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The Creative Economy in Southern Illinois: Opportunities for Reshaping Carbondale and SIU

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The Simon Review

The Creative Economy in Southern Illinois:
Opportunities for Reshaping Carbondale and SIU

By Kent Dolezal, Nicole Sack, and Lindsay Knaus

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Based upon
Expanding the Economy in Southern Illinois through Creative Placemaking
By
Kent Dolezal

*Southern Illinois University Carbondale Purchasing Power
By
Lindsay Knaus, Tenisha Miller, Dakota Nelson, Joshua Rivera, Ivan Robbins,
and Daric Thompson

*Carbondale Downtown Development:
A Study of Successful “Town and Gown” Strategies to Revitalize the Aesthetic Quality and
Economic Vitality of Carbondale, Illinois
By
Nicole Sack, Deidra Davis and Kelsey Fuller

Editor’s Note:

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by

Kent Dolezal, Nicole Sack, and Lindsay Knaus

“The secret to building better, more vibrant locations was not just attracting companies with handouts and tax breaks, but building a ‘people climate’—and not with stadiums and generic malls, but with parks and bike paths and street-level culture that would make people’s everyday lives better, improve the underlying quality of place, and signal a community that is open, energized, and diverse.” (Florida 2012)

I. Introduction

Since the 2002 release of Richard Florida’s seminal book, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, a considerable amount of the regional and local development discussion has focused on his concept of attracting and retaining the creative class as a vehicle of economic growth. Florida’s (2002) work centers on the premise that contemporary development is not a process of attracting large employers but attracting talented people to an area; it is a process of jobs following people, not people following jobs. Although Florida has a primarily urban focus (Peck, 2005), with more than 59 million or 19.3 percent of the American people living in rural areas, including nearly 12 percent of Illinoisans (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013), ignoring the impact of rural artists and creative activities comes at the detriment of local, state and national economic progress.

With Florida in mind as an avenue to increasing economic activity in the region, the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute convened a day-long conference held at the Carbondale Civic Center April 29, 2014. As part of the conference the information contained in this paper was presented by Kent Dolezal, Lindsay Knaus and Nichole Sack. This paper’s purpose is to summarize the concepts in those remarks and disseminate the information to a wider audience.

The first section expands on the concept of attracting and retaining creative people (or creatives) through the work of Markusen and Gadwa (2010) and the frame of creative

placemaking. The second section examines the existing creative economy in southern Illinois, both from a perspective of what is present in the region and how it compares to the rest of Illinois and the tri-state region with an emphasis on counties with similar circumstances as Jackson and Williamson. The third section encompasses a market study of downtown Carbondale and the spending power of SIU students, staff and faculty. The fourth section, presents two case studies of college-town success stories with an eye toward sparking the conversation by seeing how dramatic transformation is possible. Finally, the paper concludes with some closing remarks.

II. What is Creative Placemaking?

By Kent Dolezal

In recognition of the presence of creative people in all areas of our nation and to help the prospect of local economic development, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA; as part of its Mayors' Institute on City Design in partnership with the United States Conference of Mayors and the American Architectural Foundation) sponsored a white paper entitled *Creative Placemaking*¹, authored by notable regional development scholars Ann Markusen and Anne Gawda (Markusen & Gawda, 2010). The authors present a detailed explanation and argument for how the arts can be used in economic development. Markusen and Gawda describe the necessary resources for accomplishing policy change, the challenges of such endeavors, and case studies illustrating how creative placemaking has impacted communities, large and small.

As a concept, creative placemaking is centered on the connections between place and people. The interactions between people and the space they are living in or visiting can be more positive with the inclusion of the arts. With *Creative Placemaking*, Markusen and Gadwa provide a grounded, historical, and descriptive definition of the arts' impact in the United States. The

¹ The document can be found at <http://arts.gov/publications/creative-placemaking>

authors provide a concise description of the challenges and keys to successful initiatives. A brief discussion of these components and their application to southern Illinois follows.

One of the key components of successful creative placemaking projects is the identification of, and focus on, the project area's unique characteristics. Successful creative placemaking projects are designed to highlight what makes the project area distinct. The focus is on re-energizing existing characteristics, not on inventing a new community culture. Some successful projects have utilized heritage and local culture, while others have exploited geographical, historical, or architectural legacies to center their redevelopment efforts. In essence, creative placemaking reminds residents and shows outsiders what makes the area unique and valuable. Markusen and Gawda highlight Paducah, Kentucky and Cleveland, Ohio for their revitalization of waterfronts and historic architecture from their days as centers of river trade. Araundville, Louisiana emphasized its Cajun heritage, while in Minnesota the Fond du Lac Reservation's promotion of its Ojibwe artists was not only a driver of economic growth but a vehicle for community healing and reconnection to its historical identity.

Southern Illinois is as rich in its own attributes as the areas mentioned above. From its history as the agricultural heart of early Illinois, to its being a center of America's coal industry, and its lakes, hills and canyons, one can see that southern Illinois has the basis to develop its pride and identity among its residents and expand its attractiveness as a destination to visitors and those looking for a new place to live. The location of southern Illinois is also a vital asset. Many may think the southern 18 counties of Illinois are out of the way or "in the boondocks," but with three major metropolitan areas, St. Louis, Memphis and Nashville, within three hours driving distance, one can argue southern Illinois is actually a very attractive destination. Looking at a driving radius of six hours, it is easy to see that visitors from Chicago, Indianapolis, Kansas

City. Little Rock, Louisville and Cincinnati are potential audiences for southern Illinois' unique offerings.

Economic Impact of Creative Placemaking

Besides a desire to reconnect and emphasize art and culture, *Creative Placemaking* recognizes that these projects are also meant to foster economic growth and diversification. The impact of a creative economy on the local economy comes through three channels, import substitution, increasing the export base, and tapping into latent demand (Phillips, 2004; Markusen & Gadwa, 2010). The term "import substitution" simply refers to local people being able to consume cultural activities in their area rather than having to travel outside of the area to partake of those activities. Expansion of the export base is the economic term which describes tourist activity; visitors coming to an area for recreational, leisure, or arts consumption purposes will bring their money into the local economy. Latent demand is the economics term for untapped consumption possibilities present in local populations, in this case, for cultural and arts activities.

There are two reasons for latent demand; individuals may want to be consumers, but lack the resources to do so, or individuals, who may otherwise be consumers, are not because they lack information. An example of the first type of latent demand might be a southern Illinois resident who loves opera but cannot afford either the time or money to travel to St. Louis to see a performance. For the second type, consider a southern Illinois resident who knows nothing about opera and has never seen one, but would really enjoy it if she did. To meet latent demand in the first example, a successful creative placemaking initiative regularly produces and promotes a wide variety of arts activities throughout the southern Illinois region. And by expanding the portfolio of arts activities available and promoting these to a broad cross-section of the southern Illinois population, via non-traditional venues and outlets, local residents may now be exposed to

new cultural activities they had not known they would enjoy. Simply put, when given access, local residents go to events they never thought they would attend because they now have access to those activities (Phillips, 2004; Markusen & Gadwa, 2010).

The Role of Southern Illinois University

The contributions of Southern Illinois University are not to be overlooked. A university by its very nature is a draw for creatives, the artists, scientists, researchers, engineers and designers who teach there and create their own works. Also, a campus community's contribution to a young, diverse and vibrant cultural scene, lend confirmation to Florida's (2006) claim that the presence of a university is a key asset to a creative place, but not the sole determinant of a thriving creative economy. A university needs to be nestled in a community that supports and contributes to its creative energy; successful "town-gown" relations are a symbiotic partnership, not apathetic or parasitic (Florida, 2006).

Regardless of the actual relations between SIU and the City of Carbondale, Route 51's current location hinders an easy flow between campus and community. It is not only an actual physical barrier but a strong signal the division may go deeper; not the first impression one would want to give to new students, visitors and new residents coming to Carbondale and southern Illinois.

Markusen and Gadwa (2010) argue that federally-funded research shows creative placemaking activities foster greater civic engagement. Arts projects are often paired with other initiatives which better the community, such as beautification projects, transportation modernization, or other infrastructure development. The authors state the purpose of creative placemaking can be thought of as creating a portfolio of assets, including fostering a sentiment of people being connected to a place rather than a job or single employer. Such an attitude leads to higher retention of residents as employment conditions change.

