

The Illinois Labor Market Review

Your Source For Illinois Labor Market Information

A man and a woman are shown in profile, looking down at a large set of blueprints spread out on a wooden table. The man, on the left, is wearing a white hard hat and a plaid shirt. The woman, on the right, is wearing a yellow hard hat and a blue polo shirt. She is holding a yellow pencil and pointing at a section of the blueprints. The background is a blurred construction site with wooden framing.

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A Closer Look at IDES: Self-Assessments Lead to Career Fulfillment

by Lola Lucas

Students wonder what to study to qualify for a good career instead of a dead-end job. Adults in transition may need to find a new line of work when their old jobs disappear. Just about everyone would really love to have a fairy godmother wave a magic wand to reveal the right career path leading to both fulfillment and a living wage.

The Career Information System (CIS), at www.ILWorkInfo.com/icrn, has a simple button marked “Report” that does the next best thing to a magic wand. It produces a list of occupations that are most likely to match your interests, skills, values and work preferences based on the career self-assessments that you take in CIS.

CIS, accessible at no charge to all Illinois residents, enables you to administer your own career assessments. You can take the instruments as often as you want, compare them to each other and store them in a personal electronic portfolio called “My CIS Portfolio.”

Here are the four career assessments available in CIS:

- **Interest Profiler (IP):** A 180-question inventory of your interests.
- **Values: Work Importance Locator (WIL):** Surveys your values in workplace settings.
- **SKILLS:** An inventory of your preferred skills or skills used in previous jobs.
- **IDEAS:** A 120-question inventory of your interests. (IDEAS is only available to those who have purchased a site lease.)

These assessments will connect your results to 530 occupations in CIS. In addition to the career self-assessments, CIS offers **Occupation Sort**. This tool matches your work-related preferences, such as wages, educational attainment and work environment to all the occupations in CIS. Using this tool in addition to the assessments will aid in selecting careers that reflect your personal goals.

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View our Labor Market
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Note: The information contained in this publication is subject to change without notice. For the latest information visit the IDES Web site at www.ides.state.il.us.

After completing the assessments and Occupation Sort, you can obtain a report that shows a variety of careers that might be a good fit for you. The table below shows an example of how a final report looks when a user has completed three career assessments and Occupation Sort.

Wherever an X appears on the table indicates that either a career assessment or Occupation Sort suggest that an occupation may be a fit for you. The more Xes, the better likelihood of a career match.

The results of the self-assessments and Occupational Sort below show a pattern of interests in several arts-related careers. You could decide, for example, to first explore the occupations recommended by at least two assessments and Occupation Sort. In the table below, actor, art director and producers and directors are the occupations that offer the best fit.

Although the occupation of actor was selected as a match in three assessments, it was excluded from the Occupation Sort list. One reason could be that the salary of an actor was less than the preferred salary level identified in Occupation Sort. If you reported in Occupation Sort that you wanted to earn \$5,000 a month, then any occupations that paid less would not appear on the Occupation Sort list, even if they appeared as matches in the other assessments. Likewise, occupations that fit your preferences in

Occupation Sort might not appear in the results list of the other assessments.

After narrowing down career options, you could research your top potential choices. CIS has lots of information about careers, including education requirements, annual and projected openings, salary levels and training information. Informational interviews are also productive ways to learn about careers. For those in need of more structured assistance, career and guidance counselors are valuable resources.

Although CIS only includes reputable and well-validated assessments from sources such as the federal O*NET Resource Center (see <http://www.onetcenter.org/tools.html>), no career assessment can claim to know the absolute best career choice for you. In fact, you should be wary of any that claim to do so. At best, assessments suggest directions to explore and often confirm what you already suspected. In some cases, seeing how interests, values and skills line up can help you avoid a bad career choice along with wasted time and tuition.

Making more informed career choices leads to an improved career fit, which can yield both passion and productivity. It's good to be working, but it's even better to have a job that engages heart, mind and hands. That's real magic.

Lola Lucas is an IDES Career Resource Specialist in Springfield, Ill.

Sample Report of Career Assessments

Occupations	Occ Sort	IP	WIL	SKILLS
Occupations on 3 lists				
Actors		X	X	X
Art Directors	X	X		X
Producers and Directors	X	X		X
Occupations on 2 lists				
Adult and Vocational Education Teachers	X	X		
Advertising Managers	X			X
Animators and Multi-media Artists		X	X	
Announcers		X	X	

Note: Above is a sample report from the Career Information System that shows the combined results of an Occupation Sort (Occ Sort) and three career assessments: Interest Profiler (IP) Values: Work Interest Locator (WIL) and SKILLS.

Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security, Career Information System

Conducting Career Assessments:

1) Log into the Career Information System (CIS).

Go to www.ILWorkinfo.com/icrn and select Career Information System. If outside of an IDES office, use Option #3, entering city, zip and area code to prove Illinois residency.

2) Create a "MY CIS Portfolio."

At the CIS home page, go to the upper right corner where it says "Create My CIS Portfolio" and follow set-up instructions. You can now use the username and password you entered for yourself in Option #2 for subsequent log-ins.

3) Choose the career assessments you will take.

Return to the CIS home page and look under "Assessments and Links" to choose one or more of the career assessments: Interest Profiler, Values: Work Importance Locator, SKILLS and IDEAS (if available at your site.)

4) Save your assessment results.

Click the yellow star to save the results as you complete each assessment (**Note:** *In order to save future assessments, you must first log into "My CIS Portfolio" on the CIS home page or have used your portfolio password to log into CIS.*)

5) Sort occupations by your work preferences.

Go to the CIS home page and click Occupation Sort under "Occupations and Employment." Select factors, then save the results.

6) View the results.

Go to "My CIS Portfolio," select My CIS Favorites," and click on the notepad symbol next to "Report." Choose the assessments you want to include in the summary report and click "View Report."

To order the IDEAS assessment for your site: Go to www.ILWorkinfo.com/PDF/CisPLUS.pdf.

Effingham-Coles Corridor Primed for Expansion

by Dennis Hoffman

Industrial diversity and an excellent location are major factors that will facilitate the economic expansion of the Effingham-Coles corridor.

This 30-mile stretch along Interstate 57, from Effingham to Mattoon and then east for five miles on four-lane Route 16 to Charleston, is a principal area for future expansion. Eastern Illinois University is located in Charleston while the industrial and commercial mixture provides strong employment opportunities in the towns of Mattoon and Effingham. The east-west Interstate 70 also crosses at Effingham. Cumberland County, which is sandwiched between Effingham and Coles counties, is economically tied to the area as both interstates pass through it.



Population expected to rise

Between 2000 and 2009, the total population for the three-county area of Effingham, Cumberland, and Coles counties is estimated to have slightly declined by 1.49 percent (see Table 1), according to the U.S. Census Bureau. The Census Bureau estimated a slight population increase in Effingham County of 0.47 percent within the nine-year period and a moderate decline in both Coles County (-2.13 percent) and Cumberland County (-4.77 percent). While this three-county region has experienced declining population trends similar to most rural central Illinois communities, the foundation for future expansions has been established, and the population is expected to increase.

Increase in number of firms

The Illinois Department of Employment Security's Quarterly Census of Employment and Wage Report showed that the number of private firms in the Effingham-Cumberland-Coles area increased by 3.86 percent from the first quarter of 2001 to the first quarter of 2009 (see Table 2). Effingham County

Table 1. Population in Effingham-Coles Corridor

County	Year 2000	Year 2004	Year 2009	2000-2009 Difference	2000-2009 % change
Effingham	34,264	34,520	34,424	160	0.47%
Cumberland	11,253	10,895	10,716	-537	-4.77%
Coles	53,196	52,381	52,065	-1,131	-2.13%
Total for corridor	100,713	99,800	99,214	-1,499	-1.49%

