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A century of crunching the numbers

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Lori Milosevich, Terri Phelps and James Legg of Estes, Bridgewater & Ogden.

PHOTO BY DAVID BLANCHETTE

A century of crunching the numbers

BY DAVID BLANCHETTE

Although figures are their business, a 100-year-old Springfield accounting firm wants customers to know that they are more than just numbers.

"We provide a good service to a lot of people. I enjoy it, because it's always something different," said Lori Milosevich, CPA, one of three partners at Estes, Bridgewater & Ogden. "You can get a phone call over 10 different things that are important to them, so it should be important to us as well."

Estes, Bridgewater & Ogden was founded Jan. 1, 1918, and operated in the Myers Building downtown until the early 1970s, when the firm moved to their current building at 901 S. Second St. Estes, Bridgewater & Ogden provides nonprofit and governmental audits, tax planning and preparation, commercial accounting and auditing, computerized accounting services, estate taxes auditing, estate and trust services, payroll taxes and system installation and consulting.

The firm includes three partners and eight employees. "We bought the three partners out who were here before us, and all three of those partners had 40-plus years here," said Milosevich, a partner since 1989. "It's a firm that has been around a long time. Even though we are small, we've been able to keep it going. We want to keep it going as long as we can provide the same high-quality work for which we're known."

Although Estes, Bridgewater & Ogden offers a full range of accounting services, they concentrate on municipal audits, nonprofit audits and tax preparation. Their local government involvement has allowed them to help steer municipalities through the troubled waters of state budget crises and other fiscal pitfalls.

"Through the state budget crisis, I think a lot of municipalities suffered with their funding. That results in somewhat bad news at their end-of-the-year audit," Milosevich said. "When you're not getting the revenues, then you have to cut expenses. So when we do an audit, they either really welcome you, or you have to give them bad news."

On a positive note, many of the employee benefit plans the firm audits have been doing well. "The market has been up the last few quarters, until this last one, so the ones I've seen recently have been pretty healthy," Milosevich said.

Auditing municipal government entities and nonprofits is an expertise that not all CPA businesses offer, and it's a service that requires

Estes, Bridgewater & Ogden to be audited themselves every three years.

"We hire another CPA firm and they audit our audits, picking one from each industry that we do, to make sure that our work is in accordance with national standards and guidelines," Milosevich said. "They're tough. We've got one coming up in May or June, and I'm planning for it already."

The Illinois CPA Society oversees this auditing peer review program, which started in 1990.

"We are one of the few professions that have peer review," said Todd Shapiro, Illinois CPA Society president and CEO. "The municipal or nonprofit audit itself is to protect the public good. The peer review enhances the quality of the audit process."

Auditing the auditors ensures that clients receive the best possible fiscal examination and advice, and that's particularly important for nonprofits, whose financial margins are often quite slim. Those receiving state and federal grants are usually required to have an audit performed, and since state government and many nonprofits are located in Springfield, that's something Estes, Bridgewater & Ogden is ideally situated to provide.

"Many of the nonprofits we work with get grant money that benefits people, so when you get into it, you can see what good is coming out of it," said James Legg, CPA, a partner since 2015. "You also see that when Illinois got way behind on their payments, a lot of my people had to go get a line of credit or borrow the mon-

ey to keep afloat until they were able to get that promised grant money."

"These are nonprofits; it's not like a company where they've got a big cushion. They are relying on that money," Legg said. "So you're looking at the numbers, but beyond the numbers, we look at what that means for individuals and programs."

Legg said those close examinations of finances and internal controls occasionally turn up bad practices or fraud, and it's important that organizations find out how and why these things are occurring.

"You hope that you don't find them, but when you do, there are consequences," Legg said. "We have to make sure that everything going on inside the organization is up to snuff. It falls back on us. If we ignore it and then something happens, we are who they come to, because we signed that audit report."

Legg said that Estes, Bridgewater & Ogden's size is a benefit for clients because it provides continuity and allows staff to become more familiar with the nuances of each client's operation.

"When we go in to do our field work, they see the same faces every year. Some of the bigger firms aren't able to offer that," Legg said. "The size of our firm is a very positive thing because people don't like change, they want a comfort zone."

Legg said that helping clients through complex situations is especially rewarding for him.

"It's like putting a puzzle together, and when

COVER PHOTO

Lori Milosevich, Terri Phelps, and James Legg of Estes, Bridgewater & Ogden.

PHOTO/ BY DAVID BLANCHETTE

that audit report is signed or you're signing that tax return, it's a good feeling," Legg said. "Because the puzzle was in pieces before we got our hands on it."

Terri Phelps, CPA, has been a partner at Estes, Bridgewater & Ogden since 2010 and concentrates on taxes. She also finds satisfaction in helping people sort through and solve their challenges.

"I love doing the tax returns, the variety that you run into, there are all kinds of different industries that you work with," Phelps said. "Whether it's the large corporations or the mom and pop organizations, it's just nice to help people and clarify stuff that they find confusing. We help them with their bottom line and make things work better."

"My greatest reward is helping them understand, because for some of them it's like a black hole," Phelps said. "It's nice when you talk to them, walk them through it, and show them what they could be doing to help at the end."

Does Phelps have any of the stereotypical clients who show up a day or two before the April 15 income tax filing deadline with a shoe box full of unsorted receipts?

"Not a lot, but we get some," Phelps said. "We figure that some of those who show up at the last minute with the shoe boxes are going to be an extension so we at least have time to go through everything."

The new federal income tax regulations have many wondering if they will gain or lose at tax filing time. Phelps said she thinks more people will benefit under the new guidelines.

"We did a lot of projections when we were doing the 2017 tax returns to get an idea, and overwhelmingly, more people seemed like they would benefit under the new income tax law," Phelps said. "Not all of the dust has settled and we don't know how everything is going to shake out, but it does seem to be a better thing."

Many nonprofits, like those audited by Estes, Bridgewater & Ogden, are concerned that fewer

people will be able to itemize their deductions under the new tax code that might mean fewer charitable donations. Phelps hopes that isn't the case.

"There are a lot of people who give for the right reason, not just for the tax benefit," Phelps said. "But with the standard deduction doubling, you are going to have to give a whole lot more to charity to be able to still itemize. So for people who are only giving for the tax benefit, it might affect them, but I don't know that's how the general public is."

Does Phelps see a time when the computerized, do-it-yourself accounting programs such as TurboTax or Quickbooks make CPA tax services redundant?

"I can't ever see it getting to where you don't need human involvement," Phelps said. "I have various clients who will say they use TurboTax and they like it, it's a good program, but you are just reading the screen. What do you not know that's going to catch you?"

"There are tax returns that are easy, they don't take any time at all, but there are always those returns that require more help," Phelps said.

All three Estes, Bridgewater & Ogden partners are certified public accountants, and all three say it's an extremely marketable career that they hope more young people pursue. But they've noticed some reluctance among the current generation to complete the five-year CPA degree program and take the notoriously difficult CPA licensing exam.

"I've noticed with the younger generation there aren't as many CPAs out there, because it's a lot of work," Legg said. "But there's a demand, you can go anywhere with it." ♦

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



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Valerie Ausmus, CPA, at work in the offices of Estes, Bridgewater & Ogden.

The building at 901 S. Second Street where Estes, Bridgewater & Ogden is located.

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Small scale development can have a big impact

BY CATHERINE O'CONNOR

Bernice Radle, owner of Buffalove Development and Little Wheel Development in Buffalo, New York, addressed an invited forum for about 30 Springfield developers, officials and community activists on Nov. 14 to discuss her experience in small-scale development.

Inner City Older Neighborhoods (ICON) invited Radle, who has served as the vice-chair of the Buffalo, New York, zoning commission and is a faculty member of the Incremental Development Alliance, to be the keynote speaker at the half-day session. It concluded with a panel involving Matt Wolf, AIA, planning coordinator for the City of Springfield; John Shafer, AIA, a local architect; Linda Maier, Realtor, Century 21 Real Estate Associates; and Molly Berns, executive director, Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission.

Radle's story began in 2008, when she saw the world of affordable housing collapse. That is when she decided to join the conversation about how to be inclusive and provide affordable housing to the public. Now a national advocate for the small-scale development movement, she told the group that one key principle of her success is having all functions under one roof. Small scale developers need to become experts at zoning codes, municipal regulations and be creative in cultivating strategies that show how their projects will benefit the community.

More than a decade of experience in Buffalo and neighboring Niagara Falls neighborhoods has taught Radle, "Good development is not about buildings, it's about people."

An outstanding example of Radle's success with low-cost, small-scale development efficiency is the rehabbed turn-of-the century building which houses her office on the first floor and has stylish, hip residential spaces above. Her projects are "net zero" because they are designed to be as heavily energy-efficient as the finances allow.

To promote her ethic of preserving culture, she added a mural designed by a minority community member. The building, which was a typical, aging structure on a corner suffering from urban disinvestment, came to life when Radle added colorful 5'X5' mesh panels that were assembled by volunteers, underscoring her support for diversity and intention to address the neighbors' fear of gentrification.

Embracing the philosophy that "preservation means jobs," Radle recycles, repairs and rehabs using low-cost materials and is proud to pay living wages for local labor and expert craftsmanship.

In a recent project, Radle used salvaged commercial kitchen sinks and countertops in apartments, because the materials are higher quality and tenants loved the look. "We reused pallet wood as wainscoting in the kitchen, added a spice rack from Home Depot and completed a whole kitchen for under \$800," she said.

With an eye to preserving art and history, Radle creates a simple wheat paste wallpaper using enlarged photos of historic skylines, bringing a local sense of place into the kitchen.

And in every case, the survival of a project comes down to financing. Much of the effort happens before that first angel investor finds a local small-scale developer struggling to plan a project. Radle recommends the "Bigger Pockets" podcast to learn how to get started with little money down. She is also a speaker for the Incremental Development Alliance, which educates nonprofits with a boot camp and Facebook page for small scale builders.

