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# Gases fuel profits at ILMO Products

A FAMILY COMPANY PULLING BUSINESS OUT OF THIN AIR FOR 104 YEARS

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Butler Funeral Home supports community organizations through its Community Endowment Fund with the Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln.

## A donor-advised fund makes charitable giving easy

BY JANET SEITZ

Area businesses, particularly those with longtime local roots, have succeeded with support from the community. With that often comes a desire to give back to the community through charitable giving. But the process can sometimes be a challenge, with multiple requests and trying to sort through the best method to disperse funds.

The Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln has a convenient, flexible tool to help businesses, groups, individuals and families – donor-advised funds. According to CFLL's president and CEO John Stremsterfer, donor-advised funds are effective for business owners or anyone who wants a more organized approach to their charitable giving. They are typically less costly to administer than other forms of philanthropic giving, such as family or corporate foundations. Donor-advised funds can be a way for a donor to essentially have a foundation without having to set up a foundation.

"They are nice for people on the tax planning side," said Stremsterfer. "They can make a single charitable gift to their donor-advised fund and have that one charitable receipt to provide their tax planner, instead of making numerous smaller gifts to a variety of charities directly. From there, we can distribute grants which donors recommend to their preferred recipients." He suggests that

businesses that may have more variable profits from one year to the next to consider a donor-advised fund to help level out their charitable giving.

Springfield Electric's chairman of the board and retired CEO Mike Barker pointed out, "For many years, our charitable contributions came from current earnings. The sticking point about that is sometimes an organization our company wants to support might have a major fundraiser or capital drive, and the timing of that drive doesn't come at the best time for our business. In learning about the workings of donor-advised funds, Springfield Electric found a way for the timing of making charitable contributions work better for the company.

"The key to donor-advised funds," Barker continued, "is understanding that they function kind of like a charitable savings account. At Springfield Electric the process works something like this: At the end of the year, the company board of directors determines what amount to contribute into our company donor-advised fund at the Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln. The company receives the charitable deduction in the year the contribution is made. The CFLL holds those funds until we advise which charities we want to be the ultimate recipients. It's all very easy."

From there, an informal charities committee, a subcommittee of the board, makes recommendations to the full

board for Springfield Electric's significant charitable donations and grants from their donor-advised fund. "We're really following the great example set by Bill Schnirring and the Schnirring family for many years," Barker added. "Springfield Electric has always tried to support as many worthy causes as possible in the communities where we do business. I think more businesses and organizations in our community would see real advantages in utilizing a donor-advised fund as a part of their charitable giving."

Not all of Springfield Electric's charitable donations are directed from its CFLL donor-advised fund. Some donations are still made directly. "The company is working to build our fund to be ready to respond to causes that matter to us whenever they have a significant project or need," said Barker.

Likewise, Butler Funeral Home handles many requests and aims to support as many as possible. As the Butler Community Endowment Fund at CFLL grows, said Chris Butler, president, the organization finds the contributions help them maintain or increase community giving. The family has always considered helping the community and philanthropy as part of the funeral home's mission.

Butler said contributions are made to the fund in memory of each individual served as well as for each pet it assists at its Cremation Center. "We set up the fund because we were trying to think of an

appropriate way to express gratitude to a family for allowing us to serve them while at same time making the memory of a loved one a gift to be shared. It's been received well from families. It helps improve the quality of life for all in the Springfield area. As the fund grows and earns more dollars every year and the principal stays intact, the earnings allow us to do more each year. That's a good place to be.

"What we hope for long-term as the fund grows," Butler continued, "is it helps us perpetuate our mission of community philanthropy. As funds are set aside each year, it grows and perpetuates, so giving can go on and on in the community. The ease of setting up a fund at the foundation makes it easy. There's expert management and nothing to worry about other than get the word out, create awareness to make a request and process internally about what types of grant requests we want to fund." Selections for which organization to request a grant proposal from are made by the Butler staff.

According to Stremsterfer, donor-advised funds make up about 40 percent of funds at the CFLL and last year accounted for a total of \$1,150,000 in grants. More information can be found at [www.cfl.org](http://www.cfl.org) or calling the foundation at 789-4431. ♦

*Janet Seitz of Springfield is a marketing communications professional, writer and artist. She's written for a wide variety of area publications.*





ILMO CEO Linda Standley and President Brad Floreth.



Propane was added to the ILMO Products line in 2011.

PHOTO/ DAVID BLANCHETTE

# Gases fuel profits at ILMO Products

## A family company pulling business out of thin air for 104 years

BY DAVID BLANCHETTE

A Jacksonville-based family company has been pulling business out of thin air for 104 years. But they are not just sitting on their gases. They continue to add product lines and find new uses for existing ones.

ILMO Products Company is a distributor of industrial, laboratory, medical, cryogenic and propane gases in bulk, micro-bulk and cylinders. They also feature retail sales of welding and safety equipment, accessories and welder repair services. ILMO produces 95 percent of their customers' gas needs in-house.

ILMO has locations in Jacksonville, Decatur, Granite City, Litchfield, Mattoon, Mt. Vernon, Peoria, Springfield, Quincy and St. Louis. Its 100 employees service approximately 6,000 customers in the region, and their specialty gases section serves North and South America, Europe and Australia.

Brad Floreth has been the president of ILMO since 2000 and represents the fourth generation of family leadership for the company.

"I worked there summers and after school before I was 12 years old, painting gas cylinders," Floreth said. "My dad would put the cylinders in place and I would paint them and then I would go get him to move them because I couldn't roll them around, they were too heavy."

ILMO began in 1913 vulcanizing tires and offering other services for the fledgling automobile industry. Early 1900s auto headlights used acetylene, which led ILMO to offer oxygen and acetylene products for the burgeoning welding profession, another new growth area. Supplying these two gases, plus argon for metal inert gas (MIG) welding, is still a primary focus for the company.

But a walk through ILMO's Jacksonville facility also shows cylinders of all sizes and colors that are full or waiting to be filled with nitrogen, helium, carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide, propane and sulfur hexafluoride, to name just a few.

Trucks from supplier Air Products deliver the gas to ILMO where it is run through vaporizers, heated and pressurized, then put into steel cylinders. The liquid gas stays in the liquid state, in containers that resemble big Thermos bottles.

These compounds in gas or liquid form have a myriad of uses for operations as diverse as fabrication, food processing, coal production, power generation, steel construction, chemical processing, manufacturing, agriculture, cryogenic and laboratory research, health care and education.

You've undoubtedly heard about magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). As they say at ILMO, there's a gas for that.

"With an MRI, you are taking magnets

and are trying to get them down as close to absolute zero (minus 460 degrees) as possible, because the closer you get to absolute zero, the less resistance is in the magnet," Floreth said. "We use liquid nitrogen and liquid helium for that. Liquid helium is about 450 degrees below zero and liquid nitrogen acts as an insulator to help keep the helium from getting warm too quickly."

The extreme cold made possible by ILMO gases has industrial applications as well.

"We supply a lot of liquid nitrogen for fitting metal parts together, like an axle," Floreth said. "You chill the axle down and it contracts a little bit, you slide it into whatever it's going into and when it warms up, it's in there for good."

Many former chemistry students remember experiments with liquid nitrogen, where a rose dipped in the substance would shatter if thrown against a wall, or a nitrogen-coated banana could be used to drive a nail. What you probably didn't learn in chemistry class is that your spice rack might be full of nitrogen-assisted products.

"If you spray herbs with nitrogen to chill them down and then grind them, you can get a better, quicker and fresher grind, then package them and use nitrogen to get the air out of the package," Floreth said. "Some herb manufacturers

use our nitrogen for that."

Floreth said ILMO nitrogen is also used by tire manufacturers to remove tabs from tires when they emerge from rubber molds, to fill space in food oil tanks so the oil won't go rancid and to remove moisture from telephone lines to improve reception. Since the earth's atmosphere is 78 percent nitrogen, this versatile gas is relatively inexpensive to produce at about \$30 a cylinder, unlike the rarer and more expensive gases like helium, which makes up less than six parts per million of the atmosphere.

Sulfur hexafluoride, used at power plants to cool transformers, is about \$600 per cylinder, Floreth said. A cylinder of xenon, which ILMO sells only on occasion, might list at \$6,000 for a one-foot cylinder.

Linda Standley is ILMO's CEO and is also Floreth's cousin, in keeping with the family leadership philosophy of the company. She is proud of the new ISO-certified gas laboratory on site in Jacksonville that produces ultra-high purity gases. These gases are used as measuring benchmarks by laboratories, universities, utilities, high-end processing companies, law enforcement agencies and medical equipment manufacturers.