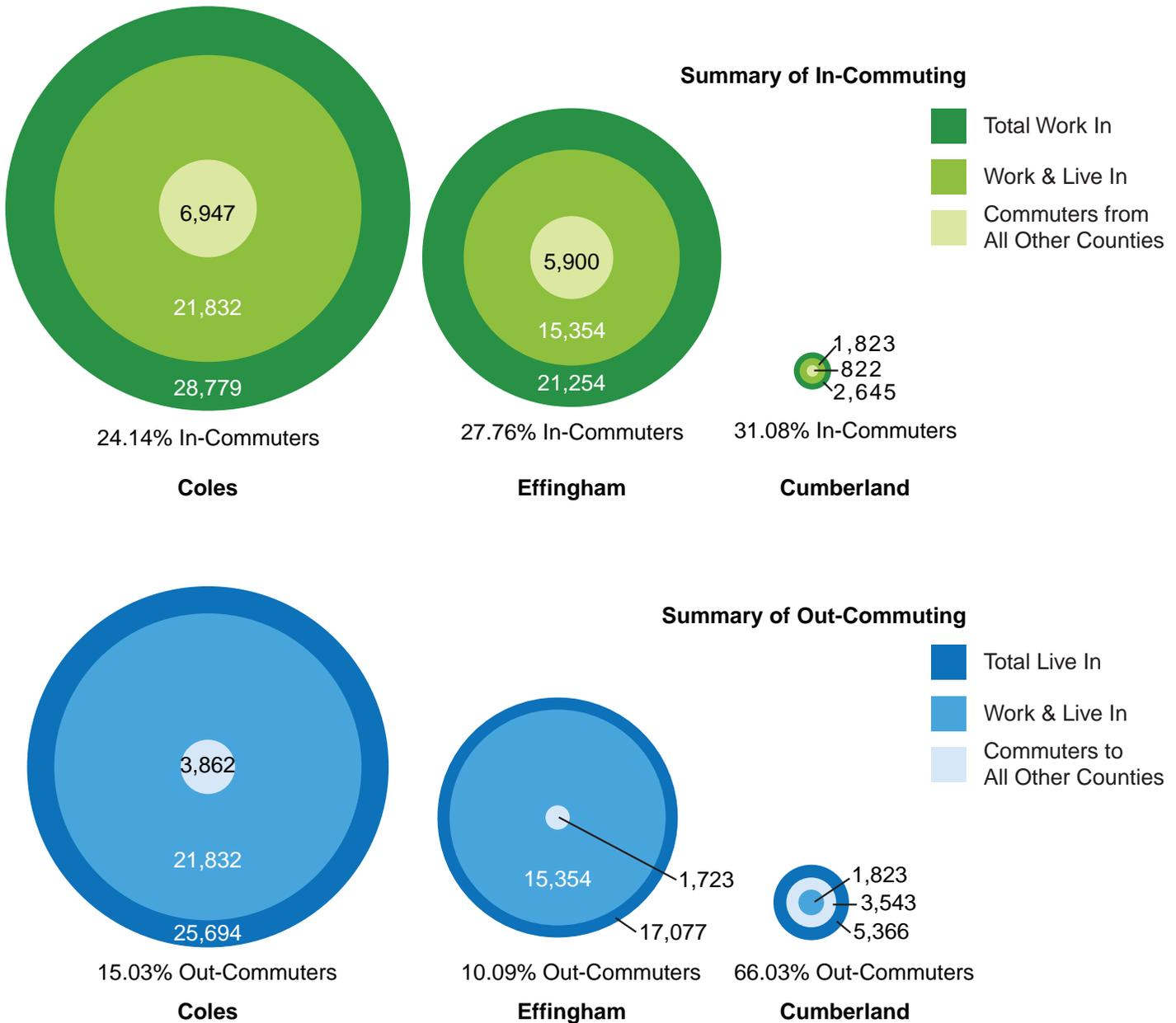
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 2. Number of Private Firms in Effingham-Coles Corridor

County	1st Qtr 2001	1st Qtr 2005	1st Qtr 2009	2001-2009 Difference	2001-2009 % Change
Effingham	1,044	1,038	1,114	70	6.70%
Cumberland	156	155	171	15	9.62%
Coles	1,182	1,167	1,189	7	0.59%
Totals	2,382	2,360	2,474	92	3.86%

Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security - Economic Information and Analysis Division

Chart 1. Commuting Patterns In and Out of Effingham-Coles Corridor



Source: U.S. Census Bureau--2000 Census

reported the largest gain with an increase of 70 private businesses (6.7 percent). Cumberland and Coles Counties experienced modest increases, with Cumberland gaining 15 firms and Coles adding seven. This gradual, yet steady, increase in the number of area establishments has been one of the positive trends for this region and indicates future business expansion for the area.

More in-commuting

Commuting patterns for work are generally excellent indicators of prospective future expansions. In-commuting areas such as Effingham and Coles counties greatly benefit from the increased commercial and

visitation activity from commuters. The ease of attracting workers from neighboring communities is also a positive tool for economic development. Heavy commuting levels to the business and commercial centers of Effingham, Mattoon and Charleston prevail along interstates 57 and 70 as well as routes 16 and 130. The 2000 Census Commuting