Recent Illinois legislation includes a new statewide historic tax credit for 25 percent of the project. With a \$3 million per project credit cap and a \$15 million total credit cap per year, it can fill an important gap in financing adaptive reuse

projects for designated historic properties. Projects can combine the 20 percent federal historic credit with the statewide credit so that developers can potentially receive financial incentives for 45 percent of the project costs.

According to architect John Shafer, the economics of Springfield's market can be an obstacle when looking at the "risk-reward quotient" of distressed properties. Panel members seemed to agree that Springfield's population is shifting, with fewer young people who might be potential urban pioneers.

There seemed to be a collective sentiment that as a community, we haven't done a successful job of selling the city beyond the Lincoln theme. Panelists spoke of a need to create a new

identity and sense of place. "We need to change the zeitgeist of our community," Shafer said.

From dealing with building setbacks, parking requirements, ADA guidelines and differing standards for mixed use, live-work spaces and infill construction, developers need to change their expectations for profit and return. A key is getting a design professional involved very early in the project, according to both Shafer and Radle.

It has been suggested that the City of Springfield needs to create a "one-stop shop," for building permits, based on the model that has been successful in other cities. According to city planner Matt Wolf, the emphasis would be to have the licensing and sign-off process for easements and special approval for designated

historic properties made clearer and easier for developers and owners.

As Radle summed it up, developers would like to "walk in with a plan, and walk out with a permit." ♦

RESOURCES:

<https://www.biggerpockets.com/renewsblog/>
<http://www.incrementaldevelopment.org>

Catherine O'Connor retired from the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency in 2015.



Bernice Radle, a developer in Buffalo, New York, speaks to ICON members about small scale development.

PHOTO BY APRIL SMITH



The newly remodeled lobby area.

PHOTO COURTESY OF STATE HOUSE INN

State House Inn completes renovations

BY ROBERTA CODEMO

An iconic downtown hotel has a new brand and a new look. The State House Inn, located at 101 E. Adams St. in Springfield, joins the Red Roof's The Red Collection and has undergone a multimillion-dollar renovation.

Built in 1961, the boutique hotel is the second property and the first franchised property in The Red Collection, a new soft-brand hotel concept that features upper midscale hotels located in metropolitan downtown locations. The Red Collection's first hotel opened in downtown Chicago in September.

"We wanted to create something unique in the marketplace," said Phil Hugh, chief development officer for Red Roof, when asked about The Red Collection. "We're really excited about it."

Plans are to expand into capital cities, metropolitan downtown locations, resort locations and major tourism locations.

Talks began last December between Red Roof and London-based Vendian Capital Management Ltd., who is the current owner of the State House Inn and also owns four Red Roof Inn and Red Roof PLUS+ properties. Packard Hospitality Management, LLC manages the property.

"We were looking to grow our portfolio," said Hugh, who has worked with Packard in the past. "The State House Inn is a unique asset." It is located within walking distance of the State Capitol, downtown businesses and historic sites and has shown steady, consistent growth.

Each hotel in The Red Collection is held to a higher standard and must meet certain minimum specifications to be part of the brand. "It made sense to renovate the State House Inn," said Hugh. Every property is unique and each has a different look. The product the brand puts in Springfield will be different from a property located elsewhere.

Research shows that hip and trendy are out. Consumers are looking for affordable, centrally located hotels that are hyperlocal and reflect

the culture and vibe of the city in which they're located.

"This is a great opportunity to be at the forefront of a new brand," said Scott McKay, general manager. "It's the launch of a new chapter for the State House Inn."

The hotel is designed to appeal to everyone from the leisure traveler to corporate and business travelers and offers guests deluxe accommodations at an affordable price in the downtown area. "We give guests more options to choose from," said McKay.

Renovations began in mid-July and are nearly complete. The new décor reflects the mid-century modern movement with retro styling and modern comforts and harkens back to the era in which the hotel was originally built.

The 125-room hotel features 23 executive one-bedroom suites and two signature suites, the Abraham Lincoln and the Mary Todd. Each guest room has been completely renovated from top to bottom and offers free Wi-Fi and other modern amenities.

Throughout the hotel, the renovations celebrate Abraham Lincoln, right down to the artwork on the walls. "Springfield is all about Lincoln," said McKay, adding Lincoln has had a huge impact on Springfield tourism and history. "He's pretty much everywhere," and guests can enjoy a unique experience that they can't get anywhere else.

"It all goes back to the brand," said McKay, who is excited to represent Springfield. Each hotel in The Red Collection is tied into the community. "It's who we are and who we want to be."

Everyone from the front desk staff on up is knowledgeable about what Springfield has to offer and trained to ask guests if this is their first time in Springfield. "It's an opportunity to welcome them," said McKay, adding that at times, the front desk functions like a concierge service.

"The future looks bright," said McKay, who expects to see an increase in bookings now that the renovations are complete. "It's exciting." ♦



The State House Inn at 101 E. Adams St.

PHOTO COURTESY OF STATE HOUSE INN

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FRANK G. "BEAVER" SCHWARTZ (Feb. 24, 1934-Oct. 19, 2018)

He was in the business of helping people

BY CATHY SCHWARTZ, ED SCHWARTZ, PAULA RYAN, JEAN WEISS AND ANN SCHWARTZ

Springfield lost an icon last month with the unexpected passing of Frank G. "Beaver" Schwartz, Jr. Officially, Beaver's business was financial planning, specializing in life and disability insurance, but he always felt that he was "just in the business of helping people," and that involved a lot more than insurance.

Beaver was a native of Springfield and grew up playing baseball all day "till we couldn't see the ball due to darkness." His pitching skills allowed him to attend the University of Illinois on a full baseball scholarship where he excelled, earning second team All-American honors. He took two years off to serve in the Army where he got to see the world and always said, "It made me realize there was nowhere else I wanted to be other than Springfield." Upon graduating, he moved back and continued selling insurance for New England Life.

Beaver loved U of I and anything associated with it. His office was a museum of Illini memorabilia, ranging from Chief Illiniwek statues, framed Illini letterman letters, to pictures of his teammates and coaches, many of whom he kept in contact with his whole life. He claimed he developed real optimism by drinking beer at tailgates in Memorial Stadium as the Illini football team staggered through many seasons of losing records. He felt the important part of football weekends was not the game so much as tailgating, getting together and having fun with friends.

He felt strongly that the university gave him the opportunity to go to college, play ball, travel the country and make lifelong friends, and he gave back any chance he could. He, along with many of his lifelong friends, helped restart and lay the groundwork for the dormant Springfield branch of the U of I Alumni Association, which is still active and flourishing today.

He often said that his success was the result of putting energy into activities that help people and that, "When you do the right thing and help people, it all comes back." Being on the board and active in the American Business Club (ABC) was one of those activities. He loved that while they raised money for charity, the fun and the relationships were like "icing on top." Beaver also was proud of helping

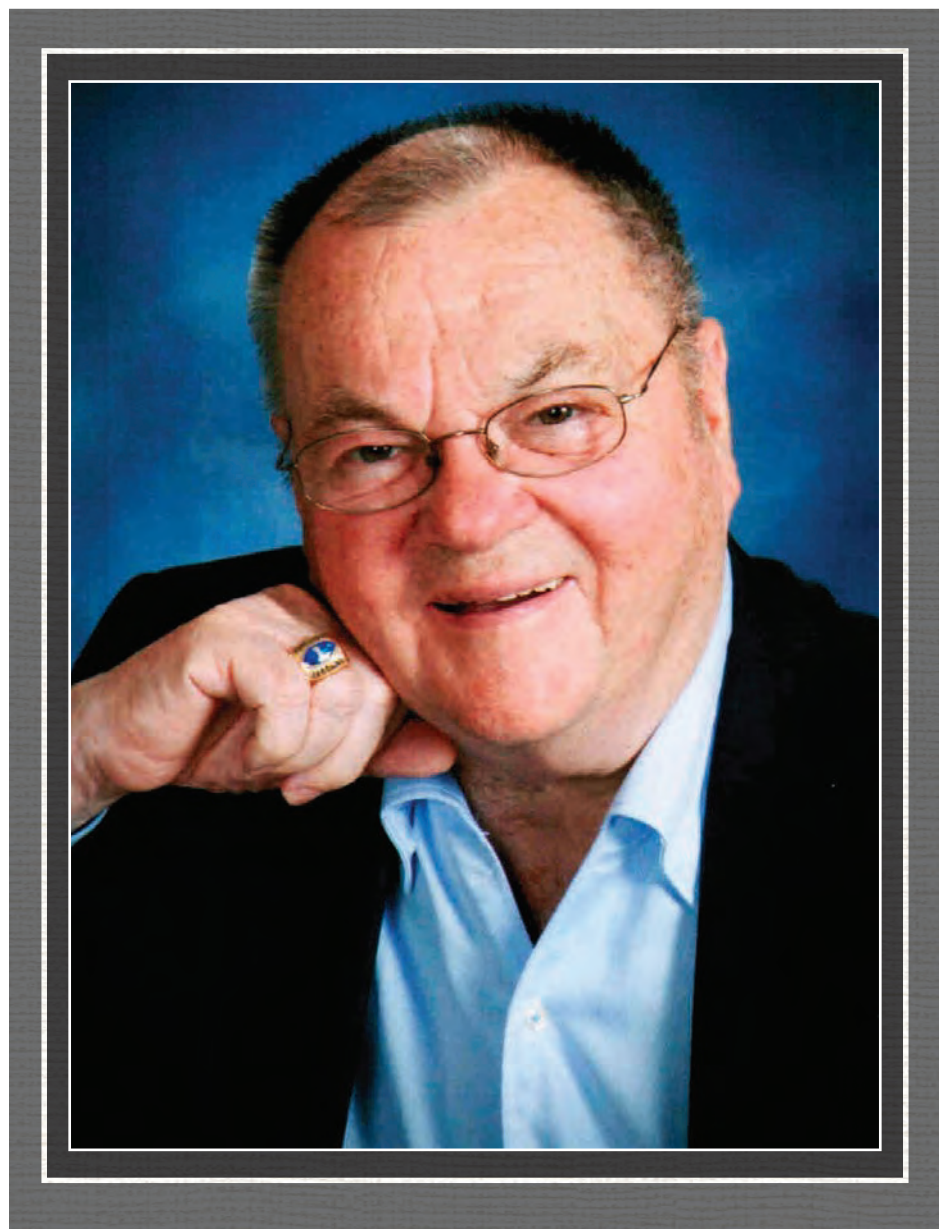
to start and served on the board of the old Springfield Caps collegiate summer baseball league that played at Lanphier Ball Park. His dedication was recognized with his 2016 induction into the Springfield Sports Hall of Fame.