"EPA Protocol Gases are used to calibrate the emissions monitoring equipment that power plants like CWLP use,"





Jay Pennell loading the Medical Oxygen "E" fill rack at ILMO.

PHOTO/ DAVID BLANCHETTE

Standley said. "They have to constantly test their emissions and keep records of that. We make the gas that they calibrate their equipment with."

"The EPA testing gases are like a dog's pedigree. We can say we produced the testing gas in this way, it's the real thing, we did these steps, we used this machine and here's the process we used to do it," Standley said. "And we have a certificate of analysis that we furnish with the gas to certify the mixture is correct."

Other testing gases produced by ILMO are used to calibrate blood gas, lung capacity and breathalyzer machines.

New and precise uses for gas are at one end of the ILMO product spectrum, but the other end features an oldie but goodie, the gas that heats homes, fires grills and dries corn. Propane is a relative newcomer to the ILMO family after the company acquired an agricultural propane business in 2011 and now serves hundreds of residential, commercial and agricultural users.

"Propane has been around forever, it's not complex, it's all about delivery and customer service, and forecasting," Standley said. "We've always sold propane in cylinders for forklifts and that kind of thing, but we now have a large tank and a bobtail truck and we deliver propane to clients in 500-gallon or 1,000-gallon tanks like you see at houses in the country."

"We just saw an opportunity. With our experience in delivery and customer service it was just sort of a natural thing to bring propane into our business," Standley said. "It fits with the core of what we do."

"There are two ways to grow for us. We don't niche around a certain product, we define ourselves by our geography," Standley said. "We try to do some of everything. We look at geographic expansion and look at adding new products that are related to what we do."

Selling the product is one thing, but service is what keeps customers coming back. Standley said ILMO places a high priority on customer service.

"One of the things that we offer to our

customers is our knowledge, because we cover such a wide variety of things and we have access to all of this training," Standley said. "Many times for a small company, we are kind of their adviser on how to use our products."

ILMO is an integral part of Illinois' manufacturing base, a business segment that has seen its share of challenges in recent years. But the biggest challenge remains.

"Illinois. This state is our biggest challenge," ILMO president Floreth said. "When someone just packs up and moves their plant out of state, we can't go with them. We are tethered to this location. The heavy cylinders go out and get used, and we have to bring the empties back."

"We participate in a benchmark with a number of other distributors in the nation, and we are always way off the chart on workers' comp," said Floreth, who added that the state's tax environment and liability insurance costs are also concerns.

Challenges aside, ILMO is committed to remaining a manufacturing force in the region. Their staying power is reflected in some of the gas cylinders waiting to be filled in Jacksonville, several of which bear 1916 inspector's stamps and which will continue to be used as long as they pass mandatory 10W-year inspections.

"You grow up working here and you end up here," Floreth said. "To be in a 104-year-old family business and not have a bunch of fighting relatives is pretty unique."

CEO Standley appreciates the company's past and is looking toward its future.

"We've got some new young people who have joined the company. We are always looking for family members to come join the business," Standley said. "We are starting down that path with my daughter, and Brad's daughter may be interested at some point."

For more information, visit [www.ilmoproducts.com](http://www.ilmoproducts.com). ♦

*David Blanchette is a freelance writer from Jacksonville and the co-owner of Studio 131 Photography in Springfield.*



The ILMO welding shop.

PHOTO/ DAVID BLANCHETTE



ILMO's Sam Mahan fills food grade CO2.

PHOTO/ DAVID BLANCHETTE



## 2017 15 Under Fifteen Awards Ceremony



Each year, *Springfield Business Journal* partners with United Community Bank to recognize outstanding small businesses in the local area. Fifteen businesses with 15 or fewer employees are selected for this award, based on nominations received from the community. They must be located in Sangamon or Morgan county and have been in business for at least two years.

On Wednesday, Oct. 11, UCB hosted a reception at its Montvale location for the selectees, their guests and members of the local business community. John and Gail Lorenzini, founders and owners of BJ Grand Salon & Spa, were the guest speakers. They shared their experience of starting a small business with just a few employees and growing into a company with multiple locations throughout the state. Todd Wise, president and CEO of UCB, present awards to each of this year's recipients.

For a complete list of all previous winners or to make a nomination for next year's 15 Under Fifteen, go to [www.springfieldbusinessjournal.com](http://www.springfieldbusinessjournal.com) and click on the "awards" tab.



Keynote speakers John and Gail Lorenzini

PHOTOS BY LEE MILNER

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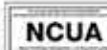
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Dan Deweese (middle) and his painting crew.

PHOTO/ WHITNEY BARNES

# Dan Deweese and his growing painting company

“People love the work we do. They’re amazed by it.”

BY WHITNEY BARNES

Dan Deweese Wood Finishing thought he had realistic expectations when he started Dan Deweese Painting and Wood Finishing in November 2014.

“When I started, it was just me,” said Deweese.

He brought on a friend two weeks later, and was up to five employees after three months, and a staff of 12 at the end of the first year.

Today, the 33-year-old is giving his interview in his 16,000-square-foot building that houses eight vans and 17 employees in a true family business that includes his father, Rich Deweese, brother, Stephen Deweese, and sister, Amy Peterson.

The youngest of seven children, Deweese said he started painting professionally for his dad in high school around age 14.

“I was certainly painting before that, probably around the age of 10. We’d go out and start with the basics – fill holes, sand, vacuum. We’d do the stuff that no one wanted to do. I was the baby of the family, so I was always doing the grunt work,” Deweese said.

The work ethic he learned as a child has helped carry him through the first couple years of owning a business that required 16-hour-days, seven-days-a-week.

“When I first started, I was in the field every day and in the shop every night. I did both ends of it,” Deweese said.

His work paid off.

“We started gaining some ground with some good contractors right off the bat which helped us grow,” Deweese said.

“Right now, we are doing exteriors that we quoted a year ago. That’s how many we had

booked coming into the season,” Deweese said.

Besides interiors and exteriors, the company also includes a custom paint and wood finishing shop.

“We do a lot of new cabinets for builders in the area and hard specialty finishes, like glazes, distressing and staining. People bring stuff they find on Pinterest and we help re-create it,” Deweese said.

In June 2016, his sister, Amy Peterson, came on-board as his office manager after selling her business, The Closet Guy, that she owned for 14 years with her husband, Brooke.

“Amy couldn’t have come at a better time,” said Deweese.

“He was exploding,” Peterson said.

“I think a lot of what I did for The Closet Guy prepared me for this because I have already worked with some of the builders and we have kind of the same customer base,” Peterson said.

She also understands the challenges involved with running a small business.

“I’m passionate about it, knowing that Dan has everything on the line,” Peterson said.

Her arrival has freed up Deweese to focus more internally.

“For me, making sure my employees are taken care of is my number one priority; my customers are second,” Deweese said. “Since I came on, we’ve been able to offer group health insurance and dental, in addition to life insurance,” Peterson said.

“I started this shop to give my employees what I always wanted as a painter. I always wanted a job that had health benefits but none of them did. I’m one of the only nonunion companies that offers those types of benefits to the extent that we do,” Deweese said.

“I’m a painter with 40 years of experience,” said Carl Hart.

“I can honestly say that Dan Deweese is the best employer, running the best outfit, I’ve ever worked for,” Hart said.

“There is a sense of family between Dan and his crew, but when it comes down to business, we know Dan’s high standards demand nothing less than perfection in the quality of work his customers expect and deserve,” he added.

“Our guys work hard. Painting is a physically demanding job. It is hard to find good painters and we want to keep them,” Peterson said of their all-male workforce.

Besides just rewarding quality work, De-

weese and Peterson say they want to do their part to improve the image and opportunities associated with the trade.

“Nobody goes to high school and says, ‘I want to be a painter when I grow up.’ Well, unless you’re Dan,” Peterson said, pointing to her brother.

“We want people to know it is OK to be a painter. It can be a very valued trade... I want them to see themselves as skilled craftsmen, because they are,” Peterson said.

“It’s true. People love the work we do. They’re amazed by it,” Deweese said.

With his trusted friends and family holding things together, Deweese has been able to take a step back and enjoy life as a newlywed outside of work.

Now, most of his time is spent in the office and doing the estimates. Though, he admits, the customers are usually surprised when he shows up at the door.

“Every other estimate the person says something like, ‘I was expecting someone much older than you.’ I have to explain my family history and let them know I do know what I’m talking about,” Deweese said.

When asked what the future holds, Deweese gives a very clear answer: “I don’t know.”

