



St. Louis Community College  
Florissant Valley

# BIENNIAL REPORT



2021-23

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## I. Overview 2021-23



What an exciting time to be an Archer, especially at the St. Louis Community College at Florissant Valley campus. Transformation is all around us. We are reimagining the student pathway through college, we have new programs taking flight to meet emerging workforce needs and we are preparing the next generation of north St. Louis County leaders.

There have been two major transformations taking place for the last two years: our emergence from the global pandemic and our work toward STLCC Transformed. Though we know that COVID-19 is still with us, our campus has spent the last two years navigating the current realities thrust upon us by the pandemic while striving to be even greater than before.

Through the loss, suffering and disruption caused by the pandemic, we also learned how to be more innovative and flexible, better care for our students and each other, and ensure our students learn despite challenges that come their way. We are pleased to be back to a standard operating posture, but we take these valuable lessons with us as we confront each new challenge.

Our second transformation is one that we can see each day with the construction of the new Advanced Manufacturing Center and Center for Nursing and Health Sciences. Earlier this year, we broke ground on both new facilities, which will serve as landmarks to the growth taking place here at STLCC-Florissant Valley. These new buildings will provide opportunities for our students and community in an unprecedented way. We are combining both noncredit workforce programs and credit programs in the same building, creating a synergy between these two units like never before. We are expanding our programs to include more healthcare options, which will help community healthcare providers access a larger workforce in a variety of fields. We are also proud to offer the College's first bachelor's degree, a Bachelor of Science in Respiratory Care.

While we often associate groundbreaking with the start of the journey, we know this work of transformation has been underway for quite some time across the College. I am incredibly grateful to College faculty and staff who have worked tirelessly to prepare the campus for the changes ahead. Their input and expertise are helping turn plans into reality.

Of course, change is not always easy or without disruption. I, and the rest of the College's leaders, recognize the sacrifices and adjustments that our colleagues, students and community members have made to help our campus and College move forward. I am grateful for the commitment they demonstrate every day to empower students, expand minds and change lives.

While the new campus facilities are works in progress, there is so much to celebrate that we have already accomplished.

Campus engagement for students, faculty and staff is being revitalized with the help of student affairs. Crucial student success initiatives, like the Black Male Achievers and TRIO, continue to expand. Campus events for students to attend are also increasing because of the efforts of student affairs. Moreover, they are working to increase engagement opportunities for employees through initiatives like "Way to Go Wednesdays."





The campus police department has enhanced campus security through an increased officer presence and placement of state-of-the-art security cameras.

The online education team has grown here on the Florissant Valley campus. The team added two multimedia specialists, one for instructional design and one for videography, to help faculty add new interactive and engaging features to their online courses. These two staff members provide support across the College, but we're happy to have their primary location here at Flo Valley.

The online education and information technology departments partnered to develop HyFlex classrooms on campus. These classes feature the latest technology and will revolutionize the student experience by providing a new level of flexibility that enables students to tailor their learning experiences to fit their schedules.

Child Development Laboratory Center staff worked tirelessly to expand childcare options at STLCC. The department helped plan and prepare the new CDLC at the Forest Park campus. Thanks to the Florissant Valley team's leadership and collaboration with the Forest Park's team, the new facility received its license in June and will support both our students' and employees' children, and those from surrounding communities. Like the Florissant Valley center, the Forest Park location will serve as a learning laboratory for our child and family development students.

The dual credit/dual enrollment department continues to rapidly expand and enhance the service we provide to local high school students. The team transformed its operations and harnessed automated digital tools to support its 34 partnerships and 140 dual credit courses. The effects of this transformation are already being felt, with a 12% increase in dual credit enrollment since fall 2020. These changes allow us to fulfill STLCC's mission and values by placing students first and making data-informed decisions.

I am also extremely proud of the newly launched PACE program. The Progress Attained through College Education (PACE) program delivers college-level educational programs to justice-involved individuals supervised by the St. Louis County Justice Services. While many jails only have workforce training or other noncollege educational options, STLCC's PACE program goes one step further and offers credit-bearing courses that can help transform the future for these students. Thank you to the staff who put in extra work to serve this unique student population, and kudos to the faculty who successfully delivered this coursework. We're encouraged by the results with average GPAs of 4.0 and 3.75 in the two cohorts that completed spring coursework.

As we continue to navigate the ongoing transformation, it's important to keep our minds on the promising outcomes in our future. You can see the result of one long-term initiative in the beautiful campus prairie behind the soccer field. Thanks to everyone who helped prepare this beautiful space.

Throughout this report, you will see evidence of the extraordinary commitment of our faculty, staff and students. Each department provides brief updates on their work, innovations and upcoming projects. Keep in mind that these lists are not exhaustive; there is simply no way for us to show all that faculty and staff do for students. Nevertheless, we hope you enjoy reviewing our brief summaries.

We invite you to join us on campus to see the transformation in action and stay in touch with us as we continue to make changes to our campus through renovation, demolition, collaboration and innovation!

Thank you for your support of our campus and St. Louis Community College.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth Perkins".

Elizabeth Gassel Perkins, Ed.D,  
Campus President and Chief Academic Officer  
St. Louis Community College at Florissant Valley





## II. Highlights 2021-22



St. Louis Community College



## ACADEMIC ADVISING

- Rebuilt the entire advising department by hiring five student success advisors and one senior student success advisor.
- Conducted 6,390 student interactions.
- Developed new student learning outcomes and tasks designed to teach students how to read the degree audit, use the interactive class schedule and register for classes. The SLOs are also designed to ensure students know about their transfer plan process.
- Designed and implemented individual case management plans focused on first-time college students, students with 45 or more credit hours and students on academic probation.
- Implemented a career advising framework that improved the way advisors address students' career exploration needs.



## **ACCESS OFFICE AND DEAF SERVICES**

- Restructured the access organization to ensure an exceptional student experience and support through a consistent and intentional district approach. Hired Amy Bird as the director of access and student success, Amy Hasman as the manager of the Meramec access office, and Geoffrey Littleton as the manager of access and student success.
- Improved technology access by hiring Lesha Blair, part-time employee at Forest Park, to help students learn adaptive software and audiobooks.
- Secured funding to purchase Swivls, which are audio and video tools, among other resources to enhance course accessibility.
- Instituted a peer and alumni mentoring program.
- Promoted the advocacy efforts of student Sean Gold, leading to first-ever student speaker for Staff Development Day and recognition as a Florissant Valley Outstanding Graduate.

## **ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT SERVICES**

- Expanded the level of service to new first-time students for summer and fall 2022 registration by having admission counselors guide students from application through the registration process. This resulted in increased enrollment in this demographic.
- Consolidated districtwide admissions to one phone number to improve access for students and served 2,714 students (in-person) since July 1, 2021.
- Helped reintroduce mobile enrollment events and provided administrative support to the recruiting staff and over 200 first-time in college students.
- Completed the first year using the Recruit CRM application tracking system. The system enables better management of the College's admissions caseload.
- LaVaughn Smith received a Missouri Community College Association Senior Service Award in November 2021.



## CAMPUS LIFE

- Planned, coordinated, implemented, hosted, and supported 70-plus student engagement events as well as several Diversity, Inclusion and Awareness events. Some of the events involved collaboration with several departments.
- Developed a framework for campus life that included the Eight Dimensions of Wellness: Emotional, Environmental, Financial, Intellectual, Occupational, Physical, Social, and Spiritual well-being in programming.
- Hosted several large-scale campus events, including Archer Welcome Weeks, campus expos, Spring Fest 2022 and the kickball tournament.
- Made an impact as a staff in the following ways:
  - Dwayne Morgan was promoted to the position of campus life manager and was profiled on the College website in the article, “Morgan Makes a Lasting Difference in the Lives of Archers.”
  - Rhonda Robinson, student activities assistant II, was honored with the 2022 Adria Warner Award.
  - Myrtle Alexander led districtwide training for new hires (student activity assistants II).
  - TeKisha Blue, student worker was inducted into Phi Theta Kappa, received the MCCA Student Leader Award and served as president of the Student Leaders Club.

## CAREER DEVELOPMENT

- Expanded career development and rebuilt the team to include Career Specialists Jada Wan and Lauren Cuddy. A total of 188 career appointments were scheduled. One hundred and fifty-five participants completed the appointments.
- Held 12 classroom presentations that covered a variety of career development topics. Established partnerships with five faculty members and the participating 87 students.
- Planned and implemented a new virtual districtwide event, “Interview Jeopardy,” to engage and increase students’ understanding of the interview process and led the district’s Spring 2022 Virtual Career Fair.
- Revamped the on-campus recruitment process and implemented it for the spring semesters, resulting in 32 employer requests for OCR and 26 OCR visits districtwide.
- Developed and organized two events, “Midterm Surprise” and “Finals Fun” to boost students’ morale and expand our presence on campus and districtwide.





## CHILD AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT PROGRAM

It's no secret that there is a childcare crisis in the United States, and child and family development program faculty members answered the call. We served on committees, facilitated discussions and increased community awareness of program offerings. The program goals this year were to increase student engagement districtwide, enhance student knowledge of community resources and programs, and acknowledge faculty professional growth and development. The program made these contributions during the year:

- Enhanced community awareness about childcare. Jasmin Marshall, assistant professor of child and family development and district program coordinator of the child and family development program, and Carol Nixon, assistant professor of child and family development, helped build capacity and establish initiatives as members of the Gateway Early Childhood Alliance. Amy Freshwater, PhD., assistant professor of child and family development, served on the YWCA Education Advisory Committee and attended the Missouri Head Start Director's Forum.
- Impacted Missouri childcare positively. Marshall served on the University of Missouri Kansas City Workforce Development Project Team alongside other early childhood coordinators who work at community colleges throughout the state. Together, they established a CORE 9 credit hour articulation agreement for early childhood students. She also served as a member on the University of Missouri Kansas City's Preschool Development Grant project team. Nixon served on the Missouri Childcare Resource and Referral Network's coordinating team and enhanced their understanding of high education outcomes.

## CHILD DEVELOPMENT LABORATORY CENTER

- Chosen for their expertise. Carrie Kinzel and Carly Gaertner, development specialist II, were asked by Jasmin Marshall, assistant professor of child and family development and district program coordinator of the child and family development program, to participate in a panel discussion during Women's History Month. They discussed – alongside parents, other early care and education professionals – the importance of childcare workers during the pandemic.
- Modeled excellence in food management. Jessica Schmidt, educational assistant I and cook at the Child Development Laboratory Center, mentored several dietetic and food service graduates from Logan University. The students spent three weeks of their practicum in the CDLC kitchen.

- Professionally developed by Brad Mears, Ed.D., professor of physical education at the University of Central Missouri. Mears provided knowledge and examples of how to support brain development, understand behavior through the lens of the brain and use that knowledge to assist children in making behavioral changes. The presentation enabled staff to continue to provide high-quality programs for CFD students who observe and participate in the CDLC classrooms.
- Partnered with BeTOGETHERstl. We joined forces to host a community event that provided a book and a snack to children three years old through third grade. Participants received a cookie, goodies to decorate and a cookie-themed book. BeTOGETHERstl is a local initiative that provides families with opportunities and programs to be together, have fun and access resources that can help them thrive through and beyond the challenges of the pandemic.
- Implemented the Child Care Development Fund block grant. This is a federal grant administered by the state for the third year of a three-year cycle. The grant was used to revitalize the center with new garden beds, bushes, chimes, flowers, fruits, herbs, seating, storage, trees and vegetables. Our youngest Archers were treated with visits from CHAMPS Assistance Dogs and received support from United 4 Children. The grant provided registration and class coverage for three staff members to attend the Conference on the Young Years and a day of staff professional development. Anna-Marie Mann, coordinator of childcare resources and referrals, and Carol Nixon, assistant professor of child and family development, wrote the grant.



## COMMUNICATIONS

- Renee Thomas Woods, associate professor of communication, presented “Exploring Critical Media Literacy Skills of Adults on Twitter” at the Midwest Popular Culture Association Conference in Minneapolis.
- Kelly Mueller, associate professor of foreign language, attended the Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages and participated in a course called “Teaching Language through Proficiency and Storytelling.”
- Amy Brown Marshall, associate professor of communication, presented “How Women Lead the Way in E-learning” at the International Forum for Women in E-Learning Conference in New Orleans.
- Three communications students presented at the STLCC-Florissant Valley and NCCU’s 2022 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration and submitted projects to district marketing and communications for Depression and Mental Health Awareness Month. Students also helped transition the Communications Student

Speakers' Showcase to a format that is available to all. Broadcast students participated in Spring Fest on all campuses by providing music and promotional items and visited the Florissant Valley of Flowers to promote the college's 60th anniversary and KCFV's 50th birthday.

- Upon its first review, the online course-of-record oral communications class received the prestigious Quality Matters certification.

## COUNSELING

- Taught IDS 115, two sections of PSY 200 (one for Bayless High School) and two sections of PRD 128.
- Served as district and campus curriculum chair.
- Represented STLCC on the statewide Core Curriculum Advisory Committee.
- Became certified in Teen Mental Health First Aid.
- Provided the following personal and crisis services to students, faculty and staff:

	<b>FV</b>
Personal	481
Walk-in/emergency	57
Head count at counseling events and /or presentations	823
Consultation (faculty, agency or other)	31
Meetings	202
Professional development	43
<b>Total:</b>	<b>1,637</b>





## DEAF COMMUNICATION STUDIES

- Eric Driskill, professor of deaf communication, received a 2021 Lifetime Achievement Award from the Missouri Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.
- Served on the planning committee for the Missouri Interpreters Conference.
- Implemented curriculum revisions that were approved by the Board of Trustees.
- Eric Driskill and Tom Flynn, part-time employee, were selected to serve as evaluators for the Missouri Interpreter exam and serve on the task force on Interpreter Educator Credentialing and the Missouri Deaf-Blind Advisory Committee.



## ENGLISH, READING AND SMART START

- E. Maxine Beach, associate professor of English and the new English/reading/smart start department chairperson, was one of 10 educators nationwide selected to work on The Digital Yoknapatawpha [faulkner.iath.virginia.edu](http://faulkner.iath.virginia.edu) and develop curriculum using the William Faulkner database. The project was funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.
- Katy Gordon, Ph.D., professor of English, won second place in the Wednesday Club of St. Louis' annual poetry contest. She was also in demand to read her work, including at the Saint Louis Poetry Center's Poetry at the Point. She served as "poetry doctor" at Florissant Valley's inaugural Poetry Clinic.

- Barbara Schwarz Wachal, associate professor of English, continued to volunteer as an external faculty advisor and writing coach to undergraduate and graduate scholars from the history, political science and communications programs at the



- University of Illinois-Springfield. She engaged in various humanitarian outreach efforts under the auspices of Amnesty International on behalf of the nation of Ukraine and its people. She worked as an activist to share current and credible reporting with scholars in regions experiencing government/military censorship.
- Ron Ebest, associate professor of English and faculty advisor for the Florissant Valley literary journal, *Voyageur*, collaborated with Julia Jenner, graphic design professor and visual and performing arts chairperson, and her graphic design students to publish a special 60th anniversary edition of *Voyageur*.
- The English department's Creative Writing committee, which includes E. Maxine Beach, Ron Ebest and Katy Gordon, professor of English, hosted a Poetry Slam! and Poetry Clinic to celebrate National Poetry Month on April 28. Approximately 50 people attended the event, and three students received prizes for their poems.



## FACILITIES

The facilities department welcomed Aaron Eckhard in July 2021 as the new facilities manager. Aaron comes to us from the Affton School District. He brought new ideas and a fresh outlook on how to streamline the department and work with even greater efficiency. In addition, several new employees joined the team. Autumn Sparks-Schuler joined the grounds department in October. John Bober and Timothy Miller joined the maintenance department in December. A few facilities' highlights of the year include:

- Spearheaded the initiative to add bottle refill stations to the water fountains, which helped the College to become more sanitary and earth friendly by reducing the number of plastic bottles used.
- Helped coordinate phase 1 of the remodeling of the Humanities building, which included the photography lab and office areas.
- Completed the canopy replacement project for the Child Development Laboratory Center.

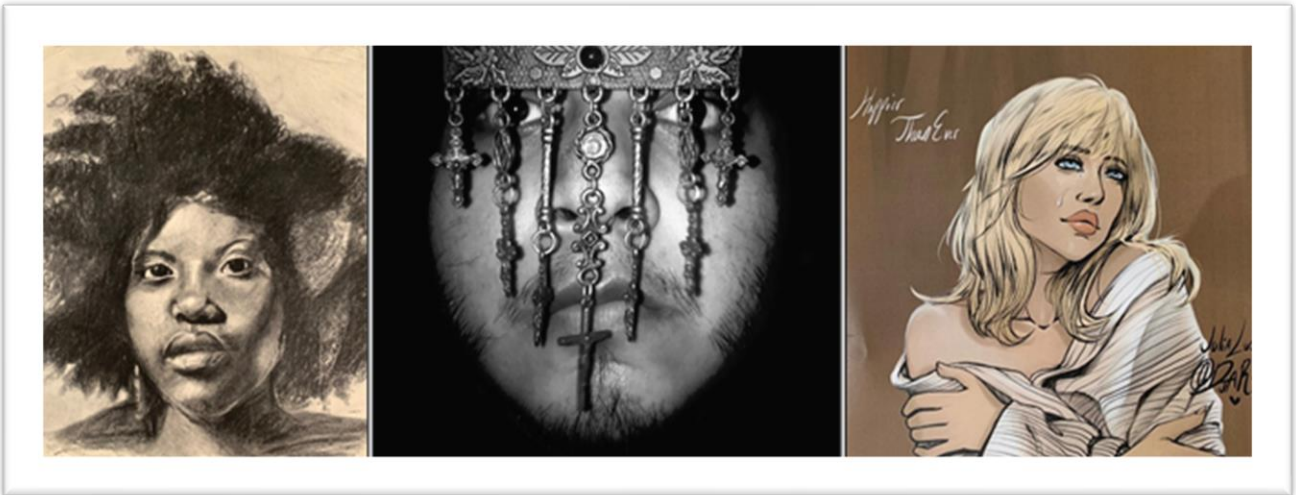


- Led a major remodel of the physical plant office that included a new roof, floors, paint, air-conditioning and furniture.
- Transformed the abandoned baseball field into a prairie rehabilitation grassland that includes native wildflowers, grasses and pollinating bees.

## FINANCIAL AID

- Served 3,291 students in person since July 1, 2021.
- Hosted a FAFSA Frenzy event for future and current students.
- Hosted a Scholarship Blueprint event for future and current students.
- Assisted with FAFSA Frenzy events for both Hazelwood East and McCluer high schools.
- Participated in a successful veterans affairs audit.





## FLORISSANT VALLEY ART GALLERIES

- Exhibited works by 27 students from 10 local high schools at the High School Art Exhibition. The show included DeSmet Jesuit High School, Hazelwood Central High School, Incarnate Word Academy, McCluer High School, Metro Academic and Classical High School, STEAM High School at McCluer South-Berkeley, Parkway Central High School, Parkway South High School, Ritenour High School, and Timberland High School. The closing reception featured an awards ceremony. Hazelwood Central student Christian Sutton won first place for his ceramic sculpture titled “Mother Earth.” As part of the prize package that included art supplies, the STLCC Foundation provided a three-credit, in-state tuition scholarship.
- Exhibited work by art students in the general fine art, graphic communications and photography programs. The reception included the return of the “Animation Showcase” – a mini-film festival, organized by Elizabeth “Neko” Pilarcik-Tellez, assistant professor of graphic communications. It featured the best work from students in animation and motion graphics classes.

## KCFV-RADIO STATION

- Completed a major capital equipment upgrade to the studios at the beginning of the fall 2021 semester with the assistance of Rick Moeller, end user technology specialist, and Steve Hehr, network systems analyst. Other incremental updates included individual recording capabilities on the editing lab computers and new microphones.

- Gathered for Spring Fest on the Florissant Valley, Forest Park, Meramec, and Wildwood campuses. Provided music, KCFV shirts, buttons and stickers to help students have a little fun ahead of finals week.
- Broadcasted live from the Florissant Valley of Flowers event, playing music and promoting the college's 60th birthday, KCFV's 50th birthday, and Mother's Day over the KCFV airwaves and online.
- Participated in the Ferguson Twilight Run, broadcasted live in front of the Ferguson Fire Station while playing music and cheering as the runners passed.

## **LIBERAL ARTS DIVISION**

- Designed, edited and produced a biweekly e-newsletter focused on College, campus, department, and program activities. The e-newsletter also captured the achievements and/or happenings of alumni and opportunities for community engagement.
- Developed an online procedure manual for support staff and chairs. The manual was spearheaded by Christine Gilbert, division secretary.
- Resumed yearly faculty and staff get-togethers at the dean's house to network and build community.
- Held bi-weekly chairs, managers and district coordinators meetings; four all staff and faculty brown bag lunches; two program coordinators and lead faculty meetings; and monthly secretarial and support staff meetings and training sessions.



## MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

- Selected by district MAC to lead the successful promotion of Florissant Valley's nursing program (which included Elizabeth Perkins, Ed.D., campus president, promoting the 60th anniversary and STLCC Transformed), engineering program, general fine arts program, and the Child Development Laboratory Center as part of a Salute to the Class of 2022 with FOX 2's Tim Ezell. The four broadcasts represented enrollment marketing that helped viewers understand why STLCC is a great option for high schoolers to consider. This involved coordinating logistics and collaborating with district MAC, campus leaders, employees, students and FOX 2 – with less than a week's notice – to distribute photo releases forms, develop talking points and potential questions for FOX 2 staff, campus talent, and conduct mock interviews. The \$130,000 media buy also included e-blasts and social media posts for FOX 2 viewers.

- Generated the central ideas for Florissant Valley's 60th anniversary celebration that included highlighting the special milestone with a STLCC Memory Table and commemorative PowerPoint display. MAC promoted the April 20 celebration and drove the



collection of items for the table, which evolved into two-memory cases. Florissant Valley was the first campus to develop programming for the College's anniversary. Meramec duplicated the memory case idea for its celebration.

- Edited the 2020-21 Florissant Valley Annual Report. The 52-page report highlighted academic, student affairs and area division successes and mentions of the campus in the news. The report was presented during governance to district leaders, shared with the campus and with community partners. This is the fourth year Florissant Valley prepared an annual report and remains the only campus to do so.



- Prepared Florissant Valley's materials used at North County Incorporated's 44th Annual Leadership Breakfast, where the campus received the Diversity and Inclusion Award. Shared information about Florissant Valley's activities to promote diversity through the annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration, African American History and Women's History Month programming, along with photos for the PowerPoint presentation.

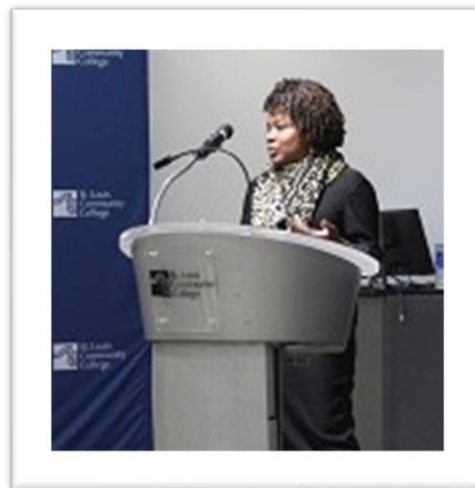
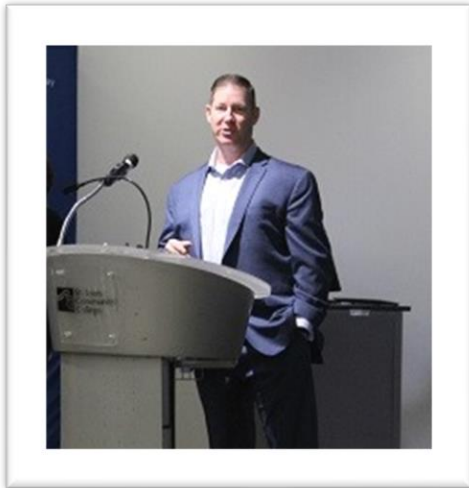


- Managed the efforts of campus coordinators to write the combined long-form article "High Schoolers Count the Ways" regarding the College's dual credit and dual enrollment offerings that was converted into the series, "High School + STLCC Classes=Achievement." This was the first of the department's continued series efforts.



## RECRUITMENT

- Participated in 110 recruitment and/or outreach events or activities. This included 75 high school recruitment, outreach and mobile enrollment events.
- Launched initial version of STLCC's Virtual Campus Tour.
- Created the recruitment and outreach landing page.
- Established the recruitment and outreach general phone work group.
- Reenergized the mobile enrollment program with the Ferguson-Florissant, Hazelwood and Riverview Gardens school districts.



## SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND MATH DIVISION

The following achievements represent areas of sustained effort for the science, technology engineering, and math division over the past year. These items are collaborative efforts that included division faculty, staff, and administration.

- Hosted a group of Geographic Information Systems employers from the St. Louis region to share their knowledge about the skill needs as a growing employment and workforce section in the area. This was the start of an ongoing process to gather data to inform future academic program development.
- Participated in the “Droning On” event with the Federal Aviation Administration. The conference provided information on the FAA regulations pertaining to unmanned aerial vehicles, required certifications, training, and skills. This activity is part of an ongoing effort to explore new areas of academic programming for the College.



- Led multiple employer engagement sessions in the construction and engineering sectors and explored academic and programming solutions to labor shortages. Employers provided valuable insights about the skills needed to succeed in their fields.
- Attended the GEOINT 2021 Symposium held in St. Louis. This symposium brought together government agencies, private companies and educational institutions to highlight trends and developments in the field of geographic information systems, mapping and satellite imagery analysis. Participation in this event was an effort to establish partnerships that would provide a foundation for ongoing analysis of the educational requirements and student employment avenues in this growing regional sector.
- Facilitated an information night for Rung for Women, a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the lives and earning potential for women. STLCC faculty and staff met with Rung for Women leaders on campus, and at their facility to provide information on short-term training options as a part of their education initiative.



## SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES/EDUCATION

For the second year in a row a faculty member — this year Howard Rosenthal, Ph.D.— was selected from this department for the 2022 the David L. Underwood Lecture Award. Other faculty continue to engage in activities that ultimately serve students, including spending countless hours on numerous full-time faculty search committees, doing grant writing and assisting faculty with creating their new Canvas platforms. Every class

moved to this new online delivery platform in the summer and preparation took place in the spring 2022 semester. More specifically, we:

- Involved human services with sociology by providing students with an opportunity to participate in the Court Watch program. This was spearheaded by LaRhonda Wilson, associate professor of sociology/anthropology.
- Received a \$10,000 recruitment grant. The education department, led by Mark Taylor, Department Chair of Social and Behavioral Sciences/Teacher Education applied for and received the grant. Chaired and participated in several hiring committees. This is the first major full-time hiring addition in years and certainly will inject new energy into the department.
- Educated students through guest speakers, including a former student and the dean of social work at University of Missouri-St. Louis. Faculty also beautified and enlivened the department with vibrant bulletin boards that addressed timely subjects such as Ukraine and Black History Month.
- Provided community outreach by providing trainings to area organizations, resulting in campus recognition for the League for Excellence Award to Annie Wagganer, assistant professor of sociology/anthropology.

## **STUDENT ADVOCACY AND RESOURCE CENTER**

- Changed program name from the Student Assistance Program to the Student Advocacy and Resource Center.
- Awarded the FY22 Food Insecure Urban Agriculture Matching Grant from the Missouri Department of Agriculture. The grant funded an introduction to gardening workshop along with a starter gardening kit for participants. The grant helped fund the creation of the SARC Market Garden that provided fresh produce and herbs to students through the Archers' Market.
- Recommended, with support provided from the STLCC Foundation, over \$28,000 in emergency funds to help students overcome immediate financial needs resulting from unplanned hardship negatively impacting their enrollment and success.
- Provided more than 1,400 meals, grocery orders and snacks to more than 200 unique students. We also had a successful audit, which allowed us to continue to receive goods from the St. Louis Area Foodbank through the Archers' Market.

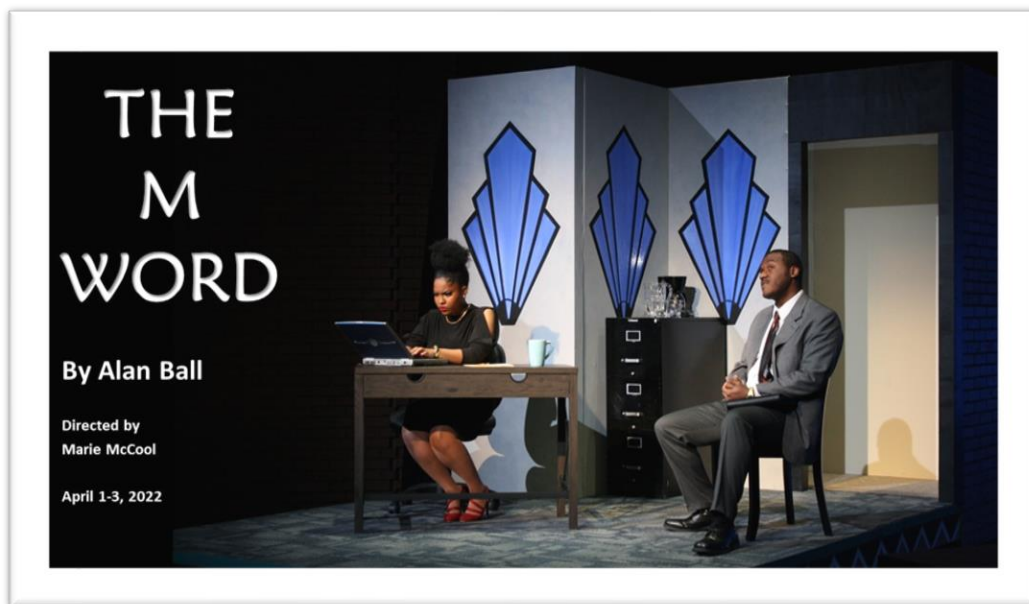


- Mailed care packages to students who tested positive for COVID or who were recommended by faculty or staff during fall 2021.



## STUDENT SUCCESS

- Organized and hosted a welcome table during peak months of new student registrations.
- Celebrated student registrations with a “Selfie with Archie” contest and back-to-school giveaways.
- Hosted Give your Advice for a Slice, Halloween Bash and Holiday Party events to connect with students.
- Implemented “Way to Go Wednesdays” for staff to show appreciation and offer an opportunity for networking and relationship building.
- Held biweekly Care Team meetings to address the needs of the most vulnerable students.



## TERRY M. FISCHER THEATRE

- Hosted the Missouri Department of Economic Development's Regional Listening Tour.

- Presented two in-person productions: “Love Letters,” directed by Daniel J. Betzler, professor of deaf communication, and “An Evening of Life’s Questions,” which included three one-act plays – “The M Word,” and “Habit,” directed by Marie McCool, theatre manager, and “The Zoo Story,” directed by Daniel J. Betzler.



- Held the Florissant Valley Orchestra’s three concerts:
- “Music of the Romantic Period,” which included Gioachino Rossini’s “William Tell Overture,” Modest Mussorgsky’s “A Night on Bald Mountain” and The John Ford Highland Pipe Band in a joint performance of “The Music of Scotland and the Music of James Bond, Mary Poppins and Henry VIII;” and “The Sounds of Spring,” which included Gioachino Rossini’s, “Thieving Magpie;” Franz Schubert’s “Unfinished Symphony;” and Johann Strauss II’s “Voices of Spring Waltz.”
- Hosted the STLCC-Florissant Valley and NCCU’s 2022 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration.
- Held two PTK induction ceremonies, the 2022 nursing graduates pinning, and the chancellor’s forum celebrating STLCC’s 60th anniversary.

## TESTING CENTER

- Achieved National College Testing Association Test Center recertification by demonstrating adherence to best practices and guidelines for testing.
- Administered more than 2,000 tests and restructured the center’s organization to ensure a consistent premiere student experience across the district.
- Selected Patti Barnes, who continues to manage the Florissant Valley testing center, as district manager of testing services.

- Hired Rick Harrison as a new testing specialist. He brings more than 25 years' of experience assisting students in the Missouri Division of Youth Services with academic preparation and career development.
- Launched a semester exam authorization form for allied health faculty to plan course exams for students with accommodations.

## VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS



- Initiated a transfer agreement for the general fine arts program. Bob Langnas, professor of fine arts, and Michael Quintero, professor of fine arts, worked with Rebecca Giordano, senior admissions counselor and transfer agreement coordinator at the Pacific Northwest College of Art, to form a transfer agreement between STLCC's general fine arts program and the Bachelor of Fine Arts studio art programs at PNCA. It is being reviewed by STLCC's legal team. STLCC is now listed as a "Transfer Partner" to PNCA, which entitles Archers to additional scholarship money when they pursue their BFA at PNCA.
- Spearheaded the program review for the Graphic Communication Associate in Fine Arts and Associate in Applied Science programs. Julia Jenner wrote the district program review document. Along with Neko Pilarcik-Tellez, they planned the oral presentation of the review.
- Kay Fields, a graphic communications student who is working toward a career in arts administration and who identifies as nonbinary, was awarded the Gyo Obata Fellowship from the Regional Arts Commission of St. Louis. The award included a 10-week paid summer fellowship that provided them with a hands-on introduction to [Perennial](#), an art nonprofit that offers educational programming in creative reuse to diverse populations. This fellowship is usually reserved for college juniors and seniors, that Kay was a sophomore speaks to the quality of their work.



- Implemented the Graphic Arts Association Speaker Series. The talks, coordinated by Neko Pilarcik-Tellez, assistant professor of graphic communications, featured Nic Parris, Nickelodeon storyboard artist, Howard Wimshurst, award-winning filmmaker and animation artist, and Knight Zhang, concept artist and illustrator.



- Presented several concerts in the Terry M. Fischer Theatre, including a spring concert directed by Ivy Allen that featured a bagpipe ensemble.



### III. Florissant Valley in the News 2021-22



St. Louis Community College



## **MEET ST. LOUIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE'S NEW VICE PRESIDENTS FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS**

**The new positions are the result of a multi-level reorganization designed to streamline processes within the student affairs department.**

August 4, 2021

Fueled by a desire to enhance the student experience, St. Louis Community College recently welcomed the addition of four vice presidents to the College.

The new positions are the result of a multi-level reorganization designed to streamline processes within the student affairs department. In these new roles, the vice presidents are responsible for leading districtwide functional areas, as well as serving as the chief student affairs officer at their respective campus.

“Each vice president brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the department and the College,” said Christine Davis, Ed.D., vice chancellor for student affairs. “We welcome their leadership, and we look forward to leveraging their talents to better serve our students and move STLCC forward.”

### **Florissant Valley**

Julie Massey, M.A., joined the College in June 2004 and served in several roles before advancing to her current position as vice president of student success and chief student affairs officer at STLCC-Florissant Valley.

In this role, Massey is responsible for academic advising, access disability services and career development. She has more than 17 years of experience in higher education and has held titles including academic advisor, manager of academic advising, manager of student success initiatives, and interim director of academic advising and student success.

Massey earned a master's degree in educational leadership and policy analysis with an emphasis in student affairs from the University of Missouri-Columbia, and a bachelor's degree in psychology from Truman State University.

A graduate of Hazelwood East High School, Massey has a passion for the College and its mission of empowering students, expanding minds and changing lives.

"There is nothing better I can think of doing than paying it forward to the students we serve at STLCC," Massey said. "This coming year, I've made it a goal to wrap my arms around the Florissant Valley campus and make sure our students are cared for and successful in their journey with us."

In addition to her work at STLCC, Massey enjoys spending time with her three daughters.

### **Forest Park**

Boyd Copeland, M.S., started with St. Louis Community College-Forest Park as vice president for multicultural student services in June. He's charged with oversight for all student affairs operations at the Forest Park campus, along with districtwide functions related to multicultural services such as TRIO grants (student support services and Upward Bound), international student services, Harrison Center, Black Male Achievers Academy, and other student diversity initiatives.

Prior to joining STLCC, Copeland served Jefferson College as the community college's director of student compliance and Title IX coordinator. He held several positions over five years at St. Charles Community College before moving to Jefferson College, including his final position as executive dean of student life. He began his career at Chattanooga State Technical Community College.

"As a first-generation college graduate who understands the value of education, I believe a community college education is the centerpiece for transforming post-secondary education in the 21st century," Copeland said.

Copeland received a master's degree from Austin Peay State University in sports administration and a bachelor's degree from Georgia State University in exercise science. He's currently pursuing a doctorate from Saint Louis University in higher education administration, with plans to complete the program next year. His scholar-practitioner work centers around student success, funding in higher education, student conduct, and diversity/inclusion within the community college.

Apart from working at STLCC, Copeland officiates college basketball throughout the Midwest at the NCAA Division I, II, and III levels and community colleges in Missouri and Illinois.

### **Meramec**



April Johnson, Ph.D., joined STLCC as the new vice president for student engagement on the Meramec Campus. In this role, she's charged with developing a comprehensive districtwide student engagement department focused on providing students with the best co-curricular experiences.

Johnson brings 17 years of higher education experience with her, having worked with non-traditional, traditional and first-generation students in public and private four-year universities, historically black colleges and universities, and community colleges. Most recently she served as assistant vice president for student affairs at Bowie State University.

"My first goal is to develop a solid, cohesive team by empowering them, valuing their knowledge and expertise, helping them to understand the connection between their roles and the goals of the institution, and creating a caring and supportive environment for them to do their best work," Johnson said.

Johnson will also focus on building a robust mentoring program, establishing a top-notch first-year experience program, revamping the new student orientation program, and establish consistency in how all campuses engage with and provide student activities for STLCC students.

"We, as an institution, need to ensure that students are socially integrated into the fabric of our community by providing stronger support systems, opportunities for social involvement, and for building peer relationships," she said.

Johnson received her bachelor's degree from the University of Maryland-Baltimore County, her master's and educational specialist degrees from Florida State University, and her doctorate in education from Wilmington University.

She and her daughter recently moved to St. Louis from the Baltimore area. She describes herself as a quiet, low-key introvert.

## Wildwood

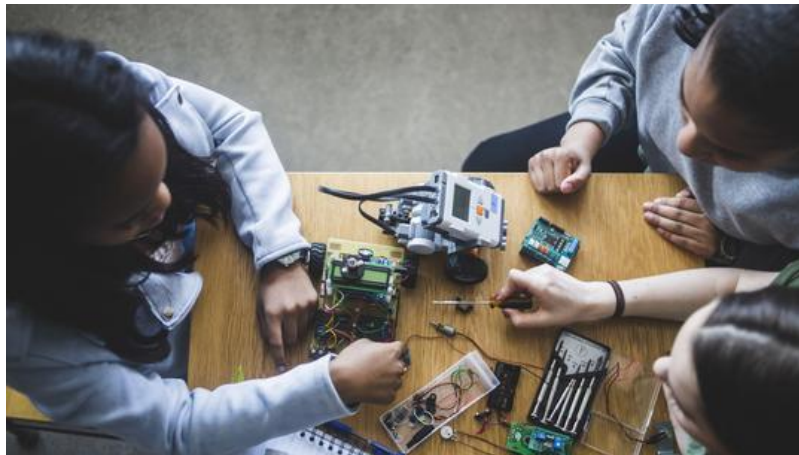
Keith Robinder, Ph.D., vice president for student support, serves as the chief student affairs officer for the Wildwood campus. He also provides districtwide leadership for the counseling department, student assistance program and childcare resource and referral program.

Robinder joined STLCC in 2019 as the vice president for student affairs at STLCC-Meramec. Before that, he worked for 10 years as an assistant, associate and interim dean for student affairs at Iowa State University. Earlier in his career, he served as the director of student life and community engagement at Laramie County Community College. Over the years, he has taught undergraduate and graduate courses focused on student success, leadership, student development, and program assessment and evaluation.

"I have a vocational calling to educate students; assisting them inside and outside the classroom to learn the knowledge and skills they need to be successful, both during and after college," Robinder said. "I went into student affairs because I had a great experience in college as a student and student leader, and I strongly believe in the power of helping people discover their potential."

Robinder earned both a doctorate in community college leadership and a master's degree in student affairs and higher education from Colorado State University. He began his educational career at the University of Denver, where he earned a bachelor's degree in business administration with a focus on hotel and restaurant management. He and his wife, Wendy, have two children. Outside of work, he enjoys spending time with his family, exploring nature, baking gluten-free foods, and traveling.

## ST.LOUISINNO



### High school students accepted into Emerson STEM Academy

August 13, 2021, 08:40am CDT

Students from three area school districts will participate in the Emerson STEM Academy for fall 2021 at St. Louis Community College-Florissant Valley. The students are from the Ferguson-Florissant, Hazelwood and Ritenour school districts. They were selected after submitting an application that included essays and recommendations and completing an interview.

## Innovative Training Program Prepares Workers for High-Demand Roles to Manufacture Critical Therapies and Medicines

October 25, 2021



Photo Credits: Dr. Elizabeth Gassel Perkins, St. Louis Community College, announces new biotech training course at kickoff event at The BioSTL Building | Katherine Bish for BioSTL.

New biotechnology professional development course through St. Louis Community College to fuel local talent to support rapidly growing St. Louis biologics manufacturing needs.

ST. LOUIS – Through a collaborative partnership facilitated by **BioSTL**, **St. Louis Community College** has launched an introductory course for industry-recognized biotechnology skills with curriculum co-developed with **Thermo Fisher Scientific**. The five-day professional development training is an effort to develop local talent with relevant experience to meet and support St. Louis' regional expertise in biotechnology – from quality control considerations to future technologies for bioprocessing.

The Biomanufacturing Research and Technical Training is a short-term training program that will provide adult learners with technical knowledge about their role on the job, and the program is cost-effective for employers.

While many St. Louis employers report plans to increase staffing levels coming out of the coronavirus pandemic, according to St. Louis Community College's annual State of the Workforce report, "a headwind to the future hiring optimism, employers reported a shortage of workers with knowledge or skills as the most common barrier to expanding employment."

“With this barrier in mind, employers need to be more strategic about growing talent, particularly with middle-skills jobs – those that require more than a high school diploma but less than a four-year college degree, such as a quality control analyst or a laboratory technician – being the most in-demand,” said Dr. Jeff Pittman, Chancellor, St. Louis Community College.

“I am consistently humbled by the innovation, creativity, and commitments coming out of St. Louis,” said Congresswoman Cori Bush. “When we talk about investing in our communities, we’re talking about generating meaningful opportunities for new jobs and better lives. That’s exactly why I’ve been holding firm over on Capitol Hill to ensure we pass the Build Back Better Act – because I know that St. Louis needs partnerships like this to build itself into one of the Midwest’s technology hubs. I am proud to support initiatives that bring more jobs, resources, and opportunities to St. Louis.”

Thermo Fisher Scientific identified this opportunity to develop local talent with biotechnology experience. The company needs a technically trained workforce to drive the production of biologic drug substance products, which treat a variety of chronic health conditions, including cancers and other life-threatening diseases as well as COVID-19. With **recent expansion plans in St. Louis** unveiled to invest \$82.5 million to expand operations and create 169 new jobs, this training course comes at an important time to address the continued growth in critical therapies and medicines.

“The accelerated demand to bring important medicines and therapies to patients in need is fueling our expansion. Developing our current and future talent is central to this growth strategy,” said Paul Jorjorian, Vice President and General Manager, Biologics, Thermo Fisher Scientific. “We are very proud to be part of this important collaboration that brings together trade, industry and academia to develop the local workforce for careers in pharmaceutical manufacturing. We look forward to working closely with BioSTL and St. Louis Community College to bring this important training to the community.”

“Equitable workforce development is essential to the continued success of our growing biomanufacturing sector and our region,” said Justin Raymundo, Manager, Regional Workforce Strategy, BioSTL. “This cost-effective workforce solution provides a model for collaborations between our academic institutions, anchor employers, and community organizations in the region that enable short-term, accessible, and inclusive training for in-demand skill sets.”

These partnerships also signal the commitments of St. Louis’ life science employers, academic institutions, and community to hire and invest locally by developing innovative training programs that lead to quality jobs in high-growth sectors, like St. Louis’ vibrant bioscience industry. This is a direct response to the **STL 2030 Jobs Plan**, which calls for industry-led workforce collaborations as a key priority.

The Plan states, “The strategy to Become a Talent Engine and Magnet depends upon local employers establishing partnerships with education and workforce training, public sector agencies, support services and community organizations to create training programs that put more people — particularly those from historically disadvantaged and underrepresented communities—on pathways into quality jobs in supportive, inclusive workplaces.”

“The partnership among St. Louis Community College, Thermo Fisher Scientific, and BioSTL is a blueprint to model for other companies and other industries,” said Jason Hall, CEO, Greater STL, Inc. “This is a proven recipe for success: investing in the development of training programs for other high-demand STEM occupations will expand program capacity, improve student access, and address rising regional demand for biotech workers.”

Visit St. Louis Community College online to learn more about [biotechnology](#).



## **PARSON MAKES 4 APPOINTMENTS TO VARIOUS BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, FILLS 3 COUNTY OFFICE VACANCIES**

BY PRESS RELEASE ON NOVEMBER 1, 2021

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. — Today, Governor Mike Parson announced four appointments to various boards and commissions and filled three county office vacancies.

### **Kerry Casey, of Chesterfield, was appointed to the State Board of Education.**

Ms. Casey is a Vice President at EXEGY, a global leader in financial market data, trading platforms, and predictive signals. She has served in this capacity since 2009 and leads global sales operations and enablement for EXEGY. Previously, she was Senior Vice President Customer Administration for Thomson Reuters. Ms. Casey serves on the Board of Directors for the Knowledge Is Power Program St. Louis (KIPP STL), Lift for Life Gym, and the Patriot Training Foundation. She also has been a Big Sister in her local Big Sister/Little Sister program and has previously served on the organization’s local advisory board. Ms. Casey earned a certificate in Executive Leadership from the University of Michigan School of Business as well as a certificate in Business Process Reengineering from the Kellogg Graduate School of Management.

### **Tom Gorsline, of Macks Creek, was appointed as the Camden County Public Administrator.**

Mr. Gorsline has served as a Detective for the City of Osage Beach Police Department since 2013. He served as a Patrolman for the Police Department for seven years prior to his promotion to Detective. Mr. Gorsline is the president of the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 101 and is a member of Kids Harbor, Missouri Coalition for Mental Health, the International Crisis Intervention Team, and the Missouri Crisis Intervention Team. He holds certifications in hostage and crisis negotiation, crisis



intervention, and peer support. Mr. Gorsline earned an associate degree in criminal justice from Eastern Gateway Community College and graduated from the Missouri Western State College Police Academy.

**Florence Hill, of Bellefontaine, was appointed to the St. Louis County Board of Election Commissioners.** Ms. Hill has worked for CIGNA since 2003 and is currently an Operations Lead Analyst. Previously, she worked as a programmer for Vestcom Inc. Ms. Hill attended St. Louis Community College at Florissant Valley and has continued her education through on-the-job programs with the University of Missouri– St. Louis.

**Shannon Landers, of Sikeston, was appointed as the New Madrid County Circuit Clerk.** Ms. Landers has served as Chief Deputy Clerk and Principal Court Clerk for New Madrid County since 2012. Prior to her promotion as Chief Deputy Clerk, she served as a deputy clerk for the Office for more than 25 years. Ms. Landers holds a certificate in Court Management from the Missouri Court Management Institute and National Center for State Courts as well as a Bachelor of Science in criminal justice from Southeast Missouri State University.

**Denise Smith, of Ellington, was appointed as the Reynolds County Collector.** Ms. Smith has served as Deputy Clerk in the Reynolds County Clerk's Office since 2013. Prior to joining the Reynolds County Clerk's Office, she was the Assistant Night Shift Manager for Town and Country.

**Roger Walleck, of Columbia, was appointed to the Workers' Compensation Determinations Review Board.** Mr. Walleck has more than 40 years of experience in the insurance industry and is currently the Chief Underwriting Officer and Corporate Leader of Underwriting for Missouri Employers Mutual. Previously, he was the Chief Underwriting Officer for Meadowbrook Insurance Group. Mr. Walleck holds professional designations in Chartered Property Casualty Underwriter (CPCU) and Associate in Insurance Services (AIS) from the Insurance Institute of America. He earned a Bachelor of Science in finance from Northern Illinois University.

**Katie Jo Wheeler, of Kansas City, was appointed to the Administrative Hearing Commission.** Ms. Wheeler recently served as Deputy Director for the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (DNR), a position she held since 2018. Prior to becoming Deputy Director of DNR, she served as General Counsel for the Department. Ms. Wheeler is certified with the Missouri Bar and has completed The Missouri Way Advanced Management Training program. She received a Bachelor of Arts in political science from Baylor University and earned her Juris Doctor from the University of Missouri–Columbia School of Law.



Willingness to serve' leads St. Louis' Jeri Kincade to Navy and (Salvation) Army.

Nov 11, 2021

### **Joe Holleman**

Joe Holleman is a reporter for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

Armed with an arsenal of numbers and a sense of duty, Jeri Kincade fights battles on two fronts:

Overseas as a supply officer with the U.S. Navy, and in St. Louis as the accounting director of the Salvation Army.

“We all were brought up with a willingness to serve,” Kincade said of her family.

“My mother was a school teacher in Maplewood-Richmond Heights — the old-school kind who did not play around,” she said.