Beaver didn't succeed by himself. He gave much of the credit to his wife and the love of his life, Fran (Fuhrwerk) Schwartz. He always said that without Franny being the glue holding the family together, he could have never put in the hours necessary to be successful. It did pay off as he became a top producer, making the Million Dollar Round Table for 51 consecutive years, Top of the Table (top one percent of all life sales) on many occasions and many other lifetime awards for consistent production. He was a natural in the world of life insurance both because he loved to connect with people – he always said that he never met a stranger – and he loved to help people. This extended beyond selling policies, it was a way of life.

Beaver just lived life large. Every minute was an opportunity. He had a huge caring heart and was incredibly generous with his time and boundless energy. He never forgot a friend or client, no matter how long he knew them. He was the guy who would make the rounds visiting sick friends or relatives or was the chief instigator in organizing get-togethers for friends who might need it. Wherever he went, he had the unique ability to make everyone feel good with a big smile, funny story, hug or a simple compliment.

Although he represented several companies over the years, including Connecticut Mutual, MassMutual and National Financial Partners, he always felt he represented himself and what was best for the client. He was proud that he never burnt a client and always did the right thing. True to his "clients first" motto, Beaver recently completed a merger with Brian Heckert of Financial Solutions Midwest to ensure continued quality support and care of his clients.

He wasn't afraid to try new things. If he thought it, he did it, and his thinking was often outside of the box. He had no fear and no second-guessing. When their five kids were still young, he and Franny pulled a "Green Acres" and moved to the country without knowing how to ride a horse, run a tractor or milk a chicken (just seeing if you were paying attention). He worked with a business coach, before



Frank G. "Beaver" Schwartz

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE SCHWARTZ FAMILY

there was such a thing, that challenged how he saw life. He attended personal growth seminars and went around town hugging people for weeks afterwards. This same adventurous spirit had him traveling to Germany, driving to Notre Dame and then to North Carolina (where he saw every one of his children and grandkids), all in the six weeks prior to his passing.

At the age of 84, he didn't feel or act old. He said, "I go just as hard as I did 20 years

ago, I just take a few more naps in between." In fact, his family takes comfort in knowing his joy of living, happiness and love of others was just as strong in his final day and that the impact he made helping others will live on. ♦

Cathy Schwartz, Ed Schwartz, Paula Ryan, Jean Weiss and Ann Schwartz enjoy sharing fun memories of their beloved and one-of-a-kind dad.

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Source: FDIC website for total deposits and market share for period specified; the banks for other information. Ranked by market share for the period ending June 30, 2018.

	NAME / ADDRESS	PHONE / FAX (=) / WEBSITE	TOTAL DEPOSITS (\$000)	MARKET SHARE	LOCAL CEO	HOLDING COMPANY	NUMBER OF MORGAN CO. LOCATIONS	YEAR EST'D
1	Jacksonville Savings Bank 1211 W. Morton Ave. Jacksonville, IL 62650	217-245-4111 217-243=2088 jacksonvillesavings.com	248,261	28.91%	Chris A. Royal	Jacksonville Bancorp, Inc.	4	1916
2	The Farmers State Bank and Trust Company 200 W. State St. Jacksonville, IL 62650	217-479-4000 217-479=4093 fsbtco.com	175,543	20.44%	Joy French Becker	Farmers Holding Company	2	1911
3	US Bank 322 W. Morton Ave. Jacksonville, IL 62650	217-479-5906 217-243=7830 usbank.com	92,745	10.8%	Jodee Nell	US Bancorp	3	1863
4	Town and Country Bank 1604 W. Morton Ave. Jacksonville, IL 62650	217-243-0660 217-245=7057 townandcountrybank.com	78,402	9.13%	Darin Gehrke	Town and Country Financial Corp.	1	1962
5	BOS - Jacksonville 1701 W. Morton Ave. Jacksonville, IL 62650	217-479-8888 217-479=8838 bankwithbos.com	59,345	6.91%	Michael Halsne, Regional President	Spring Bancorp, Inc.	2	2000
6	Community State Bank 101 West St., P.O. Box 200 Franklin, IL 62638	217-675-2311 217-675=2621 commstatebank.com info@commstatebank.com	52,610	6.13%	Chris Gordon	Galva Investment, Inc.	1	1886
7	Prairie State Bank and Trust 1052 W. Morton Jacksonville, IL 62650	217-243-8148 217-243=8390 psbank.net	46,134	5.37%	John Rohn	American Central Bancorp, Inc.	1	1995
8	Peoples Bank and Trust 197 W. State Waverly, IL 62692	855-478-8526 888-638=5845 bankpbt.com	36,248	4.22%	Rob Lyman, Community Bank President	People First Bancshares, Inc.	1	1877
9	CNB Bank & Trust N.A. 1351 Lincoln Ave. Jacksonville, IL 62650	217-243-6654 217-243=5595 cnbil.com	29,229	3.4%	Gary Graham, Regional President	CNB Bank Shares, Inc.	1	1854



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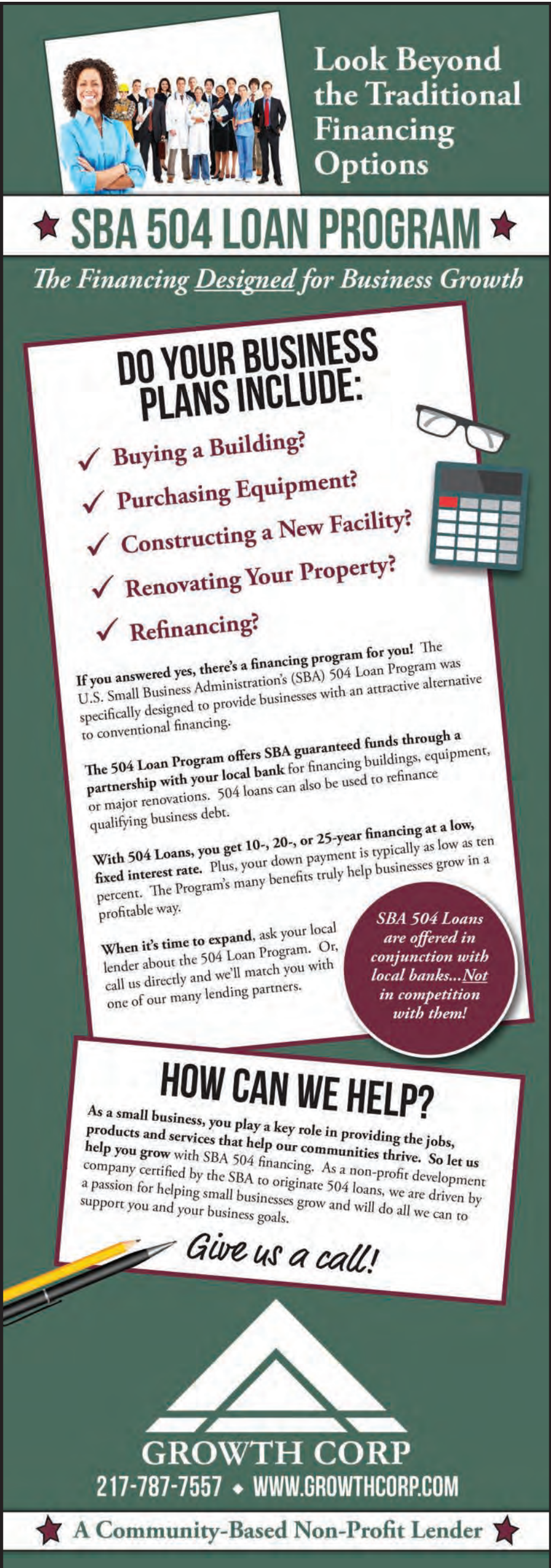
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BANKS – SANGAMON COUNTY

Source: FDIC website for total deposits and market share for period specified; the banks for other information. Ranked by market share for the period ending June 30, 2018.