“Honestly, when I started this business three years ago, I didn’t think we’d be where we are today for another 10 years. For me to grow, multiply times 20 in three years, that was more than I expected,” Deweese said.

He may not have the next few years planned out, but as a painter and a company, he plans to be around for at least another 30.

“Everybody needs paint,” Peterson said. ♦

*Whitney Barnes of Springfield can be reached at whitneyleighbarnes@gmail.com.*



Dan Deweese



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## Life on the Water...

Since they are celebrating the 25th anniversary, the owners of the Lake Springfield Marina are always surprised when they hear a customer say, "I can't believe I lived in Springfield for 20 years and didn't know that you rented boats." They also rent the toys to go with boat rentals, wave runners, kayaks, stand-up paddle boards and more.

You might know that Lake Springfield Marina provides watercraft storage, but they are also a certified SeaRay, Starcraft and Yamaha dealer in addition to being a full-service, fully-certified repair shop that even does on-site repairs. To see all the Marina has to offer, visit [lakespringfieldmarina.com](http://lakespringfieldmarina.com).

Scott Tucker and Joe Prola worked there as teenagers and both found their careers at the Marina after college. After working for over 10 years together, and learning the ins and outs of the business, the duo took over the company this past January.

When they were buying the business, Joe remembers, "We went to a number of local banks to find the right one. The folks that we worked with at First Bankers Trust were second-to-none. It was by far the easiest and best process." They enjoyed working with Ron Wenger, and Scott adds, "Ron is really down to earth and knew the background of the business. He just made it easy."

Because they value supporting their local community, Joe appreciates having First Bankers as his bank and says, "You can tell they care about your business, and that is something you just don't get at one of the big national banks." When he visits the Wabash branch, Scott likes that, "Everywhere I've banked in the past, I don't know that I've really known the tellers' names, but I do at First Bankers because they are so personable." Joe is pleased to add, "It's a much different feel - and it's nice!"

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PHOTO/ ISTOCK

# Hunting is good business

Hunting Works for Illinois taps into nostalgia for shooting traditions

BY ZACH ROTH

There are many sure signs of fall in Illinois: football, pumpkin patches, hayrides and cooler weather. For many in Illinois, there is another autumn pastime that bridges generations: hunting.

With that in mind, a group of business leaders, hunting enthusiasts and advocacy groups have joined forces to promote not just hunting, but the potential business opportunities it could bring to communities across the state.

Hunting Works for Illinois, a grassroots organization consisting of various groups, including business organizations and convention and visitor bureaus, has been formed just in time for fall. Each of the four chairs of the organization brings a different perspective to the growing group: Mark Denzler, COO of the Illinois Manufacturers Association (IMA), Bill Fleischli, executive vice president of the Illinois Petroleum Marketers Association (IPMA), Brittany Henry, executive director of the Jacksonville

Convention and Visitors Bureau and Peter Skosey, executive director of state and governmental affairs with BNSF Railway.

For those involved, it's not just an opportunity to promote businesses and communities. It's a way for them to tap into memories of family and childhood.

"Think about Illinois' hunting heritage," Skosey said. "My father was raised here in southern Illinois; he hunted with his father, and today he and I hunt shoulder to shoulder together continuing that tradition."

The group says hunters patronize businesses across the state, spending money on goods and services, while also buying gear for their yearly hunt.

"Each hunter in Illinois spends \$2,400 a year," Fleischli explained. "Putting things together, Illinois hunters spend \$278 million in trips and expenditures. They also spend \$235 million on hunting equipment. That's a big deal."

The organization also says jobs are created throughout the state due to hunters and hunting in general.

"Hunting spending in Illinois supports 18,000 jobs," Skosey said, "which translates to \$700 million in salaries and wages."

The money and jobs supported by hunting have also had a significant impact on the success of small towns across the state, especially in places like Jacksonville, whose convention and visitor bureau was among several to join forces with the group.

"One thing that has been an economic boost for our hotels has been hunting," Henry said. "In fact, we have a general manager [of a hotel] that specifically markets to hunters with price discounts and swag packages."

Through all the discussion about hotels and family and hunting, one question remained on the mind of those in attendance at the kickoff press conference. Will the organization attempt to influence political behavior regarding hunting? Denzler made clear that the organization is not inherently political; however, the group is willing to educate politicians at all levels about the

importance of Illinois' hunting economy.

"This is an educational campaign," Denzler said. "We solely want to talk about the economic impact of hunting in Illinois, and share that message that it has an impact for the retailer. Peter (Skosey) talked about the impact that it has on railroads; Bill (Fleischli) talked about the impact that it has on his members. So, this purely is to tell this great story that hunting has a profound impact on Illinois' economy."

Hunting Works for Illinois is not a new idea; several other states have started similar organizations. The goal is simple: to promote Illinois' hunting economy, while also attracting the newest generation of Illinois hunters. ♦

*Hunting Works for Illinois can be found at [huntingworksforil.com](http://huntingworksforil.com), on Twitter @huntingworks4il and on Facebook.*

*Zach Roth of Springfield is a recent graduate of Bradley University in Peoria, where he studied journalism.*

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David K., employed with the help of Hope Vocational Academy. PHOTO / HOPE INSTITUTE

# Area businesses provide jobs and enrich lives

## Partnering with Hope Vocational Training Center is a win all around

BY EMILY JANKAUSKI

Nearly 30 area businesses rise to the occasion and provide job opportunities for individuals with disabilities through Hope's Vocational Academy. For many young adults with disabilities, preparing for life after high school proves difficult as they often face limited job prospects that accommodate their needs. Yet, local businesses, such as Horace Mann, Renken Dentistry, Hy-Vee and County Market, match their needs with the various skill sets and determination of the students from the Hope Vocational Academy.

Since the 1990s, the Hope Vocational Academy prepares high school students with disabilities for the job market by teaching them the basics. According to Greg Gardner, director of vocational services at Hope, the Hope Vocational Academy provides students a space to master the necessary job skills.

"Once kids come in they start off just learning the basic tasks and work on things like following two- or three-step directions," said Gardner. "Once they start mastering those skills, then they are able to go out into the community and start as volunteers and then land jobs through volunteering."

The Hope Vocational Academy utilizes one of its two cafés for job training. Daily operations at the Hope Café – formally the Noll Café – located at 5220 S. Sixth St., and the Hope Inclusion Café and Play, located at 3252 Ginger Drive, allow students the opportunity to gain skills, such as performing food preparation, providing customer service, taking customer orders, and using cleaning supplies. Once a student hones a skill, the Hope Vocational Academy staff members network with an area business to match the needs of the business with the abilities of the student in an effort to provide the student with a job. The student initially utilizes a job coach, provided by Hope's Vocational Academy, then he or she gradually learns how to perform the job without the need for a job coach. The goal of the academy is to provide inclusion for local businesses and the community.

"We want our kids to be able to function as much as they can in the adult world," said Jodi Ogilvy, director of communications for Hope. "We try to prepare the kids for the world and we try

to prepare the world for our kids. We like to get them in a job, leave them in the job, and then back away."

Horace Mann, a participant in the Hope Vocational Academy since 2010, currently has one student work in its main building's café. According to Thomas Brownfield, assistant facilities manager at Horace Mann, the student empties the recycle bins, wipes tables and interacts with employees for one hour a day. When asked if he would recommend other area businesses participate in the Hope Vocational Academy, Brownfield said he definitely sees the program as an opportunity to give back to the community and to provide the students a sense of independence and real-life skills.

"It [the program] enriches their lives. The students take a lot of pride and confidence in their work," said Brownfield. "It's interesting to watch the growth of each student, from the initial day to evaluating what jobs he or she can perform and to see that progress as the days and weeks go along."

The Hope Vocational Academy is eager to match interested businesses with willing students in an effort to meet their growing need. Area businesses, such as Horace Mann, understand the benefits of incorporating inclusion as it engages employees and develops a relationship with the community. Ogilvy also stressed inclusion for adults with disabilities in the capital city is reliant on the involvement of area businesses and the community.

"We have these great kids who do great work, but you have to be supported by your community if you're going to succeed in what you're doing, said Ogilvy.

The Hope Vocational Academy prepares students of all learning abilities, and the skill levels of each student vary. Interested businesses should contact the director of vocational services, Greg Gardner, via email at [ggardner@thehopeinstitute.us](mailto:ggardner@thehopeinstitute.us) or by phone at 217-789-1424. ♦

*Emily Jankauski is a Springfield-area native who contributes to the Springfield Business Journal as a freelance writer. As a former graduate public service intern for two state agencies, Emily knows the importance of communicating how local government and area business play a part in shaping the capital city. Emily holds a master's degree in communication from the University of Illinois Springfield.*



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# Report shows Springfield lags in internet connectedness

BY ALEX CAMP

A recent report examining the broadband infrastructure in Springfield found that the city is the 502nd most internet-connected city in the country.

