



Dear friends, neighbors and community members,

This month we are officially moving into winter having recently seen our first bit of snowfall. December also brings winter graduation, and we are very excited for the upcoming commencement ceremonies to be held on Saturday, December 14! (Be prepared for a little more traffic around campus that day.) There is much cause for celebration as we come to the end of another year.

I am thrilled to share a transformative milestone in the history of the University of Missouri–St. Louis. As we continue addressing the critical demand for trained engineers across the St. Louis region and the state of Missouri, we are proud to announce an \$8 million gift from the James S. McDonnell Foundation. This extraordinary investment represents one of the largest one-time philanthropic gifts in UMSL's history and provides significant support for the launch of our UMSL School of Engineering.

Each year, December provides a wonderful time to look back and reflect, and we can celebrate 2024 as a year of progress and transformation. Our [Transform UMSL](#) initiative is moving along, and we continue to work with partners to be responsive to the evolving needs of the community. At the same time, we look forward to the promise of a new year filled with continued growth and opportunity.

Happy Holidays!

Kristin Sobolik
Chancellor
University of Missouri–St.
Louis



UMSL Community Connection newsletter

Received this as a forward?
[Click here](#) to subscribe.

UMSL Community Card

[Register](#) for a community card to receive benefits and discounts at UMSL events and facilities.

UMSL Careers

[Click here](#) to learn about job opportunities at UMSL. Check back regularly for new listings.

UMSL Contracts

Interested in bidding on projects at UMSL?
[Procurement Bids](#)
[Construction Bids](#)

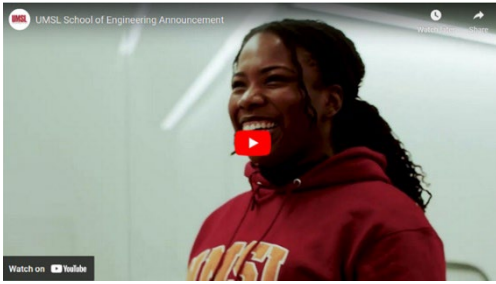
Community Connect

[Click here](#) to learn about UMSL resources, services and programs available to the community.

STL Community LAB

[Click here](#) to learn about community development trainings and programs.

Events & Resources



McDonnell Foundation awards UMSL \$8 million to help grow new School of Engineering

The University of Missouri–St. Louis is building a [new School of Engineering](#) as it continues to address the high demand for trained engineers across the St. Louis region and the state of Missouri. Those efforts have received a significant boost with an \$8 million grant from the [James S. McDonnell Foundation](#), one of the largest one-time philanthropic gifts in the history of the university.

As UMSL welcomes its first cohort of engineering students next fall, this funding will provide crucial financial support for new high-caliber faculty to teach and to engage with St. Louis industry, in addition to support staff and student success resources. This gift will ensure that curriculum and learning opportunities align with industry needs so students gain the tools necessary for professional success. The grant funds immediate and endowed scholarships that will support students over the school’s first five years and for decades into the future, training students for in-demand careers with high earning potential. [UMSL’s pre-collegiate Bridge Program](#) will receive a \$1 million endowment to support STEM college readiness programs to prepare students for engineering degrees.

“We are so grateful for the generous support of the James S. McDonnell Foundation as we work together to strengthen the future of St. Louis,” Chancellor Kristin Sobolik said. “This is truly a historic moment. UMSL shares the foundation’s vision for a thriving region where inclusive growth helps lead to shared prosperity and enhances the quality of life for all of its citizens. We believe ensuring our workforce has the skilled engineering talent it needs is critical to its long-term success and vitality.” [Read more](#) and check out this [video announcement](#).

Ferguson Farmers Winter Market

Third Saturdays,
Now through April
9:00 AM - Noon
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
33 N. Clay Ave., Ferguson

Find a variety of vendors including the EarthDance farm "Pay what you can" for produce booth.



