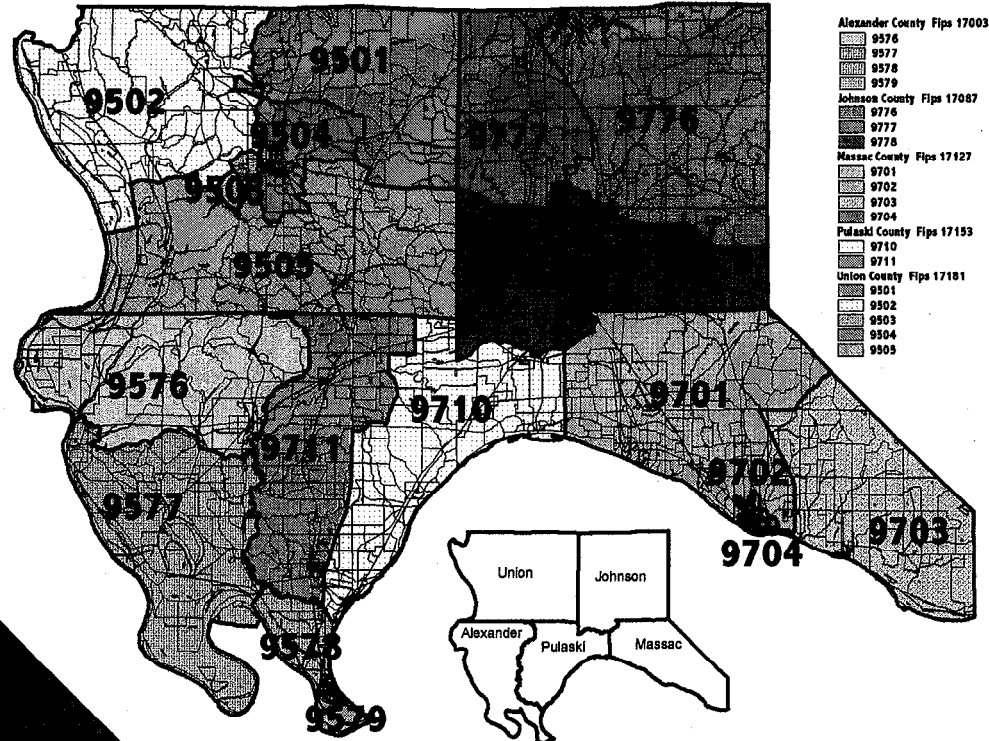
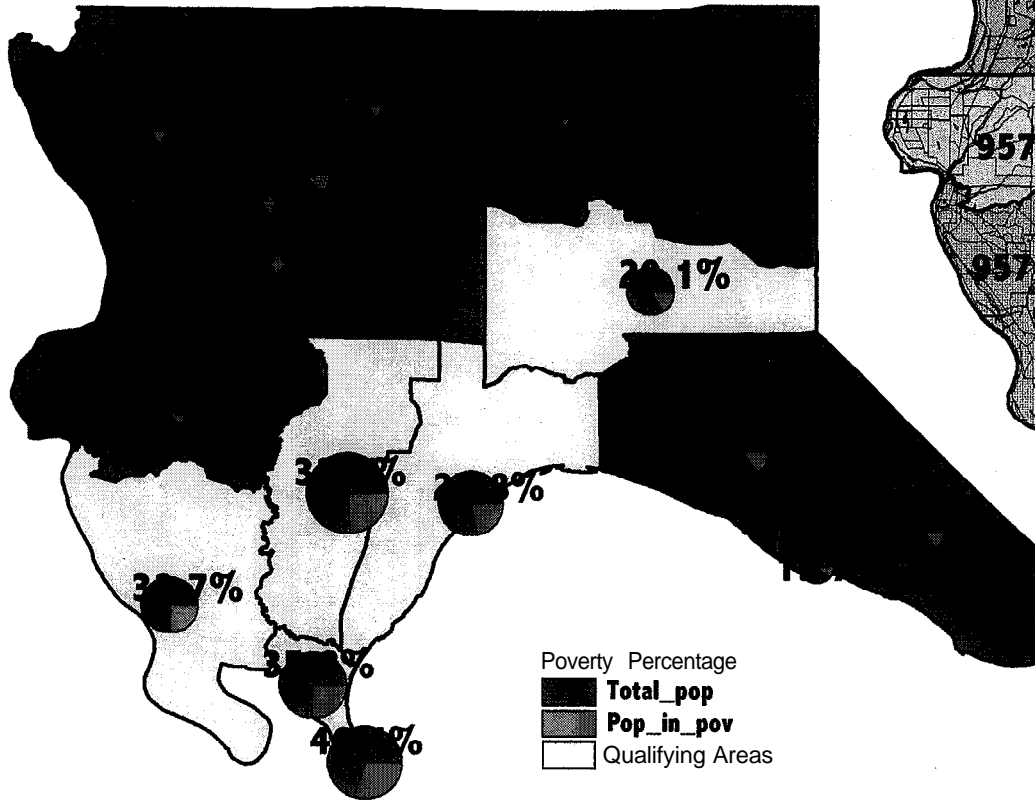
To assure that you receive credit for obtaining this pre-certification, please attach a copy of this letter in Volume I, Section 3 of your strategic plan. Note that you must still submit an Application Form, which includes the Part IV Rural Population Data Worksheet, Part II Eligibility Information, and a map of the applicant area.

Thank you for your participation in Round II of the Community Empowerment Initiative. I wish you every success in your efforts to establish and implement an effective strategic plan for your community.

G. RICHARD WETHERILL
Director, Empowerment Programs Division
Office of Community Development

Case Identifier: **1998081417003039A**

Qualifying Tract Blocks for the Empowerment Zone Initiative



County	Tract_bha	Square miles	Total pop	Pop_in_pov	Perc_in_pov
Alexander	9579	4.0	2607	1142	46.4%
Alexander	9578	16.1	2832	1006	35.8%
Alexander	9577	106.9	2408	813	32.7%
Alexander	9576	109.5	2779	434	15.7%
Johnson	9777	73.2	2286	332	14.3%
Johnson	9776	151.5	5688	438	12.2%
Johnson	9778	121.3	3373	658	20.1%
Massac	9701	134.1	4421	764	17.2%
Massac	9703	101.1	3322	570	17.6%
Massac	9702	2.0	4450	602	14.0%
Massac	9704	1.8	2559	466	19.7%
Pulaski	9711	94.9	4075	1281	32.2%
Pulaski	9710	105.9	3448	965	27.8%
Union	9505	153.7	3479	646	19.3%
Union	9503	6.1	3905	704	18.6%
Union	9504	29.0	4658	767	18.7%
Union	9501	96.9	2930	471	15.9%
Union	9502	130.9	2647	467	17.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau
Department of Natural Resources,
IGIS CD Volume II

Note: The parcels depicted on this map are shown for planning purposes only. They do not represent any official or legal boundaries.



Southern Five Regional Planning District
and Development Commission



**MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL AGREEMENT
FOR
RURAL FEDERAL EMPOWERMENT ZONE DESIGNATION**

WITNESS THAT, The County Boards of Commissioners of Alexander, Pulaski and Johnson Counties in the State of Illinois do hereby agree to collaborate and cooperate in the submission of a Nomination for a Rural Federal Empowerment Zone Designation, and

This multi-jurisdictional agreement shall be valid for the full period of any such designation for up to ten years, should it occur, and be binding upon successors, and

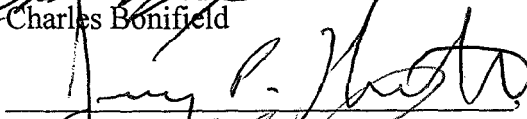
Towards that end we authorize a volunteer group of citizens, so designated by our county boards and local mayors, to submit a Notice of Intent to Participate to the United States Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Office of Community Development, Washington, DC, and

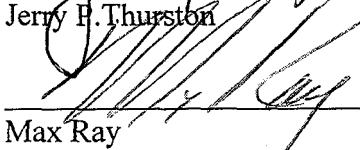
Further, we pledge to participate in the development of a strategic plan to bring about the economic revitalization of our eligible areas, and

Further, we pledge all available resources of our local governments, which includes our authority to levy taxes and provide police protection, to the effort of securing federal Empowerment Zone designation within our communities, and

Signed and sealed by resolution of the following units of government:


_____, Chairman, Alexander County Board of Commissioners
Charles Bonifield Date: June 23, 1998


_____, Chairman, Pulaski County Board of Commissioners
Jerry P. Thurston Date: June 27, 1998


_____, Chairman, Johnson County Board of Commissioners
Max Ray Date: June 24, 1998

Economic and Social Conditions

SECTION 4 - ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS

The proposed area encompasses portions of a three county area in southernmost Illinois: Alexander, Johnson, and Pulaski. The region's population of 18,743, inhabit an area totaling 449.1 square miles. Pulaski is the smallest with 200 square miles and the least populated with 7,523 people.

Population and Poverty Statistics

County	Census Tract Code/Block	1990 Population	Number of Person in Poverty	Percent of Persons Below the Poverty Level	Total Land Area in Census Tract (sq. miles)
Alexander	9577	2,408	813	32.7%	106.9
Alexander	9578	2,832	1,006	35.8%	16.1
Alexander	9579	2,607	1,142	46.4%	4
Pulaski	9710	3,448	965	27.8%	105.9
Pulaski	9711	4,075	1,281	32.2%	94.9
Johnson	9778	3,373	658	20.1%	121.3
TOTAL		18,743	5,865	31.3%	449.1

(Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Census of Population, 1990)

The population of the rural area is plagued with a stagnant economy and accompanying population loss, high unemployment rates, low-income levels, and cycles of poverty. Alexander and Pulaski counties rank #1 and #2 in the state of Illinois for the number of persons living below the federally determined poverty level. According to 1990 census data, Johnson County's 1990 per capita income was the lowest in the state, ranked 102 out of 102 counties.

Slightly more than half of the region's residents live in incorporated communities. These municipalities are small, scattered throughout the area, and some are more urban in character than others. The remaining population lives in unincorporated areas. Several named unincorporated places are located on major roads or highways and offer goods and services for residents and nonresidents. Olive Branch is located on the Great River Road (Illinois Route 3) and, although unincorporated, has many of the amenities associated with incorporated areas. Other settlements dispersed throughout the region provide community identification and have a unifying effect for their residents. However, the unincorporated, built-up areas often lack an adequate provision of public services, which poses a definite obstacle to economic development efforts. These unincorporated places are small and scattered throughout the area.

Labor Force

A major difficulty faced by the area is the insufficient supply of jobs for the demand that exists for employment. Unemployment rates have consistently been much higher than state or national levels for several decades. Historically, this area has experienced higher rates of unemployment for the region, when compared to Illinois and the U.S. over the past 16 years. Alexander, Pulaski and Johnson counties have had the most severe unemployment problems

over this period. **The minority population concentration in Pulaski and Alexander counties has experienced rates of unemployment approaching 40%.** There is little to indicate from the rates or rate trends that either the absolute or relative unemployment picture in the area will change appreciably within the foreseeable future.

Providing support for existing or locating industries that could utilize the skills of the unemployed would also expand opportunities. Encouraging expanding or relocating industries through design of customized training programs will help. An overall improvement in the region's economic base should encourage retail and other establishments that will further expand job opportunities.

Unemployment and "underemployment" (which is not accounted for in any available data) can be considered both a symptom of economic distress and a source of economic distress. Layoffs may be indicative of reduced demand for particular products, overall slowdown of local and/or non-local economics, conflicts over governmental or other regulations, disputes between labor and management, and other factors that result in a discontinuity of employment. Reduced family and personal economic resources often is compounded by social and psychological distress that may have serious future consequences. A reduction in purchasing power of residents, an overall decrease in economic activity, and a threat to potential expansion or maintenance of the local economy are some of the major difficulties faced by communities with high rates of unemployment.

Unemployment Rates by Census Tract				
Census Tract	Labor Force	# Employed	# Unemployed	Rate
Alexander - 9577	862	777	85	9.9% ^o
Alexander - 9578	1059	903	156	14.7% ^o
Alexander - 9579	721	583	138	19.1% ^o
Johnson - 9788	1343	1230	113	8.4% ^o
Pulaski - 9710	1386	1219	167	12.0% ^o
Pulaski - 9711	1414	1215	199	14.1% ^o
State				11.9% ^o
Nation				13.1% ^o

(Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Census of Population 1990)

Life Long Dependency

Alexander, Johnson, and Pulaski counties have a higher population of people receiving governmental assistance than in any other area of southern Illinois. Statistics indicated that more than 22% of the area residents are on some form of public assistance. A full 50% of Alexander County's population subsists on either unemployment or welfare. Alexander County has the highest child poverty rate in Illinois, a dismaying 45.6%^o.

Statistics indicate that more than 22% of the area residents are on some form of public assistance.

Percent of Persons Receiving Public Assistance

County	Percent
Pulaski (Census Tracts 9710 & 9711)	. 0%
Alexander (Census Tracts 9577, 9578 & 9579)	. 0%
Johnson (Census Tract 9778)	. 0%

(Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Census of Population, 1990)

The Median Family Income for the State of Illinois is \$38,664 or 54% higher than the empowerment zone median family income of only \$20,793. Per Capita income in the empowerment zone service area is \$8,834, compared to \$24,763 for the State.

In 1995, Alexander County had a per capita personal income of \$13,637 which ranked 96th in the State, and was 53.9% of the State average of \$25,293, and 58% of the national average of \$23,196.

Low Income Families

County	Total Number of Families	Number of Families that are Low-Income (Income Below \$20,000)	Percentage of Families that are Low-Income
Alexander	2,934	1,498	51.06%
Pulaski	2,040	948	46.47%
Johnson	2,763	977	35.36%
SIDEZ	7,737	3,423	44.30%
Illinois	2,944,521	619,418	21.04%

(Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Census of Population, 1990)

In 1962, President John F. Kennedy declared that Alexander and Pulaski counties were two of the poorest counties in the United States, this fact has not changed in three decades.

In 1995, Johnson County had a per capita personal income of \$11,976. This put Johnson County dead last as it ranked 102 out of 102 counties in Illinois and was 47.3% of the State average of \$25,293, and 51.6% of the national average of \$23,196.

Education Attainment

The rural isolation, combined with its economic circumstances has resulted in low educational levels throughout the zone. Over 20% of adults have less than an eighth-grade education and an additional 18.5% do not have a high school diploma.

Area schools are generally small. The ability of these small schools to offer the courses that students need to prepare for college is limited. Of those students who do complete high school, most are not prepared for college work. Because of the area's rural, isolated

nature, many of those who enter post secondary school find themselves at a cultural and social disadvantage. Two schools within the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone ranked among the ten lowest school districts in the state IGAP testing for 1997. The table below shows the educational level within the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone compared to the averages for the State of Illinois and the nation.

Educational Attainment Level of Adults over 25			
	Less than 9th Grade	Less than High School	Associate Degree and above
S.I. Delta Empowerment Zone	21.2%	39.7%	13.7%
Illinois	6.5%	.0%	17%
United States	.0%	.0%	16.9%

Source: U.S. Census Abstracts (1990)

Area high schools report dropout rates over the past three years are increasing. More students from low-income/first-generation families in the area are dropping out of high school. This higher number of dropouts is the unfortunate continuation of negative economic changes combined with the continued isolation of area students from opportunities to improve their academic achievement and access to college preparatory programs in high school. Teen pregnancy and resultant high numbers of single-female headed households are other factors in the area's high dropout rates.

Lack of Adequate Transportation

The proposed empowerment zone located within Alexander, Pulaski and Johnson counties encompasses a 449.1 square mile area. The areas are extremely rural in nature and many roads are unpaved. Although public transportation is available on a limited basis, it is imperative that if we are to bring our general population out of poverty and into the workforce, then the need for adequate transportation is essential. A recent survey conducted by the Federation of Community United Services (FoCUS) indicated that those who use public and specialized transportation are more likely than the general population in the region to reside in a household without access to a vehicle, in a household whose annual income is below \$10,000, or have a mobility limitation.

Transit-Dependency in Empowerment Zone Counties				
County	Households without access to a vehicle	Persons are 65 and over	Persons with mobility limitations	Persons below Poverty Level
Alexander	21.7%	17.6%	6.0%	32.2%
Johnson	8.3%	.0%	.0%	.0%
Pulaski	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%
Region	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%
State	14.0%	11.8%	4.3%	13.1%

(Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Census of Population, 1990)

Public Safety and Health

The police protection within the empowerment zone region is provided by a rather thin mix of municipal police forces (including volunteer auxiliary officers), county sheriffs departments, and the Illinois State Police Post at Ullin. The City of Cairo has the zone's largest municipal police force, with an average of 12 full-time officers. Other communities, which employ at least one full-time police officer, include: Vienna, Karnak, Mounds, Mound City, and Ullin. Several communities do not provide municipal police protection. However, a sheriff's department patrols each county. The four full-time officers employed by the Pulaski County Sheriff's Department constitute the region's smallest countywide police force.

Crime in the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone region increased by 12% from 1996 to 1997 as compared to a statewide decrease of 2.6%.

Each county in the empowerment zone region is served by a county ambulance service. These ambulance services could be greatly enhanced with a system of strategically placed heliports. The importance of a well-established ambulance service and a system of heliports teamed with a countywide E-911 service are especially noticed in areas without immediate access to adequate emergency health care. Johnson County currently has the only operating E-911 system in the zone. This is an important element in maintaining a stable quality of life and improving public safety. It has also become an important factor in economic development initiatives throughout the country.

Manpower, delivery systems, facilities, and access to each are major concerns of the region's health care system. The nearby regional activity centers of Paducah, KY and Cape Girardeau, MO are ranked among the largest non-metropolitan medical centers in the country. However, current Medicaid requisites make it increasingly difficult for many low-income residents of southernmost Illinois to patronize out-of-state medical facilities. Therefore, counties in the empowerment zone region have been designated officially as Critical Medical Manpower Shortage Areas. The standard for the designation is number of persons per full-time practitioner. Pulaski County has the largest number of persons per physician. The local public health department serves the area with facilities in each county and a Primary Care Clinic located on the campus of Shawnee Community College in Pulaski County. In addition, Community Health and Emergency Services and Rural Health, Inc. provide primary health care for residents of the Alexander and Johnson County, respectively. Residents of the empowerment zone region lack a desired level of access to adequate health care.

As with most impoverished areas, the teenage pregnancy rate for the empowerment zone counties is staggering. Alexander County has the highest rate in Illinois for adolescent pregnancies, 32.3% of total births in 1990.

Teenage Pregnancy Rate						
County	# of Births		# of Teenage Births		% of Teenage Births	
	1995	1996	1995	1996	1995	1996
Alexander	140	147	32	43	22.9%	29.3%
Johnson	106	103	17	11	16.0%	10.7%
Pulaski	88	112	19	30	21.6%	26.8%
State	185,801	183,079	24,046	23,331	12.9%	12.7%

Infant Mortality Rates by County, 1995-1996, IL Department of Public Health

From 1995 to 1996, Pulaski and Alexander Counties experienced an increase in teenage pregnancies of 63% and 34%. respectively.

Housing

Throughout the region there is a shortage of housing, particularly decent, affordable housing since much of the existing housing is substandard and inadequate. Both single and multi-family housing is needed. Due to income levels, houses at the lower end of the scale are always in demand. The shortage of available rental units has been described as severe. More rental units for those in the lower- and middle-income brackets are a necessity, especially since owners raise rent when additional jobs create more demand for rental properties. When this happens, existing low-income tenants can no longer afford rental payments. The Median Value **Housing** in the Empowerment Zone region is 30% below the median value housing for the State of Illinois.

Median Value Housing	
County Census Tracts	Median Value
Alexander – 9577	24,600
Alexander – 9578	23,000
Alexander – 9579	15,900
Johnson – 9778	32,800
Pulaski – 9710	25,300
Pulaski-9711	22,100
SIDEZ Average	23,950
State of Illinois	80,100



Images of Housing and Poverty in Southernmost IL Delta Empowerment Zone

TAXABLE RETAIL SALES 1991 - 1996 ALEXANDER COUNTY

Population 1990 10,626
Income/pc 1989 \$ 8,846

Retail Sales Table

Year	Total	GenMdse	Food	Eating	Apparel	FurnHH	Lumber	Auto	Other	Ag	Mfg
1991	\$ 32,591,837	\$ 3,338,004	\$ 7,357,263	\$ 3,582,773	\$ 142,491	\$ 1,411,280	\$ 1,440,592	\$ 10,515,911	\$ 3,474,680	\$ 478,414	\$ 850,429
1992	\$ 36,146,629	\$ 3,071,433	\$ 6,266,111	\$ 3,703,838	\$ 205,965	\$ 1,599,214	\$ 1,450,417	\$ 12,928,707	\$ 3,382,706	\$ 552,604	\$ 2,985,634
1993	\$ 29,926,881	\$ 2,608,997	\$ 6,104,669	\$ 3,502,068	\$ 78,720	\$ 1,648,626	\$ 1,635,146	\$ 12,481,357	\$ 2,722,214	\$ 655,064	\$ 2,432,500
1994	\$ 31,664,772	\$ 2,471,300	\$ 5,643,798	\$ 3,903,046	\$ 8,063	\$ 1,522,025	\$ 1,512,688	\$ 13,266,010	\$ 2,534,326	\$ 1,072,832	\$ (269,316)
1995	\$ 36,170,392	\$ 2,345,519	\$ 5,605,267	\$ 3,750,908	\$ 9,585	\$ 1,484,389	\$ 1,297,083	\$ 17,552,330	\$ 2,857,930	\$ 751,793	\$ 515,588
1996	\$ 32,055,757	\$ 2,123,693	\$ 5,963,643	\$ 3,433,620	\$ 9,895	\$ 1,551,382	\$ 1,410,639	\$ 13,787,834	\$ 2,553,414	\$ 666,270	\$ 555,367

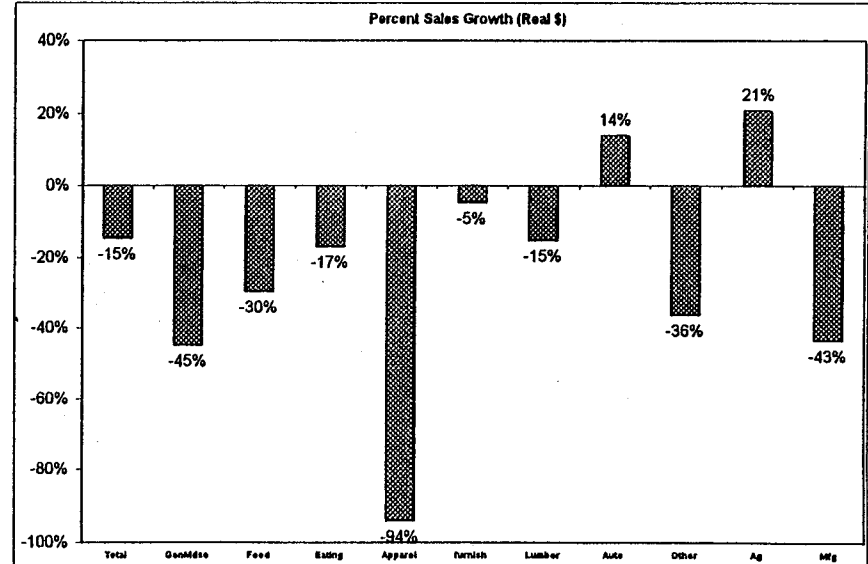
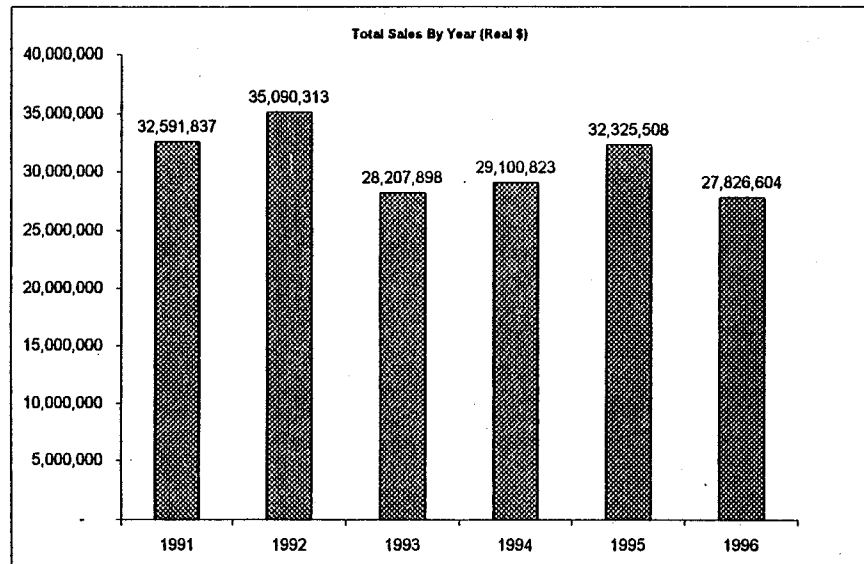
RETAC Source: Illinois KOB Reports, Illinois Department of Revenue

Real (inflation adjusted to 1991 value) Dollars

Year	Total	GenMdse	Food	Eating	Apparel	FurnHH	Lumber	Auto	Other	Ag	Mfg
1991	32,591,837	3,338,004	7,357,263	3,582,773	142,491	1,411,280	1,440,592	10,515,911	3,474,680	478,414	850,429
1992	35,090,313	2,981,676	6,082,996	3,595,600	199,946	1,552,480	1,408,031	12,550,890	3,283,853	536,455	2,898,385
1993	28,207,898	2,459,138	5,754,020	3,300,911	74,198	1,553,930	1,541,224	11,764,435	2,565,852	617,437	2,292,779
1994	29,100,823	2,271,195	5,186,810	3,587,010	7,410	1,398,784	1,390,203	12,191,839	2,329,117	985,963	(247,509)
1995	32,325,508	2,096,192	5,009,432	3,352,189	8,566	1,326,600	1,159,204	15,686,531	2,554,134	671,878	460,781
1996	27,826,604	1,843,512	5,176,853	2,980,619	8,590	1,346,706	1,224,532	11,968,789	2,216,539	578,368	482,097
Percent Real Change	-15%	-45%	-30%	-17%	-94%	-5%	-15%	14%	-36%	21%	-43%