The Challenge and Necessity of Partnerships

Creative placemaking is not an easy process. In fact, according to Markusen and Gadwa (2010), one of the biggest obstacles to successful projects is also one of its keys to success: the creation and maintenance of partnerships. The authors acknowledge the difficulty in approaching and facilitating the involvement of all relevant stakeholders. Relationships may need to be mended, as misunderstanding about mission and scope are typical in this process. Although a core of ‘creative initiators,’ individuals tasked with and committed to the project, is central to success, a wide base of community support is vital. Stakeholder involvement is necessary for any initiative to be viewed as a true community development project, not a scheme that benefits some citizens or businesses over others.

Creative Placemaking provides a good jumping off point when framing the challenges, keys to success and the benefits of expanding the arts and culture in a town, city, area, or region. Markusen and Gadwa state there is no clear template for success; creative placemaking by its very nature is experimental. The authors provide a set of powerful case studies, demonstrating how creative placemaking not only aided in economic recovery and development but increased a community’s sense, knowledge, pride and appreciation of itself.

III. The Creative Economy in Southern Illinois

By Kent Dolezal

Americans for the Arts, another organization promoting arts-based development, sponsors the ArtsIndex², a one-stop website for information on the consumption of the arts, the economic impact of creative industries, the distribution of arts-based activities, and the impact of nonprofits on cultural consumption. The site provides centralized arts consumption data at the county level gathered from the U.S. Census Department and Bureau of Labor Statistics surveys,

² The Arts Index can be found at ArtsIndexUSA.org

and data generated by private research organizations, like Dunn and Bradstreet. The Paul Simon Public Policy Institute was fortunate to be granted permission by Americans for the Arts to use data from its Arts Index to investigate the impact of the arts in Southern Illinois. The analysis presented will compare arts consumption across the 18 counties in Southern Illinois, Illinois as a whole, and the greater tri-state region (southern Illinois, southeast Missouri, and western Kentucky) will be presented. The focus will then turn to the arts economy and its business activity in southern Illinois, with comparisons to the relevant regions described above.

Primary Data Source

As part of its mission for promoting the arts in the United States, Americans for the Arts³ sponsors the ArtsIndex.⁴ This unique website allows users to investigate the economic impact of the arts from both a national and local perspective. A wide variety of topics are covered, including consumer spending on the arts, the prevalence and economic impact of nonprofits, solo artist and creative businesses. Utilizing data from the website and a data set provided to the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute by Americans for the Arts through the work of one of its lead researchers, Dr. Roland Kushner, what follows is a comparison of current arts activity in Jackson and Williamson counties to the rest of southern Illinois and the state, eleven counties of southeast Missouri and the eight westernmost counties of Kentucky.

³ Americans for the Arts is a non-profit organization with offices in Washington, DC and New York, NY. More can be learned about the organization at its website: <http://www.americansforthearts.org>.

⁴ Found at ArtsIndexUSA.org

Consumer expenditures

The first component of economic impact to be investigated is consumer arts spending at the county level. The consumer spending figures utilized in figures 1 and 2 are an aggregate of expenditures on admission fees, recorded media, musical instruments, photography, and reading materials. The original data was prepared by Claritas and is an estimate of the per capita expenditures on the individual categories. Although these categories do not cover the complete spectrum of arts and cultural spending, these figures do give an insight into consumer activity. The numbers for each county are not the consumer expenditure solely in his or her home county, but also account for consumption happening outside of the home county, including the Internet.

Figure 1⁵ show the 18 counties of southern Illinois compared to one another. Jackson and Williamson county residents are spending between \$320-340 on the categories listed and are among the top four counties in the region. There is clear evidence of comparatively strong consumer spending on cultural activities in most of the counties. The data do not permit us to investigate why Pulaski and Alexander counties fall below \$300. However, one could speculate that this is a result of the extreme poverty levels which predominant in those counties.

⁵ Unless otherwise noted, the horizontal placement of a county's marker is not of significance, only its placement on the vertical scale.

Figure 1

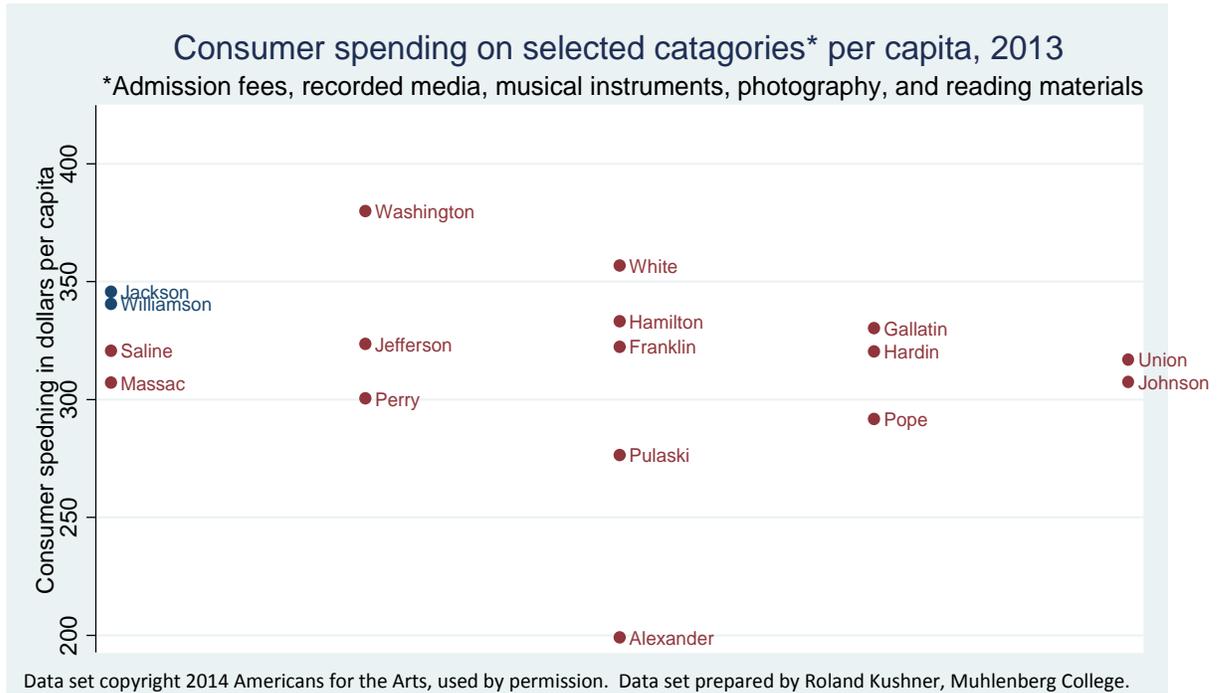
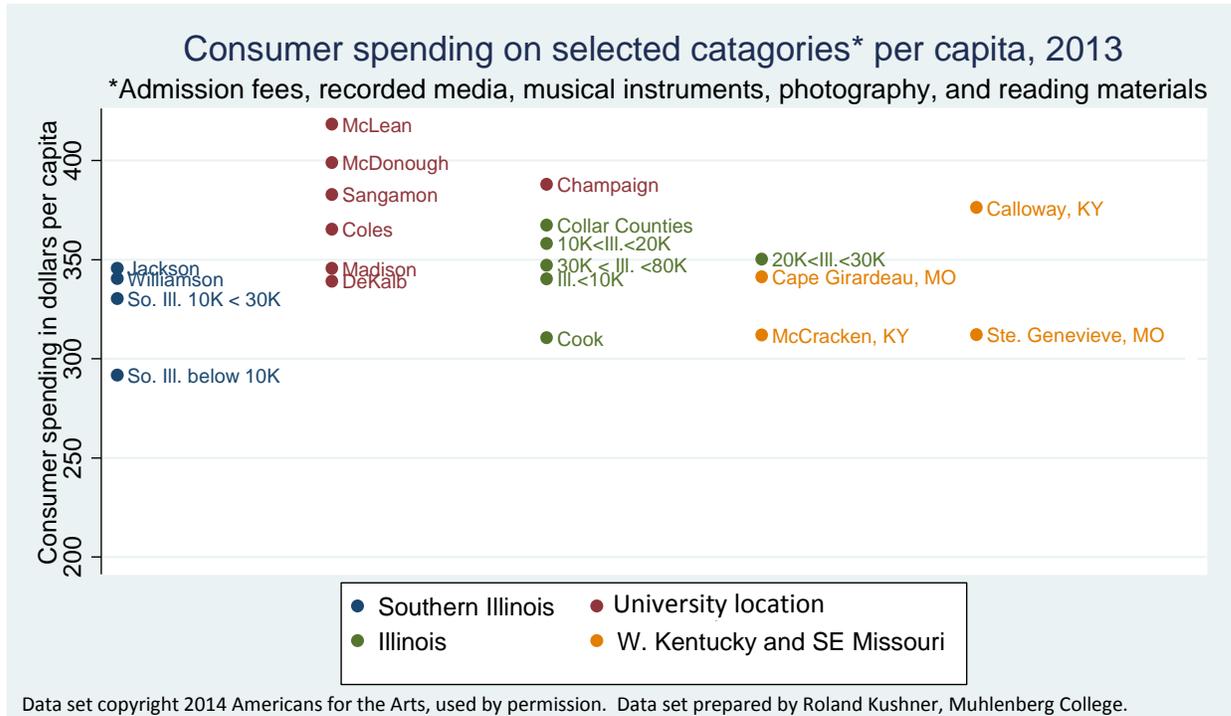


