

Springfield business journal

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FORTY UNDER 40 2014

By Michelle Higgenbotham,
associate publisher



Forty Under 40 was the first awards program established by *Springfield Business Journal* and this is our 18th year of recognizing outstanding young leaders in Springfield and the surrounding

communities. Chances are, you probably know one or more of this year's recipients as well as many of our previous recipients. Through both their professional lives and their volunteer service, these individuals are extremely involved in the communities where they reside. They represent the future of local business and we are proud to be able to acknowledge their contributions.

Each of these individuals was nominated by one or more of our readers, and they were selected based on contributions to their chosen field and overall community involvement. While their employment, educational backgrounds, and affiliations are varied, they have all made an impact in the community.

It is thanks to the ongoing commitment of our sponsors, Security Bank and the University of Illinois Springfield MBA Program, that we are able to recognize a new class of outstanding young businesspeople each year. We are also honored to have the Honorable Sue Myerscough, United States District Judge, as our keynote speaker for this year's reception.

Thank you to all of the readers who took time to submit nominations and helped insure that these very deserving individuals would be recognized for their professional and community achievements.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER



The Honorable Sue E. Myerscough is a United States District Judge for the United States District Court for the Central District of Illinois. Following law school, she served as law clerk to the Honorable

Harold A. Baker of the United States District Court for the Central District of Illinois. Beginning in 1981, Judge Myerscough was in private practice with the Springfield law offices Giffin, Winning and then Hinshaw & Culbertson until her appointment in 1987 as an Associate Judge of the Circuit Court for the Seventh Judicial Circuit. In 1990, Judge Myerscough was elected Circuit Judge for the Seventh Judicial Circuit. She was elected Presiding Judge of the Sangamon County Circuit Court in December 1994

and Chief Judge of the Seventh Judicial Circuit in December 1996. In 1998, Judge Myerscough won election to the Fourth District Appellate Court, where she served as Presiding Judge in 2002 and 2009. In June 2010, President Barack Obama nominated Judge Myerscough to a seat on the United States District Court for the Central District of Illinois, replacing retiring Judge Jeanne E. Scott. She was confirmed by the United States Senate and received her commission in March 2011.



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Ryan M. Kaiser

Occupation: Manager, Agency Training, The Greater Illinois Agency with Prudential Insurance Company of America
Age: 32
Email: ryan.kaiser@prudential.com
Education: Bachelor's of Business Administration @ UIS, Master of Business Administration @ UIS, Chartered Life Underwriter (CLU®)
Family: Two sons: Teague & Landon
Affiliations/Community Activities: NAIFA, Volunteered at Special Olympics, American Red Cross. YSPN Member, Bloomington neXt member. Involved in little league soccer as a coach. Professional Mentor for Sales Professionals in several disciplines.



- **Biggest guilty pleasure?** Cooking. Greatly enjoy cooking and am pretty skilled in several cuisine styles ranging from basic American Cuisine to complex Indian Cuisine. Have several friends who are professional chefs that I bounce ideas off of.
- **Best 'perk' of your current job?** The best perk is the feeling of helping to build something bigger than myself. I love helping a family from start to finish. More importantly, I love teaching advisors how to build a practice which in turn helps more and more people every day. The rapid changing environment and increasing need for our profession in regards to the competitive landscape of Financial Planning. Financial Professionals live a life of significance that bleeds through generations and impacts families every single day.
- **How should Springfield retain young professionals like yourself?** Work to build more professional networking sources and awareness highlighting the opportunities. Each and every business here should adopt a passion for developing young professionals into the future of our community. We need to build a strong foundation for mentorship within the local leaders and allow for publication of these successes. Focus on all the good that comes from this type of work and the dream will become a reality.

Heather Sobieski

Company: Co-Owner of Buraski Builders, Inc.
Age: 36
Email: hsobieski@buraski.com
Online: Facebook
Education: BSCE from University of South Florida in Civil Engineering in 2000 and MSCE from University of Illinois in Civil Engineering in 2002
Family: Husband is Bobby Sobieski; kids are Hailey 6 and Kaitlyn 4
Affiliations / Community Activities: Licensed Structural Engineer; 2nd Vice President of Springfield Area Home Builders Association; Home Expo Committee Member for Springfield Area Home Builders Association



Best 'perk' of your current job? The best 'perk' of my job is that I get to spend time with my family. I work with my brother and parents every day. Also, since we are a family business, I have the flexibility to go on field trips, volunteer at school, etc. for my kids. I might not be able to do these things with my kids if I worked somewhere else.

How should Springfield retain young professionals like yourself? At this point in my life, my family is the most important thing to me. If I had to move my family, I would look for a home in a safe community where there is access to a good education and plenty of activities for our kids. I would also look for a community with a relatively low cost of living so we wouldn't have to make a fortune to live a great life. I believe these are all things that Springfield currently has to offer, but there is always room for improvement.

Chandra Roberts

Organization: Marketing Director, BRANDT, Specialty Formulations division
Age: 38
Online: Linked In
Education: Marketing, Bradley University
Family: husband Mark Roberts III, step-daughter Kira (11) and step-son Zane (14)
Affiliations / Community Activities: First Presbyterian Church, National Agri-Marketing Association



- **Biggest guilty pleasure?** Outdoor water parks and the Dew Chilli Parlor.
- **Best 'perk' of your current job?** Being involved in agriculture and food production, and having the opportunity learn and work in an "outdoor classroom". Our research farms, field visits and farm tours have taken me many interesting places, from avocado orchards to cotton and rice fields. Knowing that I have a small role in educating and helping farmers grow better food is very rewarding.
- **How should Springfield retain young professionals like yourself?** As a young professional, I look for communities and employers that value innovation, entrepreneurial thinking, creativity and leadership. Having a safe and family-friendly community, affordable housing, good schools and easy access to major airports are also important. That's what makes Springfield such a great place to live and work. We are fortunate to have the amenities and the friendly, small town feel.

Morgan Manning

Occupation: Disability Claims Adjudicator Trainee, Illinois Department of Human Services, Bureau of Disability Determination Services
Age: 28
Education: MBA in Healthcare Administration, Benedictine University at Springfield; BA in English-writing, Illinois Wesleyan University
Affiliations / Community Activities: The Citizens Club of Springfield member & Marketing Coordinator; Benedictine University at Springfield Alumni Board Co-Chair; Association of Women in Communications; Young Philanthropists; Young Springfield Professionals Network; Girls on the Run of Central Illinois volunteer & coach, Capital City Crossfit community member



- **Biggest guilty pleasure?** Netflix, NookBooks, and craft beer sampling
- **Best 'perk' of your current job?** Having the opportunity to serve the public while working in the heart of Springfield is a true 'perk' for me. Being near the Old Capitol Farmers Market and the many locally-owned downtown eateries and shops allows me to regularly connect with some of the best features of Springfield.
- **How should Springfield retain young professionals like you?** Springfield should continue to increase the value of living here by investing in its businesses and entertainment offerings. This, combined with promoting the benefits of supporting our local economy, will attract and retain spirited young professionals who earn and spend their money in this community.