RETAC CPI all items, 1990=130.7

78



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TAXABLE RETAIL SALES 1991 - 1996 JOHNSON COUNTY

Population 1990 11,347
Income/pc 1989 \$ 9,170

Retail Sales Table

Year	Total	GenMdse	Food	Eating	Apparel	FurnHH	Lumber	Auto	Other	Ag	Mfg
1991	\$ 30,885,235	\$ 1,359,043	\$ 5,953,869	\$ 2,067,907	\$ 291,420	\$ 625,406	\$ 3,303,115	\$ 13,087,394	\$ 1,744,417	\$ 1,552,193	\$ 900,471
1992	\$ 32,907,989	\$ 1,447,224	\$ 6,183,369	\$ 2,384,257	\$ 311,321	\$ 694,282	\$ 3,269,629	\$ 14,627,345	\$ 1,615,074	\$ 1,236,295	\$ 1,139,193
1993	\$ 34,563,192	\$ 1,463,630	\$ 6,208,194	\$ 2,648,058	\$ 312,755	\$ 672,241	\$ 3,909,653	\$ 14,994,139	\$ 1,606,732	\$ 1,469,443	\$ 1,278,347
1994	\$ 37,725,386	\$ 1,516,575	\$ 6,246,057	\$ 2,847,895	\$ 321,483	\$ 618,721	\$ 4,876,626	\$ 16,819,940	\$ 1,672,183	\$ 1,926,116	\$ 879,790
1995	\$ 41,107,730	\$ 1,502,531	\$ 6,800,195	\$ 2,949,248	\$ 274,699	\$ 627,341	\$ 5,237,801	\$ 19,081,030	\$ 1,553,890	\$ 1,933,055	\$ 1,147,940
1996	\$ 42,463,255	\$ 1,696,379	\$ 6,884,003	\$ 3,021,931	\$ 229,149	\$ 647,062	\$ 5,116,152	\$ 19,239,325	\$ 1,963,886	\$ 1,829,522	\$ 1,835,846

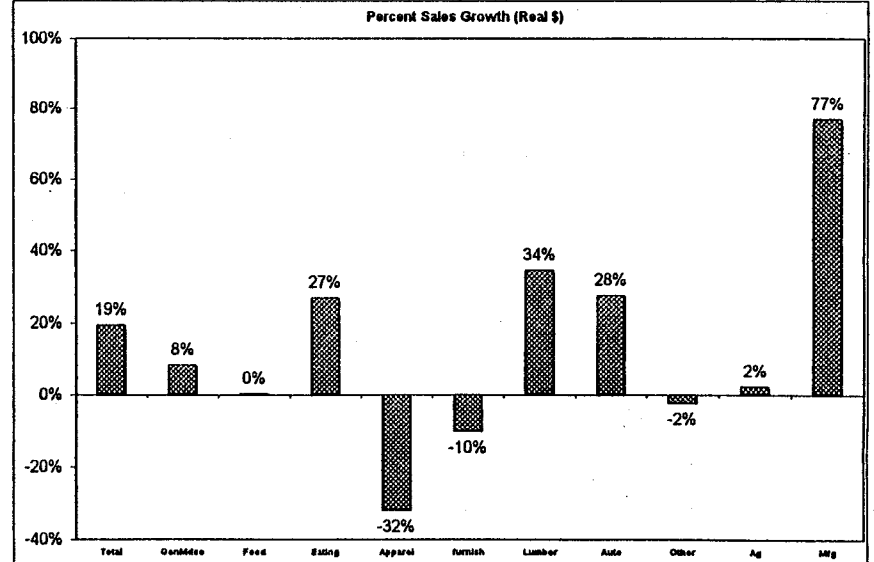
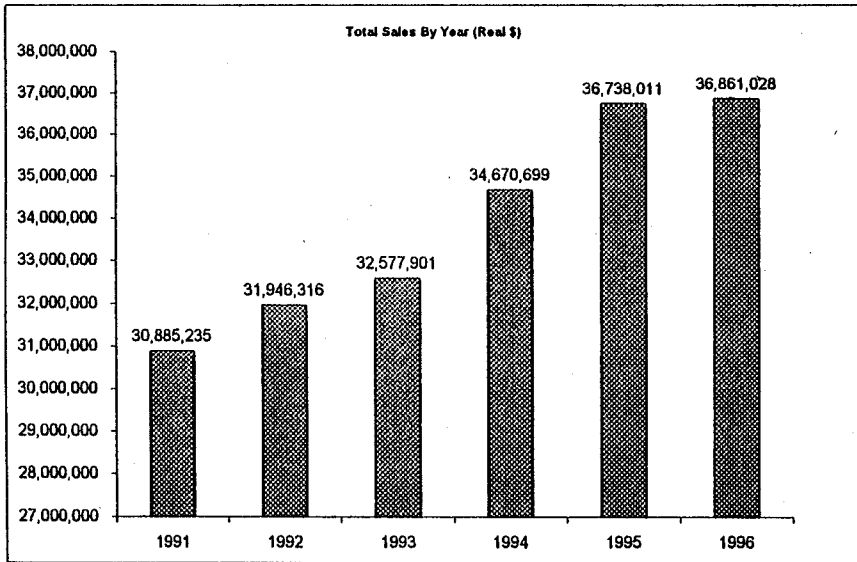
RETAC Source: Illinois KOB Reports, Illinois Department of Revenue

Real (inflation adjusted to 1991 value) Dollars

Year	Total	GenMdse	Food	Eating	Apparel	FurnHH	Lumber	Auto	Other	Ag	Mfg
1991	30,885,235	1,359,043	5,953,869	2,067,907	291,420	625,406	3,303,115	13,087,394	1,744,417	1,552,193	900,471
1992	31,946,316	1,404,932	6,002,672	2,314,582	302,223	673,993	3,174,080	14,199,889	1,567,877	1,200,167	1,105,902
1993	32,577,901	1,379,560	5,851,599	2,495,955	294,791	633,628	3,685,085	14,132,884	1,514,442	1,385,039	1,204,919
1994	34,670,699	1,393,775	5,740,303	2,617,296	295,452	568,622	4,481,757	15,458,002	1,536,784	1,770,155	808,552
1995	36,738,011	1,342,813	6,077,340	2,635,745	245,499	560,655	4,681,027	17,052,732	1,388,713	1,727,573	1,025,915
1996	36,861,028	1,472,574	5,975,788	2,623,244	198,917	561,694	4,441,172	16,701,058	1,704,788	1,588,151	1,593,641
Percent Real Change	19%	8%	0%	27%	-32%	-10%	34%	28%	-2%	2%	77%

RETAC CPI all Items, 1990=130.7

79



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TAXABLE RETAIL SALES 1991 - 1996 PULASKI COUNTY

Population 1990 7,523
Income/pc 1989 \$ 8,479

Retail Sales Table

Year	Total	GenMdse	Food	Eating	Apparel	FurnHH	Lumber	Auto	Other	Ag	Mfg
1991	\$ 17,260,313	\$ 1,130,033	\$ 4,208,089	\$ 1,513,711	\$ 55,532	\$ 468,768	\$ 1,087,533	\$ 6,386,575	\$ 1,650,695	\$ 581,450	\$ 177,927
1992	\$ 16,958,297	\$ 1,180,813	\$ 4,058,455	\$ 1,596,292	\$ 33,000	\$ 447,333	\$ 1,092,705	\$ 6,227,753	\$ 1,857,654	\$ 381,672	\$ 82,620
1993	\$ 17,286,523	\$ 1,250,956	\$ 3,868,342	\$ 1,705,683	\$ 28,746	\$ 376,800	\$ 980,341	\$ 6,877,587	\$ 1,845,472	\$ 406,827	\$ 54,605
1994	\$ 18,235,779	\$ 1,258,781	\$ 4,548,051	\$ 1,831,827	\$ 23,193	\$ 396,806	\$ 984,942	\$ 7,148,186	\$ 1,557,564	\$ 357,510	\$ 128,919
1995	\$ 20,593,218	\$ 1,262,803	\$ 3,929,808	\$ 1,784,179	\$ 26,730	\$ 357,318	\$ 929,507	\$ 9,949,923	\$ 1,662,098	\$ 394,149	\$ 296,703
1996	\$ 20,135,597	\$ 1,392,990	\$ 4,544,223	\$ 1,899,194	\$ 44,673	\$ 350,940	\$ 1,115,169	\$ 8,826,316	\$ 1,369,100	\$ 478,515	\$ 114,477

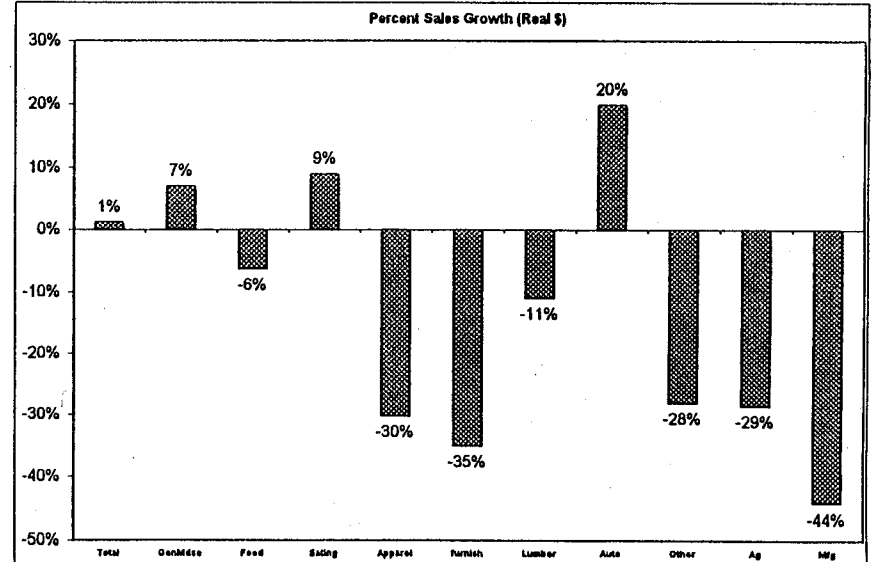
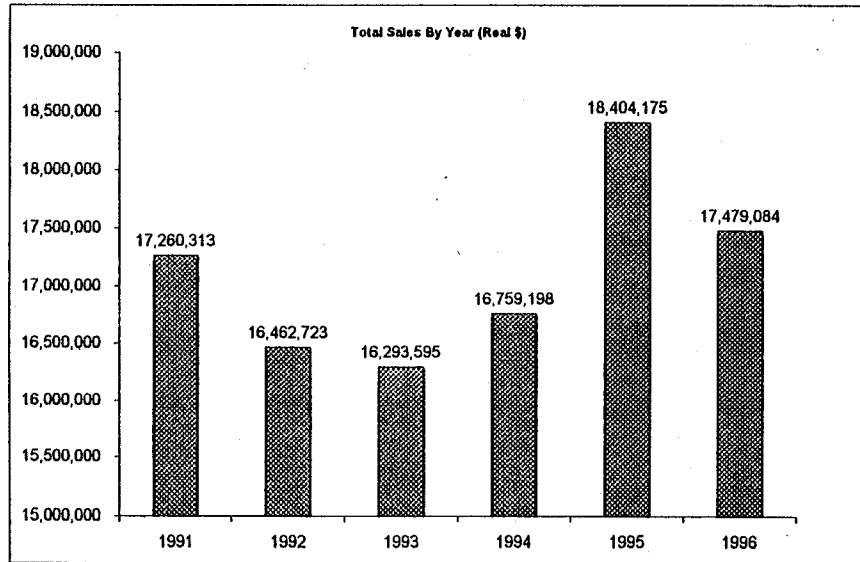
RETAC Source: Illinois KOB Reports, Illinois Department of Revenue

Real (inflation adjusted to 1991 value) Dollars

Year	Total	GenMdse	Food	Eating	Apparel	FurnHH	Lumber	Auto	Other	Ag	Mfg
1991	17,260,313	1,130,033	4,208,089	1,513,711	55,532	468,768	1,087,533	6,386,575	1,650,695	581,450	177,927
1992	16,462,723	1,146,306	3,939,854	1,549,643	32,036	434,261	1,060,773	6,045,759	1,803,368	370,518	80,206
1993	16,293,595	1,179,102	3,646,147	1,607,710	27,095	355,157	924,031	6,482,542	1,739,469	383,459	51,469
1994	16,759,198	1,156,855	4,179,788	1,683,501	21,315	364,676	905,190	6,569,386	1,431,445	328,562	118,480
1995	18,404,175	1,128,568	3,512,073	1,594,522	23,889	319,335	830,701	8,892,254	1,485,418	352,251	265,164
1996	17,479,084	1,209,211	3,944,698	1,648,631	38,779	304,640	968,043	7,661,850	1,188,473	415,384	99,374
Percent Real Change	1%	7%	-6%	9%	-30%	-35%	-11%	20%	-28%	-29%	-44%

RETAC CPI all Items, 1990=130.7

80



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Part III Benchmark Amendment

SECTION 4 – BENCHMARK AMENDMENT

The Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone Steering Committee realizes that this strategic plan was developed with the intent to become a living document. It will be necessary to revise and amend the plan as the **SIDEZ** grows and changes with time and current trends. However, the Steering Committee also realizes that the revision and amendment of benchmark goals and activities, or any other portion of the strategic plan, must not be an act that can be accomplished with ease or without thought and public input. Therefore, certain guidelines have been developed to insure that the benchmark activities and goals are revised or amended with the consideration of the effects to and opinions of the citizenry of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone.

Benchmark goals and activities will be reviewed on an annual basis by the **SIDEZ**'s Lead Entity. Suggestions will be reviewed and discussed by the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone Board of Directors. At that time, any remaining amendments or revisions to benchmark activities and goals will be presented to the sub-zones for discussion and consideration at a quarterly meeting of each of the three sub-zones. The suggested benchmark goals and activities will not be revised or amended until they can be presented at the annual public hearing of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone.

The annual meeting of the **SIDEZ** will provide a host of information for the citizens of the Zone. At this meeting, residents will be given a report as to the activities the Zone has participated in during the past year. They will also be given a “progress report”, or benchmark review of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone region. Citizens will be given a chance to make comments concerning activities and benchmark goals, and to provide testimonials for the differences the Zone is making in the region. Finally any recommended reviews or amendments to benchmark goals and activities will be presented to those in attendance at the public hearing. Citizens present will then be given a chance to comment on the proposed revisions and amendments. Revisions and amendments will not be presented as a whole change. The Board of Directors will present each revision or amendment singularly.

In addition, at least two weeks before the public hearing, a notice will be published in local newspapers (the Cairo Citizen, the Pulaski Enterprise, the Vienna Times, the Monday's Pub, and the Southern Scene). This notice will detail proposed revisions and amendments to benchmark activities and goals. All citizens will be encouraged to attend the public hearing and/or submit comments within 10 days after the public hearing date.

The purpose of bringing revisions and amendments to benchmark activities and goals to the general citizenry of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone will allow the strategic plan to remain in the hands of the people of the **SIDEZ** region. The Steering Committee feels that this procedure will allow residents and participants to take ownership in the Empowerment Zone. People are more dedicated to something they can call their own. That is the reasoning behind taking the revisions and amendments to the people instead of leaving those decisions up to the Board of Directors, a small group of representatives.

Benchmark amendments and revisions will be necessary. Changes of this type are expected with the development and implementation of any “living” plan of this type. Therefore, the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone will revise and change this document with the opinion and approval of the general population of the SIDEZ region. The people of the SIDEZ developed and formed this plan, so they must be informed of revisions and amendments before those changes occur. They should also have a chance to voice any opposition or approval of revisions and amendments before they occur. It is the people who must amend how Empowerment Zone funds are expended and the people who must evaluate the measurement of progress for the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone.

Once the people of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone have been presented with and commented on recommended benchmark changes, the Board of Directors will take the appropriate actions to amend or revise benchmark goals and activities. Revisions and amendments of benchmark goals and activities will be made after the review of benchmarks has been presented for the previous year. The Steering Committee feels that revisions and amendments cannot be made until progress has been evaluated.

Part I Community Assessment

SECTION 2 – COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

a) Assessment of Problems and Opportunities

The name chosen to identify this proposed empowerment zone – the Southernmost Illinois Delta – captures in a few words much of what defines this area as unique. Located at the extreme tip of the long state of Illinois, far away from the centers of commerce and government in Chicago and Springfield, it is no accident that residents describe themselves as being in **Southernmost** Illinois, rather than **Southern** Illinois. The “*mα*” hints at a sense of geographic and cultural difference, bordering on isolation that some people of the region feel. Memphis, Tennessee and St. Louis, Missouri, both about a 3-hour drive, are closer than Springfield, the state capital, that is 4 hours to the north.

The Ohio River defines the eastern border of the region and the Mississippi River the west. Wide flood plains formed by these rivers give rise to the use of the word “Delta” in the name of the proposed zone, as does an identification with the culture and poverty of other communities to the south in the Lower Mississippi Delta region. Racially, Southernmost Illinois is more diverse than most other rural areas in Illinois, providing another source of identification with Mississippi Delta communities. Populations in Pulaski County and eligible census tracts in Alexander County are approximately one-third black and two-thirds white, while in Johnson County, the ratio is about 90 percent white, 9 percent black. The City of Cairo is 55 percent black, 45 percent white. A small number of American Indians, Asian and Pacific Islanders and others live in the zone.

Current Trends, Conditions, Problems and Opportunities

1. The area’s two big rivers, the Ohio and the Mississippi, are both a blessing and a curse.
 - Rivers provide rich bottomlands for agriculture, but are subject to flooding.
 - Three businesses operate grain storage and river/rail transfer facilities, but there are no inter-modal transfer (rail/river/truck) facilities for goods other than grain.
 - Land suitable for industrial and residential development is limited in some areas due to flood plain classification.
 - Miles of levees and in some communities, large flood water pumps, must be maintained to protect farmland, homes and businesses from seasonal high water.
 - Marine services to line boats and barges hauling goods on the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers currently employ over one hundred people.
 - The Olmsted Locks and Dam, under construction on the Ohio River, offer the potential for increased river-based industry and recreational development after project completion in 2008.

2. The number of farms in the area has declined, fewer people make their living farming, and farm size has increased.
 - In 1990, only 2% of the total population of Alexander, Pulaski and Johnson counties were employed in agriculture. (Detailed information is available in Volume I – Section 3, General Description of the Area.)

- With the exception of one soybean processor, Bunge Corporation, there are no value-added agricultural businesses in the area. Bunge employs 96 people.
 - Canadian goose harvest at private hunting clubs near Horseshoe Lake in Alexander County has declined due to different flyway patterns brought about by warmer climate conditions. State-controlled hunting seasons have not been adjusted to match new flyway patterns.
 - A new fish processing facility, under construction at the Pickneyville Correctional Center in Southern Illinois, offers promise for the establishment of aquaculture farming.
 - The establishment of an Illinois Grape and Wine Council based at Southern Illinois University and a new viticulture (wine/grape growing) class at Shawnee Community College supports the expansion of a regional wine industry.
3. There are only a few large industries and manufacturers in the area and some have recently relocated from the area or closed operations. No development-ready industrial sites are available.
- Burkart Foam, Inc., a manufacturer of car seat foam; Crain Enterprises, a manufacturer of leveling rods; and, Servicemaster Industries, a manufacturer of cleaning products, are three of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone's largest manufacturers. Combined employment is less than 300 people.
 - D & K Drugs, another area manufacturer, relocated from Cairo to a new facility in Cape Girardeau, Missouri in December, 1996, in spite of an attractive incentive package offered to the company by the City of Cairo. The relocation resulted in the loss of 62 local jobs.
 - Renewable and non-renewable resource-based industries also provide employment. Cairo Dry Kiln, a timber-based industry, employs 69 persons. Oil-Dri, a processor of locally mined kitty litter and Fuller's Earth type products employs 85 people. A second kitty litter manufacturer, Golden Cat, a division of Ralston-Purina, ceased operations in the summer of 1998, with a loss of 112 jobs.
 - At a public meeting for the empowerment zone, local citizens strongly felt that potential industrial sites should be identified and be made. development-ready in order to attract new industry to the area.
4. Many of the well-paying jobs in the area are a result of public-sector investment.
- Meridian School District, Century School District, Shawnee Community College and Shawnee Development Council provide 1,000 jobs in Pulaski County.
 - The Department of Corrections is the single largest contributor to the economy of Johnson County. Over 900 people work at two major Illinois state prisons and one youth detention work camp.
 - Alexander County has a state correctional institution employing 400 people from throughout the region. This facility located in the area due to the work of a multi-county task force.

5. The area has historically had unemployment and poverty levels above state and national averages.
 - Alexander and Pulaski counties ranked #1 and #2 in the State of Illinois in the 1990 Census for the percentage of persons living below poverty level.
 - Nearly a third (31.3 percent) of persons in the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone had incomes below poverty level at the time of the 1990 Census.
 - Johnson County's 1995 per capita income was the lowest in the state, ranking 102 out of 102 counties.
 - Nearly 20 percent of the population of Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone census tracts in Alexander and Pulaski counties and 9 percent of Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone residents in Johnson County received public assistance according to the 1990 Census.
 - At the time of the 1990 Census, eligible census tracts in the three counties had an average unemployment rate of 13%.
 - In January, 1998, the Illinois Department of Employment Security reported a 10.9% unemployment rate for Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone census tracts. This was nearly twice the 5.6% state and 5.2% national unemployment rates.
 - Unemployment continues to remain high in the three Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone counties during the first 8 months of 1998. Of 102 counties in Illinois, all three counties ranked among the top ten counties in average unemployment rates during this time. -(See Volume 1, Section 4- Economic and Social Conditions for more details).
 - At public meetings and in public surveys, residents felt more jobs and better paying jobs were a very high priority.
 - Seventy percent of high school seniors surveyed, in the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone, indicated that they did not believe they would find desirable employment in their county after completing further education or training.

6. Low educational achievement levels affect employability of the local workforce.
 - Forty percent of residents age 25 or over in the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone have not completed high school compared to approximately twenty-five percent state and national non-completion rates (1990 U.S. Census Abstracts).
 - Employers identified educational achievement and initial skill level of local workers as lacking, in a 1995 quality of labor survey of manufacturing and industrial firms in the five southernmost Illinois counties. The survey was conducted by a utility company and Southern Five Regional Planning District and Development Commission.
 - Improved educational systems and life-long learning opportunities were rated a high priority by area residents.

7. Large well-developed regional shopping centers are located within 35 miles driving distance in neighboring states. Because of insufficient volume and widespread poverty, few retail outlets exist in the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone.
 - Local retailers have difficulty matching low prices offered by large discount chains in the regional shopping centers, so there is a tremendous leakage of retail dollars from the area.
 - Dollar General, a budget retailer and one of the few franchise variety stores in the area, recently closed one of its outlets in the City of Mounds as unprofitable. From 1991 to 1996, total taxable retail sales (in real dollars) declined 15 percent in Alexander County, increased 1 percent in Pulaski County and increased 19 percent in Johnson County.
 - Because Illinois taxes gasoline at a much higher rate than the neighboring states of Missouri and Kentucky, many residents buy gasoline across state lines, resulting in a loss of revenue for local businesses and motor fuel tax receipts. (Detailed information about taxable retail sales in the three counties is available in Volume 1, Section 4 – Social and Economic Conditions.)
 - The Landmarks Preservation Council of Illinois named Cairo's downtown historic district as one of the 10 most endangered sites in Illinois in 1998. Mound City, Mounds and other towns in the area also have decaying, empty, turn-of-the-century commercial buildings in their downtowns.
 - Area residents, who filled out a survey as part of the development of this strategic plan, expressed a wish for more local retail shops.

8. The area has a wealth of natural and historical resources that are a source of pride to local residents and an attraction for tourists. Major natural and historical places include:
 - Shawnee National Forest
 - Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge
 - Cache River State Natural Area
 - Fort Defiance Park at the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers
 - Mound City National Cemetery
 - National Historic District in Cairo
 - Horseshoe Lake Conservation Area
 - Cairo Custom House Museum, Magnolia Manor Museum, A.B. Safford Memorial Library, Thebes Courthouse, Olmsted Depot
 - Civil War and civil rights significance

9. The area lacks the infrastructure necessary to accommodate increased number of tourists. Persons attending public hearings felt that development of the tourism industry was a high priority.
 - Increased numbers and better quality overnight accommodations are needed to accommodate anticipated upper income heritage tourists.
 - Many local eating establishments are too small to accommodate bus tours.
 - Hospitality training is needed for service providers.

