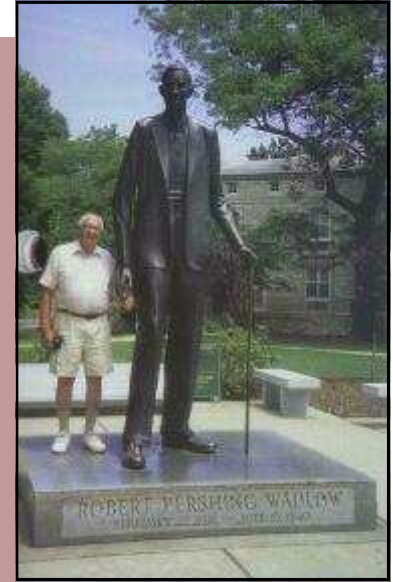
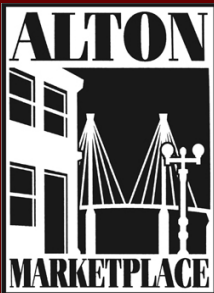


# New Business Incentive Package



*A community based, not-for-profit, volunteer organization dedicated to securing the economic vitality and aesthetic quality of the district.*



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**A comprehensive informational packet to aid entrepreneurs looking to start a business in historic Downtown Alton, Illinois**

# Alton Marketplace Association

**Alton Marketplace** is a community-based not-for-profit volunteer organization dedicated to securing the economic vitality and aesthetic quality of the Downtown District. While our focus of economic development and historical restoration is limited to downtown Alton, our membership is comprised of businesses and individuals from throughout the community who believe in the importance of preserving and maintaining the character and beauty of downtown Alton.

**As a volunteer-driven organization, we commit to the following guiding principles:**

- **Create vitality downtown**
- **Build upon historic assets**
- **Provide value to our constituents**
- **Collaborate with all those vested in downtown Alton**
- **Ensure the future success of downtown Alton**



*Alton Riverfront, as seen from the Clark Bridge*

Alton Marketplace actively works with other local organizations, city and county government, and hundreds of community volunteers to reach our goal of an improved quality of life for all citizens and businesses in the Alton area.

*Photo descriptions from front cover, clockwise from top left:*

- *Temple Banquet Facility at 3rd & State Street in downtown Alton (Former Masonic Temple)*
- *Statue of Robert Wadlow, Alton's Gentle Giant (1918-1940) at 8'11", he was the tallest man in the world*
- *Historic Snyder building at 3rd & Piasa Street in downtown Alton, currently under renovation*
- *Clark Bridge, and the Alton Marina in Riverfront Park*

Our organization is comprised of four committees, one dedicated to each of Illinois Main Street's 4-point approach



# Illinois Main Street

**History of the Main Street Program** — Alton Marketplace, founded in 1996, is the local affiliate of the Illinois Main Street Program, which was organized to help revitalize deteriorated central business districts. It is based on the model developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1977. Illinois Main Street began in 1993 with nine cities and now has 69 active Main Street communities.

The Main Street Program stresses the importance of successful, innovative programs—or “small steps”—working toward a common goal and not large “big fix” scenarios. Illinois Main Street provides technical assistance through design and architectural assistance, workshops, and statewide conferences that help local Main Street communities in their work toward a better quality of life.

Main  
Street’s

4-Point  
Approach

To Downtown  
Revitalization

**Promotions** – sells a positive image of the commercial district and encourages consumers and investors to live, work, shop, play and invest in the Main Street district. By marketing a district's unique characteristics to residents, investors, business owners, and visitors, an effective promotional strategy forges a positive image through advertising, retail promotional activity, special events, and marketing campaigns.

**Design**—creates an inviting atmosphere through attractive window displays, parking areas, building improvements, street furniture, signs, sidewalks, street lights, and landscaping, to convey a positive visual message about the commercial district and what it has to offer.

**Economic Restructuring**—strengthens a community's existing economic assets while expanding and diversifying its economic base. By sharpening the competitiveness of existing business owners and recruiting compatible new businesses, we build a commercial district that responds to today's consumers' needs. Converting unused or underused commercial space into economically productive property also helps boost the profitability of the district.

**Organization**—recruits involvement to get everyone working toward the same goal and assembles the appropriate human and financial resources to implement the revitalization program. A governing board and standing committees made up of various stakeholders make up the fundamental organizational structure of the volunteer-driven program. Volunteers are coordinated and supported by a paid director.

*“Downtowns are critically important in shaping a community’s identity and enhancing the economic prosperity of a city. I believe the new incentive program offered by Alton Marketplace, along with the new pedestrian bridge, the amenities in Riverfront Park, and upgrades in the City’s infrastructure and transportation systems, will allow us to preserve, diversify, and grow business opportunities in Downtown Alton.” ~ Tom Hoechst, Mayor of Alton*

# Dear Potential Business Owner,

Thank you for considering Downtown Alton as the location for your business endeavor. Alton Marketplace would be happy to assist you in making your professional dream a reality. Alton is a city rich with historic architecture and natural beauty, located on the Mississippi River near the confluences of Missouri and Illinois Rivers. St. Louis, MO is just a stone's throw away, and you can see the Gateway Arch from Alton on a clear day. We are located in the heart of the Meeting of the Great Rivers Scenic Byway, which has been named as one of the "Seven Wonders of Illinois".