Leaders



Leading Springfield Area Lawyers

Bernard G. Segatto, III	Barber Segatto Hoffee Wilke & Cate	Springfield	217.544.4868	Closely/Private Held; Comm Lit; Land Use/Zoning/Condemn; Real Estate: Commercial
Randall W. Segatto	Barber Segatto Hoffee Wilke & Cate	Springfield	217.544.4868	Elder; Real Estate: Commercial
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Charles R. Schmadeke	Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP	Springfield	217.528.7375	Civil Rights/Constitutional; Employment: Mgmt; Gov't/Municipal/Lobby/Admin; School
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Donald J. Hanrahan	Sgro Hanrahan Durr & Rabin LLP	Springfield	217.789.1200	Social Security Disability
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James D. Broadway	Sorling Northrup	Springfield	217.544.1144	Closely/Private Held; Comm Lit; Health; Real Estate: Commercial
Gary A. Brown	Sorling Northrup	Springfield	217.544.1144	Land Use/Zoning/Condemn; Public Utilities: Gas/Water/Electric; Work Comp Defense
Michael C. Connelly	Sorling Northrup	Springfield	217.544.1144	Closely/Private Held; Real Estate: Commercial; Real Estate: Tax; Tax: Business; Trust/Will/Estate
William R. Enlow	Sorling Northrup	Springfield	217.544.1144	Association & Non-Profit; Banking; Gov't/Municipal/Lobby/Admin
James G. Fahey	Sorling Northrup	Springfield	217.544.1144	Civil Appellate; Employment: Mgmt; PI Defense: General
Mark H. Ferguson	Sorling Northrup	Springfield	217.544.1144	Banking; Closely/Private Held; Mergers & Acquisitions
C. Clark Germann	Sorling Northrup	Springfield	217.544.1144	Closely/Private Held; Mineral & Natural Resource; Real Estate: Commercial
Lisa Harms Hartzler	Sorling Northrup	Springfield	217.544.1144	Health
John A. Kauerauf	Sorling Northrup	Springfield	217.544.1144	Closely/Private Held; Employment: Mgmt
James M. Morphew	Sorling Northrup	Springfield	217.544.1144	Election, Political & Campaign; Gov't/Municipal/Lobby/Admin
David A. Rolf	Sorling Northrup	Springfield	217.544.1144	Agriculture; Comm Lit
Peggy J. Ryan	Sorling Northrup	Springfield	217.544.1144	Family
Stephen A. Tagge	Sorling Northrup	Springfield	217.544.1144	Banking; Closely/Private Held; ADR: Comm Lit; RE: Commercial; Tax: Business
Todd M. Turner	Sorling Northrup	Springfield	217.544.1144	Banking; Closely/Private Held; Real Estate: Commercial
Bruce A. Beeman	Wolter Beeman & Lynch	Springfield	217.753.4220	Personal Injury: General; Personal Injury: Prof'l Malpractice
Francis J. Lynch	Wolter Beeman & Lynch	Springfield	217.753.4220	Personal Injury: General; Personal Injury: Prof'l Malpractice; Workers' Compensation
Randall A. Wolter	Wolter Beeman & Lynch	Springfield	217.753.4220	Personal Injury: General; Personal Injury: Prof'l Malpractice; Workers' Compensation
Zack Stamp	Zack Stamp Ltd	Springfield	217.525.0700	Gov't/Municipal/Lobby/Admin

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Trevor Jay Miller

Companies: Precision Barbers; Precision Detailing, Hydrographics and Paint and Body Repair, Grasshopper Lawn Care, 1Up'n Limousines

Age: 39

Email: 1upnpromotions@comcast.net; Finetunedbarbers@gmail.com

Online: Facebook: Precision Barbers/Detailing Paint & Body Repair; 1 Up'n Limos

Education: Peoria Barber College

Family: Wife - Theresa Miller; Children - Ty and Zoe Miller; Parents: Herman and Margery Miller



- **Biggest guilty pleasure?** Cars and motorcycles
- **Best 'perk' of your current job?** Getting to be creative on a daily basis
- **How should Springfield retain young professionals like yourself?** Less government red tape and more assistance to business owners trying to revitalize run-down areas.

Stephanie Hinds

Occupation: Lead Instructor – Sangamon CEO
Special Education Teacher – Springfield School District 186

Age: 33

Email: shinds@sps186.org

Online: LinkedIn, Facebook, Pinterest

Education: BS – Western Illinois University
MBA – University of Illinois at Springfield
Masters of Arts in Education – Quincy University

Family: Husband – Brett; Weimaraner – Ike; Parents, siblings and extended family all in Springfield



Affiliations/Community Activities: Kappa Delta Pi International Honor Society in Education, Who's Who Among Executives and Professionals, Previous Roles: School Nutrition Association Member, Illinois Newspapers in Education Association, Board Member, Teacher's Resource Fair, Advisory Board, Educator of the Year, Judge, Friend in Deed, Clothing and Volunteer Coordinator, Horace Mann Educator Scholarship, Selection Committee, Delta Zeta Sorority, Treasurer, American Marketing Association, Program's Chair, Blue Key Honor Society, Mortar Board Senior Honor Society, Alpha Delta Sigma Advertising Honor Society, Boys & Girls Club's Gus Macker Tournament, Volunteer, Miss Sangamon County Pageant, Volunteer

- **Biggest guilty pleasure?** Reality television and salty snacks
- **Best 'perk' of your current job?** Working with great students!
- **How should Springfield retain young professionals like yourself?** Continue to support programs such as the Sangamon CEO program. It showcases all of the amazing business opportunities in the area to young adults and encourages economic growth into the future.

William S. Legge

Occupation: Executive Director, Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Illinois

Age: 35

Email: wlegge@bgccil.org

Education: B.A Advertising/Marketing, Western Kentucky University, M.B.A., University of Aberdeen, Scotland

Family: Wife, Viktorija

Affiliations/Community Activities: American Business Club of Springfield, Elks BPOE #158, TRN Club, Sangamon County Juvenile Justice Council



- **Biggest guilty pleasure?** Anything involving water - sunsets on Lake Springfield
- **Best 'perk' of your current job?** Knowing that I'm helping some pretty amazing youth realize their potential.
- **How should Springfield retain young professionals like yourself?** Working in the non-profit sector can be an enormously rewarding experience for a young professional; staff and volunteers alike. It enables us to truly immerse ourselves into the whole community and gain a true sense of belonging that crosses all boundaries. Businesses who allow their young professionals to carve out their own identity will foster an environment for ambitious, creative and innovative personalities to thrive. Springfield can seem cliquish, but it's all a matter of getting involved. Encouraging young professionals to take an active role in more than just their job, but also their community passions, is an important part of retaining us. We want to have a voice and we want to make a difference. Encourage young professionals to seek out charity board positions and truly support and encourage their commitment with both time and resources. We aren't afraid of hard work, but our increasingly demanding schedules require flexibility if we're going to succeed in our professional, family, and personal lives, all of which are extremely important to us. The Monday through Friday, 8-5 career is long gone. With today's technology, we are constantly juggling responsibilities and communication 24/7. An employer who recognizes this and allows some flexibility will find themselves with a loyal and committed workforce.

Amy Ihnen

Occupation: Library Director, Chatham Area Public Library District

Age: 31

Email: Director@chathamlib.org

Online: Facebook: amy.ihnen; CAPLD

Education: Associate of Arts: Springfield College in Illinois, Bachelor's Degree in History and Politics: Cornell College, Master's in Library Science: Indiana University

Family: My boyfriend of six years, Ryan Byers and I have a lab-mix named Percy. My extended family includes my parents, Jerry and Deb Ihnen, my older brother Eric and his family, including my nieces and nephew and my younger sister, Rachel and her husband.



Affiliations/Community Activities: Benedictine Alumni Association – President, Chatham Area Chamber – Secretary, Springfield Chamber Business-Education Partnership member, Young Philanthropists member, Small Public Library Management Institute committee member, American Library Association, Public Library Association, and Illinois Library Association member

- **Biggest guilty pleasure?** I've started running recently and my favorite music to listen to is a mixture 90's rap and boy bands. I may, from time to time, mix dancing and running at the same time. I'm surprised I haven't hurt myself yet.
- **Best 'perk' of your current job?** I'm able to see children and adults light up with the love of learning, every day.
- **How should Springfield retain young professionals like yourself?** I believe it's important to focus on high school students as they prepare for college/trade school. Programs like the Sangamon CEO program are a great way for students to connect with professionals and realize that there are great opportunities in the Springfield area. I hope that other programs can be developed to reach more students, especially in non-profit/government.

