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# Made in America

TARIFFS AND STAFFING ARE TWO MAJOR CHALLENGES  
FOR AREA MANUFACTURERS

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A Henry Technologies employee welds a commercial fitting.

# Made in America

Tariffs and staffing are two major challenges for area manufacturers

## ARTICLE AND PHOTOS BY DAVID BLANCHETTE

From diodes to doughnuts, manufacturers in the Springfield area make many different things and supply steady employment. They are established, often multi-generational members of

the communities in which they are located. But manufacturers are also part of a volatile segment of the market, more susceptible to foreign policy decisions, government regulations and the growth or stagnation of state economies.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics has noted an increase in the number of manufac-

turing jobs nationwide during the past few years, particularly in the durable goods sector. “Made in America” is apparently making a comeback, and several area manufacturers are taking advantage of that trend. However, it’s hard to make something if you don’t have the employees to do so, and local industries

also report difficulty attracting enough qualified workers.

We’ve taken a look at four different types of area manufacturers to get their take on the segment’s opportunities and challenges, as well as that coveted “Made in America” designation.

### Henry Technologies Inc., Chatham

Manufacturer of flow control and pressure vessel components for the commercial refrigeration and air conditioning industry, 90 employees

The “Made in America” label is important to Henry Technologies of Chatham, which traces its history back to Chicago in 1914 and a man who built components for Model T Fords.

“The heart and soul of our company was built on the dreams of an American entrepreneur who had a passion for the value of being made in America,” said Hanna Robinson, human resources manager at Henry Technologies. “I feel that we contribute to the way people view made in America products by exceeding our customers’ expectations through excellence in all aspects of the products and services we provide.”

The Chatham facility is owned by Henry Group Industries, whose corporate offices are located in Hong Kong, but inside you’ll find local men and women machining, welding,

powder coating, testing and packing a myriad of fittings from small to very large for commercial customers around the globe, including the U.S. government.

Henry is always on the lookout for new workers with the skills needed to make commercial refrigeration and air conditioning components. Robinson said the company partners with Capital Area Career Center to attract potential welders to join the firm’s production team. Henry has also worked with the University of Illinois to host an on-site intern work study program in the engineering department, where products are designed from scratch to meet customers’ unique needs. Employment agencies are utilized to fill some other key positions, and Robinson said the company puts a lot of effort into retaining employees.

Technology has been both a blessing and a challenge for Henry, Robinson said. The firm can communicate immediately and effectively with customers around the globe, and technology helps the company to identify risks and head off potential problems so supply chain interruptions are minimized. But technology also requires additional resources to implement and support, a cost that must be borne by the manufacturer.

One of the most demanding challenges the company faces are government regulations pertaining to global warming compliance standards for refrigerants.

“It is important today as a global supplier in the industry, that we produce a product of high quality that supports environmentally safe and effective standards to our customer base,” Robinson said. “This can be very

challenging, due to federal regulations and additional operating expenses for a global manufacturer.”

“We must have complete visibility throughout our production and supply chain procedures. This is required for industry standards, as well as for our customers’ compliance measures,” Robinson said.

Robinson also noted that those in the manufacturing industry can never become complacent, because there’s always another firm itching for business.

“We must always stay relevant in our industry with product development abilities as well as having a solid supply chain of inventory available,” Robinson said. “We must always be customer- focused in order to be competitive in the industry and to provide the best value to all stakeholders.” ★





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### Mel-O-Cream Donuts International, Springfield | Food products manufacturer, 80 employees

David Waltrip loves Mel-O-Cream's chocolate long johns and white-iced cinnamon rolls, but he knows the company isn't the only manufacturer that produces these delicacies.

"Doughnuts have become a commodity in the industry, and we don't view them that way," said Waltrip, the president and CEO of Mel-O-Cream. "We try to be the best in the market. Our products taste fresher longer than anybody else's, and we have customer service and support that the majority of our competitors don't provide."