Alton offers various outdoor activities and a beautiful marina sits beneath our state-of-the-art Clark Bridge. Riders, walkers, and joggers all enjoy the Sam Vadalabene Trail, which is approximately 20 miles of level paved trail that parallels the Great River Road, which is characterized by towering limestone bluffs that are ablaze with color during the fall and home to migrating bald eagles in the winter. Alton is home to 15 City Parks including over 1,400 acres of park space. Over the past decade, millions of dollars have been invested in the development of our riverfront, including a 4,000-seat amphitheater and a pedestrian bridge leading from the park to the Broadway shopping district.

Downtown Alton is home to a renowned antique district, the Jacoby Arts Center, an award-winning Convention & Visitors Bureau, many specialty shops and an entertainment district that features over 30,000 square feet of entertainment space and caters to any taste. The district is also enjoying a resurgence of urban dwellers and several luxury loft renovation projects have been completed in recent years with the promise of more to come.

Alton is also making great strides to become a forerunner in environmentally conscious policies and green initiatives. Alton was named as Illinois' 31st "Cool City", and is the first downstate city to commit to this plan to conserve energy and reduce CO2 pollution.



Rendering of pedestrian overpass connecting Riverfront Amphitheater with Antique Row on Broadway, completed in early 2010.

## Annual Events

June-October

**Alton Farmers' & Artisans' Market**

June

**All-Wheels Drive-In Car Show**

August

**The BIG GIG Local Music Show**

September

**Mississippi Earthtones Festival**

October

**Challenge of the Bluffs Run**

November

**Tree Lighting & Taste of Downtown**

I invite you to visit our website:  
**[www.AltonMarketplace.com](http://www.AltonMarketplace.com)**

to learn more about what our organization does throughout the year to improve and promote downtown Alton. I hope that this resource serves you well; please contact our office if we can be of any other assistance to you as you move forward with your business plan.

Sincerely,

Sara McGibany - Executive Director

# About the Program



## **Purpose:**

The purpose of the New Business Incentive Package is to support the recruitment of targeted retailers to downtown Alton, while also offering some of these same programs to existing businesses in the same categories for retention purposes.

Alton Marketplace Association, with support from partnering city organizations and Madison County government, has developed a unique, multi-faceted incentive package for new businesses.

Additional funds are available to downtown businesses through the City Facade Improvement Program, Community Development Block Grants, Tax Increment Financing and Enterprise Zone. Programs herein identified are based on the generosity and support of multiple businesses and organizations, and subject to change at their discretion.

## **Objective:**

This incentive package is designed to encourage private sector investment that will ultimately improve the retail mix and general economy of the downtown district, as well as demonstrate citywide commitment to a healthy downtown.

## **Criteria:**

The program is offered primarily to targeted (new) retailers. Incentive amounts may be based on sales generated and length of occupancy.

## **Eligibility:**

Incentives are offered to all qualified applicants. However, certain incentives are limited in quantity and other restrictions may apply.

*“Our antique business has been located in Alton, for about 25 years. I have to say there are very few locations in this country with as many attributes. Only 25 minutes from Downtown St. Louis, Alton is one of the most scenic, as well as historic areas in the entire Midwest. The area has a continual flow of traffic, year round. It is also one of the most reasonable places to rent, or buy property. This area has tremendous potential. I have never regretted moving to Alton.” ~ Terry Vaughn, Owner of Alton Antique Center*

## **Retail business prospects we are actively seeking to recruit include:**

Ladies' boutiques \* Toys \* Men's clothing \* Music store—records, tapes and CD's \* Shoe store  
Outdoor Cafés \* Art galleries \* Brand name stores and franchises \* Whole foods/organic grocers  
Specialty retail (glassware, linens, etc.) \* Decorative items \* Yard Statuary \* Electronics stores  
Linens, house wares/home necessities \* Infants and children's wear \* Hotels \* Bed and Breakfasts \* Inns  
Art supplies \* Video stores \* Computer software/Internet support \* Unique clothing and accessories  
Tradesmen's shops (clock repair, woodworking) \* Pharmacies \* Signature Restaurants  
Tourism related shops \* Pharmacy \* High end salon \* Fitness and Yoga \* Retail book store; new releases \*  
Garden and landscaping \* Yarn, knitting, and other crafts