G Abu-Saba

Company: Franchise owner Jersey Mike's Subs Central Illinois, Springfield-Champaign-East Peoria

Age: 34

Email: gabusaba@gmail.com

Online: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn

Education: Bachelors in Business Administration University of Illinois at Springfield

Family: I am married to my amazingly understanding wife, Becca. We have two boys Lou, age 5, and Gus age 3.



Affiliations / Community Activities: Active in community outreach/fundraising for Easter Seals of Central Illinois, Boys and Girls Club of Central Illinois, The Salvation Army, Springfield Public Schools Foundation, SHG, Central Illinois Food Bank, AMBUCS, Eastern Illinois Food Bank, Illini Dance Marathon/St. John's Children's Hospital. Member of the National Wild Turkey Federation, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited, and a founding member of S.O.S

- **Biggest guilty pleasure?** Going 3 rounds at the Chinese Buffet. . .
- **Best 'perk' of your current job?** I have many perks but the best two would have to be first, meeting new people every day, many of which lead to some great relationships, and second, helping my employees develop their skills in order to achieve their professional/personal goals.
- **How should Springfield retain young professionals like yourself?** Young professionals desire to live in a place where the opportunity of well-paying jobs with thriving companies across a broad spectrum of industries exists. Whatever the city can do to attract companies willing to establish a presence here in Springfield should be done.

Mike Sunley

Occupation: Project Manager, Harold O'Shea Builders

Age: 31

Email: msunley@osheabuilders.com

Online: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn

Education: BS, Construction Management, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville

Family: Wife: Susie, Daughter: Leah (4), Son: Charlie(2)

Affiliations / Community Activities: LEED Green Associate, American Society for Healthcare Engineering, Mid-Central Illinois Regional Council of Carpenters JATC – Trustee, Associate Board Illinois Capital Area Chapter of the American Red Cross – Chair, Memorial's Festival of Tree's – Volunteer.



- **Biggest guilty pleasure?** Obed & Isaac's
- **Best 'perk' of your current job?** Working in a challenging and fast paced environment where no two days are the same.
- **How should Springfield retain young professionals like yourself?** I believe that creating a positive environment for business will help Springfield attract and retain professionals of any age.

Thomas E. Walsh Jr.

Occupation: Auction Manager / Auctioneer for Aumann Auctions
Email: Thomas@aumannauctions.com
Age: 31
Online: facebook.com/tom.walsh.9883, www.linkedin.com/pub/thomas-walsh-auctioneer-naa-isaa-licensed/37/3777/597/
Education: Springfield Southeast High, 2001; Eastern Illinois University, 2006, Bachelor of Arts: Communications, Minor: Business Administration; Lincoln Land Community College, 2007, Completion, Program of Real Estate and Personal Property Appraisal
Family: Mother: Judith Ostermeier formerly of Auburn; Father: Thomas Walsh formerly of Springfield ; Wife: Gwendolyn Walsh, QIDP at Brother James Court; Son: Thomas Walsh, III, 9 months old; New Baby: Baby Walsh due November 21, 2014



Affiliations: 2014 Ring-man of the Year Illinois State Auctioneers Association (ISAA) District Director, ISAA; Treasury Committee, ISAA; Ritchie Bros Auctioneers, Clinton Auto Auction; Merchandiser/Auctioneer for Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation; Board Member, Mill Creek Homeowners Association; Vice President, St. Johns Lutheran Church Council; Past Recruitment Chair, Springfield Celts Rugby Club; Free Mason Tyrian Lodge 333, Scottish Rite, Shriners International

- **Biggest guilty pleasure:** Spending time in the outdoors, hunting and fishing. I enjoy the simple things like the tranquil silence while in the wilderness.
- **Best 'perk' of your current job?** The best perk of my current job is the feedback from my clients. I have ability to connect with clients from all avenues of life. I like to think of each auction as a challenge. I have the unfettered ability to satisfy my clients by utilizing my skills to help them profit, while liquidating assets. After completion, I commonly am reaffirmed that the ease from the auction process was a huge stress relief for my clients. That satisfaction and reaffirmation is the greatest perk!
- **How should Springfield retain young professional like yourself?** Celebrate a job well done! It is important to remember to celebrate the success of the youth in our community. I have been lucky enough to receive enormous community support evidenced through referrals. The continuation of connecting our youth with different generations supports the growth of technology and innovation. I am humbled to have been allowed the opportunity to provide an innovative auction process to Springfield residents of all ages. Springfield will remain a great city for young professionals if they continue to support and celebrate the young professionals looking to bring tomorrow to our hometown!

Lisa M. Stinson

Occupation: Senior Manager, Accountant, Crowe Horwath LLP
Age: 34
Email: lisa.stinson@crowehorwath.com
Online: Facebook, LinkedIn
Education: Masters of Business Administration degree from University of Illinois at Springfield, Bachelor of Science degree in Accounting from Illinois College in Jacksonville
Family: Husband – Curtis Stinson (City of Springfield Firefighter) and 4 kids – Mason, Conner, Peyton (all age 5) and Adalynn (age 3)



Affiliations / Community Activities: Member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA), Illinois CPA Society, Illinois Government Finance Officers Association, Springfield Illinois Chapter of the Association of Government Accountants, Community Activities – volunteer at my children's school (New Berlin Elementary) and in the Early Childhood ministry at West Side Christian Church. Since I have had children, I haven't regularly participated in one organization but below are some of the organizations/community events I have volunteered/participated at the last few years: Fight for Air Climb, a fundraiser for the American Lung Association, Illinois CPA Society Day of Service - Habitat for Humanity ReStore cleanup, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Bowl for Kids' Sake, A holiday food drive for Catholic Charities, Adopt-a-family, purchasing presents for families in need during the holidays, St. John's Breadline, a local soup kitchen, Local homeless shelter, Mary Bryant Home for the Blind, Fat Ass 5K charity run, Rushville, IL ½ marathon to support the local Pregnancy Resource Center

- **Biggest guilty pleasure?** I love ice cream! I can't keep it in my house or I would eat a giant bowl every night.
- **Best 'perk' of your current job?** Crowe Horwath LLP is a great company to work for that really appreciates and supports its employees. Since having children I have been on a flexible work arrangement that allows me the freedom to adjust my schedule while still being plugged into the workforce and gaining valuable experience to grow my career. Without the flexibility that Crowe has given me, it would be much harder for me to continue my career while still spending valuable time with my children.
- **How should Springfield retain young professionals like yourself?** One of the things that really keeps young professionals connected to their community are local organizations that allow young professionals to network with their peers while also giving back to the community. Strong local groups that provide both of these opportunities really help to attract and retain young professionals. Springfield should continue to help these types of organizations to grow and help them to get the word out to professionals in various professions of their existence.



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Professional Women's Calendar of Events

You play a key role and we thank you for your contributions to our community.

Junior League of Springfield Summer Recruitment Events

JLS will be gathering for frozen yogurt on Monday, July 14th from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm. Join us and cool off at Cherry Berry, a self-serve yogurt bar. This event is family friendly.

On July 31st come unwind after a long summery day for happy hour on Thursday, July 31st from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm at Obed & Isaacs' Bocce Garden. Please contact admin@jlsil.org or (217) 544-5557 with any questions or to RSVP.