Figure 2 expands the comparison group to include the rest of Illinois and select areas of western Kentucky and southeast Missouri. The averages for southern Illinois counties grouped by population size are in the first column; the third column contains similar averages for the Illinois counties not specifically presented in the figure. When seen in this larger context, Jackson and Williamson County residents' spending is below many places in Illinois, but on par with their regional peers: McCracken, Kentucky, Cape Girardeau and Ste. Genevieve, Missouri. Those counties in the second column each contain a major state university (McLean, Illinois State University; McDonough, Western Illinois University; Sangamon, UIS-Springfield; Coles, Eastern Illinois University; Madison, SIU-E; DeKalb, Northern Illinois University). Jackson County trails almost all of those counties. One may discount those differences due to population and location, but when compared to Calloway County, Kentucky, the location of Murray State University, we can see Jackson County trails a similar area by a considerable amount.

Figure 2



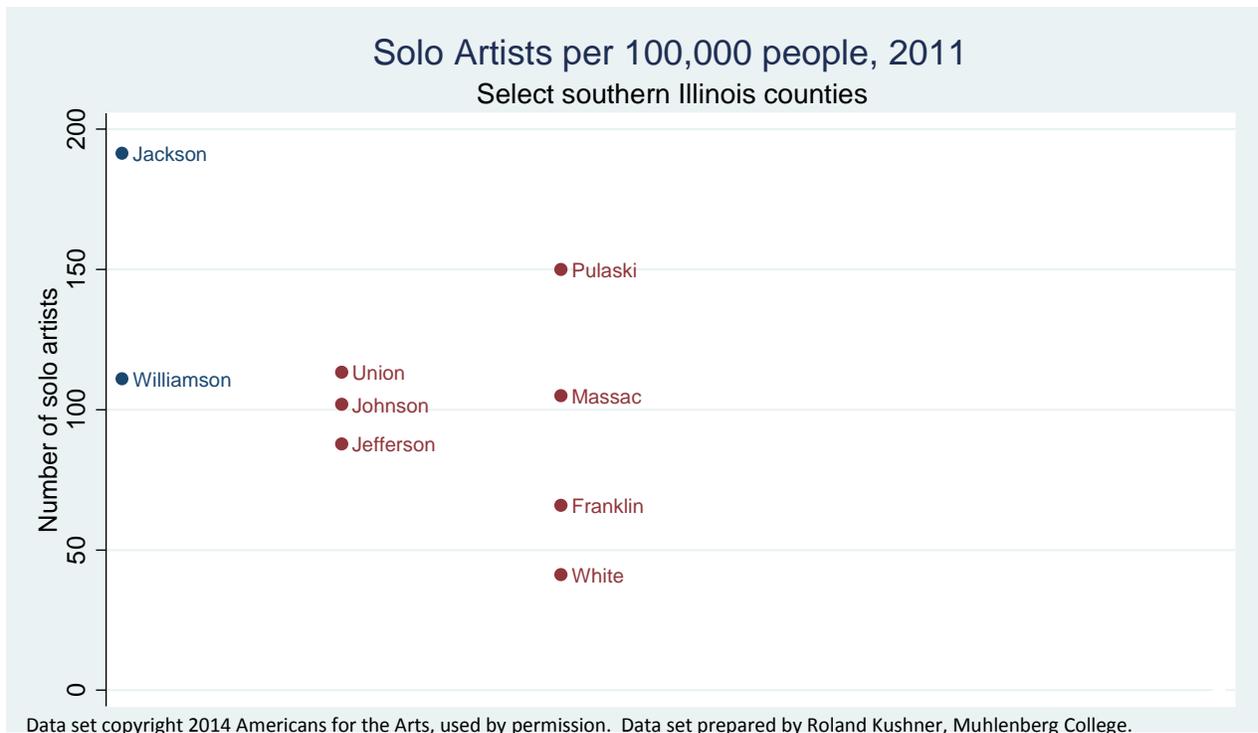
A recent poll⁶ conducted by University of Illinois Springfield Survey Research Office supports the premise that latent demand for cultural activities exists in southern Illinois. For example, with 75% of Jackson and Williamson county residents surveyed stating they do not think there are enough museums and over 60% also commenting on the need for more art exhibits and galleries, a ready audience exists for these cultural activities in the two-county region. When assessed by age of respondent, museum expansion sees over 90% support from 25-34 year olds, exactly the demographic the area needs to attract and retain. The argument is furthered by noting nearly half of all respondents would like see more music events and public lectures and discussions, respectively. Over four in ten support expansion of outdoor festivals.

⁶ The complete report may be accessed at <http://paulsimoninstitute.org/images/PDF/spring2014/psppi-jackson-williamson-county-report.pdf>.

Presence of solo artists

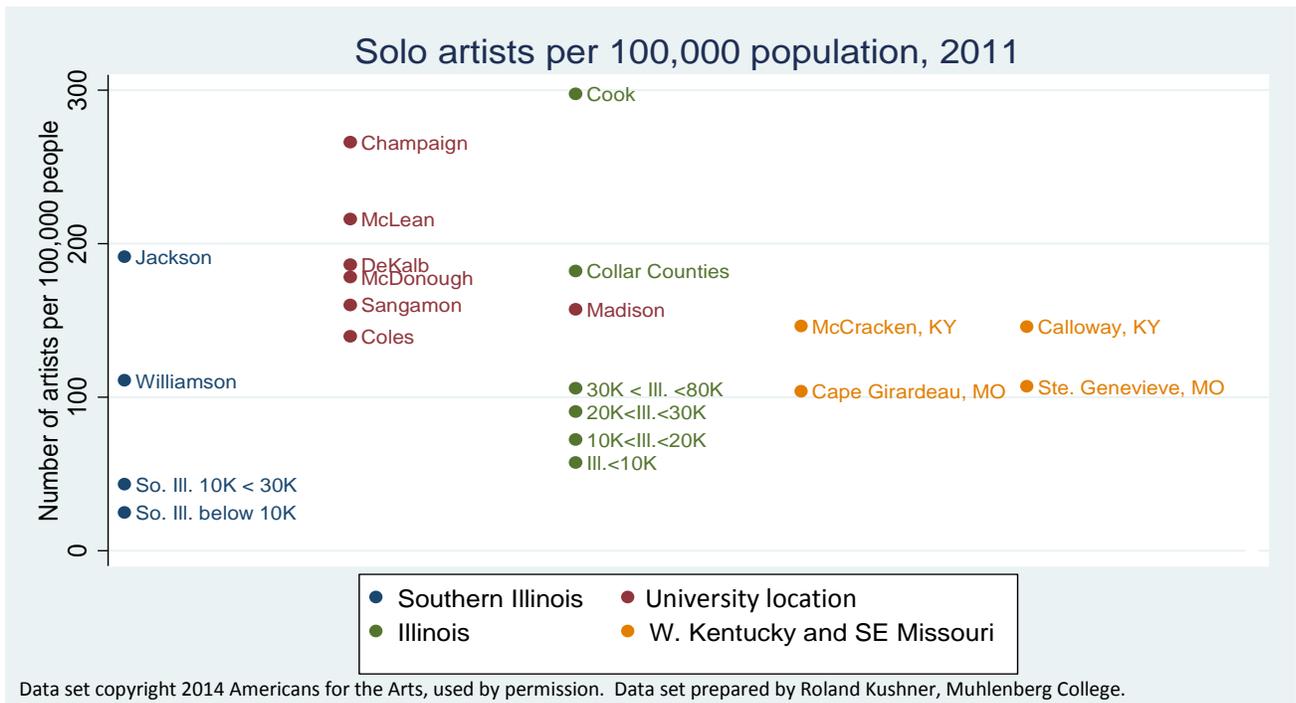
An estimation of the number of solo artists present (figure 3) in a county was created utilizing Census data and North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS). The Arts Index's creators have identified 44 of the 1800 NAICS codes that best represent solo artistic professions. The county-level census numbers are stated as if they were rates out of 100,000 people. This is done to facilitate the comparison across areas of differing population. One may argue this process may overstate the presence of solo artists in small-population counties. This may be the case, but in no way are the numbers presented supposed to be the actual number of solo artists in a respective county. They do, however, allow one to formulate a sense of the presence of solo artists in an area and facilitate the comparison of counties of similar size and/or demographics.