# A Framework for Creating the Future of Downtown

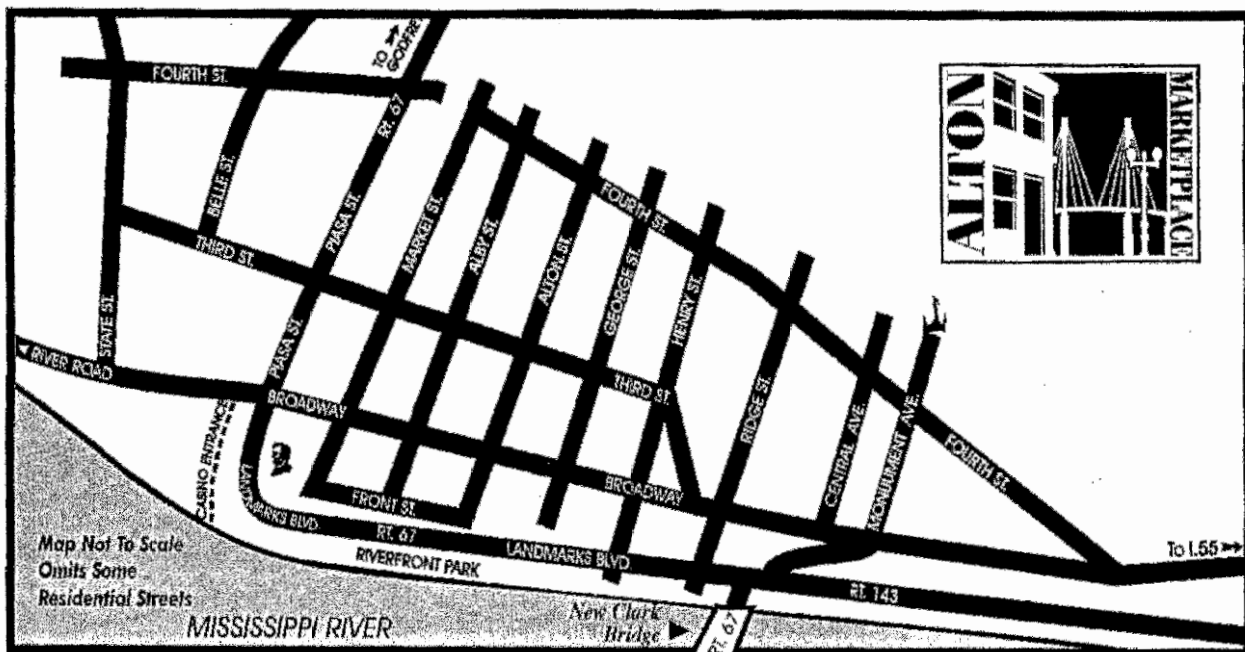
Ultimately, the goal for downtown Alton development is to create attractive patterns of development that support our community's vision and result in the highest and best use of the land resources in downtown. Fundamental to prominent goals and redevelopment strategies advanced in the plan are:

- \* **An approach to business development that does not advocate moving or eliminating existing business, but rather focuses on specific types of retail that might be introduced or expanded to enhance the quality and variety of the downtown business mix.**
- \* **An active recruitment strategy focuses on small, independently owned retailers that will complement the existing businesses.**

## Downtown Boundaries

*While some of the programs outlined are available citywide, the map below represents the primary eligible boundaries for this program.*

The largest downtown business corridor comprises Broadway from Washington Street west to William Street; Third Street from State Street east past Henry Street to where it merges with Broadway; Fourth Street from William Street east to Easton Street; and the Belle Street and Piasa Street corridors north from Broadway to Ninth Street.



# INCENTIVES

(County & State)

The **Illinois Department of Revenue** offers corporate income tax credits for property improvements and purchase of depreciable equipment in an Enterprise Zone.

The **Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity** offers numerous assistance programs for small business. Help may include financial assistance, regulatory compliance assistance, international trade and export assistance, and assistance in applying for government contracts.

Contact the **Small Business Development Center** at Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville for more information. Address is Campus Box 1107, Alumni Hall 2120, Edwardsville, IL 62026; phone 618-650-2929.

In addition, there is an **Illinois Entrepreneurship Center** at Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville, 3307 Founders Hall, Edwardsville, IL; phone 618-650-2929. This agency offers a variety of services to assist your pre-venture or growing company, including business managerial assistance, technical expertise, market information and research assistance with financial analysis.

The **Madison County Micro Loan Program** assists eligible small business owners who are interested in expanding their operations and entrepreneurs looking to start a business with loans from \$250 to \$35,000. The program is designed to provide loans to individuals and small businesses that may be unable to secure financing from traditional lenders. Loan funds may be used for equipment, working capital or inventory. The loans may not be used for refinancing existing debt, lease improvements or property acquisition. A flexible loan package will be arranged to meet the specific needs of successful applicants. Borrowers are required to make affordable monthly payments for the term of the loan, which may not exceed six years. Those interested in applying for a Madison County Micro Business Loan should visit the Justine PETERSEN website at [www.justinepetersen.org/content/loan-products](http://www.justinepetersen.org/content/loan-products) to download and complete the micro loan application and business plan questionnaire. The final step in completing the loan application process is to schedule an appointment with one of Justine PETERSEN's counselors. Additional information can be obtained by contacting Justine PETERSEN at 618/741-2159, TheBANK of Edwardsville at 618/656-0098 ([www.4thebank.com](http://www.4thebank.com)) or the Madison County Treasurer's HELP Desk at 618/692-6260 ([www.madcotreasurer.org](http://www.madcotreasurer.org)).

**Madison County Community Development** offers 3% interest "gap" financing loan programs to businesses with projects that will create permanent jobs. The entrepreneur should make application to the county at the same time he applies for a loan from his bank. The county can provide 10 to 25 percent financing of the project cost in conjunction with a private lender. Technical service is also provided regarding potential building and site locations, demographic / labor market / zoning information, other sources of federal, state and local financing for business projects, and training, job referral and recruitment services. Contact the Economic Development Coordinator at (618) 692-7040.