Illinois Women in Leadership (IWIL)

Illinois Women in Leadership (IWIL) will present the 2014 Athena Leadership Award on Thursday, July 24 at the Inn at 835. One award will be presented to the nominee who best demonstrates professional excellence, community service, and development of female leaders. A reception will be held from 5:30-6:30 p.m. followed by dinner and the awards presentation. Cost is \$30 per person before July 15 or \$40 per person after that. RSVP online at iwil.biz.



To have your event added to the Women's Calendar of Events, Please fax your information to (217) 753-2281 or e-mail to info@springfieldbusinessjournal.com



FORTY UNDER 40

Brittany Henry

Occupation: Executive Director, Jacksonville Area Convention & Visitors Bureau
Age: 30
Email: visitors@jacksonvilleil.org
Online: Facebook, Google +, Linkdin
Education: Bachelor Arts, Illinois College, Major: Communication & Rhetorical Studies, Minor: Sociology
Family: Husband, Brett Henry, Son, Parker Jackson Henry (Age 4)



Affiliations / Community Activities: Jacksonville Rotary Club – Rotarian of the Quarter, Oktoberfest committee member, Rotary Valentine dinner/dance committee member, Illinois College Roteract liaison, Member of the Jacksonville Art Association, Young Professionals Network, Jacksonville Main Street Board – recipient of Jacksonville Main Street's Volunteer of the year award for 2013. Jacksonville Mains Street Promotional Committee, Jacksonville Main Street Pumpkin Festival Committee, Jacksonville Looking For Lincoln Committee, Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area Signature Events ADHOC Committee, Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area Steering Council, Chamber of Commerce Board (Ex- Officio), Mayor's Development Group, 4th Of July Blast Committee, Nursery School Board (Fundraising & Events, Illinois Council Convention & Visitors Bureau (ICCVB) Internal Relations Committee, Volunteer throughout the Jacksonville Community

- **Biggest guilty pleasure?** Coffee – with cream! LOTS OF IT! Or my PITBULL – VIP tickets for the State Fair on August 9th! My husband says my biggest guilty pleasure is probably all the pop music I listen to, but I can't help it, I love it! I'm currently singing, "I'm so fancy!" in my house all the time, annoying him and getting our son to sing along with me!
- **Best 'perk' of your current job?** The best perk of my job is getting the chance to do what I love every day. In an Industry that is fast growing – it is amazing to see the trickle effect that tourism has for our Community and for the State of Illinois. The power of travel is truly amazing and I am proud that I am the face of tourism for the Jacksonville Area and get to promote everything that our area has to offer! The connections and friendships made through tourism partners, community partners, and travelers is absolutely rewarding!
- **How should Springfield retain young professionals like yourself?** The simple answer is that if Springfield and its surrounding communities can keep offering the jobs AND keep offering market competitive wages our young professionals will definitely stick around! Ambitious young people are seeking to follow a career path, and if Springfield, or Jacksonville, or anywhere around here doesn't, or simply can't, offer a job in that path then they are going to seek that step in their path elsewhere. Community involvement helps a lot too! Getting young professionals excited and involved in our Community will get people eager to stay and search harder for options that suit them.

Cress B. Maddox

Occupation: Senior Account Manager, MASCO Packaging & Industrial Supply
Age: 34
Email: sales@mascopac.com
Online: Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram
Education: Graduated from SIU-Edwardsville in 2002
Family: Two fabulous children, Adaline is four and Cress W. is two. I come from a large family and my parents and three of my four sisters still live in Springfield too.

Affiliations / Community Activities: American Business Club, Ambassador of Hope for The Hope Institute, YMCA Soccer Coach

- **Biggest guilty pleasure:** food/wine?
- **Biggest Perk:** working for family owned company allows for a flexible schedule, during hunting season it's very flexible.
- **How should Springfield retain young professionals like yourself?** The area needs options and variety. Entertainment, fitness, arts. Lots of green spaces, not just parks, but designated areas in high population areas. Options attract young people!



Jared Koester

Occupation: Electrician, B&B Electric
Age: 30
Email: KoesterJared@hotmail.com
Education: Benedictine University
Family: wife Angie, two sons: Jacob and James
Affiliations / Community Activities: Past President, Chatham Jaycees, Past Regional Director, Illinois Jaycees, Founding Chairman, Chatham Friends of the Parks, Commissioner, Village of Chatham Police and Fire Commission, Vice Chairman, Village of Chatham Public Properties Commission

- **Biggest guilty pleasure?** Unhealthy addiction to Lord of the Rings
- **Best 'perk' of your current job?** Ever-changing duties and responsibilities
- **How should Springfield retain young professionals like yourself?** Focus on activating young adults to become more involved, while encouraging self-reliance and resource-sharing.



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Brady Bird

Occupation: President of S.I.C. Recycling, Inc.
Age: 36
Email: bbird@sicrecycling.com
Online: twitter, facebook, linkedin
Education: B.S Business Administration – University of Colorado at Boulder; M.B.A – University of Colorado at Boulder
Family: Wife Meggan, daughter Sloan (5), son Rollin (2), son Banks (1)
Affiliations/Community Activities: YMCA Board Member, The Hope School -- Ambassador, Carrollton Bank Advisory Board (Springfield Branch), Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries Mid-America Chapter – Treasurer



- **Biggest guilty pleasure:** Espresso ... I have 3 young kids that are very active, the extra boost is needed to help me keep up.
- **Best perk of my job:** The best part of a start-up is in watching it grow and having the ability to create jobs and provide opportunities to add to our team; I work with great people and enjoy being able to provide stable employment opportunities.
- **How should Springfield retain young professionals:** Springfield is a great place to raise a family and that message should be shared with young professionals looking to start a career and build a family. We have good restaurants, lots of outdoor activities and entertainment options, stable business environment in varying fields and excellent Midwestern people. Springfield feels like a small town with the amenities of a large city.

Erin Svendsen

Occupation: Education Coordinator, Springfield Art Association
Age: 27
Email: esvends@gmail.com
Online: Facebook, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Instagram
Education: Painting/ Sculpture BFA from University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
Family: John and Karen Svendsen (parents), Cory and Jan (sister), Celia and Harper Ritter, and Michael and Amy (twin) Pitzer
Affiliations / Community Activities: Chair of Springfield Art Association's Paint the Street, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital Kentucky Derby Party, Lincoln Memorial's Art in the Garden, Reading Day at McClelland Elementary School, and Springfield ShareFest



- **Biggest guilty pleasure?** I love to eat desserts for breakfast, but I don't feel guilty about it.
- **Best 'perk' of your current job?** As an instructor, I have free open studio time or can take a free class in any medium from metal casting to ceramics.
- **How should Springfield retain young professionals like yourself?** By investing in its community. Help rebuild downtown, give the city an urban heart-beat for people to enjoy music, art, design, food, shops, technology and green industry. Give the young professional a place to go and find inspiration in their community and then encourage them to get involved through volunteerism to invest in a better Springfield.