Figure 3



Jackson County is the solo artist center of southern Illinois (figure 3). However, when seen in a larger context (figure 4), Jackson County finds itself in the middle of its Illinois university town peers. Perhaps the most surprising revelation is that Jackson County has more solo artists per 100,000 people compared to McCracken County. McCracken County, home of Paducah and its Artist Relocation Program, has had a dramatic transformation on a formerly rundown neighborhood and is nationally recognized for this transformation and used as a case study of successful creative placemaking by Markusen and Gadwa. Yet, by this ranking system, McCracken County has fewer artists per 100,000. If Jackson County has more solo artist residents than McCracken County, why does it not have an arts community as vibrant and as

Figure 4



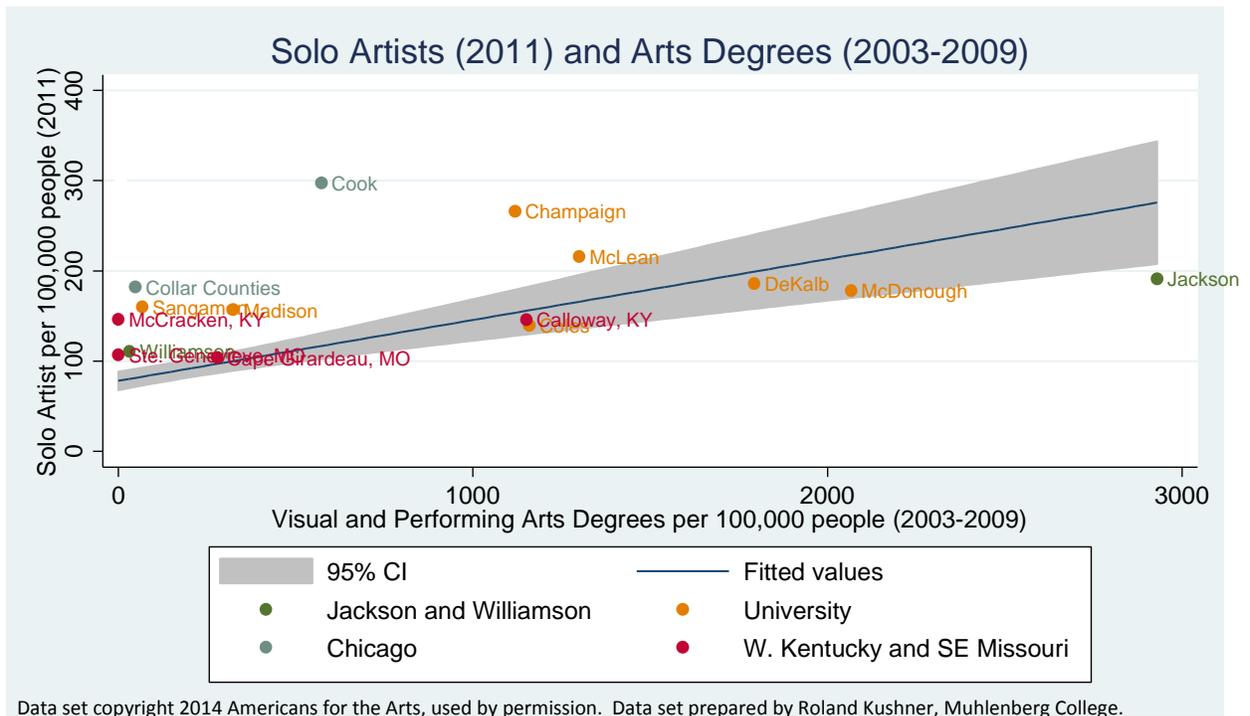
well-known? Some may speculate the arts community of Jackson County is more geographically dispersed between Carbondale, Murphysboro, Makanda, and its other small communities. If so, this dispersion bears further study since the lack of a central location for artists to congregate

may reduce their impact in comparison of the successful example of Paducah, where the arts colony is mostly located downtown near the riverfront.

Higher Education and Number of Solo Artists

Figure 5 extends the discussion on solo artists by investigating how the number of visual and performing arts degrees that have been granted in a county from 2003-2009 relate to the how many solo artists are in that county in 2011⁷. Degree data is sourced through the National Center for Educational Statistics, part of the U.S. Department of Education. Again, the data are

Figure 5



Data set copyright 2014 Americans for the Arts, used by permission. Data set prepared by Roland Kushner, Muhlenberg College. presented on the scale of per 100,000 people to facilitate comparisons and is not the actual number of degrees granted over the six-year period. The figure shows the counties illustrated in figure 4, but does not include the averages for other Illinois areas. The ‘fitted values’ line and

⁷ Visual and performing arts degrees per 100,000 people (2003-2009) appears on the horizontal axis, while the number of solo artists per 100,000 people (2011) appears on the vertical axis.

95% confidence interval are calculated from the entire data set and represent a statistically significant relationship⁸ between the two variables.

Jackson County graduates the largest number of visual and performing arts degrees per 100,000 in the sample, yet has a solo artist population well below the trend line. This means, of course, that the area is not retaining a high percentage of the arts graduates being produced at SIU. Champaign and McLean counties look as if they are able to retain a larger share of their graduates, comparatively. Many counties, including Williamson and McCracken, Kentucky, are above the trend line, yet lack significant number of graduates in their areas. One may be troubled to find that many graduates from SIU leave the area to ply their trade. An honest assessment will recognize that not all SIU arts graduates are able to have a career in southern Illinois. An actor, for instance, would be better served by relocating to Chicago than remaining in Carbondale. However, there are many arts graduates, such as ceramicists, glass artists, painters and writers, who could stay and be successful in southern Illinois.

The Presence of Creative Industries

Determining the number and impact of creative industries is addressed in the next three figures. These industries are defined through 644 codes in the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC). Although this classification has been discontinued by government agencies in favor of NAICS, Dun & Bradstreet has continued to utilize SIC in its county-level data collection.

Figure 6 presents the number of creative businesses per 100,000 people. This categorization of industries broadens the discussion beyond arts and cultural establishments, showing Jackson and Williamson counties well situated in comparison to other university counties and those of southeast Missouri and Calloway, Kentucky.

⁸ In a linear regression, estimated by ordinary least squares, arts degrees were shown to be a significant (at the 1% level) factor in the number of solo artists. The coefficient is positive (0.0673) with a t-score of 5.54, $R^2=0.186$.

Figure 6



Unfortunately, data on the number of degrees granted that contribute to these industries is not available, leaving the topic of retention of graduates unexplored. McCracken County, Kentucky shows impressive results from its creative placemaking endeavors and nearly matches Cook County in the number of creative industries per 100,000 people.

When viewed as a share of all business (Figure 7), the creative industries comprise a greater share in Jackson County than Williamson. This is in contrast to Figure 6 where it looks as if Williamson County has more establishments than Jackson County; this cannot be verified by the data percent. In the broader comparison, five of seven university counties have higher shares than Jackson County. Against regional peers, Jackson County is second to McCracken County, while Williamson is at par with Calloway, Kentucky and Ste. Genevieve, Missouri. Data for Cook County are not available.

Figure 7



Finally, Figure 8 presents the share of all employees comprised by workers in the creative industries. Williamson County shows a higher percentage than Jackson County, but some of this difference may come from the fact that practicing solo artists do not count as employees. Again, Cook County and McCracken County lead the rankings, being the only two counties represented with over 2% of each respective county's employees working in creative industries.

Figure 8



The data presented from Americans for the Arts illustrates that the potential exists for the expansion of arts and culture in the local economy. With an emphasis on increasing the exposure and access to local artists and increased retention of young artistic talent being trained at SIU, southern Illinois can capitalize on its uniqueness by attracting visitors, increasing the cultural experiences of its residents, and attracting new people to migrate to the region. The opportunities present are best encapsulated in a quote from Markusen and Gawda (2010, 6).