“And my dad was a man of service. If he wasn’t at home, we all knew he was down at the church helping someone, fixing something or cleaning something.”

Toss into that mix a grandmother, aunts and cousins who have been teachers, coaches, ministers and choir directors.

“Growing up around all that, it’s just what you know,” she said.

Kincade, 56, lives in south St. Louis, “but Richmond Heights will always be home.”

She went to Clayton schools and graduated from Clayton High, where she competed in basketball and track. In class, she soaked up mathematics courses.

“I just remember always being fascinated with numbers,” Kincade said.

One specific number she recalls is “1/2” — as in the one-half inch by which she lost the state long jump championship in her senior year, 1983.

“I was runner-up two years in a row,” she said with a faux frown followed by a full-throated laugh — “to that ‘Lisa girl’ from Lutheran South.”

Don’t forget to include modeling on Kincade’s lists of talents. She started when she was in junior high and still does runway work for local shows.

After high school, she attended St. Louis Community College at Florissant Valley and ran track for her uncle, Norris Stevenson.

Athletics also runs in the family. Vashon graduate Stevenson was the first Black player to be awarded a football scholarship to the University of Missouri. He was drafted in 1961 by the Dallas Cowboys.

Carrying on the coaching tradition is Kincade’s son, Anthony, a teacher at Buder Elementary School and a track and cross-country coach at Collegiate School of Medicine & Bioscience in St. Louis Public Schools.

After leaving Flo Valley, Kincade earned a bachelor’s degree in accounting from St. Louis University and a master’s degree in management and finance from Fontbonne University.

From 1993 to 2006, she held various accounting positions with St. Louis city. Then in 2007, she joined the [Salvation Army](#) as its accounting director.

Providing services to the needy is always a struggle, but Kincade said the COVID-19 pandemic required the Salvation Army to mobilize its efforts to an even greater degree than usual.

“Everything shut down, but we couldn’t. We couldn’t just shut all those shelters down,” she said. “But many of our fundraising efforts had to be canceled.”

Fighting to find money, Kincade said the federal government helped out. And once people began to become aware of the charity’s situation, “they gave in droves.”

Her battles for the military began in 2001, when she signed up for the Naval Reserves.

“My brother, Arthur Jr., was an Army veteran in Vietnam. He was awarded a Purple Heart,” she said. “I was always fascinated by his stories and I think I was drawn to the camaraderie” among military veterans.

“I remember after I enlisted (Jan. 31, 2001), I came home in my ‘Crackerjack’ uniform and my dad would not believe I had signed up,” she said.

“He says, ‘You just went and bought that at Old Navy,’” she said. “I was like ‘Old Navy? Really, Dad?’”

In 2002, Kincade was commissioned as an ensign and began her career as a supply officer. She was promoted to the rank of commander in 2020.

During her Navy career, she has been to a number of far-flung locales, including Greece, Cyprus, Africa, Singapore, Japan, South Korea and Ukraine.

Currently, her duty station is in Chicago and she works with the Sixth Fleet, which operates in the Black Sea and has taken part in [Operation Sea Breeze](#).

“With supply officers, the standard saying is ‘beans, bullets and bandages.’ We’re the ones who make sure the frontline troops have the things they need to do what they do,” she explained.

Soon, she likely will be heading off to another location for action — though she can’t be more specific.

“We just use the phrase ‘duties as assigned.’”

## theartsstl

### THE FOUND FIVE | BACK TO MY ROOTS

BY [JIM RYAN](#)

[NOVEMBER 17, 2021](#)

While I peruse the list of new releases each week, I always seem to have an inner battle brewing. While the majority of new releases are from new bands trying to make their mark, there is also a heavy dose of established artists offering new albums for their already established fanbase.

Should I feature those already established bands or focus on the up and comers who are looking for a little love for their music? I tend to defer to the up and comers who seem to be far more appreciative of the attention.

I think about my days at college where I was part of the music department at KCFV at St. Louis Community College at Florissant Valley. Each week we would get dozens of new CDs in the mail which were doled out in random fashion. We would then take those home and listen to them on our newfangled CD players. Hours and hours were spent analyzing the music, the tone, and the vibe of each CD. We would then convene and fight to get our favorites on the Heavy Rotation playlist for the station.

The conversations were hard fought, but if you were able to get two or three of your CDs on the list you knew you had achieved your goal of bringing the best new music to your audience. This is where I created an emotional bond with my artists.

When I would hear artists like Goldfinger, Stabbing Westward, or Veruca Salt later played on 105.7 The Point, I took it as a badge of honor that perhaps in some small way, I helped get those bands noticed. As fate would have it, I got the opportunity to interview John Feldman of Goldfinger when they played the Warped Tour at Riverport Amphitheatre and my musical journey had come full circle.

The payoff for me is when one of these artists that I highlight sends me a message saying they appreciate the mention. That is where we—as a writer/fan and a musician—create our emotional connection. Then in turn, when I get a message from a reader saying they really enjoyed hearing a band I highlighted is where we—a writer and a reader—make our emotional connection. It turns into a mutual admiration society which is what I really love.

So let's dive in and make some connections in this edition, shall we?

**Band: Naked Raygun**

**Album: Over the Overlords**

**Favorite Song: Living in the Good Times**

I am sure some of you are already calling me a hypocrite. How can a band who has already had eight albums—*Over the Overlords* is their ninth—be considered new or up and coming? Good question, but this is the first time *I* have heard of the band, so they are new **to me**. But how I went through my entire 20s never having heard this band is a mystery to me. *Over the Overlords* is full of fantastic melodic punk songs, each one catchier than the last. This album takes me back to a simpler time in my life when my friend Loyal and I would drive down Lindbergh Avenue blasting Hüsker Dü and Buzzcocks out our windows—we were the moment. This band might have formed back in the '80s, but their sound and energy are timeless.

**Other notable tracks: “Treat Me Unkind,” “Broken Things,” “Amishes,” “Black and Grey,” and “Farewell to Arms”**



**Band: The Exbats**  
**Album: Now Where Were We**  
**Favorite Song: Ghost in the Record Store**

Fun fact about me: I ALWAYS wanted to work in a record store. Cutting my musical teeth on such iconic locations as Vintage Vinyl and West End Wax, I idolized the people that scoffed at me when I asked for the latest Bon Jovi album. It only makes sense that this amazingly hippy-trippy track caught my ear. Inez McLain's vocals gave me all the feels of The B-52's Kate Pierson and (her dad!) Kenny McLain's surf rock guitar sealed the deal. This band keeps it light, delivers fun and flirty vibes, and best of all makes me feel good without medication.

**Other notable tracks: "Coolsville USA," "Best Most Least Worst," "Hey New Zealand," and "Like A Son"**

**Band: The Right Here**  
**Album: Northern Town**  
**Favorite Song: Buy Me Another Round**

Minnesota has served up so many musical artists that I absolutely love. Artists like Prince, The Replacements, Sugar, and Lizzo all hold a special place in my heart. Well, my heart will just have to get bigger for The Right Here. Unpretentious is the word I would use to describe their sound. From the authentic vocals to the infectious rhythms this band just plays fantastic rock and roll. I will say this many times, but THIS is my motivation to write this column – to find unearthed jewels like The Right Here.

**Other notable tracks – "Good Luck Trying," "Every Once in a While," "Here We Go Again," and "Northern Town"**

**Artist: Parker McCollum**  
**Album: Gold Chain Cowboy**  
**Favorite Song: Never Loved You at All**

As a self-proclaimed rock groupie, some people are flummoxed by my love of country music. But if we are truth-telling here, my first internship was with St. Louis' legendary country radio station WIL-FM. It was during the heyday of country music when Shania Twain, Garth Brooks, and The Dixie Chicks ruled the airwaves. I would be considered a country music purist in the sense that I subscribe to the theory of "give me three chords and the truth." Parker McCollum serves up that and much more on *Gold Chain Cowboy*. Where he really made me fall in love was the twang in his voice on "Never Loved You at All." Country music fans need to get on the ball and create a line dance for this track full of grapevines, step hitches, and hip bumps. This song is made for twirling.

**Other notable tracks – "Dallas," "Why Indiana," and "Blanco County Rain"**

**Band: The Courettes**  
**Album: Back in Mono**  
**Favorite Song: Hop the Twig**

Husband and wife Flavia and Martin Couri harness the sound *and the power* of '60s garage rock on their all-around spectacular album, *Back in Mono*. When I heard this album, I got so excited to share it with all of you. As a GenX'er who considers himself a Baby Boomer at heart, this album spoke to my inner beatnik. Flavia's vocals are—in a word—inspired. Whenever she belts out a “Wooooooo!” my heart skips a beat. Maybe The Courettes could tour with the Exbats and create a whole new Summer Of Love vibe. Both bands are totally fab and could totally sock it to me.

**Other notable tracks – “I Can Hardly Wait,” “Trash Can Honey,” Misfits & Freaks,” and “Edge of My Nerves”**

Well kids, I am heading back out on the musical highway to keep finding you more jams. Please remember to support your favorite bands by buying their latest albums and merch. You never know, you may just see me on my Twitter account sporting one or two of these band's t-shirts. Follow me on Twitter at [@TheFoundFive](#) to see what other songs I may pick as #SongOfTheDay.

As always you can listen to all of these songs and more as I update my playlist, “K-JIM 2021 on spotify.



2019 UMSL Department of Art and Design graduate Brock Seals supports himself through painting canvases, performing hip-hop and fashioning custom cleats for sports stars, such as Cardinals outfielder Harrison Bader. (Photo by August Jennewein)

## UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI-ST. LOUIS: LEADER OF THE ST. LOUIS AVANT-GARDE: ARTIST BROCK SEALS' BACKGROUND FUELS HIS ASCENT

**The scene feels like controlled chaos, a merging of artistic styles befitting a man who works across mediums.**

**By Ben Westhoff**  
November 23, 2021

Paint cans, sneakers and recording equipment saturate [Brock Seals'](#) studio in the Grove. On a top shelf sits a Lego action figure he designed of himself. The scene feels like controlled chaos, a merging of artistic styles befitting a man who works across mediums.

The 2019 University of Missouri–St. Louis [Department of Art and Design](#) graduate is in full creative swing, no longer working a day job but instead supporting himself painting canvases, performing hip-hop and fashioning custom cleats for sports stars, such as Cardinals outfielder Harrison Bader.

Both book smart and street smart, Seals draws on a wide range of influences, from pop culture to ancient philosophy. Today wearing thin blond braids, a vintage KISS T-shirt, camo pants and sneakers running the color gamut, he's a walking visual statement who

pushes boundaries. Having painted “REPARATIONS” in huge letters on the street by City Hall – as well as created roller skates that look like ice cream cones – his art is both political and commercially viable.

“It involves a lot of reflecting on who I am, being from St. Louis and being Black, and my culture,” he says.

He’s succeeding on his own terms in the worlds of art and activism, in the process creating a body of work both unique and inspiring. At age 28, his list of accomplishments grows weekly. He has presented at Art Basel in Miami; organized a celebrated Mad Art Gallery event, [Art, Mimosas and Pancakes](#); and recently recorded a critically regarded album called [“The Artist.”](#)

To call his ascent unlikely is an understatement. Coming from a hardscrabble North St. Louis County upbringing, Seals was raised without art-world role models. During part of Seals’ childhood his father was imprisoned, and his mother has long worked in food service.

“My mom did a good job providing for me, so I didn’t have to worry – so I could dream,” he said. “I always knew that I was different.”

His ascent to local avant-garde leader began at Jennings High School, when he and two friends produced a T-shirt line called Hello Tomorrow, a graphic-heavy lifestyle brand.

“In every St. Louis high school, people had it,” Seals recalls.

He pursued fashion on scholarship at Columbia College Chicago but dropped out and returned home feeling like he’d failed. He learned to paint at St. Louis Community College – Florissant Valley and then enrolled at UMSL, where his mentors included [Phil Robinson](#), associate professor of art, and [Michael Behle](#), associate teaching professor of art.

“They offered resources and guidance and helped me bring my crazy ideas to life,” Seals says, adding that he’s especially thankful to Behle for teaching him the business of art, including how to get work into galleries. “He showed us all the possibilities. We took a trip to New York my senior year and saw Warhols and Basquiats.”

Before long, Seals began exhibiting paintings at venues, including St. Louis’ Contemporary Art Museum, and he’s now well-known on the local scene. A February 2021 [St. Louis Magazine profile](#) gushed about his “colorful, geometric style rooted in both Black traditions and postmodern aesthetics.”

Meanwhile, he’s earning real money designing custom sneakers for his 10,000 Instagram followers. He also creates pieces for hip-hop stars and professional sports teams, including the Los Angeles Rams. For the Cardinals’ African American Heritage

Night at Busch Stadium in September, he designed a special [ballcap](#), an impressionistic spin on the team's traditional red and white, of which 30,000 were set to be distributed.

His background growing up in an area of concentrated poverty informs his creations. He says Michael Brown's 2014 killing in Ferguson by a white police officer inspired him to go harder in his craft, to put in more hours than ever.

"Mike's killing led me to take my painting more serious because I realized that it could all be taken at any moment," he says. "I learned how I could use my art as my voice."

His protest work from a June 20, 2020, block party next to City Hall has become legend. In conjunction with the Black business network For the Culture STL, he painted the word "REPARATIONS" in giant yellow letters on Market Street, as a group of supporters locked arms in a circle, so police couldn't disrupt him. The goal was to raise awareness about the issue, locally and nationally, and though the letters were soon scrubbed off, their impact continues to reverberate.

"That protest is still being talked about to this day," he says.

As Seals' career has progressed, he's become increasingly comfortable in his skin, shifting away from popular styles and into his own lane. His latest rap album, recorded at his Grove studio, often sounds more like jazz than contemporary hip-hop, while his videos eschew genre tropes in favor of his unique dance moves and wildly ornate, self-designed jackets and shirts.

His advice for the sartorially challenged?

"Wear what you like. Take risks! That's how you develop your style," he says. The same wisdom informs Seals' art, which grows increasingly impactful the more he disregards the rules.





## **ST. LOUIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE: PARTICIPANTS ARE INVITED TO LEARN ABOUT GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS CAREERS**

**Have you ever thought about who creates the mapping content for GPS when you look up directions?**

December 2, 2021

Have you ever thought about who creates the mapping content for GPS when you look up directions?

It's people who work in the geographic information systems field.

St. Louis Community College students, employees and participants in the Emerson STEM Academy are invited to learn from geographic information systems professionals Eric Adams and April N. Rountree as they give a GIS overview and snapshot of the growing career field.

The Emerson STEM Academy Speakers Series "What Is GIS, and Why Do I Care?" presentation is Friday, Dec. 10, from 10-11 a.m. in the Student Center Multipurpose Room at STLCC-Florissant Valley, 3400 Pershall Road in Ferguson.

Eric AdamsEric Adams is a geospatial functional expert and program manager at General Dynamics Information Technology, where he applies his more than 22 years of

experience in geospatial intelligence and GIS to deliver cutting-edge solutions for multiple government contracts in the intelligence community and Department of Defense.

Before joining GDIT, Adams served as a geospatial intelligence analyst in the U.S. Army (active duty) and completed combat deployments to the Middle East. A National Geospatial Intelligence Agency certified senior instructor for the Army's geospatial engineer advanced training courses, Adams successfully managed and instructed more than 300 U.S. soldiers in geospatial intelligence analysis, GIS and intelligence analysis, including imagery and full-motion video.

Adams earned a bachelor's degree in intelligence studies and a master's degree in intelligence operations and analysis from American Military University. He also earned a master's degree in geospatial information sciences and technologies from North Carolina State University.

April RountreeApril N. Rountree is a geospatial intelligence analyst with STEMBoard LLC. Before joining STEMBoard, she served as a geospatial engineer in the U.S. Army (active duty) for 10 years and was deployed as part of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. She continues to work for the intelligence community and U.S. Department of Defense.

Rountree is a graduate of the U.S. Army Airborne School, Air Assault School and Drill Sergeant School. She holds a bachelor's degree in intelligence studies and a graduate certificate in joint warfare from American Military University.

She has earned several military awards and decorations, including the Army Commendation Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Joint Service Achievement Medal, and Joint Service Commendation Medal. Active in the community, Rountree enjoys introducing students to GIS through activities and coding.

"The College is hard at work pushing the envelope and seeking out new careers and opportunities for our students," said Steve White, dean of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics at STLCC-Florissant Valley. "I'm eager to see the students' reactions to these outstanding professionals when they learn how much GIS is already part of their lives. I hope the talk inspires students to consider GIS as a career field."

## Letter: Expanded public transportation would help college education

Dec 7, 2021



Erik Bucceri of Overland drills a hole in a block of brass as he makes pieces for a hammer project in his precision machines and technology class at the Florissant Valley campus of St. Louis Community College on Thursday, Sept. 8, 2016. The 16 week class gets students ready for entry level machinist jobs. Photo by Robert Cohen, [rcohen@post-dispatch.com](mailto:rcohen@post-dispatch.com)

Robert Cohen •

The U.S. House of Representatives recently passed the Build Back Better Act. It includes a provision — the Promoting Advancement Through Transit Help to College Act — that would offer competitive grants. The grants would be administered by the Department of Transportation in partnership with local public transit providers for community colleges, historically black colleges and universities, tribal colleges, and other minority-serving institutions.

The goal is to help extend existing routes to better serve the needs of students, increase the frequency of those routes, establish transit stops closer to campuses, subsidize public transportation costs for students and more. This is imperative for our region. Despite the availability of robust public transit systems nationwide, many don't provide light rail service directly to community college campuses. That's the situation for the four campuses, two education centers, and three additional facilities that make up St. Louis Community College.

Lack of transportation access should not be a barrier to quality education. This legislation is important and could significantly improve public transit access for students.

**Dr. Elizabeth Gassel Perkins**• Florissant  
President, St. Louis Community College Florissant Valley Campus

**STLCC-FLORISSANT VALLEY AND NCCU'S MLK  
CELEBRATION NOW VIRTUAL**

**Emerson Electric Co. to receive honor**

The St. Louis American Staff  
Jan 13, 2022



Michael P. McMillan, president and CEO of the Urban League of Metropolitan Saint Louis  
Photo by Wiley Price | St. Louis American

**ST. LOUIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE AT FLORISSANT VALLEY AND NORTH  
COUNTY CHURCHES UNITING FOR RACIAL HARMONY AND JUSTICE'S  
ANNUAL DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. CELEBRATION IS NOW VIRTUAL.**

The decision to offer the program virtually instead of having both in-person and virtual options was made to comply with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance regarding avoiding large gatherings in light of the coronavirus pandemic.

The virtual celebration is Tuesday, Jan. 18 from 6-7:30 p.m. and will include an opportunity to hear inspiring speeches, celebrate excellence in the community with a formal award presentation and more. The community is invited to enjoy the event by visiting [stlcc.edu/go/fvmlkday](http://stlcc.edu/go/fvmlkday) or 89.5 KCFV-FM "The Wave."

Michael P. McMillan, president and CEO of the Urban League of Metropolitan Saint Louis, will speak on the celebration's theme, "We're Better Together." McMillan is a member of the boards of directors of numerous organizations and has received hundreds of awards and commendations from various organizations. Most recently, he was inducted into the International Civil Rights Walk of Fame as its youngest member and named the 2020 Person of the Year by The St. Louis American.

Keeping with tradition, north St. Louis County students will lead and participate in the celebration. Tyler Hoskins, a freshman, graphic communications student at the College, will serve as emcee. Beyonce' Hightower and Javon Spearman, freshmen, general transfer students at the College, are the student speakers.



Beyonce' Hightower

Javon Spearman

Participants will also hear winning speeches from NCCU's Oratorical Contest and a musical performance of James Weldon Johnson's "Lift Every Voice and Sing" by Alayna Epps, University of Missouri-St. Louis vocalist, accompanied by Paul Higdon, DMA, professor of music and pianist.

In addition to being inspired by rousing speakers and a musical performance, virtual attendees will learn more about why Emerson Electric Co. is being honored with the 2022 Dr. Rance Thomas Excellence in Community Partnership Award.

"I can't begin to count all the ways Emerson has shown its support. Most recently, thanks to Emerson, STLCC-Florissant Valley is home of the Emerson STEM Academy, a program that ensures students are ready for STEM careers and majors after graduating from high school," said Elizabeth Gassel Perkins, Ed.D., campus president and chief academic officer at St. Louis Community College at Florissant Valley.

"Emerson had a sincere interest in joining us in the work of preparing young minds for careers in science, technology, engineering, and math, and as a result, provided us with a \$1 million grant that made creating the dedicated tutoring and learning space, covering the costs of books and materials for students, and making both transportation and enrichment programs possible."





### **HSD Student, Parent, and Educator Named Winners in MLK Oratory Contest**

A Hazelwood West High School student, Hazelwood Central High School parent, and Keeven Elementary School teacher assistant are among the winners of the annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Oratory Contest.

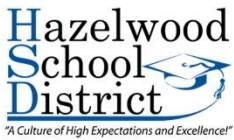
The contest, which is sponsored by St. Louis Community College at Florissant Valley North County Churches Uniting for Racial Harmony and Justice (NCCU), gives community members a chance to utilize their oratory and writing skills to share their thoughts about Dr. King and the contest's theme of "We're Better Together."

Jiyu Zhang, a West student, is the winner in the high school student category. Her compelling essay detailed Dr. King's efforts to expand voting rights and overcome adversity.

Zhang's complete essay can be viewed [here](#).

Lynda Phillips, a teacher assistant at Keeven, is the winner in the senior category. Reva Gomes, a Central parent, is the winner in the adult category. The winners received a monetary prize and will be honored at an NCCU event on January 18, 2022.





**Jan. 19, 2022**

### **Hazelwood School District Facebook Page**

We have such a talented and diverse community! Last night, Hazelwood West student Jiyu Zhang, HSD teacher assistant Lynda Phillips, and HSD parent Reva Gomes shared speeches they wrote for an annual MLK Oratory contest. St. Louis Community College at Florissant Valley and the North County Churches Uniting for Racial Harmony and Justice organize the annual contest.

We chose one word to describe the remarks of each of our speakers.

Zhang = poised.

Phillips = passion.

Gomes = inspiring.



## **STLCC-Florissant Valley to be Mass Vaccination Site**

Mass Vaccine Site Coming to STLCC-Florissant Valley

January 28, 2021

To quickly get more COVID-19 vaccinations into more peoples' arms, St. Louis Community College is partnering with the St. Louis County Department of Public Health to conduct the county's first community mass vaccination site at STLCC-Florissant Valley. Vaccinations will take place in the campus gymnasium, located at 3400 Pershall Road in Ferguson, at a time and date to be determined. Vaccinations are currently not available; however, when they become available, the site will quickly become operational. "This (Florissant Valley campus) will be the site of our first mass vaccination center. With this location, we are working closely with the state to get as many vaccines here in our community as possible and get this vaccination site up and running as soon as possible," said Dr. Sam Page, St. Louis County executive. "With the vaccine, we can now talk about being on a pathway to eradicating the virus. We also must engage in communities that are underrepresented to ensure everyone has access to vaccines, and that is our commitment in St. Louis County." Jeff L. Pittman, Ph.D., STLCC chancellor, said, "We look forward to supporting the region to getting vaccinated quickly. As Dr. Page has said many times before, widespread vaccination is the only way we are going to get through this pandemic."

Pittman noted that the College is working closely with the St. Louis County Department of Public Health for ways that STLCC nursing and allied health students can support vaccination efforts as appropriate. Ferguson Mayor Ella Jones expressed appreciation to STLCC and Florissant Valley campus officials and staff for providing the campus as the first mass vaccine distribution site in St. Louis County. "We have seen thousands of families suffer during this pandemic. Many have lost loved ones or become very sick," Jones said. "Our residents are afraid. They are scared. They are anxious to know when the end of this challenging and very difficult time will come. We know the vaccine will help us get past this pandemic and allow us to get back to normal."

Individuals must have a scheduled appointment. The vaccination site is not a drive-up or drop-in location. The College will not schedule vaccines for community members, employees or students. The St. Louis County Department of Public Health will have an online scheduling system for people who are eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine. Details will be online. Vaccines will be given by registered nurses, licensed practical nurses,

paramedics, pharmacists and other healthcare professionals or healthcare professionals in training, adequately licensed or with adequate oversight to vaccinate. The vaccination site will follow guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS).

Community members must follow the College's policies for health and safety while on campus: Wear a mask or face covering, maintain a physical distance of 6-feet, and if you are sick, please do not come to campus. When the vaccination site is operational, a traffic checkpoint will be set up to direct people to the appropriate parking areas on campus. Those who have a scheduled appointment time will be greeted by intake staff who will take your temperature, verify your photo ID and complete paperwork. They will be directed to someone to give the vaccine. After the vaccine, patients will be monitored for 15-30 minutes for adverse reactions. In the event of a medical emergency, a first aid station will be in the gym. A physician and nurses will be available for minor injuries or illnesses. For more serious needs, they'll call 9-1-1. Other STLCC campuses located in St. Louis County – Meramec, South County and Wildwood – may eventually become community vaccination sites.



