

Southwestern Illinois Board of REALTORS recognizes two REALTORS® of the Year from Metro East

Kris Rosser Schmitt, KRS Realty, and Karen Sheesley, RE/MAX Preferred, were honored at the Celebration of SIBR held this spring at the Gateway Convention Center in Collinsville.

Following the successful merger between the Greater Gateway Association of REALTORS® and the REALTOR® Association of Southwestern Illinois, the two were nominated for the honor by their peers.

Both were recognized by Illinois REALTORS® on April 24, 2023, at the REALTOR® of the Year Banquet at the President Abraham Lincoln Doubletree Hotel in Springfield.

“These two individuals worked together and need to be recognized for their dedicated relentless amount of time, energy, and commitment to opening the merger discussions, leading the merger task force, and still being actively involved as we complete the merger and form our new culture,” noted Jean Lewis, president, and Sam Row, president-elect of the Southwestern Illinois Board of REALTORS® in an official statement.

“One of these women is no more or less deserving of this award than the other because they truly always worked together, side by side, for the betterment of our local Realtors, and we believe that without them, we would not be where we are today! Both have sacrificed their own businesses and have put in full-time hours since July in a selfless act of being dedicated to our Real Estate community,” they added.

Rosser Schmitt has been a REALTOR® since 2001. She currently serves on the SIBR Board of Directors, has served on the former GGAR Board of Directors, several state committees, and volunteers with many local community organizations. “Thank you to my colleagues that thought enough of me to nominate me for such a prestigious award. I could not have assisted our association without the help of so many of my peers. I’m grateful for the opportunity to serve,” she said about receiving this award.

Sheesley has been a REALTOR® since 2005. She is currently serving on the SIBR



Kris Rosser Schmitt



Karen Sheesley

Board of Directors and has served on the former RASI Board of Directors, several state committees, and local community organizations. “I am truly honored to have been chosen to receive the Realtor of the Year Award. It has been a long year of challenging work but extremely rewarding. I certainly could never have accomplished what I did without the help and support of my fellow board members. It was a great team effort, and I am grateful that I was chosen to help lead the team in the merger process. It is a great honor and one that I am truly thankful for,” Sheesley said about receiving this honor.

Erica Kirk, CEO of the Southwestern Illinois Board of REALTORS®, added, “These two individuals have put a lot of time and energy into building the new Southwestern Illinois Board of Realtors. I have enjoyed getting to know them both. Their passion for the industry inspires me to build our association.”

The REALTOR® of the Year award is presented annually to a member or members of the Association who best exemplifies the professional qualities of a REALTOR®. It is based on a person’s service and leadership in the community and civic affairs as well as activities within the Association.

The Southwestern Illinois Board of REALTORS® serves REALTORS® and affiliate business partners in the southwestern Illinois region, including the Counties of Madison, St. Clair, Monroe, Randolph, Jersey, Calhoun, Bond, the southern portion of Macoupin County south of Route 16, and all of Clinton County (except for the easternmost Townships of Irishtown, Carlyle, Clement, Lake, East Fork, Meridian, and Brookside).

Madison County approves 1,000-acre expansion of Riverbend Enterprise Zone

By MELISSA CROCKETT MESKE
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The Madison County Board recently approved an ordinance adding approximately 1,000 acres to the Riverbend Enterprise Zone. The expansion includes property to the east and south of the enterprise zone.

“The reason the change took place is that patterns in development are shifting within the enterprise zone,” Community Development Administrator Christopher Otto said. He pointed out that officials from Hartford, Roxana and Wood River had proposed the expansion request.

In addition to the county, all municipalities within the enterprise zone must approve the change along with the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. All the municipalities that voted for the expansion include Alton, Bethalto, East Alton, Hartford, Roxana, South Roxana and Wood River.

Hartford Mayor Bill Robertson said that the village’s request for expansion was due to anticipated expansion and growth within their portion of the zone’s footprint. “5 Diamond Campgrounds is wanting to expand, to essentially double its size, so this can help them out in doing so. We’re also in conversation with a company that is looking at locating in the New Poag Road area, and this could help make that happen.”

Wood River’s City Manager Steve Palen said that they have had numerous

inquiries from prospects looking at site locations throughout the city that would now be a part of this expanded Riverbend Enterprise Zone. “We are hoping that these additional incentives will help push some of them past the finish line.”

“Businesses located or expanding in an Illinois enterprise zone may be eligible for state and local incentives,” Otto explained. “These could include property tax abatement, sales tax exemptions, investment tax credit, utility tax exemptions and more.”

Otto said, since 2019, this marked the second expansion within the Riverbend Enterprise Zone. The first was approving the expansion of 160 acres along Illinois Route 111, including St. Louis Regional Airport.

The state designated the Riverbend Enterprise Zone as an Illinois Enterprise Zone on Jan. 1, 2016. The state’s Enterprise Zone Program is designed to stimulate economic growth and neighborhood revitalization in economically depressed areas of the state through state and local tax incentives, regulatory relief and improved governmental services.

Along with Riverbend, there are three other enterprise zones — Gateway, Southwestern and Discovery.

“The county has approved the expansion of each of the enterprise zones since their creation,” Otto said. “The intent of an enterprise zone is to attract businesses or provide incentives for them to stay or expand.”

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