

Year in Review 2011: Southwestern Illinois

Madison County Transit carries 10,000 riders daily, adds all-day route to Gateway Commerce

By KERRY L. BEISER

For nearly three decades, Madison County Transit has provided safe, affordable and efficient transportation services for the people of Madison County and beyond. With a fixed-route bus system that carries nearly 10,000 riders a day, door-to-door service for the disabled and elderly, an extensive bike trail system and the regional carpool/vanpool program, MCT serves a variety of transportation needs and provides a strong transportation base for Madison and St. Clair counties.

According to S.J. Morrison, director of marketing and planning, MCT continues to meet its core objective of providing accessible transportation to the transit-dependent, carrying 300 elderly and disabled passengers daily. Every vehicle in the agency's fleet is wheelchair accessible. Morrison says MCT was one of the first agencies in the St. Louis region to have a

100 percent accessible bus fleet.

In November, ridership grew for the 12th straight month, with a 16 percent increase in boardings over November 2010.

Beyond providing transportation to those who do not own a vehicle of their own, MCT is seeing an increase in ridership from users whose garages house one or more automobiles, says Morrison. With factors such as traffic congestion, gas prices, concern for the environment and convenience, more professionals are opting to commute by bus or find a carpool or vanpool through RideFinders, MCT's ride-matching program. MCT operates RideFinders for the nine-county St. Louis region and serves approximately 1,000 employers, Morrison says, with more than 3,780 carpools and more than 90 (7 to 15-passenger) vanpools.

In 2011, MCT initiated all-day regular bus service to Gateway Commerce Center to keep

pace with demand. Morrison says the agency is preparing to add Saturday service, too, since nearly one-fourth of the workforce at Gateway Commerce Center is transit-dependent. Riders hail from Alton, Wood River, Granite City, Madison, Venice, East St. Louis, St. Louis and beyond.

Also in 2011, MCT extended bus service to the new Godfrey Walmart and to Amsted Rail Co. in Granite City. Extending transit services to meet the needs of Madison County's expanding workforce is an important goal of the agency, says Morrison.

In early December, MCT officially opened the Leclaire Junction multi-modal bus and bicycle facility that connects to bikeways, park-and-ride lots and a bus pull-off area. The structure, on Buchanan Street in Edwardsville, will connect to the 21-mile-long MCT Nickel Plate Trail, which was recently extended to Alhambra.

MCT's investments in the bikeway system, thanks to a blend of federal, state and local dollars, now totals more than \$25 million and has been cited by national site selection organizations as a quality of life amenity that is attracting tourists and homebuyers to Madison County from all parts of the U.S. In a recent survey conducted by the National Association of Realtors and the National Association of Home Buyers, from a list of 18 community amenities, trails were chosen as the second most important. Morrison says Madison County's scenic trails are linear parks that provide an oasis for the eyes, and a free family-friendly fitness and recreation option. With its 32 bridges, 19 tunnels and its very few at-grade crossings, the MCT Trails provide an exceptional environment for walking, running and cycling. Preserving, maintaining and expanding this network is also one of MCT's key goals.

Memorial Hospital opens medical services building, plans new hospital in Shiloh

By ALAN J. ORTBALS

Memorial Hospital opened its new Orthopedic and Neurosciences Center near the end of 2011 and many of the tenants have already moved in. Everyone will be in by mid-January.

The 85,000-square-foot structure was actually developed by Southwest Illinois Health Ventures Inc., a subsidiary of Memorial Group Inc. It was built to house a full range of orthopedic and neurosurgery specialists, as well as speech, physical and occupational therapists. Hand therapy is located there and pain management, and sports medicine is also an integral part of the new facility. The \$24 million center is equipped with open MRI and CT scanners.

Some of the building has been purposely left vacant in a "shell" phase of construction. According to Mark Turner, Memorial's president and chief executive officer, it was important to keep open space available not only for the growth of services that are there, but also to accommodate other physicians as they come into the community.