BroadbandNow, an internet services providing agency, released the report earlier this September. Jameson Zimmer, content strategist for BroadbandNow, noted that while Springfield's ranking sounds bad on the surface, the city's broadband connectedness is normal for mid-size metro areas. "The situation in most cities is that residents have two options: digital subscriber lines (DSL) from phone companies, or cable from TV companies," Zimmer said. "Springfield matches this closely, with most of the underserved residents being in outlying and/or less wealthy areas."

Jack A. Segal, vice president of communications of the Greater Chicago Region at Comcast, has a satisfactory opinion of Springfield's broadband connectedness. "Last year, Springfield was among the first locations in the country to get our new gigabit internet service, which can provide one gigabit per second (Gbps) download speeds to every home and business our network passes in town," he said in an interview. "Springfield was also one of the first places in the country to get our 2 Gbps fiber-based Internet service called Gigabit Pro when it launched two years ago. We also have a program called Internet Essentials that's available in Springfield that provides eligible low-income families internet service at home

for about \$10 per month."

Nick Reese, founder of BroadbandNow, explained the importance of the internet in today's society, as well as service inefficiency. "If a community wants growth, high speed internet is key. Broadband internet access is critical for communities that want to participate in the modern economy," Reese said. "Today, many residential areas and business properties throughout the U.S. are outdated, hindering economic and intellectual growth."

The report also said that Springfield has an average download speed of 40.94 megabits per second (Mbps). Download speed is the rate at which broadband connection can retrieve data from the internet. Zimmer explained how download speeds function: "If your download speed is 200 Mbps, you can download a movie much faster than if you have 3 Mbps," he said. "The fastest download speed usually offered to residential customers is 1,000 Mbps, which is called gigabit internet. This is associated with fiber providers such as Google Fiber and Fios. The main options for service in Springfield are cable and DSL, which offer speeds closer to 30 Mbps-100 Mbps."

When compared to other cities in Illinois, Springfield's Mbps is 9.4 percent slower than the state average of 44.78 Mbps. "Springfield is slightly below the average mostly because there doesn't seem to be much fiber infrastructure in the area, as you see in cities with providers like Google Fiber, Ting or Fios," Zimmer said.

Furthermore, 12 percent of the city's

population only has access to either one or zero wired broadband providers. Zimmer notes that the disproportionate state of providers in Springfield is part of a growing trend showing that, compared to other countries, internet service in the United States is less competitive. "While many residents technically have several options including wireless, normally only one or two of those will offer speeds that meet the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) minimum for 'broadband' (25 Mbps download speed, 3 Mbps upload speed)," he said. "Wireless options like satellite have high latency that makes them challenging for things like Skype."

Reese voiced his concern for the low number of providers by referencing the FCC's latest Broadband Progress Report, which found that only 38 percent of Americans have more than one choice of providers. "This fact is troubling, and not just to our team at BroadbandNow. Our broadband search tools are used by over 1.5 million people each month, and we're drowning in messages from internet users frustrated by their lack of options," he said.


Meanwhile, Segal is content with Xfinity's influence in the Springfield area. "We're proud that Xfinity Internet is the fastest and most widely available internet service in Springfield," Segal said. "Because we've invested significantly in our network in and around the city (we have over 1,000 miles of network in Sangamon County), we're able to bring our latest innovations to Springfield and offer the same high level of service there that we do across the country. That includes all of our internet, video,


voice, mobile and home security and automation services."

Zimmer concluded that Springfield can learn from other areas nationwide that have taken steps to improving local broadband. "One way to improve broadband is to make franchise agreements with providers and exchange grant money and/or exclusive service areas in exchange for a promise that they'll extend service to less affluent underserved areas," he said. "This is what New York City did with Fios, although that has currently devolved into a lawsuit since the city feels the provider didn't live up to their end of the bargain."

He added that the implementation of municipal broadband networks is another viable alternative. In Chattanooga, Tennessee, a utilities-based company, the Electrical Board of Chattanooga (EBC), installed a smart grid system in the area. Eventually, they became the first company in the nation to provide their customers internet access speeds of one gigabit per second. "If residents feel like they're stuck in a monopoly situation with services they rely on for business, education and communication, they can file complaints to their local government, the Federal Trade Commission and the FCC to help bring awareness to the issue." ♦


*Alex Camp is a master's graduate in Public Affairs Reporting from the University of Illinois Springfield. He is currently a freelance journalist. Contact him at [acamp4@uis.edu](mailto:acamp4@uis.edu).*





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A site plan showing Sherwood Plaza after renovations are complete.

PHOTO/ COURTESY OF SERITAGE GROWTH PROPERTIES

# Sherwood Plaza construction and tenant update

BY MICHELLE OWNBEY

Less than a year since the Kmart on West Wabash closed, the former big box store is nearly unrecognizable. The property owner, Seritage Growth Properties, is a publicly traded REIT and has a large portfolio of properties nationwide, specializing in redeveloping former Kmart and Sears locations into multi-tenant shopping centers. Based out of New York, New York, with real estate holdings in 49 states, Seritage also owns and manages multiple shopping centers in Illinois, primarily in Chicago and the Chicago suburbs, but also Moline and Springfield. Locally, Seritage is making a nearly \$20 million investment in redeveloping the entire

Sherwood Plaza shopping center and the first phase is well underway. In July, the Springfield City Council approved zoning changes to the former Staples location, closed since February of this year, to allow package liquor store Binny's Beverage Depot to take over the space. Binny's is in the final stages of their tenant build out and hopes to open in early November. Another new business, Orangetheory Fitness, is anchoring the other end of the east building and opened in mid-October. Two existing tenants, Mosser Shoes and Red Wing Shoes, are staying, leaving only one vacancy. Mexican restaurant Los Agaves closed in May after 14 years in business. The property managers report they are in

discussions with several fast casual restaurant concepts and hope to have a deal in place to announce after the first of the year. For the west building, Burlington Coat Factory will occupy the 40,000 sq. ft. space in the center and plans to begin their interior build out next month. The endcap tenants for that building have not yet been announced. The two outlots have both been spoken for and Outback Steakhouse is already under construction at the corner closest to the Wabash and Veterans Parkway intersection. It is scheduled to open in February 2018. Core Life Eatery, a fast casual restaurant that prides itself on serving healthy meals, has signed a lease for the smaller 3,500

square foot outlot. It will be the first location in Springfield, although Core Life Eatery has one other Illinois location, in Peoria. The façades of the east building are being upgraded and that parking area has been paved, along with new LED lights. The work on the west building is scheduled to be completed by mid-November, with all site work to be completed by February 2018. Unlike the former Kmart on MacArthur Boulevard which sat vacant for years before being redeveloped by Hy-Vee, this one has been quickly transformed into an attractive destination for shopping and dining with a mix of existing tenants and new businesses for consumers to patronize. ♦

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PHOTO / ISTOCK

# You've been in an accident. Now what?

BY THOMAS C. PAVLIK JR.

So, you've just been injured in a fall or auto collision that wasn't your fault. The dust hasn't settled yet. You are afraid, angry, hurting, numb, confused, embarrassed or all of the above. You aren't your usual cool and collected self. Quite probably you are in the absolute worst frame of mind for making decisions, yet the decisions you make in the next few minutes will have real consequences on your ability to hold an at-fault party responsible.

Your first concern is just plain common sense: are you still in danger and is there something you can do to lessen that danger? It may be something as obvious as turning on your emergency flashers to warn approaching vehicles of the need for caution.

The second concern is your own well-being. You may be so overstimulated by the immediate event that your body hasn't been able to make its own needs known. Take a minute to listen to what your body is trying to tell you – it makes little sense to immediately jump out of the car and turn a displaced fracture into a compound fracture.

If you have sustained an injury, immediate attention may help to minimize the effect of that injury. If you sit around the house for two or three days in pain until you are desperate for medical care, you may worsen your condition and can certainly expect to hear from the defense at

trial: "Now, isn't it true, Ms. Plaintiff, that you didn't even bother going to a doctor for three days after the accident?"

Don't be quick to admit fault. It can take an accident reconstructionist, such as those employed by the state police, weeks to arrive at such a conclusion. Moreover, "fault" is a legal conclusion which in many instances a motorist is not qualified to make – particularly when the motorist may be subject to the physical and emotional effects that immediately follow a collision. Also, following a collision you may not have all the facts necessary to reach any conclusion.

