

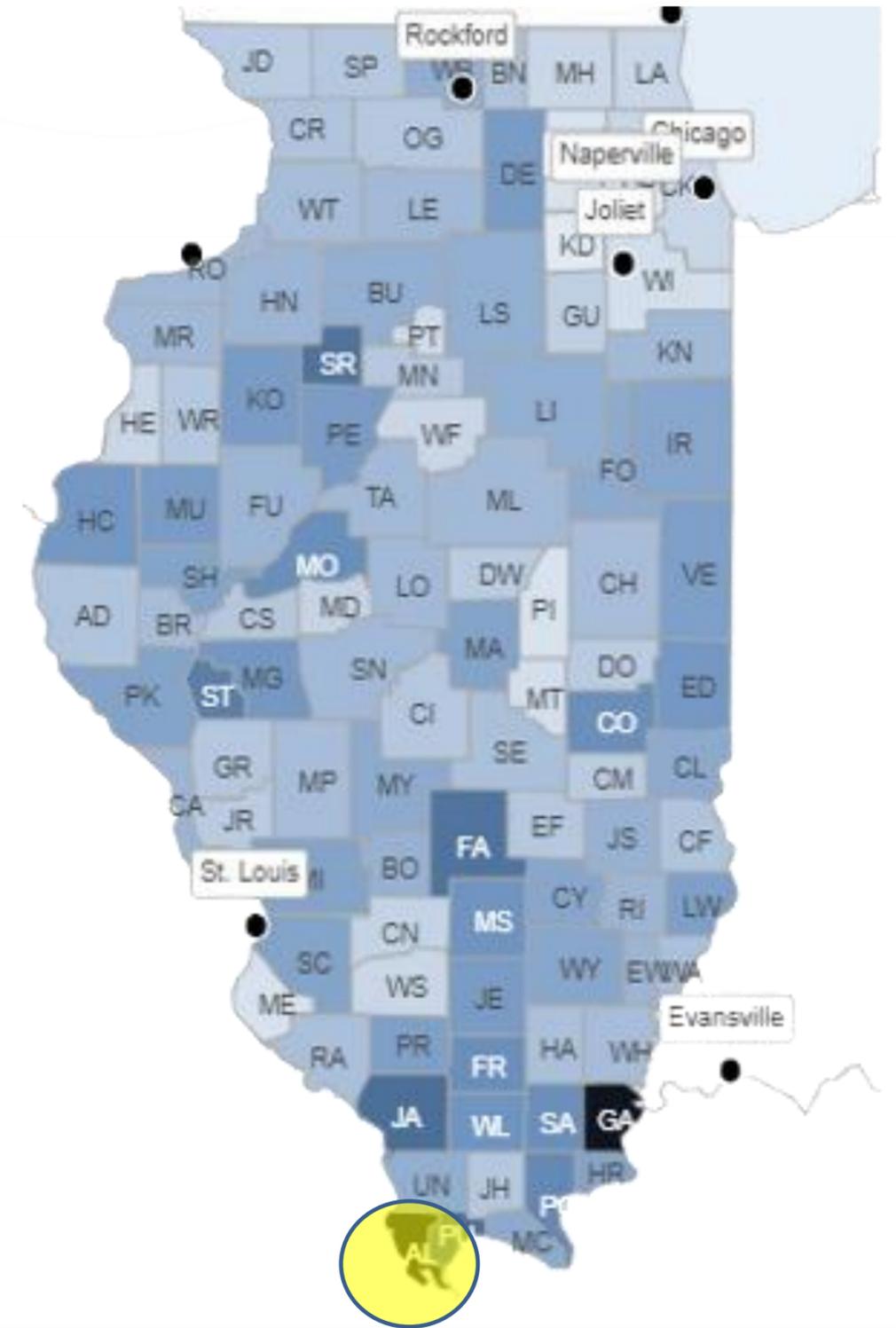


Rise
Community
Market[®]

Difficulties and successes in creating a community-owned grocery store in a rural food desert.

Target Areas

- Target area was both “low income” and “low food access” area on the USDA Food Access Atlas
- According to Feeding America:
 - Alexander County - 1,020 food insecure residents (16.3% of pop.). 70% of the residents live under the SNAP threshold of 165% poverty.
- County Health Rankings placed Alexander County as “Worst” for Food Environment Index (FEI).