### **Development of Genome Editing Coursework: A collaboration with Industry**

**Description:** Our grant funding is supporting, with the input of our local area bioscience industry, the development of two genome editing courses to be implemented into our biotechnology program at St. Louis Community College Florissant Valley. These courses will provide advanced coursework in the technologies and procedures used in the genome editing laboratories locally, while providing a great overview and understanding of the editing of a genome, and the ethics and concepts involved. Students will learn the basic history and ideas behind each of the hands-on laboratory techniques they will actually do in the lab, guided by instructors well versed in the technology. Genome editing I is being offered for the second half of the spring semester 2022.

**Speakers:** Elizabeth Boedecker PhD, District Director, Thi Nguyen, Center for Plant and Life Sciences, St. Louis Community College Florissant Valley, St. Louis, MO







The Missouri State Capitol building in Jefferson City is lit up on Wednesday, Jan. 19, 2022.

David Carson, Post-Dispatch.

### **Missouri is flush with cash, but House leaves some money out of the state budget**

Kurt Erickson Apr 6, 2022

JEFFERSON CITY — Members of the Missouri House put finishing touches on their version of a new state budget Tuesday that leaves nearly \$2 billion in general tax revenues unspent.

The overall \$46.1 billion spending plan, which covers state programs for the fiscal year beginning July 1, includes money for [arrange of major construction projects](#) but doesn't include as much money sought by Republican Gov. Mike Parson to raise teacher salaries and shore up the state pension system.

Rep. [Cody Smith](#), R-Carthage, who chairs the House Budget Committee, made it a priority to withhold some of the largesse that has flowed into state coffers during the pandemic, arguing that it should be saved for future economic downturns. A lengthy debate on the blueprint came on a day when Parson's budget office reported that net general revenue collections for the current fiscal year have increased 5.6% compared with March 2021, from \$7.85 billion last year to \$8.29 billion this year. The increase will only add to the state's already flush bottom line.

Among the top takeaways from more than six hours of debate was a reduction in the amount of federal stimulus money sought by Parson. The GOP-controlled House version spends \$2.2 billion, compared with the \$3.2 billion that Parson wanted to use for one-time construction projects.

Smith said phasing in the spending for some of the projects would allow lawmakers to better monitor the influx of federal dollars.

“We’re not trying to lose any of these dollars or send them back to the federal government,” Smith said.

House Minority Leader [Crystal Quade](#), D-Springfield, decried the Republican decision to leave money on the table for the Senate to dig into without House input.

“We are handing them a blank check,” Quade said. “The senators are going to spend this money.”

Republicans dismissed what they called “caterwauling” by Democrats.

“The Senate will do what the Senate will do,” said Rep. [Dirk Deaton](#), R-Noel.

The House’s slower-than-usual approach to the budget has been panned by leaders in the Senate, who said the delays may have been intentional.

The two chambers face a May 7 deadline to finish the budget. Pending final approval in the House this week, the Senate could take up the proposal beginning next week.

Senate Majority Leader [Caleb Rowden](#), R-Columbia, said he would call the Senate into a special session to finish the plan if it does not get done in time.

In January, Parson outlined a plan to increase the starting pay of educators, which is the lowest in the nation. An estimated 4,000 teachers are making between \$25,000 and \$35,000 annually.

Parson said that low rate, equal to about \$12 an hour, has made it hard for schools to recruit and retain teachers.

In response, the House added \$37.4 million for school districts to boost teacher pay. Some Democrats wanted at least \$100 million more, saying school districts could use the money to address high turnover rates among younger teachers. Democrats also were turned down in an attempt to add \$214 million to fully fund school bus transportation costs.

“I think we all agree that needs to be addressed,” said Rep. [Peter Merideth](#), D-St. Louis. “We have a lot of money this year.”

Rep. [Betsy Fogle](#), D-Springfield, won approval to direct \$20 million in state funds to two programs that will help cover child care costs for small businesses and essential workers, including state agencies.

Rep. [Kevin Windham](#), D-Hillsdale, was successful in adding \$4.5 million to the Access Missouri college scholarship program.

The state's transportation budget will add \$100 million to upgrade low-volume rural roads and \$75 million for a cost-sharing program with cities and counties.

The budget also includes an additional \$2.4 million to [restore Amtrak to twice-daily service](#) between St. Louis and Kansas City.

After the state shortchanged the nation's passenger rail service in last year's budget, Amtrak cut its service to once per day in January.

The spending plan also includes \$3.2 million to help pay for the demolition of abandoned, city-owned houses in St. Louis.

And it boosts spending on home health care services for low-income Missourians by \$300 million.

Parson had sought to use \$500 million in federal funds to shore up the state employee retirement fund. The House instead put \$299 million toward the idea, with a promise that they'd phase in the full amount over five years.

Smith also pushed through an amendment to ensure no state money goes to Planned Parenthood, which accepts patients on Medicaid.

Democrats said the move would die in a courtroom.

"This is unconstitutional language. It's similar to language that's in court right now, likely to be struck down," Merideth said.

Like other states, Missouri is putting much of the money it received via the American Rescue Plan Act into one-time projects, including large chunks of cash to public universities to make campus improvements and investments in new state buildings.

Broadband expansion, for example, [has become a priority after the pandemic](#) showed major gaps in internet service at a time when more people were attempting to work and shop from home.

But rather than spend \$30 million to build new cell towers in some areas of the state, the House version puts \$20 million toward that goal.

The state's [aging computer systems also will see an influx of federal dollars](#). Budget documents say the Office of Administration, which oversees the state's information technology needs, is in line for about \$89 million for "digital government transformation," while the state's child support system will receive \$27 million in upgrades.

The House budget plan also includes \$78 million [for a new health laboratory](#) in Jefferson City that will be used by multiple state agencies. Also on tap is \$104 million for [a new crime lab at the Missouri Department of Public Safety](#).

Higher education facilities in the St. Louis area also will see some of the federal money. The University of Missouri-St. Louis would get \$40 million to begin upgrades of its campus.

Harris-Stowe State University would get \$15.5 million to build a new academic building for teaching science, technology and math.

St. Louis Community College is in line for \$20 million to build a health sciences center at the Florissant Valley campus.

St. Charles Community College would receive \$18 million for a new building.  
*Posted at 7 p.m. Tuesday, April 5.*



Tim's Travels: STLCC is a great option for high school seniors

BY: TIM EZELL

POSTED: MAY 5, 2022 / 07:30 AM CDT

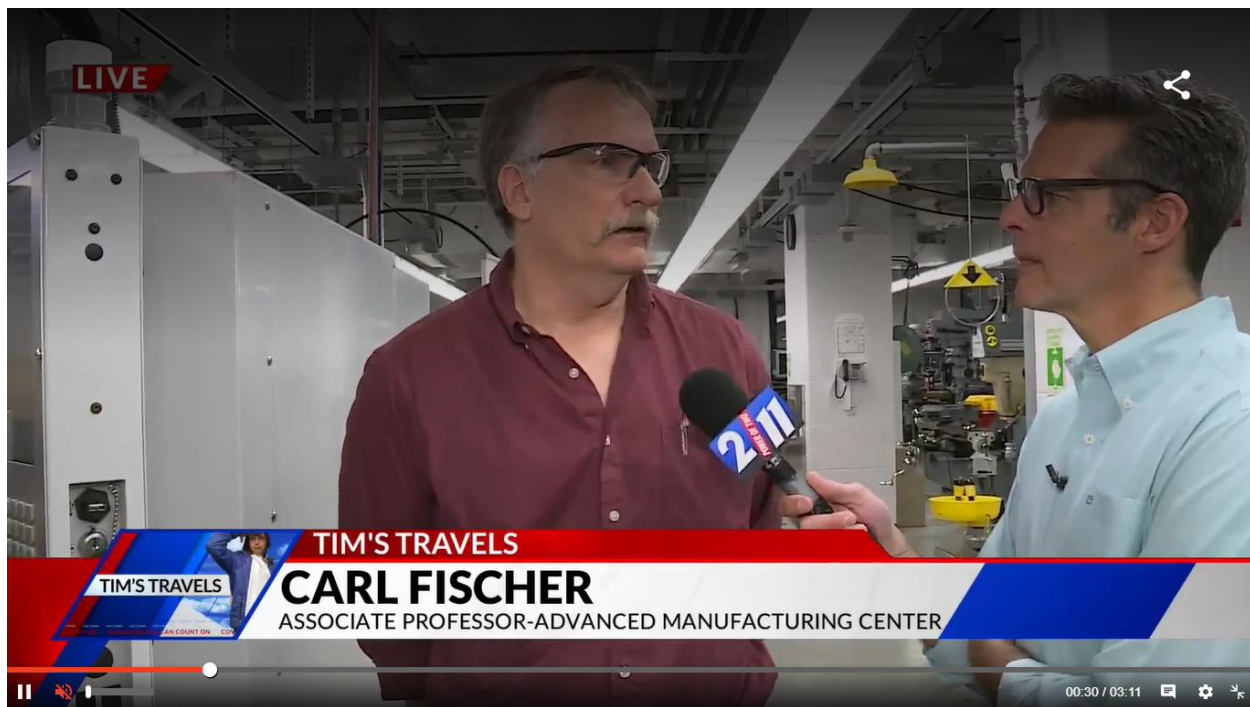


FOX2NOW.COM

### Tim's Travels: STLCC is a great option for high school seniors

Tim Ezell has gone back to school! He was on the Florissant Valley campus of...





Tim Ezell has gone back to school! He was on the Florissant Valley campus of St. Louis Community College where he checked out some of the amazing programs they offer. [Click here](#) for more information.

St. Louis Community college and FOX 2 are celebrating the Class of 2022! [Upload pictures](#) of your high school students to be shown during FOX 2 News in the Morning Fridays through May.





## **'Not just a job': St. Louis Community College, Boeing mark employment program milestone**

BY GREGG PALERMO ST. LOUIS

PUBLISHED 11:20 AM ET MAY. 08, 2022

ST. LOUIS, Mo. — When Boeing executives gathered with military brass, political leaders and others earlier this month to unveil the first T-7A Red Hawk trainer jet to be delivered to the Air Force as part of a \$9 billion contract, there were Hollywood-style videos, VIPs and a dramatic introduction of the jet itself.

But there was something else.

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### **What You Need To Know**

- The STLCC and Boeing partnership began in 2007
  - Boeing has hired 1,000 graduates
  - Participants can end up working on the F-15, F-18, 777X, T-7 projects
  - Similar partnerships are in the works for St. Louis Community College
- 

Company executives told the audience more than once that they were looking to grow their ranks and to find the people who would help the company build what would come next.

Since 2007, Boeing and St. Louis Community College have partnered on a program that can take people from a few weeks of training at the school's Florissant Valley campus to a guaranteed interview for a job on the company's assembly line.

Friday, there was a more toned-down celebration marking the fact that 1,000 people had matriculated through the program.

Karey Wagman, who became a single mother of two in February 2006 and then was left unemployed when Ford closed her plant after 13 years on the job at the age of 31, is one of those people. She knew then she wanted to end up at Boeing but wondered to herself, "How do I get that skill to get in that door?"

Eventually, she ended up as one of 12 people selected from roughly 4,000 applicants for Boeing's Pre-Employment Training program covering sheet metal assembly. Another program covers work as a composite mechanic. In each, the participants, who can be as young as a senior in high school and don't need to be enrolled in St. Louis Community College, learn the "Boeing way" as it relates to work on the 777X, the F-15 Eagle, the F-18 and soon the T-7A Red Hawk trainer. In three to five weeks, those who complete the program get a guaranteed interview with Boeing for an open position. The company covers all training costs.

Wagman was one of 10 graduates in her class and was hired in 2008.

"This partnership certainly has a strong, long lasting positive impact on the community where our employees work, have families, have lives and are contributing to what we do locally," said Paisley Matthews, vice president of operations, Boeing Defense, Space and Security. "It's not just a job. It's a career."

The public can expect programs like this one to pick up in the future at St. Louis Community College after voters last year approved an \$0.08 tax levy increase to fund further workforce development training.

"These are direct pathways into high-paying jobs that offer great benefits to anyone that goes through it. You're probably going to see us doing a lot more of these, aligning directly with employers in the future. There's other opportunities in manufacturing and other sectors to have this kind of alignment and Boeing has shown a lot of wisdom obviously in planning and working, investing in this program over the years," St. Louis Community College Chancellor Jeff Pittman said.

"I see more direct alignment with employers in the future, programs like we have with Boeing, but also through paid internship experiences and apprenticeship experiences for individuals that want to get into a job quickly," he said.



### VIETNAM VETERAN UNLOCKS 50 YEARS OF MEMORIES

By Lori Rose

May 13, 2022



George Joseph "Joe" McCarthy, U.S. Army  
Photo provided by Lori Rose.

Joe McCarthy clearly remembers his 19th birthday. He has the diagram he drew of the bunker in Vietnam where he spent the night behind a .50 caliber machine gun on the last day of "Jungle School," designed to acclimate new soldiers and train them how to survive a war zone.

He has the letter he wrote home to his folks: "Artillery shells hit pretty far away but they were so loud they'd scare the hell out of anyone. And when you're sitting alone on top of a bunker – well, you can imagine."

The drawing and letter are just two of the mementoes saved from his service during the Vietnam War 52 years ago. There are hundreds of photos that he took with the Yashica 35 mm camera he bought for a few bucks at the PX, there are the fatigues that still fit him at age 71, the Bronze Star and the other medals he earned and the handmade Viet Cong knife he brought home as a souvenir.

Most of these items were locked up for years, until, as the 50th anniversary of his service approached, McCarthy began to unpack the memories stored in his Army foot locker.

"The memories are always there," he said. "But I thought to myself, what if I wrote them down — would it make me forget some of them? Because some of them you want to forget."

McCarthy grew up in Normandy, Mo. and enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1969 at age 18. He had a year of college under his belt, but he hadn't made the grades and figured he

was going to be drafted anyway. He thought the Army would be good for him, make him “a little more mature and a little more focused.”

As it turned out, when the lottery system was instituted later that year, his number was so high he would never have been drafted at all. “But by then I had already been to boot camp and AIT (advanced individual training) and had my orders for Vietnam in my pocket,” he said.

Later, McCarthy was transferred to an administrative role at the 55th Military Intelligence Detachment headquarters in Nha Trang. After his discharge, McCarthy used his G.I. Bill benefits to go back to college, earning two associate degrees from St. Louis Community College – Florissant Valley, a bachelor’s degree in business from the University of Missouri-St. Louis and an MBA from Southwest Missouri State University.

But he said he drew heavily from what he learned in the Army about standard operating procedures over the next decades serving in management roles in the defense and healthcare industries. He worked for organizations such as McDonnell-Douglas, General Dynamics and St. Louis University and retired as senior vice president and chief operating officer for the Missouri Foundation for Health.

### **“It Was 50 Years Ago Today”**

McCarthy, who married and raised three daughters, rarely shared about his experiences in Vietnam until one of his girls asked him to speak to her high school history class about the war.

“There were many, many years that I just kept it to myself because some of it’s just too scary and extremely personal,” McCarthy said. “But I put together a presentation and met with the class for an hour and told them what it was like. They appreciated it and that kind of broke the ice.”

McCarthy started reliving the memories stored in his Army trunk and writing short stories tied to dates 50 years before. Last Christmas, he compiled 70 stories and 300 photos in an electronic book titled “It Was 50 Years Ago Today” to share with his daughters.

“This is the story of a difficult period of my life,” he wrote. “After reading it, maybe you’ll understand why I wear a Vietnam veteran’s cap, put the American flag out on holidays, get a little quiet at fireworks displays and watch military shows on television.

“Over 2.7 million military personnel served in Vietnam. Every one of them has a story; mine is but one.”





## **North County Inc. to Honor Award winners at September Breakfast**

Post published: May 28, 2021

### **NCI Awards Community Leaders for Making a Difference in North County**

North County Incorporated (NCI) will recognize local leaders for their contributions to the North County region at its 44th Annual Leadership Breakfast on Sept. 17, 2021 7:30am-9:30am at the Marriott St. Louis Airport. More than 550 business, civic, and community leaders attend this celebration annually. Sponsorship packages are still available! More information can be found at [NorthStLouisCounty.com](http://NorthStLouisCounty.com).

“It is a privilege to be able to honor the many dedicated people, businesses and organizations in North County working to improve our community, better the lives of others, and advance the local economy,” said NCI President and CEO, Rebecca Zoll

### **2021 NCI Leadership Award Honorees**

#### **Business Development Leadership Award**

- Greater North County Chamber of Commerce, under leadership of Venus Martz, President
- Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 562 Training Center
- SSM Behavioral Health Urgent Care Center

#### **Community Development Leadership Award**

- Frank Bell, Executive Director, Elevate St. Louis
- Debbie Kerber, Owner, Resler-Kerber Optometry, Inc.
- Help Hazelwood Get Healthy Committee, Hazelwood School District

#### **Diversity & Inclusion Leadership Award**

- Ritenour High School Game Changers, Ritenour School District
- Patricia Parker, Professor, University of Missouri-St. Louis
- Geoffrey Soyiantet, Founder & President, Vitendo 4 Africa
- Louis Community College-Florissant Valley

### **Elmer Belsha Leadership Award**

- Fletcher Wells II, Vice President & Director, St. John's Bank & Trust

### **Public Service Leadership Award**

- Jeffrey Bonner, President & CEO, Saint Louis Zoo
- Brian Scott Ebert, retired Board Member, Ferguson-Florissant School District
- Patty Gould, Director of School-Business Partnerships & Community Education, Pattonville School District
- Debbie Kricensky, Neighborhood Service Resource Coordinator, St. Louis County
- Keith Schildroth, Councilperson Ward 5, City of Florissant
- Chief Eddie Simmons, Jr., City of Pagedale Police Department

### **Special Recognition Leadership Award**

- Gina Siebe, President, Historic Florissant, Inc.

NCI's 44<sup>th</sup> Annual Leadership Breakfast Platinum sponsors to date include St. Louis County; St. Louis Economic Development Partnership; US Bank; SSM Health DePaul Hospital. Premier sponsors: Christian Hospital; City of Hazelwood; Enterprise Holdings; Mercy Health; Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 562; Betty Jean Kerr People's Health Center. Corporate sponsors: Bi-State Development; Greater North County Chamber of Commerce; Hazelwood School District

### **About North County Inc.**

North County Inc., founded in 1977, is an economic and community development advocacy organization serving the North St. Louis County community with a focus on economic development, education, healthcare, and transportation. NCI builds collaborative partnerships and coordinates resources and efforts of civic and business leaders to speak as a unified voice on regional issues.

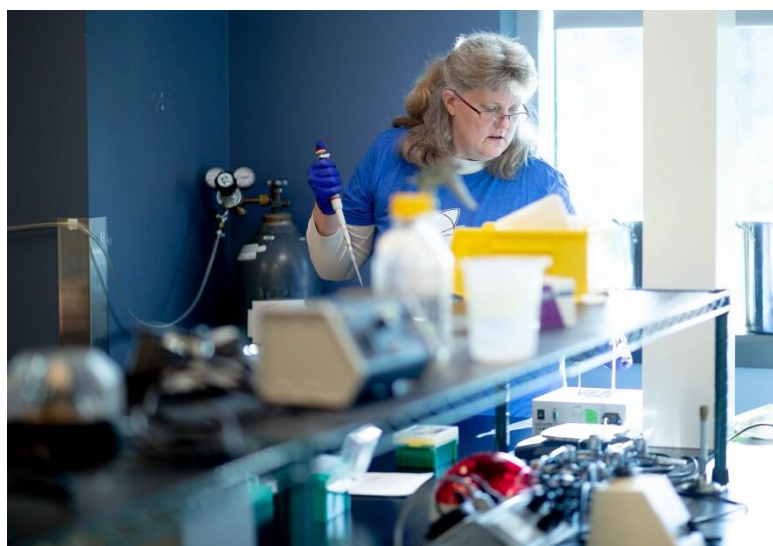


## Agriculture companies have lots of job openings in STEM fields, far from the farm

St. Louis Public Radio | By [Kate Grumke](#)

Published June 13, 2022 at 5:14 AM CDT

<https://www.kcur.org/2022-06-09/agriculture-companies-have-lots-of-job-openings-in-stem-fields-far-from-the-farm>



*Brian Munoz/St. Louis Public Radio*

Elizabeth Boedeker, the director for the St. Louis Community College Center for Plant and Life Sciences, leads one of her classes in an experiment on Tuesday, April 26, 2022 at the Donald Danforth Plant Science Center in Olivette.

Jobs in agriculture don't just take place on the farm.

Across the Midwest, plant science and ag companies are looking for scientists and others in STEM to fill positions in labs, or in front of computers, that may not fit the traditional image of agriculture.

"When people meet folks that work in the ag industry, they're often shocked about what they actually do for a living," said Kim Kidwell, the associate chancellor of Strategic Partnerships and Initiatives at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign and a former dean of the School of Agriculture. "There's a lot of engineering, there's a lot of business, there's a lot of computer science."

Across the industry, there's a growing need for scientists at every level as agriculture becomes more high-tech and employers are increasingly looking for people who don't have a traditional ag background for different positions.

Corteva Agriscience is a global company that produces agriculture products like seeds and chemicals. The company has about 500 open jobs right now, from scientists to data

engineers. About 200 of those don't require a four-year degree. Many of the openings are in Nebraska, Indiana, Michigan and Iowa.

"People think of Corteva obviously as an ag company and they think that they have to have an agriculture degree, an agronomy degree, or an ag business degree to come work for us, and that's far from the truth," said Angela Latcham, who leads Corteva's North America seed production and supply chain teams. "We're looking for people with nontraditional backgrounds."

Corteva has open positions all over the country and the world. Some are in rural areas, close to the fields where they grow their crops, but that's not the case for most jobs in agriculture.

Agricultural economists at Purdue University have been analyzing online job openings and have found about two-thirds are in metropolitan areas.

"Most of the jobs are actually not on the farm," said Brady Brewer, an associate professor of agricultural economics at Purdue.

The need for workers with untraditional backgrounds also extends to education. Kidwell, of the University of Illinois, said there's an "incredible demand" for scientists at every level, including for positions that don't require a four-year degree.

"If we don't get more people into the pipe, what's coming out of the pipeline will be grossly inadequate to support the advancement of food and ag in the way that it has the potential to expand," she said.

## **Growing the ag workforce**

In St. Louis, one community college program is trying to help fill the worker gap by training students to work in labs. St. Louis Community College's Center for Plant and Life Sciences is a hands-on program. In fact, many of the classes take place at the Donald Danforth Plant Science Center, where scientists study plants and find ways to apply their knowledge to agriculture.



*Brian Munoz/St. Louis Public Radio*

Josh Nichols, 25, of Oakville, Mo., picks up a sample on Tuesday, April 26, 2022, during a biotechnology lab experiment at the St. Louis Community College Center for Plant and Life Sciences in the Donald Danforth Plant Science Center in Olivette, Mo.

The center's director, Elizabeth Boedeker, was leading a lab exercise with her students on a recent afternoon where they were working with cells.

"There is a huge workforce demand right now," Boedeker said. "These two-year students that are doing their internships, about a third of the time those students get offered full time or permanent part time employment with those internship sponsors."

The types of positions Boedeker is training students for, like agriculture and food science technician roles, are still a much smaller group compared to farm workers, but according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, those science jobs are projected to grow [much faster](#) in the coming years than traditional [farm worker jobs](#).

Boedeker's students complete internships as part of their coursework, often with some of the many plant science startups and big companies that operate in the area.

NewLeaf Symbiotics is one company that regularly hires the interns through the community college program. The biotechnology startup is conveniently located in the same building where classes take place.

The company makes what Natalie Breakfield, Vice President for Research and Discovery, describes as basically a "probiotic for a plant."



Natalie Breakfield is vice president of research and discovery at NewLeaf Symbiotics, which is located at the Donald Danforth Plant Science Center. She says she came to the plant science field in a roundabout way after earning a molecular biology degree.

Breakfield has a Ph.D., but she said many positions at the company can be filled by someone who has gone through an associate's or technical training program, like the one through St. Louis Community College. These research assistants do hands-on lab work, collecting data and running experiments, while being supervised by another scientist.

"I know when I need an employee, I can call up [Boedeker] and ask her, who does she have available right now that's looking for a job, and she can send me a few resumes right away," Breakfield said.



As St. Louis works to become a hub for ag biotech companies, Breakfield said they're going to need more and more people in jobs like these. But one barrier to expansion is that people might not know these careers exist.

Even Breakfield said she didn't know much about the plant science field before her first job as a lab technician.

"That was my first real introduction into working with plants and then I actually just fell in love with it," she said. "I think if you like science, this is a good place to start and you can always go on further if you decide you want to further your education."