For example, assume a collision was one where a motorist had pulled up to a stop sign at night, looked both ways, and then proceeded to cross a through street where he was hit by another car which he had never seen. That motorist, knowing his duty was not only to stop but to yield to vehicles on the through street which were near enough to be a hazard, then exits his vehicle and announces to spectators that he was at fault and never saw the other car. It may well be, however, that witnesses down the block later testify that the motorist on the through street – who hit the car crossing the intersection – did not have his headlights illuminated or was speeding and driving recklessly. Under these circumstances a jury might well determine that the driver of the car on the through street was 100 percent at fault. Yet, the chance of success for the motorist who was hit after stopping at the

stop sign is severely compromised by the admissions he made at the scene before he learned exactly why he never saw the other car.

The law imposes certain duties upon a motorist at the scene of a collision involving property damage or injury in terms of notification or giving aid. If the officer called to the scene gives you a report to fill out, complete it and send it in as instructed. It is only for statistical purposes and can never be used by an opposing litigant. Although you may keep a copy for your own lawyer, you should never give a copy to another driver's insurance company. Similarly, you should never give an opposing insurance company a recorded statement or fill out a document describing a collision until you have discussed this with your attorney. The law gives the parties to an injury lawsuit certain rights to discover information from the other parties or to obtain medical information, according to rules of the Illinois Supreme Court. The process is there for a reason.

Of course, once you have left the scene of an injury you are also dealing with your own insurance company. Under most policies, the insured has a duty to notify his insurance company of a claim and to cooperate in its investigation. Occasionally a client does not choose to advise his company of an accident "clearly the other driver's fault" and where it is believed that there were no injuries for fear his or her insurance rates will go up. That's bad practice – if the other party

later turns out to have a claim, your own insurance company may deny coverage due to your late notice.

There are times that you and your own insurance company may have directly adverse positions. For example, you might be bringing an uninsured or underinsured motorist claim against another driver, because the other driver had no insurance or inadequate insurance. In such an instance you should have legal representation from day one. While you may have a duty under such coverage to provide your own carrier with a recorded statement, you are also entitled to have your attorney present for that statement.

The most helpful step you can take for your cause is to contact an attorney immediately so that he or she can get a head start on the other party. Attorneys who concentrate on injury cases will generally discuss an injury without charge. Always preserve evidence, be it medical bills, casts, injury photos or other physical evidence. Remember that ignored medical advice, unfilled prescriptions for medication and skipped doctor's appointments are all potential land mines which can effectively sink a possible claim.

Accidents happen. If someone else is at fault, do yourself a favor and keep these suggestions in mind. ♦

*Thomas Pavlik is an attorney at Delano Law Offices, LLC. Contact him at [tpavlik@delanolaw.com](mailto:tpavlik@delanolaw.com).*



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# Ag group lobbies for local food and farmers markets

Stewardship Alliance seeks leadership on farm bill from U.S. Rep. Rodney Davis

BY SCOTT FAINGOLD

The current federal farm bill, which determines all aspects of the U.S. food and farm system, comes to an end in September 2018. The Illinois Stewardship Alliance (ISA), headquartered in Springfield, is doing everything in its power to make sure the bill's replacement is friendly to local farmers and supports good conservation practices. Three members of Illinois' congressional delegation serve on the House agriculture committees and are currently writing the new farm bill.

According to Liz Stelk, executive director of ISA, a listening session on the farm bill was held in Decatur this past August. "It was great," she said, "the whole congressional committee was there and we got several members to talk about our priorities for the bill."

Those priorities, as enumerated by Stelk, include local food, beginning farmer programs, fully funded conservation programs and crop-insurance reform. "Like a lot of organizations all over the country, we are working to develop some infrastructure so farmers have marketing opportunities," Stelk said. This includes support of farmers markets and food hubs but also means helping to drive consumption at farmers

markets. "For consumers it's so different," she continued. "It's not just going to the grocery store, they have to be conscious, make an effort."

The current farm bill includes support for the Local Food and Farmers Market Promotion program, a U.S. Department of Agriculture initiative that Stelk said has helped the local food movement blossom all over the country. "There are 42 programs in Illinois that are funded through this program, but if it is not in the new farm bill, it will run out of money," she said. "These programs have been immensely successful at driving economic development and helping farmers, but they don't have baseline funding," Stelk explained. The federal farm bill has a trigger wherein if a program receives \$50 million in funding, it is considered officially part of the farm bill and becomes federal food policy. But the Local Food and Farmers Market Promotion program's current funding is closer to \$40 million.

On Oct. 11, U.S. Rep. Chellie Pingree, D-Minnesota, introduced a bill called the Local Food and Regional Market Supply (FARMS) Act of 2017. "The purpose of the bill is not for it to pass but to shop around to members of Congress," said Stelk. "It's a way to show that we want to make sure

these things get in the farm bill."

"The Local FARMS Act will work to strengthen our local food system by helping to bridge the gaps that exist between local farmers and larger institutional buyers such as schools and hospitals," said Will Reed of Native Son Farm, a certified Naturally Grown operation out of Tupelo, Mississippi, and chairman of the board for the Mississippi Sustainable Agriculture Network, in an ISA press release. "Continuing the growth and success of our state's farm-to-school program is an essential step toward curbing childhood obesity and ensuring that we have another generation of farmers interested in growing food."

Stelk says that ISA is courting specific support for the FARMS act from Republican Congressman Rodney Davis, R-Taylorville, who already has several local food programs in his purview, including ones in Springfield, Decatur, Champaign and Taylorville. "These communities totally rely on local food and they're doing a great job of revitalizing farming in rural communities. We want Congressman Davis to support it because he serves on the House Agriculture Committee," Stelk said. "In Congress, there is currently a majority party and they decide what is going to be in the farm bill. We want to make sure that this local food

bill has at least one Republican sponsor in the committee, because then it goes on the to-do list instead of on the wish list."

Davis visited ISA's vendor booth at the Old Capitol Farmers Market a few weeks ago and received a bit of an education, according to Stelk. "We take SNAP at the market," she explained. "People come and bring their SNAP card and we give them tokens and then for every token they buy, we double it. He had never seen that in action." Stelk said this presents an opportunity for Davis to "champion something that really matters for the district and that is going to help all over the country."

Stelk says ISA's concerns about support for their cause are more along the lines of competition for funding in a district that includes other worthy recipients of dollars such as the University of Illinois, rather than any ideological opposition. "The most expensive piece of the farm bill is crop insurance," she said. "It's a safety net for farmers which is critical and needs to be funded. And it's still just a tiny sliver of the bill."

ISA has been successful with the state legislature in the past, having passed 14 bills since 2009. Two of these were passed unanimously in 2016 and were signed by Gov. Bruce Rauner, one fixing farmers

## Professional Women's Calendar of Events

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

### Illinois Women in Leadership (IWIL)

IWIL will hold a luncheon on Thursday, November 16 from 11:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m. at the Sangamo Club. Vanessa Glover from HSHS St. John's Children's Hospital will be the guest speaker. Registration is \$18 per person before November 10 and \$23 after that date or at the door. Go to [www.iwil.biz](http://www.iwil.biz) or email [registration@iwil.biz](mailto:registration@iwil.biz).

### Women Entrepreneurs of Central Illinois (WE-CI)

WE-CI will be hosting a Holiday Social on Wednesday, November 8 from 5:30 to 7 p.m. at Illini Country Club. Enjoy a wonderful evening of socializing with members and buying silent auction items to get a head start on holiday shopping. The Silent Auction proceeds cover member scholarships for seminars, workshops, or business enhancement courses to improve skills or business efficiency. The cost for this meeting will be \$25. Reservations can be made by emailing [reservations@we-ci.org](mailto:reservations@we-ci.org), or visit [we-ci.org](http://we-ci.org).

### Association for Women in Communications (AWC)

AWC will hold a lunch meeting on Wednesday, November 8 from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Sangamo Club. AWC members earn free admission to national webinars, reduced prices for luncheons and programs, job updates, member resources and opportunities to serve on the local and/or national board and develop leadership skills. Non-members and guests are always welcome. To register, visit [www.awcspRINGfield.org](http://www.awcspRINGfield.org).