- Many local sites are now only open part-time and are maintained through donations and volunteer labor. Increased tourist traffic will be a strain without additional resources.
 - Many tourist sites can only be reached over dusty gravel roads.
 - Some existing sites are difficult to find due to inadequate directional signs and many sites lack interpretive signs.
10. Local and regional tourism initiatives offer new opportunities to strengthen the region's fledgling tourism industry.
- The Federal Highway Administration has recently designated seven Illinois counties, including Alexander and Pulaski, as part of the three-state Ohio River National Scenic By-Way. This designation will bring national and international marketing assistance and some transportation-related improvements.
 - Alexander and Pulaski Counties are included in a new seven county state heritage tourism demonstration site call "The Ohio River Route: Where Illinois Began." The Illinois Bureau of Tourism is providing technical assistance and some funding to assist local volunteers in developing and marketing heritage tourism sites, events, and businesses.
 - Alexander County is included in a second heritage tourism demonstration site called "Trace of Ages" that includes seventeen Illinois counties that border the Mississippi River.
 - Illinois Governor Jim Edgar recently opened a new 10-mile bicycle trail in Johnson County on September **12, 1998**. Thirty-three more miles of adjoining bike trail will be developed on an abandoned rail line.
 - Portions of Alexander County are proposed in inclusion in the Mississippi River Bike trail, a project of the Lower Mississippi Delta Center in Memphis.. The Center is planning an international bike race that will cross part of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone.
 - Groundbreaking will take place on October 3, 1998 for a new visitor and interpretive center at Cypress Creek National Wildlife -Refuge.
11. Over the last fifty years, declining populations and declining property values have results in lowered tax bases for local units of government.
- From 1940 to 1990, the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone lost 56% of its population.
 - As businesses and residents have left the area, many residential and commercial structures have become abandoned and are falling into ruin, exerting a negative impact on area property values.
 - Local governments have fewer resources with which to maintain existing public infrastructure such as roads, bridges and sewers.
 - Most needed improvements have been made with the assistance of state and federal grant dollars. Many times competitive grant applications were successful due to the extreme, even emergency need in Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone counties.

12. With the exception of the inter-states (I-24, I-57) most highways and roads do not meet width and shoulder standards and specifications established for various highway and road classifications.
 - Good north-south linkages exist, but few east-west roads.
 - In the lower five Illinois counties, half of the roads are unpaved.
 - Persons attending a regional public meeting for the empowerment zone identified infrastructure improvements, including roads, as the highest priority.
 - Infrastructure improvement projects can provide training and jobs for area residents.

13. Survey results showed that many area residents would like to have greater health care choices locally and better access to emergency services and hospitals.
 - Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone residents are served by a local health department clinic in each county and at the Shawnee Community College campus. Community Health and Emergency Services, Inc. operates a mega-clinic in Alexander County. Rural Health, Inc. provides primary care to residents of Johnson County.
 - Due to high numbers of persons to each full-time health practitioner, the counties in the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone have been officially designated as Critical Manpower Shortage Areas.’
 - Large full service medical facilities are available in Paducah, Kentucky and Cape Girardeau, Missouri, but an ambulance ride can take up to 45 minutes from many parts of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone.
 - Each county has an ambulance service, but ambulances must cover a wide geographic area.
 - Only Johnson County has an operating 911 service. 911 systems in Pulaski and Alexander counties are under development.
 - Teenage pregnancy rates increased 63% in Alexander County and 34% in Pulaski County from 1995 to 1996.
 - 1996 teenage birth rates in Alexander (29.3%) and Pulaski (26.8%) counties were more than twice the state birth rate (12.7%) for teens.

14. While there is ample well-maintained public housing in the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone, much of the existing privately-owned housing stock is substandard.
 - Some homeowners are reluctant to put money into existing homes due to low resale values. The median value of houses in the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone averaged \$23,950 compared to a statewide median value of \$80,100.
 - There is a shortage of decent, energy-efficient privately owned rental units..
 - Demand for low to moderate-income owner-occupied housing rehabilitation grants far exceeds availability. There exists a shortage of qualified contractors willing to do the rehabilitation work.
 - Dilapidated, burned and abandoned houses are a blight on neighborhoods and rural areas throughout the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone.

- The need for improved housing offers an opportunity for training and unemployment in the construction trades.
15. At public hearings, residents of the area expressed a wish for a greater sense of community and unity.
- The extreme need of the area has placed local governments and service providers in competition with one another for scarce grant dollars to provide needed services.
 - Recently local communities have successfully worked together to bring a large state correctional facility to the area that provides well-paying jobs to residents.
 - The creation of a regional economic development commission will provide an opportunity for communities to work cooperatively instead of competitively.
 - Badly needed clean up campaigns and community recreation/cultural center establishment will provide opportunities for citizens to work together cooperatively and build a sense of pride in community.
 - Cairo was a site of the last and longest civil rights movement by blacks in the nation. Minority citizens of Alexander and Pulaski counties will see this history honored through the establishment of black history museum and mural project.

(b) Assessment of the Resources available to the Community

Southernmost Illinois currently holds tremendous capacity for economic development and growth. With the development and implementation of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone Strategic Plan for revitalization, the needs of the communities have been addressed. The plan stands as proof that communities in southernmost Illinois have examined the existing conditions of slum and blight, poverty and need in their home areas and are willing to recognize and to work through new public and private partnerships to overcome those problems.

The sponsoring Steering Committee for this Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone application, made up of over two dozen governmental, educational or agency executives, area banks, and citizens of the lower three counties of Illinois have pledged to finance start-up administrative costs for the Empowerment Zone. Office space and equipment and additional local resources are available to assist the program during the initial implementation stages.

Every effort will be made to coordinate and collaborate programs and projects with other complementary activities now existing or becoming available. The Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone eligible counties realize that they are a part of many greater regions where a greater number of groups are involved in planning and developing local and regional resources. This applicant insures that funds or projects will not supplant any others operating currently, nor will they be conducting projects totally alone or in a vacuum.

The following paragraphs outline specifically some of the resources available for implementation of this strategic plan:

Financial Resources Available

Grants

One of the best financial resources available to communities in the proposed empowerment zone is the Community Development Assistance Program (CDAP) administered by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs. The CDAP funds come to the State of Illinois through the federal Community Development Block Grant program.

In Illinois, competitive grants are available for planning assistance (\$25,000 maximum), removal of architectural barriers (\$150,000 maximum), housing rehabilitation (\$400,000 maximum), public facilities design engineering (\$100,000 maximum) and construction (\$400,000 maximum). Emergency public facility grants of up to \$100,000 are available to improve public infrastructure and eliminate conditions detrimental to health, safety, and public welfare. Grant funds of up to \$500,000 are available to local governments to make infrastructure improvements in support of economic development and for loans for private sector borrowers that create jobs benefiting 51% low to moderate income persons.

As vital as these funds are to rural communities, many of the grants require matching funds that impoverished communities have difficulty raising. Public facilities design and construction and housing rehabilitation all require 25% matching funds and other competitive grants receive higher consideration the more locally derived leverage funds are available. Motor fuel taxes are the most frequent source of funds for bridge and road repairs.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Business Enterprise grants have assisted local communities in preparing land for industrial and commercial development in recent years and will be a source of funding for implementation of some strategies in the strategic plan. Housing construction and rehabilitation grants are also available from Rural Development and the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA). Many communities use grants from IHDA or Rural Development to provide a necessary 25% match to CDAP housing rehabilitation grants for low to moderate income families.

Tourism Attraction Grants (TAP) are available on a 50/50 basis from the Illinois Bureau of Tourism. To be eligible for TAP funding, projects must increase overnight stays at area hotels and motels. Cairo and several other communities have instituted hotel/motel taxes to generate funding for tourism industry development. Recently, new funding has become available as part of the Illinois Heritage Tourism Demonstration Site and Ohio River National Scenic Byway designations.

Locally-based foundations such as the Hastings Foundation and the Southern Foundation are active contributors to local community development projects. Local communities have access to grant resource directories available at Southern Illinois University's Dunn-Richmond Economic Development Center in Carbondale, Illinois, enabling them to identify potential foundation partners for implementing strategies in the strategic plan.

Loans

Multitudes of loan programs are available for economic development through state and federal agencies. A detailed summary of Financial Industry/Financial Resources printed by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs (DCCA) is included in Volume 1 Section 8 - Other Attachments.

Currently three municipalities and two counties in the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone have revolving loan funds to stimulate economic development. The City of Cairo, City of Mound City, Village of Ullin and Pulaski and Alexander counties each have a revolving loan fund available for job creation and job retention. Southern Five Regional Planning District and Development Commission administers the funds for these communities and has their own in-house revolving loan fund. Shawnee Development Council, the local community action agency, serving the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone, also has a revolving loan fund. These revolving loan funds have been and will continue to be an important source of capital for business start-up and expansion in the area. This strategic plan creates new revolving loan funds to stimulate job creation.

The City of Cairo/Alexander County and Mound City/Pulaski County are both Illinois Enterprise Zone communities. The Enterprise Zone Program was created by the Illinois legislature to encourage economic growth and neighborhood revitalization in designated areas. Businesses locating in or expanding in an Illinois enterprise zone receive state and local tax incentives such as property tax abatement, sales tax exemptions, investment and jobs tax credits and utility tax exemptions for larger businesses. DCCA offers a participation loan program for projects in Illinois Enterprise Zones that provides up to 25% of total project costs ranging from \$10,000 to \$750,000.

Local Fund Raisers

Barbecue, chicken and dumplings, steak, catfish and chili dinners, bingo, auctions, car washes, and two-for-one drawings are the type of small-scale, but important fund-raisers that volunteers use to raise money for local community improvement projects. Volunteers are savvy about selection and pricing of goods and events to fit the local economy. It is anticipated that communities will develop new local fund-raisers to raise money to implement strategies identified in this plan.

Local businesses and corporations have a tradition of donating goods and services to local fund-raising efforts.

Technical Resources Available

Business technical assistance is available at the Small Business Development Center at Shawnee Community College in Ullin and at the Dunn-Richmond Economic Development Center at Southern Illinois University (SIU) at Carbondale. Business start-up classes and business plan preparation are two of the services offered by these sites to area entrepreneurs.- Assistance to manufacturers is available through the Southern Illinois Manufacturing Extension Center based at the Dunn-Richmond Center at SIU.

Grant preparation and administration and geographic information system (GIS) mapping assistance to support economic development and resource management are technical resources available through the Southern Five Regional Planning District and Development Commission. All counties and municipalities in the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone have access to the Southern Five Regional Planning District and Development Commission services.

Southern Illinois Manufacturing Extension Center is providing technical assistance to three regional economic development initiatives: bicycle tourism, aquaculture and development of the area's fledgling wine industry. Shawnee Community College began to offer courses in viticulture this fall. Technical resources from these institutions will support strategies included in this plan.

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs (DCCA), the lead economic development agency in the State of Illinois operates a statewide One-Stop Business Information Center, accessible by a toll free call. The Illinois State Chamber of Commerce is also a source of business information.

The Southernmost Illinois Tourism Bureau, based in the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone, will provide technical and marketing assistance to assist in further development of the local tourism industry.

Each county in the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone has a qualified county engineer that can provide technical assistance in planning and carrying out road improvement projects. Southwater, Inc., a newly formed cooperative water provider, can provide technical assistance in bringing safe drinking water to the residents.

Leadership Resources Available

The University of Illinois Cooperative Extension, the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs, the Dunn-Richmond Economic Development Center and the Farm Bureau all are organizations that sponsor training to build local leadership capacity. Rural Development offers board-member training to local organizations. The Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs assists local communities in planning and carrying out self-help strategies through their Competitive Communities Initiative and the Illinois Main Street Program.

Churches, schools, Jaycee's, Rotary, 4-H, Girl and Boy Scouts are local sources of training grounds for leaders.

Business leadership is available to the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone through the State Chamber of Commerce and three local Chambers of Commerce: Horseshoe Lake, Cairo and Johnson County.

Volunteer Resources Available

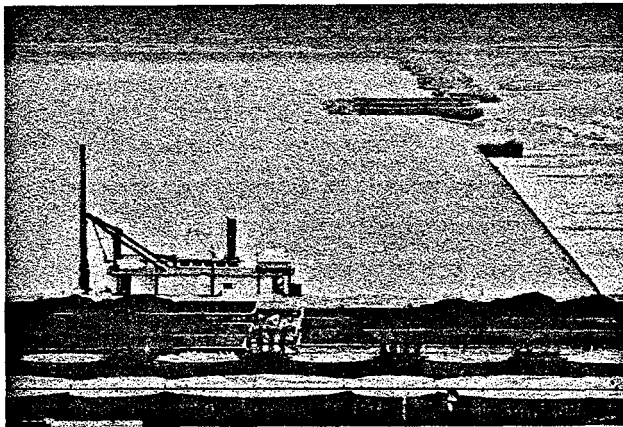
Arguably, the local spirit of volunteerism is what has enabled the communities in the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone to survive the many years of hard times. Grants have been written by volunteers, community festivals have been planned by

volunteers, community centers have been built by volunteers, parks have been maintained by volunteers and volunteers have guided the planning process and preparation of this strategic plan. This strategic recognizes that volunteerism is what creates a sense of community. Each person has different gifts and can contribute if they are invited to participate and made to feel welcome.



**Century Old
Pulaski County Courthouse**

Vienna City Park



**River Industry along the
Ohio**

Part I

Goals

SECTION 3 – GOALS

The following seven JO-year goals for the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone represent the highest priorities for community revitalization as determined at public hearings and through community survey.

Goal #1: Infrastructure

Increased numbers of residents and businesses in the zone will have clean drinking water, safe sewage disposal systems, adequate electrical and gas service, 24-hour emergency service and access to acute medical care, access to basic and advanced telecommunications and well-maintained roads that are adequate to support their intended use.

Goal #2: Economic Development

Through a comprehensive program of economic development that includes business expansion, recruitment and entrepreneurship, plus workforce preparation, the area's high unemployment rate will be reduced by 6%, to that of the state average.

Goal #3: Tourism Development:

Recognizing that the historical and scenic assets of the area represent strengths that have not been fully developed. Three hundred tourism-related jobs will exist as the result of an aggressive program of conservation, development and marketing of existing and new tourist sites and services.

Goal #4: Stronger Unity/Sense of Community

Believing that a strong sense of unity, community pride and optimism for the future result from people working and playing together in a positive manner, each year of zone designation, at least 300 people, reflecting the diversity of the community, will plan or participate in new volunteer community building activities.

Goal #5: Life-Lone: Learning and Education

Each year high school graduation rates and standardized test scores at each of the area's secondary schools will increase, as will the number of adults participating in GED, general interest, vocational and degree programs offered by regional educational institutions.

Goal #6: Housing

Increased numbers of residents in the zone will have a decent, affordable place to live. New homes will be built to accommodate residents and existing homes will be improved through housing rehabilitation programs.

Goal #7: Health Care

Increased numbers of residents of the zone will have access to affordable health care services.

Index of Topics

1. Infrastructure

- 1.1. Utilities
 - a. Water systems
 - b. Sewage disposal systems
 - c. Electrical/gas systems
 - d. Telecommunications

- 1.2. Roads
 - a. Upgrade heavily used gravel roads to oil and chip
 - b. Upgrade major arteries to state/federal standards
 - c. Purchase/share road equipment
 - d. Resurface E. 2nd Street in Grand Chain to accommodate low income housing.
 - e. Assess needs of roads serving other low-income residents.

- 1.3. Emergency Health Care
 - a. Expand emergency services
 - b. Ambulance services

Economic Development/job Creation

- 2.1. Recruit and Appoint Economic Development Commission
 - a. Industrial site development criteria
 - b. Site identification and selection
 - c. Site development

- 2.2. Business and industry retention, expansion
 - a. Business/industry inventory
 - b. Retention/expansion survey
 - c. Problem resolution
 - d. Expansion assistance

- 2.3. Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) assistance to new/expanding business
 - a. Establish RLF commission to create guidelines
 - b. Capitalize RLF for business expansion/creation
 - c. Utilize private sector banks through Community Reinvestment Act to invest in RLF.
 - d. Establish RLF for agricultural diversification projects.
 - e. Develop interactive web page for businesses.
 - f. Encourage development of niche businesses.

- 2.4. **Transportation** for low to moderate income residents
 - a. Transportation planning
 - b. Bus service
 - c. Car purchase, repair and sale

- 2.5 Intermodal transportation (rail/barge/truck) facility in Cairo
 - a. Feasibility study
 - b. Design
 - c. Construct

3. **Tourism**

- 3.1** Marketing programs to improve image
 - a. Southernmost Illinois Tourism Bureau staff increase
 - 1. Hire one additional staff person
 - 2. Marketing brochures and materials
 - 3. Enhance existing Southernmost Illinois Tourism Bureau web page.

- 3.2 Make improvements necessary to develop Southernmost Illinois into tourist destination
 - a. Cypress Creek Wildlife Refuge Auto Tour partnership
 - b. Leverage funds to develop tourist attractions
 - 1. Ohio River Recreational Area at Grand Chain, Lock & Dam 53
 - 2. Mound City National Cemetery expansion
 - 3. Outdoor recreation development near Thebes on Mississippi River.
 - 4. Ft. Defiance State Park development at confluence of Ohio/Mississippi Rivers
 - 5. Black History Museum in Cairo
 - 6. Pleasure craft fueling flat on Ohio River at Cairo
 - 7. Lodge & Community Center complex in Johnson County
 - 8. Bicycling initiative in Johnson County
 - 9. Amphitheater in Johnson County
 - 10. Covered Bridge reproduction in Johnson County

- 3.3 Enhance existing natural resources abundantly available within Zone
 - a. Cache Wetlands Educational Center partnership,
 - b. Development of Regional Hospitality Centers
 - 1. I-57 Welcome Center – Alexander County
 - 2. Ullin Depot Restoration – Pulaski County
 - 3. Train Depot Restoration -Johnson County

4. Stronger Unity/Sense of Community

- 4.1 Programs and services to unite residents within zone
 - a. Zone-wide clean-up and image building campaign
 - 1. Clean up/demolition/maintenance of abandoned buildings, industrial sites, vacant lots
 - 2. Pride development through education, volunteer clean-up, positive image-building
 - b. Senior citizen nutritional/activity center support
 - c. Community/historical/cultural/recreational site leverage funds for construction, renovation, restoration
 - 1. Park pavilion in Karnak
 - 2. Community recreational center in Cairo
 - 3. Black History mural project in Cairo
 - 4. Gem Theater restoration in Cairo
 - d. Habitat for Humanity and Christmas in April
 - e. Neighborhood conservation programs such as Neighborhood Watch and Block Clubs
- 4.2 Public access areas
 - a. Public building improvement
 - b. Downtown revitalization
 - c. Sidewalk assessment/repair/construction
 - d. Better maintenance of state-owned property through state/local partnership.

5. Life-Long: Learning and Education

- 5.1 Enhancement of educational resources and opportunities
 - a. On-site after-school programs
 - b. Community learning center establishment
 - 1. Educational and personal enrichment opportunities
 - 2. Computer access and training
 - c. Workforce training programs
 - 1. Hospitality training
 - 2. Entrepreneurship
 - 3. Construction trades hands-on training
 - 4. Home ownership counseling and maintenance training program.
 - 5. Youth Leadership
 - 6. Develop a Youth Build Program
- 5.2 Parental involvement in children's education and academic success
 - a. Identify sites with highest concentration of children
 - b. Child-Parent Education Centers developed at identified sites
 - c. Homework hotline feasibility study

6. **Housing**

- 6.1 Increase and improve affordable housing stock
 - a. Assessment of housing stock and needs
 - 1. Develop Geographic Information System Housing Stock database.
 - b. Low income housing construction participation/purchase program
 - c. Low income housing rehabilitation program enhancement
 - d. Specialized housing for elderly, handicapped, special needs populations.

7. **Health Care**

- 7.1 Increase access to affordable health care
 - a. Establish health care commission to assess needs
 - b. Support recommendations of health care commission

Part I

Strategies

SECTION 4 - STRATEGIES

GOAL #1: INFRASTRUCTURE – Increased numbers of residents and businesses in the zone will have clean drinking water, safe sewage disposal systems, adequate electrical and gas service, 24-hour emergency service and access to acute medical care, access to basic and advanced telecommunications and well-maintained roads that are adequate to support their intended use.

OBJECTIVE #1: To provide safe, affordable utility service to the residents of rural areas.

Strategies	Partners
a. Extend water mains to provide safe, treated water to residents in rural areas, in the Southernmost IL Delta Empowerment Zone, in cooperation with Southwater, Inc.	Southwater, Inc., Rural Development, Illinois DCCA, Southern IL Electric Coop, Southern Five Regional Planning, SIDEZ Municipalities
b. Develop an implementation plan with municipalities and other water districts to upgrade and extend safe, treated water to residents within the Southernmost IL Delta Empowerment Zone.	Fort Massac Water District, Millstone Water District, Rural Development, IL DCCA, SIDEZ Municipalities, Illinois-American Water Company
c. Extend utilities, including water, sewage, gas, electricity and telecommunications, to identified industrial sites.	County Governments, Southwater, Inc., Municipalities and Water Districts, IL DCCA, Rural Development, Southern IL-Electric Cooperative, Ameren CIPS, Cairo Public Utilities, GTE Ameritech
d. Develop an implementation plan with Southernmost IL Delta Empowerment Zone municipalities to upgrade and extend existing sewage systems.	,IL DCCA, Southern Five Regional Planning Rural Development, SIDEZ Municipalities
e. Identify telecommunication needs within the Southernmost IL Delta Empowerment Zone.	GTE, Ameritech, Internet and Cellular Service Providers.
f. To provide adequate telecommunications infrastructure to existing businesses and sites for new potential businesses.	GTE, Ameritech, Internet and Cellular Service Providers.

GOAL #1: INFRASTRUCTURE – Increased numbers of residents and businesses in the zone will have clean drinking water, safe sewage disposal systems, adequate electrical and gas service, 24-hour emergency service and access to acute medical care, access to basic and advanced telecommunications and well-maintained roads that are adequate to support their intended use.

OBJECTIVE #2: Develop safe, reliable roadways throughout the Southernmost IL Delta Empowerment Zone to accommodate residents, industry and tourism in order to stimulate economic growth.

Strategies	Partners
<p>a. Convert heavily traveled gravel surfaced roads in the Southernmost IL Delta Empowerment Zone to oil and chip surface.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sandusky –Olmsted Road(Pulaski Co.) • Perks to Shawnee Community College(Pulaski Co.) • Grand Chain Landing Road (Pulaski Co.) 	<p>County Highway Departments, IL Dept. of Transportation; Federal Highway Administration; Ohio River National Scenic Byways; Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge; Municipal Street Depts.; IL DCCA</p>
<p>b. Upgrade major road arteries to state/federal standards to accommodate agriculture and industrial transportation of goods and services throughout the area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vienna-Cypress Road (Johnson Co.) • Oakgrove Road (Johnson Co.) • Redman Road (Alexander Co.) • Olive Branch-Diswood Wye Road (Alexander Co.) • Fayville Road (Alexander Co.) 	<p>County Highway Departments, IL Dept. of Transportation; Federal Highway Administration; Ohio River National Scenic Byways; Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge; Municipal Street Depts.; IL DCCA</p>
<p>c. Employ two additional people per county to assist the highway department with road upgrades.</p>	<p>County Governments and Highway Departments</p>
<p>d. Implement a plan for the purchase of needed roadway equipment for use within the Southernmost IL Delta Empowerment Zone by County Highway Departments.</p>	<p>County Governments and Highway Departments</p>
<p>e. Resurface E. 2nd Street in New Grand Chain to accommodate low-income housing.</p>	<p>Village of New Grand Chain, IL DCCA, Southern Five Regional Planning, Pulaski Co. Highway Dept.</p>
<p>f. Investigate resurfacing of other municipal streets, industrial sites and critical areas to benefit low-income residents within Southernmost IL Delta Empowerment Zone.</p>	<p>Municipalities, DCCA, Southern Five Regional Planning, County Governments and Highway Departments.</p>

<p>GOAL #1: INFRASTRUCTURE – Increased numbers of residents and businesses in the zone will have clean drinking water, safe sewage disposal systems, adequate electrical and gas service, 24-hour emergency service and access to acute medical care, access to basic and advanced telecommunications and well-maintained roads that are adequate to support their intended use.</p>	
<p>OBJECTIVE #3: To provide quality, efficient emergency health care to residents of the Southernmost IL Delta Empowerment Zone.</p>	
<p>Strategies</p>	<p>Partners</p>
<p>a. Conduct a feasibility study for a Regional Medical Emergency Center to include 24 hour Emergency Services, Rehabilitation, and a Heliport.</p>	<p>County Governments, SIU School of Medicine, Southern 7 Health Department, Rural Health, ‘Community Health & Emergency Services, Southern IL Hospital Assn., IL Primary Healthcare Assn.</p>
<p>b. Construction of a Regional 24 hour Medical Emergency Center.</p>	<p>County Governments, SIU School of Medicine, Shawnee Community College, Southern 7 Health Dept., Rural Health, Community Health & Emer. Services, Southern IL Hospital Assn., IL Primary Healthcare Assn., Area Hospitals, including: Massac, Union County, Western Baptist, Lourdes, Southeast, St. Francis, Carbondale Memorial, Marion Memorial, Department of Human Services</p>
<p>c. Construct a Critical Access Hospital Wing for Cairo Mega-Clinic, which will include a 12-14 bed facility for up to 96 hours of treatment.</p>	<p>County Governments, SIU School of Medicine, Shawnee Community College, Southern 7 Health Dept., Rural Health, Community Health & Emer. Services, Southern IL Hospital Assn., IL Primary Health&e Assn., Area Hospitals, including: Massac, Union County, Western Baptist, Lourdes, Southeast, St. Francis, Carbondale Memorial, Marion Memorial, Department of Human Services</p>
<p>d. Investigate need and implement a plan for maintaining and upgrading existing Ambulance Services.</p>	<p>County Governments, County Ambulance Services, Massac Memorial Hospital, Shawnee College</p>