Beneficial Ownership Information Report (BOIR) 2024 Workshop

Wednesday, Dec. 18, 2024
6:00 PM
North County Inc. @ UMSL
8225 Florissant Rd.
Saint Louis, MO 63121

Calling all Business Owners & Entrepreneurs! Most small businesses are required to report information to FinCEN (an arm of the Federal Government under the Treasury Department) about the individuals who ultimately own or control them. This Beneficial Ownership Information Report (BOIR) is due for most businesses Jan. 1, 2025. Join this FREE workshop to learn more. For



UMSL to honor more than 900 graduates during fall commencement ceremonies

The University of Missouri–St. Louis will confer nearly 900 degrees as it celebrates summer and fall graduates during three commencement ceremonies on Saturday, Dec. 14 at the Mark Twain Athletic Center.

9:00 AM – College of Business Administration and College of Nursing

Address by Rebecca Boyer, the chief financial officer for ACME Group Holding Company

1:30 PM – College of Arts and Sciences

Address by Retired Vice Admiral Robert Sharp, the former director of the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency and now a research fellow with the UMSL Geospatial Collaborative

6:00 PM – College of Education, UMSL/Washington University Joint Undergraduate Engineering Program and School of Social Work

Address by Eric'el Johnson, an F/A-18 mission systems manager at Boeing

[Read more](#) about the commencement speakers and honorees.



Bringing more banking to north St. Louis County is more than opening a new branch

Eric Schmid, St. Louis Public Radio, Nov. 13, 2024

On a sunny September morning last year, hundreds of people gathered in the parking lot of a strip mall that sat vacant for years. The crowd was eager for the official opening of the R&R Marketplace, which finally filled the space with a host of services designed to boost economic access in and around the small north St. Louis County municipality. One of those was a new branch from Midwest BankCentre. At the time, bank Chairman and CEO Orvin Kimbrough noted the financial landscape his organization had chosen to move into. There were dozens of payday loan establishments within five miles, he said. “There’s one right there within eyesight of me,” Kimbrough said, gesturing from the podium he was speaking from. “One of our objectives of opening up this facility ... we want to put them out of business.”

Cheers erupted from the crowd at that declaration. But more than a year later, Kimbrough admits those payday lending facilities haven’t been easy to disrupt because, while predatory, they do serve a specific need within a market. “You can’t talk about displacing those facilities without replacing [them] with something that would meet that particular need,” he said. “It’s

additional information, contact (314) 244-3558 or njordan@northcountyinc.com.



Gene Horiuchi's "The Nutcracker"

Dec. 19 - 23, 2024

at various performance times
UMSL Touhill Performing Arts Center

The Saint Louis Ballet's presentation of The Nutcracker includes amazing costumes, special effects, and glorious dancing. This holiday tradition is not to be missed. Tickets range from \$45.00 to \$99.00. [Click here](#) for tickets or call (314) 516-4949.



Holiday Chill at the SLCL Natural Bridge Library

Thursday, Dec. 19, 2024

6:00 PM

SLCL Natural Bridge Branch
7606 Natural Bridge Rd.

Unwind with holiday-themed stress relief activities and festive refreshments to help you relax and prepare for the season. Part of the BJC Community Wellness Hub series. For all ages. [Click here](#) for more information and registration.

very difficult for traditional financial institutions, like banks, to compete in that space and be profitable.” ...The new Midwest BankCentre branch in Dellwood, which Kimbrough said is the bank’s “innovation center,” is a prime location for experimentation to determine how to forge stronger ties with communities in St. Louis or elsewhere that haven’t always had strong relationships with banks. In addition to Midwest BankCentre’s branch in Dellwood, the Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis announced this summer it will include a bank in a new \$10 million business plaza that broke ground on West Florissant Avenue in August. [Read more.](#)



Screening of The Muppet Christmas Carol (rated G)
 Friday, Dec. 20, 2024
 4:00 - 6:00 PM
 Ferguson Public Library
 35 N Florissant Rd.

