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2024 Women of Influence



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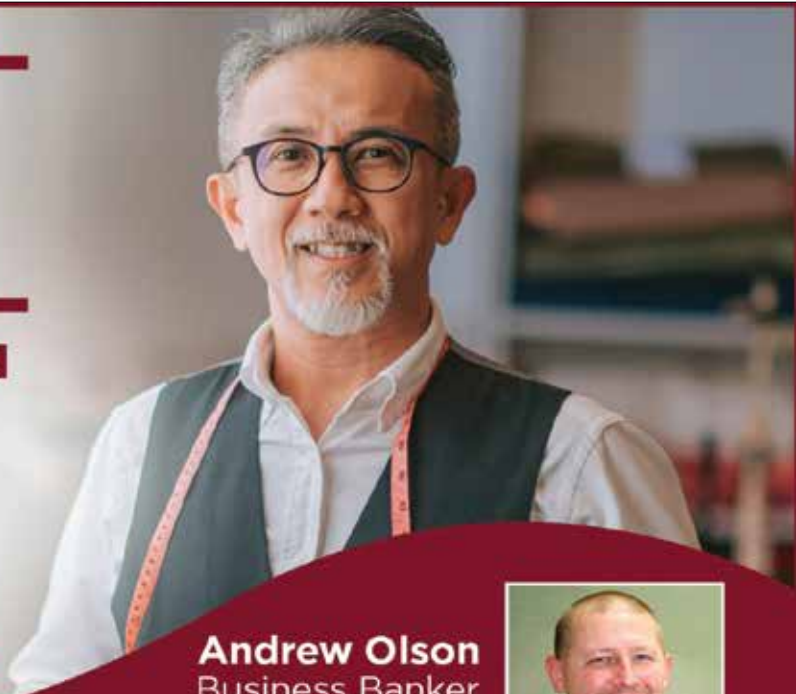
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Helping others succeed

This year's Women of Influence recipients have all made a career out of making it possible for others to be successful. Rather than seeking accolades for themselves, these three ladies all strive to help other people be recognized.

Jen Bettis has spent her 25-year career in fundraising and development, mentoring many girls and young women along the way. One student she worked with said that Jen always "put me on the right path to have a good day." Her nominator, Jennifer Sublett, noted that Bettis' career has been about "connecting donors with causes they care about, working with them to make a lasting impact and experience the joy of giving."

This is Kayla Edwards' 30th year with Express Employment Professionals, and she's helped many other people learn to love their jobs as much as she does. She said that she enjoys making people's lives better. "In my business, better means success at work and that means success at living," she said, noting how much happier and more fulfilled she felt when she switched from working in accounting to staffing.

Many people would become cynical and jaded if they spent a career working for Sangamon County Court Services. On the contrary, Ava McPike-Carpenter said she wakes up every day happy to go to work as a probation officer, dealing with juveniles who have committed crimes. She also works with adults who are on probation for drug-related crimes and women who are residents at Contact Ministries' shelter, helping them with decision-making, self-awareness, self-esteem, addiction issues, domestic problems and anything else that might prevent them from becoming successful. McPike-Carpenter wants to be remembered as a person "who believed that change is a process, and everyone is capable of change."

Helping other people – including our coworkers and clients – to live their best lives and be successful is a great legacy indeed.



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Q & A

with

Pat Joyce

By David Blanchette



Pat Joyce retired in September 2023 from the law firm of Brown Hay & Stephens, where he specialized in real estate law and served as managing partner for a time. After graduating from law school at Loyola University Chicago he started working for Chicago Title Insurance Company and was later transferred to the firm's Springfield office. He then joined Brown Hay & Stephens, where he would spend the next 49 years of his legal career.

Joyce was active in the community, serving on the boards of various charitable organizations and church committees, as well as a local school board.

He and his wife, Janice, have three adult sons: Joshua, Aaron and Andrew.

Where were you born and raised, and what was your first job?

I was born in Chicago, and we moved to Oak Park when I was 10. I caddied for a couple of years when I was a freshman and sophomore in high school and made decent money for a 15-year-old kid. When I was 16, I started working part-time at a wholesale florist in Chicago where my dad was the manager. I worked there until I graduated from law school.



Left to right: Joshua Joyce, Pat Joyce Jr., Janice Joyce, Aaron Joyce (standing behind) and Andrew Joyce

When and how did you decide to become an attorney?

I was always interested in history and law. I had a high school friend whose dad was a lawyer in Berwyn, and he would often talk to me and his son about his practice. He was a good guy and could spin a good yarn, and that kind of piqued my interest in becoming a lawyer.

What did you learn in law school and during your legal internships that has stayed with you?

I learned that you need to be prepared for anything you do with the law. I didn't do a lot of trial work, but you definitely have to be prepared for any kind of legal transaction. You need to spend the time that is necessary to do a good job for your clients.

What attracted you to the Brown, Hay & Stephens law firm?

I graduated from law school in 1972 and immediately started working for Chicago Title Insurance Company in Chicago. The people in my division would be sent to various offices of the company, and I remember being sent to Minneapolis during January when it was 10 degrees below zero. That made me certain that I didn't want to work in an office where it was really cold.

Then they sent me to Springfield twice because they were short a title examiner and asked if I would consider a transfer there. I talked to my wife to make sure she would be comfortable with that, and I took the position.

I got promoted to head up the Springfield office and got to know just about all of the lawyers in Springfield. I knew the Brown, Hay & Stephens lawyers were very

good. I was very interested in the fact that they were the oldest law firm in Springfield and Abraham Lincoln was one of the first partners. I was kind of in the right place at the right time, because one of their attorneys who handled real estate transactions died suddenly, and the firm needed someone to come in and handle that kind of stuff. I spent 49 years with the firm, so it worked out fine for me.

Abraham Lincoln is the state's most famous attorney. What about his career as a lawyer do you admire?

I admire how he was really self-educated and was very honest. You've got to have the respect of your clients, and I think Lincoln had that respect throughout his career. Although he was a successful lawyer, Lincoln was a very humble guy and that really shone through.

What clients do you most remember from your career?

I was fortunate to work with Memorial Health and Springfield Clinic and did a lot of real estate and zoning work for them when they both expanded. I remember having to acquire the air rights for Springfield Clinic when they built the bridge building over Sixth Street. I warned them it might be a contentious issue, and it sure was.

One of the few jury trials I was involved with was with Consolidation Coal Company, which was being sued by a Montgomery County farmer who claimed its mining activities caused subsidence on his farm and hurt the value of his land. We had expert witnesses and the trial lasted several days. When it was over, the jury found in

our favor. I just remember how tired and happy I was when the trial was over.

I've worked with other great local clients like Hanson (Professional Services) and developers like Charlie Adams and Frank Buraski. They were all just good people, and I enjoyed working with them.

How has the legal profession changed during your career?

It has changed immensely because of technology. When I started at Brown, Hay & Stephens we had one memory typewriter that could handle 300 words at a time. Most of our research was done by reading books. I remember when we first talked about getting a fax machine and asking if anybody would really use it. But the firm has always stayed ahead of the curve with technology.

Another big change is the number of female attorneys in the profession. We had hardly any female attorneys in Springfield when I started, but 20 years later about half of the law school graduates from my alma mater, Loyola University, were women.

Do you think the legal profession remains a noble calling?

I do. We'd often have discussions at partners' meetings about the practice of law, is it a business or a profession? It's really both, but we always tried to keep it a noble profession by doing the right and ethical things. I was always proud to be part of a firm with very high ethical standards.

What advice would you give to someone who is considering a legal career?

You need to be a good writer to be a good lawyer. You also need to be willing to work hard because it's not a nine to five job, for sure.

What may people be surprised to learn about you?

I promised my wife before we got married that someday we would have our own place with horses. Right now, we own five acres near Delavan where we keep our horses. That's really my wife's bailiwick; I was a much better lawyer than a ranch hand.

AVA CARPENTER-McPIKE

By Jean Campbell

Ava Carpenter-McPike is a force of nature and an inspiration. She has dedicated her adult life to working with at-risk youth who often don't have a voice for themselves and have endured traumatic events. She puts her heart and soul into advocating for them and helping them change the course of their lives for the better.

Carpenter-McPike, a graduate of Tennessee State University, works as a senior probation officer and individual program coordinator for Sangamon County Court Services. Over the past 28 years, she has made an immeasurable impact on minors who have committed crimes or are at risk of committing a crime.

Over time, she has expanded her duties to help others in the community. In 2003, she was presented the Probation Officer of the Year Award by the state of Illinois. She has served on various boards including United Way of Central Illinois and Illinois State Museum Society. Carpenter-McPike currently volunteers at District 186 grade schools and Contact Ministries, among others.

Carpenter-McPike works primarily with young people age 10-18 who are detained at the Sangamon County Juvenile Detention Center for committing a crime. "When kids are detained, I am the liaison between them and the probation department, social service agencies and their parents," she said. "I create individual program plans to address their specific situation and needs. I see them through the whole process, including court appearances. I also meet with them daily for cognitive therapy. We talk about how they can better process their thoughts, how to make good decisions and how to deal with the daily struggles they face."

She continues, "Most detained minors are from broken homes. Many have addiction issues. Often the trauma they have experienced is hard to break through. Based on several factors, their final outcome ranges from juvenile prison, probation, referral for treatment or going home."

After a few years at her job, Carpenter-McPike began going into select schools to work with students on probation or at risk of committing crimes. "We talk about how they can improve their social and decision-making skills, as well as ways to repair broken relationships," says Carpenter-McPike.

Ashley Varboncoeur, assistant superintendent of the Sangamon County Juvenile Detention Center, has high praise for Carpenter-McPike. "Ava is a super-compassionate person who is involved in the community and loves to help others," she says. "I've seen her at a school in a group setting with young women. They really listen to her, and Ava listens closely to them, which is a great attribute."

In 2009, Carpenter-McPike launched a cognitive program for adults who are on probation for drug-related crimes. "We meet twice a week and focus on problem solving and cognitive-based reasoning to challenge their way of thinking and consider alternative behaviors," she explains.

And last year, Carpenter-McPike started working with women at Contact Ministries' shelter. She helps them with decision-making, self-awareness, self-esteem, addiction issues, domestic problems and anything else that might prevent them from completing the program and becoming successful.

Carpenter-McPike's mother, Pat Carpenter, nominated her for the Women of Influence award. She says she realized her daughter had all the characteristics of a woman of influence. "Ava is a person who pushes the envelope," she shares. "When someone says it can't be done, Ava says it can,




photo by Steve Hinrichs

and she shows you how. She has a clear vision of what she wants to achieve, and she perseveres in the face of challenges. She acts with honesty, transparency and a strong sense of ethics to earn the trust and respect of others."

In turn, Carpenter-McPike calls her mother the biggest influence in her life. "She is my motivation, my cheerleader, my best friend. She has always encouraged me and pushed me to do what I love. She says that if you do what you love, your payment comes in other ways."

And Carpenter-McPike is proud to do what she loves. "I wake up every morning, and I am elated to go to work. The kids often ask me, 'Ms. Ava, why are you always smiling?' I tell them it's because I'm happy to be here."

Carpenter-McPike has had a successful and rewarding career, but she says being a good parent is her most important achievement. She lost her second child to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, which was devastating. But she continued to focus on raising her first-born daughter, who is now 28 years old, earned her master's degree two years ago and lives a fulfilling life.

About her legacy, Carpenter-McPike says, "I hope I am remembered as a person of great character who believed that change is a process, and everyone is capable of change. When people think of me, I want them to say, 'She didn't give up on me when everyone else did. She was honest, and she kept her word to me.'" 

JENNIFER BETTIS

By Karen Ackerman Witter

Jennifer Bettis grew up in Quincy, where volunteering and giving back were staples in her family's life. After graduating from Quincy University with a bachelor's degree in business management, Bettis moved to Springfield to attend graduate school at University of Illinois Springfield. She was part of the Graduate Public Service Internship program and earned a master's degree in interpersonal and organizational communication. Springfield has now been her home for 25 years, and she has given back through her professional career and extensive volunteer service.

Bettis is grateful for the GPSI program, which led her to a successful career in fundraising and donor relations. She was the first GPSI intern at SIU School of Medicine's foundation office and was involved with the first Denim and Diamonds gala to support cancer research at Simmons Cancer Institute at SIU School of Medicine, along with many other fundraisers.

She remained at SIU three more years following her two-year internship. "That is where my path to fund development really took shape," says Bettis. She worked with women powerhouses who still influence her today and was inspired to nurture other women.

After SIU, Bettis joined Sacred Heart-Griffin High School and was the director of advancement for 17 years. The position had a strong appeal since she had attended Catholic schools growing up in Quincy. In 2021, she decided to try something new and accepted a position at UIS. Bettis has come full circle, now serving as the UIS director of development, focusing on corporate and foundation relations and alumni engagement in the western U.S.