GOAL #2: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – Through a comprehensive program of economic development that includes business expansion, recruitment and entrepreneurship, plus workforce preparation, the area's high unemployment rate will be reduced by 6%, to that of the state average	
OBJECTIVE #1: Work with existing and potential business and industry to expand employment opportunities within the Southernmost IL Delta Empowerment Zone.	
Strategies	Partners
<p>a. Recruit and appoint an Economic Development Commission to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop Industrial Development Site Selection Criteria utilizing the Department of Commerce and Community Affairs. 2. Conduct a site selection process and identify sites for industrial parks in each sub-zone. 3. Develop an Industrial Site in each sub-zone of the EZ. 	<p>Rural Development, area banks, IL DCCA, Small Business Administration, Economic Development Association, Shawnee Community College, Southern 5 Regional Planning, Shawnee Development Council</p>
<p>b. Create a Business and Industry Retention, Expansion and Attraction Program.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish an accurate listing of all business/industry located within the Southernmost IL Delta EZ. 2. Conduct a Retention/Expansion survey of all businesses to assess areas of need and to identify potential problems/barriers. 3. Tabulate and follow up on issues and concerns of business/industry. 4. Work with existing business/industry on expansion efforts. 	<p>Rural Development, area banks, IL DCCA, Small Business Administration, Economic Development Association, Shawnee Community College, Southern 5 Regional Planning, Shawnee Development Council, Illinois State Chamber of Commerce, Ameren/CIPS, University of Illinois Cooperative Extension Service.</p>
<p>c. Provide a Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) for financial assistance to businesses.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish a RLF Commission to create guidelines for implementing a RLF. 2. Establish a Community Development Corporation with area banks. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Proceed with capitalization of RLF. b. Work with private sector banks to utilize Community Reinvestment Act funds to assist with capitalization of RLF funds, \$100 per \$1 million of bank assets for 2 years. 	<p>Rural Development, area banks, IL DCCA, Small Business Administration, Women and Minority Loan Program, IL Small Business Growth Association, Economic Development Association, Shawnee Community College, Southern 5 Regional Planning, Shawnee Development Council</p>

GOAL #2: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – Through a comprehensive program of economic development that includes business expansion, recruitment and entrepreneurship, plus workforce preparation, the area's high unemployment rate will be reduced by 6%, to that of the state average

OBJECTIVE #1: Work with existing and potential business and industry to expand employment opportunities within the Southernmost IL Delta Empowerment Zone. (continued)

Strategies	Partner
d. Provide Revolving Loan Funds for financial assistance for agricultural diversification projects (i.e. aquaculture, viticulture).	Farm Service Agency; Rural Development, area banks, IL DCCA, Small Business Administration, Economic Development Association, Shawnee Community College, Southern 5 Regional Planning, Shawnee Development Council, IL Wine Council, Women and Minority Loan Programs, Fruit Belt Service Co., Pulaski-Alexander County Farm Bureau, Johnson County Farm Bureau, Prairie Farmer, Helena Chemicals.
e. Establish Counseling Business Operational Center to identify potential businesses, develop training programs and assist with obtaining financing, with special emphasis on minority and women business development.	Rural Development, area banks, IL DCCA, Small Business Administration, Economic Development Association, Shawnee Community College, Southern 5 Regional Planning, Shawnee Development Council, Women and Minority Loan Programs
f. Develop an interactive web page, which will provide-information through data query to companies seeking to relocate or expand.	Shawnee Community College, Southern Five Regional Planning, Rural Development, University of IL, Dept. of Commerce and Community Affairs, Technical Consultants, ESRI Software Co.
g. Encourage the development of Niche Businesses including: Internet Marketing, Cottage Industries; Value Added Industries; Specialty Bicycle Products; Home-based Businesses, etc.	Rural Development, area banks, IL DCCA, Small Business Administration, Economic Development Association, Shawnee Community College, Southern 5 Regional Planning, Shawnee Development Council, Women and Minority Loan Programs

GOAL #2: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – Through a comprehensive program of economic development that includes business expansion, recruitment and entrepreneurship, plus workforce preparation, the area’s high unemployment rate will be reduced by 6%, to that of the state average	
OBJECTIVE #2: Develop and/or expand transportation opportunities to assist low to moderate-income residents to become self-sufficient.	
Strategies	Partners
a. Develop a transportation strategic plan to provide access to all EZ residents.	Shawnee Development Council, Shawnee Transportation Authority, Dept. of Human Services, Dept. of Rehabilitation Services, IL Dept. of Transportation, RIDES Transportation System, IL DCCA, Area car dealerships
b. Construct a Regional Bus Depot and purchase buses.	Shawnee Development Council, Shawnee Transportation Authority, Dept. of Human Services, Dept. of Rehabilitation Services, IL Dept. of Transportation, RIDES Transportation System, IL DCCA, Area car dealerships
c. Create a “Cars For Jobs” Program, whereby cars will be sold on a contract for deed to working low income persons without reliable transportation to get to jobs outside their immediate area.	Shawnee Development Council, Shawnee Transportation Authority, Dept. of Human Services, Dept. of Rehabilitation Services, IL Dept. of Transportation, RIDES Transportation System, IL DCCA, Area car dealerships
d. Support the development of a River/Truck/Rail Terminal Facility in Cairo <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct a feasibility study 2. Develop preliminary and final designs 3. Construct facility utilizing leverage funds. 	IL Dept. of Transportation, IL DCCA, Waterfront Services, U.S. Army Corps. of Engineers, Shawnee Terminal Railroad.

GOAL #3: TOURISM DEVELOPMENT: Recognizing that the historical and scenic assets of the area represent strengths that have not been fully developed. Three hundred tourism-related jobs will exist as the result of an aggressive program of conservation, development and marketing of existing and new tourist sites and services.

OBJECTIVE #1: Develop marketing programs to improve the image of the Southernmost IL Delta Empowerment Zone as a tourist destination.

Strategies	Partners
<p>a. Expand staff and marketing capabilities of the Southernmost IL Tourism Bureau.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hire one (1) additional staff person to assist with tourism related projects in the Southernmost IL Delta Empowerment Zone. 2. Produce and distribute marketing materials (including internet marketing and brochures) to promote Southernmost IL Delta Empowerment Zone area. 	<p>Southernmost IL Tourism Bureau, IL Bureau of Tourism, Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge, Department of Natural Resources.</p>

GOAL #3: TOURISM DEVELOPMENT: Recognizing that the historical and scenic assets of the area represent strengths that have not been fully developed. Three hundred tourism-related jobs will exist as the result of an aggressive program of conservation, development and marketing of existing and new tourist sites and services.

OBJECTIVE #2: Make the necessary improvements to develop the Southernmost IL Delta Empowerment Zone into a tourist destination.

Strategies	Partners
<p>a. Partner with Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge to develop an Auto Tour Route throughout the Cache River Wetlands and the Southernmost IL Delta Empowerment Zone Region.</p>	<p>Southernmost IL Tourism Bureau, IL Bureau of Tourism, Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge, Department of Natural Resources.</p>
<p>b. Provide leverage funds for the development of tourist attractions within the Southernmost IL Delta Empowerment Zone.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ohio River Recreational Area (Pulaski Co.) Phase 1: 100 slip marina at Grand Chain Landing with fuel and concession service. Phase 2: Develop lodge/restaurant on bluff overlooking marina. Phase 3: Develop 18-hole public golf course on land between marina and Lock&Dam #53. Phase 4: Develop Lock & Dam #53 site when released from Corps of Engineers. To include shops, camping, playground, dining and museum. Phase 5: Connect entire site by reopening Rolling Hills Road. • Expansion of the National Cemetery at Mound City • Outdoor Recreation Area at Thebes • Development of Ft. Defiance State Park in Cairo • Black History Museum in Cairo • Pleasure Craft Fueling Flat and Dock in Cairo • Johnson County Lodge and Community Center Complex Phase 1: Develop business plan, begin fund commitments and accumulation, incorporate programs, develop new programs. Phase 2: Enhance fund raising program, seek foundation and private grants and endowments, develop plans, acquire land. Phase 3: Enhance fund raising, establish sustaining perpetual funding sources, let construction bids. Construct facility. • Johnson County Bicycling Initiative • Johnson County Amphitheater • Johnson County Authentic Reproduction Covered Bridge 	<p>Southernmost IL Tourism Bureau, IL Bureau of Tourism, Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge, Department of Natural Resources.</p>

GOAL #3: TOURISM DEVELOPMENT: Recognizing that the historical and scenic assets of the area represent strengths that have not been fully developed. Three hundred tourism-related jobs will exist as the result of an aggressive program of conservation, development and marketing of existing and new tourist sites and services.

OBJECTIVE #3: To enhance the existing natural resources abundantly available within the Southernmost IL Delta Empowerment Zone.

Strategies	Partners
<p>a. Partner with the Department of Natural Resources for the development of the Cache Wetlands Educational Center</p>	<p>Southernmost IL Tourism Bureau, IL Bureau of Tourism, Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge, Department of Natural Resources.</p>
<p>b. Develop Regional Hospitality Centers in each sub-zone.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I-57 Welcome Center - Alexander County • Ullin Depot Restoration - Pulaski County • Train Depot Restoration - Johnson County 	<p>Southernmost IL Tourism Bureau, IL Bureau of Tourism, Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge, Department of Natural Resources, county and municipal governments.</p>

<p>GOAL #4: STRONGER UNITY/SENSE OF COMMUNITY - Believing that a strong sense of unity, community pride and optimism for the future result from people working and playing together in a positive manner, each year of zone designation, at least 300 people, reflecting the diversity of the community, will plan or participate in new volunteer community building activities.</p>	
<p>OBJECTIVE #1: To develop programs and services to unite residents within the Southernmost IL Delta Empowerment Zone.</p>	
Strategies	Partners
<p>a. Develop EZ region-wide clean-up and image building campaign.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement "Operation Facelift Program," which will provide for the demolition, clean-up and maintenance of abandoned industrial sites, brownfields, buildings, and empty lots. 2. Implement "Take Pride In The Zone," a clean-up and image improvement and education program. 	<p>County Governments, EZ Municipalities, Ameren/CIPS, Rural Electric Cooperatives, Cairo Public Utilities, Southernmost IL Tourism Bureau, IL Department of Corrections, IL Department of Transportation, Civic and Community Organizations, Area School Districts, Brownfield's Initiative, Environmental Protection Agency, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency.</p>
<p>b. Provide support to the Senior Citizens Nutritional Centers zone-wide to enable continuation of services.</p>	<p>Shawnee Community College, Egyptian Area Agency on Aging, Illinois Department on Aging</p>
<p>c. Provide leverage funds for the construction and/or renovations of Community/ Historical/Cultural/Recreational Sites in the Southernmost IL Delta Empowerment Zone.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Karnak Community Park Pavilion • C-air-O Center • Black History Mural Project – Cairo • Restoration of GEM Theatre - Cairo 	<p>Municipal and County Governments, IL Arts Council</p>
<p>d. Research other model programs such as "Habitat for Humanity" and "Christmas in April" for possible implementation in Southernmost IL Delta Empowerment Zone.</p>	<p>Lutheran Social Services, area churches, civic and community organizations, IL Department of Corrections, Southern IL Laborer's District Council</p>
<p>e. Research model programs such as Neighborhood Conservation Program, which includes Neighborhood Watch and Block Clubs.</p>	<p>Area Churches, civic and community organizations, City and County Police Departments, IL State Police, city and county governments.</p>

GOAL #4: STRONGER UNITY/SENSE OF COMMUNITY - Believing that a strong sense of unity, community pride and optimism for the future result from people working and playing together in a positive manner, each year of zone designation, at least 300 people, reflecting the diversity of the community, will plan or participate in new volunteer community building activities.

OBJECTIVE #2: Improve public access areas including public buildings, sidewalks and lighting.

Strategies	Partners
<p>a. Develop "Operation Cornerstone" - a program designed to provide matching funds for necessary public building improvements.</p>	<p>IL DCCA, IL Mainstreet, Ameren/ CIPS, IL Dept. of Tourism, Southernmost IL Tourism Bureau, City and County Governments, Chambers of Commerce</p>
<p>b. Implement Downtown Revitalization Matching Funds for physical improvements within municipalities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Street Renovations - City of Vienna • Assess needs in other municipalities. 	<p>IL DCCA, IL Mainstreet, Ameren/ CIPS, IL Dept. of Tourism, Southernmost IL Tourism Bureau, City and County Governments, Chambers of Commerce</p>
<p>c. Construct or Repair sidewalks throughout the Southernmost IL Delta Empowerment Zone area; Assess specific areas of need.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade and repair sidewalks in the Village of Karnak. • Assess needs of other communities. 	<p>IL DCCA, IL Mainstreet, Ameren/CIPS, IL Dept. of Tourism, Southernmost IL Tourism Bureau, City and County Governments, Chambers of Commerce</p>
<p>d. Establish state/local partnerships to encourage maintenance of state owned property.</p>	<p>County Governments, local units of government, Dept. of Natural Resources, IL Dept. of Transportation, IL Dept of Tourism</p>

GOAL #5: LIFE-LONG LEARNING AND EDUCATION - Each year high school graduation rates and standardized test scores at each of the area's secondary schools will increase, as will the number of adults participating in GED, general interest, vocational and degree programs offered by regional educational institutions.	
OBJECTIVE #1: Enhance educational resources and opportunities for residents of the Southernmost IL Delta Empowerment Zone.	
Strategies	Partners
<p>a. Establish on-site after-school program at local attendance centers.</p>	<p>Area School Districts, Regional Superintendent of Schools, Shawnee Community College</p>
<p>d. Establish Community Learning Centers throughout the Southernmost IL Delta Empowerment Zone.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide educational and personal enrichment opportunities for adults and families. 2. Establish a clearinghouse for distribution of donated computer equipment from the federal government and other sources to community organizations. 3. Provide computer access and training. 	<p>Shawnee Community College, Regional Superintendent of Schools, Shawnee Development Council, Education to Careers One Stop Centers, Illinois Community College Board, Illinois Board of Higher Education, Federal agencies</p>
<p>e. Develop on-going training programs to upgrade the skill level and productivity of the workforce.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop Hospitality Training for the Retail, Service, and Tourism Industry. 2. Develop a "Self-Employment Training" Program to encourage entrepreneurship. 3. Develop a "Build A Career" Program to provide hands-on training and preparation for an apprenticeship program in the area of Construction Trades. 4. Develop Homeownership Counseling and Maintenance Program. 5. Develop a Youth Leadership Program. 6. Develop a Youth Build Program 	<p>Shawnee Community College, Shawnee Development Council, JTPA, Construction Trade Unions, Local and City Governments, Department of Human Services, IL Department of Tourism, Southernmost IL Tourism Bureau, Boy Scouts, Girls Scouts and area schools, U.S. Dept. of Labor, U.S. Dept. of Justice, USDA Rural Development, Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, Youth Build-Illinois, Youth Build-USA, Local lumber dealers.</p>

GOAL #5: LIFE-LONG LEARNING AND EDUCATION - Each year high school graduation rates and standardized test scores at each of the area's secondary schools will increase, as will the number of adults participating in GED, general interest, vocational and degree programs offered by regional educational institutions.	
OBJECTIVE #2: Increase parental participation in the education and academic success of their children.	
Strategies	Partners
a. Identify sites with the highest concentration of school children within the sub-zones, such as public housing.	School Districts, Housing Authorities, Shawnee Development Council, Shawnee Community College, Education to Careers and Vocational Schools
b. Develop Child-Parent Education Centers at the identified sites.	Housing Authorities, School Districts, Shawnee Development Council, Shawnee Community College, Education to Careers
c. Explore the feasibility for the establishment of a "homework hotline" to serve those families located in sparsely populated areas.	Housing Authorities, School Districts, Shawnee Development Council, Shawnee Community College, GTE, IL Bell
d. Work with school districts and private businesses to form school to work partnerships.	Private businesses, Shawnee Community College, Education to Careers, Shawnee Development Council

GOAL #6: HOUSING - Increased numbers of residents in the zone will have a decent, affordable place to live. New homes will be built to accommodate residents and existing homes will be improved through housing rehabilitation programs.	
OBJECTIVE #1: Increase and improve the affordable housing stock	
Strategies	Partners
a. Conduct an assessment of available and needed housing stock units. 1. Develop Geographic Information System Housing Stock database.	Housing Authorities, Contractors, County Supervisor of Assessments, County Governments, Villages and Municipalities, Southern Five Regional Planning.
b. Implement a "Housing Construction Program," which will allow for the construction of single-family dwellings to low-income families. Families will participate in the construction process and will purchase the home at cost, upon completion.	Rural Development, IHDA, Shawnee Development Council, Southern 5 Regional Planning, Department of Housing and Urban Development
c. Supplement current low - moderate income housing rehabilitation programs.	Southern 5 Regional Planning, Shawnee Development Council, City and County Governments.
d. Based upon housing stock assessment and unmet needs, develop specialized housing, such as: half-way housing for special needs populations and/or assisted living homes for the elderly and handicapped.	Southern 5 Regional Planning, Shawnee Development Council, City and County Governments.

GOAL #7: HEALTH CARE - Increased numbers of resident of the zone will have access to affordable health care services.	
OBJECTIVE #1: Determine how the Southernmost IL Delta Empowerment Zone can assist with current health care needs.	
Strategies	Partners
a. Establish a commission of health care providers to assess current programs and unmet needs within the Southernmost IL Delta Empowerment Zone, with special emphasis on teenage pregnancy prevention.	Southern 7 Health Department, Community Health & Emergency Services, Rural Health, area Mental Health Service Providers
b. Support recommendations of Health Care Commission in conjunction with area service providers.	Southern 7 Health Department, Community Health & Emergency Services, Rural Health, area Mental Health Service Providers

PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

Goal 1, Objective 1

SouthWater, Inc. is a regional rural water distribution system throughout the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone. Southwater will be instrumental in providing safe, fresh drinking water to rural residents and extending lines to areas for industrial development. The extension of water lines by SouthWater and several other municipal and public water districts within the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone will encourage economic growth for the region.

Sewer service is another essential element for economic growth and safe rural living conditions. It has been determined that establishment of a regional sewer system would be too costly, however the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone will encourage the extension of sewer lines out into the rural areas from the already established municipal systems.

Telecommunications is also lacking in the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone region. The Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone will encourage the development of telecommunications systems within the Zone. It is paramount for economic development and growth to have telecommunications available to businesses wishing to expand or relocate.

Goal 1, Objective 2

All communities share in certain needs that are necessary for long term economic development. These needs are the foundation upon which communities are able to develop a plan to work toward becoming a growing vibrant self-sustaining community. Foundation in this instance involves several resources that must be in place for the community to sustain and develop. One of the most important resources a community must have is good infrastructure. Infrastructure involves a combination of many things with one of the most important being roads. Due to the very reason the area qualifies for empowerment zone designation is a primary factor for having poor county highway systems, basically not enough money to improve the road system. Roadway infrastructure within the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone is poor. In order for economic growth and development to occur, roadways must be maintained, in good condition, and safe.

Heavily traveled **gravel** roads will be converted to an oil and chip surface with assistance from the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone. The Zone will allocate an equal amount of funds to each sub-zone annually. The funds will be used to upgrade gravel roads to oil and chip surfaces. The most heavily traveled roads, based upon Illinois Department of Transportation traffic counts, will be surfaced first. The three county highway departments will supply labor and some materials for resurfacing, and they will pay benefits for each of the two employees hired for their department.

Major road arteries will be upgraded to state and federal standards in much the same way as the oil and chip program. However, no employees will be included in this program. In addition, the road must be identified as a major artery within the sub-zone to be considered

for further upgrade past oil and chip with EZ funds. If a road has been upgraded under the oil and chip program, it will not be eligible for major road improvements later.

Funds will be used to hire and support 2 additional highway department employees in each sub-zone. The employees will work solely within the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone on maintenance and upgrade projects. The current staffing of the County Highway Departments do not allow for additional upgrades and improvements. More employees will be needed in order for the road programs to be effective.

A fund will be established to purchase roadway equipment. The counties located within the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone do not have the equipment to take on substantial roadway improvements. Therefore, it will be necessary to purchase some additional equipment for use with the oil and chip and major road upgrade programs. The County Highway Departments will be required to provide a 30% cash match toward the purchase of approved equipment.

The Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone will assist with the resurfacing of East 2nd in the Village of New Grand Chain. East 2nd Street has been identified as being a need to accommodate the low income residents within this area of New Grand Chain. As the need for further improvements are assessed and determined within other municipalities, funds will be made available for the upgrade of streets throughout the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone to encourage economic development and tourism.

Goal 1, Objective 3

A Regional Medical Emergency Center will be located within the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone, at a central location within the Zone. This facility will include 911 emergency service, 24-hour emergency service, rehabilitation services, and a heliport.

A Critical Access Hospital Wing, which includes twelve (12) to fourteen (14) beds, where patients can be treated for up to an average of ninety-six (96) hours, and which may include two (2) psychiatric beds, will be constructed adjacent to Community Health and Emergency Services' Mega-Clinic. This will also provide the opportunity as well as obligation to restore the emergency room on a 7-day, 24-hour basis.

Ambulance services within the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone will be evaluated to determine what may be needed to improve their efficiency and response times. Ambulance services within the Zone may be able to improve their system if they had assistance with replacing equipment or staffing an idle ambulance. These options will be evaluated and implemented after the first two years of designation.

Goal 2, Objective 1

Members will be recruited and appointed to service on an Economic Development Commission for the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone. This Commission will develop industrial site selection criteria, conduct a site selection process, and identify potential sites for industrial development. Then an industrial site will be developed with the required utilities for occupation within each of the three sub-zones.

A Business/Industry Retention, Expansion, & Attraction Program will be established. This program will: 1) establish an accurate listing of all business/industry located within the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone; 2) conduct a retention/expansion survey of all businesses to assess area of need and to identify potential problems/barriers; 3) tabulate and follow-up on all issues and concerns of business/industry, and 4) work with existing business/industry on expansion efforts.

A revolving loan fund for business start-ups and expansion within the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone will be capitalized. The RLF will be set up with funds being contributed from several sources. The loans will be made in accordance with the decisions of a Loan Review Committee that will be formed with a combination of Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone Board Members and financial institution representation. Applicants will be required to seek assistance from the Shawnee Community College Small Business Development Center for business plan preparation prior to loan consideration. A RLF Commission will be created to establish specific guidelines and lending policies for RLF implementation. Also, a Community Development Corporation will be established to manage the revolving loan fund.

An agricultural revolving loan fund will be created to encourage the development of new and diverse agricultural methods within the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone. The agricultural revolving loan will place special emphasis on the development of the aquaculture (fish farming) and viticulture (wine and grape growing) areas of specialization. Other methods not generally used within the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone will be considered for funding. Loans to farmers will provide 75% funding for diversification projects. Administration of this program will follow the same guidelines as the Revolving Loan Fund for business start-ups and expansion.

The Counseling Business Operations Center will assist with the development of new businesses throughout the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone with special emphasis given to minority and female-owned businesses. The Counseling Business Operations Center will monitor and assist new business owners with business plan development, funding attainment, financial management, and general business operations. Monthly monitoring, along with annual evaluations, will determine progress of the business. Based upon business success and progress, no further assistance will be required from the Counseling Business Operations Center after three years of operation.

One of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone's primary goals is the recruitment of new businesses to their community. The Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone Economic Development Information System Site-Selector and Demographic Analysis application will be developed to provide enhanced information services to Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone businesses or businesses

interested in locating in the community. It also places the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone at the forefront of areas using Internet GIS technology for pursuing new businesses. The application will allow users to search the Zone's database for an available property for a business based on a desired size and use of the property. Users can also analyze the demographic and economic characteristics of any area by selecting a radius around an address and then selecting the type of report they would like, such as population characteristics or consumer expenditures.

Niche businesses will be developed and marketed throughout the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone in a variety of ways. The goal of this strategy is to encourage specialized manufacturing, sales or service businesses. Internet marketing will be developed for cottage industries, value-added industries, specialty bicycle products, specialty agricultural products, and tourism through a Southernmost Illinois products web-site.

Goal 2, Objective 2

Routes will be established by Shawnee Transportation Authority to enable residents of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone to travel throughout the zone to access employment, educational opportunities, and health care. Upon implementation, Shawnee Transportation Authority will establish fixed bus routes from Cairo and environs to Chester, Metropolis, Paducah & Mayfield, Kentucky and Cape Girardeau, Missouri to transport workers to currently existing jobs. Since Shawnee Community College is geographically central, Shawnee Transportation Authority will, upon implementation, develop fixed primary bus routes for multi-purpose ridership. Shawnee Community College will act as a "hub" or transition point for transfer of public riders who choose to travel from one point of origin to points on the same or other routes. As a result, even persons in poverty could afford to travel throughout the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone to access jobs, education, health care, and services. To start, routes accordingly will be established from Cairo and environs and from Vienna. Other connector routes will accordingly be established as demand and opportunity dictate.

The Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone will establish a "Cars for Jobs" Program. Ten (10) cars per year will be purchased at auction with the assistance of local car dealers and/or organizations and individuals can donate cars for tax write-offs. Vocational training school students in the area will perform necessary maintenance and repair to get cars road-worthy, gaining mechanical training and experience. Cars will be sold on contract for deed to working, low income persons without reliable transportation to get to jobs outside of their immediate area. Either the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone 501(c)3 or another non-profit participating entity will hold a lien on the car until it is paid off. Continued employment will be necessary to keep the car. Welfare to Work benefits will be used to pay insurance. Car payments will be used to purchase additional cars and parts. Purchasers must complete safe driving instruction courses.

A permanent crane and associated loading dock facilities would be installed next to the Ohio River floodwall at Cairo to be used to unload/load barges over the floodwall. There are currently no facilities available for rail/truck/river transloading. Rail service is already in place.

Goal 3, Objective 1

One person will be hired by the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone to coordinate development and provide a marketing campaign for the Zone. The Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone Tourism Coordinator will have office space within the Southernmost Illinois Tourism Bureau. Also, the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone Tourism Coordinator will produce a marketing campaign to increase awareness of the tourism qualities of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone. This marketing campaign will include the production of a zone-wide tourism brochure and the expansion of the Southernmost Illinois Tourism Bureau's website.

