

Spotlight on Southwestern Illinois Commercial Real Estate

Joe Hardin, Broker Associate, BARBERMurphy Group Inc.

By **KERRY L. SMITH**

Joe Hardin, broker associate at the BARBERMurphy Group in Shiloh,



Hardin

transitioned into the real estate business in 2000 after a 26-year career with Southwestern Bell. Bringing his business expertise as a SW Bell area manager along with

him, Hardin - who has been with BARBERMurphy since mid-2006 - specializes in land and commercial properties in St. Clair and Monroe counties.

A long-time resident of Columbia, Ill., Hardin knows Monroe County well. He also understands what many of his fellow commercial real estate colleagues do - deals are taking longer than ever to see to completion in today's economy.

Case in point: the Columbia Lakes development, a \$30 million deal that has been in the works for about a year and a half. The upscale, all-brick, multi-family community to be built on the north end

of Columbia by an out-of-area developer who has roots in the St. Louis market, has required hours of meetings and governmental reviews. Although the deal has not yet closed, Hardin says the city and the developer have been making a lot of progress and are in final negotiations. The project will include a lake and other amenities to take advantage of the natural topography on the 30-acre site.

One of his most important responsibilities, says Hardin, is to help clients understand all of the issues involved in a deal, whether it be purchasing a site for a building project, the sale or purchase of a building or the

details in a lease. Hardin's specialties also include investment properties and office warehouse space.

Hardin has just been named chairman of the Monroe County Economic Development Council for the coming year and is ending his one-year term as the immediate past-president of the Realtor Association of Southwestern Illinois. He is an active member of the Columbia, Ill. Chamber of Commerce. Hardin also serves as chairman of the Illinois Association of Realtors' Economic Development Committee; which he says frequently lobbies for property owner rights.