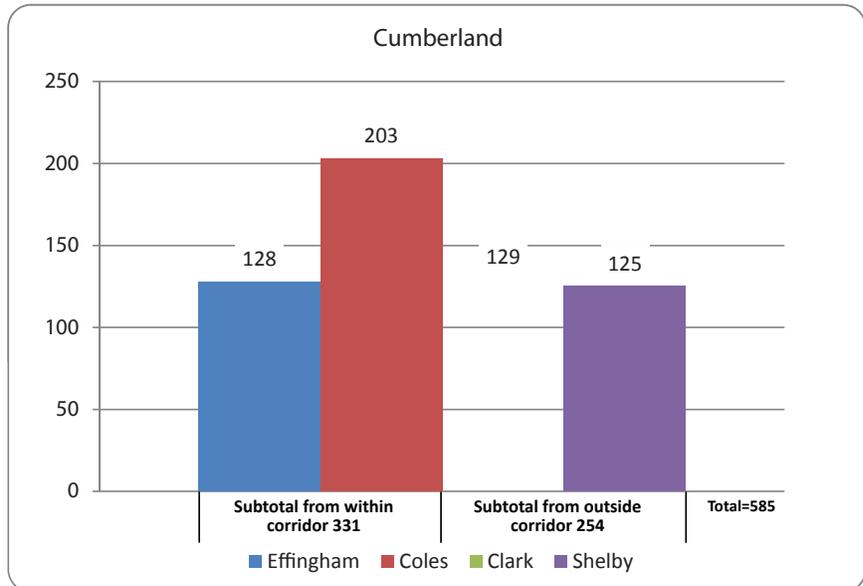
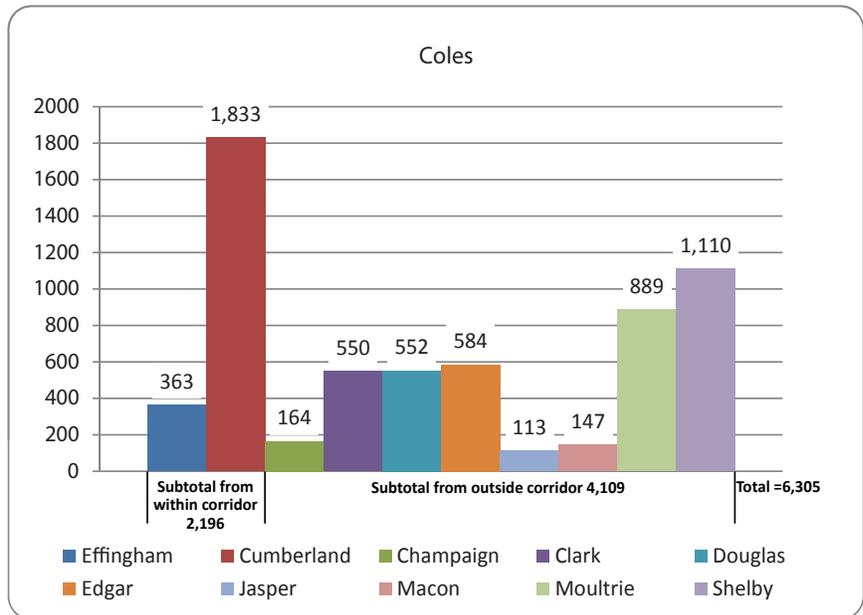
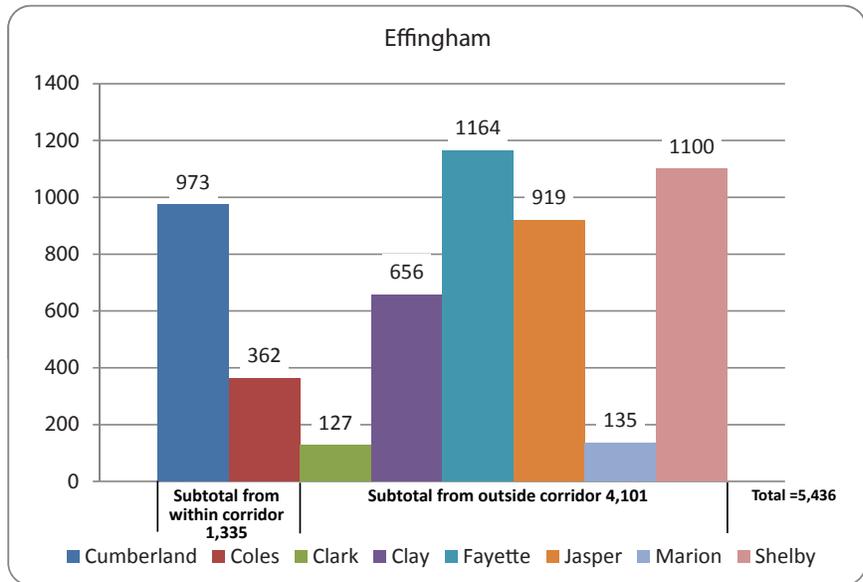
Commuting patterns for work are generally excellent indicators for prospective future expansions.