"Jen has spent her 25-year career connecting donors with causes they care about, working with them to make a lasting impact and experience the joy of giving," said Jennifer Sublett, who nominated Bettis for Women of Influence.

Bettis became a Certified Fund Raising Executive in 2011, the most advanced credential in the field of fundraising. It requires adherence to the highest of ethical standards, and she maintains her certification through ongoing professional development activities.

Bettis is a match-maker who helps others realize their philanthropic goals. She describes her job as listening to people talk about their passions to see if there is a connection to a UIS program. Her advice is to be authentic and care about people.

Known for her warm smile and pleasant disposition, Bettis enjoys hearing how she has touched someone's life and the ripple effect it had. For years Bettis volunteered as a spiritual mentor to SHG students at annual retreats, sharing perspectives on her faith and life lessons. Among all of the adult mentors, she was always a student favorite. When asked about her proudest accomplishments, she modestly cites a young woman at SHG telling her, "There you are with a big smile on your face, and that put me on the right path to have a good day." Others remark how Bettis is the first to help a friend or colleague in times of need.

In addition to helping others in small ways, Bettis takes on high-level leadership roles with multiple organizations, including Springfield Art Association, Illinois Women in Leadership and Association of Fundraising Professionals. She is a 14-year member of Young Philanthropists and belongs to other organizations that help women and girls.

Bettis has been involved for more than a decade in a number of roles with IWIL, a group that empowers women, promotes professionalism and



photo by Steve Hinrichs

develops leadership abilities. She has served as an IWIL board member, board president and chair of the annual Women's Symposium.

Bettis is the longest-serving SAA board secretary and has spent multiple years on the executive committee, including president. She is an active volunteer for the SAA's annual Edwards Place Fine Art Fair, leading the effort to provide meals for participating artists. Bettis' nominator wrote, "Her warm hospitality always brings a smile to the artists' faces when they see the amazing culinary delights she creates. That is no small job, and she easily enlists volunteer help from friends who are inspired by her dedication and commitment."

SAA executive director Betsy Dollar says Bettis doesn't just occupy a position but actively participates. Dollar also observed how Bettis mentored the SAA development director, helping her hone her skills. "She has her finger on the pulse of what's going on in the nonprofit community. She's very deserving and a good choice for Women of Influence," said Dollar, a former WOI recipient herself.

"Those who know Jen see her loving acts of kindness to all – she is a genuine, inclusive, joy-filled and caring person," said Sublett.

Bettis says it is not hard to help others, but you have to be intentional. "The women I've worked with or volunteered with have embraced me, invited me in, encouraged me and taken me out of my comfort zone." She wants to do the same for other, younger women by emulating the women who helped build her up.

Bettis said she is humbled to be recognized and grateful for her life in Springfield. She met her husband here and UIS launched her career, allowing her to meet women who have nurtured and inspired her along the way.

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KAYLA EDWARDS

By Holly Whisler

Kayla Edwards, managing partner at Express Employment Professionals, credits her parents for instilling in her the drive to succeed. “My parents had high expectations of what I did in school, sports and how I practiced. My mother emphasized academic excellence and my dad encouraged me in sports,” she said.

Edwards now encourages other people to improve their lives. “I do what I do every day because of the sheer fulfillment of impacting people and making their lives better. In my business, better means success at work and that means success in living,” Edwards said. “I was an accountant for three years, but never felt passion as a practicing accountant. Once I found staffing, I realized what had been missing.”

Grounded in her Christian faith, she approaches each day with the focus on others – her team and the people they serve. “In order for me to fully serve the people I work with, I have to continue to improve myself. They push me to be better, and that helps me help them reach their full capacity.” Edwards said she reminds herself frequently of Express’ vision “to help as many people as possible find good jobs by helping as many clients as possible find good people.”

Edwards hopes her selection for Women of Influence inspires other women to know there are unlimited opportunities to those who are willing to strive to do their best and never stop challenging themselves to improve. Building a fulfilling career does not happen overnight. Edwards started as an employment specialist with Express Employment Professionals in June of 1994. She’ll tell you the journey is worthwhile, and the relationships built along the way are priceless.

Don Adams, director of business development at Express Employment Professionals, was trained by Edwards, who he holds in high esteem. He said he admires her determination and supportive approach to any hurdle you might be facing. “She will teach you what went wrong and how to avoid the pitfall in the future,” Adams said. “She’s never negative, and I never hesitate to go to her with a problem.”

Adams says she also has the unique ability to be vulnerable. “She surveyed her team, asking where she could do better. She’s willing to grow, and that’s motivating. She’s about resolution, moving forward and making life better for the other person.”

Kirk Considine, senior director of business services at Express Employment Professionals, was also trained by Edwards. “She has helped me grow professionally,” he said. He describes her leadership style as collaborative and easy to follow.

“She’s gives you a long and wide runway to run your team, and she’s there to assist when you need it,” Considine said. “I’ve never been in a job where I walk in the door happy, knowing I have the security to be who I am. The support I have from Kayla makes it easy for me to receive her feedback.”

Considine added, “Kayla has had many accolades in her career. She’s been recognized as a top performer, and when she speaks at corporate events, she always gives the credit to her team.”

Edwards shares her time and talent with the Springfield community. She serves on the executive board of The Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce and was in charge of the search committee that hired the current president and CEO, Mike Murphy, who said he is impressed with how thoughtful Edwards is.

“She listens and learns, and grasps information extremely quick. She

analyzes well, and is a great problem-solver, which makes her perfect for her position,” Murphy said. “What I admire most is her passion for providing opportunities for the clients of Express and the people who are placed in jobs that makes their lives better.”

Sharon Riechers, senior director of global sales administration at BUNN, worked closely with Edwards when they served together on the board of directors and executive committee for the Chamber of Commerce. Riechers said Edwards’ leadership skills were obvious, as well as her ability to gain the trust and respect of other board members and the chamber staff.


“Her communication skills are exemplary. She is patient and kind, and



photo by Steve Hinrichs

people are drawn to her,” Riechers said. “It’s these qualities that enable her and her colleagues at Express to have one of the top performing offices. She encourages and enables her team to do their best, and they do. She embodies the qualities of a woman of influence and is very deserving of this award. She is a role model for other women, no matter the stage of their career.”

Jim Britton, co-owner of Express Employment Professionals, said he recognized Edwards’ potential early on and wanted her to be a part of the company from his first meeting with her. He said, “Kayla connects with people in a way that makes it easy for them to trust her and have confidence in what she says. She tells the truth – good news or bad – in a way that people can receive it, knowing it is for their benefit. Kayla truly embraces our purpose of helping people succeed. She is dedicated, caring and committed to her work and team members. We are very fortunate to have Kayla as a leader on our team.”

To Edwards, her career is not about money, position or recognition. In her words, “I get fulfilled by helping others find their fulfillment and dignity.” 

Congratulations to the 2024 WOMEN OF INFLUENCE

Jennifer Bettis Kayla Edwards Ava Carpenter-McPike

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Navigating trends in the staffing industry

By Holly A. Whisler



As the workforce shifts in response to changing trends, Springfield staffing agencies are navigating these changes across a variety of industries. Changing government regulations, remote work, artificial intelligence, immigration and diversity, equity and inclusion are forces prompting change in local agencies this year.

New legislation for temporary workers

Temporary staffing agencies are regulated by the Illinois Department of Labor under the Day and Temporary Labor Services Act. A recent amendment to the act, which requires workers provided by staffing agencies to be paid the same as the hiring company's lowest-paid employees if they are on the job for more than 90 days, has impacted some agencies more than others.

Ginette Comstock, director of operations for Manpower of Central Illinois, said the amendment is definitely a trending topic. She said that fortunately, most Manpower clients have converted the temporary employee to hire by the end of 90 days. Stiff fines and penalties are levied on agencies that do not adhere to the amendment.

Remote work

Remote work is another hot topic, with a push-pull dynamic between companies wanting employees back in the office and the demand of the workforce to work remotely. Some people are reluctant to relinquish the work-life balance they achieved by working from home during the pandemic.

Chris Walters is senior vice president of Levi, Ray & Shoup Consulting Services, the IT and engineering staff augmentation divi-

sion of LRS. He said this is a big consideration when filling IT positions. "People don't want to commute in traffic, they don't want to wear professional attire, and remote work is very attractive to them," Walters said. He noted that some employers are more flexible as long as people are coming in a few days of the week. "Our job is to fill our customers' offices with staff the way they want," he said.

"At LRS we are Midwest-focused, and most employers want to see people in the office. There are jobs we would (normally) fill with local resources that are being filled by companies that allow remote work," Walters said.

Artificial intelligence

Artificial intelligence is becoming part of everyday life for many people, but the business world is exercising caution before diving in. However, one area where AI is already becoming popular is for recruitment and hiring, according to the Society for Human Resource Management.

Comstock said Manpower uses Indeed for job postings, which incorporates some AI in that regard; otherwise, the firm does not actively use AI. She said that since AI has made recruiting and hiring more streamlined, some companies are hiring directly and no longer using staffing agencies.

Walters said, "At this point, we're kicking the tires of AI. We have to consider privacy laws and the protection of confidential information." He explained there are some safer ways to use AI, such as taking information from ChatGPT, pulling it into the company firewall to join it with company information and keeping it within the company.

"To use AI internally and ask it to tell us

how much business we did with a particular company in a specific year would be great. That's a complex data set, and if you could pull in market data and leverage the best of both worlds, that would be a beneficial use of AI," said Walters.

DEI efforts

"We want our workforce to look like the world at large. A diverse workforce brings diverse ideas, which makes us stronger," said Shannon Heisler, director of marketing at LRS. "We match the right person to the job, and to do that we make sure jobs are getting in front of as many people as possible so we have a diverse applicant pool."

Comstock said that Manpower has been proactive regarding diversity, equity and inclusion, and Walters emphasized that staffing in general has the incentive to put as many qualified people to work as possible.

Walters explained that when hiring for IT jobs, qualified candidates come from around the world, especially India. He said LRS counts on access to the international pool of workers, but occasionally immigration bills attempt to limit that access. Since immigration is a hot topic at the national level, he believes legislation limiting international hires in the near future is a possibility.

Walters explained that LRS brings hires to the U.S. and provides them a path to citizenship. Heisler added, "Nationally, LRS is still publishing more IT jobs than there are IT applicants in this country. There needs to be a path to citizenship. If we don't get access to those people, business will get done offshore, and it won't come back." **SBJ**

STAFFING FIRMS

Sources: The Staffing Firms.
Ranked by number of full-time in-office employees.

	NAME/ADDRESS	PHONE/WEBSITE/EMAIL	FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES	PART-TIME EMPLOYEES	LOCAL EXECUTIVE(S)	AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION	YEAR EST'D
1	Express Employment Professionals 3000 Professional Drive Springfield, IL 62703	217-528-3000 expresspros.com/springfieldil jobs.springfieldil@expresspros.com	29	2	Kayla Edwards, managing partner JT Britton, franchise partner Zachery Britton, franchise partner	HR and workforce strategies. Specializing in administrative, accounting, engineering and industrial careers, skilled trades, temporary, contract and direct placement.	1980
2	StaffQuick 460 N. Main St. Chatham, IL 62629	217-787-9400 staffquickjobs.com chatham@staffquickjobs.com	19	0	Morgan Edmiston, vice president Julie Scheller, area manager	Full-service staffing agency including temp and direct-hire, clerical, light industrial, professional and executive HR consulting and outplacement services.	2002
3	Manpower 2719 W. Monroe St., Suite A Springfield, IL 62704	217-528-2323 manpowerillinois.com springfield.il@manpower.com	12	2	Ginette Comstock, director of operations Angela Rhode, regional manager	Professional, administrative, industrial, accounting, customer service, HR services, direct-hire, on-site services, recruitment process outsourcing.	1948
4	LRS Consulting Services 2401 W. Monroe St. Springfield, IL 62704	217-793-3800 LRSConsultingServices.com Email through website contact page	8	0	Dick Levi, chairman Ryan Levi, CEO Greg Matthews, COO	IT and engineering staffing.	1979
5	Innovative Staff Solutions 1425 Stevenson Drive Springfield, IL 62703	217-585-1620 www.staffsolutions.com	3	0	Derek Meinhart, owner Jamie Woodcock, branch manager	Workforce management company offering staffing solutions for temporary, temp-to-hire, direct-hire and on-site management. We place candidates for professional, administrative and light industrial positions.	1994



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Illinois Supreme Court rules against staffing agencies in antitrust case

By Hannah Meisel, Capitol News Illinois

Staffing agencies – a fast-growing industry that employs nearly a million Illinoisans – are not exempt from the state’s antitrust law, the Illinois Supreme Court ruled in January.