To have your event added to the Women's Calendar of Events, please email your information to [info@springfieldbusinessjournal.com](mailto:info@springfieldbusinessjournal.com)



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market regulation and another expanding cottage food sales. “We want to make sure that our federal food policy has that same kind of advocacy,” Stelk said. ISA is a member of the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC). Springfield native Wes King, Stelk’s predecessor as executive director of ISA, now works for NSAC in Washington, D.C., focusing on local food. “He and ISA get to work together. When we look at the whole country and we look at the House Agriculture Committee, there are very few members who have such robust local food work happening in their own community.”

While people tend to think of government strictly in terms of regulation, ISA believes in programs that are helpful to farmers and communities. “The onus is on us to describe how urgent the need is,” Stelk said. One development she finds most exciting is that direct marketing venues – farmers markets, CSAs (Community Supported Agriculture) and farm stands – seem to recently be drawing not just new and beginning farmers but also older farmers (the average age for farmers is 58) because they see there is money to be made.

“With commodity prices slumping, direct markets are a great avenue for Illinois producers to be able to stay on the farm,” Stelk said. “That’s really our mission – supporting family farmers, keeping them as stewards of the land and making sure that consumers have access to affordable, fresh, nutritious food.” ♦

Scott Faingold can be reached at [sfaingold@illinoistimes.com](mailto:sfaingold@illinoistimes.com).



(Above) Produce from Suttill’s Garden vendor at the Old Capitol Farmers Market.  
 (Top left) A selection of beets on display.  
 (Left) A vendor has various cauliflower and broccoli for sale.  
 PHOTOS / PATRICK YEAGLE

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## MEDICAL NEWS

### SIU to study opioid epidemic Grant funds research in southern Illinois

Southern Illinois University School of Medicine and University of Chicago Medicine will use a \$1.13 million federal grant to study the opioid epidemic affecting the state's 16 southernmost counties.

The joint effort will initially focus on learning how and why people use opioids such as heroin, fentanyl and prescription painkillers for non-medical reasons and examine the impact on health. People with opioid use disorder, particularly those who inject the drugs, are more vulnerable to outbreaks of HIV, hepatitis and other infections.

The researchers hope their work sheds light on the region's non-medical opioid use, which will then help create more effective interventions, treatment and recovery programs.

"There's such a diversity in how people get exposed to opioids and how they get addicted, all of which matters when it comes to figuring out the fundamental question of how to help them," said UChicago Medicine's Mai Tuyet Pho, MD, MPH, an infectious disease expert and assistant professor of medicine. "It's a dangerous prospect to think just one narrative leads people to substance use. That's why we want to make sure we understand what's going on."

The team hopes their work also makes it easier for people struggling with addiction to get medical care.

Pho and Wiley D. Jenkins, PhD, MPH, science director of the Office of Population Science and Policy and associate professor of family and community

medicine at SIU School of Medicine, are co-principal investigators of the grant. They will lead the project, working closely with officials from the Illinois Department of Public Health and other partners.

Opioids have killed nearly 11,000 people in Illinois since 2008, including almost 1,900 people last year, according to IDPH statistics. State officials unveiled the Illinois Opioid Action Plan last month, which includes a goal of reducing opioid deaths by 33 percent in three years.

The 16 counties in southern Illinois, known as the Illinois Delta Region, are considered particularly vulnerable. These rural areas are among the state's most economically depressed, with limited health services and drug treatment options. The region is also where epidemiologists note particularly high rates of hepatitis C and opioid overdoses, especially among people aged 25 to 44. In addition, the region has unusually high rates of neonatal abstinence syndrome, which affects newborns who were exposed to the drug while their mothers were pregnant.

The two-year grant, which includes an option for a three-year extension to implement targeted interventions, was one of eight awarded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse in cooperation with the Appalachian Regional Commission, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. ♦

### HSHS breaks ground in Jacksonville

HSHS Medical Group hosted a groundbreaking ceremony on Oct. 13 to celebrate its new location at 1745 W. Walnut St., Jacksonville. Opening approximately April 2018, the new, 14,000-square-foot building will be home to HSHS Medical Group Family Medicine and Foot & Ankle Specialists, currently located at 1515 W. Walnut St. in Jacksonville, as well as visiting specialists with HSHS Medical Group and Prairie Cardiovascular Consultants.

Providers moving to the new location will include Allen Gerberding, MD; Kellie Stocker, FNP-BC; Jeffrey Fleischli, DPM, FACFAS; John Fleischli, DPM, FACFAS; and Terese Laughlin, DPM, FACFAS. Visiting specialists will include HSHS Medical Group providers Todd Elmore, MD, adult neurologist; Erin Blackburn, MD, pediatrics; Gopinathan Nambiar, MD, pediatrics; and cardiologists with Prairie Cardiovascular

Consultants. Dareen Siri, MD, allergist, will also offer services in the new location.

HSHS Medical Group Family Medicine will continue to bring primary care services to patients of all ages, with plans to expand the practice to four providers. The new location will also offer lab, x-ray and advanced imaging. HSHS Medical Group Foot & Ankle Specialists offer care to patients with foot and ankle concerns, including surgery.

Prairie Cardiologists will offer cardiology and APP appointments, EKGs, KardiaPro remote monitoring and echocardiography.

"We are proud of our compassionate providers and colleagues offering patient-first care at our Jacksonville locations and are excited to expand our services. We look forward to continuing care for patients in Jacksonville in this new, state of the art facility," said Melinda Clark, chief executive officer of HSHS Medical Group. ♦

### Emergency Dental Clinic expands hours

HSHS St. John's Hospital and the Central Counties Health Centers (CCHC) now provide emergency dental services to patients four days a week in Springfield. The CCHC/HSHS St. John's Dental Clinic is open Monday through Thursday 8 a.m.-5 p.m. The hours have been expanded from two days a week when the emergency dental clinic was established last year. "Access to dental care continues to be one of the top health care needs in the Springfield community," said Dr. Charles Lucore, president and CEO of St. John's Hospital. "We are grateful that we can expand these services. Our longstanding partnership with CCHC continues to help us better serve our patients and the region."

The clinic is staffed by a dentist and dental assistant offering services including exams, fillings and extractions for patients of all ages. It's located on the 9th floor of the hospital and accessible through a referral from St. John's emergency department.

"Our existing relationship with St. John's Hospital allows us to provide care for patients who need dental services, but have transportation barriers. We knew we needed to do more, and that's why we're expanding," said Heather Burton, president and CEO at CCHC.

Since opening in October 2016,

the clinic has had over 700 visits and approximately 500 patients. They have performed 477 extractions and 82 surgical extractions.

"Having the dental clinic on-site has made a huge difference for many patients," said Amy Jones, executive director of emergency services at St. John's. "Too often we see patients with serious dental pain, and we can only treat the symptoms. We needed a more permanent solution to help our patients, and the on-site dental clinic offers that."

"Emergency room treatment is not usually appropriate for those with dental pain, but many people have nowhere else to turn," said Dr. Mary-Margaret Looker, CCHC dental director. "Those seeking dental care in the emergency room generally do not follow up with a dentist because they don't have insurance, they are on Medicaid and do not know where to go, or they just don't have a dental provider, therefore ending up back in the ER a few weeks later with the same exact problem."

A federal oral health service expansion grant is funding this program. Additional treatment options will be available at CCHC's main location on Cook Street with transportation resources provided if the need arises. For more information call 788-2300. ♦

### Passavant elects two board members

Daniel Hallam, M.D., and Peter Russotto, DPM, were elected to Jacksonville's Passavant Area Hospital board of directors during the recent annual meeting of the hospital's Board of Governors.

Hallam, a general surgeon affiliated with Springfield Clinic, and Russotto, a podiatrist, will serve four-year terms. Both are members of Passavant's active medical staff. They fill a vacant spot on the board and the seat held by

retiring board member Steven Lillpop, M.D.

Doug Awe, Nancy Spangenberg and Kelly Staake were re-elected to new four-year terms. Other members of the Passavant board include: Reginald Benton, Keith Bradbury, Ginny Fanning, Barbara Farley, PhD, Donald Headen, James Hinchey, M.D., Gilbert Joehl, Phyllis Lape, PhD, Greg Lepper, Gary Scott and Thomas Veith. ♦



**Peter Russotto, DPM**



**Daniel Hallam, MD**





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Early lunch patrons waiting for their orders.

PHOTO/ STACIE LEWIS

# Good comfort food at Boyd's

BY THOMAS C. PAVLIK JR.

Comfort Food. To me, it's right up there with a good burger. Restaurants claim that they serve it, and some even rhapsodize about "upscale" comfort food. But it's rare that you find a place that actually delivers. Boyd's New Generation does exactly that.