Goal 3, Objective 2

Tremendous potential exists to capitalize on the bountiful natural attractions the Cache River basin in Pulaski, Alexander, and Johnson Counties. Expanded tourism offers hope for environmentally compatible rural economic development, but mass tourism must await construction of the kinds of amenities the larger touring public is accustomed to. Activities and facilities need to be developed to help people observe and photograph wildlife, hike, fish, hunt, and experience the Cache River Wetlands first-hand. Funding is needed to design and construct facilities along county roads and on public land to enjoy sights. The Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone plans to partner with the Cypress Creek Wildlife Refuge to develop an auto tour route through the Cache River Wetlands. Wildlife viewing pullouts, viewing platforms, parking areas, fishing and hiking access areas, maps and signs to the different areas from Vienna to Cairo will be established.

A matching fund for tourism development will be established using Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone funds. This fund will be used for leverage of tourism development projects. Each sub-zone will receive an equal amount of funding each year of EZ designation. The following are planned projects that will receive assistance from the matching fund provided adequate matching funds are secured by the sub-zones.

- Ohio River Recreational Area: Development of a marina facility on the Lock & Dam 53 (also the New Olmsted Lock & Dam) pool at Grand Chain Landing. A 100-slip marina will be constructed which will be expandable to 200 slips. The facility will also include fueling and concession services. There are five planned phases to this development project. Phase I: 100 slip marina at Grand Chain Landing with fuel & concession services; Phase II: Development of a lodge and restaurant on the bluff overlooking the marina; Phase III: Development of an 18-hole public golf course on available land between the marina and Lock & Dam #53; Phase IV: Development of Lock & Dam 53 property when released from the Corps. of Engineers as excess property. This development is already in the planning stages and will include shops, camping, playgrounds, dining, and a river museum, and Phase V: The marina and Dam sites will be connected by the re-opening of Rolling Hills Road.
- Mound City National Cemetery Expansion - Land will be acquired for donation to the U.S. Veterans Administration. This donation will be made to encourage the expansion and addition of gravesites for military burials within the cemetery.

- Outdoor Recreation Area at Thebes – This development will include one or more projects such as camping, trail riding, or a marina on the Mississippi River near Thebes.
- Black History Museum in Cairo: The establishment of a Black History Museum in Cairo which will contain documents, photographs, and artifacts that will reflect the history of blacks in Alexander and Pulaski Counties.
- Pleasure Craft Fueling Flat and Dock in Cairo: A floating fuel flat will be purchased and anchored by movable spuds at the 8th Street Ohio River Levee Gap in Cairo. Pleasure craft will be able to purchase fuel and tie up overnight or for longer. There is a lack of fueling sites for pleasure craft south of the Golconda Marina on the Ohio River and south of Cape Girardeau, Missouri on the Mississippi River.
- Johnson County Lodge and Community Complex: The construction of a multipurpose community activity complex and rustic lodge, providing both educational and recreational programs for citizens of all ages. The complex will include a restaurant, conference rooms, cabins, camping areas, local history museum, auditorium, tennis courts, and indoor swimming pool.
- Johnson County Bicycling Initiative: Physical components will include signage, interconnected road systems with oil and chip surface. Promotional components include the creation of a specific unique event plus a series of regularly occurring annual events, maps, brochures, guided tours, and a web-site to promote the area as a premier cycling destination.
- Johnson County Amphitheater: Construction of an outdoor theater with dressing rooms on each side. It would consist of a quarter dome wood structure made of nine arched beams with decking and cedar shingles for roofing.
- Johnson County Authentic Reproduction Covered Bridge: The construction of an authentic reproduction covered bridge of the “Burr Arch” design set in place across the Cache Creek located at the Vienna City Park. It will have the functional purpose of providing a way for pedestrians and bicyclists to safely enter and exit the park and the bike trail to/from the City of Vienna.
- Development of Fort Defiance State Park: This project will include: erection of a small replica of Fort Defiance, establishment of camping sites, and expansion of the Toll House Building with a glassed in room to allow viewing of the river by visitors and/or expansion of the dining area for the restaurant.

Goal 3, Objective 3

Partnerships will be encouraged and developed for the construction and support of the Cache River Wetlands Visitor/Educational Center. This Visitor/Education Center will foster natural resources appreciation, serve as a point of destination for tourists and recreation enthusiasts visiting southernmost Illinois. The center will provide an indoor and outdoor resource learning center for students and teachers throughout Illinois and neighboring states. Illinois Department of Natural Resources has committed \$4 Million to the construction of the Cache River Wetlands Visitor/Educational Center and the Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge is attempting to secure Federal funds to upgrade the center to a state of the art destination point visitor center.

A fund will be established to develop and encourage the development of Regional Hospitality Centers within each sub-zone of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone. The following three projects will be considered for funding:

- Ullin Railroad Depot Restoration: Restoration of a 101 year old structure with rich local history and southern Illinois historical importance. The depot has local support as well as regional support due to its railroad heritage. This depot is one of only a handful of historical depots left on the still-active portion of the Illinois Central Railroad Line.
- Interstate Highway Welcome Center at I-57 Cairo Exit: Illinois does not have a Welcome Center present on Interstate 57 until travelers are approximately 40 miles across the state line. There is an interstate exit at Cairo, approximately 3 miles across the state line. This would be an excellent site for a first-contact welcome center. The Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone proposes to purchase land for the development of a state sanctioned Welcome Center. The land will be leased to the State of Illinois on a 99-year term for the purpose of construction a Welcome Center on the property.
- Johnson County Train Depot Restoration: This historic railroad depot has been donated to the Johnson County Chamber of Commerce. Funding is needed to relocate the structure and to rehabilitate the structure to include offices for the Johnson County Chamber of Commerce, a souvenir shop, and general tourist information.

Goal 4, Objective 1

Operation Facelift is a general clean-up program designed to improve the appearance and community spirit of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone. The clean-up and maintenance of abandoned industrial sites or empty lots can be developed for new industrial, economic opportunities or housing. Sites could be developed for recreation (parks, gardens, ball fields, etc.) or affordable housing. TANF recipients and other low-income residents and/or youth will be hired to perform the work. In addition, minor repairs and maintenance will be made to current dwellings (i.e., painting, porch/step repairs, etc.).

Take Pride in the Zone Campaign is a multi-faceted clean-up and image improvement program for the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone. It will include the development of a professional marketing and education campaign about litter and illegal dumping. Burned out, derelict buildings will be removed. There will be a zone-wide commitment to better enforcement of building and other codes, keeping weeds and grass mowed. Special attention will be paid to welcoming visitors at entrances to the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone and each community within the Zone. The project will include a carrot and stick component. In addition, “Take Pride in the Zone” events will be held.

Leverage funds will be provided through the establishment of a Community/Cultural/Recreational Site Development fund. Communities and organizations will be required to provide commitment of additional funds before leverage funds will be committed from the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone. Some projects are currently under way in each of the three sub-zones.

- Karnak Community Park Pavilion: A pavilion is scheduled to be built at the Karnak Community Park. The pavilion will be used for community events and public, outdoor meetings.
- C-air-O Center: Construction of a recreational center that would be committed to enhancing the educational experiences for the community by providing quality, diverse recreational programs, services and facilities that promote the holistic development of participants.
- Black History Mural Project: Research work of noted Cairo-born black painter/muralist, Hale Woodruff, will be completed. Mr. Woodruff’s work is exhibited in many permanent museum collections. A professional muralist will be hired to design murals reflective of Woodruff’s work. The muralist will train and supervise the painting of murals by local youth, area volunteers, and art students. Murals will be painted on the Ohio River floodwall between 6th and 8th Streets in Cairo.
- Restoration of the GEM Theater in Cairo: The restoration of the Gem Theater in Cairo will result in a regional theater and multi-cultural civic center. The theater was donated to the City of Cairo in 1995 and a volunteer committee has raised over \$45,000 – enough money to put a new roof on the theater and repair of the marquee for use in advertising community events. The theater had been gutted before it was donated to the City and needs interior and exterior restoration. The theater, when restored, will be made available for music, dance, plays, films, conventions, meetings and other events for the entire region. It is

located in the downtown historic district and is an important part of the revitalization of the downtown.

Goal 4, Objective 2

Operation Cornerstone is a matching fund for the improvement and rehabilitation of publicly owned buildings within the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone. This fund will be a 50/50 matching fund to improve, restore, or rehabilitate public buildings for the purpose of restoring or enhancing public services.

A Downtown Revitalization Fund will be established to provide matching funds to communities for small improvement projects in downtown areas. This fund will also be a 50/50 matching fund. A community must have 50% of the project funds in place to receive EZ funds. Improvements that could be made under this program include: decorative lighting, street furniture, walkways, awnings, etc.

Sidewalks will be upgraded and repaired within the Village of Karnak. Then, sidewalk systems throughout the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone will be evaluated. At that time, funding will be provided to upgrade and repair sidewalks in other municipalities, as needed.

State and local partnerships will be developed to encourage and ensure the proper maintenance of state-owned property within the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone.

Goal 5, Objective 1

Vienna, Century, Meridian, Egyptian, and Cairo Consolidated School Districts have recognized that behaviors and grades of many children in school must be improved if they are to enter the 21st Century labor force. Toward that end, Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone school districts propose to establish on-site after school programs at local attendance centers, which will remain open until 6:30 p.m. each evening. Planned programs will include supervised homework and recreation, safe havens for “latch-key” children, and whole family learning opportunities, which will result in improved school behavior, attitudes and grades plus increased parental involvement. Community involvement will be solicited and obtained from local employers, social and service agencies, church and civic groups and all positive forces in the neighboring community for programs both on and off school sites, both in and after regular school activities for both students and families. Parents will be employed as necessary to operate the local centers. It is expected that talented community volunteers will be recruited, welcomed and used to supplement operations at each center.

Community Learning Centers will be established throughout the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone region. The overall goal of this project is to create safe havens for children after school and during the summer months where they can complete homework, enjoy safe, supervised play, explore new territories, learn responsibility, gain self esteem, establish positive relationships and grow into healthy, happy and better educated individuals. In addition, the centers will provide educational and personal enrichment opportunities for adults and families. Activities will include: literacy and basic education, job training, continuing education courses, services to employers, personal and career counseling, and job placement services. The Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone Community Learning Centers will also serve as clearinghouses for distribution of donated computer equipment from the federal government and other sources. Computers will be used in the Community Learning Centers and distributed to local community organizations. The Community Learning Centers will also provide computer access and training to all residents of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone.

On-going training programs will be developed to better prepare Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone residents for career opportunities, leadership skills, entrepreneurship, and general living skills. Training programs include:

- Hospitality Training: General training for service jobs to better promote the friendly atmosphere Southern Illinois is known for within businesses.
- Self-Employment Training and Youth Entrepreneurship Programs: Training programs to encourage the development of businesses for adults interested in becoming entrepreneurs and a program to develop entrepreneurial qualities within the youth. A portion of the Revolving Loan Fund may be designated for youth start-up businesses.
- Build A Career Program: Low income clients, TANF clients, and Welfare-to-Work recipients and Youth will take part in an on-the-job training and classroom education program to learn construction trades. A portion of their training will be received while actually building affordable housing. Profits from the sale of homes can be used to help sustain and continue the program.

- Youth Leadership Program: Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of America, and 4-H programs will be identified and established to support a youth leadership development.

Goal 5, Objective 2

Sites will be identified that reflect the highest concentration of primary and secondary children within the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone. It is anticipated that these sites will, more than likely, be areas adjacent to public housing authorities within the Zone. These identified sites will be the project areas for the development of Child/Parent Education Centers. The centers will provide a range of activities for parents and children that would be designed to increase parent participation in the education of their children and the academic success of the children. Services provided at Child-Parent Education Centers include: parent liaison services, library, tutoring, homework supervision, parent education classes, student detention, and social services.

The feasibility of developing a Homework Hotline will be explored within the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone. This will provide an alternative to Child-Parent Education Centers for those families located in sparsely populated areas of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone. Homework Hotlines would be available through each school district within the Zone. The Hotlines will be accessible to parents and students both, allowing them to get updated homework assignments and tutoring tips.

Goal 6, Objective 1

An assessment of the available housing stock for the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone will be conducted. This assessment will be used to develop a geographic information system housing stock database. Features of the database will include: street maps that have the ability to provide information on the classification of the property (residential, commercial, industrial, etc.); the current status of the property (in need of rehab, already rehabbed, abandoned, in need of demolition, etc.); a photo of the property, and a general description of the property. The database will be used to plan housing construction and rehabilitation projects. It will also be used to assess the areas where housing for special needs populations is needed.

A housing construction program will be established to provide single family affordable housing units to residents of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone. The program will include the following components: 1) construction will be of basic single-family dwellings on lots donated by towns and counties within the Zone that have been taken for back taxes; 2) Applicants will be required to work on the homes; 3) Applicants will have some choice in design, and 4) Homes will be financed and sold to applicants at cost. Financing for the purchase of the homes will be made through the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone, with interest earned on the financing being used to support further housing construction.

Goal 7, Objective 1

The Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone will establish a Health Care Commission. This commission will be responsible for assessing the current primary health care needs of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone. It will also be responsible for the development of programs that should be implemented to help reduce and correct weaknesses in primary health care services within the Zone. Special emphasis will be given to the area of teenage pregnancy prevention programs.

The Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone will assess and implement recommended programs and changes for the development and improvement of primary health care services within the Zone.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND BENCHMARKS

INFRASTRUCTURE

Goal #1: Increased numbers of residents and businesses in the zone will have clean drinking water, safe sewage disposal systems, adequate electrical and gas service, 24 hour emergency services and access to acute medical care, access to basic and advanced telecommunications and well-maintained roads that are adequate to support their intended use.

Objectives

1. To provide safe, affordable utility services to the residents of rural areas.
2. Develop safe, reliable roadways throughout the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone to accommodate residents, industry and tourism in order to stimulate economic growth.
3. To provide quality, efficient emergency health care to residents of Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone.
4. Improve public access areas including public buildings, sidewalks, and lighting.

Benchmarks

1. The number of utility project upgrades and expansions increase.
2. Access to state of the art telecommunication systems is available.
3. The number of roadways being upgraded to safe standards is increasing
4. The dollars spent on roadway equipment purchases is expanded.
5. Emergency services to residents is available and existing services are upgraded.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Goal #2: Through a comprehensive program of economic development that includes business expansion, recruitment and entrepreneurship, plus workforce preparation, the area's high unemployment rate will be reduced by 6%, to that of the state average.

Objectives

1. Work with existing and potential business and industry to expand employment opportunities within the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone.
2. Develop and/or expand transportation opportunities to assist low to moderate income residents to become self-sufficient.

Benchmarks

1. Industrial sites will be developed and available for new or expanding business and industry.
2. Seventy-five percent of existing business and industry within the zone will participate in the Business and Industry Retention Survey.
3. The number of Business and Industry expanding or locating in the area will grow.
4. Additional jobs for low to moderate income/Welfare to Work residents will be available.
5. The number of new businesses, with special attention to minority and female owned businesses, will increase.
6. The Revolving Loan Fund Programs will provide for the increased success of rural entrepreneurs.
7. The number of Welfare to Work recipients entering the workforce is increasing due to the availability of transportation.
8. The number of persons utilizing transportation opportunities for employment, medical or educational purposes will increase.

TOURISM

Goal #3: Recognizing that the historical and scenic assets of the area represent strengths that have not been fully developed. Three hundred tourism-related jobs will exist as the result of an aggressive program of conservation, development and marketing of existing and new tourist sites and services.

Objectives

1. Develop marketing programs to improve the image of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone as a tourist destination.
2. Make the necessary improvements to develop the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone into a tourist destination.
3. To enhance the existing natural resources abundantly available within the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone.

Benchmarks

1. Additional marketing and promotion information is developed and distributed in order to promote tourism in the areas.
2. Expenditures to preserve and develop the historical and scenic assets increase.
3. Additional funding for tourism related development projects is actively pursued by local and state officials.
4. Tourism related businesses and employment opportunities increase.

STRONGER UNITY/SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Goal #4 - Believing that a strong sense of unity, community pride and optimism for the future result from people working and playing together in a positive manner, each year of zone designation, at least 300 people, reflecting the diversity of the community, will plan or participate in new volunteer community building activities.

Objectives

1. To develop programs and services to unite residents within the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone.
2. Improve public access areas including public buildings, sidewalks and lighting.

Benchmarks

1. The number of communities participating in clean-up campaigns is increasing.
2. The sense of pride and safety in the communities will grow.
3. The number of communities engaged in historic/cultural/recreational development activities increased.
4. The Senior Nutrition program will continue to provide meals and services to the senior population.
5. Positive community image will increase as a result of community development projects.

LIFE-LONG LEARNING AND EDUCATION

Goal #5: Each year high school graduation rates and standardized test scores at each of the area's secondary schools will increase, as will the number of adults participating in GED, general interest, vocational and degrees programs offered by regional educational institutions.

Objectives

1. Enhance educational resources and opportunities for residents of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone.
2. Increase parental participation in the education and academic success of their children.

Benchmarks

1. The number of parents involved in the education of their children will increase.
2. The high school dropout rate will decrease due to additional resources and opportunities.
3. The number of persons participating in workforce education programs increase annually.
4. The job placement rate of residents, including low to moderate income and Welfare to Work residents, will increase due to the enhancement of available resources.
5. The number of children participating in after-school programs increase.

HOUSING

GOAL #6: Increase numbers of residents in the zone will have a decent, affordable place to live. New homes will be built to accommodate residents and existing homes will be improved through housing rehabilitation programs.

Objectives

1. Increase and improve the affordable housing stock.

Benchmarks

1. Prospective home owners have access to affordable housing.
2. Additional sources of funds for housing rehabilitation are identified and secured.
3. The percentage of substandard housing units declines.

HEALTH CARE

Goal #7: Increased numbers of residents of the zone will have access to affordable health care services.

Objectives

1. Determine how the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone can assist with current health care needs.

Benchmarks

1. The number of local health care providers will increase.
2. The number of citizens utilizing local health care providers will increase.
3. Teenage pregnancies will decrease due to the development of innovative pregnancy prevention education programs.

Part II

Phase I Work Plan

PART II

PHASE 1 WORK PLAN

INFRASTRUCTURE - Goal #1: Increased numbers of residents and businesses in the zone will have clean drinking water, safe sewage disposal systems, adequate electrical and gas service, 24 hour emergency services and access to acute medial care, access to basic and advanced telecommunications and well-maintained roads that are adequate to support their intended use.

Activities

- 1.1a Provide funding to enable SouthWater, Inc. to extend existing water lines into the rural areas adjacent to supplied municipalities and public water districts.
- 1.2a Implement oil and chip resurfacing program and hire 2 additional employees at each zone highway department to work on zone resurfacing projects.
- 1.2b Implement program to upgrade major road arteries (1 in each sub-zone per year) to state and federal regulations.
- 1.2c Establish and utilize equipment purchasing fund to provide equipment for necessary road upgrade projects.
- 1.2d Design work for the resurfacing of East 2nd Street in New Grand Chain.
- 1.3a Conduct a feasibility study for a regional emergency medical center.
- 1.3b Provide support for the design for a 96-hour, 12-14 bed Critical Access Hospital facility adjacent to Community Health and Emergency Services.
- 1.3c Conduct a planning study in year 1 and implement to upgrade zone ambulance services.
- 1.4a Identify telecommunication needs within Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone.

Infrastructure Baseline Indicators	Baseline	Target Year One	Target Year Two
Health Care Facilities/Emergency Services built or upgraded	-0-	0	1
Number of water and waste projects planned or under construction	-0-	1	3
Number of miles of road upgrades	-0-	25 miles	45 miles
Dollars spent on roadway equipment purchases	-0-	\$100,000	\$200,000

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – Goal #2 – Through a comprehensive program of economic development that includes business expansion, recruitment and entrepreneurship, plus workforce preparation, the area’s high unemployment rate will be reduced by 6%, to that of the state.

Activities

- 2.1a(1) Develop industrial site selection criteria.
- 2.1a(2) Select sites for industrial park and site development.
- 2.1b(1) Establish business and industry listing and develop survey.
- 2.1b(2) Survey business and industry located within SIDEZ.
- 2.1c(1) Create RLF guidelines for Business and Industry and agricultural loan programs.
- 2.1c(2) Proceed with RLF capitalization and implementation.
- 2.1d Proceed with Agricultural Diversification RLF capitalization and implementation.
- 2.1e Supplement outreach training activities for the Business Operations Center.
- 2.1f Purchase software and begin map development for interactive business attraction web page.
- 2.1g Identify niche businesses within SIDEZ; develop internet marketing program.

- 2.2a Develop transportation strategic plan.
- 2.2b Purchase buses to implement strategic plan, if feasible.
- 2.2c(1) Study legal ramification of “Cars for Jobs” Program
- 2.2c(2) Implement “Cars for Jobs” Program.
- 2.2d(1) Feasibility study for Cairo River/Truck/Rail Terminal Facility.
- 2.2d(2) Design completion for Cairo River/Truck/Rail Terminal Facility.

Economic Development Baseline Indicators	Baseline	Target Year One	Target Year Two
Revolving Loan Fund Dollars Utilized	-0-	\$250,000	\$700,000
Number of Industrial Sites Developed	-0-	1	4
Number of Business and Industry Surveyed	-0-	240	950
Number of Businesses created/expanded	-0-	2	6
Number of persons utilizing transportation opportunities	140	160	185
Number of jobs created or saved	-0-	15	35
Job training opportunities created/expanded	-0-	1	3
Job training facilities created/expanded	-0-	1	3
Number of persons trained	-0-	30	100

TOURISM - Goal #3 - Recognizing that the historical and scenic assets of the area represent strengths that have not been fully developed. Three hundred tourism-related jobs will exist as the result of an aggressive program of conservation, development and marketing of existing and new tourist sites and services.

Activities

- 3.1 Hire tourism coordinator for SIDEZ and develop a marketing campaign.
- 3.2a Planning study assistance for development of Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge Auto Tours.
- 3.2b Provide matching funds for the development of sub-zone tourism initiatives.
- 3.3a Provide technical assistance for development of Cache Wetlands Visitor/Educational Center.
- 3.3b Development of Hospitality/Visitor's Center in each sub-zone.

Tourism Baseline Indicators	Baseline	Target Year One	Target Year Two
Number of tourism attractions created/saved	-0-	3	7
Number of tourism-related jobs created/saved	-0-	6	16
Tourism impact expenditures	\$21.93M	\$22M	\$22.8M

STRONGER UNITY/SENSE OF COMMUNITY - Goal #4 - Believing that a strong sense of unity, community pride and optimism for the future result from people working and playing together in a positive manner, each year of zone designation, at least 300 people, reflecting the diversity of the community, will plan or participate in new volunteer community building activities.

Activities

- 4.1a(1) Implement "Operation Facelift" Program.
- 4.1a(2) Implement "Take Pride in the Zone" campaign.
- 4.1b Supplement Senior Meals Program in order to continue their operations.
- 4.1c Establish matching fund for community center development.
- 4.1d Research Habitat for Humanity and Christmas in April programs for possible development.
- 4.1e Research possible development of Neighborhood-Conservation Programs.
- 4.2a Implementation of Operation Cornerstone (public building restoration matching fund).
- 4.2b Downtown Revitalization program implementation.
- 4.3c Design and construction of sidewalk system extension and upgrade in the Village of Karnak.
- 4.4d Start building state and local partnerships for state property maintenance.

Stronger Unity/Sense of Community Baseline Indicators	Baseline	Target Year One	Target Year Two
Number of community improvement projects created	-0-	2	5
Number of Senior Nutritional Sites saved.	-0-	4	4
Number of volunteers participating in Community Improvement Projects	-0-	300	300

LIFE-LONG LEARNING AND EDUCATION – Goal #5 – Each year high school graduation rates and standardized test scores at each of the area’s secondary schools will increase, as will the number of adults participating in GED, general interest, vocational and degree programs offered by regional educational institutions.

Activities

- 5.1a Establish on-site after-school programs at local attendance centers.
- 5.1b(1) Establish Community Learning Centers in each sub-zone.
- 5.1b(2) Develop a computer clearinghouse program to receive and donate excess computers to community organizations.
- 5.1c(1) Provide hospitality/leadership training courses to zone residents.
- 5.1c(2) Provide Self-Employment Training courses to zone residents.
- 5.1c(3) Develop and implement “Build A Career” Program.

- 5.2a Identify sites with highest concentrations of school children within the SIDEZ.
- 5.2b Establish Child/Parent Education Centers at identified sites.
- 5.2c Study the feasibility of developing a “homework hotline”.

Life-long Learning and Education Baseline Indicators	Baseline	Target Year One	Target Year Two
Job Training opportunities created/expanded	-0-	1	3
Number of persons trained	-0-	20	75
Youth development opportunities created/expanded	-0-	1	4
Number of youth participating by development programs	-0-	30	120
Number of Community Learning Centers established or upgraded.	-0-	1	3
Number of computers donated to organizations in the community.	-0-	10	25

HOUSING - Goal #6 - Increased numbers of residents in the zone will have a decent, affordable place to live. New homes will be built to accommodate residents and existing homes will be improved through housing rehabilitation programs.

Activities

- 6.1a Conduct Housing Stock Assessment
- 6.1b Develop a housing stock Geographic Information System inventory database.
- 6.1c Implement a housing construction program.

Housing Baseline Indicators	Baseline	Target Year One	Target Year Two
Number of housing units built or rehabilitated	-0-	3	10

HEALTH CARE - Goal #7 - Increased numbers of residents of the zone will have access to affordable health care services.

Activities

- 7.1a Establish Health Care Commission to assess primary health care needs with the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone.
- 7.1b Implement Health Care Commission recommendations.