Arts and culture at this historic juncture are proving their power as economic and social catalysts. Through smart collaborations with other sectors—government, private business, foundations—they are creating opportunities for rejuvenation and economic development, anchored in and tailored to diverse communities. The arts can be a fulcrum for the creative transformation of American cities.

IV. Downtown Carbondale and the SIU Consumer

By Lindsay Knaus, Tenisha Miller, Dakota Nelson, Joshua Rivera,
Ivan Robbins, and Daric Thompson

When looking at opportunities for economic growth, southern Illinois has many small cities, towns and rural communities at its disposal. Carbondale is especially ripe with opportunities due to its population size and the presence of SIU. To help in investigating one of Carbondale's largest customer bases, SIU students, staff, and faculty, the authors created an online survey that was distributed to the university community in October 2013 (see Appendix A). Comprised of over 800 respondents, the survey assessed perceptions of the downtown area and the respondents' patronage of downtown businesses, including which goods and services the respondents use along with those they would like to see increased. Accompanying the SIU Consumer Survey (SIU-CS), several downtown businesses were interviewed regarding customer trends, marketing, and the unique challenges present in downtown Carbondale, especially the area of downtown closest to campus, known as the Strip. The findings of these two surveys illustrate both the challenges and opportunities present in the downtown area (Knaus et al., 2013).

Carbondale is the largest city in the Carbondale-Marion-Herrin Metropolitan Statistical Area (CMH), having 26,241 residents of the CMH's total population of 126,827. When one expands the commercial area to be inclusive of the surrounding counties of Franklin, Saline and Perry, the population grows to 212,855, with Carbondale remaining the largest city (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014).

Along with being one of the commercial centers of southern Illinois, Carbondale is also home to Southern Illinois University (SIU) with a total enrollment of nearly 17,964 students, 13,351 undergraduates and 5,263 graduate and professional students. SIU also employs more than 5,000 faculty and staff. Besides the day-to-day commercial activity of its students, staff and

faculty, SIU also drives the local economy by attracting visitors for sporting and cultural events (Institutional Research and Studies, 2014). With the presence of these factors present, Carbondale is one of the economic drivers of the local area's economy.

Its downtown, however, isn't so highly regarded. One respondent to the SIU-CS put it rather bluntly, "The Strip is hideous, and it honestly hurts my eyes to even drive through there." Other respondents stated the downtown needed to be "cleaner" and be more welcoming to pedestrians (Knaus et al., 2013). These same sentiments are not just limited to the SIU-CS. A sampling of online reviews and forums mention Carbondale being "sort of a crummy town" and "pretty terrible," while others talk specifically about the downtown area "the strip/downtown . . . absolutely needs to be revitalized," "strip area has been pretty depressing," and "the strip could sure use sprucing up" (*StudentsReview*, 2014; *SalukiNation.net*, 2014).

With an aging core, a sterile streetscape, and a major highway running through its heart, downtown Carbondale has challenges that may seem too difficult or complex to overcome. However, when one looks at the diversity of businesses present, the access to parking, and a significant customer base, in the shape of SIU students, staff, and faculty literally across the street, downtown Carbondale shows it has promise to shake the negative perceptions and re-establish itself as a culture and entertainment center of southern Illinois.

SIUs Impact on the Local and Regional Economy

As one of the region's largest employers, SIU supports over 12,000 jobs either directly or indirectly in the Southern Illinois region. SIU also contributes over \$800 million in expenditures to the area, with over \$100 million going to the local economy from operating expenses such as capital expenditures, permanent improvements, and research grants. Figures reported indicate SIU paid over \$300 million in salaries and fringe benefits to its nearly 7000 employees in 2010, compensating each employee roughly \$49,000. In addition to the spending potential of SIU

employees, students hold over \$200 million in purchasing power. In 2010, this calculates as each student having over \$11,000 at his or her disposal. These contributions greatly aid growth in the local economy. While SIU does not pay any state taxes, employees, students, staff, and any visitors do contribute in the form of taxes paid (Sharma, Diaby & Harfst, 2011).

Annually, it is estimated that for every \$1.00 of appropriations from the state to SIU, \$0.41 returns to the state and local governments in tax revenues and generates \$2.90 of annual economic activity in the Southern Illinois economy. The university and its constituents also contribute non-financially to the region, providing a workforce that contributes strongly in the areas of economic development, health and social services, culture, and volunteerism. Nearly 20% of SIU students are engaged in volunteer efforts, collectively contributing 50,965 hours of volunteering in 2011 (Sharma, Diaby & Harfst, 2011).

Downtown Parking

While many residents and consumers hold the belief that congested or lack of parking in the downtown area of Carbondale is an issue (Knaus et al., 2013), research performed by the city shows that despite popular belief, parking is plentiful and available. The City of Carbondale directly observed metered parking lots in the downtown area to assess a lots' total usage versus its potential usage. The study also accounted for the revenue of parking permits for the individual lots. This consideration made a large difference when looking at usage percentages, as one lot saw utilization of 117% with 23% being the next highest total; two lots were utilized at less than 10% of potential. Even though the misconception exists parking downtown is difficult, in truth metered parking lots are not being used anywhere near their full potential (See Table 1).

Table 1

Lot	Meter Revenue, FY 13	Permit Revenue, FY 13	Total	Usage
6	\$454	\$217	\$671	5%
9	\$4,010	\$2,071	\$6,081	13%
12	\$1,976	\$31,888	\$33,864	117%
13	\$4,909	\$1,325	\$6,234	9%
20	\$7,492	\$0	\$7,492	15%
21	\$4,500	\$0	\$4,500	23%
5	\$2,695	\$0	\$2,695	17%

Source: City of Carbondale Economic Development Coordinator Gary Williams.

Downtown Businesses

Downtown Carbondale is home to a diverse spectrum of businesses. In order to account for all business in the area, data were obtained from on-the-ground surveys to ensure that all business listed online or in local newspaper were still open. The downtown area hosts a surprising number of businesses, totaling 115 individual stores. The service sector dominates the area with 53 stores making up 46% of all businesses in the area. Casual and sit-down dining make up the second largest category at 24% of businesses with 28 stores. The third largest offerings are 25 retail establishments, totaling 21 percent of downtown businesses. Surprisingly, bars are the smallest percentage of the downtown market with 10 different bars making up 8 percent of the market. This is probably a result of the relatively tight rein the city has kept on the number of liquor permits issued in Carbondale over the years.

In order to understand how businesses perceive current SIU purchasing power trends, we took a qualitative approach and interviewed nine businesses in the downtown area to hear their

view on students' purchasing habits. Businesses from each industry were represented in our downtown area survey. The questions asked included:

1. What types of customer trends they noticed?
2. If they had regular customers, and of those regular customers how many of them were students?
3. What were some of the advantages of their current location and how advertising was used to bring students to their establishments?
4. From these questions we were able to derive how location, customer trends, and business practices intermingle to procure the student dollar.

Businesses interviewed were divided into three classifications: restaurants, service, and retail. The customer trends noted by these businesses, regardless of sector, were surprisingly similar and the experiences of the restaurants interviewed typifies the experience of downtown businesses.

New Kahala, Don Taco, China Express, and Harbaugh's Cafe were chosen to be representatives for the restaurants present downtown. The similarities between these businesses included their business windows and customer trends. Three restaurants, New Kahala, Don Taco, and China Express, noted an early business window, typically between 10am-3pm, accounting for most of their profits weekdays. These restaurants also depend on local business employees for lunchtime orders to make up a significant part of a day's revenue. During summer and winter breaks, these customers help to make up for lulls experienced when students leave. Weekends are crucial in maintaining the stability of downtown restaurants. To make up for revenue lost during SIU breaks, some restaurants modify their business hours or close completely. The exception to these rules of adaptation is Harbaugh's Café, a homey café which maintains high customer loyalty year round.

Although students account for a large proportion of regular customers, downtown restaurants depend on the local population to patronize their establishments. Due to fluctuations in the student population, businesses rely on the local population as a consistent customer base. Nevertheless, the purchasing power of the students is substantial enough to sustain a business if it is willing to make certain adaptations.

Due to the personal nature of most service businesses offered in the downtown area, mainly barber shops, beauty, nail and tanning salons, the local residents account for the majority of business regulars. However, the SIU student population does play a role in the longevity of these businesses, by establishing a new client base of regulars during active school sessions.

