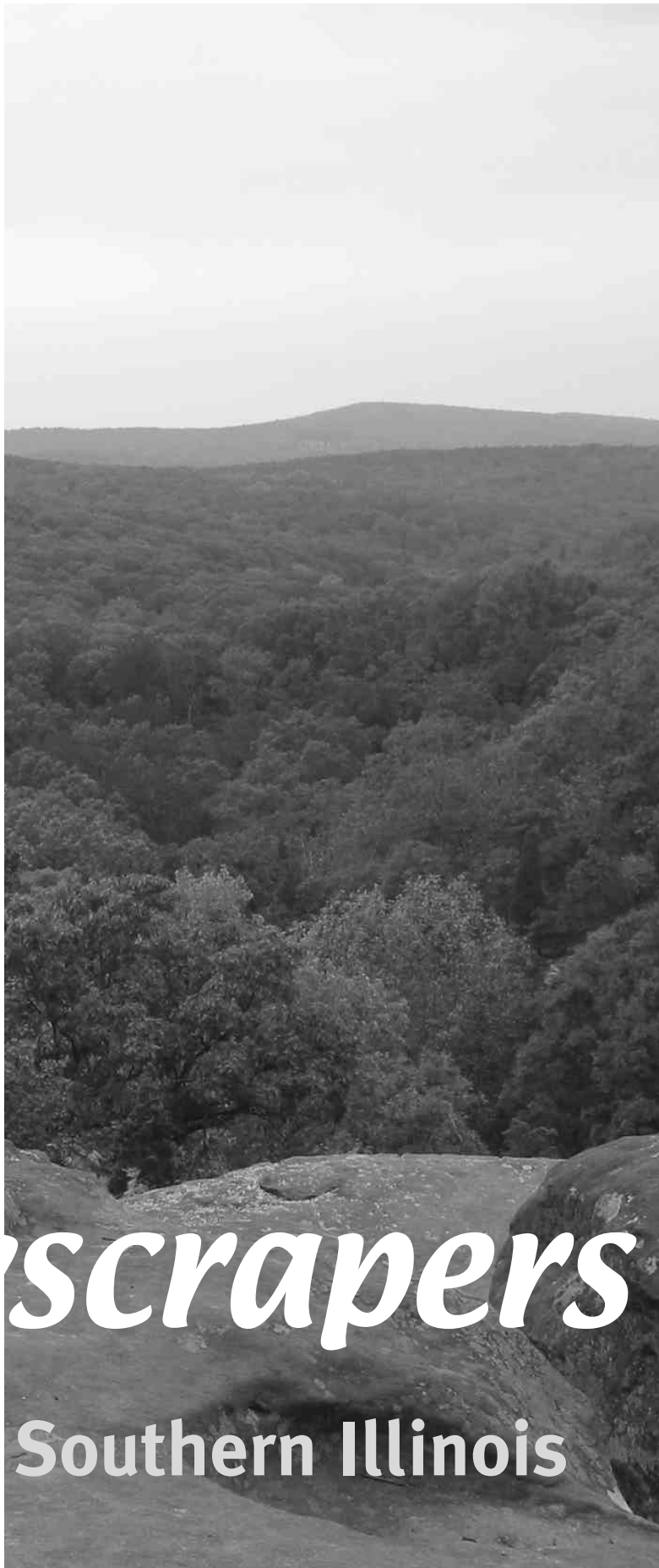


# *South of the Sky*

A Look at Health Care in

Observation Trail, Garden of the Gods



**S**outh of I-70 are some of Illinois most beautiful landscapes. They look very different from the skyscrapers of Chicago or the fields of corn and flat plains of central Illinois. Awesome lakes, glorious rock formations and grand forests comb the region. The vista of health care also has a different look in this region. An estimated 29.5 percent of the state's total population lives in rural counties in Illinois. Of 102 counties in the state, 84 are considered rural — nearly the entire southern region. Rural areas have limited access to health care. SIU's Rural Health Initiative has been working for a decade on innovative strategies to help. The Initiative, funded through the Rural/Downstate Health Act, has been providing financial assistance to downstate communities since 1993. What follows is a look at three programs that are making a difference in these areas. Enjoy the views — not just the breathtaking landscapes, but the beauty brought by better health care in underserved areas.