ST MARYS PARK

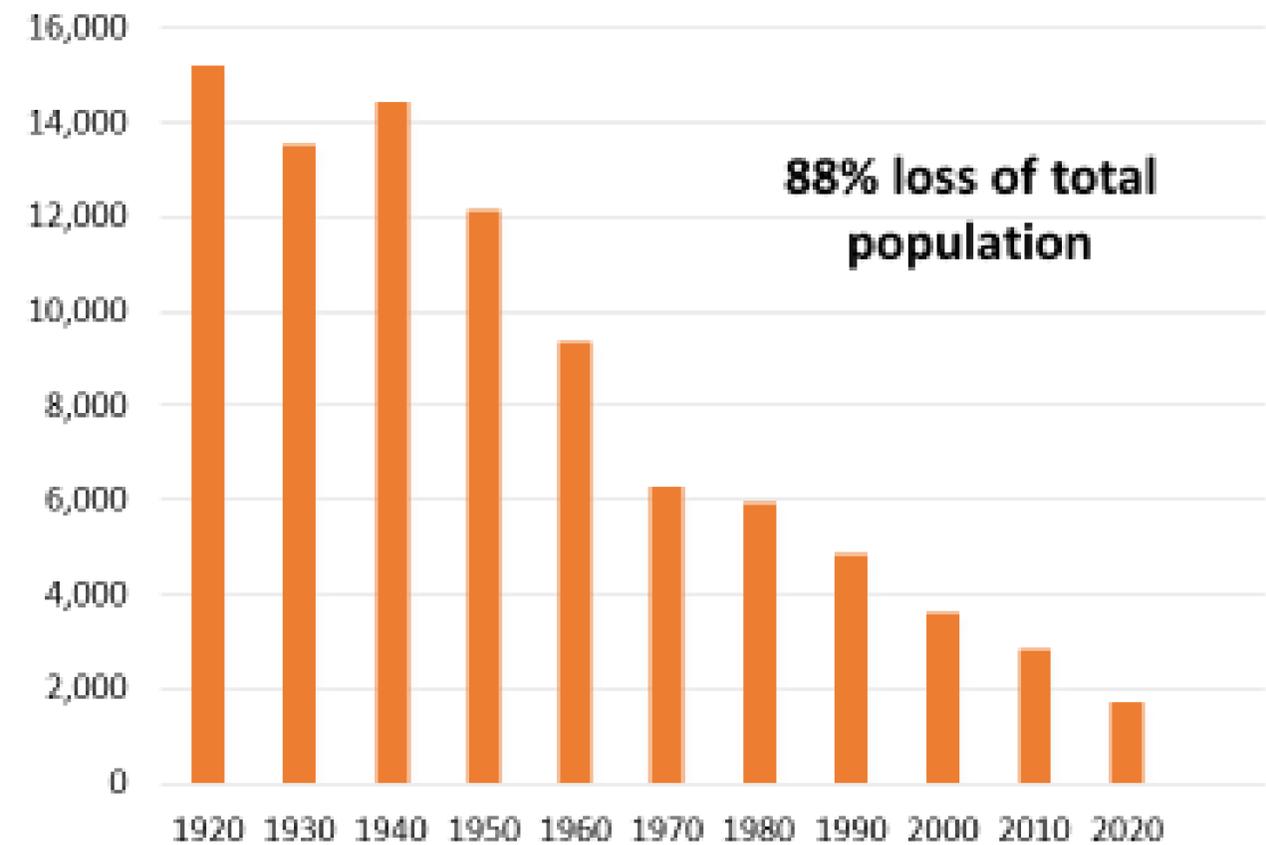
Cairo's peak population was 15,200 in 1920.

Cairo lost over half of population from 1940-1970.

The community continues to lose between 10% and 20% of population each census since 1980.

Currently home to a little more than 1,650 residents.

POPULATION OF CAIRO, IL



88% loss of total population

Last grocery store closed in 2015

Cairo, IL

- Located at convergence of Ohio and Mississippi rivers
- 7 sq. mile peninsula at southernmost tip of Illinois.
- Population: 1,659 (estimated)
- 72% African American/Black, 25.3% White, 1.07% Hispanic, 1% Other
- 8.3% Unemployment
- No grocery store, no gas station, 1 full-time restaurant, 1 hotel



- **19 item “Grocery Access” Survey to residents of Cairo.**
 - **177 were collected from the Cairo area.**
 - **31 surveys were from areas surrounding communities in or adjacent to this food desert.**

COMMUNITY GROCERY SURVEY

The local University of Illinois Extension office is working with partners in your community to learn more about community food resources to improve access to healthy foods. This survey is part of the Health Equity Achieved Together (HEAT) project. Please complete the survey to the best of your ability. Anonymous responses may be included in reports and presentations shared with the Southern Illinois Food Access Regional Advisory Board, staff at area service agencies and organizations, and local grocery/retail owners and managers. We greatly appreciate your time, your input is greatly valued.