## **Workforce Investment Act (formerly known as the Job Training Partnership Act)**

The Madison County Employment and Training Department can provide job tax credits for hiring welfare recipients and other disadvantaged groups. There are also tax credits for hiring youth for summer jobs. Other services available for employers include demographic information, recruitment assistance, assessment testing, Job Fair/Hiring Event coordination, and on-the-job training for qualified employees. Contact Matthew Jones at 618-296-4315.

*"I am attracted to downtown Alton's breathtaking views of the Mississippi River and the Clark Bridge, the charm and character of turn of the century buildings and cobblestone streets. It is this combination of grandeur in nature, walkability, and easy access to St Louis that inspired conversion of an industrial building into 10 residential lofts, boutiques and offices -- that sold itself."*

*Penny Schmidt,  
Developer—Mississippi  
Landing Lofts*

[www.misslanding.com](http://www.misslanding.com)

# INCENTIVES

*(local)*

## **From the Alton Marketplace Association & Illinois Main Street:**

### **Waived Partnership Fees during your First Calendar Year of Business** (\$100 value)

Benefits include: a window decal to represent your partnership, recognition at our Annual Meeting and in our publications, the addition of a link to your website on the partnership page of our website, the opportunity to announce your business & share information on upcoming sales or events in monthly newsletter articles and within our weekly segment on WBGZ Radio. Additionally, registration fees for Marketplace events will be waived during your first calendar year of business.

### **Free Facade Design Services**

Available through the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency for Alton Marketplace members. Contact Executive Director at 618-463-1016 for more information. Full design service, including facade design, signage design, graphics, and report on maintenance and code issues with suggestions for possible solutions and cost estimates, which represents a \$4,750 value.

### **Assistance in Finding a Location for Your Business**

Our organization maintains a database of available real estate downtown for lease or purchase, including rental or sales price, square footage, and contact information.

Visit the Marketplace web site at [www.AltonMarketplace.com](http://www.AltonMarketplace.com) and click the "Real Estate" link.

### **Exclusive Financing Options**

A brochure is included telling details on the Low-Interest-Loan program that Alton Marketplace has arranged with area banks, which offers special financing for projects in the downtown district.

### **Free Resource Library for Starting Your Business**

The Alton Marketplace office, has numerous books available for loan. Titles include: *Starting Your Own Business in Illinois*, published by State of Illinois, Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity; *Open Book—A Practical Guide for Small Business Growth*, published by American Express; *How to Really Start Your Own Business*, published by Inc. Magazine; *How to Choose the Best Bank for Your Business*, published by Inc. Magazine in cooperation with VISA Business and SCORE; *Boom Town USA: The 7-1/2 Keys to Big Success in Small Towns*, by John Schultz. SCORE also houses all of their reference materials in a business resource section at Hayner Library.

### **Artfully Alton**

An opportunity to display artwork by local artists in your storefront windows or on interior walls. Approximately 20 downtown businesses are currently participating & the project is being marketed through a brochure and a website: [www.ArtfullyAlton.com](http://www.ArtfullyAlton.com)

### **Recycling Assistance**

Alton Marketplace partners with the Sierra Club and Godfrey Recycling to provide recycling service for downtown businesses. Paper, aluminum, plastic, glass and cardboard are accepted. Please call 463-1016 for details.



*"The Loft" at Tony's Restaurant (312 Piasa St.); a great example of upper-story redevelopment available to rent for special events*

# INCENTIVES

## **Free help from SCORE (Service Corps Of Retired Executives)**

Counselors to America's Small Business, SCORE's purpose is to counsel the small business community with special emphasis on "start-up" assistance. SCORE is a nationwide association sponsored by SBA, and the group underwrites a collection of books at Hayner Public Library on starting a business, writing business plans, establishing personnel policies and accounting systems. To enroll for assistance and to find out the topics for upcoming training with SCORE consultants please call 618-467-2280, email [score@lc.edu](mailto:score@lc.edu), or visit their office on the campus of Lewis & Clark Community College: 5800 Godfrey Rd. Alden Hall—Godfrey, IL 62035. Learn more about the Southwestern Illinois Chapter by visiting: [www2.lc.edu/score/swis.htm](http://www2.lc.edu/score/swis.htm)

City of Alton has funding available under the **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)** commercial rehab program to encourage facade improvements through 25-75 matching grants. Funds may be used for exterior repairs to commercial buildings and for the correction of code violations. The maximum available is 25 percent of the documented cost of improvements, usually not to exceed \$7,500 for any one project. However, up to \$10,000 may be allocated if the property is a corner building with two facades facing the streets. Priority will be given to structures which are determined to be of primary significance to the historical nature of the city and which will render a high impact in improving the appearance of the business. Applications may be obtained at City Hall, 101 East 3<sup>rd</sup> St. Contact Greg Caffey in the Department of Business and Economic Development, at 618-463-3533.