Turner says Memorial has seen significant

growth in both inpatient and outpatient services, which is bucking the trend. According to Turner, inpatient admissions in the St. Louis market - as well as nationally - are down significantly, but not at Memorial. The Belleville-based hospital is still seeing inpatient admission growth, he says, and he attributes that to increasing market share. Patients are choosing Memorial over other alternatives.

In an effort to keep up with that growth in demand and with the changing market, Memorial applied for and received a Certificate of Need to build a new 94-bed, full-service, acute-care hospital in Shiloh. When complete, those 94 beds will be moved out of the main facility, reducing it to a 216-bed hospital. The next nine to 10 months will be spent designing the new facility and then going out to bid. The plan is to complete the construction bid process by year-end 2012. Upon completion, both facilities will be 100 percent private-bed hospitals.

It's all part of adapting to the rapidly-changing healthcare environment, according to Turner. He looks for healthcare institutions to be integrating more with their physicians,



Memorial recently received a Certificate of Need to build a new 94-bed, full-service, acute-care hospital in Shiloh. Upon completion, both the main Belleville campus and the new Shiloh facility will be 100 percent private-bed hospitals.

working together to improve the efficiency and reduce the cost of care. Another hallmark of the future, he says, is that reimbursements to healthcare providers are going to decline over the rest of the decade.

While the industry has already gone through a great deal of efficiency improvement over the past 20 years, says Turner, everyone in the

field needs to continue to find best practices - the best way to provide care to patients. More and more physicians are choosing to align with hospitals and health systems, sometimes becoming employees. The coming decade, Turner says, is really going to be more about change - change at a pace like the industry and those it serves have never seen before.

Strengthening Business in Southwestern Illinois

Madison County Transit (MCT) bolsters businesses and institutions throughout Madison County and Southwestern Illinois through its diverse array of transportation services.

- MCT carries 10,000 passengers a day to work, shop, attend class and do business.
- MCT's Runabout provides life-sustaining mobility for 300 elderly and disabled individuals.
- The 100-mile MCT Trails bikeway system is a magnet for new home buyers and visitors.
- RideFinders, operated by MCT, assists 1,000 regional employers with carpool, vanpool services.

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Year in Review 2011: Southwestern Illinois

145-year-old Columbia schoolhouse converted to welcome center to boost tourism

By ALAN J. ORTBALS

Local governments in Monroe County, Ill. have banded together to adaptively reuse an 1867 schoolhouse as a visitor welcome center, one-room school museum and commemorative plaza.

The building was renovated by the city of Columbia using only local resources, including a donation from a local philanthropist, donated materials and services, brick paver proceeds and revenue from the city's hotel/motel tax. Five local governments, including the city of Columbia, have executed an intergovernmental agreement and cooperatively fund, maintain and manage the center through a multi-jurisdictional steering committee.

In the earliest days of European settlement, Monroe County was home to the Cahokia-Kaskaskia Trace, one of the busiest byways through this area. The Trace was used by

Lewis and Clark as they traveled north to Cahokia gathering men and supplies for the Corps of Discovery in 1803. In many ways, the Cahokia-Kaskaskia Trace can legitimately claim to be "where Illinois began."

Unfortunately, awareness of this pioneer thoroughfare and its impact upon the early history of Illinois and the St. Louis region had become so limited that by 2000, Landmarks Illinois included the Trace in its "10 Most Endangered" listing of buildings and sites statewide that were likely to be obliterated.

Hammond Shoemaker, the first doctor along the Cahokia-Kaskaskia Trace, built a one-room building for his children in 1867. It was used as a public school until 1951, then as a private home for almost four decades. In 1992, the structure was moved to its present location in order to avoid demolition due to the widening of Illinois Rte. 3. Today, adaptive reuse of the building allows for three

functions:

-- In addition to racked brochures and maps, the Monroe County Welcome Center features displays, exhibits, photographs and other memorabilia from the history of Monroe County and the Cahokia-Kaskaskia Trace, and volunteer staff provide visitor services five days per week from May through October;

-- The Shoemaker School Museum partially recreates the building's use as a mid-19th century one-room school, including such services as interpretive functions for local school groups;

-- The One-Room School Commemorative Plaza before the entrance into the building designates all 60+ one-room schools that dotted Monroe County in 1900 and provides opportunities to remember parents, grandparents and teachers with imprinted brick pavers.