My guest and I arrived on one of the first colder days of fall at the start of the lunch hour. Walking in, we felt like the entire staff went out of the way to welcome us and to make sure that we were taken care of. It was a good start. One server even made sure to take us up near the kitchen so we could see some of Boyd's offerings.

In terms of traditional ambience, you might want to look elsewhere. Stepping into Boyd's is a bit like traveling back a few decades. Without even having to look at the menu, the décor hints that Boyd's uses copious amounts of butter and fat. Mention a kale smoothie and you might even be escorted out.

Our fellow diners represented a cross section of Springfield. I wouldn't hesitate to have a business lunch here as it's the kind of place where bonding over good food is bound to happen.

Boyd's has a rotating list of standard daily specials that augment the menu. The day we visited there was meatloaf (\$6.99, served with cabbage and mashed potatoes with gravy), BBQ pork steak (\$6.99, served with green beans and mashed potatoes and gravy) and baked chicken (\$6.99 white, \$6.25 dark – served with what we assumed were two sides).

The menu itself includes sandwiches (served with fries and garnish), "Create-A-Meal" (choice of protein with three sides and a dessert - \$9.99) and dinners (\$6.50 to \$7.99 – served with a roll and one or two sides).

Some of the offerings that grabbed our attention included the fried tripe (intestine) sandwich (\$6.50), the BBQ Snoot (\$6.50 – what we assume is pig nose!), the whole catfish (\$9.25,

strangely served with spaghetti and cole slaw), and the liver and onions (\$6.50, with rice, green beans and a roll).

Sides include favorites like buttered potatoes (\$3.50 large, \$2.50 small), candied yams (\$3.50/\$2.50), greens and cornbread (\$3.50/\$2.50), and of course fried okra (\$3.50/\$2.50).

Portions are large for the price and we had no doubt that we were getting a good return on our food dollar.

My guest and I couldn't quite decide, so we ordered more than we should have. The fried green tomatoes (\$3.99) were too tempting to pass up, as was a bowl of Annie's Gumbo (mild or hot, served with rice, \$6.99). We appreciated that Boyd's staff accommodated us by splitting up a bowl into two smaller servings so we each had our own helping – it was a nice touch.

The fried green tomatoes came out piping hot with just the right ratio of cornmeal to flour in the batter – crunchy on the outside and juicy on the inside. We appreciated that they weren't over-salted as that would have taken away from

the dish's fresh, tangy flavor.

The gumbo came with a generous helping of sausage and chicken, but the best part was the rich, deep flavor. We imagine it had to have started with a wonderfully dark roux and just the right amount of filé powder.

Put the world's leaders around a table with bowls of this gumbo and there's a fair chance that all the world's problems would be solved.

For our main dishes, we decided to go with the BBQ pork steak and meatloaf specials. We're glad we did.

The meatloaf was cut thick, generously sized and slathered with a healthy amount of gravy. I managed to grab a bite (I had a generous guest) and concurred with his assessment that this was what meatloaf was meant to be – juicy, bold

in flavor, not dense, and not overpowered by the gravy. I'm not a fan of cooked cabbage, but my guest was. Mashed potatoes were obviously homemade and were the perfect complement to the dish.

The BBQ pork steak was of the bone-in thin style that I remember from growing up. It was paired with a slightly sweet BBQ sauce that stuck to the steak like they were married. I had

made a good choice. I had confirmed that the dish came with fries, so I was a bit disconsolate that it came out with mashed potatoes and gravy. But that paired so well with the steak that it was a fortuitous glitch. And, in any event, about midway through the meal our server rushed over to apologize for the mistake and offered to bring me some fries. Thinking that we'd cross the line into gluttony I declined, but appreciated that he noticed.

I wouldn't want to eat like this every day, but when you need a dose of comfort food, Boyd's is a good place to get it. And you should bring friends -- comfort food is meant to be shared. ♦

*Thomas Pavlik is an attorney at Delano Law Offices, LLC. Contact him at [tpavlik@delanolaw.com](mailto:tpavlik@delanolaw.com).*



Baked chicken daily special

PHOTO/ STACIE LEWIS

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# Introducing new businesses

## Two new food trucks debut on Springfield's east side

BY NAN KORDING

Grub N Out and YUM-YUM HIBACHI ON WHEELS are two new food trucks with permanent locations on Springfield's east side. The two trucks occupy space in the parking lot of The Hitting Center and Hope Thrift Store, located at 1800 S. Dirksen Parkway. Grub N Out's proprietors are Dawn and Michael Whalen, and the phone number is 414-8853. Grub N Out will serve lunch and dinner daily from 11 a.m. through 8 p.m. Monday through

Friday, 11 a.m. through 7 p.m. Saturday and 12-6 p.m. Sunday. The menu features a variety of fair-style foods such as lemonade shakeups, hamburgers, gyros, grilled cheese, Philly cheese steaks, chicken and waffles, plus a variety of salads, donuts and donut holes. YUM-YUM HIBACHI ON WHEELS will operate Monday through Saturday, from 11 a.m. through 7 p.m., serving hibachi-style meals. Selamat Hatawan is the proprietor, and the phone number is 630-776-4854. ♦

## SANGAMON COUNTY NEW BUSINESS REGISTRATIONS

**Bandito Entertainment**, 1817 Reed Ave. 415-7081. Ryan Scott McCullar.

**Grub N Out**, 1800 S. Dirksen Pkwy. 414-8853. Dawn L. Whalen, Michael M. Whalen.

**Sunflower Communications**, 1008 ½ W. Fayette Ave. 416-5194. Erica Lynn Smith.

**Suredry Waterproofing**, 1126 E. Esther, Taylorville. 381-6186. Donald Ray Felton.

**Wonderfulwhereabouts**, 2448 N. Farmingdale Road, Pleasant Plains. 725-4741. Jean E. Wilkins, Charles Joseph Wilkins.

**All About Hair**, 3325 S. Sixth St. Road Ste. 11. 720-2255. Elizabeth C. Lewis.

**Drone Images**, 67 Cinnamon Creek. 899-9713. Aaron Schober, Nick Schober.

**JHF Heating and Air Conditioning**, 8894 Revere Road, Pawnee. 415-6544. John H. Firebaugh, Jason Allen Briggs.

**Springfield Call2Action**, 1119 S. Sixth St. 652-2639. Donald J. Hanrahan.

**Gene Caudle Handyman Contractor**, 901 E. Lincoln., Riverton. 299-2215. Ottis E. Caudle, Jr.

**Sappy's Tree Trimming and Bush Removal**, 3401 Hazlett Road. 415-5912. Aaron Jahns.

**Cantrall Creek Orchard**, 5311 S. Cantrall Creek Road, Cantrall. 494-5218. David W. Hayes.

**Carter Construction**, 2028 N. 23rd St. 341-7943. Greg Carter.

**K K Massage Spa**, 3247 W. Iles Ave. 720-9742. Yonglian XU.

**La Despensa**, 1810 Stevenson Dr. 309-310-4912. Ottoniel de Jesus Lopez.

**Cents of Humor Publishing, LLC**, 917 N. Third St. 504-202-4326. Brandon Hines.

**Food Store & High-Tech Wireless Phone Store**, 616 N. Grand Ave. E. 330-461-0291. Ameenuddin Mohammed, Samir Mohammed Al Mahweti.