Health Care Baseline Indicators	Baseline	Target Year One	Target Year Two
Health Care Facilities/Emergency Services built or expanded	-0-	-0-	1

Part II
Phase I
Operation Budget

SECTION 2 – PHASE I OPERATIONAL BUDGET

Goal #1 – Infrastructure

Project Description	Year 1	Year 2
Objective #1		
a) Extension of water mains in cooperation with Southwater.	\$200,000.00	\$200,000.00
b) Water Upgrades	-0-	-0-
c) Extend utilities to industrial sites	-0-	-0-
d) Plan to upgrade sewers	-0-	-0-
e) Telecommunication needs	-0-	-0-
Objective #2		
a) Oil and Chip Road (30% match)	300,000.00	300,000.00
b) Upgrade major roadway arteries	200,000.00	200,000.00
c) Cooperative equipment purchases	75,000.00	75,000.00
d) Hire 6 highway dept.employees – 2 for each county	150,000.00	150,000.00
e) Resurface E. 2 nd Street – New Grand Chain	-0-	30,000.00
f) Resurface other municipal streets	-0-	-0-
Objective #3		
a) Conduct a feasibility study for Regional Medical Center	12,000.00	18,000.00
b) Construction of Regional Medical Center	-0-	-0-
c) Addition of 12-14 bed 96 hr emergency treatment facility at CHESI Mega-Clinic	12,000.00	15,000.00
d) Upgrade ambulance services throughout zone	40,000.00	90,000.00
TOTAL GOAL #1 – INFRASTRUCTURE	\$989,000.00	\$1,078,000.00

Goal #2 – Economic Development

Project Description	Year One	Year Two
Objective #1		
a) 1. Develop site selection criteria.	\$-0-	\$-0-
2. Select industrial sites.	-0-	-0-
3. Develop industrial sites.	-0-	\$400,000.00
b) 1. Develop Bus./Ind. Listing	-0-	-0-
2. Conduct Retention/Expansion Survey	10,000.00	-0-
3. Tabulate Survey results	-0-	-0-
4. Assist with expansion efforts	-0-	-0-
c) 1. Establish Revolving Loan Fund	500,000.00	500,000.00
2. Increase capitalization of RLF	-0-	-0-
d) Establish RLF for Agricultural diversification	40,000.00	40,000.00
e) Establish a Counseling Business Operations Center	10,000.00	25,000.00
f) Develop an interactive web page for industry attraction	10,000.00	10,000.00
g) Encourage development of Niche businesses	10,000.00	10,000.00
Objective #2		
a) Development of transportation strategic plan	-0-	-0-
b) Construct regional bus depot and purchase buses	50,000.00	100,000.00
c) Review legal issues related to “Cars for Jobs” program; purchase and maintain fleet of cars.	-0-	20,000.00
d) Support development of River/Truck/Rail Terminal		
1. Conduct feasibility study	25,000.00	-0-
2. Develop preliminary and final designs	-0-	25,000.00
3. Construct facilities utilizing leverage funds	-0-	-0-
TOTAL GOAL #2 – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	\$655,000.00	\$1,130,000.00

Goal #3 - Tourism

Project Description	Year 1	Year 2
Objective #1		
a) 1. Hire one additional staff person for Southernmost Illinois Tourism Bureau	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00
2. Expand tourism materials and website for zone.	8,000.00	8,000.00
Objective #2		
a) Partner with Refuge to develop Auto Tour Route	-0-	-0-
b) Provide leverage funds for tourist attraction development.	300,000.00	600,000.00
Objective #3		
a) Partner with DNR for development of Cache Wetlands Educational Center.	-0-	-0-
b) Develop Regional Hospitality Centers	150,000.00	-0-
TOTAL GOAL #3 - TOURISM	\$478,000.00	\$628,000.00

Goal #4 - Stronger Unity/Sense of Community

Project Description	Year 1	Year 2
Objective #1		
a) 1. Implement "Operation Facelift Program"	\$100,000.00	\$100,000.00
2. Implement "Take Pride in the Zone" Program	100,000.00	100,000.00
b) Support Senior Citizen Nutritional Centers	30,000.00	30,000.00
c) Leverage funds for construction/rehabilitation of Community/Historical/Cultural/Recreational Sites	100,000.00	100,000.00
d) Research Habitat for Humanity/Christmas in April	-0-	-0-
e) Research Neighborhood Conservation/Neighborhood Watch and Block Clubs.	-0-	-0-
Objective #2		
a) Operation Cornerstone Matching Funds	90,000.00	40,000.00
b) Downtown Revitalization 50/50 Matching Funds	30,000.00	90,000.00
c) Upgrade and repair sidewalks within municipalities	120,000.00	120,000.00
d) Establish state/local partnerships	-0-	-0-
TOTAL GOAL #4 - STRONGER UNITY/ SENSE OF COMMUNITY	\$570,000.00	\$580,000.00

Goal #5 - Life-long Learning and Education

Project Description	Year 1	Year 2
Objective #1		
a) Establish on-site after-school programs	\$50,000.00	\$40,000.00
b) Establish Community Learning Centers	125,000.00	125,000.00
c) Develop on-going training programs to upgrade workforce.		
1. Hospitality Training	4,000.00	4,000.00
2. Self-Employment Training	8,000.00	8,000.00
3. "Build A Career" Program	40,000.00	80,000.00
4. Homeownership Maintenance/Counseling	-0-	-0-
5. Youth Leadership Program	4,000.00	4,000.00
6. Youth Build Program	-0-	-0-
Objective #2		
a) Identify sites for Child/Parent Education Centers	-0-	-0-
b) Establish Child/Parent Education Centers	25,000.00	25,000.00
c) Explore "homework hotline"	-0-	-0-
TOTAL GOAL #5 - LIFE-LONG LEARNING AND EDUCATION	\$256,000.00	\$286,000.00

Goal #6 - Housing

Project Description	Year 1	Year 2
a) Conduct Housing Assessment		
1. Develop GIS Housing Stock database	\$-0-	\$-0-
b) Implement Housing Construction Program	180,000.00	180,000.00
c) Supplement low-moderate housing rehab programs	-0-	-0-
d) Specialized housing needs	-0-	-0-
TOTAL GOAL #6 - HOUSING	\$180,000.00	\$180,000.00

Goal #7 - Health Care

Project Description	Year 1	Year 2
a) Establish Healthcare Commission	\$-0-	\$-0-
b) Support recommendations of Healthcare Commission	\$-0-	\$-0-
TOTAL GOAL #7 - HEALTH CARE	\$-0-	\$-0-

OVERALL BUDGET	Year 1	Year 2
Total Goals 1-7	\$3,414,000.00	\$3,882,000.00
Administration	120,000.00	120,000.00
GRAND TOTAL	\$3,534,000.00	\$4,002,000.00

Operational Budget Narrative

GOAL #1 INFRASTRUCTURE

SouthWater, Inc. - Water Line Extensions

EZ Funds: Year 1 - \$200,000; Year 2 - \$200,000

Total implementation costs to extend water mains to rural areas of Johnson, Alexander, and Pulaski Counties over the ten-year designation period are estimated at \$4,000,000.

Current funding has been obtained through a loan from Rural Development for \$250,000 and \$400,000 in Community Development Assistance Program grants through the IL Department of Commerce and Community Affairs. Additional funding will be obtained from Rural Development, IL Department of Commerce and Community Affairs, and possibly EDA, where job creation is a possibility.

Technical assistance will be obtained from Southern Five Regional Planning District and Development Commission, USDA Rural Development, and Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative.

Gravel Road Conversions to Oil and Chip Surface

EZ Funds: Year 1 - \$450,000; Year 2 - \$450,000

Road infrastructure in the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone is currently a hindrance to economic development and tourism. Roads must be upgraded from gravel surfaces to improve the safety and marketability of the region. Total implementation costs for this program are estimated at \$642,500 per year for the ten-year designation period. Infrastructure investment for converting gravel roads to oil and chip surfaces over the ten-year period would equal \$6,425,000.

Matching funds and leverage will be provided by each County Highway Department in the form of labor and materials. It is estimated that approximately \$1,927,500 will be provided over the ten-year designation period. This would amount to \$135,000 per year in the form of labor, benefits, and materials. Other sources of funding will be obtained from the Illinois Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, National Scenic Byways Program, Cypress Creek Wildlife Refuge, and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs.

Technical assistance will be obtained from the Illinois Department of Transportation, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs, and USDA Rural Development.

Major Artery Road Upgrades to State and Federal Standards

EZ Funds: Year 1 - \$200,000; Year 2 - \$200,000

Total implementation costs to upgrade major transportation arteries within the SIDEZ to state and Federal standards are estimated at \$5,100,000 over a ten-year period (\$510,000 per year).

Leverage and matching funds will be contributed from a number of sources. The County Highway Departments within the Zone are committed to providing labor and some materials, in the form of approximately \$85,000 per year. Additional funding will be obtained from the Illinois Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, and the National Scenic By-Way Program.

Technical assistance will be obtained from the Illinois Department of Transportation, Local Highway Department Engineers, and the Federal Highway Administration.

Roadway Equipment Purchase Fund

EZ Funds: Year 1 - \$75,000, Year 2 - \$75,000

To facilitate the roadway improvement programs introduced through the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone, an equipment purchase fund will be established. \$75,000 of EZ funds will be contributed to the program each of the first two years of designation. It is anticipated that the total cost of establishing this fund will be \$107,500 per year for at least the first two years of designation.

Matching 30% funding has been committed from the County Highway Departments within the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone.

Technical assistance will be obtained through the Illinois Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, and Central Management Services.

Resurfacing of East 2nd Street in the Village of New Grand Chain

EZ Funds: Year 1 - \$0, Year 2 - \$30,000

East 2nd Street, located in the Village of New Grand Chain, will be resurfaced to accommodate the travel of low-income residents living along this street. Total implementation of this project is estimated at \$180,000. Year 2 EZ funding will provide for the design and engineering for this project. Additional EZ funding will be considered after initial design, engineering, and cost estimates are obtained from the Village.

Additional funding will be obtained from the Village of New Grand Chain, the Pulaski County Highway Department, Illinois Department of Transportation, and the Federal Highway Administration.

Technical assistance will be obtained through the Pulaski County Highway Department and Illinois Department of Transportation.

Regional Medical Emergency Center

EZ Funds: Year 1 - \$12,000, Year 2 - \$18,000

The Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone will construct a regional medical emergency center within the Zone. Implementation costs have been estimated at \$1,500,000. Empowerment Zone funding will be used in years 1 and 2 to provide for site selection, design and architectural fees.

Matching funds for construction will be obtained through the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Southern Illinois Healthcare, Illinois Department of Human Services, and the Health Care Facilities Mortgage Insurance Program.

Technical assistance will be provided by Southern Illinois University School of Medicine, Southern Seven Health Department, Rural Health, Inc., Community Health and Emergency Services, Southern Illinois Hospital Association, Massac Memorial Hospital, Union County Hospital District, Western Baptist Hospital, Lourdes, Southeast Missouri Hospital, St. Francis Medical Center, Carbondale Memorial Hospital, Marion Memorial Hospital, and Illinois Department of Human Services.

Construction of a 12-14 Bed, 96-hour Critical Access Hospital Treatment Facility addition to CHESI Mega-Clinic

EZ Funds: Year 1 - \$12,000; Year 2 - \$15,000

Total implementation costs for the construction of a 12 to 14 Bed, 96-hour Critical Access Hospital treatment facility addition to Community Health and Emergency Services' Mega-Clinic is estimated at \$1,236,000.

Matching funds and leverage will be obtained from the following sources: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Southern Illinois Healthcare, Hastings Foundation, Southern Foundation, Kreege Foundation, Illinois Department of Human Services, Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs, and the Healthcare Facilities Mortgage Insurance Program.

Technical assistance will be provided by Southern Illinois University School of Medicine, Southern Seven Health Department, Rural Health, Inc., Community Health and Emergency Services, Southern Illinois Hospital Association, Massac Memorial Hospital, Union County Hospital District, Western Baptist Hospital, Lourdes, Southeast Missouri Hospital, St. Francis Medical Center, Carbondale Memorial Hospital, Marion Memorial Hospital, and Illinois Department of Human Services.

Ambulance Services Upgrades

EZ Funds: Year 1 - \$40,000, Year 2 - \$90,000

Empowerment Zone funds will be used to assess the current conditions of ambulance services within the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone region. Upgrades will be made to improve the response time and quality of treatment. Total implementation costs are estimated at \$80,000 for year 1 improvements and \$180,000 for year 2 improvements.

Leverage funds will be obtained through the Illinois Emergency Services Grant Program and the Illinois Regional Ambulance Program.

Technical assistance will be obtained from County government, County Ambulance Services, Massac Memorial Hospital, Union County Hospital, Shawnee Community College, and Southern Illinois University.

GOALS #2 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Business & Industry Attraction & Retention Survey and Industrial Site Development EZ Funds: Year 1 - \$10,000, Year 2 - \$400,000

Empowerment Zone funds will be used in year 1 to development and perform the survey component of the Business & Industry Attraction & Retention program. Zone funds will be used for industrial site development in each of the three sub-zones during year 2 of designation. Total cost of industrial site development is estimated between \$2.1 Million and 3 Million.

Leverage and matching funds will be obtained through the following: Illinois Development Finance Authority, Economic Development Administration, Rural Development, and Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs.

Technical assistance will be obtained from Rural Development, the U.S. Department of Commerce, Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs, SouthWater, Inc., Southern Five Regional Planning District and Development Commission, SCC Small Business Development Center, and SIU Office of Economic and Regional Development.

Interactive Web Page Development

EZ Funds: Year 1 - \$10,000, Year 2 - \$10,000

An interactive web page will be developed to stimulate expansions and start-ups within the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone region. Web page development is estimated at \$50,000. A total of \$20,000 will be provided by the SIDEZ.

\$30,000 in matching funds will be contributed by Rural Development, private businesses, County and Municipal Governments, the Economic Development Administration, and Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs. Southern Five Regional Planning District and Development Commission will provide equity in the form of technical services.

Technical assistance will be provided by: Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs, Economic Development Administration, Rural Development, Shawnee Community College, Southern Illinois University, Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs, Regional Technical Assistance Center, and Rural Partners.

Establishment of Revolving Loan Fund for Business Start-Up and Expansion

EZ Funds: Year 1 - \$500,000, Year 2 - \$500,000

Implementation of a Revolving Loan Fund for business start-up and expansion is estimated at \$2,000,000. The Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone will provide primary funding.

Additional capitalization will be received from Rural Development's Intermediary Re-lending Program, Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs, Small Business Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce – EDA, and area financial institutions.

Technical assistance and administration assistance will be provided by: Southern Five Regional Planning District and Development Commission, Shawnee Community College Small Business Development Center, Shawnee Development Council, Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs, and Small Business Administration.

Agricultural Diversification Revolving Loan Fund

EZ Funds: Year 1 - \$40,000, Year 2 - \$40,000

Implementation of an Agricultural Diversification Revolving Loan Fund is estimated at \$1,500,000. The Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone will provide primary funding.

Additional capitalization will be received from Rural Development's Intermediary Re-lending Program, Illinois Farm Bureau, Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs, Small Business Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce – EDA, and area financial institutions.

Technical assistance and administration assistance will be provided by: Southern Five Regional Planning District and Development Commission, Farm Service Agency, Pulaski, Alexander, and Johnson County Farm Bureau, Illinois Farm Bureau, SCC's Small Business Development Center, Shawnee Development Council, Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs, and Small Business Administration.

Business Operations Center

EZ Funds: Year 1 - \$10,000, Year 2 - \$25,000

Implementation costs for the development of a Business Operations Center is estimated at \$1,000,000. EZ Funds will be used to develop the programs and facilities for the Business Operations Center. Additional funding will be considered after the 2nd year of designation.

Additional funding will be sought from Rural Development, area banks, Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs, and the Small Business Administration.

Technical assistance will be provided by: Rural Development, area banks, Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs, Small Business Development Center, Illinois Cooperative Extension, Shawnee Community College's Small Business Development Center, Shawnee Development Council, and Southern Five Regional Planning District and Development Commission.

Development of Niche Business Marketing

EZ Funds: Year 1 - \$10,000, Year 2 - \$10,000

Implementation of an effective niche business marketing program is estimated at \$50,000. Of this, the SIDEZ will provide \$20,000 toward the development of a marketing campaign and internet marketing of niche businesses located within the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone.

Additional funding will be needed in the amount of \$30,000. This funding will be obtained through the contributions of local business wishing to promote their own and other niche businesses located within the SIDEZ.

Technical assistance will be provided by: University of Illinois Extension, Shawnee Community College, and Southern Illinois University

Public Transportation to Jobs, College, and Health Care

EZ Funds: Year 1 - \$50,000, Year 2 - \$100,000

Initial implementation costs to establish routes and purchase additional vehicles is estimated at \$500,000. The SIDEZ will provide \$50,000 in year 1 to assist with the establishment of routes and \$100,000 in year 2 to assist with the further development of routes and purchase of vehicles. Additional funding will be considered in subsequent years.

Matching funds will be provided by: Illinois Department of Human Services, Illinois Department of Rehabilitative Services, Illinois Department of Transportation, Shawnee Transit Authority, Shawnee Development Council, and Rural Development.

Technical assistance will be sought from Illinois Department of Human Services, Illinois Department of Transportation, Shawnee Development Council, Rural Development, Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs, Rural Partners, and RIDES, Inc.

Cars for Jobs Program

EZ Funds: Year 1 - \$0, Year 2 - \$20,000

The implementation of the Cars for Jobs Program is estimated at \$20,000. The Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone will implement and administer this program completely. Match will be provided through donations of parts, insurance, and cars.

Leverage and match will be obtained in the form of donations from insurance agencies, local car dealerships and vocational training programs.

Technical assistance will be provided by Shawnee Development Council, Regional Adult Education Center, local car dealerships, insurance agencies, and drivers' education programs.

River/Truck/Rail Transloading Facility
EZ Funds: Year 1 - \$25,000, Year 2 - \$25,000

Total implementation costs to design and construct a River/Truck/Rail Transloading Facility in Cairo is estimated at \$4,230,000. The SIDEZ will provide funds for a feasibility study and preliminary design in years 1 and 2 of designation.

Leverage and match funding will not be required until the third year of designation. When match is required, Waterfront Services, trucking companies, Shawnee Terminal Railroad, Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs, and U.S. Department of Commerce - EDA will be approached for additional funding.

Technical assistance will be provided by the following: Rhutasel & Assoc., Inc. (Engineers & Architects), Waterfront Services, trucking companies, Shawnee Terminal Railroad, Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs, Southern Five Regional Planning District & Development Commission, Shawnee Community College Small Business Development Center, and job referral agencies.

GOAL #3 TOURISM

SIDEZ Tourism Coordinator and Marketing Materials

EZ Funds: Year 1 - \$28,000, Year 2 - \$28,000

Implementation of this portion of the strategic plan will be \$28,000 per year for ten years. At that time, Southernmost Illinois Tourism Bureau will assume the full financing of one staff person. The additional employee will be responsible for assisting with development and promotion of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone. In addition, funding will be provided to produce a tourism marketing campaign for the SIDEZ.

Leverage will be provided to the Zone through the donation of office space and support services from the Southernmost Illinois Tourism Bureau. Additional funding will be provided through local hotel/motel taxes.

Technical assistance will be obtained from Illinois Department of Tourism, Southern Five Regional Planning District and Development Commission, Shawnee Community College, and the Southernmost Illinois Tourism Bureau.

Tourism Development Fund

EZ Funds: Year 1 - \$300,000, Year 2 - \$600,000

A Tourism Development Fund will be established to assist in the development and enhancement of tourist attractions and destinations throughout the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone. Funding will be distributed to the sub-zones in an equitable manner. Therefore, complete implementation costs cannot be determined at this time.

Leverage/Matching funds will be obtained by each entity wishing to "tap into" the Tourism Development Fund. Obviously, many of the projects will require a greater matching portion than can be obtained through the fund. Examples of possible funding sources include: National Scenic By-Way program, Illinois Department of Tourism, Tourism Attraction Grants, Heritage Tourism Designation funding, TEA 21, Historic Preservation, private donations, labor and material donations, private foundations, chambers of commerce, and community organizations.

Technical assistance will be provided from a variety of sources. Sources include: Southernmost Illinois Tourism Bureau, Southern Five Regional Planning District and Development Commission, Illinois Department of Tourism, Rural Development, Ohio River Scenic Route Committee, Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, National Historic Preservation Agency, and Illinois MainStreet Program.

Hospitality Centers Development

EZ Funds: Year 1 - \$150,000, Year 2 - \$0

Three hospitality center developments are being proposed. One center will be located in each sub-zone. The plan calls for the development of a welcome center at the Cairo I-57 interstate exchange, the restoration of the historic railroad depot in Ullin, and the relocation and restoration of a historic railroad depot in Johnson County. Total implementation costs for all three projects is estimated at \$760,000.

Leverage funds will be provided by the following participants, listed by site:

Cairo I-57 Welcome Center - Land will be acquired by the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone for donation to the state to develop an IDOT Welcome/Rest Center, Illinois Department of Transportation will commit \$500,000 to the construction of an Interstate Welcome Center

Ullin Historic Railroad Depot - The Ullin Civic Club has already received \$18,500 in donations from local citizens for the depot restoration. In addition, TEA 21 funding, Illinois Department of Tourism funding, U.S. Forest Service Economic Recovery Program funding, and Rural Development funding is being sought. Donated labor and materials will also be used in the restoration project. Total project costs are being estimated at \$90,000.

Johnson County Train Depot - Leverage funds will be sought from the Johnson County Chamber of Commerce, Vienna Civic Club, Johnson County Historical Society, Vienna Community Park Board, Johnson County Revitalization Corporation, Johnson County Heritage Festival Committee, and Illinois Department of Tourism. The actual depot has already been donated. Additional renovations and relocation of the structure are estimated at \$60,000.

Technical assistance at all three sites will be obtained from Illinois Department of Transportation, Illinois Historic Preservation, National Historic Preservation, State of Illinois, Illinois Tourism Bureau, and Southernmost Illinois Tourism Bureau.

GOAL #4 STRONGER UNITY/SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Operation Facelift

EZ Funds: Year 1 - \$100,000, Year 2 - \$100,000

Implementation costs for Operation Facelift are estimated at \$350,000 per year. The Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone will provide \$100,000 per year of the needed funding.

Match and leverage will be provided by the following entities: local utility companies, Habitat for Humanity, JTPA, Illinois Department of Human Resources, and Illinois Department of Corrections. In addition, local municipal and county governments will donate abandoned lots and building sites to the program and homeowners will assist by providing materials for general cleanup to their properties.

Technical assistance will be provided by Shawnee Development Council, Ameren/CIPS, Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative, SouthWater, Inc., Cairo Public Utilities, Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs, and Illinois EPA.

Take Pride in the Zone Program

EZ Funds: Year 1 - \$100,000, Year 2 - \$100,000

Implementation costs for this program is approximately \$200,000. The Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone will provide the necessary cash for implementing this volunteer program. The needed cash funding will be used to demolish and dispose of the worst eyesores within the region.

Leveraging will be present in many forms and fashions. Any additional funding will be obtained from beautification grants, and EPA Brownfield grants. Volunteer labor will be the most essential element to this program.

Technical assistance will be provided by: local school districts, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4-H clubs, ministerial alliances, Illinois Department of Corrections, Illinois Department of Transportation, and volunteer community organizations.

Senior Meals Program Continuation Funds

EZ Funding: Year 1 - \$30,000, Year 2 - \$30,000

The cost of providing Senior Nutritional Sites throughout the SIDEZ is approximately \$510,000 per year. Zone funding of \$30,000 per year will enable this already established and successful program to continue and expand.

Leverage is already in place in the form of state and federal funding and meal donations.

Technical assistance will be provided by Shawnee Community College Older Adults Program, Egyptian Area Agency on Aging and Illinois Department of Aging.

Community Improvement Projects Fund

EZ Funding: Year 1 - \$100,000, Year 2 - \$100,000

A 50/50 matching fund will be established to assist with the development of community improvement projects. Implementation costs cannot be established at this time. More information needs to be gathered. It is estimated that community improvement projects throughout the zone will range from \$500,000 to \$1,000,000.

Leverage and matching funds must be in place before the CIP Fund can be accessed. The participating community organization or entity must have 50% of the project in place in order to be eligible for Fund participation.

Technical assistance will be accessed from various local and regional community organizations including, but not limited to, ministerial alliances, Girl Scouts of America, Boy Scouts of America, 4-H Clubs, school-related organization, etc.

Operation Cornerstone

EZ Funds: Year 1 - \$90,000, Year 2 - \$40,000

Operation Cornerstone will be established as a matching fund for the renovation and construction of public service buildings within the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone. The fund will be established as a 50/50 pool. Communities or organizations wishing to participate with the pool must obtain the required 50% match prior to contribution from the SIDEZ. It is estimated that nearly \$1 Million will be contributed to Operation Cornerstone over the 10-year designation period.

Matching funds will be obtained from a variety of sources. These sources are unknown at this time.

Technical assistance will be provided by Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs, Illinois Mainstreet, Ameren/CIPS, Illinois Department of Tourism, and the Southernmost Illinois Tourism Bureau.

Downtown Revitalization Matching Fund

EZ Funds: Year 1 - \$30,000, Year 2 - \$90,000

The Downtown Revitalization Matching Fund will provide access to capital for community improvement projects including street lighting, signage, and street fixtures. \$30,000 and \$90,000 will be contributed to this fund in each of the two years respectively to establish the fund.

Downtown Revitalization funds will be matched on a 50/50 basis. A community will not be able to access Downtown Revitalization Funds until they have committed an additional 50% to the project. Sources of match and leverage funds are not available at this time.

Anticipated sources include Illinois MainStreet, Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs, and TEA 21 funds.

Technical assistance will be provided by Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs, Illinois Mainstreet, Ameren/CIPS, Illinois Department of Tourism, and the Southernmost Illinois Tourism Bureau.

SIDEZ Sidewalk Repairs

EZ Funds: Year 1 - \$120,000, Year 2 - \$120,000

Total implementation costs for Zone Wide sidewalk installation and repairs are estimated at \$750,000. Priority areas for completion are the Village of Karnak and the Village of Pulaski. An estimate for completion and upgrade of the sidewalk system within the Village of Karnak is \$100,000. Costs will be similar in the Village of Pulaski.