The Monroe County Welcome Center is

the gateway to many regional attractions, such as: Maeystown, an entire village on the National Register of Historic Places; the city of Columbia, with three renovated one-room schools, historic sites, lodging, museums, restaurants & shopping; the city of Waterloo, with a variety of attractions including the History Museum for Monroe County; Dreamland Palace German Restaurant in Foster Pond, which attracts busloads of tourists for the authentic German food served there; Schorr Lake Vineyards and Lau Nae Winery, members of the Heartland River Wine Trail; Fort de Chartres State Historic Site, Fort Kaskaskia State Historic Site and the Pierre Menard Home in Randolph County. The next phase of business development for the Monroe County Welcome Center will involve working with these attractions, local merchants and others to develop marketing materials and sites to better promote visitor awareness.

Koppeis converts Valmeyer cave into five million feet of office, record storage and warehouse space

By ALAN J. ORTBALS

What began as a white elephant has turned into a money and job producer for the village of Valmeyer.

The village was destroyed in the Great Flood of 1993 and the decision was made to move the town out of the floodplain and up on top of the bluffs. What the town fathers hadn't figured on was the existence of the Columbia Quarry still owning the mineral rights. The village bought the quarry, but the solution to one problem created another: What to do with five million square feet of what was essentially a cave? That's where Joe Koppeis stepped in.

Where everyone else saw a big hole in the ground, Koppeis saw opportunity. He took control of the property under a land lease with the village and has invested about \$40 million creating an office, record storage and warehouse facility called Rock City.

Rock City sits well above the floodplain, so floods are not a threat. Its interior ceiling heights average about 28 feet. Normal temperature is about 58 to 60 degrees day and night, 365 days a year. All that was necessary was to grind down

the floors, level them with concrete, erect walls and run utilities.

Rock City's first tenant was Gateway Storage. Gateway saw that the temperature-controlled climate was an ideal setting for a refrigerated warehouse. It's a whole lot cheaper to cool space when you start at 58 degrees, says Koppeis, rather than your typical 95 degree St. Louis summer day.

Gateway stores products for more than 50 companies including Anheuser Busch, Kraft and Edie's Ice Cream in about 200,000 square feet of space. The company employs 60 people in the operation.

Rock City, after responding to a Request for Proposals from the National Archives and Records Administration, was the successful bidder to build a \$30 million building with full Class 1 office space, computer rooms, record storage and a scanning operation. The National Archives space employs about 150 people and stores more than 2.5 million cubic feet of records.

Koppeis says he has about three million square feet still available and it could house a wide



The development of Rock City in Valmeyer continues to attract prestigious records storage and warehousing clients, among them the National Archives and Records Administration. The agency employs some 150 people and stores more than 2.5 million cubic feet of records there.

range of uses. Obviously, Rock City is ideal for storage and warehouse operations, but he says it could also be an ideal place to locate a computer center, call center or other back office users. That's because there is another yet-untapped resource: an underground lake that could be used as an economical way to provide the cooling

such systems require.

Rock City is still in the early development phase, but under the terms of the ground lease the village receives royalties from the rents. By teaming with Koppeis, Valmeyer has been able to turn a white elephant into a cash cow. The future, says Koppeis, looks extremely promising.

Welcome to Southwestern Illinois' historic Cahokia-Kaskaskia Trail!



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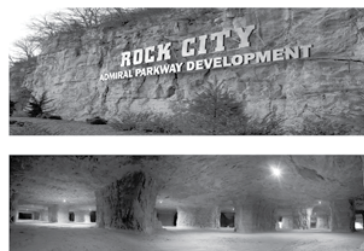
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Year in Review 2011: Southwestern Illinois

St. Louis Downtown Airport expands main runway, dedicates first fire station in 2011

By **KERRY L. BEISER**

St. Louis Downtown Airport in Saugat celebrated two major milestones in 2011: widening its primary runway and opening its first fire station.