However, this commitment to quality has limited the growth of Mel-O-Cream, which has been producing doughnuts in the Springfield area since 1932.

"When you live in a commodity world and people are so price-sensitive, there are only a certain number of customers who feel that it's worth the extra money to try to do business that way," Waltrip said. "But that's one of our core values, and we don't forget you after we sell you our product."

Most of Mel-O-Cream's products are cooked at their plant on Springfield's far southwest side and then frozen to be shipped to stores, where the donuts are finished and sold to consumers under the store's brand name. Because of this, many doughnut fans in the Midwest are eating Mel-O-Creams and may not realize it, Waltrip said.

Mel-O-Cream is being asked to do more to its doughnut products before they

leave the Springfield plant so the stores that sell them have less preparation work to do. Waltrip said that's because the stores are experiencing a labor shortage, a dilemma that Mel-O-Cream also faces.

"It can be challenging for us to get skilled labor," Waltrip said. "We try a multitude of sources: social media, word-of-mouth, job fairs, every angle we can come up with, trying to be creative all the time trying to figure out ways to recruit workers."

Shortages of drivers in the trucking industry inspired Mel-O-Cream to buy its own trucks and hire its own drivers to deliver products. Waltrip said the company tries to retain workers by paying fair wages and benefits and by making the plant a great work environment.

Waltrip has lived in the Springfield area his entire life and has watched manufacturers come and go. Unfortunately, it's been mostly "go."

"We don't have enough manufacturers in Springfield. There are lot of opinions about why or why not, but the results out-speak all of the opinions," Waltrip said. "You see government and hospitals growing, but you don't see that from manufacturing."

"I travel a lot in my business, and in places like Iowa and Texas you see a lot of new growth, a lot of construction," Waltrip said. "It makes me scratch my head and think, 'What are we missing compared to these locations?'" ★

### CCK Automations, Jacksonville | Electronics manufacturer, 86 employees

"You ought to see the American flag we fly on our production floor," said CEO J.J. Richardson.

CCK Automations is locally owned and the company designs, engineers and manufactures electronic components, a process most people probably associate with China. But the Jacksonville firm is proudly American and is glad to have a hand in the return of electronics manufacturing to the United States.

"A lot of the electronics manufacturing was outsourced to China a few years ago, but a lot of it is trying to come back to the U.S.," Richardson said. "I think President Trump has done a great job by imposing the tariffs. When I first saw those I thought it was going to kill our business, but it's actually been good for our business."

"We've seen customers decide to bring product back to the United States versus paying that tariff, so there's no business advantage to move production overseas," Richardson said.

CCK also has an injection molding facility, part of a business it acquired in 2015, where they design and make plastic component parts for electronics. CCK also makes plastic components that don't go into electronics, like field tile connectors.

"Our customers want us to provide more solutions. We used to just make the electronic circuit boards for our customers," Richardson said. "Now we are placing them in enclosures, making them weatherproof, we are doing a lot of value-added processes. We are becoming more vertically integrated to fulfill our customers' desires and wants."

Most of the work cells in CCK's 149,000-square-foot facility are easily movable, and it's not uncommon for employees to quickly reconfigure the huge, bright, clean work floor to produce a brand new product or add production capacity for an existing one. Richardson said CCK has a global client base that includes the agriculture, food, consumer electronics, oil and gas industries.

CCK employees work four 10-hour days per week in two shifts and Richardson said they receive competitive wages. But the company is not immune to the problem it shares with other area industries and that is the lack of a readily available workforce.

"We have talked to two local colleges to try and figure out how we can work a specific program for our needs," Richardson said. "The problem is, they typically don't offer programs we need for our area of electronics. Illinois College has just started an engineering program and that's something we are looking at for internships in the future."

Richardson and his wife are Jacksonville natives and they intend to stay in the community, even though keeping a successful business going in Illinois keeps getting tougher.