Follow Kate on Twitter: [@KGrumke](#)

*This story was produced in partnership with Harvest Public Media, a collaboration of public media newsrooms in the Midwest. It reports on food systems, agriculture and rural issues. Follow Harvest on Twitter: [@harvestpm](#)*



## BUSINESS BRIEFS

JUN 21, 2022



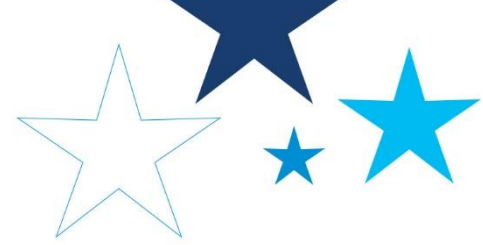
St. Louis county native **Jordan Cooper** was named dean of nursing at St. Louis Community College (STLCC). A registered nurse and board-certified family nurse practitioner, Cooper holds nursing degrees from several universities, including an Associate of Applied Science in nursing from STLCC-Florissant Valley. Cooper served as an adjunct nursing faculty for STLCC in 2017 and joined as a full-time faculty member in 2018. He became program coordinator of the STLCC-Florissant Valley nursing program in 2020, before assuming the interim dean role in January 2022. Cooper made numerous contributions to the Florissant Valley program, such as increasing the number of full-time faculty members and boosting student enrollment. He also strengthened the college's partnership with Ranken Jordan Pediatric Bridge Hospital. Cooper will continue the college's expansion initiative started in 2019, that will see the college grow its nursing program by 75% by 2024.



#### IV. Florissant Valley Awards 2021-22



St. Louis Community College



## **FLORISSANT VALLEY AWARDS**

### **RECOGNITION OF HONORS PROGRAM FACULTY**

Brian Bozek, Amy Brown-Marshall, Maria Darris, Margie Dorlan, Rob Ebest, James Eck, Dino Edmonds, Donna Friedman, Scott Gevaert, Katherine Gordon, Paul Higdon, Elida Kraja, Bob Langnas, Emily Lasek, Susan Lundry, and Neko Pilarcik-Tellez

### **2020-21 INNOVATION OF THE YEAR\***

Steve Ehlen, Bill Hoffman, David Kobe, Stacey Lampman, and Tom McGovern

### **LEAGUE FOR INNOVATION EXCELLENCE AWARD WINNERS**

Karen Wade, Annie Wagganer and Laura Westhoff

### **PART-TIME CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR**

Ashley McGee

### **ADJUNCT FACULTY OF THE YEAR**

Taylor Short

### **FULL-TIME CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR**

Edward Pfeiffer

### **PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR**

Mea Hampton

### **NEW FACULTY MEMBER OF THE YEAR**

Megan Cotter

### **EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE TO THE COLLEGE**

Amy Brown-Marshall

### **2022 DAVID L. UNDERWOOD MEMORIAL LECTURER**

Howard Rosenthal

\*Honorees were recognized on campus due to the coronavirus pandemic..

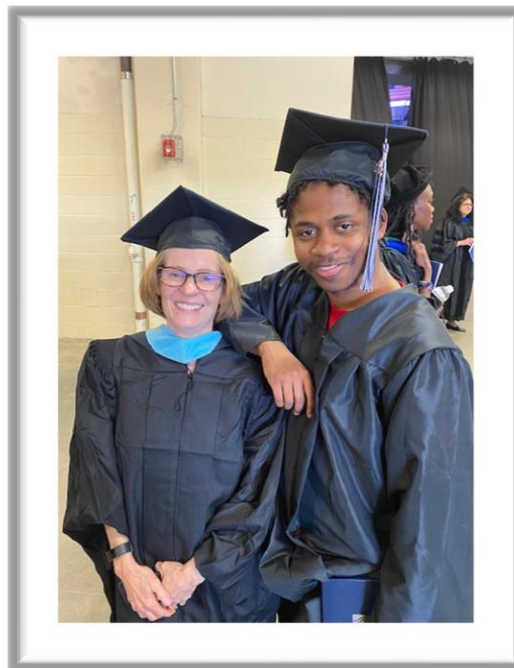


## **V. Highlights 2022-23**

## ACADEMIC ADVISING AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Academic, Career, and Transfer Advising at St. Louis Community College is dedicated to empowering students, expanding minds, and changing lives by developing a collaborative educational partnership with students dedicated to their success. We encourage students to develop and follow an educational plan with short- and long-term goals, which are consistent with their personal values and career aspirations. The department strives to provide comprehensive services and support that every student needs to realize and achieve their goals and dreams.

- Advising sessions with 82% of the fall 2022 FTIC cohort.
- 68% of students that met with advising persisted to spring 2023.
- Integrated career development and academic advising to align with best practice for academic, career, and transfer advising.
- Conducted 7,320 advising sessions.



## ACCESS OFFICE

The Florissant Valley Access Office has several things we are proud to share from the 22-23 academic year. Starting with our retention efforts, to our Access Ally program's impressive impact on completion for our most at-risk students, to our significant



representation of this year's graduating class, the Access Office has excelled at serving students and ensuring equity in education. The Access Office employees were proud to be involved with high school outreach and on-campus Student Affairs events and collaborations.

- Promoted Geoffrey Littleton, STLCC graduate and former Access student, from Specialist to Access Office Manager and hired a new specialist, Rachel Lucarz.
- Awarded three staff Rock Stars.
- Graduated 30 access students and continued biweekly check-ins and calling campaigns, which resulted in a near 80% retention rate in fall and spring.
- Served 516 students and showed them how to use accommodations and maximize potential for academic success via our "Three Pillars of Support" – the Ally program, Tutoring and TRiO.
- Increased Ally program appointments to 1,025 contacts over past year and was awarded President's Initiative Funding to celebrate our accomplishments.



## ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT SERVICES

The admissions office changed its name to the enrollment services office after merging the admissions and financial aid offices. We provide a wide range of services including, but not limited to, registering FTIC students, processing withdrawals and other documents, helping complete applications for school and for financial aid, and financial aid counseling. We also partner with a variety of other departments on campus to provide a premier student experience.

- Serviced over 4,000 walk-in students.
- Staff combined received more than eight Rock Star Awards.
- Manager selected as League of Innovation award winner.

- Spearheaded transition to registering FTIC students.



## ADVISING

Academic, career and transfer advising is dedicated to empowering students, expanding minds and changing lives by developing a collaborative educational partnership with students. We encourage students to develop and follow an educational plan with short- and long-term goals, which are consistent with their personal values, goals and career aspirations. We strive to provide comprehensive services and support that every student needs to realize and achieve their goals and dreams.

- Advising sessions with 82% of the fall 2022 FTIC cohort.
- Helped 68% of students who met with advising persist from fall 2022 to spring 2023.
- Integrated career development and academic advising to align with best practice for academic, career and transfer advising.
- Held 7,320 advising sessions.



## CAMPUS LIFE

Campus life believes that campus student engagement is integral to one's college experience. Student involvement offers a variety of programs, services and cocurricular experiences that enhance student academic and personal development. The department is committed to bringing the campus to life through fun and diverse opportunities outside the classroom.

- Hosted and supported 70-plus student engagement events. They included programs that focused on culture, diversity, education, health and wellness, leadership, motivation, and social interactions.



- Sponsored Black History Month events. Three-hundred thirty students participated in our calendar of events.
- Hosted Spring Fest, which attracted 150 participants.

- Hired new staff: Mary Ries, student activities assistant II/administrative assistant, and Jairo Morales, student activities assistant II for programming.

## CHILD AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT PROGRAM

- Coordinated a tribute for a legend. Jasmin Marshall, assistant professor of child and family development and district program coordinator of the child and family development program, along with CFD faculty and students, shared the history of Ella Jenkins with CDLC children at a Women's History Month celebration. Jenkins is known as the "First Lady of Children's Music" and a leading voice of the genre for more than 50 years. CFD students from Foundations and Language and Literacy classes made musical instruments for the sign. Some of Jenkins' classic songs were also played from albums using a 1978 Fisher-Price record player turntable.
- Explored design ideas at the National Coalition for Campus Children's Centers conference in New Orleans. At the conference, Marshall learned new ways to conduct reflective supervision and interactive ways to increase staff morale. She also heard about an architectural company, which is led by a former CIA agent, that designs "safe spaces" for children.
- Compiled new content. Carol Nixon, assistant professor of child and family development, worked relentlessly to add two new online classes to the child and family development program. CFD 104 Creative Experiences in Early Childhood and CFD 201 Social Emotional Development: Guidance and Discipline, are now online education courses.
- Recruited eager learners. CFD created a recruitment plan to target high school students across the district. Amy Freshwater, PhD., assistant professor of child and family development, covered schools in South County. Nixon covered West County schools and Marshall targeted North County high schools and St. Louis Public Schools.

## CHILD DEVELOPMENT LABORATORY CENTER

- Participated in the professional development session titled "Everyone Needs Attention: Help Young Children Manage Their Feelings by Understanding Your Own," led by Tamar Jacobson, Ed.D., early childhood education consultant. CDLC staff received a wealth of knowledge and examples on how to support social emotional development, understand behavior through the lens of the adult emotional capacity and use that knowledge to assist children in making behavioral changes. This opportunity enabled staff to provide the highest quality programming to the CFD students who observe and participate in the CDLC classrooms.



- Partnered with LUME Institute to provide CDLC staff intensive social-emotional coaching. The LUME Foundations' course provided 10 teachers and three administrators tools and strategies to decrease stress and build resilience and effectiveness in the classroom setting during a 16-week cohort.
- Added a new roof and skylights to the CDLC. This project took many weeks, but the result created a safer environment for children and brighter hallways and play spaces illuminated by natural light.
- Supported 25 students who received Child Care Access Means Parents in School grant funding by offering quality care for their children and encouragement to them.
- Teamed with the Parent Advisory Council to plan "The Week of the Young Child." This national week celebrates children and raises awareness about caring for our youngest citizens.



## COMMUNICATIONS/MASS COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

- Created a digital media pathway for an associate degree.
- Hired Mary Horner, instructor II mass communications, a new temporary faculty member.
- Chaired and participated in several hiring committees, including one for a full-time, continuing position. This is the first significant full-time hiring in years, and we are ecstatic.



- Provided the Progress Attained through College Education program with Donna Trone, adjunct faculty of communications.
- Revised outdated mass communications curricula. With the help of district colleagues four courses are being processed through CourseLeaf.



## ENGLISH, READING AND SMART START

- Supported students: Carolyn Fuller and Rachel Martin, assistant professors in reading, served on the district Emerging Scholars' committee. The committee is preparing to bring the Emerging Scholars program back to the college this fall.
- Celebrated students: E. Maxine Beach, associate professor of English, invited her Women in Literature students and theatre students to read passages and/or poems from their favorite women authors as part of Women's History Month. The reading was livestreamed on YouTube.
- Celebrated students. The English department Creative Writing committee of Maxine Beach, Ron Ebest, professor of English and faculty advisor for the Florissant Valley literary journal, Voyageur; Katy Gordon, Ph.D., professor of English; and Tim Layton, professor of English, and in collaboration with the National Poetry Month campus committee, hosted the second Spring Poetry Slam! and Poetry Clinic to celebrate National Poetry Month. Three outstanding students were awarded prizes for their poems.

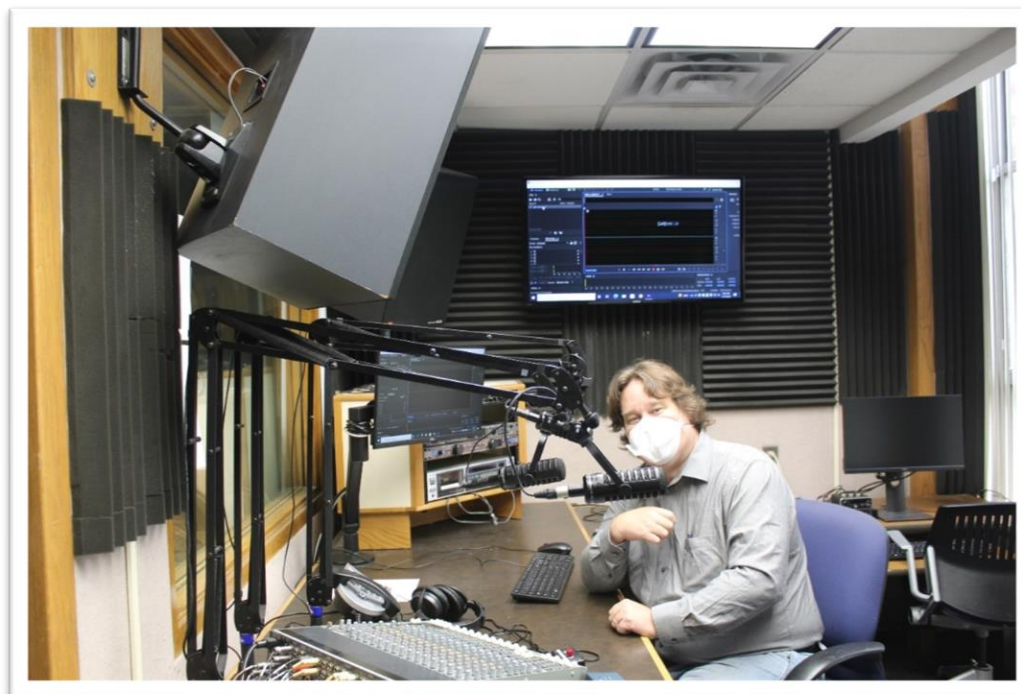
- Promoted justice. Carolyn Fuller copresented on the history of enslavement in America and the impact the Legacy Museum and the National Memorial for Peace and Justice has on promoting impactful discussions around issues of race and racism in the United States. They also shared reactions to their visit to the museum.

## **FINANCIAL AID**

- Serviced 3,361 walk in students.
- Awarded more than \$60,000 in book scholarships.
- Placed 71 Federal Work-Study students.

## **FOREIGN LANGUAGE DISTRICT PROGRAM**

- Spearheaded making all levels of 101 and 102 foreign language courses MOTR.
- Expanded foreign language offerings to STLCC's South County Center.
- Selected as a finalist for the Missouri Community College Association Outstanding Adjunct Faculty Award. Yuki Tanaka-McFarlane, adjunct faculty of Japanese at Forest Park, was a finalist.
- Tapped as a finalist for the College's Innovation of the Year. Swivl, a project coordinated by the access office and foreign language department was a finalist. Swivl is a small robot that uses an iPad and can "swivel" back and forth by following a marker worn by the professor to provide remote learning opportunities in specific cases. The work was featured in the online St. Louis Business Journal.
- Created a pathway for an associate degree.



## KCFV-RADIO STATION

- Provided music for several events on campus, including Maya Angelou's birthday party, the campus kickball game and several Welcome Week events for students.
- Broadcast live for three days from the Valley of Flowers Festival. This gave students an opportunity to experience a live remote broadcast.
- Started doing student-led play-by-play broadcasts at Archers' soccer, volleyball, basketball, baseball and softball events. Two of the student broadcasters graduated in May 2023. One is attending the University of Missouri-St. Louis to study communications and mass media, and the other is attending the University of Missouri to study sports journalism.

## MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

- Thrust stories about STLCC-Florissant Valley forward internally and externally, so dialogue about students, employees and programs were noticed. From features like "Black Male Achievers Receive New Suits for STLCC's Career Fair" and "STLCC Enabled Gunn to Find the Right Fit for New Career" to informative pieces like "St. Louis Wins Federal 'Build Back Better Regional Challenge'" to

"Center for Plant and Life Sciences Hosts Open House Grant," the stories caught readers' attention, and helped keep STLCC in community conversations.

- Attracted media attention with the press release regarding the Black Male Achievers receiving suits for STLCC's job fair among others. The story took the "coveted cover story slot" in the Community News and KSDK featured the story at 4 and 6 p.m. Oct. 14. The good publicity served double duty and raised awareness about the Black Male Achievers program and the job fair.
- Made history with the "STLCC Enabled Gunn to Find the Right Fit for New Career" article, which according to the St. Louis Business Journal, was one of the most read articles in the history of its ST.LOUISINNO series.
- Created a new system in September to help track the STLCC photo backdrop and minimize confusion. I purchased a second photo backdrop and created a system to always have a STLCC backdrop in the Student Center Multipurpose Room, where many events happen, and place a second backdrop in the theatre. Now, the only backdrop that moves across campus is the "traveling backdrop" that calls the theatre home.
- Conducted a Town Hall dry run in November to prepare leadership for the Town Hall organized by Phi Theta Kappa.

## NEW STUDENT PROGRAMS

The department launched several new programs over the course of the 2022-2023 school year that were designed specifically to improve first year student competencies, increase retention of first year students, and ignite student engagement. In July 2022 the department launched a new model of New Student Orientation districtwide, known as Archer Orientation, which included virtual and in-person opportunities for students. During the academic year the department focused on implementing the new co-curricular First Year Experience Program, which consisted of three or more co-curricular events each month on average that relate to a learning outcome such as seminars, lunch and learns, hands-on workshops, and more. The New Student Programs team often partners with other departments within the college or external community members who can provide expertise on the topic of an event. These partnerships ensure that students are taught the important skill of resource navigation in the college setting. Some of program's most imperative accomplishments include:

- Spearheaded the new cocurricular First Year Experience program with modules centered on campus involvement, goal setting, motivation, as well as character, financial literacy, academic achievement, study skills, dialoguing and community building, health, wellness, and safety, critical thinking, career planning, and time management. Implemented FYE Seminars and shared standard information

(comparable to what competing institutions share) with first-year students. Hosted biweekly peer mentor office hours that brought students in regularly. During this time, staff was able to collect suggestions, connect students with campus resources, and be a friendly face students could count on.

- Engaged with students from the moment of enrollment on their New Student Programs Teams Channel. Staff promoted opportunities with the new students, answered questions, and provided valuable advice. Through the communication system, the team recruited and selected four outstanding first year students to attend the Governor's Student Leadership Forum in Jefferson City. The students represented STLCC at the statewide conference in February 2023; one first-year student represented STLCC at the National Student Leadership Forum in Washington D.C.
- Interacted with over 350 students at FYE-specific events at the Florissant Valley campus alone during the academic year. The department tracked participating student data and developed a Tableau Dashboard with Institutional Research to better understand the value of the FYE program. This information can be reviewed at the following link:  
<https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/stlcc.dashboard/viz/STLCCNewStudentProgramsDashboard/Dashboard1>
- Provided multiple Archer Orientation sessions to individuals enrolled in the PACE program at the St. Louis County Jail.
- Participated in several conferences, which included winning the Innovation of the Year for the Meramec campus, being nominated for the districtwide Innovation of the Year, and proposing a session based on the co-curricular FYE model at STLCC for the 2023 MCCA Annual Conference in Kansas City.

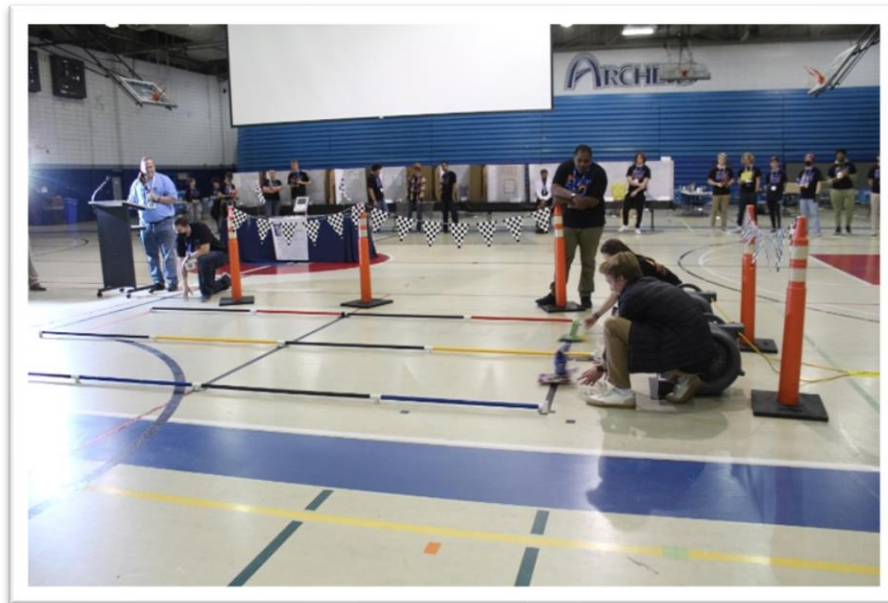




## RECRUITMENT AND OUTREACH DISTRICTWIDE

The department, with the support of the College, worked to attract and enroll a diverse student body and pursue opportunities and partnerships that enrich the community. Recruitment and outreach provided respectful and effective assistance to prospective students and their families as they explored educational opportunities at St. Louis Community College. The department participated in 481 K-12, workforce and community outreach events, campus tours, and activities. Ninety of these occurred in the Florissant Valley service area. Some of these efforts included:

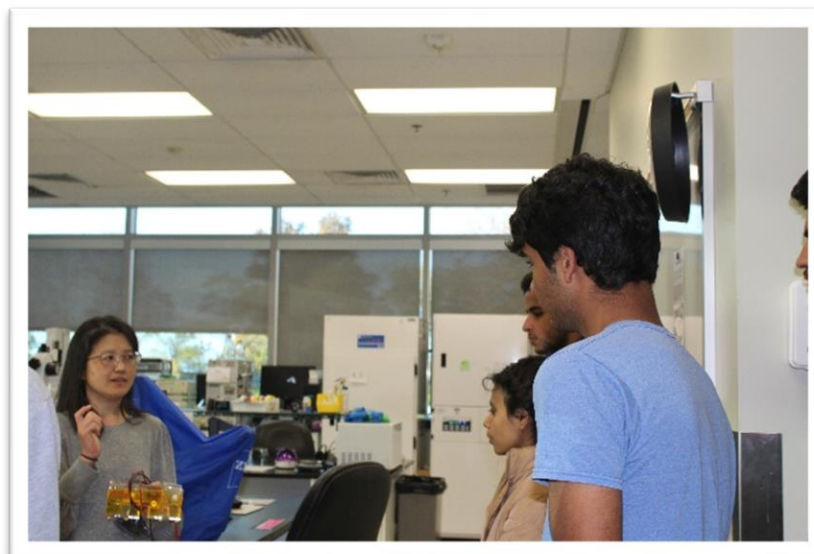
- Presented at the Missouri Association for College Admission Counseling Cube Conference for High School Counselors. Chris Thurmond, Ed.D., coordinator of student recruiting, gave the talk.
- Hosted 21 mobile enrollment visits districtwide.
- Ensured STLCC's presence in the community by sharing information and resources at the Amazon Warehouse in Hazelwood, Bethesda Temple Church Community Fair and the Ferguson Empowerment Festival among others.
- Conducted 19 campus tours at St. Louis Community College at Florissant Valley.
- Collaborated with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Missouri, The Little Bit Foundation, STL Youth Jobs, and the Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis among other partnerships.



## SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND MATH DIVISION

The STEM division kept busy this year with reaching out, reshaping and reimagining. Significant changes in positions and promotions occurred, some old projects returned, and new ones began. Through it all, the STEM division remained focused on student success and retention.

- The engineering and technology department led the Project Lead The Way design challenge “The Windy 500” on Feb. 24. Twenty-one area high schools and more than 150 students competed in a design and build challenge or took tours of the engineering and Center for Workforce Innovation facilities. This event brought together industry representatives, high school students and STLCC faculty and staff. It was so popular, we were asked to expand it next year.
- The Center for Plant and Life Sciences held an open house on Oct. 27, which attracted hundreds of people to tour the biotechnology program space at BRDG Park.
- Math faculty and the academic success and tutoring team are transforming the student learning experience in Intermediate Algebra (MTH 140). The Factoring Factory initiative is building a “bridge” between the math classroom and the Math Lab. The program, which launched in spring 2023 at Florissant Valley, is based on the recognition that factoring is a crucial foundational topic. Faculty have identified that factoring is a skill that students were struggling to master, and that was seemingly responsible for a significant drop/fail rates in the course. Students work with the Math lab to improve their skills until they can pass a quiz with a score of at least 80%. Early results are very promising. With 188 students assessed in the spring, 52.7% passed compared to 40.9% in the fall. Only 26.6% of students withdrew compared to 38.1% withdrawal rate in the fall.
- Secretary of State Jay Ashcroft toured the Engineering building Oct. 21.





- STLCC was awarded \$3 million as part of the Build Back Better Regional Development Challenge with Greater STL to upgrade machinery in the new Advanced Manufacturing Center.

## SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES/EDUCATION

- Organized a five-day Juneteenth celebration for St. Louis County. They worked in conjunction with the chairwoman of the St. Louis County Council and other north St. Louis County leaders.
- Participated in focus groups, one for the safety of St. Louis region, led by UMSL faculty, and the second examining voter participation by the League of Women voters. Many Florissant Valley students participated.
- Facilitated a town hall for the Student Government Association in April. The goal was to assess retention. This was spearheaded by LaRhonda Wilson, associate professor of sociology and anthropology.
- Presented at the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy conference in Denver, and the Southwestern Philosophical Society conferences in Las Vegas. Mike Jostedt, assistant professor of philosophy, had his article pertaining to the ethics on where to live published at the latter conference.
- Invited multiple guest lecturers to psychology classes. Experts were from the fields of early education, horticulture and mental health. The mental health speaker held a book signing, which was attended by several psychology students. Rimiko Thomas, assistant professor of psychology, spearheaded the efforts.

## STUDENT ADVOCACY AND RESOURCE CENTER

Over the past year, the Student Advocacy and Resource Center has grown. Through the addition of our basic needs support specialist and the increased level of monetary support for students, we have expanded direct support services to students.

- Spearheaded a districtwide partnership with the St. Louis Area Diaper Bank and the St. Louis Alliance for Period Supplies to provide diapers and period products to students and their families.
- Awarded districtwide more than \$30,000 in emergency funds to students experiencing unplanned financial hardships. Seventy-eight percent of these students were retained or graduated.
- Received a permit from the St. Louis County Public Health to operate the Archers' Market as a food bank by achieving a 100/A Grade on our initial routine inspection.
- Served over 5,000 grab-and-go meals to students through the Archers' Market.



## STUDENT SUCCESS

- Collaborated with key stakeholders and became acquainted with and involved in the St. Louis Community College at Florissant Valley campus.
- Organized and hosted a welcome table during peak months of new student registrations.
- Celebrated student registrations with a Selfie with Archie contest and back to school giveaways.
- Hosted student the Halloween Bash, Registration Pop-ups and Holiday Party engagement events to connect with students.
- Hosted “Way to Go Wednesdays” for staff to show appreciation and offer an opportunity for networking and relationship building.

## TERRY M. FISCHER THEATRE

Events and shows increased attendance by 181% over the previous year.

- Collaborated with the 47th Underwood award winner Howard Rosenthal, Ed.D. on his memorial lecture “Long Live the Florissant Valley Mystique: The Secret History of the College.”
- Hosted the State of the St. Louis Workforce event.
- Presented three theatrical productions:
  - “American Son” directed by Daniel Betzler, professor of deaf communication.
  - “Four One-Act Comedies,” which included: “A Tall Order” and “Knockers” directed by Daniel Betzler, and “Left to Right” and “Inside the Department of the Exterior,” directed by Marie McCool, theatre manager.
  - “Good People” directed by Daniel Betzler.
- Presented three concerts performed by the Florissant Valley Orchestra.
- Pinned three groups of nursing graduates.



## TESTING CENTER

The Testing Center continued to provide premier service to a variety of STLCC students and the community despite staffing shortages across the district. In addition to providing placement testing for incoming students, the Testing Center provided out-of-class testing for students with accommodations, students who needed to make up missed exams, certification testing for career and technical education programs, including noncredit accelerated programs and entrance exams for specialized programs. We provided more proctored testing for students in the Online College, either in online hybrid or hyflex courses. We are partnering with the online education department to develop a manual for proctored experiences and a process for better tracking and servicing online students. The goal is for the process to begin in summer 2023. We partnered with recruitment to give recent high school equivalency exam ecompleters a gift and information on STLCC programs.

- Served more than 2,515 students, including 388 HiSet students, 225 students from Workforce Solution programs, and 60 students from other institutions.
- Received four Rock Star Awards for the efforts of staff.
- Assisted with “placement tool” development. The tool is scheduled for implementation in spring 2024.

## THE FORUM

- Hired a student editor and graphic designer.
- Recruited student writers and began hosting weekly planning meetings.
- Reopened “The Forum” office, so writers and graphic designers could work.
- Updated “The Forum” into an online-only format.
- Printed the first hard copy using a free template followed by a professionally designed issue later in the year. The newsletter is shared around campus, the district and in the community.



## VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS DEPARTMENT

- Showcased six art exhibitions in the Contemporary Art Gallery. The shows featured work from current students, three alumni Washington University Danforth Scholarship winners – Racheal Borden, Rashonda Daniels and Janessa Johnson, as well as the work of Quinn Briceno, alumni and adjunct instructor, Ramiro Rodriguez, artist, and area high school artists.
- Nominated for a College Television Award Emmy and an Animation Dingle, Ireland's top animation festival, for Elizabeth "Neko" Pilarcik-Tellez, assistant professor of graphic communications' animated short, "The Pope's Dog." Pilarcik-Tellez, received praise for the films' innovative compositing and light process. The film and Pilarcik-Tellez's work on it has received publicity both on the web and in industry publications.
- Exhibited work at the 27th annual Varsity Art Exhibition at Art Saint Louis. The exhibition featured work by Melissa Bobo, photography major, and Deonni Thomas, general fine arts major.
- Participated in Virtual Speaker Series programming sponsored by the Graphic Arts Association. This series featured six professionals in the animation and storyboarding industry who discussed career opportunities and how to break into the industry. The series, developed and hosted by Pilarcik-Tellez, was open to the campus but designed specifically for animation and storyboard students.
- Presented portfolios to graphic arts advisory members for their final graphic communication's program exercise. Students in portfolio class each had two portfolio reviews with industry leaders and specialists to assess their readiness for career fields and/or matriculation to an art college or university.



## **VI. Florissant Valley in the News 2022-23**

## Making the Switch

*In the midst of the Great Resignation, people looked to GEOINT as a new career option. We spoke to one woman who recently made the leap.*

By: Meredith Landry | August 16, 2022

For the past 26 years, St. Louis resident Sara Lopez has worked in education. She's held various positions—reading tutor, parent liaison, middle school advisor, college prep program advisor, and more—throughout her career. But when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, Lopez craved something new, much like the millions of other Americans who quit their jobs during “[The Great Resignation](#),” a term coined in May 2021 to describe the large number of employees voluntarily quitting their jobs.



To explore other career options, in March 2021, Lopez joined a non-profit organization called [Rung for Women](#), which provides resources and support for women who want to improve their careers. It was there that she first heard of geospatial intelligence (GEOINT).

“In one of the career classes, an instructor mentioned GEOINT and it caught my interest,” said Lopez, who’s originally from Pasadena, Calif. “The first thing I wanted to know, though, is if you have to be ‘sciency’ to work in GEOINT. They said no, so I went for it.”

The first thing she did to familiarize herself with the field and its big players was to attend the Geo-Resolution Conference at St. Louis University in September 2021.

“Everything was completely over my head because I had never heard of this field,” said Lopez, a mother of three, who graduated from Cal State-San Bernardino with a Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies and a minor in Spanish. “But I tried to take away as much as I could.”

Lopez attended her first USGIF Symposium in St. Louis in October 2021.

She left the program with names and email addresses, many new contacts on LinkedIn, and a burning interest to join the GEOINT industry—a global industry that is projected to grow from \$63.61 billion in 2021 to \$147.58 billion in 2028, according to [Fortune Business Insights](#).



The following month, Lopez attended USGIF’s annual GEOINT Symposium in St. Louis. Though overwhelmed at first, Lopez committed herself to networking and learning. “I made so many connections and asked so many people what’s the best way to get started in the industry and everyone told me to just jump in feet first...It was amazing.”

That Symposium solidified for Lopez that she was on the right track, and it also gave her pause. As a 44-year-old Latina woman, she was clearly in the minority.

“One of the first things I noticed was that the room was filled with a lot of white men,” she said. “There weren’t that many women, and there weren’t that many women of color.”

Determined to change that, Lopez enrolled in a data analyst training course through the Rung for Women program to learn more about the basics. Then she joined several GEOINT-related organizations, including USGIF and the Urban and Regional Information Systems Association.

“I knew that if I wanted to get ahead, I had to learn everything I could and get involved as much as possible,” she said. “Trying to switch careers at my age can be tricky.”



Lopez on her first day of work at T-Kartor USA.

Turns out, it was the right time for Lopez to switch. After interviewing with a few companies for a job, in May 2022, she was offered a position as level 1 geospatial analyst for T-Kartor USA, a geospatial software provider headquartered in St. Louis. Her first assignment? Extracting objects from satellite imagery.

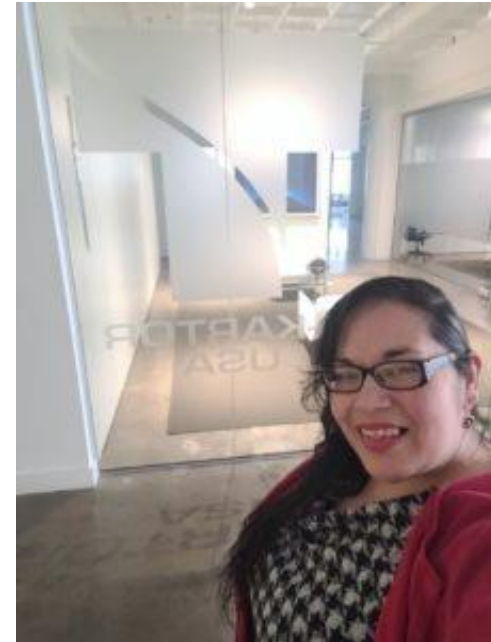
“I’ve been able to handle it so far, and I’m enjoying it,” she said. “But I know it’s going to get harder.”

In addition to her full-time job as an analyst, Lopez, who enjoys scrapbooking and exploring Route 66, is also a full-time student at St. Louis Community College–Florissant Valley earning a degree in American Sign Language (ASL). She hopes to one day serve as a trilingual interpreter in English, Spanish, and ASL.

Eventually, Lopez would like to combine her skills as an educator, analyst, and interpreter. And while she’s not sure that position even exists, she’s excited to see what comes next.

“I’m still looking into what I ultimately want to be,” Lopez said. “This field is so big and I’m enjoying the journey.”

*Main image: Lopez celebrating a graduation with family and friends.*



## AGCMO Hosts “Build my Future” Career Event for Area Youth at SLCC in Ferguson Oct. 12

*Posted on 08/25/2022*

The Associated General Contractors of Missouri (AGCMO) has announced that [Build My Future](#) is coming to St. Louis on Wednesday, Oct. 12. The event will be held in the

gym at St. Louis Community College – Florissant Valley, 3400 Pershall Road in Ferguson.

Build My Future is a national workforce development initiative started in Springfield, MO to highlight careers in the construction industry through hands-on learning opportunities provided by local employers, unions, educators and skilled trades associations. Targeting high school students specifically, each student will have the opportunity to engage in hands-on learning experiences in a wide range of activities including: surveying, concrete testing, asphalt paving, heavy equipment operation, welding and much more.

The high school students also will receive t-shirts, safety gear and a quick overview of safety protocols. Through these experiences, students not only learn about the craft behind a wide range of trades; they also engage in conversations with construction experts about what kind of training is needed, wages, working conditions, what a typical day looks like, and current opportunities within the industry.

In 2018 the Missouri Economic Research and Development Center projected employment in Missouri's construction industry to grow from 122,687 in 2018 to 131,154 by 2028. June 2022 employment of 139,800 has already smashed through those projections and growth in some segments of the sector, i.e. utility system construction, is projected as high as 21.6 percent.



However, these positive headwinds could be significantly slowed by a lack of qualified workers currently confronting contractors. In its Annual Workforce survey, Associated General Contractors of America (AGCA) reports that 95% of Missouri contractors have unfilled open craft positions and 71% have unfilled salary positions, mirroring statistics nationwide.

“One often overlooked benefit to a construction career is the variety it offers,” notes Len Toenjes, AGCMO president who actually began his career as a carpenter and today serves as chief executive for the statewide construction industry association.

“Every day and every job is different. And there’s nothing as rewarding as overlooking a building or infrastructure site you’ve worked on and knowing that you were part of building it. It’s very satisfying.”

The construction industry also provides highly competitive wages and benefits. In Missouri, five out of the five most numerous construction occupations had higher



median pay than the median for all employees in the state in 2019. Missouri offers a variety of craft/trade training programs including exceptional union apprenticeship programs, technical schools, junior college, industry-sponsored trade courses and some of the top post-secondary engineering programs in the nation.

AGCMO also offers a robust scholarship program, supporting students interested in construction with more than \$282,000 in student financial support since 2018. This Build My Future event will be immediately followed by the opportunity for adults to learn more about careers in the construction industry and a hiring fair.

This is your opportunity to learn why construction is a great career choice, why your high school aged child should pursue a construction career and about specific opportunities currently available for you. The Build My Future portion of the day will run 9am-2pm.

High school students must sign up through their school in order to attend. Students that are homeschooled can contact Charlyce Ruth ([cruth@agcmo.org](mailto:cruth@agcmo.org)) to get registered to attend. Build My Future will open to the general public at 2:30pm and run until 6pm. Registration is not necessary to attend this portion of the event.



## **Gov. Parson to highlight historic investments at various st. Louis sites**

By [Taylor Holt](#)

*Published: Sep. 29, 2022 at 6:29 AM CDT*

ST. LOUIS, Mo. (KMOV) - Missouri Governor Mike Parson will be making stops across the St. Louis area to highlight investments and opportunities in workforce development and education.

As part of his statewide tour, Parson will visit Kirkwood High School, St. Louis Community College Florissant Valley's Center for Workforce Education, and the Wentzville GM Assembly Plant. Recently, GM announced investments in plants nationwide to prepare for more electric vehicles.

Thursday, St. Louisans will learn what could be in store for the future of the Wentzville facility.

In 2019, Parson was present when the GM President stated they'll invest \$1 billion to start building the next generation of Chevrolet Colorado and GMC Canyon. The plant got upgrades including to the body shop, assembly area and paint shop. Those upgrades were the aftermath of a \$50 million tax break for GM from the state.

The company previewed the 2023 models of the trucks in August, which the company hopes to start producing in the first quarter of next year.



## Missouri's Spire to Raise Rates Just in Time for Winter

***Spire seeks a revenue increase of \$151.88 million that would impact residents' monthly bills***

By [Jessica Rogen](#) on Fri, Sep 30, 2022 at 9:40 am



Missouri Spire customers are likely to see their gas bills get bigger for the second year in a row.

This week, customers of the state's natural gas company received a Notice of Local Public Hearings and Request for Comments Regarding Proposed Increase GR-2022-0179. In it, Spire disclosed it had filed a

request to increase revenues by 10.29 percent to approximately \$151.88 million with the Missouri Public Service Commission.

Though the size of the rate hike is still open for public comment, if it stays as-is those in eastern Missouri would see an approximate increase of \$8.19 monthly or 10.44 percent. Those in western Missouri would see an increase of about \$11 a month or 12.65 percent increase. Any increase would take effect by February 29, 2023.

If this sounds a little familiar, that's because late last year the Commission approved Spire's request to increase revenues by \$72 million, which meant residential customers saw a 2.8 percent increase in their monthly bills, says Scott Weitzel, vice president of regulatory and governmental affairs for Spire Missouri. In January, Spire kicked off the Notice of Intended Rate Case Filing that has led to this proposed increase, according to filings on the Public Service Commission's website.

The back-to-back increases are due to Spire's regular rate review procedures as a

state-regulated company. In the last rate review, commissioners ordered Spire to change its accounting procedures to better recover expenditures, specifically employee costs and improvements.

"We're investing hundreds of millions of dollars every year in Missouri," Weitzel says. "And part of that investment, once it's in service, once our customers are using it, you know, we then go back and ask for recovery for that. That's one thing about rate reviews, we're not asking for money to be spent in the future, per se, we're asking for recovery for investment."

Ultimately, the Public Service Commission is responsible for determining what, if any, rate increase would take effect, and Weitzel anticipates the final amount of revenue increase to be adjusted as it goes through the review process.

Doing that process two years in a row is unusual for Spire.

"We, again, never intended to file another rate review so closely," he says. "We know, rate, or any type of increase, is not fun or enjoyable for our customers. You know, inflation's at 8 percent, we're sensitive to that. Those that are especially struggling, we're going to have some outreach. We've got probably a handful, if not a dozen tools, to help those customers, especially those in need."

Weitzel encouraged those who need financial assistance to visit [spireenergy.com/assistance](https://spireenergy.com/assistance).

Missouri residents are invited to a public hearing where they can testify on the rate increase request. The hearings will take place at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, October 12, and at noon on Thursday, October 13, at **St. Louis Community College-Florissant Valley** (3400 Pershall Road) and 6 p.m. on Tuesday, October 18, at **Gregg/Klice Community Center** (1600 East 17th Terrace, Kansas City).

Residents can comment in writing to the **Missouri Public Service Commission** (P.O. Box 360, Jefferson City, Missouri, 65102; 800-392-4211; [pscinfo@psc.mo.gov](mailto:pscinfo@psc.mo.gov)). More information is available at [spireenergy.com/rate-review](https://spireenergy.com/rate-review).



Sponsors, exhibitors needed for 2023 build my future stl career expo  
October 3, 2022



**HANDS ON EXHIBITS** will be front and center at this spring's Build My Future STL career expo, which will give students the opportunity to experience a day in the construction industry through an interactive showcase. Sponsors and exhibitors are needed for the April 26 and 27 event at the St. Charles Family Arena.

**By SHERI GASSAWAY**  
**Correspondent**

Sponsors and exhibitors are needed for the 2023 Build My Future STL career expo, which will give students the opportunity to experience a day in the construction industry through an interactive showcase.



The event, sponsored by the Home Builders Association (HBA) of St. Louis & Eastern Missouri and the Francis Howell School District, will take place at the St. Charles Family Arena on April 26 and April 27, 2023 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. for students and on April 26 from 3 to 5 p.m. for the general public.

2023 will be the second year for the expo. Last year's event featured hands-on exhibits and virtual reality simulations by nearly 60 local organizations that specialize in architecture, construction, bricklaying, heavy equipment, tile laying, welding and more.



## **Build My Future STL**

“We had 800 students from 35 schools attend last year, and for a first-year event, we were incredibly happy with the outcome and the excitement of the students,” said Kelley Pfeiffer, of HBA of St. Louis & Eastern Missouri.

This October, the Associated General Contractors (AGC) of Missouri, (a sponsor of Build My Future STL), is also hosting several Build My Future events for high school students throughout the state, including one scheduled for Ferguson on Oct. 12. The event will be from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. at St. Louis Community College at Florissant Valley. For more information visit [agcmo.org](https://agcmo.org) or call Charlyce Ruth at 417-425-3390.

For the 2023 event, Build My Future STL has invited students from 205 schools from the seven Missouri counties the HBA serves as well as students from schools in the Metro East. It has also expanded the event to two days and opened it to the public for a couple hours.

“Since we’re inviting more students, we decided to make it a two-day event so we can accommodate everyone,” Pfeiffer said. “We are also opening the event to the public so high school students interested in a particular construction trade can bring back their parents and so others interested in the construction industry may attend.”

Organizations interested in sponsoring the expo or being an exhibitor can visit [agcmo.org](http://agcmo.org) or contact Pfeiffer at 314-817-5633. Event setup for 2023 exhibitors will be on Tuesday April 25 and final setup is allowed between 7 and 8 a.m. on the day of the event.

The idea for Build My Future was born in Springfield, Mo., in 2014 out of a shared desire among industry professionals to remedy the dwindling pipeline of workers and lack of interest in the skilled trades. Today, Build My Future is the largest event of its kind in the country, and now takes place annually in 10 states.



## Oct. 12 Build my Future Interactive Event Reaches 650-plus St. Louis Area Students

OCTOBER 19, 2022



Recently 46 area contractors, vendors, schools and workforce teams joined together to provide a hands-on, interactive event at St. Louis Community College – Florissant Valley that introduced another 650-plus area high school students to the construction industry. From pounding away at pipe or fashioning a sheet metal carrier, to creating a wooden toolbox that doubles as a footstool or trying out welding, drywall or concrete, AGCMO member contractors and partners created a fun, interactive experience-filled day for the students.

Each Build My Future event starts with students picking up a t-shirt, backpack and safety glasses, followed by a 5-10-minute safety talk and overview of the day's activities. Students then fan out to both indoor and outdoor displays and activities, followed by lunch and networking time. A Construction Job Fair closed out the Oct. 12 event from 2:30 to 6 p.m., with companies standing by to talk with persons interested in current job opportunities in the industry.

This was the fifth Build My Future event for AGCMO this year, including earlier BMF events in St. Charles, Springfield, Macon and Sikeston, with a sixth Build My Future scheduled in Jefferson City Tuesday, Oct. 18 at Jefferson City Jaycees' Fairgrounds. Two 2023 BMF events are already scheduled for next year – April 5, 2023 at the Ozark Empire Fairgrounds in Springfield and April 26 and 27 at the St. Charles Family Arena in St. Charles.



The construction industry serves as an important engine to Missouri's overall economy. At the same time, there is a critical workforce shortage in the industry. The purpose of the event is to introduce high school students to the exceptional workforce development & training programs in existence along with good-paying career opportunities immediately available.

In today's competitive workforce environment, it's important to inform students and their parents about the plentiful and immediate opportunities in the construction industry. Here are a few facts that are helpful in introducing students to the industry:

**Economic Impact:** U.S. gross domestic product (GDP)—the value of all goods and services produced in the country—totaled \$23 trillion in 2021; construction contributed \$958 billion (4.2%). In Missouri, construction contributed \$15.5 billion (4.9%) of the state's GDP of \$319.3 billion. There were 753,000 construction firms in the U.S. in 2020, including 13,640 in Missouri.

<https://www.agc.org/sites/default/files/Files/Advocacy/MO.pdf>

**Construction Employment:** The US construction industry employed 7.692 million in July and increased to 7,708 million in August. In Missouri, the construction industry employed 140,600 in August 2022 (seasonally adjusted), an increase of 7,600 (5.7%) over August 2021.

[https://www.agc.org/sites/default/files/users/user21902/State%20Empl%202022\\_August\\_Alpha\\_12mo.pdf](https://www.agc.org/sites/default/files/users/user21902/State%20Empl%202022_August_Alpha_12mo.pdf)

**Construction Industry Pay:** Construction jobs pay well. In Missouri, 5 out of the 5 most numerous construction occupations had higher median pay than the median for all





employees in the state in 2021 (Half of workers earn more than the median; half earn less.) See AGC of America Missouri fact sheet for sample median wages:

<https://www.agc.org/sites/default/files/Files/Advocacy/MO.pdf>

Workforce Shortage: Nationally 91 percent of contractors report difficulty in filling both craft and salaried positions. In Missouri, 96 percent of surveyed contractors report difficulty finding hourly craft workers and 77 percent are having problems filling salaried positions, mirroring statistics nationwide. View recent survey results here:

[https://www.agc.org/sites/default/files/users/user21902/2022\\_Workforce\\_Survey\\_MO\\_M%20\(2\).pdf](https://www.agc.org/sites/default/files/users/user21902/2022_Workforce_Survey_MO_M%20(2).pdf)

\*SOURCE: AGC of America Missouri Fact Sheet (07/22/22)) unless otherwise indicated.

AGCMO was pleased to welcome several state and local leaders to the Oct. 12 event. Ferguson Mayor Ella Jones welcomed the vendors at the ribbon cutting, encouraging them to continue to reach out to our youth. (Her husband was an electrician so she made it clear she recognized that construction provides a good living wage.) She jointly broke the ribbon along with Dr. Elizabeth Perkins, Campus President and Chief Academic Officer of St. Louis Community College – Florissant Valley.

Missouri Lt. Governor Mike Kehoe stopped by to talk with students and was able to try out some of the larger equipment. Also, Missouri State Senator Brian Williams (14th District; Assistant Minority Floor Leader) took time out from his busy schedule to tour the displays and talk with the students.



Build My Future has been an astounding success in 2022. Here are the results, to date:

Springfield (April 13), Students: 1700, Schools: 70, Exhibitors: 64

Note: Original registrations were 2700; inclement weather prevented some students from attending.

This event had 48 sponsors, including the AGCMO Education Foundation.

St. Charles (April 20), Students: 800 (Approx.), Sponsors: 28, Exhibitors: 47

NOTE: The Francis Howell School District and the Home Builders Association of St. Louis and Eastern Missouri chaired this event, with the AGCMO Education Foundation also participating on the committee and as a sponsor.

AGCMO (Lead Sponsor/Organizer) EVENTS:

Upstate MO (Macon; Sept. 21), Students: 1500, Schools: 48, Sponsors: 28, Exhibitors: 47  
Southeast Region (Sikeston; Oct. 5), Students: 1600, Schools: 49, Exhibitors 24, Sponsors: 21

Gateway Region (St. Louis Community College – Florissant Valley; Oct. 12), Students: 650, Schools: 46, Exhibitors/Sponsors: 42

Central MO Region (Jefferson City; Oct. 18), Students: 1800 (Approx.), Schools: 57, Exhibitors: 51, Sponsors: 30

For information or to volunteer for 2023 events, contact Charlyce Ruth at AGCMO.