The decision comes three-and-a-half years after Attorney General Kwame Raoul sued a trio of staffing agencies, alleging they used their mutual client to coordinate no-poach agreements, which created a secondary agreement to pay temp staffers less than the market rate.

In a unanimous 20-page opinion, the justices quoted a 1979 U.S. Supreme Court opinion that said some agreements “are so plainly anticompetitive that they are conclusively presumed illegal without further examination under the rule of reason generally applied in (antitrust law) cases.”

And the case before the Illinois Supreme Court, the justices said, was no different.

“The alleged agreement falls squarely within the realm of conduct so clearly anticompetitive that it violates antitrust laws without further examination under the rule of reason,” Justice P. Scott Neville wrote for his colleagues.

The three companies at issue – Elite Staffing Inc., based in Chicago, Midway Staffing Inc. and Metro Staffing Inc., both headquartered in Chicago suburbs – all had contracted with a construction company also located in the suburbs.

Elgin-based Colony Display LLC designs and builds display models and custom furniture for commercial properties such as motels, grocery stores and restaurants. While the company operates in seven states, Colony manufactures, assembles and houses most of its furniture in three Illinois facilities.

The vast majority of Colony’s workforce is temporary. According to court records, at any given time the company “employs approximately 75 to 100 full-time employees,” compared with “between 200 to 1,000 temporary workers,” the original complaint alleged.

The staffing agencies’ contracts with Colony gave the company sole discretion over hiring, firing and assigning workers. And, the lawsuit alleged, the staffing agencies began to take advantage of that setup as early as



The Illinois Supreme Court decision comes after Attorney General Kwame Raoul sued a trio of staffing agencies, alleging they used their mutual client to coordinate no-poach agreements, which created a secondary agreement to pay temp staffers less than the market rate. CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS FILE PHOTO

2018, communicating with each other via Colony.

“For example, many Midway employees wanted to switch to Elite because they were ‘not happy working for Midway’; they cited ‘pay issues’ and a lack of communication and support from their employer,” according to court records.

In response, Midway Staffing allegedly asked Colony for assistance in “squashing” the transfer of employees, resulting in Colony informing Elite Staffing that hiring other agencies’ employees was “bad practice” and wasn’t allowed. Elite Staffing then produced its own policy to Colony, which the company then forwarded on to Midway Staffing, thus enforcing the no-poaching policy, according to Raoul’s office.

In a settlement reached just before oral arguments on the related cases in November, Colony agreed to pay \$1.2 million to compensate the temporary workers impacted by the no-poach agreements.

But the staffing agencies went ahead with their appeal to the court, claiming their business models exclude them from the state’s Antitrust Act, based their legal arguments on a 1980s update to a key definition in the law.

The law prohibits “restraint of trade” that decreases competition between “persons engaged in commerce and trade,” and then further defines commerce and trade as “all economic activity involving or relating to any commodity or service.”

The staffing agencies point to that 1980s-era update that defines service as anything that isn’t a commodity. The definition also

stipulates that “service” doesn’t include “labor which is performed by natural persons as employees of others.”

While the justices acknowledged the language of the law was “ambiguous,” Neville wrote that they must look back in history to determine the purpose of the exclusion for “services.”

The court looked back at 1960s-era commentary from the Chicago Bar Association’s Committee on Antitrust Law, which had a hand in drafting the Illinois Antitrust Act, as well as an article by one of the law’s big proponents, Northwestern University law professor and

leading antitrust expert James Rahl. Combing through the historical record, Neville wrote, the justices found the exemption was written solely for the benefit of labor unions.

“Like the bar committee, Rahl emphasizes the need to exempt legitimate union activity from the reach of the Illinois Antitrust Act and the correlative exemption for agreements between employers in the course of negotiations with unions,” Neville wrote. “No source concerning the purpose of antitrust laws suggests that the legislature meant to leave competing employers free to collude with each other to reduce the wages they pay to their employees or to collude to prevent workers from switching to better jobs.”

In a statement, Raoul praised the justices’ decision.

“The Illinois Supreme Court has confirmed that Illinois’ Antitrust Act prohibits agreements among employers to restrict worker mobility and fix wages,” Raoul said. “I am pleased with this important result. My office will continue to enforce Illinois’ statutes to protect the rights of workers to seek better employment opportunities, wages and benefits, which allow them to support themselves and their families.” **SBJ**

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WOMEN'S EVENT CALENDAR



Illinois Women in Leadership (IWIL) will hold a fundraising dinner on Sunday, May 19, to raise money for an all-female team to travel to Kenya this July. The IWIL team will provide motivational talks to teen girls at a girls' boarding school and at a girls' rescue center, spend time at an elementary school and nursing home, and build a dorm block at a girls' high school. Donations will cover materials for the dorm block build, supplies for the girls' rescue center and nursing home and scholarships for the elementary school and girls' rescue center.

The dinner will be held at Douglas Avenue United Methodist Church, 501 S. Douglas Ave., on Sunday, May 19. Doors open at 5 p.m. and buffet begins at 5:30. The authentic African dinner will be created by chef Kimsimone Manning, owner of Seoul 4 Soul in downtown Springfield. Kim is well-known for her fabulous recipes and has worked in the culinary world for more than 22 years. The cost is \$55 and registration will close on Friday, May 10. No walk-ins will be allowed. Visit iwil.biz to learn more.

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OFFICE EQUIPMENT, FURNITURE AND SUPPLIES

Sources: The individual companies.
Ranked by number of local full-time employees.

	NAME/ADDRESS	PHONE WEBSITE/EMAIL	# OF LOCAL EMPLOYEES	OWNER/ MANAGER	PRIMARY PRODUCTS AND SERVICES OFFERED	MAJOR BRANDS	YEAR EST'D
1	CDS Office Technologies 612 S. Dirksen Parkway Springfield, IL 62703	217-528-8936 cdsot.com info@cdsot.com sales@cdsot.com	128	Mark Watson, president	Managed IT services, managed print solutions, copiers/printers, office supplies and business furniture.	Konica-Minolta, Lexmark, Sharp, HP, Panasonic Toughbooks, Cisco Meraki, Ubiquiti, Microsoft Gold Partner, Office 365, CDS cloud-based phone systems, HP Enterprise, 3CX Phone Systems' and more.	1971
2	Watts Copy Systems, Inc. 2860 Stanton Ave. Springfield, IL 62703	217-529-6697 wattscopy.com watts@wattscopy.com	79	Carol Watts, president	Copiers/multifunctional devices (MFD), desktop multifunction printers (MFP), desktop printers, managed print services (MPS), interactive display systems/digital signage, software solutions, water filtration systems, scanners.	Authorized Sharp Dealer, Authorized Kyocera Dealer, HP	1981
3	Office Depot 3129 S. Veterans Parkway Springfield, IL 62704	217-698-4825 officedepot.com ods00323@officedepot.com	28	Kevin Pologruto	Office supplies, office furniture, office equipment, copy and print services, marketing services, tech services, IT services, shipping services and shredding services.	HP, Lenovo, Avery, Epson, Canon, Uni-ball, Dell, Brother, Serta, Swingline	1995
4	Resource One 321 E. Adams St. Springfield, IL 62701	217-753-5742 resourceoneoffice.com info@resourceoneoffice.com	18	Cindy Davis	Interior design, furnishings and installation for commercial spaces in the corporate, education, health care, hospitality and retail markets - including furniture, full-height prefab walls, window shades and treatments, acoustics and interior construction elements and finishes.	Haworth (preferred dealer), AIS, OFS, Kimball, HON, JSI, Draper and Springs Window Fashions.	1987
4	Wiley Interiors 301 E. Laurel St. Springfield, IL 62703	217-544-2766 wileyinteriors.com springfield@wileyinteriors.com	18	Zachary Hoffman and Diane Beauchamp	A full-service contract furniture company, providing interior design, sales, project management and installation services.	Herman Miller, Knoll, Design Within Reach, Geiger, Nemschoff, Kimball Int'l, National, Lacasse, Via Seating, ESI, 9to5 Seating	1958
5	GFI Digital, Inc. 1846 W. Jefferson St. Springfield, IL 62702	217-303-6776 gfidigital.com areiss@gfidigital.com	14	Bruce Gibbs	IT services and hardware, copiers, printers, document management, scanning, data backup, camera systems.	Ricoh, Sharp, HP, Barracuda, Cisco, VMware, EMC, HP Enterprises, Datto, Meraki, Dell, Verkada, Artic Wolf, Microsoft	1999
6	Tom Day Business Machines 3308 Cockrell Lane Springfield, IL 62711	217-529-8282 tomdaybusinessmachines.com	12	Dale Smith president	MPS (Manage Print Service), office solutions.	Lanier, HP, MBM and Toshiba	1981
7	CORInstallation Furniture & Supply LLC 500 North St., Suite 19 Springfield, IL 62704 (by appointment)	217-210-8808 corinstallation.com info@corinstallation.com	8	Corina (Cori) J. Williams-Blair	Office furniture, K-12 and higher education furniture, interior design and space planning, installation and reconfiguration, flooring and window treatments.	KI, VIA Seating, Groupe Lacasse, OFS, Carolina, Pallas Textiles	2018
8	Built Interior Construction Springfield	217-481-4208 www.builtinterior.com rpate@builtinterior.com	3	Rachel Shea, manager/business development for Central/Southern Illinois	Interior construction solutions, glass fronts, modular interior construction, branding, acoustics, power solutions	DIRTT	2016
8	Richards and Stehman 317 E. Monroe St. Springfield, IL 62701	217-522-6801 rscustomproducts.com sales@rscustomproducts.com	3	Katherine Dobron	Rubber stamps, small engraved signs, name badges, plaques, awards, embossing seals, stamp inks and solvents, notary supplies, notary service	Shiny, Colop, Trodat, JP Plus	1954
9	Work Space Solutions, Inc. Springfield, IL 62704	217-553-0123 workspacesolutionsinc.net qjhrh@sbcglobal.net	2	Robyn and Christie Hovey	Office, school, medical furniture – new and used – specification and sales, receiving, delivery, and installation of interior furnishings, floor-to-ceiling modular walls, window treatments, carpet, tile, interior accessories, repupholstering and refinishing of existing furniture.	Krueger International - KI Genius Wall, Lafayette Blinds, Pallas Textiles, HON, Tandus-Centiva, Xenali, Furniture Lab and Mayline	2004



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Make your workspace more modern

By Jo Jenkinson and Nathan Watson, Office Principles



PHOTO COURTESY OF OFFICE PRINCIPLES

The modern workspace is undergoing a significant evolution. Companies are rethinking and reimagining their offices to align with new priorities – from flexibility and collaboration to sustainability and employee wellness.

We will continue to see emerging office design trends as businesses create spaces tailored to their unique needs and company cultures.

If you're looking at an office refurbishment or entire remodel, being aware of the latest office design trends can help you create a workspace that will inspire your team. Read on to find out more about the top 10 commercial office design trends for 2024.

1. Hybrid workspaces

The pandemic forced many companies to embrace remote and hybrid work out of necessity. But even as return-to-office plans progress, a 2023 McKinsey survey found that over 90% of organizations will be combining remote and on-site work.

Office spaces must now strike a balance between supporting collaborative, in-person teamwork and providing amenities for employees who split time between home and the office.

Design elements may include 'Zoom Rooms' for virtual meetings, touchdown spaces for remote workers, hot-desking options and technology that facilitates hybrid collaboration. The office remains a hub for connection, innovation and culture –

while also giving teams the flexibility they've come to expect.

2. Biophilic design

Biophilic design brings nature into the built environment – an attractive prospect for employees who spent so much time indoors over the past few years. The office design trend involves maximizing natural light, greenery, organic patterns and natural materials. Living walls, green roofs, courtyards, plants and nature-inspired artwork are just some biophilic elements being incorporated into workspaces.

Research shows biophilic design boosts productivity, creativity, wellbeing and employee satisfaction. It taps into our innate human connection with the natural world. For companies wanting to create a vibrant, inspiring workspace, biophilic design also allows for unique branding and aesthetic.

3. Technology integration

The integration of IoT and connected devices allows businesses to create intelligent, responsive environments. Features may include:

- Occupancy sensors and traffic flow analysis to inform space planning decisions
- Smart LED lighting and temperature control systems
- Phone booths, video conferencing systems and

- interactive screens for seamless collaboration
- Apps for controlling space booking, amenities, AV equipment
- Voice assistant technologies like Alexa for hands-free control
- Digital signage and wayfinding solutions

Smart office technology provides data insights while allowing workspaces to respond dynamically to evolving needs. It presents new opportunities to optimize efficiency and create personalized employee experiences.

4. Flexible and modular spaces

Gone are the days of rigid cubicles and assigned desks. Modular furniture systems allow companies to reconfigure layouts and create collaborative zones. Moveable walls, acoustic dividers and multi-use furnishings provide the flexibility to adapt spaces quickly.