1. Check all the places where you can get groceries within a 15-minute travel time (one way) of where you live;
 - I cannot buy groceries within a 15-minute travel distance of my home.
 - At a regular chain grocery store with fresh and packaged food items (Kroger, Schnucks, Aldi, Save-A-Lot).
 - At a large retail store like Walmart or Target.
 - At a small local grocer, deli, or meat shop (Stop and Shop, Big Johns, McClains, Foodtown)
 - At a convenience store, gas station, or pharmacy with fresh food (fruits, vegetables, meats, dairy, eggs)
 - At a convenience store, gas station, or pharmacy with ONLY packaged items (no fresh food)
 - At a Dollar Store (Dollar General, Family Dollar)
 - At a farmer's market or farm/produce stand.
 - At a food pantry
2. If you buy groceries outside of a 15-minute traveling distance from the place where you live, how long are you traveling (one way)?
 - 16 – 30 minutes
 - 31 – 60 minutes
 - Over an hour
 - I don't buy groceries outside of a 15-minute traveling distance
3. Please check all programs you and your family participate in (check all that apply):
 - Free or reduced-price school lunch or breakfast
 - SNAP-Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (LINK)
 - WIC
 - CSFP (Senior Food Box)
 - Senior meal site
 - Weekend food backpack program
 - None of these
4. How often do you buy groceries outside of Illinois?
 - Never
 - About once a week
 - About once a month
 - A few times a month

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**CAIRO RESIDENTS:
WE NEED YOUR HELP**



go.illinois.edu/HEATGrocerySurvey

Please scan the QR code above to complete the Community Grocery Survey.

University of Illinois Extension is working with partners in your community to learn more about community food resources to improve access to healthy foods. This survey is part of the Health Equity Achieved Together project.

**EAT.
MOVE.
SAVE.**



Survey Results



COMMUNITY GROCERY ACCESS SURVEY REPORT

Cairo and Gallatin County Illinois
March, 2022

Southern Illinois Food Access Initiative
Health Equity Achieved Together (HEAT) Project



Illinois Extension

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**EAT.
MOVE.
SAVE.**

This institution is an equal opportunity provider. This material is funded by the USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – SNAP. College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Services. University of Illinois | USDA | Local Extension Councils Cooperating.

CAIRO

96.5% buy groceries outside of Illinois "at least once a month"

64.7% drive between 31 minutes to an hour to buy groceries.

68.4% said that healthy foods: were not available in their community.

67% said they obtain their groceries from a Dollar Store

Solutions for Cairo? Co-op Grocery Store

- **Collaboration began December 2021 between Illinois Extension's HEAT Project and Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs at Western Illinois University.**
- **Sean Park, Program Manager for IIRA and John Shadowens, Extension Community and Economic Development Educator teamed up to help Cairo solve its food insecurity issue**



**Western Illinois
University**



Illinois Extension
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**Illinois Institute
for Rural Affairs**



Technical Assistance Provided

- Steering Committee Formation
- Meeting Facilitation
- Co-op Training
- By-laws, EIN, Articles of Inc.
- Partnership Development (SIDEZ, HCCTP, Kroger)
- Marketing
- Wholesaler Selection
- Grant Writing (\$713,000)
- Advocacy
- Board Election
- Business Pro Forma
- Store Design and Layout
- Equipment Specs
- Store Manager Search and Training

Organizing and Info Sharing

- The idea of a co-op was new to the people of Cairo.
- Public information sessions starting in May 2022.
- Recruited 18 volunteers to form Steering Committee
- Steering Committee meets weekly for 8 months at Hannibal Black's Sports Bar and Grill.
- Meetings facilitated by John and Sean.