Also available under certain conditions is **TIF (Tax Increment Financing)** which provides financial assistance for permanent building and site improvements associated with existing structures. Eligible improvements may include life safety and handicapped accessibility requirements, repair or replacement of roof, floors, structural walls or windows, repair or replacement of electrical, plumbing, heating or cooling systems; or installation of an elevator, sprinkler, fire or smoke alarm systems and for paving parking lots. Maximum grant available is \$15,000; but not to exceed 25 percent of project cost. A residential TIF program is in place, which provides a property owner with \$7,500 per residential until created.

**Enterprise Zone** Alton is part of the Riverbend Enterprise Zone # 45. It also includes the communities of East Alton, Bethalto, Hartford, Roxana, South Roxana and Wood River. It is administered by the Madison County Community Development Department, 130 Hillsboro Ave., Edwardsville. IL. Contact John J. Herzog, Economic Development Coordinator, phone 618-692-8940.

Businesses relocating to an enterprise zone, a designated area of high levels of poverty, unemployment, job loss and population loss and general distress may qualify for various state and federal tax credits, tax abatements and partial wage subsidies for new hires from these distressed groups of people. There is a sales tax exemption on building materials and paints purchased for renovation of structures in the Enterprise Zone.

## **SBA loans**

After a borrower applies to a lending institution, the lender will determine whether a SBA guarantee is necessary and the bank will apply to SBA for one of four basic types of SBA Loans available. Learn more at [www.sba.gov/financing](http://www.sba.gov/financing).

*Downtown Alton has a natural beauty and historical and eclectic style with a kitschy yet ageless quality. We developed here for these reasons, plus the governmental TIF financial incentives were amazing! Downtown Alton is still a relatively untapped but up and coming market. People want to live and play, eat and shop here. The more we build, the more they come!*  
Julie Harper, Developer—  
Lincoln Lofts  
[www.lincolnlofts.net](http://www.lincolnlofts.net)

# INCENTIVES

*(local continued)*

**Perks offered from fellow local businesses during your first calendar year of operation:**

## **MARKETING & ADVERTISING**

**Interactive Multi-Media Marketing**—Riverbender.com, an outstanding web developer, also runs the River Bend's #1 local web portal (smart phone friendly) dedicated to sharing information about you and your community. Advertisers can buy interactive multi-media marketing strategies pursuing an audience of 40,000+ unique visitors monthly. Marketing options include: display ads, e-commerce shopping cart service, printable savings coupons, your gift certificates for purchase online, classified ads, video ads on local high school sports programs, and video features for your business. In addition to internet exposure, Riverbender.com also offers placemat ads at area restaurants and event promotional services. As a courtesy to Alton Marketplace members, Riverbender.com offers a significantly discounted marketing bundle for your company. Other FREE services include: local link listings, a Community Calendar, and web-based email. Contact: [info@riverbender.com](mailto:info@riverbender.com) or call 465-9850.

**Radio Advertising**— WBGZ Radio is very affordable as your primary vehicle for reaching customers who are likely to shop at your store. Because you have just made a major investment by opening your doors, you will want to protect your investment with powerful advertising and marketing. Radio delivers substantial return on investment for advertisers. Call WBGZ Radio for a complementary session to take the mystery out of advertising. We will make sure you understand all the exciting options radio offers, both on the air and online at [www.AltonDailyNews.com](http://www.AltonDailyNews.com). We will design an advertising package just for you at no charge and even produce a sample commercial. We will also arrange for your fifteen minutes of fame with a complementary radio interview on Let's Talk Business. Consumers spend more time with radio than any other medium; in fact, WBGZ offers access to nearly 97% of all River Bend residents. Call Nancy Bivens, Sales Manager, at 465-3535 or email her at [nancy@wbgzradio.com](mailto:nancy@wbgzradio.com) for more information. WBGZ 1570 AM has studios in Downtown Alton. Local ownership, local staff, loyal listeners, and a tradition of strong local advertising support make WBGZ the community's choice for local news, sports, weather and event information.

**Convention and Visitors Bureau** offers a complimentary listing in the directory of the *All Around Alton* Annual Visitors Guide for tourist oriented businesses. Your business information & website link will also be on the CVB's web site, [www.VisitAlton.com](http://www.VisitAlton.com). Restrictions apply, contact 1-800-258-6645.

**Print Advertising**— The Telegraph offers access to 70,000 readers at affordable rates. For print advertising, on line, brochures, newspaper inserts, or direct mail opportunities, call Karla Edmison at 463-2546 or Amy Schaake at 463-2534. They can design special advertising packages tailored to the needs of your business.

**Discounted Printing** — Abbey Graphics & Printing, located at 3312 Godfrey Road is offering a discount on the first printing order of stationery, business cards or forms.



## **PROFESSIONAL SERVICES**

**Free Business Checking** — TheBANK of Edwardsville, Alton locations, is offering a free business checking account and a business portfolio bag for any new commercial account opened by a downtown Alton business. Locations at 324 Ridge Street or 4415 Martin Luther King Drive in Alton. Please contact Karen McAtee, 618-467-6700.