	NAME / ADDRESS	PHONE / FAX (=) / WEBSITE	TOTAL DEPOSITS (\$000)	MARKET SHARE	LOCAL CEO	HOLDING COMPANY	NO. OF SANGAMON COUNTY LOCATIONS	YEAR EST'D
1	Illinois National Bank 322 E. Capitol Ave. Springfield, IL 62701	877-771-2316 217-747=8591 illinoisnationalbank.com	803,931	13.95%	Sarah C. Phalen	Illinois National Bancorp, Inc.	8	1999
2	United Community Bank 301 N. Main St. Chatham, IL 62629	217-483-2491 217-483=7608 ucbbank.com	762,254	13.23%	Robert A. Narmont	United Community Bancorp, Inc.	14	1907
3	JPMorgan Chase 1 E. Old State Capitol Plaza Springfield, IL 62701	217-527-3860 217-753=3169 jpmorgan.com	707,439	12.28%	Management Committee	JPMorgan Chase & Co.	3	1851
4	Bank of Springfield 3400 W. Wabash Ave. Springfield, IL 62711	217-529-5555 217-698=4570 bankwithbos.com	629,919	10.93%	Tom E. Marantz	Spring Bancorp, Inc.	4	1965
5	PNC Bank 1 Old State Capitol Plaza North Springfield, IL 62701	217-753-7100 217-753=6267 pnc.com	463,024	8.03%	Brian Ray, Regional President	The PNC Financial Services Group, Inc.	7	1804
6	Marine Bank 3050 W. Wabash Ave. Springfield, IL 62704	217-726-0600 217-726=0645 ibankmarine.com	452,510	7.85%	Chris R. Zettek	Marine Bancorp, Inc.	7	1993
7	US Bank 205 S. Fifth St. Springfield, IL 62701	217-753-7530 217-753=7558 usbank.com	364,313	6.32%	Mike Johnson	US Bancorp	4	1863
8	Town and Country Bank 3601 Wabash Ave. Springfield, IL 62711	217-787-3100 217-698=4529 townandcountrybank.com	289,837	5.03%	Micah Bartlett	Town and Country Financial Corp.	4	1962
9	Carrollton Bank 2135 W. Wabash Ave. Springfield, IL 62704	217-793-8696 217-793=9503 carrolltonbanking.com	205,034	3.56%	David S. Haney, Regional President	CBX Corporation	1	1877
10	Prairie State Bank & Trust 3751 W. Wabash Ave. Springfield, IL 62711	217-993-6260 217-546=7665 psbank.net	175,099	3.04%	Joe Hardy	American Central Bancorp, Inc.	4	1890
11	Security Bank 510 E. Monroe St. Springfield, IL 62701	217-789-3500 217-789=6729 securitybk.com	107,060	1.86%	Eloise L. Mackus	NA	3	1906
12	Warren-Boynton State Bank 702 W. Illinois St. New Berlin, IL 62670	217-488-6091 217-488=6216 wbsb.com	102,302	1.78%	James Weast	W B Bancorp, Inc.	2	1877
13	Williamsville State Bank & Trust 3341 Old Jacksonville Rd. Springfield, IL 62711	217-698-9728 217-787=5150 wsbt.net	88,371	1.53%	Catherine J. Gonzalez	WSB Financial Ltd.	3	1890
14	Rochester State Bank 133 N. John St. Rochester, IL 62563	217-498-7111 217-498=8674 rochesterstatebank.com	87,635	1.52%	Kim Kleinschmidt	Rochester State Bankshares, Inc.	1	1912
15	Bank & Trust Company Rt. 4 at Plummer Blvd. / P.O. Box 228 Chatham, IL 62629	217-483-3343 217-483=6325 banktr.com	77,453	1.34%	Don Krager, EVP, Dan Fleming, President	LBT Bankshares, Inc.	3	1902
16	Regions Bank 3000 S. Sixth St. Springfield, IL 62703	217-718-6560 217-528=1117 regions.com	55,296	0.96%	Bart Rose, Central Illinois Market Executive	Regions Financial Corp.	2	1869
17	Hickory Point Bank & Trust 3131 W. Wabash Ave. Springfield, IL 62704	217-547-3600 217-547=3605 hickorypointbank.com	44,643	0.77%	Robert T. Mizeur	First Illinois Corp.	1	1979
18	West Central Bank 3600 Wabash Ave. Springfield, IL 62711	217-726-9600 217-726=9001 westcentralbank.com	39,219	0.68%	Jay Barnes	West Central Bancshares, Inc.	1	1876
18	People's Bank and Trust 2840 Mansion Rd. Springfield, IL 62711	888-728-1954 888-638=5845 bankpbt.com	33,661	0.58%	Marty Kerns, AVP, Consumer Banking	People First Bancshares, Inc.	1	1954
20	First Bankers Trust Company 2201 W. Wabash Ave. Springfield, IL 62704	217-546-6151 217-546=9164 firstbankers.com	27,879	0.58%	Ron Wenger, Market President	First Bankers Trustshares, Inc.	1	1946
21	Alliance Community Bank 200 North West St. Athens, IL 62613	217-636-8214 217-636=7458 bankacb.com	32,803	0.57%	John L. Leinberger	AC Bancorp, Inc.	1	1910

Community banks grow and adapt

BY HOLLY WHISLER

Springfield has a bank to fit every need, whether it be for large-scale commercial banking, money for a small start-up business, or personalized service for the individual who needs to open his or her first checking account. There are more than 20 banks based in Sangamon County, ranging from large national banks to community banks. However, since the Great Recession of 2008, there have been a multitude of changes in the banking industry as a whole. The names of banks have changed, some banks have closed and a number of community banks have grown in size as they have merged with larger banks.

"Clearly, we are seeing community banks merge for many different reasons," said Sarah Phalen, president and CEO of Illinois National Bank (INB). "Illinois has the most banks of any state, and competition is fierce. We have many very small rural banks, and for some of these banks, they are having trouble keeping and attracting young talent to the rural communities."

Phalen also noted the increasing costs of regulation. "Interest rates have been very low for quite some time, and it is difficult for banks to make money in that environment, especially with such competition. You add to that the need to constantly be spending money on new technology and regulation, and it becomes difficult for some to continue to offer their clients the services they want. Some banks are fatigued and not willing or able to keep up with new technology and changing regulations, and some banks feel it is best to merge in order to bring the highest level of service to their clients," according to Phalen.

The banking industry is heavily regulated, and while it protects the bank and the consumer,

some banks are buckling under the weight of regulation and are forced to either go out of business or be acquired by a larger bank in order to survive. The fines for noncompliance are quite steep.

Tate Jones, executive vice president of retail banking at United Community Bank, concurred. "The climate of community banks is challenging, due to increased regulatory scrutiny, increased wage pressure and an uncertain interest rate environment."

The Dodd-Frank Act is legislation that was signed into law by President Obama in 2010 in response to the financial crisis that became known as the Great Recession. While Dodd-Frank was intended to regulate the financial industry and stop lenders from taking advantage of consumers, it also created additional compliance issues for banks.

Dodd-Frank is just one regulation that hits some banks hard. In fact, in May of this year, President Trump signed into law a financial measure that is aimed to ease the burden put on small and medium-sized lenders by the Dodd-Frank financial reform act. However, it will take time before that relief will reach the financial institutions it intends to help.

Jim Weast, president and CEO of Warren-Boynton State Bank in New Berlin explained, "The burden of regulation is felt throughout the banking industry, and perhaps in greater magnitude by the community bank. The regulations were written with large institutions in mind and those don't typically translate well to community institutions. The recently passed regulatory relief bill should help ease some of the burden, as it specifically addresses the needs of community institutions. The only issue is that it will take significant time to implement these, which means

we still have to work with the burdensome existing regulations," said Weast.

When asked how community banks cope with the weight of regulation and compliance, Weast said, "In many cases, community banks use companies that specialize in regulatory compliance. These companies provide a valuable service, but are expensive to work with. Many smaller community institutions struggle with the cost of compliance."

Phalen noted, "There was a time a few years ago when the pace of new regulations coming out of Washington were a bit hard to handle all at once. But we have great resources in the Illinois Bankers Association and Community Bankers Association of Illinois. Additionally, we have really strong staff that have worked in compliance for banks for a long time and can help us manage the changes and implement the necessary procedures to comply. I think in some more rural communities, they struggle to find such staff, and that was one thing that the relief act helped with last year. It allowed very small institutions the opportunity to avoid some regulation. For INB and many other community banks in Springfield, we are larger than that threshold, so that relief did not necessarily apply."

While some industry sources estimate that approximately 25 percents of community banks have closed nationwide, many of the remaining community banks are resilient and standing strong in changing tides.

John L. Leinberger is president and CEO of Alliance Community Bank, the product of a recent merger between Athens State Bank and National Bank of Petersburg. He said, "We believe the future of community banking is actually growing stronger, especially in Springfield and surrounding communities. While the consolida-

tion trend may drive up the average size of what is considered a community bank, customers still value the personal touch that community banks offer. We not only have the benefit of working where we live, community bankers tend to be very active in volunteer and service organizations that are the lifeblood of many communities. We are loyal to our communities, and in turn, our customers acknowledge and reward our efforts by trusting their local community bank for their financial needs."

Weast agreed that "local community banks have been thriving since the financial crisis of 2008. Clients have seen the value of doing business with community banks since we are able to focus our attention on the individual and take an active role in our communities. People have realized that community banks see them as a valued client and friend, not just a dollar sign." ♦

Holly Whisler has worked for the Illinois State Board of Education and Lincoln Land Community College. She is currently a freelance writer in the Springfield area and can be reached at hollyaw@comcast.net.



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ACCOUNTING FIRMS

Sources: The accounting firms
Ranked by number of CPAs.