Areas can easily be opened up into large communal areas or sectioned off into semi-private nooks. Hot-desking and shared desks also give employees the freedom to choose where they want to work each day. Activity-based working presents diverse settings for different modes – collaboration, focus, learning, socializing or rejuvenating.

This fluid design approach empowers employees and caters to the natural ebb and flow of office-based work. Spaces can be modified to suit changing team dynamics and needs.

5. Sustainability and eco-friendly practices

Sustainability is a key priority for companies aiming to reduce their carbon footprint. Operational energy efficiency, renewable energy solutions and sustainable build materials are some ways workplaces are becoming greener. Additional eco-conscious practices may include:

- Responsible waste disposal and recycling programs
- Low-emission paints, adhesives, furniture and flooring with non-toxic materials
- Motion-activated lighting to reduce energy waste
- Renewable energy sources like solar panels
- Green roofs or living walls to conserve energy
- Smart water refill stations instead of plastic bottles
- Bike racks and electric vehicle charging stations

A sustainable office benefits the bottom line through energy savings while demonstrating a commitment to environmental values. In an era

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of conscious consumerism, an eco-friendly workspace also contributes to positive brand image.

6. Mental health and wellbeing focus

The lines between work and life have become blurred. People are spending more time in the office, and workplace stress has compounded over recent years. Current office design trends promote employee mental health and ensure wellbeing is of paramount importance.

Design considerations include creating private spaces for relaxation or quiet focus, providing access to natural light and greenery, ergonomic furnishings, amenities like gyms or walking trails and policies that encourage work-life balance. Collaborative spaces help build social connections and community.

Workplace culture also plays a major role in nurturing wellbeing. But an intentionally designed, inspiring environment can foster happiness, reduce stress and improve the daily experience for employees.

7. Color psychology and aesthetics

Color palette choices and interior design aesthetics create an ambience that impacts mood and motivation levels. Bright, vibrant tones tend to energize. Warm neutrals promote relaxation and focus. Cool hues like blue or green can have a calming effect.

Using color strategically and playing with different textures, artwork and furnishings can enhance creativity. Bold accent walls or vivid branding elements also allow companies to incorporate brand identity into their office's look and feel.

Thoughtful use of color, lighting and decor creates an inviting, branded environment where people enjoy working and connecting. Psychological balance is key for optimal performance.

8. Multi-functional spaces

Traditionally, the workplace catered mainly to productivity. But work-life balance has become essential. Offices are now integrating amenities that allow for rejuvenation and recreation alongside work.

Gyms, nap pods, massage rooms, games lounges, cafes, outdoor spaces and even "speak-easy" bars or hidden lounges provide employees opportunities for movement, relaxation and fun. Quiet libraries or meditation rooms offer calm reflection.

By blending work, leisure and restoration, the modern office aims to be an all-encompassing environment that sustains innovation and nurtures company culture. Employees can seamlessly transition between collaboration, events or decompression activities.



PHOTO COURTESY OF OFFICE PRINCIPLES

9. Inclusive design

Diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives have become integrated into business operations. Office design must also cater to a diverse workforce. Strategies include:

- ADA compliance and accessibility for differently-abled employees
- Gender-neutral spaces like bathrooms or lactation rooms
- Prayer rooms, meditation spaces or quiet rooms
- Ergonomic desks and chairs for all body types
- Signage and wayfinding in multiple languages
- Natural light for energy and seasonal affective disorder
- Providing a variety of work settings

An inclusive office makes all employees feel accepted, valued and able to thrive. It's not only the right thing to do – it's smart business. Diverse companies are more successful at attracting top talent and outperform industry norms.

10. Local culture and brand integration

While drawing inspiration from global office interior design trends, leading companies are integrating local influences into their offices. Celebrating the city or country's heritage and native features fosters community. Some examples:

- Murals or artwork from local artists
- Reclaimed woods or local natural materials

- Architectural details reflecting regional history
- Landscaping with native greenery
- Cafe menus featuring area cuisine
- Collaborations with neighborhood businesses

Similarly, companies aim to have workspace design reflect their values and brand identity. Custom signage, display walls showcasing products or achievements, murals with company slogans and branded color schemes are just some examples.

The modern office seamlessly ties in inspirations from its surroundings and its inner identity. This creates a welcoming, on-brand environment employees can take pride in.

What's next for workspace design?

As work dynamics keep evolving, so will office spaces. But by keeping these 2024 office design trends in mind, companies can craft personalized environments that unlock productivity, creativity and purpose for the new world of work. The office remains an irreplaceable epicenter for community, innovation and culture – and the latest office design trends driving workspace design aim to maximize its positive impact.

Jo Jenkinson is the design director and Nathan Watson is the development director at Office Principles, a commercial workplace design firm. To see examples of past projects and office solutions, visit officeprinciples.com.

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Sources: The Law Firms.
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	NAME/ADDRESS	PHONE / WEBSITE/EMAIL	LOCAL LAWYERS	PARTNERS	MANAGING PARTNER(S)	PARTIAL LIST OF PRIMARY AREAS OF PRACTICE	YEAR EST'D
1	Brown, Hay + Stephens, LLP 205 S. Fifth St., Suite 1000 Springfield, IL 62701	217-544-8491 bhslaw.com	30	14	Charles Y. Davis	Civil litigation and appellate practice, real estate, education, probate, estate planning, banking, family, employment, environmental, business and health care, traffic/criminal	1828
2	Sorling, Northrup, Hanna, Cullen & Cochran Ltd. 1 N. Old State Capitol Plaza, Suite 200 Springfield, IL 62701	217-544-1144 sorlinglaw.com	21	15	James G. Fahey Stephen F. Hedinger Brian D. Jones Joshua J. Watson Brian D. Lee	General business law, estate planning, litigation, health care, governmental relations, insurance, banking, utility regulation, environmental, family, employment	1945
3	Giffin, Winning, Cohen & Bodewes PC 900 Community Drive Springfield, IL 62703 102 N. Westgate Ave, Suite B Jacksonville, IL 62650	217-525-1571 gwcbllaw.com aknowski@giffinwinning.com	11	5	Creighton Castle	Litigation practice, legislative/governmental affairs, real estate development, business, commercial, banking, estate planning, probate, family law, election law	1911
3	HeplerBroom LLC 4340 Acer Grove Drive Springfield, IL 62711	217-528-3674 heplerbroom.com tbozarth@heplerbroom.com	11	5	Troy Bozarth	Insurance defense, personal injury, corporate and business law, probate, utilities, banking, medical malpractice defense, employment, commercial litigation, environmental	1894
3	Kanoski Bresney 2730 S. MacArthur Blvd. Springfield, IL 62704	217-523-7742 ucount2.com info@kanoski.com	11	1	Todd Bresney	Individual serious personal injury, truck collisions, motorcycle collisions, medical malpractice, workers' compensation, wrongful death, product liability, nursing home negligence	1979
4	Rammelkamp Bradney, P.C. 232 W. State St. Jacksonville, IL 62650	217-245-6177 rblawyers.net receptionist@rblawyers.net	9	6	Brad W. Wilson	Business and corporate, real estate, estate planning, probate, general litigation, insurance, employment and labor law, municipal, utilities and education	1895
4	Heyl, Royster, Voelker & Allen, P.C. 3731 Wabash Ave. Springfield, IL 62711	217-522-8822 firm@heyloyroyster.com	9	6	Theresa M. Powell	Personal injury defense litigation, workers' compensation, employment law, medical and professional liability defense, insurance litigation, appellate practice, business and transactional law, civil rights	1987
5	Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP 400 S. Ninth St., Suite 200 Springfield, IL 62701	217-528-7375 hinshawlaw.com	8	8	Charles Schmadeke	Business and corporate practice, governmental affairs, insurance litigation, real estate, business formation, financing and other transactions	1934
5	FeldmanWasser 1307 S. Seventh St. Springfield, IL 62703	217-544-3403 feldman-wasser.com info@feldman-wasser.com	8	5	Howard Feldman	Civil litigation, criminal defense - state and federal courts, construction law, divorce, related family law, wills, estates, civil rights, employment law	1987
6	Sgro, Hanrahan, Durr, Rabin & Reinbold, LLP 1119 S. Sixth St. Springfield, IL 62703	217-789-1200 casevista.com greg@casevista.com	7	6	Gregory P. Sgro	A general practice law firm representing individuals and businesses	1999
7	Barber, Segatto, Hoffee, Wilke & Cate, LLP 831 E. Monroe St. Springfield, IL 62701	217-544-4868 barberlaw.com	6	5	Matthew J. Cate	General civil litigation and appellate practice, estate planning, probate, banking, corporate, business and family law, real estate, media, tax, bankruptcy	1897

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	NAME/ADDRESS	PHONE / WEBSITE/EMAIL	LOCAL LAWYERS	PARTNERS	MANAGING PARTNER(S)	PARTIAL LIST OF PRIMARY AREAS OF PRACTICE	YEAR EST'D
7	Stratton, Moran, Reichert, Sronce and Appleton 725 S. Fourth St. Springfield, IL 62703	217-528-2183	6	6	Bruce Stratton William F. Moran III Justin Reichert Greg Sronce August Appleton Paul Appleton	Family law, estate planning, criminal law, traffic, real estate, health care, appeals, corporate and business law, labor law, elder law, personal injury, municipal law, workers' compensation, DUI	1980
7	Gates, Wise, Schlosser & Goebel 1231 S. Eighth St. Springfield, IL 62703	217-522-9010 gwspc.com gordon@gwspc.com	6	4	Gordon W. Gates	Commercial and real estate transactions, commercial litigation, employment issues, business bankruptcies, criminal defense, drivers license reinstatement, personal injury and malpractice, DUI and traffic	1997
8	Graham & Graham, Ltd. 1201 S. Eighth St. Springfield, IL 62703	217-523-4569 rjwilderson@ggltlaw.com	5	3	Richard Wilderson Bradley Huff Nancy Eckert-Martin	General trial practice, medical-related litigation, business transactions, real estate, health law, probate	1897
8	Delano Law Offices, LLC 1 SE Old State Capitol Plaza Springfield, IL 62701	217-544-2703 delanolaw.com delano@delanolaw.com	5	n/a	Sarah Delano Pavlik	Personal injury, workers' compensation, medical malpractice, estate planning and probate, business litigation, business planning and transactions, real estate, family law	1967
8	Cassiday Schade LLP 2040 W. Iles Ave., Suite B Springfield, IL 62704	217-572-1714 cassiday.com jrupcich@cassiday.com	5	2	Joseph Rupcich Joy Syrcle	Personal injury defense litigation, transportation, premises, medical and professional liability defense, insurance defense litigation, appellate practice, civil rights	2014
9	Bellatti, Fay, Bellatti & Beard, LLP 816 W. State St. Jacksonville, IL 62650	217-245-7111 bellattilaw.com	4	3	Daniel J. Beard	Business and commercial, estate planning, probate, real estate, banking, municipal	1876
9	Hart, Southworth & Witsman 1 N. Old State Capitol Plaza, Suite 501 Springfield, IL 62701	217-753-0055 N/A	4	3	Mike Southworth Samuel J. Witsman Timothy J. Rigby	Business law, real estate, banking, corporate, probate, estate planning, special needs estate planning, municipal tax-exempt financing	1985
9	Shay & Associates Law Firm, LLC 1030 S. Durkin Drive Springfield, IL 62704	217-523-5900 www.shayandassociates.com shayandassociates@comcast.net	4	1	Timothy Shay	Civil litigation involving personal injury, medical malpractice and workers' compensation	1992
9	Scott & Scott, P.C. 611 E. Monroe St., Suite 200 Springfield, IL 62701	217-753-8200 scottandscottlaw.com	4	4	R. Stephen Scott Gregory A. Scott Jared M. Scott Pamela Hart	Family, tax, commercial, bankruptcy, real estate, personal injury, estate planning, probate, corporate, general litigation, elder law	1947
9	Drake, Narup & Mead, P.C. 107 E. Allen St. Springfield, IL 62704	217-528-9776 dnmpc.com	4	4	Christian D. Biswell	Trial attorneys, medical malpractice, insurance defense, general practice, family law, personal injury	1989

TOP LAWYERS

SPRINGFIELD AREA

BASED UPON A SURVEY OF THEIR PEERS



These **LEADING LAWYERS** have been recommended by their peers to be among the **TOP LAWYERS** in Illinois.