Michelle Cox

Occupation: Donor and Admissions Coordinator at Lutheran High School
Age: 36
Email: m.cox@spiluhi.org
Online: Facebook, LinkedIn
Education: BS in Mechanical Engineering from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville
Family: Husband - Ryan, Children - Makenna (9), Caleb (6), Camden (3) and a baby girl due in November
Affiliations / Community Activities: Volunteer Volleyball Coach, SIUE Alumni Association, Past Board of Education Member at Trinity Lutheran School



- **Biggest guilty pleasure?** Chai Tea Lattes
- **Best 'perk' of your current job?** Getting to spend each day with such wonderful students and staff
- **How should Springfield retain young professionals like yourself?** By continuing to offer ways for young adults to be active in the community, either physically, professionally or academically (i.e. bike/running trails and park activities, local professional society events or career advancement opportunities via the local colleges)

Dominic Elijah Watson

Occupation: Legislative Assistant to State Senator Andy Manar
Age: 30
Email: Dominic.watson02@gmail.com; Online Social Network(s): @2kingsinc (twitter); Dominic Elijah Watson (FB & LinkedIn)
Education: I am a proud graduate of Ursuline Academy. I attended Benedictine University at Springfield.
Family: I am a proud father, son, brother and uncle.
Affiliations / Community Activities: City of Springfield Community Relations Commission (Commissioner); Sangamon County Young Democrats (Executive Board Member); Springfield Chapter of NAACP (Vice President); Young & Powerful Group (National Executive, Springfield Co-Chair, 2013 Inauguration Co-Chair); Young Democrats of Illinois (Vice President)



- **Biggest guilty pleasure?** I would have to say my guiltiest pleasure is being a "DIE-HARD" Green Bay Packers. I am given a hard time, often, because I have lived in Illinois all my life, but I am a "Cheese Head".
- **Best 'perk' of your current job?** Best perk of my current job would be working for State Senator Andy Manar. He has been a great mentor to me over the course of my time working for him. It is not too often that you come into contact with someone with a genuine passion to serve the community, true definition of a servant leader.
- **How should Springfield retain young professionals like yourself?** I am a firm believer in getting individuals involved. Through this involvement a sense of ownership will develop and could help with retaining young professionals. In addition, we as young professionals need to do a better job in reaching out to other young professionals who may not have the network to get involved. Lastly, Springfield needs more opportunities for career development – as well as a social support network – to attract and keep young professionals.

Lauren Gibson

Occupation: Graduate Public Service Intern, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity Office of Energy and Recycling
Age: 25
Email: lgibson2311@gmail.com
Online: https://www.linkedin.com/pub/lauren-gibson/5b/718/715
Education: BA in History- Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (2011)
Masters of Public Administration- University of Illinois Springfield (2014)
Family: Parents- Stephanie and Daniel Gibson
Affiliations / Community Activities: Board Member/Professional Development Chair- Young Springfield Professionals Network
Board Member- American Society for Public Administration Central Illinois Chapter
Young Professional Representative to the Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) Action Committee



- **Biggest guilty pleasure?** A tie between chocolate and coffee
- **Best 'perk' of your current job?** Being able to immediately apply what I learned in my Masters coursework to projects at work. It is also nice to have the tuition for my degree paid for.
- **How should Springfield retain young professionals like yourself?** Springfield needs more residential choices for young professionals, such as unique, urban apartments. Many young professionals are entrepreneurial, wanting to start and manage their own businesses. Springfield should encourage a climate that makes it easy to do that and to grow those businesses. Revitalizing the downtown area could provide those unique living opportunities, business opportunities and urban lifestyle that many young professionals want. The residents of Springfield should rally around this effort.

Sarah Tapscott

Occupation: Manager, Special Events/American Lung Association
Age: 32
Email: Sarah.Tapscott@Lung.org
Education: BA in Community Health Education, Illinois State University
Family: Husband Nick of 9 years, Daughter Lynley (6) and son Brennan (2)
Affiliations / Community Activities: YSPN, IWIL, Association of Fundraising Professionals, President , Chamber Ambassador



- **Biggest guilty pleasure?** Sweets and Pinterest
- **Best 'perk' of your current job?** I have several perks to my job, but the most rewarding is I am helping to save lives. Putting on Special Events can be stressful at times, but seeing the whole thing come together and knowing how important those dollars are in sustaining the great work we do, makes it so worth it!
- **How should Springfield retain young professionals like yourself?** I think it's important that young professionals know they are not only making a difference in their company or organization but also in their community. I think in order to retain young professionals the more opportunities for them to get involved through continuous learning, mentorship, clubs or volunteerism the better. Community connections mean a lot. By getting involved in our community, we are also building friendships and business connections, making it less likely for us to be on the lookout for something better.

Melanie Dineen

Roller Derby Name: Cer Vixen Ovaries
Age: 35
Occupation: Cake Designer at Incredibly Delicious; President of MidState Mayhem Roller Derby
Email: Incdelcakes@gmail.com Presidentmmrd@gmail.com
Online: Incredibly Delicious Cakes on Facebook, Midstatemayhemrollerderby.com, Cer Vixen Ovaries on Facebook, gameovaries927.blogspot.com
Education: Springfield Southeast High School, Springfield College In Illinois, Self Taught Pastry Chef working alongside my brother, Patrick Groth, at his local business Incredibly Delicious.
Family: Married to Joshua Dineen with four awesome children, Lilyana-6, Lucien-8, Liam-9, and Eliot-11.



Affiliations / Community Activities: President of MidState Mayhem Roller Derby, Springfield, Illinois' all-female, skater operated, non-profit, amateur roller derby league. MMRD is committed to empowering women through sisterhood, sportswomanship, and personal growth both on and off the track. MMRD aims to be a vital part of the Springfield area community, seeking opportunities to support and promote local charities, sports, and businesses. Through the sport of roller derby, MMRD offers a supportive environment that challenges women mentally and physically, in turn enriching the lives of our members and the community.

- **Biggest guilty pleasure?** Hitting women! It sounds downright awful to say it but honestly the sense of empowerment I get from being able to physically dominate my opponents cannot be matched by anything else on this earth. The strength it takes comes from within and from my surrounding teammates. We train hard at this intense sport and have a heck of a lot of fun together while doing it. There is no greater guilty pleasure than Roller Derby.
- **Best 'perk' of your current job?** Cookies and Espresso! Being a working mother of four, I am so thankful to be somewhere that I can be an artist of my own elements in a timeframe that also affords me a rich life with my children. I have no set working hours. I work as needed and they feed me amaaaazing things while I am there! Working at Incredibly Delicious really has been the perfect fit for a loving, family-oriented, creative type like myself.
- **How should Springfield retain young professionals like yourself?** Keep it personal. People flourish in an environment where they feel needed and welcomed. The daily interactions, experiences, and relationships are the heart of a business. Even during the toughest tasks, a young professional will have the drive to perform and excel if they have the foundation of encouragement laid out before them and a friend to cheer them on. Impossible things can be achieved when you feel validated in your professional life.

Danielle Nicole Stanley

Occupation: Legislative Affairs, Dunn Fellow, Office of Illinois Governor Pat Quinn
Age: 25
Email: daniellestnly@yahoo.com
Online: Facebook-Danielle Stanley; LinkedIn-Danielle Stanley
Education: Masters of Public Administration, University of Illinois at Springfield (UIS) (2013); Double Bachelors Legal Studies & Political Science, UIS (2011); Associates of Applied Science, Lincoln College (2009)
Family: Linda Mattox, my beloved mother is the College Foundation Specialist and also an Adjunct Professor at South Suburban College, South Holland; Bobbie Stanley, my supportive father is a Letter Carrier/Truck Driver for the United States Postal Services; Eric Stanley, my big brother is a South Suburban College Police Officer and also a part-time basketball coach.



Affiliations / Community Activities: Organizing for Action-Springfield; Enroll America; Springfield Race Unity Committee; Springfield & Central Illinois African American History Museum

- **Biggest guilty pleasure?** My biggest guilty pleasure is traveling. I love exploring new places and experiencing different cultures. After every trip I take, I find that I return home wiser, with greater maturity, more accepting of cultures different from mine.
- **Best 'perk' of your current job?** The best "perk" of my job is seeing progressive policies evolve into laws. The opportunity to work in state government allows me to be at the center of change. Working with legislators, lobbyists, advocacy groups and constituents has helped me to become an effective communicator. As a Dunn Fellow I am able to experience state government with a more practical hands on approach.
- **How should Springfield retain young professionals like yourself?** I believe that keeping housing costs at an affordable rate for recent college graduates is a way Springfield can retain young professionals. Today's young professionals are torn between the excitement of big cities like Chicago and the realities of repaying student loans. Springfield's current affordable housing market allows young and upcoming professionals the opportunity to repay their debts and secure decent housing.
Springfield should also concentrate on recruiting new corporations; especially tech and sustainable energy corporations. Large corporate headquarters in Springfield will allow young professionals outside of the public sector to reside in Springfield. This will enable Springfield to become a more progressive city.
Finally, there should be increased marketing of cultural events, festivals, and tourist attractions that appeal to diverse crowds. Young professionals are skeptical about living in Springfield because of the perceived lack of entertainment, restaurants and nightlife. There are not enough places or tourists attractions that appeal to the young professional demographic.