Advertising often builds the foundation to any successful business, whether it is print, radio, Internet, television, or word of mouth. A portion of the businesses interviewed relied on word of mouth as a primary means of advertising. Due to the fact that word of mouth was the only form of advertising for some downtown businesses, good customer service plays a pivotal role in not only obtaining customer loyalty but also as the basis of its marketing strategy. One business relied solely on Facebook for its advertising. In completing a walk-through of the downtown area other outside advertising was visible. Other businesses rely on eye-catching methods, such as bubbles or sidewalk signs to draw in the student pedestrian.

The primary assertion that can be made from the results of this survey is that the student population helps cultivate, maintain, and stabilize businesses in the downtown area, at least for those that are able to adapt to the seasonal fluctuations in student population. Attracting and retaining local residents is the basis of many downtown businesses and local residents are critical customers during student population lulls. Even without a discussion of visitors to downtown Carbondale, be they tourists, residents from near-by towns, or parents visiting their kids at SIU, one can see that Downtown Carbondale, as a whole, cannot tailor itself to one group of

customers, but must be willing to try strategies that expand the present customer base while presenting visitors with goods, services, customer service, and attractive public spaces that will make them want to come back.

V. Examples of Success

By Nicole Sack, Deidra Davis, and Kelsey Fuller

"A good place contributes to the standing of a good university, and a good university contributes to the economic development and cultural vitality of the place in which it is located." (Bromley, 2006)

Neither a university nor its home city can succeed on its own; it is a partnership based in necessity. Our focus now turns towards examples of transformative town-gown relationships in the cases of Kent, Ohio, home of Kent State University, and Clemson, South Carolina, home of Clemson University. Through these models of positive change, Carbondale and SIU are presented with illustrations of how they can stimulate positive economic growth, improve the aesthetic value of the city and the attractiveness of the university, and foster a relationship based on collaboration, mutual support, and respect.

Kent State University in Kent, Ohio

Despite being the second largest university in Ohio, Kent State University had suffered stagnation, beginning in 1970s. The flashpoint that changed this small town outside Cleveland was when four students were shot and killed by Ohio National Guardsmen during an anti-Vietnam demonstration on May 4, 1970. The city of Kent spent much of the last four decades retreating from this history. With this incident shaping the perception of Kent all these many

years, housing stock worsened and economic development in the downtown stalled (Schneider, 2013).

In 1975, the physical relationship between Kent and Kent State was harmed by the construction of the Haymaker Parkway – a five-lane bypass running through downtown. This roadway created a physical barrier to go with the frayed psychological bonds, further cutting off the campus from the downtown. In the presence of these obstacles, economic development efforts were sporadic and poorly executed. While the city would compile, though not execute, a comprehensive plan every five years, the city was mostly “content to have a slowly evolving mix of sedate shops and family restaurants that attracted a trickle of student and faculty from the university” (Schneider, 2013).

Kent’s New Policy Responses

Beginning in 2005, change came to both city and university in the form of new leadership. Much of the new development Kent is now experiencing is credited to Kent’s City Manager, Dave Ruller, and the President of the Kent State University, Lester A. Lefton. Both were outsiders -- Ruller most recently coming from the city of Alexandria, Virginia while Lefton had previously worked as vice president at Tulane University – who saw there were problems needing to be addressed. Both also had a spirit of cooperation and mutual interest in Town & Gown success (Tucker, 2012).

Among the issues Kent needed to overcome were:

- A five-lane bypass constructed in 1975 that ran through Kent’s downtown and created a physical barrier further cutting off the campus from the town.
- An aging core
- A haunted past

With the emphasis of nurturing the town and gown concept, Kent's leaders aggressively worked to reshape its downtown to recruit and retain young professionals as well as Kent State students, faculty and staff. Kent began with a new comprehensive plan in 2005. Instead of just placing it on a shelf, they treated it as a living document. The city did a strength, weakness, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis, set strategic direction, and action planned. Beginning in 2008, several redevelopment projects in the downtown area, some of which had been discussed for decades, were put into motion and resulted in nearly \$110 million in total investment from public and private sources. Key components of the redevelopment include Acorn Alley, a large retail and pedestrian plaza, the Kent Central Gateway Transportation Complex, and the KSU Hotel and Conference Center (Schneider, 2013).

The first of these key components was the Phoenix Project, a development privately financed by Kent resident Ron Burbick that renovated and expanded a section of commercial space along East Main Street. Included in the project was construction of a pedestrian alleyway lined with small shops, eventually known as Acorn Alley, which opened in 2009. A second phase of Acorn Alley opened the next year (Schneider, 2013).

The Kent Central Gateway, is a \$26 million multi-modal center that not only combines regional transportation, but mixed-use space for retail, business and parking. The facility opened in August 2013. Of the total cost, \$20 million was paid through a federal TIGER Grant, secured in 2009 -- the most competitive of all the application years (U.S. Department of Transportation, 2011).

The Gateway project created a new bus transfer facility in downtown Kent with parking spaces to support future development. The facility includes commercial space and bicycle storage to improve transit accessibility in Kent and linkages to Cleveland and Akron. In addition

to improving travel options, the facility features indoor and outdoor waiting areas, public restrooms, and a passenger pickup/drop-off area.

Another anchor to the redevelopment is the Kent State University Hotel and Conference Center. This 94-room hotel and meeting center opened in June 2013. The important thing to note is the role of the KSU Foundation. This \$15.6 million project is funded through the Kent State University Foundation but is dependent on investments from public and private organizations, Specifically the Pizzuti Companies of Columbus, City of Kent, Development Fund of the Western Reserve, which is controlled by the Development Finance Authority of Summit County, and Finance Fund. Additionally, the hotel will also serve as a learning space for students, particularly for those enrolled in university's hospitality management degree program (Vargo, 2012).

These projects have resulted in total enrollment at Kent State University increasing from 22,944 students in Fall 2008 to 28,998 students in Fall 2013 – a 26% increase. The city and university were honored with the 2013 Larry Abernathy Award from the International Town–Gown Association in recognition of positive town–gown cooperation and collaboration.

Human Capital

In addition to financial investments, we found that Kent State University, made wise use of its available human capital. One way was through KSU's center for public administration and public policy -- which has a full staff dedicated to providing technical assistance to governmental bodies and nonprofit organizations. The center assigns one of its graduate assistants to work on community projects. Additionally, KSU has embraced service-learning programs. The Office of Experiential Education and Civic Engagement was created out of the efforts of KSU faculty members. Students are able to earn course credit for their work in the community.

Clemson University in Clemson, South Carolina

We found a similar approach to faculty and student involvement implemented at Clemson University where they offer a master's degree in city and regional planning as well as PhD programs in planning, design and the built environment. Clemson University is also a leader in town and gown relations.

The City and the University

When there are authority figures with contrasting ideologies, conflicts among them will rise. However, the inverse can occur when persons of power work together for the benefit of enlightened self-interest. This was the case over 25 years ago for the leaders of Clemson University and the city of Clemson.

For years, the President of Clemson University Walter T. Cox and the Mayor of Clemson Larry Abernathy met, and from their regular meetings arose the creation of the Clemson Joint City-University Advisory Board (JCUAB) comprised of members of the city and university communities. As a result of these meetings of JCUAB, the International Town and Gown Association was created in 2006.

The *International Town and Gown Association* charges university leaders, city officials, students and community members to collaborate in order to form programs, academic research and services that are mutually beneficial and effective for the city and the university. In response to this union, Clemson has flourished and continue to rank high, #1 in 2014, in *The Princeton Review* for the category titled “Town and Gown Relations Are Great.”

Planning and the University

The Department of Planning, Development and Preservation (PDP), at Clemson University, has graduate degree programs, Master’s and PhD programs, devoted towards City and Regional Planning. The PDP’s professional degree programs “allows the department to engage in the full spectrum of land and community management, planning, and design studies. These programs are considered interdisciplinary, which incorporates various disciplines across the campus for their collective instruction of the programs’ students in order to produce diversely educated individuals capable of handling various *real world* developmental task” (*Clemson University, South Carolina, 2014*).

One of the graduate programs, the City and Regional Planning Master’s Degree Program (CRPP), has a primary mission “to serve the local, state, regional, national and global environment by integrating theory and practice in dealing with challenges of community growth and change in an increasingly diverse society by engaging in research and service activities that address critical planning issues” (*Clemson University, 2014*)

VI. Future Options for Carbondale

Another option to increase the aesthetics and economic vitality of the downtown area of Carbondale would be to, once again, work with SIU, but in a spirit that would foster continual, long-term benefits to both the campus and the city’s downtown.

