

# ST. CLAIR COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

19 Public Square, Suite 200  
Belleville, IL 62220-1695  
Phone: 618-825-3200  
www.co.st-clair.il.us  
Facebook: StClairCountyEconDev  
Twitter: @SCCEconDev



---

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

### Meeting Minutes

January 14, 2026

#### Members Present:

Ken Sharkey, Chairman  
Scott Greenwald, Assistant Chairman  
Robert Allen  
Marty Crawford  
Robert Trentman  
Rick Vernier

#### Members Excused:

Matt Smallheer

#### Staff Present:

Rick Stubblefield, Executive Director  
Becky Rose, Executive Assistant

#### Others Present:

Kimberly Huth, Military Affairs Director  
Darren James, MidAmerica Airport Director  
Kyle Anderson, Leadership Council Southwestern Illinois Director  
May Brown

#### Call to Order:

Chairman Ken Sharkey called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. and led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### Public Comment Regarding the Agenda:

Chairman Sharkey asked if anyone present had a question or comment regarding the agenda. There were none.

#### Approval of December 10, 2025 Committee Minutes (action required):

Chairman Sharkey called for action on the December 10, 2025, Committee minutes. Mr. Greenwald made the motion to approve the minutes which were seconded by Mr. Allen. The motion passed unanimously.

#### New Business (Director's Report):

Mr. Stubblefield deferred his time to Kyle Anderson, Leadership Council Southwestern Illinois Director.

Mr. Kyle Anderson stated that a recent economic development plan identified a key need: a clearer definition of who we are as a region and who we want to be. The primary focus is to build a single, strong regional brand that increases visibility for Southwestern Illinois and positions the area to compete more effectively with St. Louis for new development. The regional brand will be Envision Southwestern Illinois, with the tagline "Gateway to Growth." The website will present a cohesive, go-to market strategy that

markets Southwestern Illinois as a unified region. It will tell a comprehensive story highlighting the region's workforce, education partnerships, and strength as a logistic powerhouse. The website will also include a map highlighting available properties across nine counties; Bond, Calhoun, Clinton, Jersey, Madison, Macoupin, Randolph, St. Clair, and Washington. Key industry sectors to be highlighted include defense manufacturing, aerospace, logistics, and geospatial industries.

Mr. Stubblefield reiterated the region's strong potential, emphasizing available space, a capable workforce, reduced congestion, and existing infrastructure. Kyle also shared information regarding data center opportunities in Downstate Illinois.

There were no further comments or questions.

New Business (MidAmerica Airport Director's Report):

Mr. Darren James reported on the airport's performance, noting that 2025 was a record year. Records were set in seven out of twelve months. Overall growth in 2025 was 18% compared to the previous record year of 2022, and year-over-year growth from 2024 to 2025 reached 25.3%. It was a fantastic year in terms of capacity, particularly driven by Allegiant's performance. Allegiant and Sun Country have announced plans to merge, with the merger projected for the second half of 2026. The combined airline will remain a competitive, leisure-focused carrier, consistent with their current business models. The merger adds significant potential, including 105 destinations currently served by Sun Country, an expanded aircraft fleet, and new opportunities through international destinations, opening doors that Allegiant has not previously had. Additionally, Sun Country's cargo operations for Amazon add another layer of opportunity. While there are still many unknowns, the merger presents substantial upside and long-term potential.

There were no further comments or questions.

Mr. Vernier made a motion to approve the Director's report and Mr. Greenwald seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business (Military Affairs Director Comments):

Ms. Kimberly Huth reported that on December 17, 2025, the U.S. Senate passed the Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), authorizing approximately \$901 billion in defense funding for military programs. Additionally, the President and Secretary Hegseth have requested an additional \$1.9 trillion to be added to the defense budget in response to global concerns, including Venezuela and other countries. At this time, there are no planned deployments, though the forces remain on standby. It was officially announced that McGhee Tyson Air Force Base will receive the KC-46 aircraft. Furthermore, the current four-star Commander of Air Mobility Command, General John Lomontagne, has been tapped to serve as the next Vice Chief of Staff.

There were no further comments or questions.

Mr. Greenwald made a motion to approve the Director's report and Mr. Crawford seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Other Comments:

There were no further comments or questions.

Adjournment:

Chairman Sharkey asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Vernier so moved, and it was seconded by Mr. Greenwald. The motion to adjourn passed unanimously and the Committee adjourned at 5:25 p.m.