	NAME / ADDRESS	PHONE / FAX (=) WEBSITE	NUMBER OF CPAs	NUMBER OF FULL TIME EMPLOYEES	PRINCIPALS/PARTNERS	PERCENT ACCOUNTING	PERCENT TAX	PERCENT CONSULTING	YEAR EST'D
1	Sikich LLP 3201 W. White Oaks Drive, Suite 102 Springfield, IL 62704	217-793-3363 217-793=3016 sikich.com	44	85	Tom Krehbiel, Andy Lascody, Chad Lucas, Angie Leach, Richard Lynch, Gary Neubauer, Andrew Paoni, Amy Sherwood, Bruce Thompson, Michelle Usher	60%	25%	15%	1982
2	Kerber, Eck & Braeckel LLP 3200 Robbins Rd., Suite 200A Springfield, IL 62704	217-789-0960 217-789=2822 kebcpa.com	38	87	Dale Becker, David Burnett, Phil Capps, Marc Carter, Josh Clark, Jim Hagerman, Skip Hedger, Cheryl Martin, Steve Povse, Kate Ward, Danielle Hunt, Josh Shugart, Bethany Jaeger, Kirsten Kienzler	66%	21%	13%	1931
3	Eck, Schafer & Punke LLP 227 S. 7th St. Springfield, IL 62701	217-525-1111 217-525=1120 espcpa.com	20	38	Kristi Corpin, Jim Hogge, Brent Leach, Mario A. Perrino, Brad Punke, Paul Schafer, J.D. Stewart	55%	31%	14%	1994
4	RSM 1 N. Old State Capitol Plaza, Suite 500 Springfield, IL 62701	217-789-7700 217-753=1654 rsmus.com	13	17	Leslie Barhett, Director	45%	30%	25%	1926
5	Crowe LLP 3201 W. White Oaks Drive, Suite 202 Springfield, IL 62703	217-862-2700 217-862=2701 crowehorwath.com	9	13	Chris Mower	31%	26%	43%	2005
6	Pehlman & Dold PC CPA 100 N. Amos Ave. Springfield, IL 62702	217-787-0563 217-787=9266	7	11	Todd J. Anderson, J. Timothy Cravens, Dorinda Fitzgerald, Jamie Nichols	52%	40%	8%	1941
7	Estes, Bridgewater & Ogden 901 S. Second St. Springfield, IL 62704	217-528-8473 217-528=8506 ebocpa.com	6	10	Lori K. Milosevich, Terri L. Phelps, James Legg	60%	37%	3%	1918
8	PFA Tax and Accounting Professionals 3201 Pleasant Run, Suite C Springfield, IL 62711	217-793-3810 217-717=9947 pfanow.com	5	18	Tom Flynn, Jeff Burris, Dan Garner, and Brian Voights	52%	43%	5%	2011
8	Zumbahlen, Eyth, Surratt, Foote & Flynn Ltd. 1395 Lincoln Ave. Jacksonville, IL 62650	217-245-5121 217-243=3356 zescpa.com	5	16	Cindy Foote, Valerie Flynn, Adam Withee, Suzanne Steckel	59%	34%	7%	1970
9	Quorum Consulting, LLC 4440 Ash Grove, Suite A Springfield, IL 62711	217-793-7200 217-793=7204 Quorum401k.com	4	11	Donald E. Wienhoff, Angela R. Davis	30%	60%	10%	1994
10	Cowan, Epperson & Associates 979 Clocktower Dr. Springfield, IL 62704	217-523-6969 217-523=0717 ceassoc.com	2	6	Darren Epperson	49%	47%	4%	1986

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Banking industry looks for new talent

BY ZACH ROTH

Ten years ago, the banking industry suffered its biggest setback in more than 80 years. The Great Recession didn't just cost everyday people their life savings and 401(k)s, it also sent the banking industry into a funk from which it is still trying to recover.

One reason involves the most basic function of business: the worker. A lack of qualified employees has affected the banking industry in recent years, something that Brian Hoffman of the Illinois Bankers Association is attempting to rectify.

"One of the things that our banks are struggling with is finding quality talent," Hoffman said. "Traditionally, when you talk to a banker, they didn't go to school to become a banker. They kind of fell into banking, and they've been there 40 or 50 years. So, we still see that, and we have a lot of banks that are getting to be in that crunch...a lot of people are retiring and there's not that kind of flood of talent coming into the industry. There's no pipeline."

Hoffman is the current president of Illinois Bankers Business Services at the Illinois Bankers Association (IBA), a nonprofit affiliated with Illinois' banking industry and sponsor of a new job board. BankTalentHQ provides job services and job listings for those seeking work in the financial services industry, especially younger workers who may not have considered a career in banking to be a possibility.

According to their press release, the site "is designed as a talent management resource for the financial industry," and hopes to become "the premier talent management site for financial industry careers." It's a rebrand of



Brian Hoffman, president of Illinois Bankers Business Services at the Illinois Bankers Association (IBA) PHOTO COURTESY OF IBA

sorts for the banking industry, which has seen potential employees bypass banking for more lucrative options.

"There's a lot of different factors (for the lack of talent)," Hoffman said. "Increased regulation is one, but also a changing dynamic in the industry as well. You look at who the competitors are in the space for talent; you have your Googles, your Facebooks, all these technology companies."

To compete with big technology firms, the IBA, in conjunction with 17 other state banking associations, has formed the new career center to provide a fresh face in the banking industry. The features of the site are standard: job listings, advice for potential job seekers and resume help. However, the idea of a job board is something unique for an industry not quite known for being on the cutting edge.

"We're competing against the Indeeds and the ZipRecruiters and all those

kinds of job boards," Hoffman said. "It's a niche job board, just for banking."

Hoffman is optimistic about the new venture, with more and more states beginning to hop on board, creating a much more stable base of resources from which to work.

"We started out with four state banking associations," Hoffman said. "We're now up to 17 state banking associations in 25 states

and territories. One association, the Western Bankers Association, makes up 13 states plus Guam. So, it's grown every month. We're doing better than last year. We're starting to get traction as part of that."

Recruitment is only one part of the equation when it comes to refilling the talent pool. Even Hoffman, who is optimistic about the future of his venture, knows that the prior generation of bankers had some development advantages that newer generations will not have.

"A lot of the larger banks, especially in Chicago, used to have management trainee programs, and those have kind of gone by the wayside as banks have grown and changed," Hoffman said. "Hopefully, you start to see some of those programs coming back, because a lot of CEOs actually went through those programs."

Hoffman is hopeful that his new venture will help bring back an industry that has seen rough times over the past 10 years. Only time will heal the wounds brought by the Great Recession, but Hoffman is trying to expedite the process with BankTalentHQ.

"What has been detrimental in the past is that the industry hasn't prepared the next level of talent," Hoffman said. "Now, we have to start from scratch. You have to get to students earlier and earlier to let them know what the opportunities are. We, as an industry, are trying to get that talent to understand what opportunities there are in banking. We believe this is a good first step, but there's still a lot more for us to do to get to that talent." ♦



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Charitable donations and the new tax laws

BY JUSTIN MASON AND CASEY TOM

The War Revenue Act of 1917 authorized the first tax deduction for charitable giving. Since that time, charitable tax deductions for giving have incentivized taxpayers to make charitable contributions to minimize their overall federal tax liability. One hundred years later, in 2017, the passage of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA) may have a significant impact on the tax benefit of making charitable contributions. Changes have paved the way for additional planning opportunities regarding charitable contributions for 2018 and beyond.

Under the TCJA, we have seen an expansion of the standard deduction and a cap placed on the state and local tax (SALT) deduction. Combined, these changes have made it more difficult for taxpayers to clear the hurdle of the standard deduction in order to itemize deductions. It is estimated that as many as 90 percent of households will no longer itemize deductions and will simply claim the standard deduction. Because of this, many taxpayers will no longer receive an additional tax benefit from their charitable deductions that they previously received.

For 2018, the standard deduction has been raised to \$12,000 for individuals and \$24,000 for married couples filing jointly. These are significant increases from 2017, which allowed for a standard deduction of \$6,350 for individuals and \$12,700 for married couples filing jointly. This can be attributed to a consolidation of the eliminated \$4,050-per-individual personal exemption and the standard deduction.

As mentioned above, the TCJA of 2017 has also placed a cap on the state and local tax deductions. What this means is that the sum of state income taxes and property taxes will provide no additional tax benefit above a level of \$10,000.

Below is a simple comparison of two identical situations from 2017 and 2018. For this example, we are assuming state taxes of \$9,900, property taxes of \$10,000, mortgage interest of \$7,500 and charitable contributions of \$5,000. In 2017, the household easily clears the standard deduction of \$12,700 and was able to take full advantage of their state income and property taxes, along with their charitable contributions.

For 2018, with the expansion of the standard deduction – combined with the \$10,000 SALT cap – will have the household claiming the standard deduction of \$24,000 as opposed to itemizing. This means that for the \$5,000 contributed to charity in 2018, the household effectively receives no tax benefit.

However, with proper planning and the use of a donor-advised fund, it is possible for this household to receive the tax benefit of their charitable contributions.

Although donor-advised funds were orig-

inally recognized under the Tax Reform Act of 1969, it seems that more recently, their planning benefits are being utilized more commonly. Prior to TCJA, their primary use was to make large charitable donations to offset income in years in which a taxpayer's income was going to be higher than usual. One can think of years in which a business may be sold, a year in which an executive was to exercise stock options, etc. The substantial increase in income presented an opportunity to accelerate future charitable contributions into the present year.

Under the TCJA of 2017, the planning benefits of a donor-advised fund have become increasingly important. To summarize how they work, a taxpayer first establishes an account with a charitable fund. Major custodians, such as Charles Schwab, Fidelity, Vanguard, etc. as well as local organizations, such as the Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln, can provide taxpayers with such accounts. Once established, the taxpayer will make a large irrevocable donation, representing some level of future charitable intent, enough to get over the hurdle of the standard deduction. Often we look at three, five or even 10 years of future contributions.

The taxpayer will receive the entire amount as a tax deduction in the year of the contribution. The taxpayer can then make contributions to charitable organizations over multiple years, albeit without additional tax deductions in subsequent years, due to the receipt of the deduction in the year of the contribution.