Airport director Bob McDaniel says the \$7.377 million runway project, completed using funding from FY 2010 and 2011, included widening the main runway from 100 feet to 150 feet so that it now supports planes weighing up to 200,000 pounds. A new high-intensity lighting system, replacing the medium-intensity system that had been installed in the 1980s, was also part of the work, which McDaniel says was actually broken into three separate projects all performed by Lebanon-based Christ

Brothers. The new Downtown Airport runway is 7,002 feet long.

Resurfacing was also part of the runway work. The pavement was more than 20 years old, according to McDaniel, and had severe cracks which was costing a lot to maintain and was becoming a safety hazard. Three inches of concrete was milled out and repaved. Securing one contractor for all three projects helped keep costs down significantly, McDaniel says, by eliminating redundancies in earthwork, paving and other areas.

Since the main runway had to be closed for about 6.5 months during the height of the construction work, the airport's parallel runway was available

to pilots. For two years, the parallel runway, normally spanning 3,800 feet in length, was extended to 5,300 feet to accommodate jet traffic. Nonetheless, its narrow, 75-foot width cost the airport about half its business during the construction period, according to McDaniel. But now that the main runway is back open, he sees that MD-80, Boeing 737 and 727 business coming back.

The airport's decision to transition from a general aviation airport to a commercial airport is a reflection of its proactive business strategy. Three years before the FAA required the formation of a fire department in order to accommodate a lower, post-Sept. 11th threshold of commercial passengers (planes carrying

nine or more passengers), St. Louis Downtown had already put the plans in motion in 2008 to build the fire station and already had trained emergency responders. In January 2011, the airport dedicated the fire station, which also serves as an emergency operations center for the region.

McDaniel says the airport is eagerly awaiting economic impact numbers from a study that was recently performed. Twelve years ago, the same study reported \$200 million as the economic impact that St. Louis Downtown Airport had on the surrounding community. This time around, he says, early indications suggest that number will be at least \$300 million.

St. Louis Regional Airport draws tens of thousands to property via free public events

By **KERRY L. BEISER**

Including spectators from the surrounding area, St. Louis Regional Airport's signature public events in 2011 drew more than 36,000 visitors.

The airport, according to manager Dave Miller, continues to be a popular venue for massive community celebrations. For the sixth straight year, Cornerstone Church in Bethalto sponsored the airport's Fourth of July fireworks spectacular. The celebration, which took place at the airport grounds, attracted 7,000 people to the grounds and another 31,000 to the surrounding area.

In mid-September, St. Louis Regional's 17th annual "Wings and Wheels" two-day fly-in event, also free to the public, drew an estimated crowd of 5,000.

On the 10th anniversary of Sept. 11th,

St. Louis Regional was the end point of the village of Bethalto's memorial parade. When the parade reached the airport, the U.S. Air Force Band of Mid-America played for several hundred people. First responders and military personnel who were invited to St. Louis Regional were recognized after the band's performance, and fireworks were scheduled at dusk.

Miller says the airport has also been successful in attracting The Wally Byam Caravan Club International, one of the world's largest trailer and motorhome organizations composed of one make of RV (the Airstream Trailer).

In addition to visitors who utilize St. Louis Regional as a venue for celebration, taxpayers can also celebrate the airport; over the past seven years, St.

Louis Regional's has been able to reduce its property tax burden by an average of 15 percent. (In 2003, the airport cut the tax rate by 60 percent, and then continued reducing it a few more points each year.) Miller says currently the owner/occupant of a \$100,000 home pays approximately \$2.43 per month to the airport, and that is the smallest item on the tax bill.