BUILDING OUR FUTURE

Congratulations to the recipients of the 2014 Bud and Helene O'Shea Construction Scholarship



Nolan Brennan – Sacred Heart-Griffin High School
Nolan plans to study Architecture at Clemson University.



Kevin Thomas - Sacred Heart-Griffin High School
Kevin plans to study Mechanical Engineering at Purdue University.



O'Shea Builders established the Bud and Helene O'Shea Foundation through the Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln to help provide educational opportunities for area residents interested in the construction industry and related careers. The Bud and Helene O'Shea Foundation has awarded renewable scholarships to ten local students since its inception in 2010.

Ben Jackson

Occupation: Vice President, Government Relations, Illinois Bankers Association
Age: 32
Email: bjackson@ilbanker.com
Online: LinkedIn, Facebook
Education: Master of Public Administration (MPA) and a B.A. in Political Studies, University of Illinois Springfield
Family: Wife of 7 years, Rachel, and 20-month-old Son, Alexander. Our family is expecting a second baby boy in September.
Affiliations / Community Activities: American Legion and VFW



- **Biggest guilty pleasure?** A good medium-rare ribeye steak paired with a single-malt scotch.
- **Best ‘perk’ of your current job?** Working at the Illinois Statehouse and visiting Washington, D.C. to lobby on behalf of Illinois’ diverse and vibrant banking industry is a huge “perk” and a real privilege. Also, traveling around the state to meet with our member banks is something I truly enjoy.
- **How should Springfield retain young professionals like yourself?** More and more young professionals and businesses seem to be making relocation decisions based in large part on “quality of life” assessments, and larger cities tend to provide more services and opportunities that attract young professionals. Springfield - and the surrounding area - needs to invest in as many “quality of life” resources as possible, which would include quality schools and services, along with unique shopping and dining. Additionally, I love the outdoors and hiking, and believe that maintaining, expanding, and promoting our area’s outdoor resources (parks, hiking and biking trails, and water recreation) could be a big factor in retaining younger professionals and our families.

Molly Berendt

Occupation: Compass Program Director, Family Service Center
Age: 27
Email: mberendt@service2families.org
Online: Facebook, LinkedIn
Education: Honors B.A. in Political Science, French, and International Studies from Saint Louis University
Family: parents in Cincinnati, OH, and a younger sister in Nashville, TN
Affiliations / Community Activities: Douglas Avenue United Methodist Church, H.I.S. Home 300 Leadership Team, Young Philanthropists, Young Springfield Professionals Network, Faith Coalition for the Common Good – Education Task Force, Leadership Springfield Class of 2014, recreational soccer, Big Brothers Big Sisters



- **Biggest guilty pleasure?** Chocolate-covered pretzels.
- **Best ‘perk’ of your current job?** Getting thank-you notes and artwork from grateful kids and working with our many amazing, dedicated volunteers
- **How should Springfield retain young professionals like yourself?** Increase funding for Springfield School District 186; increase downtown living space; add bike paths and trails; continue to support nonprofits who rely on donations to do the much-needed work we do!

Stephanie Barton

Occupation: Attorney/Labor Relations Manager, City of Springfield
Age: 36
Email: sshallenberger@gmail.com
Online: Facebook and Linkadln
Education: Juris Doctor, Northern Illinois University College of Law
Family: B.A. Political Science, Eastern Illinois University Husband, Bill Barton, Daughter, Adalynn Ginder, and in the process of adopting more children
Affiliations / Community Activities: Rochester Christian Church member; In His Hands Orphans Outreach, Project Coordinator; Enos Park Neighborhood Improvement Association volunteer, Sharefest School Makeover Team Leader; Illinois Public Employer Labor Relations Association; Government Bar Association, Sangamon County Women’s Bar Association



- **Biggest guilty pleasure?** Any reality singing show and chocolate
- **Best ‘perk’ of your current job?** Working with every single Department of the City and City Council that creates awareness for community service needs and opportunities.
- **How should Springfield retain young professionals like yourself?** Creating opportunity for career advancement and creating and encouraging a healthy work/family/community service balance.

Ayrin Ramey

Occupation: Sales Representative at Midwest Office
Age: 33
Email: aramey@midwestoffice.com
Education: Bachelor’s degree in Business Administration from Robert Morris College. Full academic and athletic scholarship for Soccer, played 4 years, captain Junior and Senior year.
Family: Engaged to my wonderful fiancé Ryan Hintz and we have two 4-legged kids named Molly and Ace, a beagle and a yellow lab. My mom, grandma, and little sister are my best friends along with some of the best circle of girlfriends anyone could ask for.



- Affiliations / Organizations:** I’m the Events chairman and Board Member of YSPN. I’m also an affiliate member of Capitol Area Association of Realtors the residing chairman of the Social Committee and member of the Community Service committee. I’m a former member of Big Brothers Big Sisters and still very close to my “little” and plan to participate in the program as long as possible.
- **Biggest guilty pleasure?** Dessert, a hot fudge brownie sundaes with whip cream and vanilla ice cream. I also have a slight obsession with Spicy Doritos and Prairie Farms French Onion Dip. Yum!!
 - **Best ‘perk’ of your current job?** I love helping people and my job helps others have better days at work, which means more success in the office. Plus, we have the nicest office furniture and most comfortable desk chairs of any office I’ve ever worked in.
 - **How should Springfield retain young professionals like yourself?** I think it is very important to encourage young professionals to join and participate in groups like YSPN and the Chamber of Commerce as soon as possible. These groups help develop social skills, networking skills, and friendships; all of which are very important in one’s success. Once a young professionals has gained respect and acknowledgment from colleagues, they are more willing to grow their business locally, thus their success benefits our great capital.

Wes King

Occupation: Executive Director, Illinois Stewardship Alliance
Age: 30
Email: wes@ilstewards.org
Online: Facebook: wes.king.39, LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/pub/wes-king/14/839/533, Instagram: WAKING14
Education: Masters of Arts in Political Science, University of Illinois at Springfield, 2010
Bachelor of Arts in Political Studies, University of Illinois at Springfield, 2006
Family: Parents: Amy & Gary King, both live in Springfield; father is retired from the state of Illinois (Illinois Environmental Protection Agency) and now works for Arcadis an international environmental engineering firm. My mother is a stay at home mom. Two sisters: Anna & Amanda King; Anna lives in Baltimore Maryland, Amanda lives in Portland Oregon
Affiliations / Community Activities: President, Governor Appointed Illinois Local Food, Farms and Jobs Council, Sierra Club Sangamon Valley Group, Group Chair, Illinois Chapter of the Sierra Club Political Committee, Jefferson Park Community Garden co-manager, work with Friends of Jefferson Park and the Springfield Park District to promote the gardens and oversee activities associated with the gardens, Mother Jones Foundation, Board Member, Annual volunteer for Animal Protective League’s Chili Supper and Bazaar fundraiser, Eagle Scout, Slow Food Springfield – Member, organic gardening, kayaking and hiking