**Discounted Web Site Design** - GetWebbed.net is offering a \$150 rebate on the design fee for a website of 15 pages or less. Contact Bruno Dosso at 618-406-8376 or [bruno@getwebbed.net](mailto:bruno@getwebbed.net)

**Paint and finish program**—St. Peters Hardware & Rental is offering \$5 off every gallon of paint for a new business that is redecorating its interior or façade. Please visit their facility at 2502 State Street.

**Office supplies & furniture**—Williams Office Products at 500 East Broadway is offering 10 to 40 percent discounts, and Royal Office Products at 8 W. Broadway is offering 20 to 70 percent discounts to new businesses, with specific discounts to be determined depending on the product. Williams Office Products also offers free office design services as well as office renovation and relocation services.

**Discounted Appreciation Gift Cards**— If you purchase a minimum of \$300 worth of gift cards from Tony's Restaurant for gifting to top employees or customers that you would like to reward, you will receive \$30 worth free. This 10% discount also applies to any purchase of gift cards in excess of \$300. Please visit 312 Piasa St. or call 618-462-8384.

**Design Services**— JMC Design is offering a free one-hour initial consultation for new businesses in the downtown district. Services include: interior and exterior design and color consultation, Personalized Shopping, Space Planning - Residential and Commercial, Upholstery, Window Treatments, Painting, and Faux Painting. Contact Owner Jean Cousley at 618-463-0566 or [jmcdesign@charter.net](mailto:jmcdesign@charter.net)

# A Note on Historic Buildings

Most of downtown Alton is within historic districts. In order to preserve the historic and architectural heritage of the City, all new construction, exterior building alterations and signs within the historic district are reviewed by the Alton Historical Commission prior to issuance of a building permit.

The Commission meets once a month; they offer and encourage preliminary reviews. Any work which could alter the historical appearance of a building such as window, door or siding replacements must be approved by the Commission prior to issuance of a building permit.

For information about historic preservation ordinance requirements, facade grants, and meeting schedules, contact Sue Gillespie in the Building and Zoning Department at 618-463-3532.



*I love living downtown for the convenience and easy access on foot to dining, nightclubs, Hayner Library, exercise in Riverfront park, and the spectacular views of the great Mississippi. This lifestyle suits me! Bob Hellrung, Resident—Laura Lofts*



It should be noted that there are several federal and state investment tax credits available for restoring historic buildings. These credits are applied to an owner's federal taxes owed or to future tax liabilities. The credit is worth a percentage of the cost of the renovation. Approximately \$9,000 is the maximum credit that any one individual can claim in any one year. Larger credit amounts, however, may be divided up and carried into other years.

The Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, National Park Service and the Internal Revenue Service jointly administer a 20% Rehabilitation Tax Credit. This credit applies to certified historic structures, which may be listed on the National Register of Historic Places individually, or as a contributing building within a National Register district; or as a contributing building within a local historic district that has been certified by the National Park Service.

In addition, a 10% Rehabilitation Tax Credit may be applied to non-historic commercial buildings built before 1936.

# Frequently Asked Questions



## Q. What are the demographics for Alton, IL?

A. The 2000 census shows a population of 31,000 for the City of Alton

- According to statistics compiled by Claritas Inc. for the Madison County Community Development Department, the 2008 estimated population for a 3-mile radius of downtown Alton is 28,326. This circular geographic area excludes portions of northeast Alton but includes portions of Godfrey.

- Racial breakdown for this area in 2008 is:

- 70.96% Caucasian; 25.53% African-American and 3.43 % Hispanic, Asian and other groups

Age breakdown is:

- 24.96% under 18; 75.03% 18 and older; and 14.77% age 65 and older

- The area has 12,130 households. Married individuals with spouse present totaled 10,166; 2,019 people were widowed and 2,844 were divorced

- Educational attainment for adults age 25+ was:

- 16.78% did not finish high school; 32.07% have a high school diploma or GED; 25.05% have some college credits but no degree; 7.67% have Associates Degrees; 13.33% have Bachelors Degrees; 6.09% have post-graduate degrees

- Household income for 2008 is estimated as follows:

- Less than \$15,000.....2,571
  - \$15,000 to \$24,999.....1,736
  - \$25,000 to \$34,999.....1,426
  - \$35,000 to \$49,999.....2,179
  - \$50,000 to \$74,999.....2,272
  - \$75,000 to \$99,999.....1,011
  - Over \$100,000..... 926
- Average household income is \$46,391 / median household income is \$37,291
- Number of families below poverty level: 1,005 or 13.41%
- Unemployment.....4.27%
- Occupation class:
- Blue collar.....3,052.....24.53%
  - White collar.....6,803.....54.14%
  - Service and Farm.....2,681.....21.34%
  - Median owner occupied home value.....\$83,590



## Q. What forms do I need to start up a business?

A. If you are starting a new business, or this is the first time you have done business in the State of Illinois, you must register the name of your business with the Madison County Clerk's Office in Edwardsville, IL . When a business name is different from the full legal names of the owner(s) the Illinois Assumed Name Act requires sole proprietorships and general partnerships to register with the County Clerk's office. The certificate issued by the County Clerk states the name of the business, the legal names and addresses of those owning and conducting the business and the business address. In addition, notices of filing must be published in a newspaper of general circulation for three consecutive weeks. There are fees involved. For further information call 618-692-6290.