All ages are welcome to attend the FREE screening of The Muppet Christmas Carol (rated G) and to enjoy some wintry treats and crafts! [Click here](#) to see the full list of events.



Representation Matters! UMSL forum for community dialogue focuses on representation in government

Early in December, about two dozen community members and UMSL faculty, staff and students came together to discuss people’s thoughts on how they are represented in government institutions. UMSL Political Science professors Dr. [Anita Manion](#) and Dr. [David Kimball](#) set the context for the conversation with findings from their Boards and Commissions research at this event titled, “Representation Matters: Of the People, For the People.” Attendees had an opportunity to ask questions about the research followed by small group discussion. “I found it gave me much food for thought” and “I wanted to continue the discussion,” stated one of the attendees. Another noted that “We must provide equitable opportunities and access for all to serve” as a key takeaway from the event.

This was the third in a series of community dialogues at UMSL providing participants an opportunity to make new connections and build their civic muscle through interaction and conversation on political or controversial topics through a deliberative dialogue approach. UMSL faculty member Lara Zwarun shared, “I was very pleased to see a forum in action—what a great idea to bring active, informed community members to UMSL to share and learn and compare notes with each other and with faculty and staff. For those unsure what to expect, it was a nice balance of presentation and active participation, prompted/structured facilitation and 'open mic.' I thought it was very powerful!”



Ferguson's Winter Wonderland
 Friday, Dec. 20, 2024
 5:00 - 8:00 PM
 1050 Smith Ave.
 Ferguson, MO 63135

This FREE holiday celebration features photos with Santa, The Grinch Vendor Village, Carolers, Hot Chocolate, Balloon Twister & Lots of Lights! [Click here](#) for more information.



Transform UMSL goes beyond bricks and mortar

This fall, we have seen the tangible impact of our mission to transform lives—whether through our academic programs, the vibrant energy of our students, or the physical transformation of our campus. Projects like our recently upgraded Children’s Advocacy Center, the deconstruction of the Social Sciences and Business Building Tower to make way for its modernized replacement to become home for the College of Education and Honors College, and the ongoing construction of the Richter Family Welcome and Alumni Center exemplify our commitment to creating spaces that inspire learning, collaboration and community. These transformations go beyond bricks and mortar; they reflect our dedication to empowering our students to succeed and ensuring UMSL remains a vital force in St. Louis. Together, we are not just reshaping our campus—we are creating pathways for opportunity, innovation and shared prosperity for our region. Learn more about the advancements of our Transform UMSL initiative in this [video](#).

The community can follow progress and timelines by downloading the monthly [Transform UMSL Project Report](#). Questions are welcome during this exciting time of transformation at the University of Missouri–St. Louis.

Share with Us

We’d love to hear your questions and comments about UMSL and stories about great things happening in our communities. Your thoughts will help shape content covered in future newsletters to be pertinent to you and your neighbors. Leave any suggestions, questions, or stories [here](#). Thank you!

Toys For Tots Toy Giveaway and Christmas Charity Event

Sunday, Dec. 22, 2024
10:00 AM - 2:00 PM
New Awakening Church
8000 Natural Bridge Rd,

As a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization serving the 24-1 community, Inspired Lives Foundation is delighted to present this special holiday event that not only spreads joy to children but also provides critical support to families in need during this season of giving. [Click here](#) to register or email info@inspiredlivesfoundation.org for more information.



MLK Day Observance

Monday, Jan. 20, 2025
11:00 AM
UMSL Touhill Performing Arts Center

This year’s theme is the “Beloved Community: a community where everyone can thrive.” Keynote from Fredicka Newton, President and co-founder of the Dr. Huey P. Newton Foundation, a former Black Panther Party member, and widow of Huey P. Newton. Performances by the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, the Sheldon Arts Foundation choir, and the UMSL Voices of Jubilee choir.