Pattern in Illinois report (the latest available data) provides a view of the tremendous distance that area residents commute for work. In addition, residents also commute to the primary centers for entertainment, recreation, education, and medical care. Since 2000, local officials have reported increased commuting as well as an increase in calls from commuters asking for increased highway construction improvements.

Coles and Effingham counties are large in-commuting areas, and there are more than 3,000 additional in-commuters than out-commuters in Coles County and at least 4,000 more in-commuters than out-commuters in Effingham County. Cumberland County, between Coles and Effingham Counties, is an out-commuting area (see Chart 1, on previous page). More than four times as many residents commute out of Cumberland County than travel to Cumberland County for work.

Overall, the Effingham-Coles area is a considerable in-commuting region as many more workers commute to this area than residents commute out for employment. Most of the commuters to these communities are residents of surrounding counties (see Chart 2). Six nearby counties outside of the Effingham-Coles corridor have more than 100 commuters to Effingham County with sizable numbers from several counties. For example, 1,164 commuters from Fayette County, 1,100 from Shelby County, 919 from Jasper County, and 656 from Clay County travel to Effingham County. More than 100 workers in eight counties outside of the Effingham-Coles corridor drive to Coles

Chart 2. In-commuting to Effingham-Coles Corridor by County



Source: U.S. Census Bureau-2000 Census

Note: The total # of in-commuters counted excludes counties with fewer than 100 commuters.



County for employment. The large numbers of commuters who drive to Coles County include 1,110 from Shelby County, 889 from Moultrie County and more than 500 commuters each from Clark, Douglas, and Edgar counties.

Energy resources boom

In nearby Taylorville, a Christian County community, a major clean coal project is proposed. The planned \$3.5 billion Tenaska power plant, known as the Taylorville Energy Center, is a coal gasification operation that will convert Illinois coal into substitute natural gas, burn the gas to produce electricity and sell emitted carbon dioxide for enhanced oil recovery. Omaha, Neb.-based Tenaska, which received a \$417 million investment tax credit from the U.S. Department of Energy and the U.S Treasury to develop the plant, estimated the plant will create 2,500 construction jobs and hundreds of permanent jobs, according to a July 27 online article in the St. Louis Business Journal. The development of this plant will enhance economic activity in this section of central Illinois.

Industry growth

Educational facilities are major employers in the region. Eastern Illinois University in Charleston is not only the largest employer,

but also has a significant influence with its many resources available to the community. Lakeland College in Mattoon, with facilities in Effingham, is also a substantial resource for the region. Both institutions generally have a number of building projects underway boosting the construction trades.

Reflecting the national trend, employment in health care services continues to expand. This steady growth has been a stabilizing factor, and employment projections indicate an increased demand for medical workers and support staff. In addition, numerous new medical facilities and centers either have opened or are slated to open. For example, the Lavender Ridge Living Center will open later this summer. The Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Center, Heritage Woods Assisted Living Center and Carle Foundation Physicians Services will open within the next one to two years. Thus, the construction industry has also benefited from the expansion and facility needs of the health care service industry.

The central location of Effingham-Coles Corridor and its excellent infrastructure have led to the expansion of the transportation industry. Interstates 57 and 70, crossing at Effingham, provide easy access to major highways in all directions and influence the steady growth of retail trade businesses, including truck stops,

restaurants, gasoline stations and shopping areas. The opening of the FedEx facility in Effingham in early 2009 is a prime example of the benefits of the transportation infrastructure. In addition, more motels and hotels have been built, and additional lodging facilities, such as Hilton Garden Inn and Holiday Inn & Suites, are in the planning stages.

The manufacturing industries have suffered through the most serious changes during the past two years. Numerous factories have endured both temporary and permanent layoffs plus workweek reductions. The diversity of the manufacturing base in this region has always been a major strength. As the national economic conditions rebound, the manufacturing plants in this region should begin to recover.

Agriculture traditionally has had a key impact on this area's economy. The solid farming tradition with its support system continues, but like most businesses, the industry has wrestled with the national problems of higher fuel prices and cost of operation. Corn, wheat, and soybeans are major crops grown in central Illinois. Agriculture will continue to be a significant industrial sector in this region.

In summary, the Effingham-Coles corridor is certainly primed for growth. The three-county area has seen an overall increase in business firms during the past several years. The interstate system binds together Effingham, Cumberland and Coles counties with a diverse industrial base to generate economic advances. More people are commuting into the area, resulting in increased commercial activity. The planned new Taylorville Energy Center will trigger robust job creation. The area will also experience expansion in the transportation-warehousing, retail trade, wholesale trade, leisure-hospitality, education, and health care services industries.

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