Matthew J. Cate	Barber Segatto Hoffee Wilke & Cate LLP	217.953.4979	Commercial Lit; Creditor Rights/Commercial Collection; RE: Commercial; RE: Residential
Randy S. Paswater	Barber Segatto Hoffee Wilke & Cate LLP	217.953.4979	Creditor Rights/Commercial Collections; Elder; Family; Trust/Will/Estate
Bernard G. Segatto III	Barber Segatto Hoffee Wilke & Cate LLP	217.953.4979	Close/Private Held; Commercial Litigation; Land Use/Zoning/Condemn; RE: Commercial
Randall W. Segatto	Barber Segatto Hoffee Wilke & Cate LLP	217.953.4979	Close/Private Held Business; Elder; Real Estate: Commercial
Barry Hines	Barry Hines — Attorney at Law	217.953.4051	Agriculture; Real Estate: Commercial; Trust/Will/Estate
Michael Glenn Barton	Bellatti Barton Cochran & White LLC	217.793.9300	Agriculture; Close/Private Held Bus; RE: Commercial; Tax: Individual; Trust/Will/Estate
Mark S. Cochran	Bellatti Barton Cochran & White LLC	217.793.9300	Agriculture; Environmental; Public Utilities; Real Estate: Commercial; Trust/Will/Estate
Andrew G. White	Bellatti Barton Cochran & White LLC	217.793.9300	Agriculture; Energy; Real Estate: Commercial; Real Estate: Residential; Trust/Will/Estate
Robert A. Stuart Jr.	Brown Hay & Stephens LLP	217.544.8491	Association/Non-Profit; Trust/Will/Estate
Joseph N. Rupcich	Cassiday Schade LLP	217.993.5644	Civil Rights/Constitutional; Medical Malpractice Defense; PI Defense: General
Sarah Delano Pavlik	Delano Law Offices LLC	217.544.2703	Close/Private Held Business; Trust/Will/Estate
Thomas Chester Pavlik Jr.	Delano Law Offices LLC	217.544.2703	Close/Private Held; Comm Lit; Cred Rts/Comm Collect; RE: Comm; Secured Transaction
Christian D. Biswell	Drake Narup & Mead PC	217.528.9776	Medical Malpractice Defense; Professional Malpractice Defense
Ashley D. Davis	FeldmanWasser	217.544.3403	Civil Rights/Constitutional; Family
Carl R. Draper	FeldmanWasser	217.544.3403	Civil Rights/Constitutional; Employment: Employee; False Claims Act/Whistle Blower
Howard W. Feldman	FeldmanWasser	217.544.3403	Construction; Family; ADR: Family
Kelli Ellen Gordon	FeldmanWasser	217.544.3403	Family
Roger L. Rutherford	FeldmanWasser	217.544.3403	Gov/Muni/Lobby/Admin; Trust/Will/Estate
Stuart H. Shiffman	FeldmanWasser	217.544.3403	Civil Appellate; Criminal Appellate; Criminal Defense: Felonies/Misdemeanors
Stanley N. Wasser	FeldmanWasser	217.544.3403	Construction
James R. Enlow	Gates Wise Schlosser & Goebel	217.522.9010	Bankruptcy: Individual; Bankruptcy/Workout: Comm; Commercial Lit; Land Use/Zoning
Gordon W. Gates	Gates Wise Schlosser & Goebel	217.522.9010	Bankrupt/Workout: Comm; Close/Private Held; Comm Lit; Land Use/Zoning: RE: Comm
Todd M. Goebel	Gates Wise Schlosser & Goebel	217.522.9010	Criminal Defense: DUI; Criminal Def: Felonies/Misdemeanors; Criminal Def: White Collar
Frederick J. Schlosser	Gates Wise Schlosser & Goebel	217.522.9010	Criminal Defense: DUI; Criminal Defense: Felonies/Misdemeanors
Bradley B. Wilson	Gates Wise Schlosser & Goebel	217.522.9010	Civil Rights/Constitutional; Employment: Employee
D. Peter Wise	Gates Wise Schlosser & Goebel	217.522.9010	Criminal Defense: DUI; Criminal Def: Felonies/Misdemeanors; Criminal Def: White Collar
Jason E. Brokaw	Giffin Winning Cohen & Bodewes PC	217.525.1571	Civil Appellate; Employment: Management; Governmental/Municipal/Lobbying/Admin
Creighton R. Castle	Giffin Winning Cohen & Bodewes PC	217.525.1571	Close/Private Held; Mergers/Acquisitions; RE: Comm; Tax: Business; Trust/Will/Estate
David A. Herman	Giffin Winning Cohen & Bodewes PC	217.525.1571	Commercial Lit; Election/Political/Campaign; Gov/Muni/Lobby/Admin; Trust/Will/Estate
R. Mark Mifflin	Giffin Winning Cohen & Bodewes PC	217.525.1571	Commercial Litigation; Governmental/Municipal/Lobbying/Administrative
Christopher E. Sherer	Giffin Winning Cohen & Bodewes PC	217.525.1571	Civil Appel; Elect/Political/Campaign; Family; Gov/Muni/Lobby/Admin; Trust/Will/Estate
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Jason R. Vincent	Giffin Winning Cohen & Bodewes PC	217.525.1571	Criminal Defense: DUI; Criminal Defense: Felonies/Misdemeanors; Family
James W. Chipman	Golan Christie Taglia LLP	217.280.5518	Real Estate: Tax
Larry A. Apfelbaum	Kanoski Bresney	217.523.7742	Workers' Compensation
Todd A. Bresney	Kanoski Bresney	217.523.7742	Personal Injury: General
William J. Harrington	Kanoski Bresney	217.523.7742	Personal Injury: General
Robert M. Javoronok Jr.	Kanoski Bresney	217.523.7742	Personal Injury: General; Workers' Compensation
Kathy A. Olivero	Kanoski Bresney	217.523.7742	Workers' Compensation
John J. Waldman	Kanoski Bresney	217.523.7742	Workers' Compensation

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Sources: The Law Firms.
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9	Wolter, Beeman & Lynch LLP 1001 S. Sixth St. Springfield, IL 62703	217-753-4220 wblawyers.com wbl@wblawyers.com	4	3	Francis Lynch Brent Beeman Suzanne Dennis	Personal injury, professional malpractice, workers' compensation	1997
9	The Law Offices of Frederick W. Nessler & Associates, Ltd. 536 N. Bruns Lane, Suite 1 Springfield, IL 62702	217-698-0202 nesslerlaw.com	4	1	Frederick W. Nessler	Personal injury, workers' compensation, medical malpractice, wrongful death, clergy misconduct, nursing home abuse	1977
10	Cherry, Frazier & Sabin, LLP 1 W. Old State Capitol Plaza, Myers Building, Suite 800 Springfield, IL 62701	217-753-4242 springfieldlawfirm.com	3	3	Diana N. Cherry Richard D. Frazier Scott A. Sabin	Family, criminal defense, personal injury, federal and state appeals, civil litigation, traffic defense	1983
10	Bellatti, Barton, Cochran & White, LLC 944 Clocktower Drive, Suite A Springfield, IL 62s704	217-793-9300 bellatti-barton.com lawyers@bellatti-barton.com	3	3	Michael G. Barton	Estate planning, probate, trust, real estate, business planning and income tax for farmers and landowners.	1987
10	Sheehan & Sheehan, Lawyers, P.C. 1215 S. Fourth St. Springfield, IL 62703	217-544-0701 sheehanlaw.net jr@sheehanlaw.net pat@sheehanlaw.net wps@sheehanlaw.net	3	3	Patrick J. Sheehan Patrick J. Sheehan III William P. Sheehan	Adoption, agricultural law, business/commercial law, estate planning and administration, probate, real estate, taxation, traffic and minor criminal offenses, personal injury	1960
10	Livingstone, Mueller, Bima & Davlin PC 620 E. Edwards St. Springfield, IL 62703	217-525-1070	3	2	L. Robert Mueller Ken Bima	Workers' compensation law	1953
10	Edwards Group LLC 3223 S. Meadowbrook, Suite A Springfield, IL 62711	217-726-9200 edwardsgroupllc.com david@edwardsgroupllc.com	3	1	David Edwards	Estate planning and elder law	2008
11	Zack Stamp, Ltd. 225 S. College St., Suite 100 Springfield, IL 62704	217-525-0700 zackstamp.net kmcfadden@601w.com	2	2	Kevin J. McFadden	Insurance and financial institution regulatory law, business law, military law, construction law	1997

Jonathan T. Nessler	Law Offices of Frederick W. Nessler & Assoc	217.698.0202	Nursing Home Negligence; Personal Injury: General
Stephen Scott Morrill	Morrill & Fiedler LLC	217.789.5411	Governmental/Municipal/Lobbying/Administrative
James E. Neville	Neville Richards Zittel & Siegel LLC	618.277.0900	Medical Malpractice Def; PI Def: General; Product Liab Def; Transport Def; Toxic Tort Def
Timothy S. Richards	Neville Richards Zittel & Siegel LLC	618.277.0900	Medical Malpractice Defense; PI Defense: General; Products Liability Def; Toxic Torts Def
Cheryl S. Neal	PNC Private Bank	217.753.7130	Trust/Will/Estate
James A. Borland	Quinn Johnston	217.753.1133	Personal Injury Defense: General; Products Liability Defense
Pamela E. Hart	Scott & Scott PC	217.753.8200	Elder; Family; Real Estate: Residential; Trust/Will/Estate
Gregory A. Scott	Scott & Scott PC	217.753.8200	Adoption/Reproductive Technology; Family Appellate; Family; Trust/Will/Estate
Jared M. Scott	Scott & Scott PC	217.753.8200	Family; Trust/Will/Estate
R. Stephen Scott	Scott & Scott PC	217.753.8200	Bankrupt/Workout: Comm; Close/Private Held; Tax Bus; Tax: Individual; Trust/Will/Estate
Michael M. Durr	Sgro Hanrahan Durr Rabin & Reinbold LLP	217.789.1200	Close/Private Held; Comm Lit; RE: Association/Condominium; RE: Comm; RE: Resident
Jeana Kim Reinbold	Sgro Hanrahan Durr Rabin & Reinbold LLP	217.789.1200	Bankruptcy: Individual; Bankruptcy/Workout: Commercial; Creditor Rights/Comm Collect
Gregory P. Sgro	Sgro Hanrahan Durr Rabin & Reinbold LLP	217.789.1200	Land Use/Zoning/Condemnation; PI: General; RE: Commercial; Trust/Will/Estate
Timothy M. Shay	Shay and Associates	217.523.5900	Personal Injury: General; Personal Injury: Prof'l Malpractice; Workers' Compensation
Michelle L. Blackburn	Sorling Northrup	217.544.1144	Family; Trust/Will/Estate
James G. Fahey	Sorling Northrup	217.544.1144	Civil Appellate; Employment: Management; Personal Injury Defense: General
C. Clark Germann	Sorling Northrup	217.544.1144	Close/Private Held; Comm Lit; Gov/Muni/Lobby/Admin; Min/Natural Resource; RE: Comm
Stephen F. Hedinger	Sorling Northrup	217.544.1144	Animal; Environmental; Mineral/Natural Resource
Michael G. Horstman Jr.	Sorling Northrup	217.544.1144	Association/Non-Profit; Close/Private Held; RE: Comm; Tax: Individual; Trust/Will/Estate
Brian D. Jones	Sorling Northrup	217.544.1144	Banking/Financial Institutions; Close/Private Held; Employee Benefits; RE: Commercial
John A. Kauerauf	Sorling Northrup	217.544.1144	Association/Non-Profit; Close/Private Held Business; Employment: Management
Kirk W. Laudeman	Sorling Northrup	217.544.1144	Medical Malpractice Defense; PI Def: General; Prof'l Malpractice Def; Transportation Def
James M. Morphew	Sorling Northrup	217.544.1144	Election/Political/Campaign; Governmental/Municipal/Lobbying/Administrative
Lisa A. Petrilli	Sorling Northrup	217.544.1144	Commercial Litigation; Gov/Muni/Lobby/Admin; Land Use/Zoning; RE: Commercial
David A. Rolf	Sorling Northrup	217.544.1144	Agriculture; Commercial Litigation; Land Use/Zoning; PI Def: General; RE: Commercial
Peggy J. Ryan	Sorling Northrup	217.544.1144	Family
John R. Simpson	Sorling Northrup	217.544.1144	Tax: Individual; Trust/Will/Estate
Stephen A. Tagge	Sorling Northrup	217.544.1144	Banking/Financial Institution; Close/Private Held; Comm Lit; Creditor Rights; RE: Comm
Joshua J. Watson	Sorling Northrup	217.544.1144	Family; Trust/Will/Estate
Matthew A. Brewer	Stephen P. Kelly, Attorney at Law	217.544.8000	Workers' Compensation

These EMERGING LAWYERS have been identified by their peers to be among the TOP LAWYERS in Illinois who are age 40 or younger OR who have been admitted to the practice of law for 10 or fewer years.