In the city of Carbondale, internships with students from Southern Illinois University are sporadic at best. This comes as no surprise; just dropping interns at the door is not a cure all. There needs to be management, training and supervision. Usually, if this is not to take away from current duties, new positions must be created. That is one reason why Kent's programs have been successful -- because faculty and staff from the university supervise the work.

Just as Clemson University has a degree program in which its students actively participate in the region's planning and development projects, it would behoove SIU to incorporate some elements of this program. Should they do so, this would be a great opportunity for the city of Carbondale to create an alliance with the university.

TIF #2

Carbondale has an excellent opportunity to capitalize on brick and mortar improvements in downtown. In December 2012, the Carbondale City Council created the "Downtown Illinois-University Corridor Tax Increment Financing District #2." TIF #2 encompasses a 134-acre area, which primarily straddles Illinois and University Avenues and is bordered by Willow Street to the north and Park Avenue to the south. This is the latest economic incentive tool to encourage redevelopment of the city's aging core. According to the city of Carbondale, five property owners have entered into redevelopment agreements with the city in the first ten months of TIF #2. A sixth development using TIF #2 funding is slated for the 710 S. Illinois Avenue property in Carbondale.

In March 2014, the Carbondale City Council agreed to enter into a development agreement with Tartan Realty, which has plans to build a four-story, mixed-use building with space available for retail shops or restaurants on the ground floor and residential use on the upper floors (Duncan, 2014). As this paper goes to press, the old 710 property has been razed and a

new mixed-use building is rising in its place. It can be the start of a new chapter in the history of downtown Carbondale.

During the 23-year-life of the TIF #2 district the city of Carbondale anticipates the area generating a total of \$44.2 million in new tax increments to be reinvested in the area. The base Equalized Assessed Value for TIF #2 is \$10.4 million. Any valuation above the base EAV is redirected into the city's special TIF fund. This money can be used to pay for certain development costs within the designated district – such as public improvements to streets, sidewalks, street lighting, water and sewer lines. Incentives can also be offered to private developers, such as reimbursement (up to 75 percent) for buying property, demolishing buildings, remodeling or other redevelopment activities.

While the mechanism for spurring more development is in place, a plan of how to best maximize this new influx of interest and revenue has yet to be determined. It should be noted that the TIF #2 area extends south on Highway 51 to Park Avenue. Currently, this area is occupied by the SIU Blue Barracks, used by the university's art department. If the current “downtown” is unwilling or unable to be redeveloped, there is the opportunity to move the commercial district further south and closer to the campus. However, leaving the current Strip without improvement would not bring the comprehensive reforms that have spurred developments in our other case-study towns.

Transportation Center Investments

Carbondale should reconsider the design and function of the current Amtrak Station on Illinois Avenue. Amtrak ridership is at an all-time high and currently, between 10,000 and 13,000 people pass through the Carbondale Station each month. A total of 140,000 passengers boarded and disembarked at the Carbondale Station in fiscal year 2012 (Amtrak Fact Sheet).

Instead of a squat-1980s building surrounded by chain-link fencing, Carbondale can pursue grants to transform the station into a landmark that greets visitors, creates a positive first impression and fosters civic pride. Additionally, a newly designed station could integrate other transportation options such as Greyhound, The Jackson County Transit District, Saluki Express and taxis for newcomers, guests or traveling residents.

Transportation Investments Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Grants are being utilized right now in Illinois cities such as in Alton, Joliet and Bloomington-Normal. The Normal Illinois Uptown Station opened June 2012 to anchor the redevelopment of the commercial district. The initial concept to completion was an 11-year process. And the end result was a 68,000 square-foot transportation center that interconnects the Bloomington-Normal Public Transit system, Amtrak, airport shuttles, taxis and bicycles. Besides serving as a new neighborhood landmark -- as the building features a prominent clock tower -- the complex contains retail and municipal office space. Additionally it houses a 380-car parking garage. The \$45.6 million Normal Illinois Uptown Station project was funded through a variety of sources including a \$22 million TIGER Grant; \$10.5 million in grants from FTA's Bus and Bus Facilities program; \$13.2 million from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and bonds issued by the town (Great American Stations, 2013).

VII. Concluding remarks

The City of Carbondale cannot be accused of not exploring different options for economic growth. Over the years it has commissioned a hotel feasibility study, planning for a new multi-modal station, marketing plans and the expansion of TIF districts. However, there is still a need to bring these ideas to fruition.

Taking a page from the Kent State playbook, there are five major factors that call for immediate attention:

- Increased cooperation between the City of Carbondale, SIU, and southern Illinoisians
- The creation of a multi-modal station,
- Increased streetscaping,
- Improved pedestrian connections between campus and city, and
- The development of a downtown master plan

The most important of these is increasing the cooperation between the City of Carbondale and SIU. As demonstrated in both Kent and Clemson, a collaborative partnership sends a strong signal to residents, students and occasional visitors that Carbondale and southern Illinois is a place that is proud of who it is and what it has, and is eager to share with others. A strong collaborative partnership also allows citizens greater access to participate in policy change through either SIU or the City of Carbondale. Working together, the two organizations have the opportunity to be role models and inspirations for additional growth, fitting with SIU's educational mission and complementing Carbondale's position as a regional economic center.

As mentioned in *Creative Placemaking* (Markusen & Gadwa, 2010), transforming a city or region is more than just attracting new jobs. At its heart, it is about reminding the people who live there why the place they call home is important and the sharing of this feeling with visitors and new residents. It is growth and development which respects the people who are already there and helps create an environment open to expansion, revitalization, and change. With the unique attributes and assets present in southern Illinois and Carbondale and the examples set by Kent, Ohio, Clemson, South Carolina, Paducah, Kentucky and others, a dynamic transformation of the region is possible, but it takes citizens, business leaders and public officials, collaborating, to bring it to fruition.

VIII. Acknowledgements

This work is based on the following papers:

Expanding the Economy in Southern Illinois through Creative Placemaking

By

Kent Dolezal

Southern Illinois University Carbondale Purchasing Power

By

Lindsay Knaus, Tenisha Miller, Dakota Nelson, Joshua Rivera, Ivan Robbins, Daric Thompson

Carbondale Downtown Development:

A Study of Successful “Town and Gown” Strategies to Revitalize the Aesthetic Quality and Economic Vitality of Carbondale, Illinois

By

Nicole Sack, Deidra Davis and Kelsey Fuller

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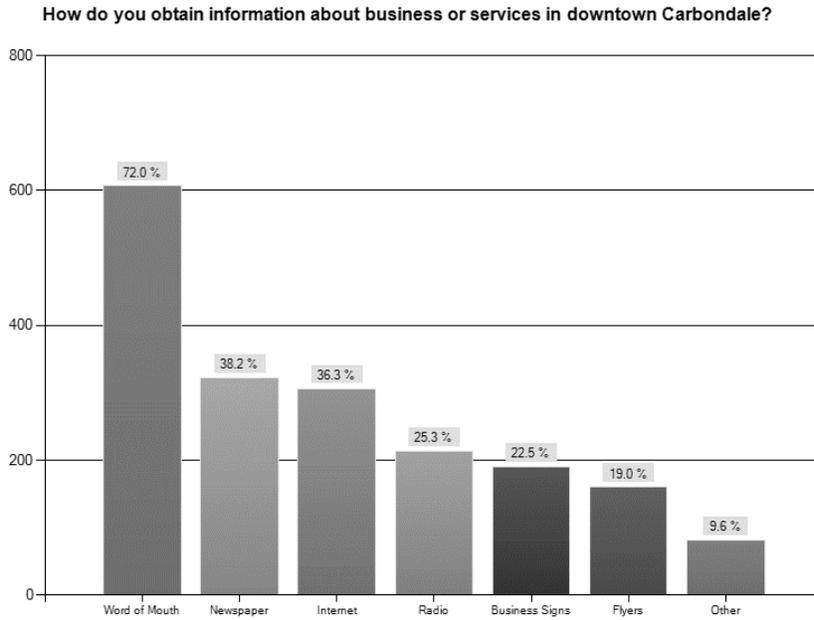
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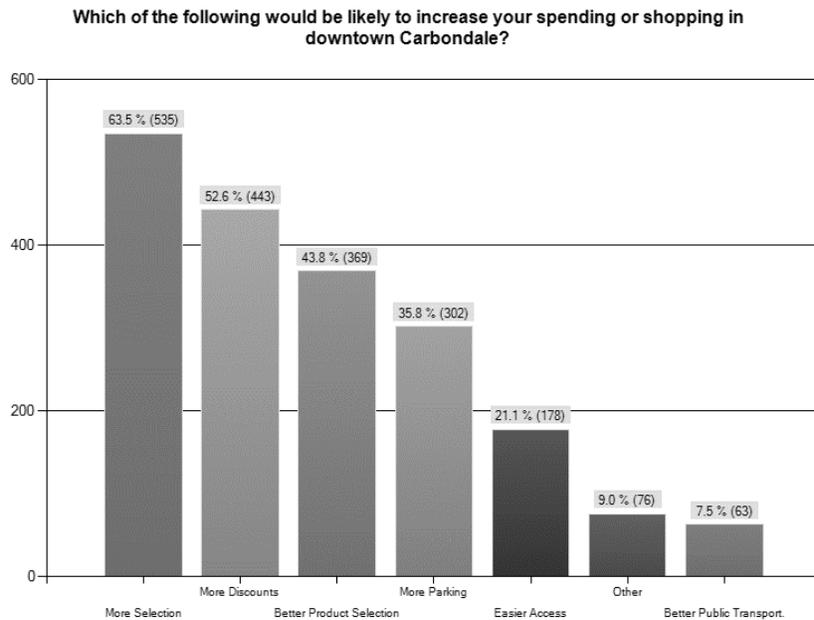
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Appendix A