**YUM-YUM HIBACHI ON WHEELS**, 1800 S. Dirksen Pkwy. 630-776-4854. Selamat Hartawan.

**DECKER INNOVATIONS**, 2332 Chesapeake Landing. 652-9418.

**MGS Welding and Repairs**, 302 Elm St., Loami. 801-3685. Matthew G. Schmideler.

**Books on the Square**, 427 E. Washington. 965-5443. Jeannie D. Alexander.

**Calascio Energy**, 703 E. Fourth St., Apt. A, Pawnee. 303-6617. Joel B. Bartolomucci.

**Premier Auto Spa**, 1531 W. Jefferson St. 720-6682. Blake T. McCombs.

**Iron Fitness**, 771 Durkin Dr. Unit A. 971-3327. Natalie D. Hudgens.

**LavLif Co.**, 17 Redwood Lane. 553-8890. Kimberly C. Moore, Michael Scurlock.

**Sean Flowers Lawn Maintenance**, 930 E. Griffiths Ave. 638-8100. Sean M. Flowers.

**Silver Lining Creations**, 703 Deerfield Road, Chatham. 972-8270. Melisa A. Schable, Edward J. Schable.

**Tasty City**, 4233 Wabash Ave. 354-9808. DWAC, Inc.

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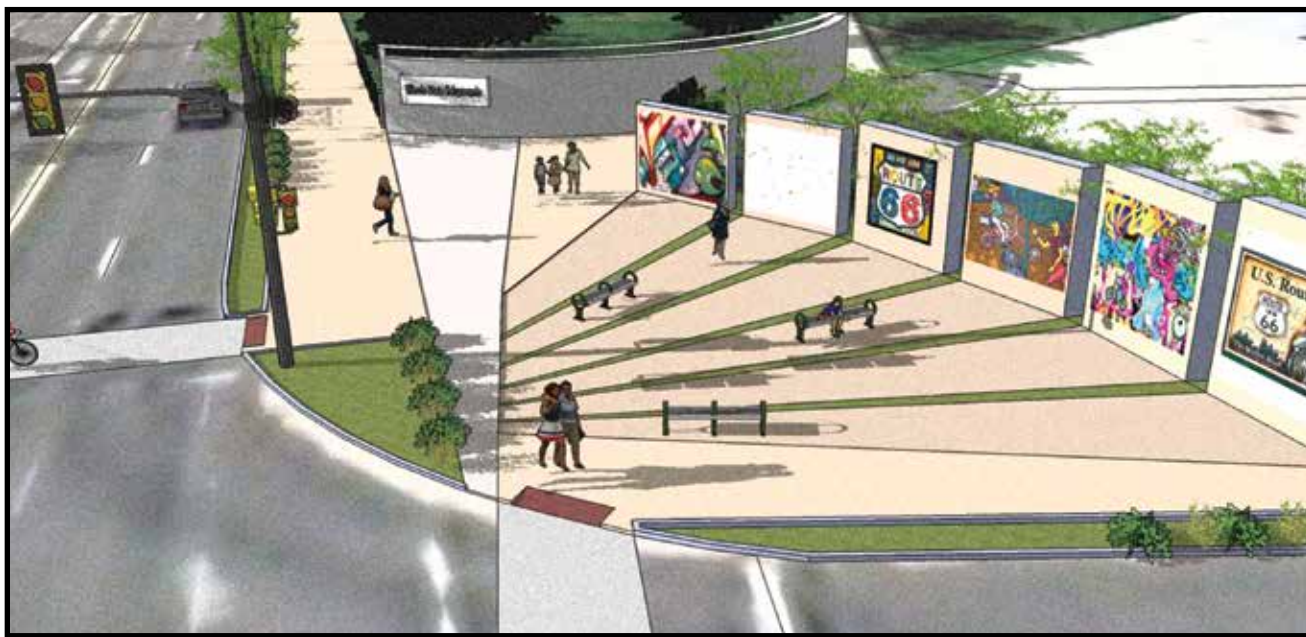
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Idea for a "character area" at the Illinois State Fairgrounds.

ILLUSTRATIONS COURTESY OF SPRINGFIELD-SANGAMON COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

## Putting muscle on Springfield's bones

The new 20-year city comprehensive plan

BY FLETCHER FARRAR

During the process of developing Springfield's new comprehensive plan, one resident commented, "This city has great bones. What we lack is muscle on them." The new 80-page planning document, which its authors hope will guide Springfield development over the next 20 years, says the comment reveals that Springfield's citizens feel the city's weaknesses can be overcome and would welcome positive changes. The comment also reminds Springfield to think about what gives a city muscle. Muscle comes from the mind and the spirit of a town, more than maps.

If, for example, enough cool stuff begins to happen on MacArthur Boulevard, despite the area's problems and frumpy look, then the place could become frumpy trendy. If the city's new survey of the near east side discovers enough historic sites related to the African-American community, then we may start seeing that section of the city as more of a possibility than a problem. New underpasses and consolidation of rail lines on 10th Street may eventually give us a new linear park on the Third Street rail corridor, though that seems too many years away to get excited yet. In the meantime, can we get a consensus on development of the North Mansion block and build a project that will make Springfield happy? The benefit would go beyond the park and handsome townhomes that could end up there, to the civic energy that can come from a successful project. Success can lead to more success.

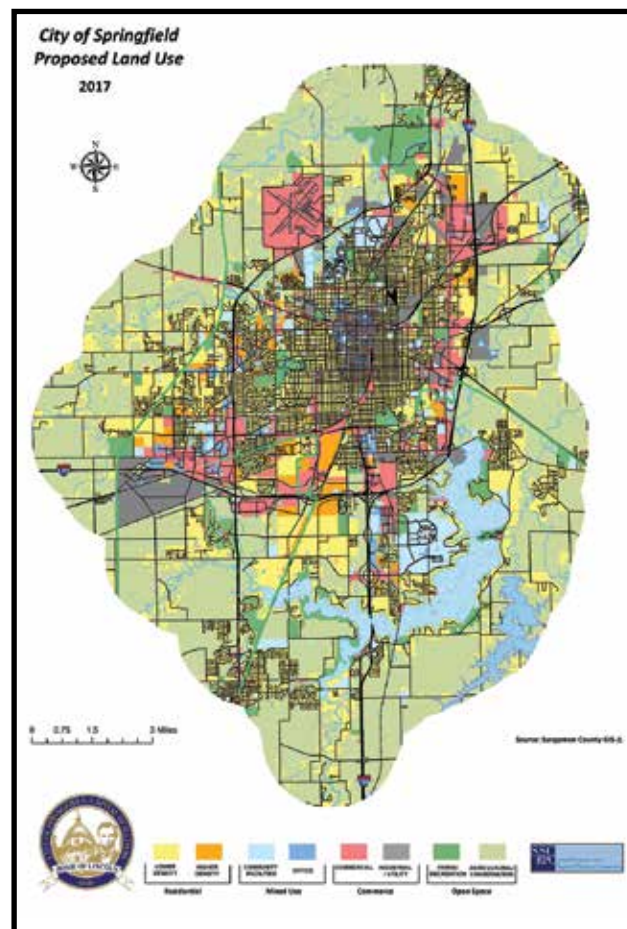
There hasn't been a lot of that lately. The budget impasse at the Statehouse put everybody in a bad mood, and made "Springfield" synonymous with stalemate statewide. The comprehensive plan comes at a time when county government is criticizing city government for not doing enough about economic development. The local economy, hampered by state government cutbacks, pension uncertainty and anti-union threats, seems stuck.

The new city plan won't by itself turn that around, of course. There is no "wow" factor in "Comprehensive Plan, City of Springfield, 2017-2037," by the Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission. But looking at the city large, as the planning document does, makes it look controllable, as though people can guide its future and their own, rather than the built environment determining our destiny. "Cities do change," writes E. Norman Sims, executive director of the planning commission, in his introduction to this plan, a capstone of his career. "A city's comprehensive plan is intended to provide a consistent basis for decision making," Sims writes. "It is often the only public document that describes the community as a whole and its desired vision of the future, describing how, and at what pace, it wishes to develop physically, economically and socially. It may be one of the most important investments a community makes, as it plays an important role in the community's ability to manage change."

The plan argues for consistency in land use, development and the policies that guide it. Without up-front agreement on such matters as growth, economic development and environmental protection, issues are addressed only by happenstance. "Consistency often encourages additional private investment in a community," the intro states, "and serves to facilitate more efficient and effective use of public funds when budgetary decisions are made in light of long-term needs." Consistency can also attract new public funding by demonstrating that "the city is prepared to use these funds wisely and well." Consistency can seem as dry as land use maps, but it is something the city council doesn't do well. Any satisfaction from sticking to a plan only comes years down the road.

There are some happy highlights. The plan notes that abolishing the

Third Street tracks was envisioned in Vachel Lindsay's 1920 *Golden Book of Springfield* as well as Myron West's 1925 Springfield *City Plan*. It's beginning to look like that old Third Street mistake will get corrected and, the plan says, should become a "City-Center Connecting Linear Park." Under the heading, "Developing a more attractive city," the plan suggests designating "legacy neighborhoods" and "opportunity areas" where blight can be targeted with redevelopment with financial incentives and architectural assistance. Vacant lots can be turned into small outdoor gathering spaces, and a tired intersection, like Cook Street and Martin Luther King Drive, could become a "neighborhood center" or an "enhanced character area." Suggestions like these sometimes attract cynics, but here they seem appropriate as reminders that planning doesn't stifle new ideas, but makes way for them.



A city plan is "often the only public document that describes the community as a whole and its desired vision of the future."

The biggest idea is that Springfield can still plan for its future, and have some control over its destiny. By renewing its commitment to growth, to preserving old neighborhoods and downtown, to environmental protection and efficient transportation, the plan can put citizens on a common path where, because some things are decided, new ideas become more possible. Hope, and the energy that comes from it, puts muscle on a city's bones. ♦



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