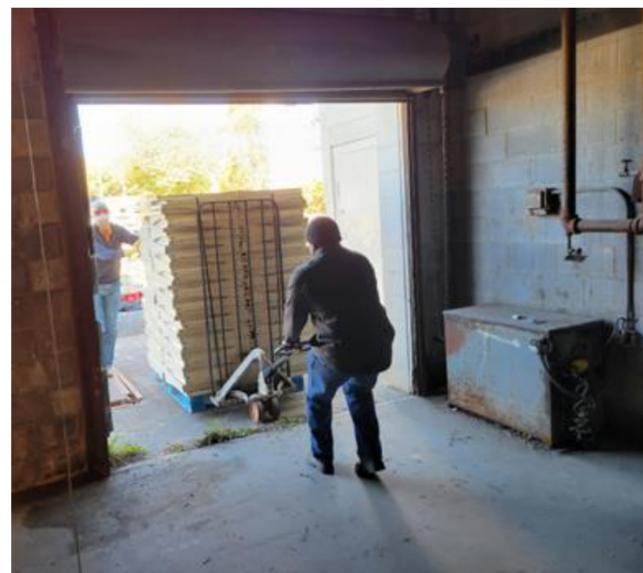
Fast Progress

June, 2022 – ICIJIA grant from ICJIA to support creation of store.

July, 2022 – Logo design contest won by Asher Roper. Rise Community Market now has a brand! By-laws and Articles of Incorporation finished.

August, 2022 – Bank account opened, EIN number, insurance carrier selected

September, 2022 – Donations of shelves and equipment from Kroger. Lease developed. Co-op begins selling memberships



Rise
Community
Market®

Fast Progress

October, 2022 – Store space leased, sub-lease with HCCTP, Began selling shares of preferred stock.

November, 2022 – HCCTP begins renovations. University of Illinois Foundation awards a \$100,000 gift. Nominations were sought for the first Board election

December, 2022 – Board election and steering committee dissolves. Over 115 members and 10 shares of stock sold. Major equipment starts arriving.



Special Recognition

Rise Steering Committee, HEAT Team and IIRA were recognized during the Alexander/Pulaski Co. NAACP Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Breakfast on January 16th, 2023.

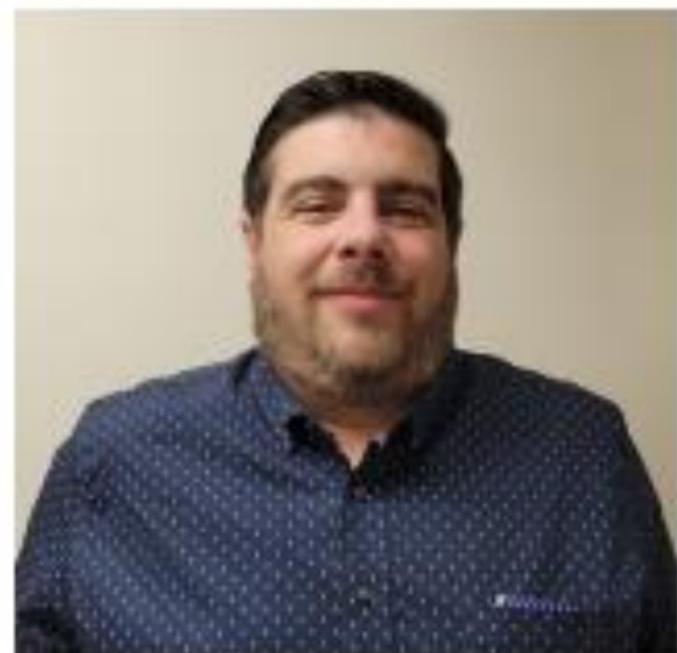
Lt. Governor Julianna Stratton's second visit to Cairo to celebrate the store's progress.



More Progress...



December, 2022 – Board election, steering committee dissolves. 115 members and 10 shares of stock sold. Major equipment starts arriving.



January 30, 2023 – Robert Edwards starts work as store's General Manager.

February – May, 2023 – Volunteers work on HVAC, painting, installing shelves.

May, 2023 – First order of inventory arrives!



Grand Opening

6/16/2023

Celebration attended by over 250 people.

Emceed by John Shadowens, Extension

Remarks from Lt. Governor Julianna Stratton,

Special recognition and plaques for Dale "Jake" Woodson, Steven Tarver, Asher Roper, and Carol Childress.

News coverage is extensive.



SNAP Education @ Rise

EAT.MOVE.SAVE.



SNAP Education @ Rise

EAT.MOVE.SAVE.



"While attracting new co-op members is undoubtedly important, I believe it's equally crucial to emphasize the significance of healthy eating and how our co-op can support parents in sustaining a healthier family."





Cairo Illinois
No Longer a Food Desert!

**SIDEZ-
Southernmost
Illinois Delta
Empowerment
Zone**



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W
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University**



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AMERICA**



**Illinois Institute
for Rural Affairs**

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BUILDERS INITIATIVE



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 **HCCTP**
Highway Construction Careers Training Program

Kroger