## FAQ's continued...



### **Q. What are the City of Alton's requirements for a new business?**

A. The City of Alton requires business owners to obtain a business license. Fill out a business license application and submit it with the appropriate fee at the City Treasurer's Office at Alton City Hall, 101 E. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, phone 618-463-3540. The license must be secured prior to conducting business.

### **Q. What happens next with the application?**

A. Once submitted, the application is processed as follows: The premises/building is inspected by the Building and Zoning Department to insure proper zoning is in place for that specific type of business and the building meets the Alton City Code requirements. Any changes made to the building, electrical or plumbing systems will require permits and inspections from the Building and Zoning Department. Next, the building is inspected by the Alton Fire Department to insure that all Illinois State Fire Code requirements are met. The Alton Police Department conducts a background check of the owner(s). If the new business is a food service establishment, the premises must be inspected to insure health requirements are met. You will need to obtain a permit from the Madison County Health Department. Please call the Health Department at 618-692-8954 for more information.

### **Q. How long does the business license approval process take?**

A. Approximately 14 to 21 days. Building and/or fire code concerns may add to this time frame.

### **Q. What is the penalty for conducting a business without a license?**

A. The business will be shut down until all license requirements are met and/or an ordinance violation will be filed with the Madison County Circuit Clerk.

### **Q. How does the license renewal process work?**

A. Prior to the end of each calendar year a renewal form will be sent to each business. The forms should be updated and returned to the City Treasurer along with the appropriate fee.

### **Q. What are the State of Illinois business licensing requirements?**

A. You must apply for an Illinois Business Tax ID number. It will take six to eight weeks to get the number if handled through the mail. If you go in person to the Illinois Department of Revenue, 101 West Jefferson Street, Springfield, Il, or to the branch office in Fairview Heights, the number will be issued at that time. Contact phone numbers are 1-800-732-8866 in Springfield or 618-624-6773 in Fairview Heights. The State of Illinois requires most businesses to be registered and/or licensed by the Department of Revenue. Among the forms which may be required include (REG-1) Illinois Business Registration, (IL-W-4) Withholding Allowance Certificate and (IL-941) Withholding Tax Forms. In addition there are several categories of sales tax: the Retailers Occupation Tax which is imposed directly on the gross receipts of a retail seller; the Use Tax, which is imposed directly on the customer for retail purchase of merchandise in Illinois, and the Service Use Tax which is imposed directly on the customer for purchase of services.

## FAQ's continued...



### **Q. What are the Federal requirements for a new business?**

A. Every partnership, corporation and S Corporation must have a Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN). A sole proprietorship must also have a FEIN if it pays wages to one or more employees, or files excise tax returns including those for alcohol, tobacco or firearms. To apply for a FEIN use form SS-4, application for Federal Employer Identification Number. To receive an application, contact the IRS at 800-829-4933.

### **Q. How do I get approval for signage?**

A. If the business is located in the Appearance Review District, any new sign or change to the exterior must be approved by the Appearance Review Board prior to permit issuance or approval of the business license. In general, three square feet of signage is permitted for each linear foot of frontage. Most downtown properties are located within the Commercial C-4 Zone, or in the Marina Zone (MR). For more information, contact Doug Wagner, Alton Building and Zoning Department, 618-463-3533. For any new sign proposal, you must appear in person for approval. Please contact Cheryl Ingle, 618-463-3801; [cingle@alton-il.com](mailto:cingle@alton-il.com). The Appearance Review Board meets second Wednesday of the month, if any requests are on the docket.

### **Q. How do I obtain a liquor license?**

A. Application must be made in writing to the Mayor of Alton, who also serves as the city's liquor commissioner. The applicant gives his name and mailing address; the name of the business, name and address of the landlord if the property is leased; date of his first application for a liquor license from the State of Illinois and whether that request was approved or denied; and the current State of Illinois liquor license number. The written consent of two thirds of the property owners within 300 feet is required before the license can be issued. No license shall be issued for sale of alcoholic beverages within 200 feet of a church, school, hospital, YMCA, YWCA, or military base.

### **Q. What other business organizations service this area?**

A. The River Bend Growth Association serves as a chamber of commerce for the cities of Alton, Bethalto, East Alton, Elsau, Godfrey, Grafton, Hartford, Roxana, South Roxana and Wood River. The Growth Association office is at 5800 Godfrey Road on the campus of Lewis and Clark Community College; phone 618-467-2280. The combined population of these communities is 80,586, with 33,282 households and a median household income of \$41,099. (2006 estimates). The Growth Association also offers its own website for businesses seeking available real estate in the Riverbend area. Visit [www.riverbendprospector.com](http://www.riverbendprospector.com) to view photos of available properties with location maps under GIS Planning technology.

Downtown Alton Incorporated is another downtown improvement organization comprised of shop & restaurant owners. This group organizes the Downtown Block Parties as well as other events & beautification projects throughout the year. For more info, contact President Russ Smith at 462-1175.

