

# Small Business Week of Southwestern Illinois and Local Chambers Continue Promoting Small Businesses Through Dec. 15

by Doug McIlhaga

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**EDWARDSVILLE** – The Illinois Small Business Development Center (SBDC) for the Metro East at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville is part of a professional committee supporting local restaurants and retailers for Small Business Saturday. This group, known as the Small Business Week of Southwestern Illinois (SBWSWIL), reached out to area chambers to create a unique shopping experience in support of local small businesses.

The Greater Belleville, Collinsville, Edwardsville-Glen Carbon, Metro East (Fairview-Swansea), O’Fallon- Shiloh and the Troy-Maryville-St. Jacob-Marine Chambers joined the effort supporting small businesses.

Together, these chambers across Madison and St. Clair Counties solicited companies to spotlight themselves on a “passport” in an effort to promote their respective

establishments and garner more customers during COVID-19. The size of the passport was limited, and only 16 businesses are featured from Madison and St. Clair Counties, respectively. Local retailers and restaurant owners were quick to offer prizes in appreciation of their patrons.

Shoppers originally had from Sunday, Nov. 22 through Saturday, Nov. 28 (Small Business Saturday) to stamp their “passport” at all 16 local establishments for a chance to win a prize. Due to COVID-19 safety precautions, shoppers are welcome to purchase online (if available) or take advantage of curbside or delivery options.

The promotion was met with such enthusiasm that the group extended the shopping opportunity through Tuesday, Dec. 15. Just return [the passport via](#) email (scan or take a picture of the completed passport) by 11:59 p.m. on Dec. 15 [to sbdcedw@gmail.com](mailto:sbdcedw@gmail.com). Winners will be announced, as prizes last, on Wednesday, Dec. 16.

This is a great opportunity for business owners to advertise and generate traffic for the upcoming holidays. SBDC Director, Jo Ann Di Maggio May appreciates the support of all the chambers and the entire SBWSBIL committee, “It truly takes a team effort to help small businesses survive and thrive.”

To obtain a County “passport” and support small business, reach out to the local chamber or contact the Illinois SBDC for the Metro East at [sbdcedw@gmail.com](mailto:sbdcedw@gmail.com).

Small Business Week Southwestern Illinois pays tribute to the contributions that small business makes to the U.S. economy. The focus is on:

- Uniting the area’s tireless, hard-working entrepreneurs under one tent to inspire and nourish the entrepreneurial spirit that powers our economy—all through a full week of programming and events specifically tailored to their unique business needs.
- Rallying the entire Southwestern Illinois together to shine a spotlight on the unsung heroes of our small business community through the Small Business Awards. Together, we celebrate their achievements in exponential growth, innovation, social entrepreneurship, and company culture.

The Illinois [SBDC](#) for the Metro East assists entrepreneurs as well as existing business owners operating in the nine-county Metro East region of Calhoun, Jersey, Madison, Bond, Clinton, St. Clair, Washington, Monroe and Randolph. It enhances the region’s economic interests by providing one-stop assistance to individuals by means of counseling, training, research and advocacy for new ventures and existing small businesses.

SBDCs in Illinois are funded, in part, through a cooperative agreement among the U.S. Small Business Administration, Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity and [Southern Illinois University Edwardsville](#) as a service to the community. To learn how these no- cost services may help your business venture, contact the Metro East SBDC at 618-650-2929 or [sbdcedw@gmail.com](mailto:sbdcedw@gmail.com).