Brittany Kink Toigo	Barber Segatto Hoffee Wilke & Cate LLP	217.953.4979	Family; Tax: Individual; Trust/Will/Estate
Samantha A. Bobor	Giffin Winning Cohen & Bodewes PC	217.525.1571	Employment: Management; Gov't/Municipal/Lobby/Admin; Labor: Management; School
Jackson B. Fredman	Giffin Winning Cohen & Bodewes PC	217.525.1571	Civil Appellate; Family Appellate; Family; Gov/Muni/Lobby/Admin
Gina Couri-Cyphers	Kanoski Bresney	217.523.7742	Personal Injury: General
Benjamin M. Sgro	Sgro Hanrahan Durr Rabin & Reinbold LLP	217.789.1200	Personal Injury: General; RE: Commercial; RE: Residential; Workers' Compensation
Aaron D. Evans	Sorling Northrup	217.544.1144	Close/Private Held Bus; RE: Commercial; RE: Residential; RE: Finance; Trust/Will/Estate
Brian D. Lee	Sorling Northrup	217.544.1144	Civil Appellate; Commercial Litigation; Personal Injury Defense: General

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	NAME/ADDRESS	PHONE / WEBSITE/EMAIL	LOCAL LAWYERS	PARTNERS	MANAGING PARTNER(S)	PARTIAL LIST OF PRIMARY AREAS OF PRACTICE	YEAR EST'D
11	Kopec, White & Spooner 225 S. College St. Springfield, IL 62704	217-726-7540 springfield-law.com mkopec@kws-law.com dwhite@kws-law.com	2	2	A. Michael Kopec David V. White	Civil litigation and trials, divorce and family law, personal injury, business planning, formation and transactions, franchise law, estate planning and probate, real estate	2008
11	Young Law Partners, P.C. 1300 S. Eighth St. Springfield IL 62703	217-544-8500 lyblaw.com info@lyblaw.com	2	2	Duane D. Young Stephen Iden	Family law, guardianship, adoption, elder law, probate, estates, medicaid planning, wills, trusts, social security, disability	1995
11	Vig Law 1100 S. Fifth St. Springfield IL 62703	217-241-5628 vig-law.com	2	2	Sara Vig	DUI defense, state and federal criminal defense, traffic offenses, civil rights	2017
11	Berg & Robeson PC 1217 S. Sixth St. Springfield, IL 62703	217-525-1917 bergandrobesson.com sberg@bergrobesson.com amueller@bergrobesson.com	2	1	Steve W. Berg	Petitioner's workers' compensation and plaintiff's personal injury	1988
11	Hennessy & Roach, P.C. 3940 Pintail Drive Springfield, IL 62711	217-726-0037 hennessyroach.com	2	2	Emilie A. Miller	Workers' compensation defense, general liability and civil litigation, labor and employment	1993

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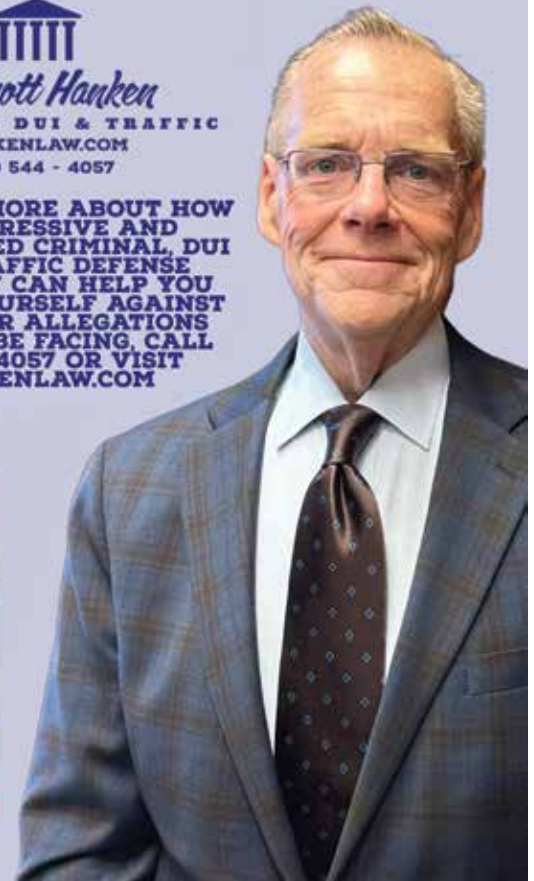
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Top legal industry trends for 2024

By Adam Hamdan, Briefpoint



Law is known as one of the industries most resistant to change, with many law firms sticking to traditional methods – but not without a good reason. These traditions have built some of the biggest practices that we know today, and they undeniably influence other firms to stick to what they know best.

All that is changing, however, with the arrival of new legal tech and constant innovation of standard legal practices. In 2024, we expect to see both big and even smaller law firms ride the wave of transformation in the field of law. The legal sector is highly competitive and fast-paced by nature, which calls for constant improvement through strategies that align with current innovations available. There are too many legal trends to talk about, so we've narrowed it down to the six most relevant ones:

1. Increased adoption of AI technology

Lawyers are turning to artificial intelligence to simplify legal processes and make them more efficient, made noticeable with the popularization of legal AI tools like Briefpoint, PatentPal and Casetext. Most legal pros are no longer skeptical of this “new” tech but are instead embracing it as a cost-efficient legal assistant.

A LexisNexis survey involving nearly 8,000 participants across U.S., Canada, France and UK law firms revealed that almost half expect AI to significantly change practices, especially in improving productivity and efficiency in everyday tasks.

Meanwhile, Thomson Reuters highlighted 2023's milestones in AI development, including a focus on safe and trustworthy AI applications in various legal functions.

2. Cloud-based technology for cybersecurity

Private cloud tech is a type of cloud-based computing and storage where the data belongs to the law firm that uses it, inaccessible to the public. The legal field handles sensitive and private client information daily, making private clouds a necessity as more and more firms go fully digital.

But why has cloud tech become so crucial? The 2022 IBM Cost of Data Breach report showed that a staggering 83% of the organizations it surveyed had encountered more than one data breach, facing an unprecedented average total cost of \$4.35 million – a peak for the year and marking a 2.6% increase from the year before.

Cloud security encompasses a wide array of protocols, tools and strategies aimed at safeguarding data, applications and infrastructure in the

cloud, addressing key concerns such as data privacy, compliance and protection against breaches and malware.

3. Alternative legal service providers

Simply put, Alternative Legal Service Providers (ALSPs) are services that take the grunt work from in-house legal teams. These might include document review, due diligence, research, compliance and much more.

According to several reports, ALSPs now constitute a \$20.6 billion market segment, having experienced a compounded annual growth rate of 20% from 2019 to 2021. This growth indicates a rapidly evolving market where the lines between ALSPs merged firms, law firms and corporate law departments are increasingly blurring.

The report highlights that both law firms and in-house counsel are recognizing the value that ALSPs bring to the table, including specialized services, improved cost efficiency and greater flexibility in headcount and talent management.

Independent ALSPs represent the largest market segment, but law firm-owned captive ALSPs are emerging as the fastest-growing segment, indicating a strategic shift within law firms towards embracing alternative service models.

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4. Shortening lockup periods

Most firms rely on billable hours to make a profit, but these hours don't necessarily get paid right away. A "lockup period" refers to the time between completing work and getting paid. For larger firms, longer lockups may not make a significant change to cash flow, but it can be a huge problem for small firms with limited resources.

The 2023 Legal Trends Report by Clio emphasized the importance of reducing lockups for maintaining a healthy cash flow. It introduced the concept of "lockup" as a mix of "realization lockup"

flexibility, work-life balance and variety of projects, which contrasts with the traditional set-up.

Additionally, the increasing number of firms outsourcing work supports the rising trend of freelance lawyering. Nearly half of law firms reported using contract lawyers, indicating a significant shift toward integrating freelancers into traditional legal practice.

This change is partly driven by the legal outsourcing market's rapid growth, which is projected to reach significant figures by 2027.

Additionally, law firms are increasingly adopting strategic measures to maximize efficiency and profitability. These measures include optimizing leverage, further reducing office space in response to hybrid work models, investing in technology and skilled staff like pricing specialists and outsourcing non-core functions.



(work yet to be billed) and "collection lockup" (billed work yet to be collected), suggesting that technology, particularly electronic billing solutions, can significantly lower these durations.

5. Rising numbers of freelance lawyers

Some people might think that the legal profession is something you have to do on-site, inside an office where you can meet colleagues and clients face-to-face. That's not the reality nowadays, especially with current technological advancements and shifting work preferences brought about by the pandemic.

Today, the legal world is adopting alternative work setups, as we can see by the increasing number of freelance lawyers. These attorneys come from diverse backgrounds, including law professors, lawyers caring for families and retired or semi-retired legal professionals.

Overall, the appeal of remote work lies in the

6. Firms focusing on combating recession

Many industries are still reeling from the economic impacts of the pandemic, and the legal sector is no different. Today, legal professionals are more wary of economic uncertainty and finding ways to be more recession-proof.

The resilience and growth strategies that were emerging in 2023 have further evolved this year, with firms focusing even more on diversifying their various business practice areas and enhancing operational efficiencies to maintain competitiveness and profitability.

Midsize law firms, in particular, have continued to thrive by capitalizing on counter-cyclical practices such as litigation, labor and employment, and bankruptcy. This focus allows these firms to leverage the demand brought about by economic shifts, providing services that become more sought-after in challenging times, such as the cost-of-living crisis.

The future of the legal industry is bright

The legal industry, while inherently orthodox in some ways, is not immune to change. Goals may remain the same, but the ways we go about it are always open for improvement.

These key trends revolve around upgrading legal services and, essentially, the bottom line. With more efficient workflows and maximized potential, firms can stay competitive in a cutthroat legal market. **SBJ**

Briefpoint is a generative artificial intelligence tool that drafts discovery response and request documents for attorneys, allowing them to embrace efficiency, minimize tedious tasks and focus on more value-adding work. The company, based in Irvine, Ca, was co-founded by a senior litigation attorney and a former lead engineer at Relativity.



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1	Systemax 4501 Alex Blvd., Suite A Springfield, IL 62711	217-331-9002 systemaxsolutions.com bjackson@systemaxsolutions.com	35	Brett Jackson Bryan Mesecher	Brandt, Bank of Springfield, Troxell, HSHS, Kerber, Eck & Braeckel, Hanson Professional Services, Tom Lange Company, O'Shea Builders, YMCA of Springfield, Henson Robinson Co., Abraham Lincoln Capitol Airport, TOIRMA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	1982
2	The Illinois Press Association Advertising Services (IPAS) 2501 Chatham Road Suite 200 Springfield, IL 62704	217-241-1300 illinoispress.org adservices@illinoispress.org	11	Illinois newspapers	Illinois Office of Secretary of State, Illinois EPA, State Treasurer's Office	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	1865
3	Buzzworthy Integrated Marketing 15 S. Old Capitol Plaza Springfield, IL 62701	217-718-5445	8	Michael Buzinski	Entire Productions, American Landscaping, North Pacific Research Board, The Corkscrew Wine Emporium, CTC Mortgage, Clean Impact, Walton Clinic, Zero Waste Management, Pinnacle Contracting, Daaxit Fractional CFO, Ireland Clinic	✓		✓			✓	2005
3	HPR Marketing & Consulting Group	217-698-2023 hprmarketing.com info@hprmarketing.com	8	Wally Hamlin	Ryan Electrical Solutions, Nurses & More, Nudo, Springfield Area Home Builders Association, Century DCJR, DeKalb Sycamore Chevrolet, Midwest Garage Door Company and more	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	2001
3	Encore Consulting PMB 204 3309 Robbins Road Springfield, IL 62704	217-816-5415 encoreconsulting@gmail.com	8	Terri Noel	Deb Sarsany Team, Levitt AMP Springfield Music Series, Clay Design Co, Exciting Windows, IECU, Habitat for Humanity, Monarch Landscaping, Mosquito Joe, Peoples Bank & Trust, Premier Vision, Treasures for Tails, Travel Shoppe, King's Daughters Organization, Lezlie Hearn Broker, Peace, Love & Sweat, Simply CBD and WE-CI.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	2003
4	Targeted Marketing Resources 3171 Greenhead Dr. Suite A Springfield, IL 62711	217-546-8194 targetedmarketingresources.com larissa@targetedmarketingresources.com	5	Larissa Hansen	Local independent businesses	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	2009
5	Paszkwicz Marketing 3161 W. White Oaks Dr. Suite 102 Springfield, IL 62704	217-302-6262 spcreativity.com	3	Mark Butler Ellen Marten Molly Ballinger	Paszkwicz Litigation Services, Central Illinois Builders, BJ Grand, Butler Funeral Homes, Lincoln Land Community College Foundation, USCA, Illumine Transportation, Inner City Mission, TOIRMA, Kelley & Ferraro, O'Shea Builders, IICLE, Global Tech	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	2020
6	Gem PR & Media 2121 W. White Oaks Dr. Springfield, IL 62704	217-391-4302 gemprmedia.com hello@gemprmedia.com	2	Gemma Long Chris Long	Local independent businesses throughout Illinois and illinoislocal.org	✓		✓	✓	✓		2013
6	Fine Tune Creative 2228 Cloverfield Lane Springfield, IL 62711	217-622-6363 finetunecreative.net pzubeck@msn.com	2	Perry Zubeck Lori Zubeck	America Ambulance, The Real Estate Group, Knight's Action Park, The Creek, Curve Inn, Springfield Reprographics, My Friends Discovery Daycare, Public House 29, Saporì Pizzeria & Italian Market	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	2013



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Artificial intelligence is reshaping marketing

By Annie Fulgenzi

Generative artificial intelligence tools have been silently innovating how businesses market to consumers in big ways over the last year. However, proposed new AI disclosure laws in Illinois may soon shine a light on these practices.