- **Biggest guilty pleasure?** Politics. Politics and the democratic process can be discouraging and disappointing which is where the guilty part comes in, but I also enjoy the theater and strategy of it all. I have often told friends and colleagues that to me politics is like sports but the outcomes have significant consequences for everyday working people and the communities we all call home. And while with politics, just like with sports, I might have a particular team and individuals that I root for, similar to sports where you can enjoy watching for the love of the game regardless of who is playing, I enjoy the strategy and theater of the democratic process even when the team or individuals I usually root for are not involved.
- **Best ‘perk’ of your current job?** I love to garden, I consider myself a foodie and I am very concerned about issues related to environmental sustainability; through my job at Illinois Stewardship Alliance I am fortunate that I get to work directly and on a daily basis with these very same issues. I’m blessed to be working in a field and with issues I am personally very passionate about. I can’t imagine a better perk than having a job that combines my professional skills, educational experience and individual passions. However if I had to simplify it I would say—the food—whether it is the amazing farm-to-table dinners and lunches I have been able to enjoy or the occasional free bunch of carrots or other farm products I get from farmers we work with.
- **How should Springfield retain young professionals like yourself?** This is one of the important questions facing the future of Springfield and not one with an easy answer. In general we need more walkable and liveable mixed-use development, infill development and less sprawling development that necessitates everyday car use. With that said, I recently had the idea that a well thought out marketing strategy and campaign might go a long way in helping to address the issue. I often times hear gripes from “Millennials” and young professionals about what is wrong with Springfield. While there is considerable room for improvement I think Springfield has a lot going for it in terms of events, activities, and amenities that appeal to “Minnenials” and young professionals but as a city and a community we have done a poor job of making that case to the public.

Seth Morrison

Company: Owner/operator of Springfield Rentals LLC
Age: 26
Email: Springfieldrentalsllc@gmail.com
Education: Bachelors in History/Bachelors in Economics from SIU Carbondale
Family: Mother – Mary Morrison; Father – Steve Morrison (of Morrison Properties); Sister – Jennifer Morrison; Girlfriend – Kayla Worker
Affiliations: Involved with the big brothers big sisters program (Neontrez is my little's name); I also coach a Under 8 soccer team with Ryan Wolfe of Marine Bank



- **Biggest guilty pleasure:** GOLF!
- **Biggest perk:** I renovate property that is typically rundown and in bad shape. Every building my crew and I do is a massive improvement to the neighborhood we are working in. Every project people who live in the neighborhood will come up and thank us for helping out the area. That makes it all worth it.
- **How should Springfield retain young professionals like yourself?** The best way to retain young professionals on the macro scale is to make Springfield a fun and interesting place to live. All the art shows, summer festivals, and cultural events help a ton and you can never have too many. On the micro scale the young professionals club and organizations such as Leadership Springfield help immensely.

Paul Sawyer

Occupation: Partner, Whitetail Properties
Age: 39
Email: paul.sawyer@whitetailproperties.com
Online: facebook.com/paul.sawyer.33
www.whitetailproperties.com
www.linkedin.com/pub/paul-sawyer/47/b67/4bb/
Education: Concordia Academy High School
Family: Wife – Hillary, Daughter – Willow
Affiliations / Community Activities: Member of Detroit Christian Church, member of Quality Deer Management Association



- **Biggest guilty pleasure?** Enjoying a 12 oz filet with extra butter and an Old Fashioned with Bulliet Bourbon at Ruth's Chris.
- **Best 'perk' of your current job?** Being able to work hard at something that you are passionate about, because everyday the line between work and play blurs. I do not feel like I am working in the traditional sense.
- **How should Springfield retain young professionals like yourself?** First by attracting a great steakhouse. The Springfield community needs to make an every effort to be attractive to professional executives by creating great recreational opportunities for professionals like myself ; parks, sports, restaurants, shopping, etc.

Meaghan Buecker

Occupation: Special Education Teacher, Springfield Public School District #186 - Lanphier High School
Age: 33
Email: mbuecker@sps186.org
Online: Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter
Education: M.S. in Reading/Literacy from Benedictine University in Springfield, B.S. in Education for Special Education and Elementary Education
Family: I have been married to my high school sweetheart, Steve Buecker for ten years. We have four beautiful children Henry (8), Claire (6), Jack (5) and Magdalyn (3).



- Affiliations / Community Activities:** Springfield Area Soccer Association, L&M Gymnastics, Springfield Education Association, Participation in area fundraisers and community running races
- **Biggest guilty pleasure?** My biggest guilty pleasure is baking. I love to bake and decorate cake, cupcakes and cookies...and the guilty part is enjoying them. :)
 - **Best 'perk' of your current job?** The best 'perk' of my job as a special education teacher is working with my students and seeing their smiling faces when they are learning and having fun in the classroom. Having the summers off with my children is a bonus.
 - **How should Springfield retain young professionals like yourself?** Providing opportunities for professional growth and development.

Ben Ladage

Occupation: Independent Sales Representative - DuPont Pioneer Seed
Auctioneer/Owner: Ben Ladage Auctions
Farmer – Family Farm: Ladage Farm, Auburn Illinois
Age: 32
Email: auctions@benladage.com; ben.ladage@plantpioneer.com
Website: www.benladage.com
Online: Facebook-Ben Ladage; Ben Ladage Auctions
Education: Auburn High School grad. 2000, Lincoln Land Community College 2001-2003
Family: Wife of 6 years, Kimberly Ladage. Son, Eli, 3 years old & daughter, Eden, 1 year old



- Affiliations / Community Activities:** Vice President- Sangamon County Farm Bureau, Member of the Illinois State Auctioneers Association, Member of St. John's Lutheran Church, Chatham IL
- **Biggest guilty pleasure?** Sports! Playing and watching
 - **Best 'perk' of your current job?** Talking. I enjoy it, whether it's seed sales or auctioneering. The biggest "perk" of working on the farm is that I get to work with my father, Brent, and brother, Blake, every day.
 - **How should Springfield retain young professionals like yourself?** By continuing to show the benefit of Agriculture and how it both benefits us here in Central Illinois and the World. Also by continuing to contact me, a young auctioneer, to do auctions against the many "seasoned" auctioneers in the area.

Destiny Nance-Evans

Occupation: Associate Director, ISAE, FIRM, Inc.
Age: 31
Email: dnance-evans@firminc.com
Online: LinkedIn
Education: Bachelor's of Science in Marketing, Southern Illinois University Carbondale
Family: Husband, Joshua and two sons, Bingham and Bayler
Affiliations / Community Activities: American Society of Association Executives



- **Biggest guilty pleasure?** I love getting hair blowouts! Shhh... don't tell my husband!
- **Best 'perk' of your current job?** I get to network with and learn from top professionals in the Association industry.
- **How should Springfield retain young professionals like yourself?** As I reflect on my own background and experiences as a young professional, as well as conversations with others, I think there are many ways to retain us. However, two are top on the list, opportunity and engagement. To retain young professionals, we need to provide the opportunity to be a part of the community, and to feel that if the time and effort are put in, they can make a difference and be a part of the outcomes. Developing ways to engage young professionals in defining the vision and future of the community and creating buy-in by making them a part of that process, will ground young professionals to this area. As a young professional with a family, I also believe in the importance of safe community areas with plenty of green space. Its too easy with modern technology to stay inside - it is important to incentivize outside recreation. Finally, we must continue to foster business growth and opportunity, including promoting an environment for young entrepreneurs.