## St. Louis leaders call for ban on assault rifles following school shooting

*Missouri Gov. Mike Parson told a TV reporter Tuesday that he believes tougher gun safety laws won't help.*

October 27, 2022

[Rebecca Rivas](#)

*Rows of flowers and candles have been left in front of Central Visual and Performing Arts High School in St. Louis, following the tragic shooting on October 24, 2022 that left two dead and several others wounded. // Photo by Rebecca Rivas/Missouri Independent*



The first time St. Louis Mayor Tishaura Jones publicly spoke about the tragic shooting at Central Visual and Performing Arts High School, it was just hours after a shooter took the lives of a 15-year-old student and a health teacher.

Jones was so visibly shaken with grief she could barely get out the words.

Now after two days of listening to students and community members, she said she's gone from "sad to angry."



And that anger on Wednesday was focused on state leaders who Jones said have offered their prayers since the tragedy but refuse to enact laws that would make it harder for people to obtain “weapons of war.”

“The time for thoughts and prayers are over,” Jones said during a briefing at the Metropolitan St. Louis Police Department . “It’s time for action. But the actions of the Missouri legislature in recent years have made gun violence far more likely to occur in our city and state.”

Jones is a part of a growing chorus of St. Louis community members and leaders demanding tighter gun restrictions in Missouri in response to the tragedy at Central VPA.

On Monday, former Central VPA student Orlando Harris, 19, broke into the locked high school with an AR-15-style rifle and shot and killed dance student Alexzandria “Alex” Bell and teacher Jean Kuczka.

Interim St. Louis Police Chief Michael Sack read a passage from the shooter’s notebook Monday, where he wrote: “I’ve been an isolated loner my entire life. This was the perfect storm for a mass shooter.”

The investigation into how Harris obtained the gun is ongoing, Sack said Wednesday, but officials know a gun was previously taken out of his possession by the police within the past few months at the request of his mother.

It’s unclear whether or not he bought the gun and accessories from an unlicensed dealer. Missouri law does not require background checks on unlicensed gun sales, which aligns with federal law.

Harris came into the building Monday with more than 600 rounds of ammunition, Sack said.

State Sen. Karla May, D-St. Louis, told The Independent that the state needs to immediately ban assault weapons in Missouri.

“I don’t think we need warzone weapons in our communities,” May said. She’s also demanding that the state reinstate the requirement to have a permit and safety training to carry a concealed firearm in public. Over the past five years, Republican legislators have pulled back almost all restrictions on carrying a firearm, May said.

“The gun laws are almost none,” she said.

Gov. Mike Parson said Tuesday that Missouri doesn’t need more gun laws, but more mental health resources.

“Trying to regulate guns, that doesn’t work. We know that,” [Parson told Fox 2 News’s Emily Manley Tuesday](#). “That’s the political argument and again, if you’re someone that’s mentally unstable, you don’t know what that reaction is going to be. You can pass all the laws you want for that, but if they aren’t abiding by the law, it’s not going to make any difference.”

### **Missouri’s gun laws**

Missouri’s gun laws consistently rank among the least restrictive on the [Gifford Law Center’s annual scorecards for states](#).

Missouri had the nation’s six highest gun-related death rate in 2019, according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#). That rate has [steadily increased](#) since Missouri passed its first conceal-carry law in 2003. The rate includes both intentional and accidental deaths.

In 1999, Missouri residents voted down a National Rifle Association-backed state ballot measure to allow concealed weapons permits to eligible citizens.

But in 2003, Republicans gained the majority in the House and the Senate. And that year, they successfully passed a [“right to carry” law](#) that required sheriffs to issue a concealed carry permit if gun owners take a firearms safety course and pass a background check.

Four years later, Missouri repealed the requirement to have a license and pass a background check before purchasing a handgun. Gun homicides in Missouri increased by 25% in the three years following the repeal of the law — from 2008 to 2010, according to a report through the [Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Policy and Research](#).

In 2016, Republicans were able to override then-Gov. Jay Nixon’s veto to allow Missourians 19 and older to [carry concealed guns without a permit](#). The legislature also passed a [“stand your ground” law](#) that same year.

Then last year, the legislature passed the Second Amendment Preservation Act, which prohibits state and local law enforcement from enforcing certain federal gun laws.

Local officers who attempt to enforce the federal firearms laws could be “permanently ineligible” from serving in Missouri and on the hook for potential court costs and fines.

Both May and Jones said the law has them worried because it makes it harder for local law enforcement and federal agents to work together.

“They shouldn’t go to work worrying about whether they are going to be penalized for doing their job,” May said.

Congresswoman Cori Bush, D-St. Louis, echoed Jones’ sentiments at the Wednesday press briefing about the need for stronger federal regulations of firearms.

“It is a preventable public health crisis,” Bush said. “Republican lawmakers especially, we need you to step up. We need you to join us in taking action on this gun violence crisis in this country. And if it means stepping away from the dollars you receive, you need to do so.”

Bush is hosting an [in-person town hall](#) on Thursday in St. Louis to discuss bullying, gun violence and school safety. It will be held at 6 p.m. at St. Louis Community College – Florissant Valley.

Congressman Jamaal Bowman, D-New York, who is vice chair of the House Committee on Education and Labor, will be participating in the panel, Bush said, along with students, advocates and school officials.



### **Cori Bush hosts town hall on school safety Thursday evening**

By Reggie Lee  
Oct. 27, 2022

ST. LOUIS – Missouri Congresswoman Cori Bush and other St. Louis officials said they are heartbroken and angry after Monday’s attack.

Congresswoman Bush is now calling for more action surrounding gun reform.

“My team and I are working relentlessly to introduce an advanced gun reform policy rooted in public health to protect and address the needs of our community and communities alike,” Bush shared.

Congresswoman Bush plans to host a town hall Thursday at 6:00 p.m. on school safety. It’s at St. Louis Community College-Florissant Valley, and is open to everyone. Community members can come together and hear from students, school administration officials, mental health experts, and elected leaders.



### **Senior from STL high school shooting speaks at town hall**

By Andy Banker  
Oct. 28, 2022

ST. LOUIS – A student who survived the St. Louis High School shooting spoke with Fox 2 after her emotional outcry for change stunned a congressional town hall meeting, Thursday night. It brought the crowd to its feet for a standing ovation.

“It should not have taken my school to get destroyed for you all to listen. It should not have taken my school for you all to understand that this is a problem,” Veronica Russell said, fighting tears.

Russell, a senior at Central Visual and Performing Arts (CVPA) High School where the shooting occurred, was a panelist at the town hall meeting hosted by St. Louis Democrat Congresswoman, Cori Bush, at St. Louis Community College, Florissant Valley. She rose to speak without warning.

“I took my chance while I still had the platform instead of waiting for the next incident to happen or the next child to get injured. This something we need to act on now,” she later told Fox 2.

More than 150 people packed the town hall, including the mother of 15 year old student, Alex Bell, who was killed along CVPA teacher, Jean Kuczka. Bell’s mother did not speak and kept her head bowed most of the time.

Democrat Congressman, Jamaal Bowman, traveled from his district in New York City to be there, too.

Most of the focus was on mental health services and gun restrictions.

St. Louis Police confirm the gunman, 19, who graduated from CVPA, had been committed for mental health treatment in the past. Still, he was able to buy the AR-15 style rifle used in the shootings from a private seller earlier this month, after an FBI background check blocked an attempted purchase from a licensed dealer. St. Louis Police even responded to the gunman’s home this month to take the rifle and give it to a relative, at his mother’s request. It’s unclear how the rifle ended up back in the gunman’s possession.

“We need background checks on every single gun sale, every single gun transfer. We need to enact red-flag laws. We need to ban assault weapons,” Congresswoman Bush said.

Earlier Wednesday, Missouri’s Republican Governor, Mike Parson, was at St. Louis Police Department Headquarters to visit the heroic St. Louis Police and St. Louis City Public Schools officers who rushed into the building to take out the shooter and prevent a massacre.

“These guys did exactly what no one else wants to do and went into the facility in a hot situation and took out a shooter,” Gov. Parson said. “I thanked them for their service. I

thanked them for doing that. I thanked their families for standing behind them. Some people would say social workers or go to a different avenue. What do yOu think would have happened if that would have occurred with a guy with 600 rounds in there ...”

“I thought we were going to get our act together after Columbine we didn’t, after Sandy Hook we didn’t, after Virginia Tech we didn’t ... on and on and on,” Congressman Bowman said.

He disputed claims that states with “red flag” laws would have seized the shooter’s weapon when Missouri did not.

“That’s a separate issue in the State of Missouri that we look at. I don’t think there’s any question people who have mental health issues, you can take their weapons,” he said.



## **Students make voice heard at town hall, Rep. Bush takes aim at Missouri gun laws**

By [David Amelotti](#)

*Published: Oct. 28, 2022 at 3:21 PM CDT*

ST. LOUIS (KMOV) -- Hundreds of community members poured onto the campus of St. Louis Community College - Florissant Valley on Thursday to hear students and area superintendents speak about the cause and prevention of school shootings. The gathering took place days after a gunman killed a student and teacher at Central Visual and Performing Arts High School.

News 4 got a one-on-one interview with Missouri Congresswoman Cori Bush.





We asked her what kind of legislation she wants to see after the tragedy, and she pointed to Missouri's gun laws.

"One thing is private gun sale, there needs to be background checks," Congresswoman Bush explained. "That could save lives. If someone is turned away from purchasing a gun because a check came back, so they were rejected at a gun show or business, there should be a red flag

that says this person was turned down, and should not be able to buy a weapon. That would save lives."

News 4 asked the congresswoman if Monday's tragedy and the quick response of city police changes her stance on defunding the police.

She said no because she said defunding the police is not about giving police a low wage. She said it ensures departments don't have an overflow of military-grade equipment.

"No. No, because the one doesn't have anything to do with the other," Congresswoman Bush shared. "What we are saying is we need to focus on our social safety net and we don't need to continue to add money to policing when we're not making sure we have resources for mental health, having people trained to respond to mental health calls or someone who is suffering from substance use -making sure those experts respond instead of police. That needs to happen, that will save lives. My stance has not changed. Defunding the police is not about a police officer not being paid, or cutting the number of police. What I am saying is we are funding the social safety net that is important. We need that versus a stockpile of swat gear."

News 4 also asked Congresswoman Bush if Monday's tragedy makes her want to see all safety officers in schools armed. She said it's not up to her.

"So when we listen to our children, our students, some of them say they don't want armed security in the schools," Bush explained. "Some students do want that. I don't have to sit in the classrooms, they do, so we need to ask them."

Central Visual and Performing Arts High School senior Veronica Russell read a letter she said she sent Cori Bush's and Mayor Tishaura Jones' offices, but hadn't gotten a response.

She said bullying didn't cause Monday's tragedy, but weak legislation and neglecting mental health.

"What have we gained from use of assault rifles, death of kids, death of animals, terrorist attacks, high murder rate, and nothing more," Russell said. "Missouri does not investigate backgrounds before gun sales, require a permit, or proper training. Let's be honest, what are these weapons for."

"That's what it's about," Bush said when asked about Russell's letter. "We made sure we had students on our panel because people need to hear. Not only hear what they want but they need to hear their passion, their anger. This was the space for her to share that and others because just a few days ago on Monday we were holding students crying, consoling, listening to students and parents about what they just experienced. We had to have that space. How do we talk about student safety without students part of the conversation?"

Congresswoman Bush told Russell in front of the crowd that her office just received the letter on Thursday and would be reviewing it as soon as possible and will respond to the teen. She said she will also reach out to Mayor Jones to ensure she reviewed the letter as well.

Funding was a need heavily discussed at the town hall that lasted nearly three hours. One example is the Trauma-informed Schools Initiative.

President of the St. Louis Public Schools Board of Education Matt Davis said it was passed to help urban and rural schools. He said the problem is it was passed without a way to fund it.

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**St. Louis student: 'It should not have taken my school' to push gun safety**

[Taylor Tiamoyo Harris](#)

Oct. 28, 2022

*"It should not have taken my school for you all to understand that this is a problem," said Veronica Russell, a senior at Central Visual and Performing Arts High School during a town hall meeting on school safety and gun violence on Thursday, Oct. 27, 2022, at St. Louis Community College-Florissant Valley. Listening, from right, are panelists U.S. Rep. Cori Bush and Lena Chapman.*



GUSON — Reality hit home for Cadena Brim and her daughter Veronica Russell, a senior at Central Visual and Performing Arts High School.

Russell was shocked and distraught after her classmate and a teacher at her school were killed in a mass shooting by a former student on Monday on the CVPA and Collegiate School of Medicine and Bioscience campus. Brim encouraged her daughter to write it all down, and she did.

Russell transformed her thoughts, feelings and emotions into a letter outlining her outrage with Missouri gun laws directed to U.S. Rep. Cori Bush, St. Louis Mayor Tishaura O. Jones and St. Louis Public Safety Director Dan Isom.



*Central Visual and Performing Arts High School artistic director Willie Kilpatrick, right, hugs CVPA senior Veronica Russell following the conclusion of the student panel during a town hall on school safety and gun violence on Thursday, Oct. 27, 2022, at St. Louis Community College-Florissant Valley.*  
*Jordan Opp, Post-Dispatch*

Russell hadn't received a response, but accepted a request to participate on Bush's gun violence and school safety town hall at St. Louis Community College-Florissant Valley on Thursday. As a panelist listening to the conversation about bullying, she stood and read her letter.

"What exactly have we gained from the use of assault rifles? The deaths of innocent children, the deaths of animals, terrorist attacks, fear and nothing more," said Russell, to applause. "Do you think that St. Louis deserves another stain on its history?"

The Democratic congresswoman sought to shift responsibility to Republicans who oppose gun restrictions in the U.S. Senate and at the state level.

“I am going to implore everyone that’s in our state Legislature that has made the decision that they do not want to tighten up on our gun laws, I am asking that you come and speak that to our youth,” Bush said. “Come and meet with them in their faces and tell them that you will not tighten up and tell them why.”

*Taneyia Ingram, center left, a senior at Central Visual and Performing Arts High School records as Veronica Russell speaks during a town hall on school safety and gun violence on Thursday, Oct. 27, 2022, at St. Louis Community College-Florissant Valley.*

*Jordan Opp, Post-Dispatch*



Other high school students from St. Louis-area schools participated in the panel and said they wanted more resources dedicated to mental health. A counselor on the panel recommended mandatory mental health classes in schools.

New York Rep. Jamaal Brown, who serves as vice chair for the U.S. House Committee on Education and Labor, moderated the second panel, where some school officials highlighted their new approach to bullying and safety such as restorative justice, a practice when an offender and victim meet.

Another school administrator said counseling was added to their school’s suspension process because sending students home for infractions was not solving the problem.

When a question asking if the solution to mass school shootings was arming teachers with guns, panelists said no. St. Louis Public School board member Alisha Sonnier said it would be traumatizing, and pointed out another influence on school violence.

“You cannot have school safety if you don’t have community safety,” Sonnier said.

“We really have to get to a place as a world and society that we see that guns are the problem and not the solution.”

A moderator posed an audience question about cost effective activities for youths to express themselves physically and emotionally.

Russell yelled out from the front row of the audience: “That’s what Central was!” she said.

“It should not have taken my school for you all to understand that this is a problem,” Russell said. “No words could ever reiterate what the school meant to us before screams filled our classrooms and bullets flew through our halls.”



A **TEGNA** Company

## **STLCC enrolling youth in job training programs**

St. Louis Community College is enrolling young people in its accelerated job training programs.

These are tuition-free courses that will give you in-demand credentials in 12 months or less.

For information, attend an enrollment event Thursday, November 17, from 2:30 to 6:30 p.m., at St. Louis Community College, Florissant Valley Training Center, Room 202/204, 3400 Pershall Rd., Ferguson, MO 63135

The Job Corps Scholars grant offers tuition-free education in:

- Culinary Life Science
- Health Sciences
- Skilled Trades
- Information Technology

St. Louis Community College is recruiting eligible youth ages 16-24 into the Job Corps Scholars Program Partnership. Through this partnership eligible youth will have the opportunity to participate in credit and non-credit education and accelerated workforce training programs at St. Louis Community College that are 12 months or less. Each qualified student will work with a personal career counselor and employment services specialist providing academic/career guidance and planning and job placement assistance along with supportive services to ensure each student is successful in obtaining their educational and training goals that leads to a credential and employment outcomes.

### **Criteria**

If you're a 16- to 24-year-old St. Louis or St. Louis County resident who's ready to work toward a successful future, contact us today to learn more about opportunities available through the Job Corps Scholars program at St. Louis Community College. You may be eligible if you meet one or more of the following conditions:

- You receive public assistance.
- You meet the income guidelines.
- You are experiencing homelessness.



- You are a foster care recipient.

[For more information, click here.](#)

## **THE ST. LOUIS AMERICAN**

People on the Move

### **Larhonda :L. Wilson honored with Community College Association's teaching award**

Dec 6, 2022 Updated Dec 7, 2022

*LaRhonda L. Wilson*

Photo courtesy of St. Louis Community College

LaRhonda L. Wilson, associate professor of sociology at St. Louis Community College at Florissant Valley, is one of two recipients honored with an [Excellence in Teaching Award](#).

The veteran educator – who also serves as the College's Center for Teaching and Learning coordinator – and Lisa Ebert of Jefferson College were tapped winners from a pool of 12 finalists recognized at the awards dinner Nov. 30 at the Missouri Community College Association's 58th Annual Convention and Tradeshow Awards.

The Excellence in Teaching Award is presented annually to outstanding instructors for work done during the previous year. The winners set the standard of excellence not only within higher education, their institutions but across the state.



**ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH**

**Your Ameren bill could go up by \$12 a month. You can weigh in today.**

[Bryce Gray](#)

Feb. 9, 2023

Ameren is seeking to increase revenue from its electricity rates by \$316 million — a proposed hike that the St. Louis-based utility says would raise bills by \$144 annually, for an average residential customer.

The company says the higher rates would be justified thanks to its ongoing investment in the region's electric grid, and other factors, such as rising costs of capital.



But critics balk at the price tag, complaining Ameren shouldn't be able to recover costs and profits associated with the company's coal-fired power plants, its political lobbying efforts, legal costs tied to Clean Air Act violations, and even the use of customer rates to cover charitable donations when the St. Louis Blues score power play goals.

Ameren did not grant requests for an interview Wednesday, but said that its request accounts for "major upgrades to system reliability and resiliency, as well as investments to support our transition to cleaner energy," according to a statement from the utility.

"We understand there is no good time to adjust electric rates and we're committed to do what we can to keep rates as low as possible by spending wisely and cutting costs," the company said.

Ameren first filed for the rate hike in August, which comes on the heels of a [\\$220 million increase](#) that went into effect less than a year ago. The Missouri Public Service Commission, which regulates the state's monopoly utilities, will hold public hearings about the company's proposal Thursday in the St. Louis region. A noon hearing is set for the St. Charles County Administrative Building, and a 6 p.m. hearing will be held at the St. Louis Community College-Florissant Valley Student Center.

Perhaps the biggest criticisms from watchdog groups center on the sheer size and timing of the rate increase sought by the utility, which represents an 11.6% jump in revenue. Consumer advocates are concerned about the financial burden an ensuing rate hike could place on customers — especially during a period of high inflation and rising interest rates.

"A double-digit rate increase even in the best of times can be considered grounds for 'rate shock' for many families," wrote Geoff Marke, an economist for the Missouri Office of Public Counsel, which advocates for utility customers on matters before state regulators.

That sentiment was echoed by a host of organizations at a press conference last week — arguing that the move threatens to exacerbate the more than 50,000 disconnections for late payment that the company performed last year, and jeopardize vulnerable and low-income groups.

“I hope that Ameren Missouri can truly understand that utility insecurity is one of the primary contributors to homelessness, and that an increase of this nature will lead to placing a vast number of our veterans and region’s neighbors at risk,” said Bill Wallace, president and CEO of Missouri Veterans Endeavor, in a statement last week.

Burrowing into Ameren’s financial records, critics and watchdogs have raised questions about specific costs.

One example is whether Ameren should be allowed to charge customers for legal expenses related to its Rush Island Energy Center breaking the law. The coal-fired power plant is slated for an early retirement after years of ongoing Clean Air Act violations — an infraction that confronted Ameren with a court order to install expensive pollution controls, before the company proposed to retire the facility instead.

PSC staff recommends that Ameren not be allowed to pass along its political lobbying expenses, such as membership dues to groups like the Edison Electric Institute — an industry organization that has opposed air pollution regulations in the past.

And testimony filed on behalf of the Sierra Club argues that Ameren should be made to “identify ‘avoidable’ spending ahead of time,” particularly given performance issues and forced outages at certain coal units, and “cost-competitive replacement options available” — especially thanks to federal tax credits for clean energy.

Also questioned is Ameren’s sponsorship of the Power Play Goals for Kids program, an initiative stating that Ameren will donate \$500 to a local children’s charity for each power play goal scored by the St. Louis Blues in the regular season. Marke described it as a “horribly inefficient way to help kids in need.”

More information about Thursday’s public hearings can be found at [psc.mo.gov](https://psc.mo.gov). Meanwhile, Ameren urges any customers struggling to pay their bills to look into its energy assistance programs and flexible payment options.

Related information is available at [AmerenMissouri.com/EnergyAssistance](https://AmerenMissouri.com/EnergyAssistance).



Feb. 9, 2023

ST. LOUIS – Ameren Missouri wants customers to pay more for their electricity. On Thursday, locals can have their say on Ameren Missouri’s major rate hike request.

There are two chances Thursday to weigh in on Ameren’s proposal. The utility wants a rate hike totaling \$316 million. That means the average customer will pay some \$12 more a month, or about \$144 more annually.

If the increase is approved by the Missouri Public Service Commission, Ameren’s revenues would jump by 11.6%. This comes after a separate \$220 million rate increase from Ameren went into effect in February of last year.

Critics are speaking out against the price tag of Ameren’s latest rate hike proposal.

FOX 2’s Post-Dispatch partners reported that critics say Ameren should not be able to recover costs and profits associated with the company’s coal-fired power plants, it’s political lobbying efforts, its legal costs related to clean air act violations, and the use of customer rates to help fund charitable donations.

In a statement to the Post, Ameren said the rate hike would pay for “major upgrades to system reliability and resiliency, as well as investments to support our transition to cleaner energy.”

The statement also read, “We understand that there is no good time to adjust electric rates, and we’re committed to do what we can to keep rates as low as possible by spending wisely and cutting costs.”

The Missouri Public Service Commission is hosting two public hearings on Thursday. The first is at noon at the St. Charles County Executive Office building on North 3rd Street in St. Charles. The PSC staff will give out information and host a question-and-answer session.

The second hearing will be at 6:00 p.m. at the Florissant Valley campus of the St. Louis Community College. That will have a similar format to the St. Charles hearing.



### **Ameren pitches rate hike at public meetings**

By [Alex Gaul](#)

*Published: Feb. 9, 2023 at 7:34 PM CST*

ST. LOUIS, Mo. (KMOV) - Ameren Missouri is pitching a Summer rate hike to customers.

The proposal was made to the Missouri Public Service last August, but the commission held two public meetings on the subject Thursday as part of its decision-making process, one in St. Charles and the other at St. Louis Community College - Florissant Valley.

Ameren says the proposal would cost the average residential consumer about \$12 more per month. Under the [plan](#), the average rate would increase from 10.38 cents per kilowatt hour to 11.59 cents per kilowatt hour, an 11 percent increase. Ameren says the new rates would still be below the national average.

The [proposal](#) to the PSC says the rate increases would generate \$316 million annually. Ameren VP of Regulatory Affairs Warren Wood says the funds would go towards vital grid and infrastructure improvements and clean energy.

“We have a lot of older infrastructure,” Wood said. “We’re replacing it with smarter, more efficient technology, and it’s helping keep the lights on for our customers.”

At the meeting in St. Charles, customers brought up issues with the rate increases and questioned if they were necessary.

“As everything is going up, surely the electricity is eventually going to have to, so I’m not so opposed against it,” customer Tom Stanton said. “They act like this is a charity thing that they have to give electricity, but it’s a business at the end of the day.”

The PSC has until the end of June to make a decision, with more hearings scheduled in April, per a spokesperson. If approved, the new rates would go into effect in July.

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## STL JEWISH LIGHT

### Three events on our must-see/do list



[ELLEN FUTTERMAN](#),  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF  
PUBLISHED MARCH 23,  
2023

There is no lack of fascinating art and photography exhibitions by members of the St. Louis Jewish community throughout the area this

month and next. Here are three to put on your must-see list.



“Wise Women, Resilient Lives” at the Ethical Society, a new photography exhibit by Temple Israel congregant Cathy Lander-Goldberg, gives voice to a diverse demographic that is often ignored or overlooked.

