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The Voice of St. Louis

Site selector: St. Louis' woes ill-timed as countless companies look at relocating



Photo credit KMOX/Michael Calhoun

ST. LOUIS (KMOX) -- "Companies are relocating today at a pace we haven't seen for over five decades" and lifestyle factors like crime and homeless are a larger consideration in their decision on where to go.

Site selector John Boyd says that isn't good for St. Louis in the wake of recent headlines from mainstays like Square and Centene.

Corporations including AT&T, Honda, J.P. Morgan, and UPS hire his Florida firm to sort through their location options for new offices or factories.

"We're asked to identify a lot of different data points: the cost of doing business, taxes, and all sorts of different demographic data, and, increasingly, we're being asked to look at crime and homeless statistics."

He says St. Louis is not putting its best foot forward.

"The outmigration of signature employers like Centene, which cited levels of crime with their Charlotte expansion, and this horrible shooting outside of Square's new office complex -- this is very significant."

Square confirmed it closed its new offices in the historic Post-Dispatch building Monday and Tuesday, next door to the plaza where the deadly shooting took place Sunday night.

Police identified the victim as 36-year old DeMarco McNeal. No word on arrests.

"Unfortunately, St. Louis is becoming the poster child for major urban cities losing businesses and residents due to crime, homelessness, and lack of accountability from its elected leaders," Boyd says.

He points out it's not all bad news; the St. Louis region in the last couple of years has secured the Square expansion, a hub for federal consultant Accenture, and the world headquarters of ag firm Bunge.

"For companies that want to have a mid-continent location, a very compelling case can be made for St. Louis," Boyd says, adding, "St. Louis has been working hard in booming industries like bio-sciences, financial services, and aerospace. Our client Boeing is now the largest employer in St. Louis."

This story aired during Total Information AM, 5-8:30 a.m., 9/3/2021.