To date, leverage funds have not been identified. Match will be provided through labor of the Village's maintenance crews.

Technical assistance will be provided by the following: Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs, Illinois Mainstreet, Ameren/CIPS, Illinois Department of Tourism, the Southernmost Illinois Tourism Bureau, Illinois Department of Transportation, and County Governments.

GOALS #5 LIFE-LONG LEARNING AND EDUCATION

After School Programs

EZ Funds: Year 1 - \$50,000, Year 2 - \$40,000

Implementation costs to develop and operate an after school program within the secondary school systems are \$102,989 annually.

Leverage funds will be obtained through the local school districts. Each district and the Regional Superintendent of Schools will provide funding for the balance of the program. Other match will be provided in the form of donated, volunteer labor.

Technical assistance will be obtained from area school districts, Regional Superintendent of Schools, and Shawnee Community College.

Community Learning Centers

EZ Funds: Year 1 - \$125,000, Year 2 - \$125,000

Development and operation of Community Learning Centers throughout the SIDEZ will require \$500,000 per year.

Leverage and match will be sought from private foundations, Learn and Serve America Community-Based programs, Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs, U.S. Department of Education, and Illinois Board of Higher Education.

Technical assistance will be provided by the following: Shawnee Community College, Regional Superintendent of Schools, Shawnee Development Council, Southern Seven Health Department, Education to Careers, Illinois Community College Board, and Illinois Board of Higher Education.

Hospitality Training Courses

EZ Funds: Year 1 - \$4,000, Year 2 - \$4,000

Implementation costs for developing a hospitality training course are estimated at \$20,000. Cash needs call for approximately \$8,000.

Leverage funds and match will be provided by the U.S. Department of Education, the Illinois Board of Higher Education, Education to Careers Program, Welfare to Work Initiative, and Shawnee Community College.

Technical assistance will be provided by Shawnee Community College, Shawnee Development Council, JTPA, Construction Trade Unions, Department of Human Services, and Southernmost Illinois Tourism Bureau.

Self Employment Training Courses

EZ Funds: Year 1 - \$8,000, Year 2 - \$8,000

Implementation costs for developing a self employment training course are estimated at \$20,000. Cash needs call for approximately \$16,000.

Leverage funds and match will be provided by the U.S. Department of Education, the Illinois Board of Higher Education, Education to Careers Program, Welfare to Work Initiative, and Shawnee Community College.

Technical assistance will be provided by Shawnee Community College, Shawnee Development Council, JTPA, Construction Trade Unions, Department of Human Services, and Southernmost Illinois Tourism Bureau.

Build A Career Program

EZ Funds: Year 1 - \$40,000, Year 2 - \$80,000

Implementation costs to develop and administer the Build A Career Program are estimated to be approximately \$485,400 per year. One dwelling is estimated to cost approximately \$121,350.

Leverage funds and match will be provided in the form of Community Services Block Grants, JTPA, and Illinois Department of Human Resources. Local city and county governments will donate property for construction of homes.

Technical assistance will be provided by Shawnee Development Council, Shawnee Community College, local construction trade unions, and Illinois Department of Human Services.

Youth Leadership Training

EZ Funds: Year 1 - \$4,000, Year 2 - \$4,000

Implementation costs for developing a Youth Leadership course are estimated at \$20,000. Cash needs call for approximately \$8,000.

Leverage funds and match will be provided by the U.S. Department of Education, the Illinois Board of Higher Education, Education to Careers Program, Welfare to Work Initiative, and Shawnee Community College.

Technical assistance will be provided by Shawnee Community College, Shawnee Development Council, JTPA, Construction Trade Unions, Department of Human Services, and Boy Scout and Girl Scout Councils

Child - Parent Education Centers

EZ Funds: Year 1 - \$25,000, Year 2 - \$25,000

Implementation costs for developing child/parent education centers throughout the SIDEZ are estimated at \$50,000 per year.

Leverage funds will be obtained from private foundations, community donations, school districts, and HUD.

Technical assistance will be provided by the following: local housing authorities, local school districts, Shawnee Community College, Shawnee Development Council, and Regional Superintendent of Schools.

GOAL #6 HOUSING

Housing Construction Program

EZ Funds: Year 1 - \$180,000, Year 2 - \$180,000

Implementation costs for developing a housing construction program are estimated at \$240,000 annually. This constitutes \$60,000 per home constructed.

Leverage funds will be obtained from Rural Development, and Illinois Housing Development Authority. Lots for construction will be obtained from county and municipal governments.

Shawnee Development Council, Southern Five Regional Planning District and Development Commission, Illinois Housing Development Authority, and Rural Development will provide technical assistance on this project.

GOAL #7 HEALTH CARE

Recruit and Appoint Health Care Commission

EZ Funds: Year 1 - \$-0-, Year 2 - \$-0-

Recruit and appoint a health care commission. Funding will not be needed in the first two years of designation. The Health Care Commission will exist in an advisory capacity to the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone Board of Directors.

Part II

Uses of EZ/EC SSB

Grants

SECTION 3 - USES OF EZ/EC SSB GRANTS

All EC/EZ SSBG Grant funds to be used by the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone will fall under these statutory goals:

- (1) Achieving and maintaining economic self-support for residents, to help them develop and retain the ability to support themselves and their families economically;
- (2) Achieving and maintaining self-sufficiency for residents, to enable them to become and remain able to care for themselves in daily activities and in the long-term; and
- (3) Preventing neglect and abuse and preserving families, to protect children and adults, who are unable to protect themselves from neglect, abuse or exploitation and to preserve, rehabilitate or reunite families living in the designated neighborhoods.

The following is a summary of the uses of the EZ/EC SSBG Grant funds and how they apply to the allowed programs, services and activities.

- Community and economic development programs and efforts to create employment opportunities.
 1. Water and sewer line extensions to rural areas and industrial sites within the SIDEZ.
 2. Development of industrial sites
 3. Development of telecommunications technology and availability of that technology.
 4. Roadway improvements to supplement and encourage economic development and tourism.
 5. Operation Cornerstone
 6. Downtown Revitalization Fund
 7. Construction and repair sidewalks systems within the SIDEZ
 8. Creation of a Business & Industry Retention & Attraction Program
 9. Revolving loan fund programs for business start-up, expansion, and agricultural diversification
 10. Niche business marketing
 11. Counseling Business Operational Center development
 12. Construction of a river/truck/rail transloading facility
 13. Tourism staff expansion and marketing to develop and improve the SIDEZ's position as a tourist destination, which will stimulate economic development and growth
 14. Tourist attraction development
 15. Construction or renovation of Regional Hospitality Centers
 16. Operation Facelift
 17. Take Pride in the Zone Campaign

18. Senior Citizen Meals Program
 19. Development of community/recreational centers
 20. Develop and establish an interactive web page utilizing geographic information system mapping and database system.
- Job training and job readiness projects:
 1. Establish a Counseling Business Operational Center
 2. Develop a Hospitality Training Program
 3. Develop a Self-employment Training Program
 4. Implement Build A Career/Youth Build program
 5. On-going training programs to upgrade the skill level and productivity of the workforce.
 - Health programs such as public health education, primary health care, emergency medical services, alcohol and substance abuse prevention and treatment programs, and mental health services.
 1. Feasibility study to construct a regional medical emergency center
 2. Construction of a 24-hour regional medical emergency center
 3. Construction of a critical access hospital wing for Cairo Mega-Clinic which will include a 12 – 14 bed facility for up to 96 hours of treatment
 4. Maintain and upgrade existing ambulance services
 - Human development services such as child, youth and family development programs, services for the elderly, and child care services
 1. Support Senior Meals Nutritional Centers
 2. Establish Community Learning Centers
 3. Develop Child/Parent Educational Centers
 - Education projects such as after-school activities, adult learning classes, and school-to-work projects
 1. Establish on-site, after-school programs at local attendance centers
 2. Establish Community Learning Centers
 3. Develop on-going training programs to upgrade the skill level and productivity of the workforce
 4. Implement a homeownership counseling and maintenance program
 5. Develop Child/Parent Education Centers
 6. Provide a Homework Hotline to serve families located in sparsely populated areas
 - Transportation services
 1. Implement a public transportation strategic plan
 2. Construct a regional bus depot
 3. Purchase busses for regional public transportation program
 4. Create a Cars for Jobs program
 5. Develop a river/truck/rail transloading facility

- Environmental clean up projects
 1. Operation Facelift
 2. Take Pride in the Zone Campaign

- Housing programs
 1. Build a Career program to teach people construction skills while constructing homes
 2. Housing stock assessment
 3. Establish a housing construction program
 4. Supplement current housing rehabilitation programs
 5. Develop specialized housing for special needs residents
 6. Develop housing stock Geographical Information System database and map

- Projects providing training and technical assistance to the EZ Lead Entity, its board and committee members, and other organizations
 1. Development of leadership training workshops and courses
 2. Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone Lead Entity and Board of Directors training, technical assistance, and administration

- Projects to finance community-focused financial institutions for enhancing the availability of credit such as loan funds, revolving loan funds, and micro-enterprise loan funds as well as other activities for easing financial barriers faced by social services entities, housing organizations and other organizations serving EZ residents
 1. Capitalization of a revolving loan fund for business creation and expansion
 2. Capitalization of agricultural diversification revolving loan fund
 3. Establishment of a counseling business operations center

Part III

Participation

PART III - "CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT"

SECTION 1 - PARTICIPATION

Participation of the residents of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone is essential to the implementation and success of the strategic plan. The Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone will be a forum for all citizens within the designated area. Citizens will be encouraged to attend all meetings of the sub-zone. In addition, all meetings of the Board of Directors of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone are open to the public. The same policy was instituted with the EZ Steering Committee. The Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone will also circulate survey forms on an annual basis to receive input from citizens as to the progress of the Empowerment Zone and the general attitude of the SI Delta Empowerment Zone's population.

Part III

Incorporations of Experiences

SECTION 2 – INCORPORATION OF EXPERIENCES

The methods proposed for incorporating learning from experience gained during implementation of the strategic plan and from information obtained from other sources into revisions of the strategic plan, benchmark goals and implementation methods and procedures.

The Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone Steering Committee fully anticipates that the plan will need revisions and updating as experience and knowledge is gained through implementation. A process has been created to allow for changes to the strategic plan to take advantage of new opportunities and to meet new challenges that were unanticipated. Some strategies may not yield the desired results and may need to be revised or replaced, and better benchmarks may be found for measuring progress toward goals. Due to the duration, severity and range of problems facing the area, a quick overnight fix is not expected and the plan should not be changed or abandoned simply because progress seems slow. It is recognized that positive change will take time.

A plan was developed after extensive public input, thoughtful gathering and analysis of information and the honest efforts of committed volunteers. A thorough process for a continuing exchange of information between the public and the Empowerment Zone governing board after designation is outlined in Part IV, Section 5 of this plan. Each county will establish an EZ County Citizen's Council under the sponsorship of the county board member designated as representative to the Empowerment Zone Board of Directors. These Empowerment Zone County Citizen's Councils shall meet quarterly to provide input on how the strategic plan is working; suggest revisions and/or additions to the strategic plan; review the benchmarks and comment on procedures being followed. The Empowerment Zone County Citizen's Council is a critical communications link for input to the Empowerment Zone Board of Directors.

Once a year a public meeting will be held as provided by Part IV, Section 5 of this plan. The governing board will make a summary report and analysis of progress of goals, benchmarks and strategies during the year. They will report any significant new challenges or opportunities that have occurred in the area that may need to be addressed in the strategic plan. At this time, the governing board will propose any amendments that they feel are necessary to correct substantive deficiencies in the plan. The public will then be invited to comment and make suggestions to the Empowerment Zone Governing Board. Following public comment and discussion, the governing board will publicly vote whether to accept or reject any proposed amendments to the plan.

Part III

Benchmark Review

SECTION 3 – BENCHMARK REVIEW

The Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone (SIDEZ) will evaluate the benchmark goals, activities, indicators, and targets. The evaluation will be conducted on a bi-annual basis. Every six months the lead entity will evaluate the progress being made by the SIDEZ by compiling the benchmark indicator information to the targets presented for each activity and goal. The following is a detailed listing of how the progress of the SIDEZ will be evaluated.

Benchmark Indicators

- Number of Jobs created or saved
- Job Training Opportunities Created/Expanded
- Job Training Facilities Created/Expanded
- Number of Persons Trained
- Youth Development Opportunities Created/Expanded
- Number of Youth Participating in Development Activities
- Educational Facilities Built or Upgraded
- Health Care Facilities Built or Upgraded
- Number of Computer Learning Centers Established or Upgraded
- Number of Computers Donated to Organizations within the SIDEZ
- Number of Revolving Loans
- \$\$ of Revolving Loan Funds utilized.
- Number of Housing Units Built or Rehabilitated
- Number of Water and Waste Projects Under Construction
- Number and type of Telecommunications Projects Under Construction
- Number of Roads Upgraded
- Number of Community Improvement-Projects Created
- Number of Industrial Sites Developed
- Number of Industrial Sites Occupied
- Number of Businesses and Industries Surveyed
- Number of Businesses Created or Expanded
- Number of Persons Utilizing Transportation Opportunities
- Number of Tourist Attractions Created, Expanded or Saved
- Number of Senior Nutritional Sites Saved
- Dollars invested on Roadway Equipment Purchases
- Percent Increase in Tourism Dollars Received, as tracked by the State of Illinois Tourism Bureau.
- Number of people involved in general interest, vocational and degreed programs.
- Increase in IGAP scores of students in area high schools.
- Reduction of the school dropout rate.
- Reduction of the teenage pregnancy rate.
- Increase in GED scores.

The Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone will compile the foregoing information into a report, which will be presented to the SIDEZ Board of Directors on a bi-yearly basis. After the Board of Directors has reviewed and accepted the benchmark review, it will be presented at the quarterly meeting of the Sub-zones. The Board of Directors and the Sub-Zone Committees will review the first six months' progress report (benchmark review). The first review will not be presented to the region.

The second **Benchmark Review** of each year will be presented to the citizenry of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone region. After review and approval by the Board of Directors and the Sub-Zone Committees, the official, yearly Benchmark Review of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone will be published in local newspapers, (the Cairo Citizen, the Pulaski Enterprise, the Vienna Times, the Southern Scene, and the Monday's Pub) and regional newspapers (the Southern Illinoisan, the Southeast Missourian, and the Paducah Sun). The publication will be made prior to the annual Public Hearing of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone.

The Benchmark Review will also be presented at the annual public hearing of the Zone. This will enable the greatest number of citizens of the region to evaluate the progress of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone. The SIDEZ Steering Committee believes that by providing the benchmarks to the public for review, it will facilitate the strengthening of community spirit and unity. This will help to achieve one of the **priority** goals of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone.

Finally, the yearly Benchmark Review will also be made available to interested parties in the form of printed material. This will help market the Zone and provide information concerning the Zone's progress. Not only is it important for the people of the Zone to realize the accomplishments the SIDEZ is making, outside entities and participants should also be able to review the progress of the Zone.

Benchmark Review reports will include a listing of the benchmark-goals, indicators, baselines, targets, and activities. Benchmark reports will also include the progress being made on long-term benchmark activities. After the presentation of benchmark reviews, the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone will analyze the report and determine if any revisions or amendments should be recommended.

Part III Benchmark Amendment

SECTION 4 – BENCHMARK AMENDMENT

The Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone Steering Committee realizes that this strategic plan was developed with the intent to become a living document. It will be necessary to revise and amend the plan as the **SIDEZ** grows and changes with time and current trends. However, the Steering Committee also realizes that the revision and amendment of benchmark goals and activities, or any other portion of the strategic plan, must not be an act that can be accomplished with ease or without thought and public input. Therefore, certain guidelines have been developed to insure that the benchmark activities and goals are revised or amended with the consideration of the effects to and opinions of the citizenry of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone.

Benchmark goals and activities will be reviewed on an annual basis by the **SIDEZ**'s Lead Entity. Suggestions will be reviewed and discussed by the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone Board of Directors. At that time, any remaining amendments or revisions to benchmark activities and goals will be presented to the sub-zones for discussion and consideration at a quarterly meeting of each of the three sub-zones. The suggested benchmark goals and activities will not be revised or amended until they can be presented at the annual public hearing of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone.

The annual meeting of the **SIDEZ** will provide a host of information for the citizens of the Zone. At this meeting, residents will be given a report as to the activities the Zone has participated in during the past year. They will also be given a “progress report”, or benchmark review of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone region. Citizens will be given a chance to make comments concerning activities and benchmark goals, and to provide testimonials for the differences the Zone is making in the region. Finally any recommended reviews or amendments to benchmark goals and activities will be presented to those in attendance at the public hearing. Citizens present will then be given a chance to comment on the proposed revisions and amendments. Revisions and amendments will not be presented as a whole change. The Board of Directors will present each revision or amendment singularly.

In addition, at least two weeks before the public hearing, a notice will be published in local newspapers (the Cairo Citizen, the Pulaski Enterprise, the Vienna Times, the Monday's Pub, and the Southern Scene). This notice will detail proposed revisions and amendments to benchmark activities and goals. All citizens will be encouraged to attend the public hearing and/or submit comments within 10 days after the public hearing date.

The purpose of bringing revisions and amendments to benchmark activities and goals to the general citizenry of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone will allow the strategic plan to remain in the hands of the people of the **SIDEZ** region. The Steering Committee feels that this procedure will allow residents and participants to take ownership in the Empowerment Zone. People are more dedicated to something they can call their own. That is the reasoning behind taking the revisions and amendments to the people instead of leaving those decisions up to the Board of Directors, a small group of representatives.

Benchmark amendments and revisions will be necessary. Changes of this type are expected with the development and implementation of any “living” plan of this type. Therefore, the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone will revise and change this document with the opinion and approval of the general population of the SIDEZ region. The people of the SIDEZ developed and formed this plan, so they must be informed of revisions and amendments before those changes occur. They should also have a chance to voice any opposition or approval of revisions and amendments before they occur. It is the people who must amend how Empowerment Zone funds are expended and the people who must evaluate the measurement of progress for the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone.

Once the people of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone have been presented with and commented on recommended benchmark changes, the Board of Directors will take the appropriate actions to amend or revise benchmark goals and activities. Revisions and amendments of benchmark goals and activities will be made after the review of benchmarks has been presented for the previous year. The Steering Committee feels that revisions and amendments cannot be made until progress has been evaluated.

Part IV

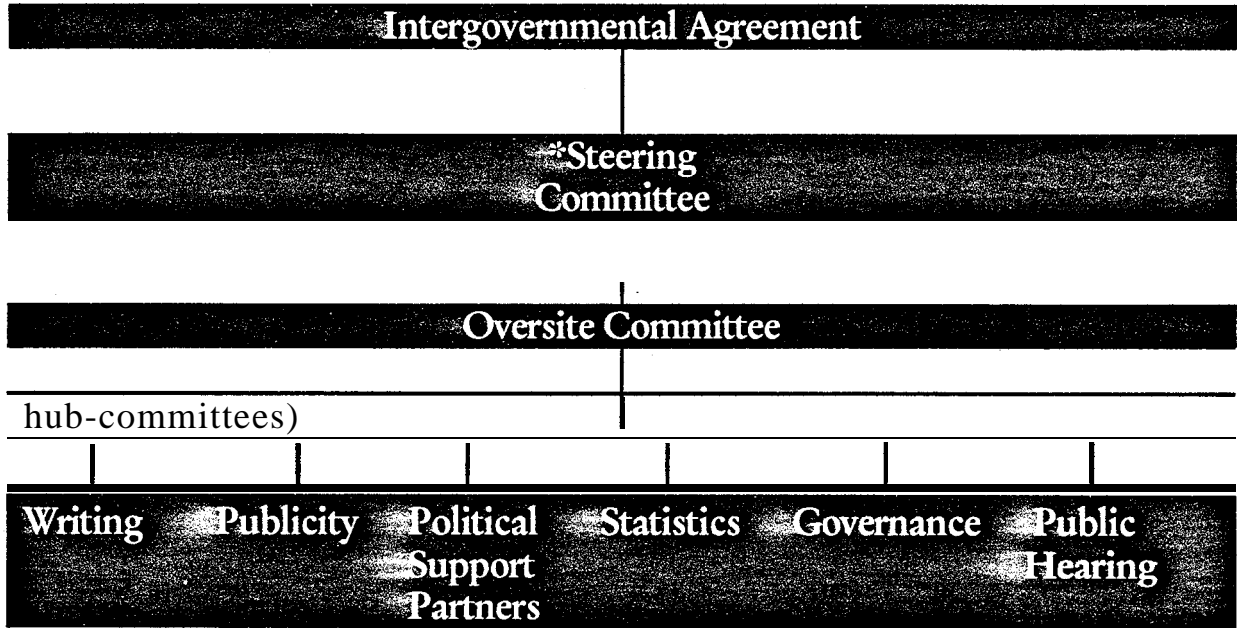
Lead Entity

PART IV - “ADMINISTRATION PLAN”

SECTION 1- LEAD ENTITY

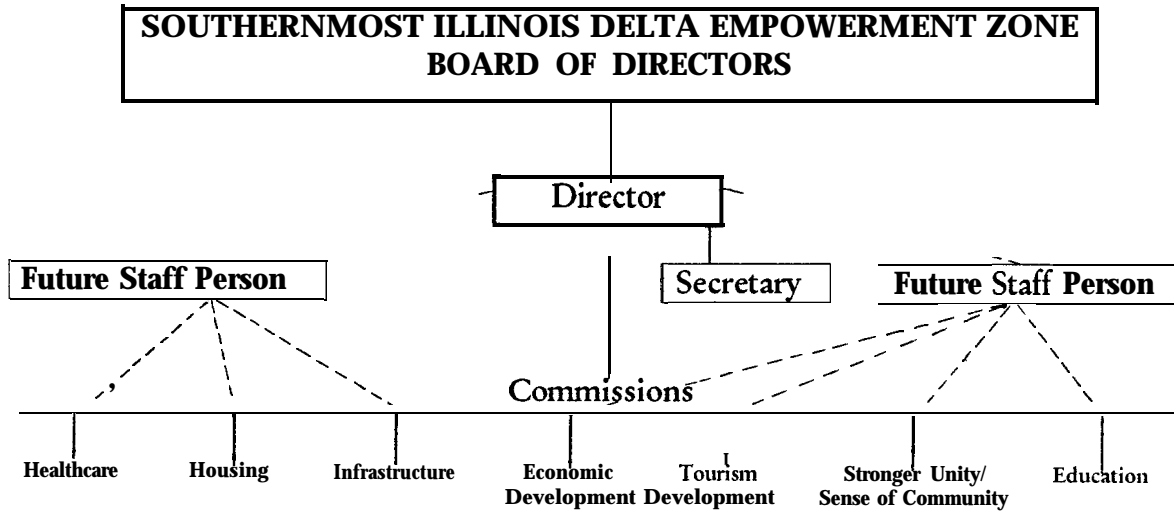
Alexander, Pulaski, and Johnson Counties have agreed to support the formation of a regional 501 (c)3 not-for-profit corporation in order to administer the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone. The SI Delta Empowerment Zone has not yet been formally incorporated, however, County Boards have instructed their State’s Attorney’s to begin the process of the establishment of the 501(c)3. The majority of membership for the Board of Directors will evolve out of the original steering committee. Once the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone has attained 501(c)3 status, its board of directors will be able to legally receive and administer Federal and state funds. However, some of the activities that the Empowerment Zone has envisioned accomplishing will require assistance from other state, Federal, and local agencies. In those instances, the appropriate agency will be receiving and administering funding. This is where a spirit of cooperation and partnering will be incorporated into the SI Delta Empowerment Zone. The intent of the Zone is to partner and only provide actual administration of funds when EZ funds are actually being interjected into the project.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



- Steering Committee was made up of members from churches, private business,, education, health, banking, labor unions, **senior** citizens, low income, minorities, high school/college age, and law enforcement from all areas of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



Part IV

Capacity

SECTION 2 - CAPACITY

The Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone is in the process of being established as a 501(c)3 entity. The steering committee for this effort has proposed and had overwhelming support for a capitalization plan. This plan will only serve to strengthen the partnering that has occurred thus far in the designation effort. The EZ steering committee will attain 501(c)3 not-for-profit status. At that time, Shawnee Community College will make office space available on the SCC Rustic Campus. The Rustic Campus is centrally located within the EZ boundaries. It is also home to Southern Seven Health Department, Southern Five Regional Planning District and Development Commission, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Regional Office, The Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge's headquarters, Head Start, and the Regional Superintendent of Schools Office. Shawnee Community College will also contract with the SI Delta Empowerment Zone to manage the accounting and auditing functions for the Empowerment Zone. A copy of Shawnee Community College's fiscal year 1997 is included at the conclusion of Volume II, Part IV of this plan. In addition to the donation of office space, Southern Five Regional Planning Commission has agreed to supply the SI Delta Empowerment Zone with a computer system and printer upon Zone designation.

The EZ steering committee has estimated that the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone will need approximately \$150,000 in order to begin operations. Capitalization of the Empowerment Zone will be obtained from the three county governments involved, the municipalities within the zone, and private business donations. Additional funds will be obtained through SSBG Federal Empowerment Zone funding. Alexander, Pulaski, and Johnson Counties have signed a multi-jurisdictional agreement of financial support to the SI Delta Empowerment Zone. This agreement is attached at the end of Volume II, Part IV. It has been determined that \$120,000, three percent of the annual SSBG allocation, will be provided through SSBG Federal Empowerment Zone funds; the remaining \$30,000 will be provided from Alexander, Pulaski, and Johnson Counties for the first year of designation. The counties will each contribute \$10,000 cash. It will be the responsibility of the Sub-Zone Committees in each of the counties to provide the \$10,000 in funds.