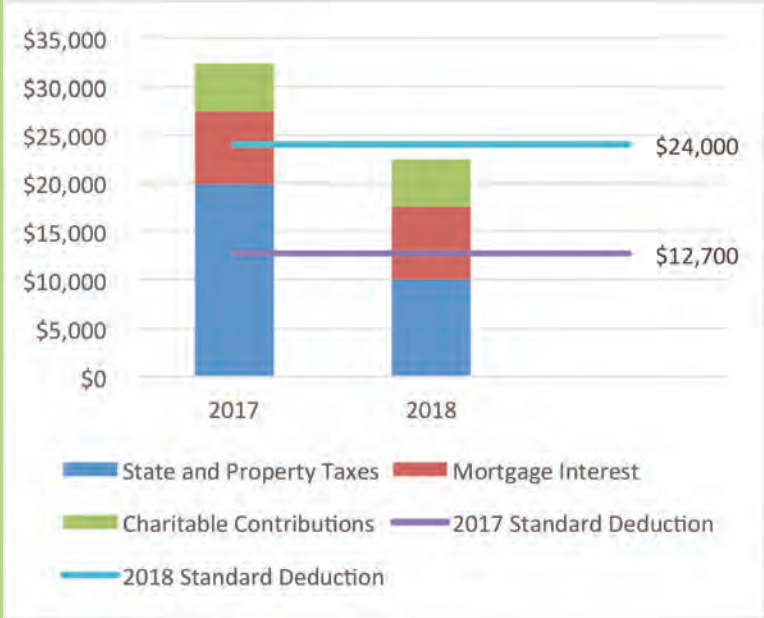
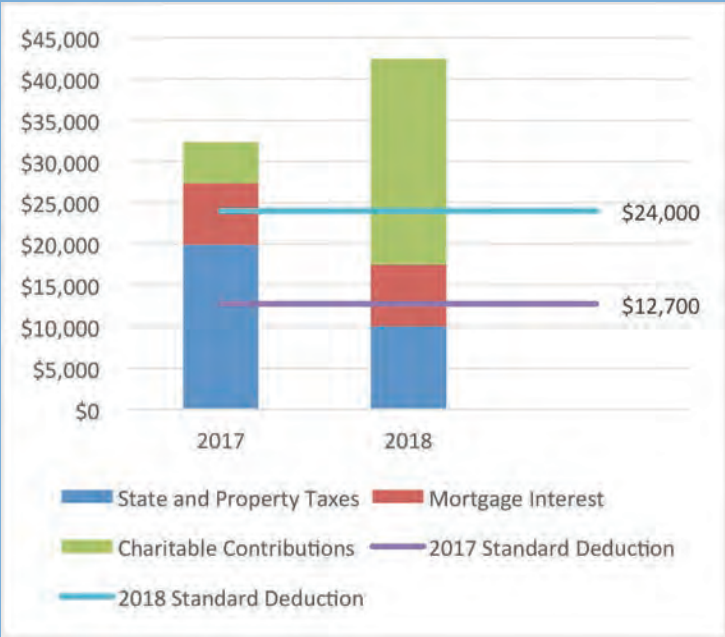
In the next example, the taxpayer chooses to accelerate the next five years of annual con-

tributions into the present at \$25,000 (five years at \$5,000 per year). The acceleration of these contributions into the donor-advised fund allows the taxpayer total deductions of \$42,500, easily clearing the standard deduction hurdle and allow them to receive most of the benefit of their entire charitable contributions.

Once contributed, the assets could then be distributed out to charities, by the taxpayer, at an amount equal to \$5,000 per year over the next

five years. In each of the next five years, the taxpayer would then claim the standard deduction.

This method of contributing to a donor-advised fund works with cash contributions; however, if the taxpayer can use appreciated securities from a taxable investment account then the taxpayer also receives the benefit of avoiding tax on the gain of the appreciated securities. This is where the planning benefit of a donor advised fund really shines.



The expansion of the standard deduction, coupled with the cap on the state and local tax deduction, has decreased many taxpayers' abilities to clear the level of the standard deduction. For charitable taxpayers, in many cases, this has taken away the tax benefit incentive for charitable contributions. Using a donor-advised fund and proper planning techniques, a taxpayer may still be able to take advantage of their charitable intent and receive a tax benefit. ♦

** The above example is simplified for context. Every individual situation is different and requires consideration. It is always important to consult with a qualified financial adviser and tax professional to assess your specific situation. Investment Advisory services provided by KEB Asset Management, LLC, a fee-only registered investment adviser. Tax and Accounting services provided by Kerber, Eck & Braeckel LLP.*

Justin Mason is a CFP and wealth adviser with KEB Asset Management, LLC. Casey Tom is a CPA and senior tax manager with Kerber, Eck & Braeckel, LLP.

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Sources: The Credit Unions; Illinois Credit Union System
Ranked by total assets.

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1	Citizens Equity First CU - CEFCU 2424 W. Iles Ave. Springfield, IL 62704	217-546-0076 217-546=8939 cefcu.com email@cefcu.com	5,811	5,129	Mark Spenny	3	1937
2	Credit Union 1 225 S. College, Suite #100 Springfield, IL 62704	800-252-6950 217-789=0032 creditunion1.org	826	743	Paul Simons	1	1958
3	Heartland CU 2213 W. White Oaks Drive Springfield, IL 62704	217-726-8877 217-726=2157 hcu.org support2@hcu.org	288	254	Tom Lex	5	1946
4	Land of Lincoln CU 300 South Grand Ave. West Springfield, IL 62704	217-528-0677 217-528=3672 llcu.org llcu@llcu.org	230	196	Craig Althoff	1	1947
5	Illinois State Police FCU (ISPFCU) 730 Engineering Ave. Springfield, IL 62703	800-255-0886 866-523=8756 ispfcu.org ccr@ispfcu.org	95	85	Megan Becker	1	1966
6	Illinois Educators CU 1420 S. Eighth St. Springfield, IL 62703	217-528-2642 217-528=2681 iecumember.org	57	52	Jody Dabrowski	2	1938

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Economic forecast calls for growth

BY ZACH ROTH

When Jim Glassman looks at the current state of the economy, he can't help but think of sunshine, warm weather and cool tunes.

"If you could time travel and visit some other time in life, where the broad economic features looked better than they are right now," Glassman said, "I don't think you could find it. That's why I use Brian Wilson's song, "Good Vibrations," to characterize where we are in macro terms."

Indeed, Glassman, head economist for JPMorganChase, and many others like him are quite rosy on the state of the American economy. It was the key feature of a speech he gave to assembled members of the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce at the annual Economic Outlook breakfast held at UIS on Nov. 13. But while other economists are relatively subdued about the current state of America's economic picture, Glassman didn't hold back his excitement about both the present and the future.

"To me, it's unbelievable what's been going on," Glassman said. "For the last decade, everybody has been all stretched out about the U.S. economy. We've been growing more slowly and, for the longest time, the conversation was about 'what's going on?' People were dreaming up all these pessimistic stories about the U.S. economy's performance. And yet, if you look at what is going on, America is getting back to work. Now, the big complaint is that we can't find people to work, and we're having a hard time attracting people and we're having a hard time retaining people."

Glassman criticized the role that traditional business media coverage plays in formulating how people perceive the current state of the

national economy.

"When I'm on the road and I listen to what you hear, I think it's very confusing to figure out what's happening (with the economy)," Glassman said. "Part of the reason for that is that when you're getting information about the economy, it's pieces of the puzzle. It takes a long time to build a puzzle. One day it's retail sales, one day it's stats, and no one thing is the whole economy."

Even though some may perceive the current recovery to be sluggish, Glassman was quick to note that further context may be needed to understand the current state of the economy.

"If somebody went to sleep in 2009 and they woke up today and you showed them what's going on, they would conclude that we had a pretty normal recovery," Glassman said. "The reason is, knowing how fast our economy is growing isn't the whole story. It's only half the story. You need to know, what's our growth potential? How are we doing relative to our growth potential?"

That growth potential has been realized, albeit more at a distance runner's pace than that of a sprinter, with the economy at full employment and fewer people applying for jobless claims. For some economists, the current boom is a sign of a potential bust in the next few years. Many believe that recent actions by the Federal Reserve, in conjunction with the passing of newly instituted tax cuts, may produce an overheating economy that's ripe to implode. But Glassman said that these actions may keep the economy stable in the near term, something that wasn't the case in prior periods.

"Given what we did on the fiscal side, there's every reason to believe the economy is going to grow at three to four percent for the next couple years," Glassman said. "The big

worry was...are we pouring fuel on a fire, because we have a fully employed economy and we're just going to be pushing the economy forward? The big fear in the economics community was, all we were going to be doing was creating more inflation, because there are limits to growth. I think we're going to be surprised by this second wind that we're getting that will generate a lot more activity, and it's going to boost the economy more."

Glassman paints a pretty rosy picture of the American economy. Uncertainty is to be anticipated, even expected, but in his mind, the current good vibrations should continue unabated.

"Things are really humming," Glassman said. "We're doing fine." ♦

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Robert Ares becomes CEO of Land of Lincoln Credit Union

BY ERIC WOODS

Land of Lincoln Credit Union (LLCU) recently announced the appointment of Robert Ares to be the company's new chief executive officer. Ares comes to Springfield from Glasgow, Kentucky, where he most recently served as the chief operating officer for South Central Bank.

"I began my career in banking as a part-time teller at the age of 16, while I was a junior in high school. When the branch I started in closed, I was hired at 1st National Bank of Homestead as a part-time teller," said Ares. "When the position of assistant auditor became available, I applied and was given the opportunity. As time went on, I applied and became a general ledger clerk. I earned the opportunity for progressively more responsibilities within the accounting department, finally being promoted to executive vice president and CFO in 2006."

"In 2012, as a result of my work during the difficult recession, the directors recommended and shareholders elected me to become a bank director. And most recently, I have been blessed with the opportunity to be the president and CEO of Land of Lincoln Credit Union," he said.

As his banking career was in its early stages, Ares attended Miami Dade Community College before earning his bachelor's degree in business management from Saint Leo University in 1990, graduating magna cum laude. He later earned his MBA in 2005.

"Work hard and get an education. That is the best advice I have ever been given," said Ares. "Discipline, not desire, will determine your destiny."

"I was blessed with a mentor, David Peyton, former president and CEO of 1st National Bank of South Florida. David provided me with opportunities to learn and grow. He was unselfish and

a great role model for me." Not only is Ares proud of his career, but he is quite fond of his family. "I am married to my wife and way better half, Debbie. We have been married for 31 years," he said. "She is a medical transcriptionist. Our son, Daniel, is a middle school teacher in one of the Tampa, Florida, suburbs. He and his wife, Sadie, have blessed us with our granddaughter, Genesis."

Ares is excited to begin this next chapter of his career as he takes over his new position. Among his new job duties, Ares is responsible for providing strategic leadership for the company by working with the board of directors and other management to establish long-range goals, strategies, plans and policies.

"The future, from my perspective, looks bright for Land of Lincoln Credit Union. We have an engaged board that is committed to central Illinois and the various communities we serve," he said. "We have a great team of individuals that work well together and are committed to growing and serving our members and our communities. To that end, we will be offering new products and services to our members and carrying on our mission of providing education and quality services for financial success. We will continue to work hard to improve the financial literacy of our communities through education."