Lander-Goldberg, who is a clinical social worker in addition to professional photographer, focused her lens on 14 older women, including two in the local Jewish community, from their upper 70s to 90s, who come from all different stations of life, ethnicities, careers, backgrounds and sexual orientations.

She found what they have in common is their willingness to share their perspectives on living meaningful lives through volunteering, advocating, writing, working, learning, teaching, traveling, creating, physical activity, humor, gratitude, faith, patience, self-kindness, hope, pleasure, positivity, problem solving and connecting with others.

“I asked what advice they had on aging, what’s different than they thought it would be and to talk about sense of purpose,” said Lander-Goldberg, who is also the director of Photo Explorations, which collaborates with organizations to offer workshops for all ages using photography and writing to help participants tell their stories and build self-awareness.

The exhibition includes a recent portrait by Lander-Goldberg as well as a copy of a past photo provided by each participant. The past image helps to tell her story and is sometimes tattered by the years it has been in a wallet or an old adhesive photo album. Lander-Goldberg collaborated with each participant to capture their story, publishing an excerpt of their conversation alongside their photos. Featured in the display are two Meg Selig and Arlen Chaleff, both Jewish St. Louisans.



Cathy Lander Goldberg-and Meg Selig.

Selig, who is shown holding her two-year-old daughter Elizabeth in 1979, was a school counselor for many decades. It wasn’t until she was in her 60s and near retirement from St. Louis Community College at Florissant Valley, that she began working on her “next chapter” as a writer, with more than 200 blogs for *Psychology Today*. She also wrote two books, “Silver Sparks: Thoughts on Growing Older, Wiser, and Happier” and “Changepower! 37 Secrets to Habit Change Success.”

Chaleff was named a *Jewish Light* Unsung Hero in 2021 for her impact in mental health awareness. Her original photo was taken in 1975 when she was suffering from severe despair related to a relationship break up and a diagnosis of manic depression, now

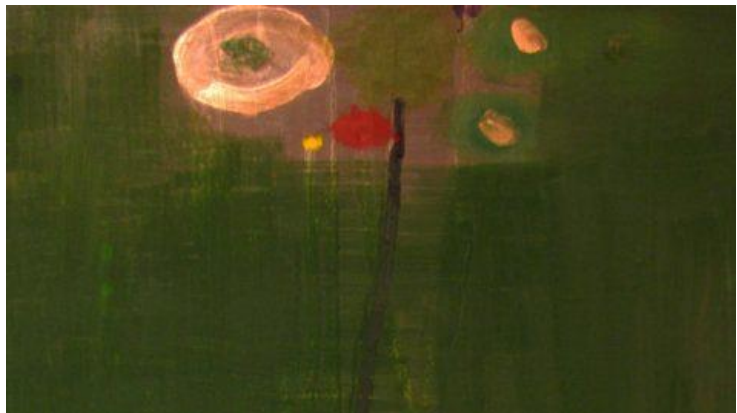
known as bipolar disorder. After years of treatment, she has dedicated her life to ending the stigma of mental health disorders and is a board member for Jewish Family and Children's Services and the St. Louis Chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI).

The exhibit will run through April 23, at the Ethical Society Gallery, 9001 Clayton Road. Doors are open to the public every Sunday from 9 a.m. to 1:30 pm. The exhibit also can be viewed Monday to Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., by calling ahead to arrange a time at 314-991-0955 ext. 214 or emailing [njelinek@ethicalstl.org](mailto:njelinek@ethicalstl.org) or [janeschaefer79@gmail.com](mailto:janeschaefer79@gmail.com). You can also view a virtual gallery at [www.CLGPhoto.com](http://www.CLGPhoto.com) (Click "Wise Women").

If you aren't able to make it to the Ethical Society before the show closes, it will be presented starting June 2 at the Webster Groves Public Library, 301 E. Lockwood Ave. and run through the end of the month.

"Unspecified Botanicals and Their Allies," which features new works by St. Louis Jewish painter and sculptor Barry Leibman, opens Friday, March 24th, from 6 to 9 pm. at Hoffman LaChance Contemporary, 2713 Sutton Boulevard, in Maplewood.

"The paintings in 'Unspecified Botanicals' are representations of imaginary flowering plants—they do not have any official scientific family, genus or species," said Leibman, who in addition to pursuing his art, was a co-owner of Left Bank Books for many years. "They are imaginary and unspecified. They are often accompanied by various allies, such as seeds, planets, vases or a general sense of atmospherics, like a particular season of the year."



The exhibit runs through April 22nd with gallery hours on Fridays and Saturdays from 12 to 3 p.m., or by appointment, 314-960-5322. [www.hoffmanlachancefineart.com](http://www.hoffmanlachancefineart.com).

Last, but certainly not least, are the works of four St. Louis Jewish artists that will be featured at Congregation B'nai Amoona's Art Gallery – fine art photographers Bob Denlow, David Capes and Neshama Roash as well as ceramic sculptor Sandy Kaplan.

Their exhibition opens on March 27, with an opening reception from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Sunday, April 2, and runs through June 9. For hours and more information, call 314-567-9990 or [www.bnaiamoona.com](http://www.bnaiamoona.com). B'nai Amoona is located at 324 S. Mason Road.

## Advocates, residents protest St. Louis County bill barring people in streets

[Kelsey Landis](#)

May 9, 2023

CLAYTON — Opposition is stacking up against a bill pending before the St. Louis County Council that would prohibit people being in county streets. Joggers, walkers, people with disabilities and community groups have all complained that it would unfairly target them.



The measure proposed by Councilman Ernie Trakas, a Republican from unincorporated South County, bars standing, sitting, walking or otherwise moving along [roadways in St. Louis County](#). People could be ticketed for violating the rule, and it would apply throughout the county unless a municipality has a stricter rule in place. ■

Trakas said he plans to bring it up for a final vote at tonight's council meeting.

But Robyn Wallen, transportation committee chairperson for the Missouri Council of the Blind, said her agency worries most that authorities will enforce the bill inconsistently.

"We're afraid of the demographics that are going to be targeted," she said. "It's always easy to approach the people that you feel are less likely to say anything."

People who jog, push strollers, use a wheelchair, have limited mobility, are visually impaired or live in a place with bad, bumpy sidewalks encounter the same problem: Walking in the street is often a necessity. The bill makes an exception for places where there are no sidewalks, mandating that people use whichever roadway shoulder faces oncoming traffic. It allows for first responders and people getting on and off buses.

Trakas says the bill is a public safety measure that isn't designed to target anyone.

"Really there's not, in my mind anyway, an argument to be made that somehow this measure to make roadways safer for people and drivers is somehow compromising other people's convenience or right," Trakas said.

But the proposed rules are impractical for joggers, says Anne Marie Mosher of Florissant. The 54-year-old community college math teacher runs five or six miles daily, and encounters plenty of situations where she has to hop into the street.

"Anybody who does recreational walking or running would understand that this adds some layer of unnecessary stress to somebody who's just trying to get out and about," Mosher said.

Mosher also worries the bill unfairly targets her students at St. Louis Community College-Florissant Valley. Many don't have a car and walk to class.

"They're focused on trying to get somewhere rather than, 'Oh, I have all the time in the world to think about this rule,'" Mosher said.

The pro-pedestrian group Safer Streets for Kirkwood and St. Louis County sent a letter to council members urging them to vote down the bill. And Trailnet, a St. Louis-based nonprofit that advocates for pedestrians and cyclist safety, also opposed the bill. The organization shared concerns in a letter to councilmembers.

"Mandating people walk on sidewalks that are either bad or nonexistent is not good public policy," the letter stated.

Until all sidewalks in St. Louis County become accessible to people with disabilities, Trakas' bill should not go into effect, said Wallen, who is blind.

"If you want to have something like this, fix that first," Wallen said.

Trakas said he plans to bring up [Bill 86](#) for final passage at [tonight's meeting](#), which starts at 6:30 p.m.

Trakas said he's unsure of how much support he has from his fellow councilmembers. He needs a majority of the seven-member council to favor the bill.

If it passes, it would go to County Executive Sam Page for his signature before becoming ordinance.



## LEGACY MOTOR CLUB Race Preview: World Wide Technology Raceway

May 31, 2023

### Race Information

- Round: NASCAR Cup Series Race No. 15 of 36
- Track Location: World Wide Technology Raceway, Madison, Illinois
- Race Name: Enjoy Illinois 300



- Broadcast: Sunday, June 4th at 3:30 PM ET live on FS1 (TV), MRN (Radio) Sirius XM NASCAR Ch. 90
- Team Entrants:

No. 42 | Noah Gragson & Luke Lambert – Sunseeker Resorts Chevrolet Camaro ZL1

No. 43 | Erik Jones & Dave Elenz – Bommarito Automotive Group Chevrolet Camaro ZL1

Noah Gragson, No. 42 Sunseeker Resorts Chevrolet Camaro ZL1

World Wide Technology Raceway Stats

Truck Series: Starts: 2; Best start: 3rd; Best finish: 9th; Top-10s: 2; Laps led: 63

#### 2023 NASCAR Cup Series Season Stats

Starts: 14, Best start: 10th; Best finish: 12th (Atlanta); Laps led: 2; Points position: 32nd

About Sunseeker Resorts: Opening in 2023, Florida's newest luxury resort located in

Charlotte Harbor is the first resort property of Sunseeker Resorts, a wholly owned subsidiary of Allegiant Travel Company. Sunseeker Resort Charlotte Harbor occupies

over 22 waterfront acres with 785 guest rooms, including 189 Signature Sunsuites™.

Set upon the Peace River and Florida Gulf Coast, this premier resort offers 20 original food and beverage concepts; including seven stand-alone restaurants, eleven bars and lounges, two poolside offerings and a 25,000-square-foot multi-dining experience.

Additional hotel amenities include a waterfront promenade, two unique rooftop and waterfront pool experiences, 60,000-square-feet of combined convention space, full-service spa and salon, a 7,100-square-foot state-of-the-art fitness center with four group exercise studios with specialty instructor lead classes, three retail and market shops, and an 18-hole championship level golf club exclusive to hotel guests only. The resort is conveniently located within a short drive of Punta Gorda, Fort Myers, Sarasota, St.

Petersburg-Clearwater, and Tampa airports. For more information, visit

[www.sunseekerresorts.com](http://www.sunseekerresorts.com). Follow on Instagram: @sunseekerresorts and like us on

Facebook: @sunseekerresorts.

Charlotte Recap: Noah Gragson suffered the same issue as teammate Erik Jones at Charlotte Motor Speedway last weekend. He moved through the field in the first stage and hit debris on track early in Stage 2. The debris tore a hole in the radiator and the team spent 50 plus laps in the garage fixing the car. Once he came back out, Gragson and teammate Jimmie Johnson were caught up in an accident and two laps later Gragson's machine had a mechanical failure forcing an early retirement.

Gateway in Trucks: Gragson has two starts at the 1.25-mile track in St. Louis. He has two top-10 finishes and has completed all 320 attempted laps around the circuit. This will be his first attempt at World Wide Technology Raceway in the NASCAR Cup Series and in any type of racing vehicle since 2018.

Local Spotter: Longtime spotter Earl Barban grew up in St. Louis and is a graduate of Jennings High School. In 1983, Barban enlisted in the United States Marine Corps Reserve, where he served as a truck driver until 1988 and received the Navy Achievement Medal. Barban attended Florissant Valley campus of St. Louis Community College and the University of Missouri at Columbia. He worked on a friends sprint car



team and did a driving stint at Pevely Speedway in St. Louis before going to work for Penske in NASCAR. Barban spotted for Jimmie Johnson in six of his seven championship seasons.

Quoting Noah Gragson: “I’m looking forward to St. Louis and hope we get to practice and qualify. The weather is really hurting us – when we don’t have a chance to make laps and have to start by the metric, we have to work hard to move forward and have been having some bad luck. I ran well in the trucks at this track so I am looking forward to getting some laps in the No. 43 Sunseeker Resorts Chevrolet.”

Erik Jones, No. 43 Bommarito Automotive Group Chevrolet Camaro ZL1

World Wide Technology Raceway Stats

Truck Series: Starts: 3; Best start: 1st; Best finish: 5th; Top-five: 1; Top-10s: 1; Laps Led: 88

Cup Series: Starts: 1; Best start: 21st; Best finish: 7th; Top-10s: 1; Laps Led: 4

2023 NASCAR Cup Series Season Stats

Starts: 14; Best start: 8th; Best finish: 6th (Talladega); Top-10s: 2; Laps led: 17; Points position: 27<sup>th</sup>

Charlotte in the Rear view: Practice, qualifying and the original running of the Coca-Cola 600 was postponed due to rain at Charlotte Motor Speedway. When the race started on Monday, Erik Jones would have to start from the 26th position. After the green flag dropped, Jones worked his way through the field and finished Stage 1 in the 11th position. Unfortunately, early in Stage 2 Jones hit a piece of debris, tearing a hole in the radiator, which forced the No. 43 team to the garage for repairs. When Jones returned to the track 59 laps later, the team used the track time to adjust on the No. 43 as Jones hung on for a 32nd place finish.

Trucking at St. Louis: Jones has three starts at World Wide Technology Raceway in the NASCAR Truck Series. He scored one top-five, led 88 laps and has two DNF’s in that series on the 1.25-mile oval.

Dynamic Duo: Jones and crew chief Dave Elenz had a successful first trip to World Wide Technology Raceway for its inaugural NASCAR Cup Series race in 2022, managing a seventh-place finish. Jones ran 194 out of the 240 laps inside the top-15 and held an average position of tenth throughout the race.

Meeting “That Jones Boy”: Fans will have the opportunity to meet the driver of the No. 43 Bommarito Automotive Group Chevrolet, as Jones will make an appearance on race day at the World Wide Technology Raceway. At 11:10 am (local time) Jones will sign autographs for approximately 100 fans at the United States Air Force activation in the fan midway.

Jones Partners with MIS: Byron, Michigan native Jones will return to his “home” track of Michigan International Speedway (MIS) in August. To honor the hometown hero, MIS will offer a special Erik Jones Fan Experience ticket package which will include a DJ,

games and a chance to meet Jones. The Erik Jones Fan Experience will be located in Lot 3 – click here for details.

Quoting Erik Jones: “St. Louis is a great track, since it was new last year on the Cup schedule, we haven’t had the opportunity to run there as much as the other tracks, but when we do have the opportunity to compete there we have run well. Last year we didn’t have a great start, but we worked our way up to a top-ten finish. With Bommarito back on the car this year I feel like we need to have that same goal in mind. It is going to be our first time back on the road in a while and transitioning from a 600-mile race in Charlotte to a 300-mile race changes your mindset a bit, but I am excited to get back out there and race for a win.”

#### ABOUT LEGACY MOTOR CLUB:

LEGACY MOTOR CLUB is a professional auto racing club owned by businessman and entrepreneur Maurice J. Gallagher and seven-time NASCAR Cup Series champion (NCS) Jimmie Johnson. The club competes full-time in the NCS fielding the Nos. 42 and 43 Chevrolet Camaro ZL1 for drivers Noah Gragson and Erik Jones, respectively, along with the No. 84 part-time entry for Johnson in 2023. Richard Petty “The King” serves as team ambassador.

In 2021, Gallagher acquired Richard Petty Motorsports and renamed the team to Petty GMS. With the addition of Johnson to the ownership structure in 2023, the organization rebranded to LEGACY MOTOR CLUB (LEGACY M.C.). With a unique title signifying a nod to car clubs of past eras, LEGACY M.C. is an inclusive club for all motorsport enthusiasts to celebrate the past and future legacies of its members, while competing for wins and championships at NASCAR’s elite level.

Based in Statesville, N.C., LEGACY M.C. operates alongside GMS Racing (GMS), which currently fields three full-time entries in the NASCAR Truck Series. Since the formation of GMS in 2012, Gallagher and Mike Beam, team president, have shared incredible success. GMS Racing captured the 2015 ARCA Racing Series championship, the 2016 and 2020 NASCAR Truck Series championships and the 2019 and 2020 ARCA East championships, accumulating over 65 wins across six national racing circuits.

To keep up-to-date with the latest news, information and exclusive content, follow [LEGACY MOTOR CLUB](#) on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram and at [www.LEGACYMOTORCLUB.com](http://www.LEGACYMOTORCLUB.com).

The logo for The Mount Airy News, featuring the text "The Mount Airy News" in a white, stylized, gothic-style font against a dark blue rectangular background.

#### **Surry’s Thao wins Lea Plarski Award**

June 22, 2023 Cory Smith

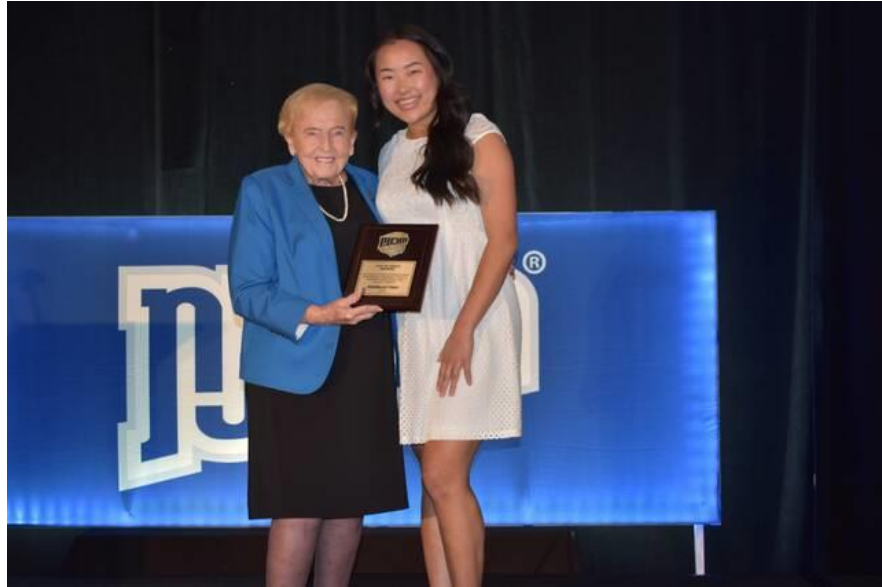
**By Cory Smith**

**csmith@mtairynews.com**

*Lea Plarski, left, introduces the 2023 Plarski Award winner: Michelle Thao of Surry Community College.*

CHARLOTTE — Michelle Thao put an exclamation mark on her accomplished volleyball career at Surry Community College by receiving the Lea Plarski Award.

Thao, a graduate of Fred T. Foard High School, was named the Plarski Award recipient at the 2023 National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) Foundation Awards.



Thao is the first Region 10 student-athlete to receive this national award. Region 10 is made up of junior colleges across North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and the southern part of West Virginia.

Created in 1995, the Plarski Award is handed out annually to honor the Plarski's numerous accomplishments and undeniable dedication to student-athletes. The award also recognizes Plarski's tremendous service to the NJCAA and two-year college athletics

Plarski, a former director of athletics at St. Louis Community College-Florissant Valley, helped to establish the Women's Division of the NJCAA in 1975. She served as Vice President of the NJCAA Women's Division from 1975-1990, then made history as the first female to be elected to the office of NJCAA President – a position she held from 1990-1996.

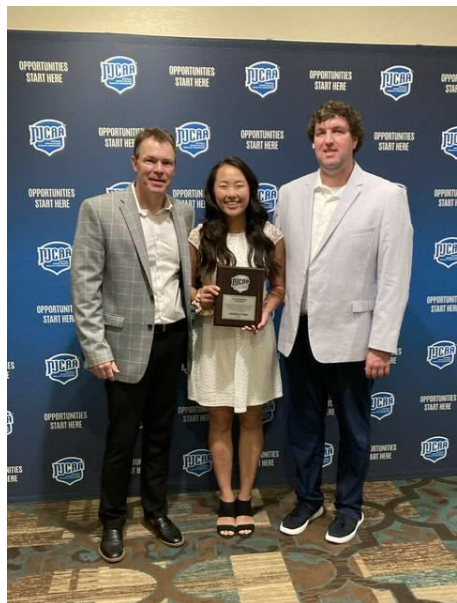
She is also the first female to receive the Edward S. Steitz Award from USA Basketball.

The Plarski award is presented to an NJCAA student-athlete who exemplifies sportsmanship, leadership, community service, academic excellence, athletic ability and achievements – qualities that were the cornerstones of Plarski herself. Thao checks all of these boxes.

Michelle is a two-time NJCAA All-American in volleyball, having been named Honorable Mention in 2021 and selected to the Second Team in 2022. Thao was named Region 10 Western Division Player of the Year in both 2021 and 2022 while being named Region 10 Player of the Year in 2021.

She was named to the Region 10 All-Tournament Team in both 2021 and 2022.

Prior to her time at Surry, Thao led Foard High School to back-to-back 2A State Championships in 2019 and 2020. She was named Most Valuable Player of both state championships, as well as N.C. 2A State Player of the Year as a senior.



In addition to her on-court accolades, Thao has volunteered with various organizations and events including the Surry health fairs, blood drives, volleyball camps and youth camps. Thao has also been a member of the Surry Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA).

*Michelle Thao, middle, is pictured at the 2023 NJCAA Foundation Awards with Surry Community College Athletic Director Mark Tucker, left, and former Surry volleyball coach Caleb Gilley.*

Thao has been recognized on both the President's List and Dean's List for her academic achievements while maintaining a 3.85 GPA. She has been recognized by the NJCAA for her academic excellence as an All-Academic Third Team member.

"Michelle Thao is a special young lady," said Surry Athletic Director Mark Tucker. "She is the epitome of a student-athlete, and is always humble with her success. In addition, Michelle is an outstanding leader on and off the court. This is the first time a student-athlete from our college and also Region 10 has received the prestigious Lea Plarski award from the NJCAA, and Michelle is extremely deserving of this honor.

"All of us at Surry are excited to see what the future holds for her."

Thao will continue her academic and athletic career at UNC-Asheville. She plans to study Business Management while pursuing a career in Human Resources Administration.



**To Facilitate the Collaboration of All the Stakeholders in the STL Region's Built Environment in Creating Inclusive, Robust Employment and Economic Growth. College Selects PARIC For \$44 Million Health Sciences Building**

## College Selects PARIC For \$44 Million Health Sciences Building

*Posted on 06/29/2023*



St. Louis Community College, through a competitive selection process, has chosen PARIC Corp. To construct a four-story, \$44 million health sciences building on the Florissant Valley campus.

Construction of the 100,000-square-foot facility is expected to begin this summer and be completed by December 2024.

The Community College is modernizing facilities and programming at Florissant Valley to meet today's job training and retraining demands. Replacing many of the school's current facilities which were built more than a half-century ago and cannot be updated to meet today's training and technological needs will lead to significant

continuing savings on utilities and maintenance while also supporting the school's plans to remain a leader among its peer learning institutions

Other firms on the Health Sciences Building team include KAI Architects and NAVIGATE Building Solutions.

**PARIC**, one of the largest privately held companies in the Midwest and recently named a "Top Workplace," is an innovative general contractor and design-build firm. The team focuses on building excellence while also building answers to the special challenges impacting their customers' operations.

With teams in St. Louis, Kansas City and throughout the Midwest, PARIC's projects range from colleges, universities and hospitals to industrial facilities, multi-family housing and the renovation of historic buildings.





## VII. Florissant Valley Awards



## **FLORISSANT VALLEY AWARDS**

### **RECOGNITION OF HONORS PROGRAM FACULTY**

Kimberly Barr, Joseph Bauer, Elva Beach, Dan Betzler, Allison Binns, Quinn Briceno, Amy Brown-Marshall, Marilyn Caldwell, Gerald Covell, Maria Darris, Eric Driskill, Ella Dueker, Katie Gordon, Tai Gruver, Theresa Karutz, Elida Kraja, Robert Langnas, Emily Lasek, Timothy Layton, Paula Linden, Ron Lizorty, Susan Lundry, Jennifer Medeiros, James Mense, Michael Metroulas, Anne Marie Mosher, Mary Beth Schwartz, Melissa Stephens, Russell Tallant, Rimiko Thomas, Annie Wagganer, and LaRhonda Wilson

### **PART-TIME CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR**

Sonja Preston

### **ADJUNCT FACULTY OF THE YEAR**

Donna Trone

### **FULL-TIME CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR**

Noelia Quiroz

### **PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR**

Seena Phillips

### **NEW FACULTY MEMBER OF THE YEAR**

Erin Mignin, Ph.D.

### **EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD**

Keri Janssen

### **EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE TO THE COLLEGE**

Ellen Wottrich

### **2023 DAVID L. UNDERWOOD MEMORIAL LECTURER**

Rokhaya “Daba” Niang Ndao



St. Louis Community College

St. Louis Community College at Florissant Valley

3400 Pershall Rd • St. Louis, MO 63135

314-513-4200 | [www.stlcc.edu](http://www.stlcc.edu)