Nicolas Paz

Company: Owner, AZTCA Mexican Grill
Age: 32
Email: nicolaspaz@hotmail.com
Education: Bachelors in International Business
Family: Wife – Amanda, daughter – Kylee, 14; Son – Luka, 2



- **Biggest guilty pleasure?** Soccer!! I play indoor & outdoor here in Springfield & of course its playing all day on TV at AZTCA so I watch a lot of soccer too
- **Best 'perk' of your current job?** Being my own boss of course!! I can change the menu when I want or I can add a daily special that a customer requests. I also cook recipes from my country, Bolivia, for my customers to try which is great to let them try new things from other countries.
- **How should Springfield retain young professionals like yourself?** Springfield does a decent job already but I think Springfield should grow more by offering "fun" things for the young families for example St. Louis & Chicago have great museums, aquariums, Zoos & farms/gardens for families to visit but not much here for them to do or visit.

Alex Rabin

Occupation: Attorney – Partner, Sgro, Hanrahan, Durr & Rabin, LLP
Age: 39
Email: alex@casevista.com
Online: Linked In, Twitter: @rabin1974
Education: BS Biology UIS 1998
JD Valparaiso University 2003
Family: Wife – Emily, Son – Jacob, Daughter – Reese
Two pugs: Rowdy & Max
Lots of extended family in Springfield. Mom & Dad, two brothers and 3 sisters.



Affiliations / Community Activities: Treasurer - Board of Governors, Shriners Hospital For Children, St. Louis, 2009-present, Past Master, Chatham Masonic Lodge #523, Illinois Times runner up for “Best Attorney” 2013

- **Biggest guilty pleasure?** Boats, pools, good wine and food. Yummy
- **Best ‘perk’ of your current job?** Helping people. Seriously, I love helping people solve their legal problems.
- **How should Springfield retain young professionals like yourself?** Provide opportunity, encouragement, guidance, and reward good results.

Thomas Gray

Occupation: President of Grayboy Building Maintenance
Age: 34
Email: grybybm@casscomm.com
Online: Facebook
Education: High School with 1.5 years of college
Family: Amanda (wife) Harleigh (daughter 13), Addison (daughter 9)



Affiliations / Community Activities: Business Networking International (BNI), Charter member and Board of Directors at Sherman Area Chamber of Commerce

- **Biggest guilty pleasure?** My biggest guilty pleasures are cars and motorcycles.
- **Best ‘perk’ of your current job?** The best perk of my job is meeting so many great people throughout the state of Illinois and getting to work with them on a regular basis.
- **How should Springfield retain young professionals like yourself?** I believe having activities throughout the city for both families and single professionals at clean and safe facilities will help to retain young professionals in Springfield.

Joshua M. Renken

Company: Owner/Dentist, Renken Dentistry
Age: 38
Email: drrenken@renkendentistry.com
Online: Linked In, Facebook, Pinterest
Education: Eastern Illinois University, University of Illinois at Chicago - College of Dentistry
Family: Wife – Leigh Children – Reilly-11, Miles-9, Oscar-2, Lorelai-2



Affiliations / Community Activities: Chairman of the Board of Directors for the Hope Institute for Children and Families, Professional organizations-Executive Board of Directors GV Black District Dental Society, Illinois State Dental Society, ADA, Academy of General Dentistry, and International College of Oral Implantologists

- **Biggest guilty pleasure?** Culver’s turtle sunday
- **Best ‘perk’ of your current job?** Getting to see our patients and their families grow up over time, and working with our team
- **How should Springfield retain young professionals like yourself?** Support incentives that draw businesses and increased economic activity to Springfield.

Grant Hammer

Occupation: Staff Aid, Office of the Illinois State Treasurer
Age: 31
Email: Grant.E.Hammer@gmail.com
Online: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram
Education: SSHS graduate, B.A. History, with a Political Science minor from Southern Illinois University Carbondale, and coursework towards a Political Science M.A. from the University of Illinois at Springfield.
Family: Married to Jennifer, two children; Cam (age 3) and Josephine (age 1).



Affiliations / Community Activities:
Trustee: Springfield Park Board of Trustees; Recreation Committee Chair and serve on the Finance & Personnel, Buildings & Concessions, Grants & Marketing, and Long Range Planning committees.
Vice President: Springfield Youth Hockey Association; Youth hockey instructor and Communications Chair
Board Member: Scarborough Neighborhood Association
Past Volunteer Service: American Foundation for Suicide Prevention “Out of the Darkness” Community Walks, Illinois English Bulldog Rescue, Downtown Springfield Inc.’s Old Capitol Blues & BBQ and Old State Capitol Art Fair.

- **Biggest guilty pleasure?** I sneak away a couple evenings a week to play ice hockey at the Nelson Center in Lincoln Park!
- **Best ‘perk’ of your current job?** Travel. My job oftentimes requires a level of day travel, where I am afforded the opportunity to visit new places and meet new people.
- **How should Springfield retain young professionals like yourself?** Springfield’s community stakeholders, e.g., its business leaders, elected officials, civic organizations and more should seek to retain bright, talented young professionals by encouraging their involvement and participation in community matters. Young professionals should be challenged to invest themselves in the success of our community and actively work to shape its future.

Allison Lacher

Occupation: Visual Arts Gallery Manager and Adjunct Assistant Professor at the University of Illinois Springfield
Age: 36
Email: alach3@uis.edu
Online: Facebook, LinkedIn
Education: Master of Fine Arts in Sculpture, Indiana University; Bachelor of Fine Arts in Sculpture, Edinboro University
Family: My wonderful husband of eight years, Nathan L. Steele, Ph.D.
Affiliations / Community Activities: I serve as 1st Vice President on the Board of Directors at the Springfield Art Association, and I’m also Co-founder and Creative Partner, along with UIS Visual Arts affiliates, at DEMO Project Art Gallery.



- **Biggest guilty pleasure?** Vegas, baby!
- **Best ‘perk’ of your current job?** My position is flooded with perks, among them: working in harmony with genuinely stellar colleagues that inspire and motivate me; working with, and forging relationships with, a variety of artists from all over the country; the positive energy that radiates from the University of Illinois Springfield campus community; and all of the joys that come with fostering the development of undergraduate students as the broad spectrum of visual arts unfolds for them.
- **How should Springfield retain young professionals like yourself?** I advocate for the business community to support further cultural development and advancement in Springfield - be it art, music, theatre, or beyond - through funding, generating enthusiasm and awareness, and extending resources, as cultural presence and programming are proven in their ability to create a more dynamic and livable community overall. Springfield can retain young professionals by investing in cultural outlets and opportunity, and especially those that result from community partnerships and/or collaborations. Two heads are said to be better than one, and businesses, community non-profits, and institutions that partner together in the name of cultural initiatives have the potential to further engage and cultivate a community of loyal young professionals.

Jessica Wiltsie Kocurek

Company: Salon Owner & Hairstylist, Willow & Birch Salon
Age: 26
Email: jessica@willowandbirchsalon.com
Online: Facebook, Instagram, Linked In, Twitter
Education: Studied Cosmetology at the Aveda Institute Chicago
Family: Husband-Kyle Kocurek



Affiliations / Community Activities:I am an educator for Original Mineral color and Bennefactor and Gage for Men Haircare lines, which gives me the opportunity to share my knowledge and passion for my industry with other salon professionals. My salon hosts annual fundraiser events supporting our local Children's Miracle Network, as well as a Walk for Water event each April raising money for the Alliance for the Great Lakes helping to keep our water sources clean.

- **Biggest guilty pleasure?** Popcorn
- **Best ‘perk’ of your current job?**Getting to help people feel amazing about themselves every day is the best feeling in the world! I'm truly blessed to have such loyal clients and a staff full of employees who support the dream that is W&B!
- **How should Springfield retain young professionals like yourself?**I believe that keeping the Springfield area focused on buying local will help businesses in the area to thrive. I have great relationships with other small business owners in Springfield and truly love supporting our local economy as they have done for me.