Land of Lincoln Credit Union will have new programs in 2019 designed to help further spread financial literacy and counseling to those who find themselves in financial crisis. Additionally, according to Ares, they are constantly adding new services to offer greater levels of efficiency and convenience to their 30,000 members.

"You'll see a few new products emerge from LLCU in 2019 that will offer just that," he said.



Robert Ares, Land of Lincoln Credit Union CEO PHOTO COURTESY OF LLCU

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AWC will host a holiday celebration lunch on Wednesday, Dec. 5 from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Sangamo Club. For more information or to make reservations, visit www.awcspringfield.org.

Illinois Women in Leadership (IWIL)

Illinois Women in Leadership (IWIL)

IWIL will not hold a meeting in December. Programs will resume beginning on Thursday, Jan. 17 with a lunch at the Sangamo Club from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Steve Thomas will speak on "Helping People Navigate Through the Complexities of Human Weirdness." Registration is \$18 per person on or before January 11 and \$23 after January 11 or at the door. Visit www.iwil.biz for more information or to register.

Women Entrepreneurs of Central Illinois (WE-CI)

WE-CI will hold a luncheon on Wednesday, Dec. 12 at the Sangamo Club from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Join us for a celebration of 2018, a look ahead to plans for 2019, and installation of new officers. We will also be recognizing our corporate sponsors. To register, visit weci.wildapricot.org/events.



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Don't become a victim of fraud

BY SARAH DELANO PAVLIK

We've all seen the national headlines about Bernie Madoff or Rita Crundwell, the comptroller of Dixon, Illinois, who stole \$53 million. But we've also seen the headlines in Springfield, including Adam Lopez, who is currently in jail facing charges of stealing more than a million dollars from clients. Other notable local incidents include a woman who stole \$2.5 million from a consulting firm, a woman who stole \$600,000 from a hospital, a woman who stole \$500,000 from an auto body shop, a bank employee who stole more than \$100,000 and another bank employee who stole \$47,500, to name a few. Fraud can happen anywhere. What should you look for to keep it from happening to you?

Spotting fraud can be very difficult. Diana B. Henriques, author of *The Wizard of Lies: Bernie Madoff and The Death of Trust*, sums it up well. "We think we'll see these guys coming. We think we'll recognize them before they get close enough to hurt us. It's wrong. These guys don't look like the Joker. They look like Robert De Niro. They look like somebody you'd want to sit next to at dinner."

These thieves will steal from their family, their friends and their employers, so knowing someone well (or thinking you know them well) will not prevent fraud. Neither will a referral from a trusted source. Bernie Madoff only accepted new clients who were referred to him. He further violated his clients by using them to spread his fraud among their own friends and family.

According to *Inc. Magazine*, the most likely person to embezzle funds is "a female employee above age 40 without a prior criminal history working in finance or accounting – and living in Vermont. Nearly two-thirds of 2011's incidents involved female perpetrators, although men embezzle, on average, 25 percent more. Nearly three quarters of crimes were committed by employees who held finance and accounting positions, with an average age of 47.9 years old. Just five percent had any criminal history." All of the examples I cited above, except Bernie Madoff and Adam Lopez, are women. I will

leave it to the psychologists and sociologists to determine why that is.

Some of the signs of fraud are the same, whether it is regarding personal investments or company assets. Documentation is key. Almost all fraud requires fake documentation. Bernie Madoff sent out fake account statements for years. Since his funds were private, it would have been difficult to realize the statements were fake. He chose the format, the letterhead, etc. He controlled everything.

Most of us, however, invest with advisers who are employed by other companies. This gives us the opportunity to verify any statements that we receive. If the format of your statements changes or looks unprofessional, you should investigate. Look for a phone number online to verify account information. Do not use a number provided on the statement. You could also verify your accounts online, making sure you go to the legitimate company website and not a look-alike site.

Madoff's fraud was fairly straightforward. He took people's money and kept it for himself instead of investing it. Rita Crundwell's fraud was more complicated, and a more typical example of corporate fraud.

According to an article in the *Journal of Forensic & Investigative Accounting*, "The fraud was genius in its simplicity. Rita Crundwell picked up the daily mail, made all the deposits, updated the journals and ledgers, prepared and

signed checks, moved investment monies and reconciled the bank accounts." The City of Dixon had six authentic bank accounts, plus a seventh fraudulent account created by Crundwell. She opened a new checking account as "City of Dixon and RSCDA" (Reserve Sewer Capital Development Account). "She routinely transferred funds from the first five accounts into the legitimate capital development fund account. The next step was that she created fictitious capital projects and fabricated a total of 179 invoices for those projects. Transfers from the legitimate account to the fraudulent account were documented as payments of the fictitious invoices."

In hindsight, the fake invoices should have been obvious. They had no Illinois Department of Transportation logo or letterhead. Many of the transactions should also have raised red flags at the bank. Because of their mistakes, the auditors and bank settled with the City of Dixon for approximately \$40 million. But that might not be the case for all of us.

So what can you do to protect yourself? Be vigilant. Open your statements promptly (sounds obvious, but some people don't). If there is fraud, the earlier you catch it, the better. Review your statement for unusual changes or inconsistencies. Finally, verify your statement

at least annually online or by phone.

What can you do to protect your business? First and foremost, adopt strong internal controls. Your accountant can help you develop controls, which will likely include the following:

- Ensure no one person has control over all parts of a financial transaction. For example, separate deposits from record keeping.
- Require employees to take vacations.
- Reconcile bank accounts and petty cash promptly every month.
- Examine canceled checks to make sure the vendor, amount and signature are authorized.
- Restrict use of credit cards and verify all charges made to credit cards.
- Set account limits with credit card companies and vendors.
- Require employees to submit itemized, original receipts for all purchases.
- Examine credit card statements and receipts each month, independently.
- Require an explanation of any significant differences in expenses from budgeted amounts.
- Keep petty cash and blank checks in a locked box or drawer.
- Prohibit writing checks payable to cash.
- Issue receipts for cash, using a pre-numbered receipt book.
- Reconcile cash receipts daily.

You may also consider purchasing insurance that covers commercial crimes. Chris Leming, senior vice president of Troxell, says that good internal controls will help reduce the cost of the coverage, and the application will require you to list your internal controls.

Work with your team – your insurance agent, your accountant, your lawyer and other advisers – have strong controls, and keep your eyes open. Remember, it can happen to you. ♦

Sarah Delano Pavlik is an attorney at Delano Law Offices, LLC. Contact her at sdpavlik@delanolaw.com.



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MEDICAL NEWS

SIU receives grant funding for Alzheimer's research

Alzheimer's is a devastatingly progressive disease that robs our loved ones of their memories and personalities. Presently 5.7 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's. By 2050, this number is projected to rise to nearly 14 million. Early and accurate diagnosis could save up to \$7.9 trillion in medical and care costs, according to the Alzheimer's Association.

There is increasing evidence that Alzheimer's disease lies on a continuum with dynamic neurobiological and pathological symptoms. As the disease progresses, targeting specific therapeutic windows for intervention may give patients the greatest benefit. Several studies have implicated glutamate dysregulation in Alzheimer's disease pathologies in the brain. The glutamate system influences synapse formation in early brain development, synapse maintenance and synaptic plasticity.

A laboratory team led by Erin Hascup, PhD, assistant professor in the departments of neurology and pharmacology at Southern Illinois University School of Medicine, has been awarded two grants totaling \$6.33 million from the National Institute on Aging (NIA) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The group has shown that glutamate dysregulation is likely occurring prior to cognitive decline.

Hascup's team will study how glutamate neurotransmission changes over the course of Alzheimer's disease progression. Co-investigators Kevin Hascup, PhD, Neurology, Neurosciences Institute and CADRD, and Kristin Delfino, PhD, Center for Clinical Research, are contributing to the research. A \$2.95 million grant will support experiments to explore how specific protein changes cumulatively affect glutamate levels and brain activity. Hascup believes this new data could produce useful early biomarkers and therapeutic targets for fighting Alzheimer's.

A second grant award of \$3.38 million from the National Institute on Aging will fund studies of cellular aging, inflammation, neurotransmission and cognition in Alzheimer's disease. Andrzej Bartke, PhD, professor emeritus and director of geriatric research in SIU's department of internal medicine, will join the team on those investigations.

"Alzheimer's disease progression presents a moving target, so finding the timing for therapeutic treatments is critical," said Hascup. "If we can reduce the burden on aging cells and shift how they tolerate inflammation, it may help to slow or prevent the cognitive decline seen in patients."

In addition to its research focus, SIU

School of Medicine operates the Center for Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders. Since 1987, its staff has diagnosed, treated and educated Illinois residents with Alzheimer's and other dementia-related problems. In

the past year, the center, along with its Memory and Aging Network, has served more than 4,000 patients and their families. ♦

Free classes to explore health care careers

Memorial Medical Center has announced its winter sessions for a program designed to help students and community members learn more about health care careers. The free program, Hands-On Healthcare, launched in September 2017 and is offered in partnership with Southern Illinois University School of Medicine.

Hands-On Healthcare meets at least monthly. Sessions for the winter are rehabilitation therapy, 6-8 p.m. on Dec. 6; nursing, 2-4 p.m. on Jan. 21; medical education, 6-8 p.m. on Feb. 7; and pharmacy, 2-4 p.m. on March 4. Registration for each class opens 30 days before the class date. Each session has a limit of 40 participants.

The rehabilitation services class will be held in Suite 140, Memorial Physician Ser-

vices-Koke Mill, 3132 Old Jacksonville Road; the nursing and pharmacy classes will be held in Room 2B, Memorial Center for Learning and Innovation, 228 W. Miller St.; and the medical education class will be held at SIU School of Medicine, 801 N. Rutledge St.

