

Fall Edition

## ECIDC NEWSLETTER

October 2, 2025



DEVELOPMENT OF AN



# Economic Development District

Coles County Regional Planning & Development Commission has been in talks with the Economic Development Administration (EDA) on the possibility of writing a CEDS, or Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, with the potential end goal of forming an Economic Development District. Initial calls have been promising, but the process is a long and involved one, with many aspects that would need to be worked out ahead of moving forward.



private sectors to foster stability, growth, and resilience. It serves as a blueprint for economic development, requiring region-wide community participation to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Identifying these allows the region to outline key priorities and actions in order to advance the economy. CEDS plans are helpful when seeking funding opportunities, and are required for regions seeking EDA funding. They also promote continued collaboration, as they require updating every five years.

## What is an EDD?

An Economic Development District (EDD) is a regional partnership that brings together multiple counties—sometimes even crossing state lines—to strengthen local economies. They are typically formed by public organizations, planning bodies, or nonprofits and facilitate collaboration among local governments, area businesses, and community groups. In essence, they lead regionally driven economic development planning that leverages the public, private, and non-profit sectors to develop a strategic blueprint for regional collaboration, such as a CEDS (Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy).

## What do EDDs Do?

EDDs lead the planning process that guides regional growth through development of a CEDS. They help to build capacity for communities, promote job creation and investment opportunities, and coordinate efforts between local, state, federal, and private partners. In short, they help communities work together to build long-term, sustainable growth by researching economic development, planning, and implementing strategies identified in a CEDS.

## What is a CEDS?

A CEDS is a regional strategic plan that focuses on economic development, aligning public and

### Key Components of CEDS:

- SWOT analysis and detailed description of the region's current economic conditions.
- A clear plan for future economic development and specific objectives to achieve it.
- Broad participation from regional stakeholders to ensure buy-in and collaboration.
- A system of monitoring strategies after implementation assess the impact on the regional economy and to ensure key performance measures are met.

(Continued on Page 2)



## Requesting EDD Designation

The designation of an EDD comes from the U.S. Economic Development Administration, or EDA, and there are several specific and formal steps that must be taken before that designation can be requested. One must first write a CEDS, and have it approved by the EDA. A CEDS Strategy Committee would need to be appointed, who would submit Annual Performance Reports and revise the CEDS periodically. The eligibility of the region must be verified, based on the EDA's distress criteria. This involves a review of the twenty-four-month average of each participating county's unemployment rate and per capita income. The proposed governing board of the EDD must have the documentation to support that they have the appropriate organizational structure and staffing capacity to carry out the objectives of the CEDS. An extensive background narrative must be completed with an economic justification analysis that supports the proposed region being designated as an EDD. Finally, a formal application must be submitted to the EDA requesting the EDD designation.

While the path to get there may seem extensive, the benefits to belonging to an EDD help to balance the scales. EDDs make regions eligible to apply for EDA grants to fund infrastructure, workforce development, disaster recovery, and business expansion. It also makes them more attractive for private investment opportunities and partnerships, which help sustain economic growth. Also, the regional collaboration that an EDD brings allows for the leveraging of resources and expertise that an individual community may lack. All of these combined resources could make the difference between a region that thrives, and a region that fails. It's an important undertaking that deserves careful consideration.

## Mattoon/Charleston Upcoming Events

<b>Mattoon Trunk or Treat &amp; Charleston Scare on the Square</b>	Oct 24, 2025
<b>Veteran's Day Parade-10:15a.m.</b>	Nov. 11, 2025
<b>Lightworks in Peterson Park-free admission</b> (one night walk thru: 5-7p.m Vehicles only Nov. 21-Dec. 28. Sun-Th 5-9pm, Fri-Sat 5-10p.m.)	Nov. 20, 2025
<b>Mattoon Arts Council Photography Show</b> (KC Summers Toyota Building)	Nov 21-29, 2025
<b>Mattoon Downtown Cookie Walk</b>	Nov. 29, 2025
<b>Downtown Christmas in Mattoon &amp; Christmas in the Heart of Charleston</b>	Dec. 5, 2025 Dec. 6, 2025

# NEWSLETTER

ECIDC Fall 2025



## 2025 LANDMARKS AWARD

The 2025 Landmarks Illinois Richard H. Driehaus Foundation Preservation Award for Environmental Sustainability was awarded to Coles County this year for the replacement of nearly 400 windows in the Coles County Courthouse. This was recognized as an exceptional preservation effort by Landmarks Illinois. The two-year effort to replace 384 deteriorating windows in the 125-year-old courthouse helped with significant energy efficiency improvements for the county and enhanced the overall appearance of the prominent landmark (JG-TC.com).

## ARCOLA BROOM PALACE



September saw the grand opening of Arcola's three-story Broom Palace, which kicked off three days of activities at the 54<sup>th</sup> annual Broom Corn Festival this year. The 6,075-square foot structure houses a broom corn-themed visitor center, local history museum, and an observation deck on the third

floor. The Broom Palace is decorated with large, colorful, fiberglass brooms, reflecting the community's history as a hub for broomcorn farming and broom manufacturing. Visiting hours are offered from 10a.m.-3p.m. Wednesday to Saturday.



Pictures from: WTWO & City of Arcola



Please join IL Rural Partners for their Community Showcase in Paris, IL on Thursday, October 16, 2025 from 10a.m.-12p.m.

The event will cover affordable housing for working families and seniors, with a few presentations as well as a panel discussion. The Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) will be present to discuss their housing programs. The City of Paris and the Laborer's Home Development Corp. will also discuss their successful public/private partnership to promote residential development. All are welcome to attend.



**Rural Partners Illinois**

# COMMUNITY SHOWCASE

**City of Paris Illinois**

## CITY OF PARIS

### AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR WORKING FAMILIES & SENIORS

- IL Housing Development Authority Programs
- Public/Private Partnerships to Promote Residential Development
- Tiger Senior Apartments Tour

Ernie Eveland Gym  
306 S Central Ave, Paris, IL

10:00am - 12:00pm  
October 16, 2025

[info@RuralPartners.org](mailto:info@RuralPartners.org)

**RURAL PARTNERS**  
**A VOICE FOR RURAL ILLINOIS**  
**CONNECTING PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES WITH RESOURCES**

## EQUITABLE ENERGY FUTURE GRANT PROGRAM

**D  
C  
E  
O**

- Total DCEO Funding: \$25.5 million
  - Anticipated Awards: 40
  - Award Range: \$250,000 - \$1,000,000
  - To be eligible, you must be an Equity Eligible Contractor; Business, Non-profit, Cooperative Organization that meets equity building criteria.
- The application deadline is December 31, 2025.

The focus of this IL DCEO program is to provide pre-development funding to support the creation and development of renewable energy and energy efficiency projects benefitting businesses, community organizations, and the workforce in Illinois. A specific focus will be on historically disadvantaged communities.

**G  
R  
A  
N  
T  
S**

## COMMUNITY SOLAR ENERGY SOVEREIGNTY PROGRAM

- Total Funding:** \$8.5 million
- Number of Awards:** Approximately 40
- Award Amounts:** \$50,000-\$1,000,000
- Eligible Applicants:** Community-based organizations, public entities, and technical service providers collaborating with community-based organizations.
- Application Deadline:** December 31, 2025

**Program Purpose:** This program from IL DCEO offers pre-development funding to support the creation and growth of initiatives that enable long-term governance, management, and maintenance of community solar projects, including models such as community solar cooperatives.