*A community based,  
not-for-profit, volunteer  
organization dedicated to  
securing the economic  
vitality and aesthetic  
quality of the district.*



## Websites of interest:

[City of Alton](http://www.Alton-il.com) — [www.Alton-il.com](http://www.Alton-il.com) (business license & liquor license info)

[Madison County](http://www.revenue.state.il.us/Businesses/register.htm) — [www.revenue.state.il.us/Businesses/register.htm](http://www.revenue.state.il.us/Businesses/register.htm)  
(Registering a Business/Assumed Business Name with Madison County)

[State of Illinois](http://www.revenue.state.il.us/Businesses/register.htm) — [www.revenue.state.il.us/Businesses/register.htm](http://www.revenue.state.il.us/Businesses/register.htm)  
Registering a Business with the Illinois Department of Revenue

[Guide to Starting a Business in Illinois](http://business.illinois.gov/step_by_step_guides.cfm) —

[http://business.illinois.gov/step\\_by\\_step\\_guides.cfm](http://business.illinois.gov/step_by_step_guides.cfm)

[Alton Marketplace](http://www.AltonMarketplace.com) — [www.AltonMarketplace.com](http://www.AltonMarketplace.com)

[Artfully Alton](http://www.ArtfullyAlton.com) — [www.ArtfullyAlton.com](http://www.ArtfullyAlton.com)

[River Bend Growth Association](http://www.growthassociation.com) — [www.growthassociation.com](http://www.growthassociation.com)

[River Bend Prospector](http://www.riverbendprospector.com) — [www.riverbendprospector.com](http://www.riverbendprospector.com)

[SCORE-Southwestern Illinois](http://www2.lc.edu/score/swis.htm) — <http://www2.lc.edu/score/swis.htm>

[Madison County Community Development Department](http://www.co.madison.il.us/CommunityDevelopment/CommunityDevelopment.shtml) —

[www.co.madison.il.us/CommunityDevelopment/CommunityDevelopment.shtml](http://www.co.madison.il.us/CommunityDevelopment/CommunityDevelopment.shtml)

[Southern Illinois University Edwardsville-Small Business Development Center](http://www.siu.edu/business/sbdc/) —  
[www.siu.edu/business/sbdc/](http://www.siu.edu/business/sbdc/)

[Southwestern Illinois Development Authority \(SWIDA\)](http://www.swida.org) — [www.swida.org](http://www.swida.org)

[Leadership Council-Southwestern Illinois](http://www.siteselection-il.com) — [www.siteselection-il.com](http://www.siteselection-il.com)

[St. Louis Regional Chamber and Growth Association \(RCGA\)](http://www.gotostlouis.org) — [www.gotostlouis.org](http://www.gotostlouis.org)

[Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity \(DCEO\)](http://www.commerce.state.il.us) — [www.commerce.state.il.us](http://www.commerce.state.il.us)

[Alton Amphitheater at Riverfront Park](http://www.RiverfrontAmphitheater.org) — [www.RiverfrontAmphitheater.org](http://www.RiverfrontAmphitheater.org)

[Alton Marina](http://www.AltonMarina.com) — [www.AltonMarina.com](http://www.AltonMarina.com)

[Alton Police Department](http://www.altonpolice.com) — [www.altonpolice.com](http://www.altonpolice.com)

[Cool Cities Program \(Alton's Page\)](http://www.coolcities.us/cityProfiles.php?city=3&state=IL) — <http://www.coolcities.us/cityProfiles.php?city=3&state=IL>

[Pride, Inc.](http://www.prideincorporated.org) — [www.prideincorporated.org](http://www.prideincorporated.org)

[The Telegraph](http://www.thetelegraph.com) — [www.thetelegraph.com](http://www.thetelegraph.com)

[RiverBender.com](http://www.Riverbender.com) — [www.Riverbender.com](http://www.Riverbender.com)

[St. Louis Post Dispatch](http://www.stltoday.com) — [www.stltoday.com](http://www.stltoday.com)

[Today's Advantage](http://www.todaysadvantage.com) — [www.todaysadvantage.com](http://www.todaysadvantage.com)

[WBGZ-1570 AM](http://www.altondailynews.com) — [www.altondailynews.com](http://www.altondailynews.com)

[Alton Convention and Visitors Bureau](http://www.visitalton.com) — [www.visitalton.com](http://www.visitalton.com)

[Alton Landmarks Association](http://www.altonlandmarks.org) — [www.altonlandmarks.org](http://www.altonlandmarks.org)

[Alton Museum of History and Art](http://www.AltonMuseum.com) — [www.AltonMuseum.com](http://www.AltonMuseum.com)

[Downtown Alton, Inc.](http://www.downtownalton.com) — [www.downtownalton.com](http://www.downtownalton.com)

[Madison County Transit](http://www.mct.org) — [www.mct.org](http://www.mct.org)

[Madison County Bikeway System](http://www.mcttrails.org) — [www.mcttrails.org](http://www.mcttrails.org)

[Meeting of the Great Rivers Scenic Byway](http://www.greatriversbyway.com) — [www.greatriversbyway.com](http://www.greatriversbyway.com)

[Hayner Library](http://www.haynerlibrary.org) — [www.haynerlibrary.org](http://www.haynerlibrary.org)

[Jacoby Arts Center](http://www.jacobyartscenter.org) — [www.jacobyartscenter.org](http://www.jacobyartscenter.org)