It is the intent of the SI Delta Empowerment Zone to start making progress toward self-sufficiency within three years of designation. At that time, the Zone will not require a cash contribution from the sub-zones. The Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone will be totally self-sufficient by the eighth year of designation. At that time, it will no longer have to rely on SSBG funds for a portion of its operations. It is also the intention of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone to be able to assume the responsibility of accounting and auditing functions at some point prior to the end of the 10-year designation period. It is anticipated that the SI Delta Empowerment Zone will be able to achieve self-sufficiency through the success of programs implemented by and within the Zone. For example, a revolving loan fund, established by the Southernmost Illinois Empowerment Zone for business start-up and expansion, will generate interest income, which can be used to support the Zone. The establishment of similar programs with the potential to bring revenues into the SI Delta Empowerment Zone will prove to realize the goal of becoming self-sufficient.

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

Board of Trustees
Shawnee Community College
District No. 53 1
College Road
Ullin, Illinois 62992

We have audited the accompanying general purpose financial statements of Shawnee Community College District No. 53 1 as of June 30, 1997, and for the year then ended. These general **purpose financial** statements are the responsibility of the District's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these general purpose financial statements based on our audit.

We conducted our audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards; Governmental Auditing Standards, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States; and the provisions of Office of Management and Budget Circular A-133, "Audits of States, Local Governments, and **Non-Profit Organizations**." Those standards and OMB Circular A-133 require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the general purpose financial statements are **free** of material misstatement. An audit includes **examining**, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the general purpose **financial** statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall general purpose financial statement presentation. We believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our opinion.

As is more fully described in Note I to the general purpose financial statements, the District has valued property and equipment at historical costs giving no effect to assets disposed of or determined obsolete. **In** our opinion, property and equipment should be recorded at cost, adjusted annually for dispositions or obsolescence to be in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles. **The** effects on the general purpose financial statements of the preceding practice are not readily determinable.

In our opinion, except for the effects on the general purpose financial statements of the condition described in the preceding paragraph, the general purpose financial statements referred to above present fairly, in **all** material respects, the financial position of Shawnee Community College District No. 53 1 as of June 30, 1997, and the results of its operations and the cash flows of its proprietary and similar trust fund types for the year then ended in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles.



In accordance with Government Auditing Standards, we have also issued a report dated September 12, 1997, on our consideration of Shawnee Community College District No. 531's internal control over financial reporting and our tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts and grants.

Kemper CPA Group L.L.C.

Kemper CPA Group L.L.C.
Certified Public Accountants and Consultants

Anna, Illinois
September 12, 1997

SHAWNEE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT NO. 53 1
ULLIN, ILLINOIS

COMBINED BALANCE SHEET
ALL FUND TYPES AND ACCOUNT GROUPS
JUNE 30.1997

	<u>Governmental Fund Types</u>			Proprietary	Fiduciary	<u>Account Groups</u>		Total (Memorandum Only)
	<u>General</u>	<u>Special Revenue</u>	<u>Capital Projects</u>	<u>Fund Type Enterprise</u>	<u>Fund Types Trust and Agency</u>	<u>General Fixed Assets</u>	<u>General Long-Term Debt</u>	
ASSETS								
C a s h	\$ 1,537,619	\$ 129,322	\$ 572,024	\$ 243,973	\$ 24,493	\$	\$	\$ 2,507,431
Investments	500,000		300,000		1-00,000			2,000,000
Receivables								
Day Care				22,128				22,128
Tuition	637,443							637,443
Outside Agencies		124,392						124,392
Property Taxes	152,362	26,657						179,019
Accrued Interest Receivable	1,828		954		4,415			7,197
Due from Other Funds	85,000	31,673						116,673
Inventories				158,339				158,339
Prepaid Insurance	1,471	39,536						41,007
Fixed Assets (Net of Accumulated Depreciation)				52,710		11,647,585		11,700,295
Amount to be Provided for: Retirement of General Long- Term Debt							487,000	487,000
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 2,915,723	\$ 351,580	\$ 872,978	\$ 477,150	\$ 1,228,908	\$ 11,647,585	\$ 487,000	\$ 17,980,924

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

SHAWNEE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT NO. 531
ULLIN, ILLINOIS

COMBINED BALANCE SHEET
ALL FUND TYPES AND ACCOUNT GROUPS - CONCLUDED
JUNE 30, 1997

	Governmental Fund Types			Proprietary	Fiduciary	Account Groups		Total (Memorandum Only)
	General	Special Revenue	Capital Projects	Fund Type Enterprise	Fund Types Trust and Agency	General Fixed Assets	General Long-Term Debt	
LIABILITIES AND FUND EQUITY								
Liabilities								
Accounts Payable	\$ 62,551	\$ 70,758	\$	\$ 18,477	\$ 9,739	\$	\$	\$ 161,525
Accrued Expenses	232,971							232,971
Due to Other Funds	13,459	103,214						116,673
Deferred Revenue	283,871	124,576						408,447
Installment Contract Payable							487,000	487,000
Total Liabilities	<u>592,852</u>	<u>298,548</u>	<u>-0-</u>	<u>18,477</u>	<u>9,739</u>	<u>-0-</u>	<u>487,000</u>	<u>1,406,616</u>
Fund Equity								
Investment in General Fixed Assets						11,647,585		11,647,585
Retained Earnings Unreserved				458,673				458,673
Fund Balances								
- Restricted		53,032	872,978		1,219,169			2,145,179
- Unrestricted	2,322,871							2,322,871
Total Fund Equity	<u>2,322,871</u>	<u>53,032</u>	<u>872,978</u>	<u>458,673</u>	<u>1,219,169</u>	<u>11,647,585</u>	<u>-0-</u>	<u>16,574,308</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND FUND EQUITY	<u>\$ 2,915,723</u>	<u>\$ 351,580</u>	<u>\$ 872,978</u>	<u>\$ 477,150</u>	<u>\$ 1,228,908</u>	<u>\$ 11,647,585</u>	<u>\$ 487,000</u>	<u>\$ 17,980,924</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

Part IV Board Membership

SECTION 3 – BOARD MEMBERSHIP

The Alexander, Pulaski, and Johnson Empowerment Zone Steering Committee decided to form a sub-committee that would be responsible for exploring the options of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone governance structure. The Governance Committee established some guidelines for the corporation's Board of Directors and start-up operations. Their recommendations were brought to the EZ Steering Committee. Some minor changes were made at this time, however the sub-committee's recommendations and the changes were approved unanimously at a Steering Committee meeting. The most important change to the sub-committee's proposal was that no maximum number of Board Members would be set. The minimum number was set at **15** members with no maximum number of Director's. The Steering Committee felt that a maximum limit should not be set at this time and that the corporation could determine this number, if needed, after the incorporation of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone had taken place. The following is a brief synopsis of Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone's Board Structure and organization procedures.

Board Structure

- a) A new 501(c)3 organization should be established to administer the EZ designation, and to fulfill the role of an administrative entity. A recommendation of 3% of grant funds per year for administrative expenses and subcontracting should be considered.
- b) The 501(c)3 Board of Directors should consist of at least fifteen (**15**) members. A quorum of directors should consist of a minimum of eight (8) members.
- c) Composition of this 501(c)3's governing board, in numbers and mind, must fairly reflect the residential population of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone region in terms of age, race, personal income, gender, and geographical location.
- d) It is recommended that Southernmost Illinois Delta EZ utilize Shawnee Community College as its Fiscal Agent, under reasonable fees, if approved as a Round II Federal Empowerment Zone.
- e) The Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone Board shall endeavor through cash and in kind contributions to raise funds sufficient to meet initial operating expenses.
- f) The initial seating of the new Board of Directors of the 501(c)3 shall, at a minimum, consist of:
 - 1 County Commissioner from each County within the Zone
 - 1 Mayor from each County within the Zone. Mayor representatives will be selected by a mayor's caucus from each of the three Counties within the Zone.
 - 1 Representative from each of these regional Community Development Organizations:
 - a) Shawnee Development Council
 - b) Southern Five Regional Planning District & Development Commission
 - c) Southern Seven Health Department

- d) Shawnee Community College
- e) Pulaski/Alexander County Farm Bureau
- 2 Representatives from Education K – 12
- 1 Representative of the low-income population from each County within the Zone. This representative will be elected by their peers through a public meeting process. Shawnee Development Council elects low-income representatives for their Board of Directors in a similar fashion. EZ representatives will be elected in the same process, concurrently with Shawnee Development Council Directors.
- 1 Representative of Private Business from each County within the Zone. Private business representatives will be selected by the county chambers of commerce, or the County Board of Commissioners in the absence of chambers of commerce.

Ex-Officio Board Members

There shall be recruited a multitude of partners, both local, regional, and national, who will be very important to the Southernmost Illinois Delta EZ Corporation. All **partners** will be welcome to attend meetings, participate in discussions, support and contribute to the establishment and implementation of the Empowerment Zone.

Initial roster of local partners should consist of: Representatives of Tourism, Senior Citizen Centers, Health Care Providers, including nursing homes, Head Start and other child care and early childhood centers, banks, public and private housing authorities, agriculture, and more to be added.

Initial roster of other contributing partners consist of: USDA’s Rural Development, the Illinois Departments of Transportation, Corrections, Public Aid, Natural Resources, Commerce and Community Affairs, and Human Services; Southern Illinois University, and more to be added.

Involvement Of Low Income Citizens And Community Organizations

To assure the on-going and active participation of all citizens, local communities in three counties should have ongoing opportunity to keep apprised and continue to learn about the Empowerment Zone’s opportunities for them and their families.

To accomplish this, there shall be established three SI Delta Empowerment Zone sub-committees in each of the participating counties of Alexander, Pulaski, and Johnson. These EZ sub-zones will meet quarterly, at times and places to be scheduled and announced by their respective County Boards and such sub-zone meetings shall be open to all citizens of that county. Notice of each quarterly meeting shall appear in local newspapers, at least one full week before each meeting, and agendas shall be prepared and available for each citizen who shall attend. These agendas shall provide time and space for public input from interested citizens.

At these quarterly meetings, Directors of the 501(c)3, any appropriate public and private partners, and/or program staff shall supplement the pertinent county board members, if so

requested by any entities or groups within that county, including the County Board, to assure the on-going participation of the grass-root-level citizenry. Perspective can be gained by the governing body and given to interested citizens through this process.

As local groups become better organized and seek recognition from the membership of the 501(c)3, the county EZ sub-committees can and will request and gain the ability to nominate and/or appoint directors to the governing board of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone.

The previous paragraphs are the recommendations of the Steering Committee's governance structure committee. These recommendations were reviewed at a meeting of the EZ Steering Committee and accepted unanimously by those in attendance. The three principles of Board Structure, Ex-Officio Members, and Involvement of Low Income Citizens and Community Organizations will be the bedrock philosophy for the formation of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone.

Part IV

Partnerships

SECTION 4 – PARTNERSHIPS

The SI Delta Empowerment Zone Steering Committee has recognized several major regional and community organizations that will be instrumental in making the EZ a success. In addition, the area is separated into three counties in Southernmost Illinois, thereby creating geographical boundaries that must be addressed. The following is a discussion concerning the vast opportunity the SI Delta Empowerment Zone has to create lasting and successful partnerships within the Zone's designated area and beyond.

As mentioned earlier, the SI Delta Empowerment Zone's region is contained within three counties in Southernmost Illinois. The entire County of Pulaski, and portions of Alexander and Johnson Counties make up the SI Delta's designation boundaries. Each of the Counties also contains several incorporated municipalities. Pulaski County's municipalities include the City of Mound City, City of Mounds, and the Villages of Pulaski, Olmsted, Ullin, New Grand Chain, and Karnak. Alexander County's designated area includes the City of Cairo and the Village of Thebes. Finally, Johnson County is home to the Zone communities of the City of Vienna and the Villages of Cypress and Belknap. Each of the three County Boards and the Councils of the twelve (12) municipalities will be partners to the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone and its efforts. Actions made by the SI Delta Empowerment Zone that will help rejuvenate the economy and release their residents from poverty will be supported by the participating counties and municipalities. In addition, the Counties and municipalities will also be helpful in creating the three (3) County sub-zones that will be required by the 501(c)3 for the EZ designation. Cooperation between counties and municipalities is not a new agenda for these communities. All of these municipalities were involved in the effort to locate and construct a Super Maximum Facility Prison in Alexander County near Tamms, Illinois. These communities came together to show a united front of support for this opportunity for one of its neighbors. Also, Alexander and Pulaski Counties are in the process of constructing a Tri-County Regional Justice and Detention Center in Ullin, Illinois. This project is a cooperative venture between the two zone counties and the neighboring Union County. This facility is located within the SI Delta Empowerment Zone designation area.

Due to the area's limited resources and population, several major regional organizations have formed over the years in order to serve certain needs of the residents. Many of these organizations are five-county providers while others are seven-county providers. This region seems to understand that many things can be accomplished by cooperating over geographic boundaries for services and programs.

Shawnee Community College is a regional educational facility. SCC was formed in 1967 by the five counties of Alexander, Johnson, Massac, Pulaski, and Union. Since then, the college has continued to grow and prosper. In past years, the college has shown enormous growth. They have relocated classrooms from the "Rustic Campus" to a new campus and will be constructing additional classroom and auditorium facilities within the next year. In addition; the College is a true friend to the communities that it serves. The "Rustic Campus" has not been totally abandoned. The seven original classroom buildings located on the rustic campus have been renovated to provide office space to several regional organizations. The Regional Superintendent of Schools, Southern Seven Health Department, Southern Five

Regional Planning District and Development Commission, SCC Day Care, Head Start, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, The Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters all have their offices located in the buildings on the Rustic Campus. Also, the College is headquarters to the five counties' only Small Business Development Center. This is located on their main campus along with JTPA and Dislocated Workers Program offices. Shawnee Community College has provided office space to the Southernmost Illinois Tourism Bureau, the regional Cooperative Extension, and JAMP (Johnson, Alexander, Massac, and Pulaski) Developmental Services in the past. Finally, SCC has offered to provide office space for the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone. They will also be providing the financial accounts and auditing for the EZ. The College has been very instrumental in the preparation of the designation application and will be one of the initial representatives on the 501 (c)3's Board of Directors.

The Regional Superintendent of Schools is an office dedicated to serving the K-12 and vocational training schools throughout the five-county region including Alexander, Johnson, Massac, Pulaski, and Union Counties. The Regional Superintendent's office has been involved in the preparation and submittal of the SI Delta Empowerment Zone's application for designation. This office provides both monetary and technical assistance to the school systems located within the five counties. This office, in addition to the Cairo School District, Egyptian School District, Meridian School District, Century School District, Cypress Grade School, Vienna -Grade School, and Vienna High School, will be partners in the effort to improve our educational attainment level, decrease the area's high school drop-out rate, and improve parental involvement in children's education.

Shawnee Development Council will be an essential partner to the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone. They currently serve the counties of Alexander, Hardin, Johnson, Massac, Pope, Pulaski, and Union. This agency is classified as a community action agency. Shawnee Development has already established working partnerships with other agencies that serve the EZ designation area. Currently, Shawnee Development has a not-for-profit corporation that assists Southern Five Regional Planning District and Development Commission with housing rehabilitation contracts. If not for the assistance from Shawnee Development Council, Southern Five would be without sufficient numbers of contractors to complete rehabilitation within their required timelines. Also, Shawnee Development has established JTPA offices on the main campus of Shawnee Community College. Shawnee Development Council provides weatherization assistance, low income energy assistance, job-training assistance, and youth job-training assistance to low income residents within their service area of seven counties; three of which are located with Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone's designation area. Shawnee Development will hold a Director's seat on the initial founding board of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone's 501 (c)3 corporation.

Southern Five Regional Planning District and Development Commission was established by the five County Boards of Alexander, Johnson, Massac, Pulaski, and Union in 1976. The primary objective of Southern Five is to provide technical assistance and grants administration to the Counties and Municipalities within their service area. Southern Five has been a key part in the organization and development of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment-Zone's application for designation: Southern Five's Executive Director has served as the chairperson for the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone's

Steering Committee. Southern Five currently administers revolving loan funds for three counties, three municipalities and one in-house. This agency has the responsibility for many community and economic development programs within five counties and 24 municipalities. Southern Five Regional Planning Commission will be on hand to provide technical assistance and has agreed to donate computer equipment to the start-up of the SI Delta Empowerment Zone once designation has been obtained. They will also hold a seat on the Board of Directors for the initial seating of the SI Delta's 501(c)3 corporation.

Southern Seven Health Department coordinates and administers health care programs for the citizens of Alexander, Hardin, Johnson, Massac, Pope, Pulaski, and Union Counties in Illinois. Southern Seven has been involved in the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone designation application. Southern Seven currently administers WIC and Head Start programs for residents of the seven-county area. This agency also provides health care services to residents through several clinics located throughout the region. The role of Southern Seven within the SI Delta Empowerment Zone will be to coordinate all health care providers and establish working relationships with other health care agencies within the designation area. There are several other health care providers including: Delta Center, Inc., Community Health and Emergency Services, and Rural Health, Inc. (to name a few) that will be involved with evaluating and improving the health care availability to residents within the SI Delta Empowerment Zone. Southern Seven will also hold a seat on the Board of Directors of the Empowerment Zone's 501(c)3 corporation.

Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative and their subsidiary, SouthWater, Inc., are rural electric and water providers for the designation area. SIEC and SouthWater have participated and supported the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone designation. Their goal is to provide safe and cost efficient electricity and water services to the rural and unincorporated areas of the Counties of Alexander, Johnson, Massac, Pulaski, and Union Counties. Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative and SouthWater will aid the SI Delta Empowerment Zone in providing electricity and water services that are vital to sustainable economic development within the Southernmost Illinois Empowerment Zone.

In addition to regional community and economic development organizations, the SI Delta Empowerment Zone will partner with many other agencies and organizations that are not region specific. During the designation application process, the Steering Committee found that there is a limitless supply of partners that can and are willing to assist with the sustainable rejuvenation of the Southernmost Illinois Delta area. Those detailed above in addition to many more whom will be discovered later are considered to be partners to the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone.

The following is a listing of additional/potential partners to the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone:

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|--|---------------------------------------|
| SouthWater, Inc. | Fort Massac Water District |
| Rural Development | Millstone Water District |
| Illinois Department of Commerce and
Community Affairs | Illinois-American Water Company |
| Southernmost IL Delta Empowerment
Zone Municipalities | Pulaski County Board of Commissioners |
| | Johnson County Board of Commissioners |
| | Alexander Co. Board of Commissioners |

Ameren/CIPS
 Cairo Public Utilities
 General Telephone Company
 Ameritech
 Internet and Cellular Providers
 Illinois Department of Transportation
 Federal Highway Administration
 Ohio River National Scenic By-ways
 Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge
 SIDEZ Municipal Street Departments
 Village of New Grand Chain
 Pulaski County Highway Department
 Alexander County Highway Department
 Johnson County Highway Department
 SIU School of Medicine
 Southern Seven Health Department
 Rural Health, Inc.
 Community Health & Emergency Services
 Southern IL Hospital Association
 Illinois Primary Healthcare Association
 Massac Memorial Hospital
 Union County Hospital
 Western Baptist Hospital
 Lourdes Hospital
 Southeast Missouri Hospital
 St. Francis Hospital
 Memorial Hospital of Carbondale
 Marion Memorial Hospital
 IL Dept. of Human Services
 Pulaski County Ambulance Service
 Alexander County Ambulance Service
 Johnson County Ambulance Service
 First State Bank of Olmsted
 First State Bank of Grand Chain
 ComBank of Mounds
 Capaha Bank
 First National Bank of Cairo
 First State Bank of Vienna
 Banterra Bank
 Small Business Administration
 Economic Development Association
 Illinois State Chamber of Commerce
 University of Illinois Cooperative
 Extension
 DCCA Women & Minority Loan
 Programs
 IL Small Business Growth Association
 Farm Service Agency
 Illinois Wine Council
 Fruit Belt Service Company
 Pulaski-Alexander-Co. Farm Bureau
 Johnson County Farm Bureau
 Prairie Farmer
 Helena Chemical
 ESRI Software Company
 Shawnee Transportation Authority
 RIDES Transportation System
 Area car dealerships
 Waterfront Services
 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
 Shawnee Terminal Railroad
 Southernmost IL Tourism Bureau
 Illinois Bureau of Tourism
 Department of Natural Resources
 Rural Electric Cooperatives
 Cairo Public Utilities
 IL Department of Corrections
 Civic and Community Organizations
 Vienna School District
 Meridian School District
 Egyptian School District
 Cairo School District
 Century School District
 Brownfield Initiative
 Environmental Protection Agency
 IL Environmental Protection Agency
 Egyptian Area Agency on Aging
 IL Department of Aging
 Illinois Arts Council
 Lutheran Social Services
 Area Churches
 Southern IL Laborer's District Council
 City and County Police Departments
 Illinois Mainstreet
 Education of Careers
 Five County Regional Vocational Center
 One-Stop Centers
 Illinois Community College Board
 IL Board of Higher Education
 JTPA
 Construction Trades Unions
 Boys Scouts of America
 Girl Scouts of America
 U.S. Department of Labor
 U.S. Department of Justice

Dept. of Housing and Urban
Development
Youth Build of Illinois
Heritage Tourism Advisory Committee
Youth Build – USA
Local Lumber Dealers
Pulaski County Housing Authority
Alexander County Housing Authority

Johnson County Housing Authority
Johnson County Supervisor of
Assessments
Pulaski County Supervisor of Assessments
Alexander County Supervisor of
Assessments
Private Businesses and Contractors

Part IV Public Information

SECTION 5 -- PUBLIC INFORMATION

It is the intent of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone to keep all partners and citizens of the Zone involved with the activities and progress of the SI Delta Empowerment Zone. In addition, it is also the intent of the Zone to make everyone aware of our progress and activities. To that end, a system of notifications has been put in place with the formation of the SI Delta Empowerment Zone Steering Committee. This system will be duplicated and enhanced with the formation of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone's 501 (c)3 corporation.

At present, a database has been established that contains the names and addresses of all people who have attended and shown continued interest in the efforts of the Steering Committee to submit an application for designation as a Federal Empowerment Zone. All meeting notices, agendas, and minutes were mailed to everyone on the database. This practice will continue with the formation of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone. In addition, meeting notices were published in all local papers with circulation within the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone area. This includes the Cairo Citizen, the Pulaski Enterprise, the Vienna Times, the Southern Scene, and the Monday's Pub. Meeting notices will continue to be printed in these papers after the formation of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone.

The EZ Steering Committee held two public hearings: one at the onset of the designation application process, and the other when the strategic plan was complete and ready for submission. The public hearings were announced through the newspapers, over the local radio station, WKRO in Cairo, and through the posting of meeting announcements in businesses and agencies throughout the designation- area. It is the intent of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone to hold a large public meeting once a year to discuss progress over the past year and new accomplishments for the coming year. This meeting will be announced and publicized in the same manner as the public hearings during the strategic planning process. At this time, any amendments to the strategic plan will be discussed and benchmarks will be reviewed and/or amended.

The Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone will recognize the formation of three sub-zone committees. There will be a sub-zone committee representing the citizens of Alexander, Pulaski, and Johnson Counties respectively. Sub-Zones will meet on a quarterly basis. The purpose of the meetings will be to receive input from all citizens located within a sub-zone. Notice of sub-zone meetings will be made through local newspapers within the sub-zone and through mailings to those who have attended past meetings. A database similar to the one already established for the entire SI Delta Empowerment Zone will be created. Issues and opinions discussed at the sub-zone meetings will be reported to the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone Board of Directors at the meeting following the sub-zone's quarterly meeting.

Finally, the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone Board of Directors will meet monthly. Additional meetings will be called when necessary to carry out business of the Empowerment Zone. All meetings of the Board of Directors will be announced through meeting notices in the Cairo Citizen, the Pulaski Enterprise, the Vienna Times, the Southern

Scene and the Monday's Pub. Meeting notices will be published at least one week in advance of the scheduled meeting. Emergency meetings will be published at least three days before the meeting. In addition, a database will continue to be utilized that holds the names and addresses of all Board of Directors, media, and partners. Meeting notices will be mailed directly to everyone listed in this database.

It is the intent of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone to provide printed materials detailing the progress of the Empowerment Zone over the course of the designation period. News releases will also be printed from time to time to inform the public of successes and new activities of the SI Delta Empowerment Zone. News releases will not only be printed in local newspapers, but will also appear in newspapers of regional circulation (the Southern Illinoisan, the Paducah Sun, and the Southeast Missourian). Other printed materials will have a broader range of audiences and circulation.

Part IV Public Participation

SECTION 6 – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone will be a forum for all citizens within the designated area. Citizens will be encouraged to attend all meetings of the sub-zone and all meetings of the Board of Directors of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone are open to the public. The same policy was instituted with the EZ Steering Committee. The Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone will also circulate survey forms on an annual basis to receive input from citizens as to the progress of the Empowerment Zone and the general attitude of the SI Delta Empowerment Zone.

In addition, citizens will have representation on the Board of Directors of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone. The initial seating of members calls for three low-income representatives and for three members of the private business sector. Additionally, community-based organizations such as a community action agency, the regional planning commission, and representatives from education, agriculture, and health are included in the initial seating of the Board of Directors. The initial seating of the Directors was established as a guideline only. More seats can be added as the SI Delta Empowerment Zone takes on a life of its own. It has also been mentioned that as the sub-zones become established and grow stronger, seats will be made available on the Board of Directors to accommodate citizen appointments from within the sub-zones. This will allow for three additional seats on the governing board for citizens within the SI Delta Empowerment Zone.

All opinions and comments obtained through public meetings, surveys, and sub-zone meetings will be recorded within the official minutes or report of such forums. These written comments and opinions will be reviewed at the monthly meetings of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone. All views of the private citizenry will be given the utmost attention when establishing programs and courses of actions for the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone and its strategic plan.