It should come as no surprise that AI has rapidly infiltrated countless areas of life. Whether you have noticed the shift or not, perhaps the most significant way AI has begun to alter our experience is through business' marketing, branding and advertising.

Brett Jackson, chief executive officer of Systemax, the largest advertising agency in Springfield, said Systemax began using generative AI about a year-and-a-half ago, and it quickly became a foundational part of their work.

"I think they're incredibly useful. We use them for writing copy and coming up with imagery," said Jackson. "As an example, we work with all kinds of brands and each brand has their own brand voice, image, their own look and feel. Some brands are very corporate and very professional sounding. So to write copy for that organization and then switch to one that's more fun and family oriented, then to one that's a little more raunchy – that's a hard thing to do quickly and to be efficient with it."

Jackson said they can easily prompt AI to write posts in the tone that best represents the brand they are working with; for instance, a law firm's Instagram post may need to sound professional while a prompt for a dog food company might ask for a more fun and playful voice.

As far as imagery, Jackson might use AI tools on applications such as Canva to generate a stock image of customers "looking like they are having fun while opening a checking account," for example, instead of having to organize a whole photoshoot to meet that specific request.

Beyond generating content in the first place, Jackson said AI is used to analyze data on how different advertisements perform to then generate subsequent media that can most effectively reach and engage consumers.

"We might say, 'Here's five Instagram ads that we created. Here's the copy for these and how they performed. Now, write an ad that will perform at the highest level using the same voice.' You're able to then layer results and data on top of it to keep refining for better and better results," said Jackson.

This sort of A/B testing, which compares the performance of two versions of content, is not necessarily new to the marketing industry, but with the use of AI it has become far more efficient, effective and accessible at a level that would have required a higher data analytics skill set before.



Prompt of "A white endurance Ford new-generation Explorer SUV speeding on the dirt, SUV off-road style, low angle, sports photography, mud, realistic --ar 128:63" for Midjourney V6. IMAGE PROVIDED BY DEVIN LARSON

Chris McCloud, a partner at Pendulum PR's Springfield office, said while AI is certainly useful for his company, it's not a replacement for the human creativity element. The public relations firm specializes in working with businesses in regulated industries including consumer technology, cannabis, health care and government to promote brands through positive publicity and reputation management.

"I think the important thing to keep in mind is AI is never going to know your brand or your voice as well as you do," McCloud said. "I think we should absolutely take advantage of the benefits, but we should be very respectful about what it can and can't do. For me, it's never going to be a replacement for the human element, whether you are writing out a strategy, or you're writing a press release or you're asking it to draw you a graphic. There are subtle differences that I think people are starting to be able to see whether something's written by artificial intelligence or whether it's been written by somebody who truly knows a customer of a client's brand. I would never just use an AI and give it to a customer without injecting



CHRIS MCCLLOUD, A PARTNER AT PENDULUM PR, SAID HE DOESN'T SEE AI EVER REPLACING THE HUMAN ELEMENT NEEDED FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION. PHOTO COURTESY CHRIS MCCLLOUD

my skill and my expertise into whatever I'm asking it to do," said McCloud.

However, not everyone can so easily spot when AI is being used to influence consumer behavior. And many companies don't include labels indicating when content is AI-generated, but that might soon be changing.

A bill currently in committee in the Illinois General Assembly (HB-4869) would amend the Consumer Fraud and Deceptive Business Practices Act to require businesses to include a disclosure when AI is used to generate marketing content. According to the bill's sponsor, state Rep. Hoan Huynh, D-Chicago, this includes content that is AI-generated but edited by a human.

"We're seeing a rise in deceptive business practices where folks are misled when they're looking at commercials or advertisements they believe are factual, when in fact they've been created by synthetic media," said Huynh. "So we wanted to make sure any ads for goods or services that are created with artificial intelligence have to be disclosed. That way, consumers can know when something has been artificially altered and can make an informed decision before purchasing a good or service," said Huynh.

Utah was the first state to pass a law of this kind in early April, but many states appear poised to follow. TikTok, YouTube, Facebook and Instagram have already implemented options for users to select a label for posts that utilize AI. Companies that utilize AI for marketing or advertising would be well-advised to keep an eye on additional regulations that are likely to be put in place for this rapidly evolving technology. ^{SBJ}

Annie Fulgenzi is a law student at University of Illinois who is particularly interested in issues related to artificial intelligence. She previously interned at Springfield Business Journal and Illinois Times while completing her undergraduate degree at SIUE.



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The tax rules of giving

By Sarah Delano Pavlik

People frequently ask me how much they can give to someone at any one time. The answer for most of us is any amount you want.

The federal government imposes a transfer tax on all American citizens and residents, but there is an exemption of \$13,610,000 per person as of Jan. 1, 2024. This amount is increased each year based on inflation. However, the law which increased the exemption is set to sunset on Dec. 31, 2025. At that time, if Congress and the president do not act, the exemption will be decreased by 50%, which is estimated to leave a \$7 million exemption in 2026.

Each of us can use this exemption amount to cover transfers during our lifetimes or at our deaths. So, this year, I could give my children (or anyone else) up to \$13,610,000 without incurring any gift tax (assuming I have not used any of my exemption in the past). Or, if I died this year, my estate would not owe any estate tax if the value of my estate was less than \$13,610,000.

There are certain exceptions to the transfer tax. There is an unlimited marital deduction if your spouse is a U.S. citizen. So, if Jeff Bezos ever marries Lauren Sanchez, at his death he could leave all his billions to her tax-free. Or he could give her any amount while he is alive. Gifts to charitable organizations are also exempt from gift and estate tax.

There is also an exemption for gifts to individuals. This amount is called the annual gift tax exclusion. For many years, this amount was \$10,000. However, since 2002 it has also increased with inflation, and is now \$18,000. This means that you can give any person up to \$18,000 per year without reporting it to the federal government or

having it count against your \$13,610,000 exemption. Annual exclusions apply to gifts to individuals. They do not apply to gifts to trusts unless the trusts have specific provisions.

You can give \$18,000 per year to any number of people, so if you have five children and five grandchildren, you could give them a total of \$180,000 without any gift tax consequences. If you are married, your spouse can give \$180,000 as well. There is also a special rule regarding sec-



tion 529 education accounts. You are allowed to give or use five annual exclusions in one year for contributions to a section 529 account. So, you could give \$90,000 to a section 529 account for your grandchild in 2024 (assuming you did not make other gifts to them) and make an election to count your 2025, 2026, 2027 and 2028 annual gift tax exclusions for the grandchild toward that gift. You are required to file a federal gift tax return to make that election.

Even though you will not owe any gift tax until your lifetime gifts exceed your exemption amount (currently \$13,610,000), you are required to report

gifts that exceed the annual gift tax exclusion on a gift tax return. Gift tax returns are due on April 15 of the year after the gift. So, if you give your child \$118,000 in 2024, you will need to report that in a gift tax return that will be due April 15, 2025. The first \$18,000 of the gift is excluded. The remaining \$100,000 will count against your lifetime exemption, meaning you can only give away another \$13,510,000 during your lifetime or at your death. Most of us will never come close to this amount

and will never pay any gift tax or estate tax to the federal government. (Illinois does not have a gift tax, but its estate tax exemption is only \$4 million).

Gifts are not income to the person receiving them and are not deductible by the person making the gift, but there is a potential income tax downside to giving assets other than cash. Assume you bought shares of Apple for \$50 and they are now worth \$200. If you sold the shares, you would pay a capital gain of \$150. If you give the shares to your child, your child keeps your income tax basis, so if she sells the shares, she will have a capital gain of \$150. If you keep the shares until your death, they will receive a step-up in basis to the fair market value on the date of your death. So if the shares are worth \$200 on the date of your death and your child receives them under your will, then sells them for \$200, she will not have any capital gain.

Bottom line: if you're in a giving mood, feel free to do so – up to \$13,610,000. **SBJ**



Sarah Delano Pavlik is an attorney with Delano Law Offices in Springfield.

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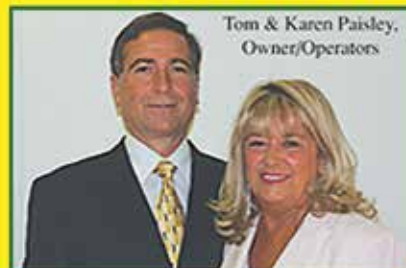
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Free trauma-informed care training

Free training on trauma-informed care is available for people who work in community-based organizations, health care or education settings or who work closely with people in vulnerable populations.

The training will be offered both virtually and in-person thanks to a partnership between Memorial Health, S. Consulting LLC and Heritage Behavioral Health.

In Sangamon County, there is an in-person training available 4 to 6 p.m., Wednesday, Sept. 18, at the Salvation Army, 1600 E. Clearlake Drive, Springfield. There are

also virtual sessions available: 10 a.m.- noon on Wednesday, May 15; and 10 a.m. to noon, Thursday, July 18. A link will be sent after participants have registered for the virtual training.

"The goal behind this training is to decrease the stigma around those seeking care for mental wellness," said Sonja Chargois, a community engagement and equity, diversity and inclusion coordinator at Memorial Health. "Participants will learn practical tools for how to approach their work in a trauma-informed way and increase client engage-

ment, outcomes and community wellness."

Attendees will learn about trauma's complex impact, creative and compassionate responses and the importance of caring for self. There will be two continuing education credits available for those who work in clinical settings. To receive continuing education contact hours, attendance is required at the entire event as well as completion and submission of the evaluation form.

For more information, email communityhealth@mhsil.com.

Register for the Little Miracles 5K Walk/Run



HSHS St. John's Children's Hospital is encouraging people of any age or ability to participate in the Little Miracles 5K Walk/Run. All proceeds from this event will go towards the ongoing needs of the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at St. John's.

"The Little Miracles 5K offers an oppor-

tunity for friends, families and colleagues to come together while supporting a great cause," said Mary Rogers, philanthropy specialist for HSHS St. John's Foundation. "It is truly remarkable to witness the community coming together in support of our tiniest patients and their families."

The Little Miracles 5K Walk/Run will be held on Saturday, June 22 at 9 a.m. The walk/run will take place at Washington Park and offers a 3K route or 5K route. Registration is open now.



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Supporting women at work

By Kelly Gust



I think a lot about how women make workplaces better, as well as the opportunities and challenges women face. When consulting with individuals and organizations about management challenges, I try to balance organizational, systemic solutions with empowering individuals to take ownership of their situations. Focusing only on organizational solutions robs individuals of their power and initiative, but expecting individuals to fight systemic issues alone defers responsibility from business owners and leaders. The Women of Influence special issue presents a unique venue to consider how organizations can support women at work, as well as how individual women can have a positive influence on their workplaces.

Equal pay

High-achieving women want to work where they are paid well for delivering top-quality results. Employers are more likely to attract top female candidates when they offer wages that are fair along all forms of compensation (base pay, overtime, bonuses, benefits and any other perks).

Organizations can make pay equity a priority, review pay regularly to ensure fairness and take steps to make pay more transparent. Organizations can also develop pay bands, make bonus targets more visible and communicate steps taken to ensure pay equity.

Women can ask for that raise. The job market changes quickly, so keep an eye on job postings that require qualifications similar to yours. Consult sources such as PayScale.com or Salary.com to assess your pay against comparable roles. Educate yourself about pay (remember that organizations cannot forbid the discussion of pay at work), and if

you suspect that your compensation doesn't align with your results or your qualifications, go ahead and request an increase.

Equally divide helping tasks

It's well-documented that women do more office housework and other helping tasks such as taking notes, making coffee, ordering food and planning office parties. Such work usually goes unrewarded.

Organizations can strive to create a culture of helping. If having coffee available during the day is important, then figure out how to get it done fairly. Distribute helping tasks equally on a rotational basis, create committees, use a lottery system or ask for (and reward) volunteer behavior.