On an operations and maintenance basis, the airport is self supporting; no property tax dollars go toward categories such as airport staff salaries, utilities, etc. Property tax dollars, says Miller,

are used to leverage federal and state grants for airport capital improvements. With \$25,000 in local property tax dollars, he adds, St. Louis Regional Airport can generate a \$1 million capital improvement project that boosts the local economy through jobs creation.

The airport continues to be successful in land acquisition, according to Miller. St. Louis Regional closed on the property formerly known as "the Service Master" property. This parcel is adjacent to the Wayside Estates subdivision and the Bethalto Walgreens store.

TheBANK of Edwardsville recruits Rick Parks to head Commercial Banking Group in 2011

By **KERRY L. BEISER**

A high point for TheBANK of Edwardsville's commercial banking operations occurred in mid-October, 2011, when Rick R. Parks joined the organization as Senior Vice President of its Commercial Banking Group.

Parks, who has 25 years of banking and financial experience, oversees commercial banking in all of TheBANK of Edwardsville's markets. Before coming to TheBANK, Parks worked as Regional President for Centurion Bank in Fairview Heights where he was responsible for overall strategic planning, management and sales production of the Southern Illinois region for the past seven years.

The veteran banker began his professional career as a commercial loan analyst at First Trust and Savings Bank in Kankakee in 1987 after earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Finance from Olivet Nazarene University. He earned an MBA from Saint Louis University in 1992.

TheBANK of Edwardsville has assets exceeding \$1.5 billion and 20 banking locations in Madison and St. Clair counties.

Parks says commercial banking services offered by TheBANK include the following: business checking and savings accounts; credit card processing; account reconciliation; retirement planning services; notary services; treasury management and commercial loans.

Under the treasury management category, business clients are able to benefit from: online banking, direct deposit, direct payment/ACH, wire transfers, electronic federal tax, payment system (EFTPS), sweep accounts, positive pay, remittance processing/lockbox services, image disk, online statements and remote deposit.

Under the commercial lending category, TheBANK offers lines of credit, term loans, real estate loans and tax-exempt financing.

Parks currently volunteers or serves on the board of seven community organizations including: Good Shepherd Ministries in East St. Louis; Belleville Optimist Club; Leadership Council Southwestern Illinois; Boy Scout Pack 49; O'Fallon-Shiloh Chamber of Commerce; First Church of the Nazarene; and the Metro-East Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

He is a past board member of the Masterworks Chorale, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southwestern Illinois, The Boy Scouts of America and the YMCA of Southwestern Illinois as well as a past member of the O'Fallon Noon Rotary Club, Mascoutah Noon Lion's Club and Leadership Belleville.

Being actively involved in the community is important to Parks; he says it is one of the reasons he was drawn to TheBANK of Edwardsville.


Parks lives in O'Fallon, Ill. with his wife, Trisha. They have three children.

You Know Rick!

Rick Parks - Senior Vice President
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As Senior Vice President of the Commercial Banking Group at TheBANK of Edwardsville, and with more than 25 years of banking and financial experience, Parks is looking forward to keeping TheBANK the LEADING LOCALLY-OWNED COMMUNITY BANK IN THE METRO EAST.

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Alton receives TIGER grant from USDOT

U.S. Rep. Jerry Costello (D-IL) announces that the city of Alton has received a \$13.85 million Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery or TIGER grant from the U.S. Dept. of Transportation. The funds will be used to build a Multimodal

Transportation Facility in conjunction with the new High-Speed Intercity Passenger Rail station in Alton.

IMPACT Strategies promotes Manning

Scott Manning, a project engineer for IMPACT Strategies, has been promoted to project manager.

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It's Time to Plan for 2012

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January - 2011 Year in Review

February - Engineering/Architecture/Planning
Special Section: New Mississippi River Bridge

March - Real Estate

April - Construction

May - Industry Leaders (Lists)

June - Banking/Finance
Special Section: Women in Banking/Finance

July - All Stars (Charitable Giving)

August - Engineering/Architecture/Planning
Special Section: SWIL Levee Crisis

September - Real Estate

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