



News Release

For Immediate Release

Contact: Lisa Church
573-471-1818, lchurch@semofoodbank.org

SOUTHEAST MISSOURI FOOD BANK TO OPEN SATELLITE FACILITY TO SERVE NORTHERN COUNTIES

Sikeston, MO (Jan. 24, 2022) Southeast Missouri Food Bank has announced it will open a satellite facility in Jackson to better serve the northern part of its coverage area.

According to President and Chief Executive Officer Joey Keys, the food bank's board of directors and leaders had discussed the need for an additional facility for quite some time, but the COVID-19 pandemic and the sharp demand for food assistance services made the need more acute.

"The pandemic hit hard and fast in Spring 2020 and very quickly revealed some gaps in our infrastructure," Keys said. "The food bank had to respond quickly because people were displaced from their jobs in a matter of weeks. We had to provide much more food than what we had been doing previously. We moved 16 million pounds of food in 2020 – 3 million more pounds than the previous year -- and at times it was a struggle."

That's one of the reasons the food bank decided to acquire the former Sappington Outdoor location on east Jackson Boulevard in Jackson.

"The building met our must-haves," Keys said. "Sturdy construction, loading docks, warehouse space, easy highway access and a good value – all of those were important to us. The satellite location will give us better access to Cape Girardeau County as well as our partners in Bollinger, Perry, Ste. Genevieve and Madison counties."

The food bank, founded in 1985, acquires food in mass quantities and distributes it through food pantries, mobile food distributions and special programs for senior citizens, school children and veterans. Its network includes 143 pantries in 16 counties of southeast Missouri. The main distribution center located off Interstate 55 in Sikeston will remain the food bank's primary location.

“Our building in Sikeston has 72,000 square feet, and we have no plans to leave it for the foreseeable future,” Keys said. “It will remain our headquarters. We just needed additional space in a second location.”

The Jackson facility provides 18,500 square feet of warehouse and office space, which will allow for storage of additional food and water and serve as a second center for volunteer activities, such as packing food boxes. In 2021, the food bank distributed 15.08 million pounds of food, the equivalent of 12.5 million meals. This is up sharply from the 13 million pounds distributed in 2019.

Southeast Missouri Food Bank also is the designated resource for food and water should a disaster hit southeast Missouri.

“We recognize the importance of having a second location in case of disaster,” Keys said. “If anything, such as a tornado or earthquake, were to damage our Sikeston location, it could cripple our ability to respond. An additional location is needed so we have the food and water we would need to organize a distribution at a moment’s notice.”

Work will begin soon on some needed repairs and retrofitting, including limited roof repair, HVAC, electrical and plumbing upgrades, wall repairs and painting, new flooring and signage. The food bank is expected to occupy the building in late summer.

Southeast Missouri Food Bank By The Numbers

- 16 counties served
- 143 pantries in its network
- One in six families and one in five children in southeast Missouri don’t have access to enough food.
- 70,000 average number of people served each month
- 21% of children in the area are in homes considered food insecure
- 15.08 million pounds distributed in 2020 (12.5 million meals)
- 5,350 food boxes distributed to seniors each month
- 1,200 weekend backpacks of food distributed to students in 31 school districts
- 96% of donations go back into programs

About Southeast Missouri Food Bank

The mission of Southeast Missouri Food Bank is to end hunger and leverage the power of food to build a healthy community. The food bank provides food to 143 food pantries, soup kitchens, and shelters in 16 southeast Missouri counties, including Bollinger, Butler, Cape Girardeau, Carter, Dunklin, Madison, Mississippi, New Madrid, Pemiscot, Perry, Reynolds, Ripley, Scott, Ste. Genevieve, Stoddard, and Wayne counties. Southeast Missouri Food Bank also provides mobile food distributions, monthly boxes of food to eligible seniors and weekend backpacks of food to about 1,200 students in 30 school districts. The Food Bank is affiliated with Feeding America, the nation's largest food bank network, and has received the highest possible rating from Charity Navigator, attesting to its adherence to best practices. Those interested in helping can do so by making a tax-deductible contribution, donating food, or volunteering. Visit SemoFoodBank.org for more information.