Women can continue to be gracious while using the extra work as potential leverage. "Sure, I'll plan the party this time, and next time I think this would make a great stretch assignment for David and the sales team," or "These extra hours show my dedication and are worthy of consideration at my next salary review." Women can also get more leverage by helping to come up with a more fair and equitable solution for the company.

Offer flexible work and benefits

Many women in the workforce today are raising children while simultaneously caring for aging parents. Employers that offer flexible work arrangements and benefits will attract a broader and more diverse workforce.

Organizations can offer any feasible solutions including remote work, compressed work weeks, flexible hours, self-scheduling or job sharing. Benefits should include a variety of options that meet the diverse needs of employees; those with

young families may be interested in child care while others might be interested in long-term care as they age.

Women can remember it doesn't hurt to ask. When our children were younger my husband's job required him to travel frequently, putting me on day care pickup and drop-off duty most days. I dreamed of working 10 fewer hours per week just to take the pressure off. Finally, I got up the courage to ask my boss, bringing with me a proposed solution for how the arrangement would work. By helping to work out the details, my employer was receptive and we negotiated an arrangement.

Provide opportunities for growth

Education, training, mentorship and promotion opportunities are critical for retaining women in the workplace. These opportunities help women to enrich their experience and advance their careers.

Organizations can be creative in offering

educational opportunities. Consider options such as in-house training, tuition reimbursement, professional development grants, conference attendance, mentoring or other creative solutions. Organizations would also be well-served to review promotional data to ensure equal opportunity to advancement and upward mobility.

Women can build a business case for what training they seek and how it will benefit the business. Most organizations, even those without an in-house investment in training, will support educational opportunities for employees that have a return on investment. Help your boss see the ROI for sponsoring even a portion of the cost. Many women could also be bolder in seeking promotions. Men will apply to a promotional job even if they meet few of the criteria, but many women feel they must meet all criteria before applying. Don't hesitate to raise your hand when opportunity presents itself.

By focusing on systemic solutions, organizations can create a culture where all employees can reach their potential. By taking the initiative to ask for what they want, women can use their influence to create better workplaces.

SBJ



Kelly Gust is the CEO of HR Full Circle, a Springfield-based consulting firm that provides talent management and human resources consulting to organizations of all sizes and stages. She also serves as president of Women Entrepreneurs of Central Illinois.

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SEOUL
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PIZZA

By Thomas Pavlik Jr.

Dining options, especially for lunch, have been dwindling in downtown Springfield, which is why I was happy to hear that Seoul 4 Soul had recently opened on the second floor above Buzz Bomb Brewing Co. on Adams Street.

Seoul 4 Soul advertises itself as a “Korean fusion bistro with vegan and vegetarian options.” It also notes that it is woman, Pacific Islander, Latin, Indigenous, Black and Asian-owned.

I decided to get takeout, but as it turns out, it was evidently attorney day at Seoul 4 Soul. So while I waited for my order to be prepared, I was able to check in with several friends who were dining that day and get their perspectives, all of which were positive. I like it when things work out like that.

Seoul 4 Soul can be accessed through Buzz Bomb or from a separate door off of Adams Street. I have a particular affinity for the space given that my late father-in-law once owned this building, where he operated his law firm. While it’s undergone several transformations since we moved down the block to the southeast corner of the Old Capitol Plaza, this is by far my favorite iteration of the space.

While it can be a little dark, there’s a good vibe going on. The furniture has an industrial feel, and there’s funky art all over the place. Occupancy could be a problem with an influx of visitors, but it appeared that Seoul 4 Soul had about half dine-in business and half takeout the day I visited.

Diners order at a counter toward the back of the space that also serves as a bar. Given its location above a brewery, it was no surprise that there was an impressive list of beers and other options.

If you’re trying to nail down a menu online before visiting, it can be a challenge, as there appears to be several menus on various social media sites. As I’ve said so many times, I wish restaurant owners would make it easier for people to find an accurate menu. That being said, the core menu that’s consistent across all platforms includes wings, a variety of bulgogi options, some appetizers and sides.

For the uninitiated, bulgogi consists of thinly sliced beef (or other proteins) marinated in soy, honey, sesame oil, garlic and onion. It’s ubiquitous in Korean culture. Although traditionally served over rice, the dish has evolved and been fused with other cuisines and culinary traditions. Hence Seoul 4 Soul’s bulgogi tacos, gyros and pizzas in addition to the customary rice bowls. Besides beef, Seoul 4 Soul offers tofu, mushroom, chicken and pork.

Sides and appetizers include Mexican street corn, a variety of hummus and vegetable mandu



Focaccia pizza

(Korean dumplings filled with vegetables). As for the wings, there are about a half-dozen options including kimchi dry rub, wasabi tzatziki and the collab (orange whip tea, roasted poblano, golden kiwi and lime).

I went traditional and ordered the lunch-sized bi bim bap rice bowl. It was a generously sized bowl of rice with a healthy serving of beef bulgogi, all topped with a fried egg, carrot, jalapeno, cucumber, mung beans and sauteed spinach. It came with a side of delicious kimchi as well as the requisite gochujang sauce, which is what really made the dish explode with flavor. Gochujang sauce is made from gochujang (a flavored spicy miso paste) and typically combined with soy, garlic, sesame oil, sugar and rice vinegar. It would have been a mundane dish without the kimchi and sauce. I poured all of it on top of the dish, broke the yoke and then mixed everything together in order to get the perfect bite containing all of these elements. It was delightful, and quite large for a lunch portion.

One of my friends got the Korean Reuben, which was the daily special. He advised that he was happy that the staff had talked him into ordering it. It was reported as gigantic in size and came on toasted marble rye. He described

his experience as follows: “The corned beef was solid, a mix of larger chunks and pieces more in the pulled form. The kimchi mixed with the sauerkraut was a nice twist, such that the sauerkraut didn’t overwhelm the corned beef like some Reubens. The bread did get soggy, as always happens with sauerkraut and Thousand Island (this time mixed with gochujang). The chips were standard, crinkle-cut chips with kimchi spice, which added some tang. House-made lemon limeade was refreshing. I would go with a half sandwich next time, which is available.”

The other attorneys and lobbyists that I spoke to likewise gave positive reports and indicated that they would be back. Seoul 4 Soul is definitely worth giving a shot when you’re downtown and also qualifies for a destination meal. Make sure to give it a try. **SBJ**

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Women for Women

By Janet Seitz

When former Springfield Mayor Karen Hasara visited Hilton Head, S.C., nearly 20 years ago, she was inspired by a group she came across. "I saw a photo and article about a women's giving circle there and thought it would work here, she recalled. "It seemed like a good fit for us in the Springfield area so I discussed it with the Community Foundation (for the Land of Lincoln)." Thus, the Women's Fund was born in 2006.

Hasara served as the founding steering committee chair for Women for Women. The initial goal was to recruit 100 women who would donate \$1,000 a year for three years to become founding members. This fund would support issues women and children face in Sangamon and surrounding counties. The initiative aims to engage women of all generations, create informed philanthropists and empower women to take action.

"The most challenging part of being involved has been continuing to increase our numbers and to follow the projects we fund," said Hasara. "Fortunately, it has not been difficult because of the work of members and staff. The rewards of seeing the outcomes of our projects are amazing."

Kate Dunne, who served on the steering committee for several years, is the current chair. "I became involved because I wanted to support organizations in Sangamon County that serve women and children," said Dunne. "I love the idea of collaborative philanthropy and being a part of much larger annual gifts than I am individually able to contribute. I appreciate the opportunity to be a part of a women-driven fund.

Dunne said she admires and appreciates the many women who were members or founding members of the group, including Ginny Conlee, Carolyn Blackwell, Kathy Germeraad and Sarah Beuning. "They have all done so much for Springfield," she said.

Currently the fund sits at a little over \$1 million, said Dunne. Each year's contributions build the endowment to ensure perpetuity of the fund, in addition to funding that year's recipients. More than \$500,000 has been awarded to local organizations.

Approximately 20 organizations apply



Executive director of The James Project, Olivia Hayse, center, receives the Women for Women grant award from Sammi Mander, left, and Lori Schlosser. PHOTO COURTESY WOMEN FOR WOMEN

for funding each year, and the criteria are as follows:

- 501(c)(3) charitable organization; or a faith-based organization (proposals must benefit all, regardless of religion, and be for a service provided which is not religious in nature); or
- a public or private school (proposals must be for projects that exceed the school's budget funding); or
- some government entities or municipalities may be eligible.

Funds must be used for programs and services primarily affecting positive mental health outcomes for women and children who reside in Sangamon, Cass, Christian, Logan, Macoupin, Menard, Morgan and Montgomery counties.

This year's recipients will be announced in mid-May at the members-only event. Recipients over the past few years include Compass for Kids, The James Project, Helping Hands, Wooden It Be Lovely, Jacksonville Area Center for Independent Living, Enos Park Neighborhood Improvement Association and many more.

Dunne recounted a memorable moment at the annual luncheon last October when members heard from 2023 grant recipients Helping Hands of Springfield and The James Project.

"A Women for Women member who works at the YMCA was alarmed to hear that children in DCFS custody in Sangamon County were having to shower at truck stops and other less-desirable facilities

because of a lack of resources," said Dunne. "She was able to facilitate a partnership with the YMCA and The James Project to arrange for children to be able to shower at the YMCA. Currently the YMCA is also sponsoring a diaper drive for babies in foster care in Sangamon County. I love when people are connected in the community in ways like this that allows for creativity, cooperation and 'collaboration.'"

The more women who join, the more can be done. "I'd encourage women who want to impact the lives of women and children in our community in a positive manner and be an active participant in grant-giving that is larger than their own financial resources to consider joining," Dunne said. "I feel very privileged to be a member of a group of women who are successful, compassionate, thoughtful, intelligent and driven to improve the lives of others in Sangamon County."

"Our community should be grateful for the efforts of our members to fill in gaps of funding for local projects that need help," added Hasara. "We, of course, welcome new members who can contact any current member or call the Community Foundation." For more information visit <https://cfl.org/Initiatives-Projects/Women-for-Women>. **SBJ**

Janet Seitz is a local communications professional, writer and artist. To share your story, contact her at janetseitz1@gmail.com.

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New businesses

Sangamon County new business registrations, March 16, 2024 – April 15, 2024

Be It Creations, 314 S. Lincoln Ave. 464-0286. Kelsi Hayes.

BJ Cleaning Service, 49 Lilac Lane. 441-5924. Brenda K. Ferguson.

Divine Cosmos, 11611 Dyer St., Apt. 1428, El Paso. 685-0208. Hayley N. Kane.

Eric Kelly Lawn Care and Snow Removal, 136 W. Raylots St., Spraulding. 502-0124. Eric Kelly.

Interstate Tobacco, 900 E. Kinzie St., Lot 93, Riverton. 588-0145. Dakota L. Townsley, Brittany Estes.

710 Rippy G's, 2501 Wabash Ave. 630-745-0499. Jenita Harris.

Connected by Cori, 732 Deerfield Road, Chatham. 827-5245. Cori R. Barry.

M Fitness Health & Wellness, 3450-B Liberty Drive. 891-1394. Emily McAfee.

Noll Injury & Accident Lawyers, 930 E. Monroe St. 544-8441. Noll Law Office.

Schaake Construction, 912 W. Washington St. 415-5069. Brian Schaake.

Springfield Lactation, 252 Maple Grove. 299-9440. Malia Naqvi.

Karnez Essentials, 1921 S. 15th St. 775-5082. Lontreal K. Martin Jr.

Relax Designs & Apparel LLC, 1222 E. Lenox Ave. 862-4084. Saresa Lanette Black.

Pritty Glam, 915 S. Durkin Drive. 553-7938. Cypriana Nicole Adams.

BCG, 2828 S. Hoover Ave. 314-745-2760. Trayvion Cornelius Little.

Wren's Refinishing, 2412 N. 16th St. 528-3187. Wallace H. Reed.

Hanna White Photography, 3025 Selkirk Road. 971-4198. Hanna Renee White.

Sandy K's Healthcare Staffing Solutions, 3309 Robbins Road, #969. 904-2541. Calvanise Clark.

Baymont by Windham, 5871 South Sixth Street Frontage Road. 529-6655. Amit Amin.

Top Notch Tails, 421 Bruns Lane. 204-3134. Jessie Haworth.

Pro Nails, 1150 N. Fifth St., Suite G. 522-8277. Quoc Kinh Dang.

MKT Consulting, 1000 South Grand Ave. E. 671-9846. Monte K. Turner.

Pendleton Cleaning Service, 3318 Ashley Lane. 720-4912. Marke Collins.

AP Lawncare & Landscaping, 2630 Delaware Drive. 741-7233. Anthony Perry.

D&M Logistics, 3125 Wide Track Drive. 685-3730. Dearis Briggity.

WNNNG Services, 3255 Young Road, Mechanicsburg. 899-5288. Branding Winning, Ross Winning.

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