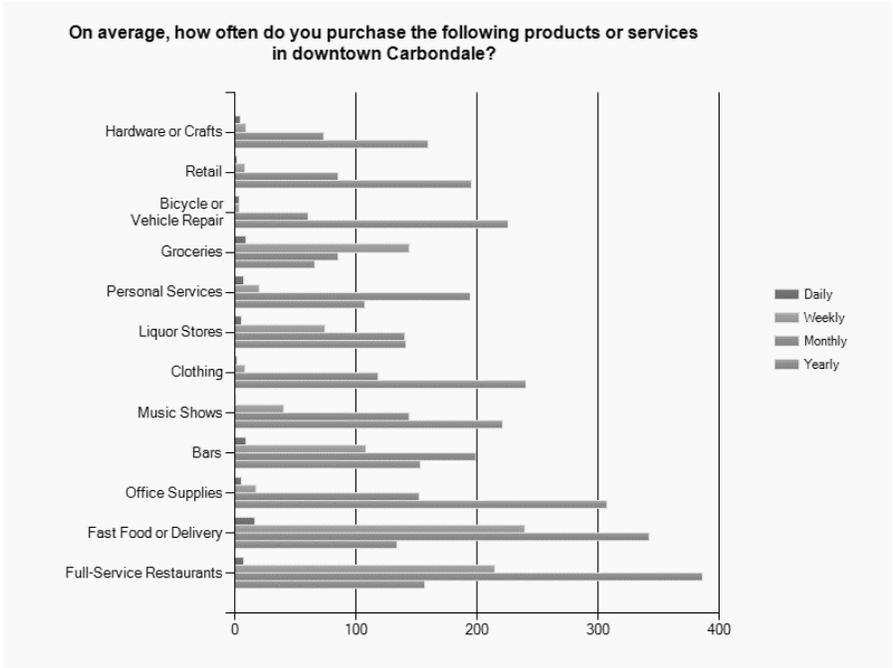
X. The Questionnaire



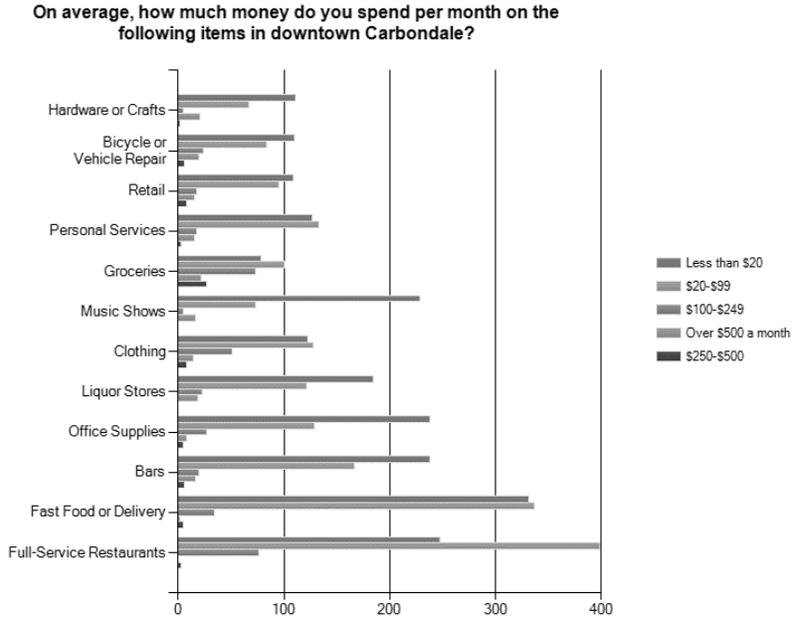
N=844 [Y-Axis reflects maximum total number of respondents per category]



N=844 [Y-Axis reflects maximum total number of respondents per category]

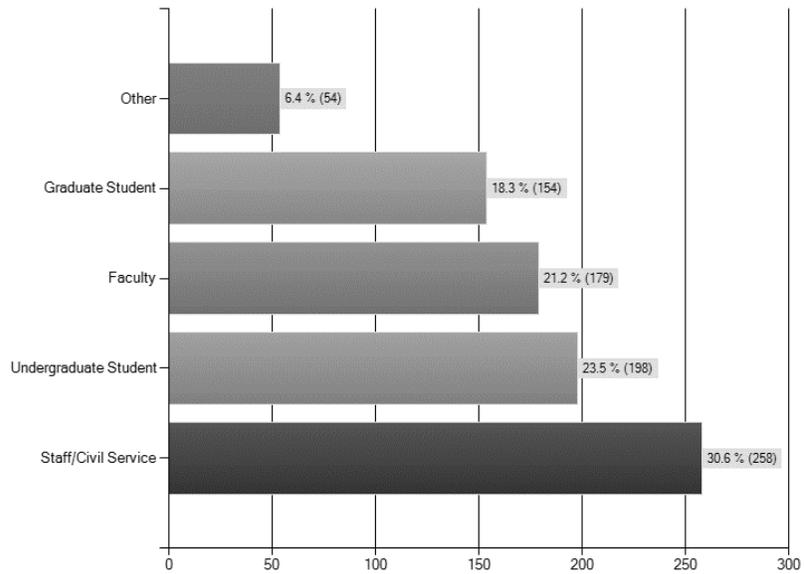


N=844 [Y-Axis reflects maximum total number of respondents per category]



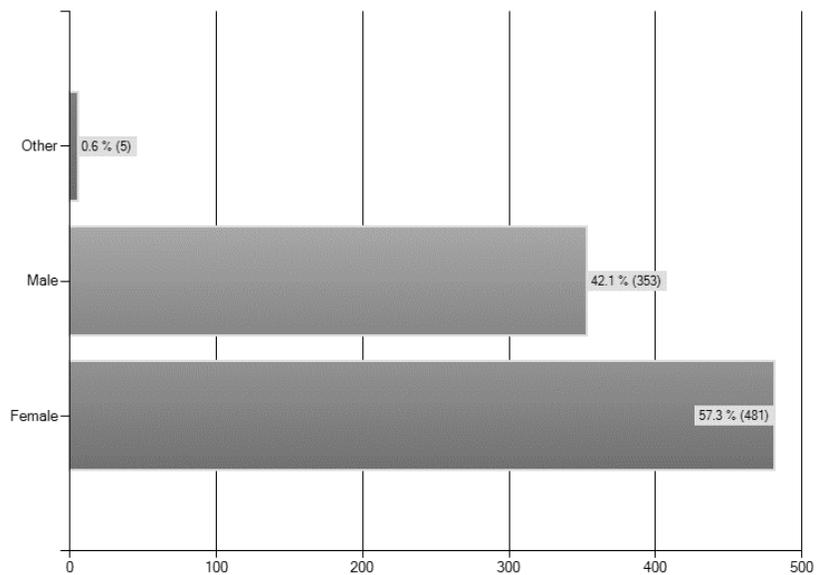
N=844 [Y-Axis reflects maximum total number of respondents per category]

What is your current title at Southern Illinois University Carbondale?



N=844 [Y-Axis reflects maximum total number of respondents per category]

What is your gender?



N=844 [Y-Axis reflects maximum total number of respondents per category]