Applicants will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. A confirmation email will include documents that require a parent's or guardian's signature if the participant is 18 years old or younger. To register or for more information, visit Jobs.ChooseMemorial.org/students/hands-on-healthcare. ♦

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Made-from-scratch makes an impression at Papo's Café

BY TOM PAVLIK

I've been hearing about Papo's Café for the last several months, but primarily in connection with its made-from-scratch breakfasts, baked goods and hand-crafted coffee drinks. And yes, Papo's breakfast menu sure is enticing. Although plenty of business is done over breakfast meetings, this month the fates decreed a lunch meeting with a west-side client at Papo's. We visited on a dreary and cold day looking forward to some nourishment and to catching up with a longtime client – and found Papo's conducive to both.

Papo's is located in a strip mall, and we weren't quite sure what to expect. In terms of décor and layout, think farmhouse meets coffee bar. There's a large gathering room just off the entrance with a communal table, a nice sitting area with comfortable lounge chairs – complete with a small fireplace and a TV – and some smaller tables. The main dining area continues the farmhouse feel with barn wood-style partitions, distressed wood furniture and metal chairs that harken back to pre-industrial revolution farm implements. The light from several walls of windows helps keep the place from being cloyingly dark. All told, it works, and you quickly forget you're in a strip mall.

One thing I don't like for a business lunch is ordering from a counter. Somehow, it's always awkward. But Papo's does a nice job of ameliorating the issues – staff is knowledgeable, speedy and helpful and bottlenecks are avoided thanks to smart

placement of the menus. As we were in line, we noticed that Papo's has a cooler filled with ready-to-go items for those looking to carry out or to get in and out quickly. Everything looked fresh and appetizing.

Papo's describes itself as “made-from-scratch meets local and quick service.” When I hear made-from-scratch and see a large menu, I usually discount the claim. Which is why I was happy to see that Papo's doesn't overextend itself and instead keeps a tight and focused lunch (and, for that matter, breakfast) menu.

Papo's has a handful of signature dishes that are rounded out by sandwiches, soups and salad. All items can be made into a meal for an extra \$2.50 – which includes one side and tea or canned soda, made in-house. Available sides include Cheeto crunch mac and cheese or pasta salad.

Being only three for lunch we couldn't sample the whole menu, and it was with some regret that we opted to pass on the pork belly sandwich (coffee-rubbed pork belly, lettuce, tomato and bacon-chipotle aioli on a baguette - \$9.99), the pimiento ham and cheese melt served on a plain bagel (\$7.99) and the briolles (stuffed brochte bread with him and cheddar - \$3.99).

Instead, we went with the poke bowl (ahi tuna, rice, kale, cucumber, carrots, cabbage, sesame with a ginger glaze - \$10.99), the Papo's salad (mixed greens, goat cheese, pecans, dried cranberries, sliced apples and Fuji dressing - \$8.99) and the chipotle turkey

wrap (turkey, bacon, avocado, provolone, bacon-chipotle aioli served on a honey wheat wrap - \$8.99). Because it was a cold day, we also threw in Papo's soup of the day (tortilla soup - \$2.99 cup and \$4.49 bowl) and the Cheeto crunch mac and cheese (\$1.79).

Our food came out quickly. And, surprisingly, it all came out at the same time, which allowed us to avoid the “go ahead while it's hot” dance when dishes come one at a time. Nicely done, Papo's.

I'm a bit of a tortilla soup snob, and found this iteration to have a depth of flavor that I wasn't expect-

ing. A bit more chicken and some crunchy tortilla chips as a garnish would have been nice, but certainly weren't necessary.

The mac and cheese was a true treat – the crushed up Cheetos added some brilliant orange color and texture, which served to elevate the dish. What a good idea, as was the copious amount of gooey cheese.

I found the wrap to be a bit sweet to my taste (I hadn't noticed that it came on a honey wheat wrap – my bad), but everything else was spot on. The bacon-chipotle aioli, which I ordered on the side, was a real winner that helped balance the dish out. As with all of Papo's offerings, the dish was generously sized.

The Papo's salad was reported as on the higher end of the spectrum – the goat cheese pairing well with the cranberries and light, but flavorful, dressing. My guest found the acidity of the apples to be a nice touch.

But I think the best dish of the day was the Poke bowl – one of Papo's signature dishes. It's not often that you find a dish that screams health-conscious, but that also delivers with bold and balanced flavors. Thankfully, my guest allowed me a few bites, and I now know what I'll order on my next visit to Papo's. Don't miss this one.

We couldn't help but notice the delicious-looking baked goods put out by the kitchen, and actually grabbed a scone (\$2.79) to take home. Although not consumed until the next morning, it was simply reported as delicious.

Papo's has some good stuff going on, and we all decided we'd be back. ♦



Austin Carter and Omar Romero of Papo's Café. PHOTO BY STACIE LEWIS



Papo's Café offers made-from-scratch items. PHOTO BY STACIE LEWIS

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#ILGive provides an easy way to connect donors to charitable causes.

PHOTO COURTESY OF FOREFRONT

#ILGIVE encourages charitable donations

BY JANET SEITZ

'Tis the season for giving, as many charities push year-end donations, which historically have provided donors with opportunities for both charitable gestures and tax deductions. Annual efforts such as #Giving Tuesday, the first Tuesday after Thanksgiving, help spotlight charitable causes and the spirit of giving.

Forefront, Illinois' statewide association for nonprofits and grant-makers, rounded up more than two dozen area charities for the #ILGive for #GivingTuesday social media event held on Tuesday, Nov. 28.

"#ILGive is a great way to tell any organization's story to a new, broader audience and boost their fundraising efforts," said Sarah Tapscott, Forefront's director of state partnerships. "#ILGive helps nonprofits reach new donors and provides the type of brand visibility that only a statewide effort can generate. To help organizations make the most of their efforts, the #ILGive platform allows organizations to custom-brand their profiles with pictures, video and specialized donation fields."

"Girls on the Run participates in #ILGive as part of our end-of-year giving strategy," said Jennifer Sublett, the organization's executive director. "Donors are generous at this time of year and also factor year-end gifts into their tax plans. We have been focusing our fundraising efforts on more gifts from individuals, so #ILGive is a great method of outreach to connect with donors and potential volunteers."

Allaina Blackwell, development and communications coordinator for Ronald McDonald House of Central Illinois, reported that, "#ILGive is a great way for us to connect with our local community here in Illinois and to be able to thank and acknowledge the support from so many of our friends right here. It works in tandem with the other fundraising efforts we make throughout the year, allowing us to focus on our folks here at home during the course of this campaign."

Tapscott said although #ILGive is primarily a social media campaign, "we know that each year a larger and larger percentage of donations are made online." #ILGive has its own Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages and a tagboard on ilgive.com that tracks and shares the posts of participants. Paid advertising on Facebook, Instagram and Google Adwords helps boost the campaign's reach.

"In some parts of the state, we have partnered with local foundations to support additional print ads and billboards. We are always looking for new partnerships that support the nonprofit community," said Tapscott.

While #ILGive is a 24-hour campaign and its media efforts, matching grants and prizes are available only for that day, donors can still find the organizations involved for 30 days and donate. Last year's #ILGive campaign created over five million impressions on social media across the state and had nearly 60,000 visitors to the website.

However, the end-of-year donations may be impacted by tax reform. Understanding the new tax laws and implications on nonprofit giving is about as complicated as untangling a string of holiday lights. In terms of giving, Tapscott said, "we don't have enough data yet to show how it has impacted giving. We won't really know the full extent of the tax changes until 2019."

Expectations are that giving may decrease, due to the Universal Charitable Deduction. The sector is expected to lose between \$12 and \$20 billion in charitable giving, according to Tapscott, due to the doubling of the standard deduction that was inserted in the Tax Reform Bill of 2017. It's estimated this change will result in the percentage of taxpayers who itemize their taxes decreasing from 31 percent to 13 percent, eliminating an important giving incentive for 21 million Americans.

According to John Stremsterfer at the Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln, "bunching" donations may help donors exceed the new standard deduction to contend with tax issues. The CFLL recommends a donor-advised fund may be the solution, by bunching multiple years' worth of donations in one year. Gifts to CFLL are tax deductible for that year and the assets grow tax-free. Assets can then be divided to make yearly contributions to charities and nonprofits. This action is as simple as delaying a 2018 contribution to the beginning of 2019 and making another donation in December 2019.

For many area nonprofits, the result of the recent tax law changes is still under wraps. Although some of the tax incentives may be vanishing, the need to support area nonprofits isn't going away. ♦

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



Extrernity MRI at 2921 Montvale Dr.

PHOTO BY STACIE LEWIS

Advanced Extrernity Imaging reaches out

BY STACIE LEWIS

Extrernity MRI, located at 2921 Montvale Dr., is now Advanced Extrernity Imaging, one of several businesses associated with the Foot and Ankle Center of Illinois, including Illinois Laser Center and the Foot and Ankle Depot.

Dr. John Sigle, owner, explains that while they had previously offered extrernity MRI imaging, they recently acquired advanced technology for extrernity three-dimensional CT scanning. Advanced Extrernity Imaging is one of the few places in the area that offers that

technology.

The Foot and Ankle Center of Illinois offers a variety of services including advanced surgery, treatments for arthritis and diabetic foot care. Laser treatments are also available as are specialty products.

More information ia available at myfoot-andanklecenter.com. Advanced Extrernity Imaging is located at 2921 Montvale Dr. in Springfield. They are open Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. and can be reached at 217-787-2700. ♦

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O & L Builders, 1900 Plover Rd. 622-4411. Chloe Leischner.
Corrine's Closet, 223 S. 6th St. 210-2060. Corrine Campbell and Devon Campbell.
Kate's Senior Care, 2539 W. Monroe St. 280-3318. Katey Bennett.
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SOAJR Enterprise, 1615 E. Melrose. 220-7500. Suarawu O. Amuda, Jr.
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Brust Enterprise, LLC, 41 Vernon Dr., Rochester. 306-1121. John J. Brust.
Full Blast Pressure Washing, 34 Queensway, Sherman. 361-6992. Matthew Johnson.
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