"The Illinois business environment is incredibly hurtful with the taxes and the minimum wage going to \$15 an hour," Richardson said. "The minimum wage doesn't just affect the entry-level worker, it affects everybody. That is a migration that goes through the pay scale, all the way up the food chain. I think you'll see a trend for people to look outside of Illinois." ★



The concrete pigments the business manufactures are primarily red, yellow and black, but the fourth-generation Springfield family business of Solomon Colors, Inc. is red, white and blue at heart.

"There are two companies manufacturing granular pigment in the United States. Solomon Colors is one and the other is importing granular pigment from Germany and China," said Richard Solomon, board chairman and CEO. "Producing 'Made in America' granular pigment does make a difference, knowing that our customers can rely on our quality control."

Solomon Colors began pulverizing hematite iron ore in Springfield in 1927, and today the sprawling complex at the site of the old Springfield power plant still produces iron oxide pigments in dry powder, liquid slurry and granular forms for coloring concrete products. The company also produces decorative concrete products under the Brickform brand including hardeners, color release powders, stains, overlays, sealers, coatings and imprinting devices. All of the products are manufactured at Solomon's Springfield, Illinois and Rialto, California plants.

Solomon also designs and builds automated dispensing equipment so concrete plant operators can add colors directly into mixing trucks.

The fact that Solomon's competitors import much of their raw material from China has given the Springfield manufacturer an

advantage, especially since a 10% tariff was imposed in September 2018.

"We import synthetic iron oxide in from China, but we also bring it in from Germany and Brazil. We have positioned ourselves so we don't put all of our eggs into one basket," Solomon said.

But that doesn't mean Solomon won't do business with China. On the contrary, the company is looking at establishing a manufacturing operation in that country to produce decorative concrete products that will only be sold in China, not shipped to the United States.

"The reason we are doing it is because there is a 35% tariff for us to ship product into China from the United States," Solomon said. "I can understand the purpose of the tariff; I have seen it from both sides. But there shouldn't be a 35% tariff on our stuff and only 10% on stuff going the other way. It's a position that I support the administration on for that purpose."

More than 51% of Solomon Colors stock is owned by employees, with the rest owned by the Solomon family, including Richard's son, Adam, who is the company president and chief operating officer. Adam Solomon said that finding and keeping quality employees is a constant challenge at the Springfield operation.

"One good thing about the economy being good is that people have jobs, but one negative is that it's hard to find good people," Adam Solomon said. "All we want



Solomon Colors CEO Richard Solomon, left, and President and COO Adam Solomon stand by machines producing yellow pigment at the Springfield plant.

is people who will show up and want to work, and we'll hire and keep them. But it's actually hard to find people that even want to do that."

The Solomon president said the company has used recruiters, word-of-mouth, member associations, temporary employment agencies and has had discussions with area high schools and colleges to try and keep jobs filled. Many of the Solomon manufacturing jobs are hands-on, but others require special training or degrees in industry compliance or chemistry.

"A lot of the people we are finding are out-of-state, and it is kind of difficult to find someone and convince them to move to Illinois. The state's tax and business climate is definitely part of it," Adam Solomon said. "You also can't change the fact that Springfield is not Chicago. That's never going to happen, so you have to find people that want to live in a mid-sized town."

"But I think living in a town this size is a good thing, and the people who have come to Springfield appreciate the community," Adam Solomon said. ★

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2019 recipients Leuwania Baker, Stacey Skrysak, Abby Sgro, Vernessa Glover and Amanda Long. PHOTOS BY LEE MILNER

**Each year, Springfield Business Journal partners with Security Bank to recognize women from both the public and private sectors who have made outstanding contributions to the local community. The recipients are selected from nominations submitted by community members throughout the year.**

**On Tuesday, May 14, Security Bank hosted a reception at Island Bay Yacht Club for the selectees, their guests and members of the local business community. Stephan Paul Antonacci, president and CEO of Security Bank, presented awards to each recipient.**

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



Leuwania Baker with nominator Jennifer Gill.



Amanda Long with nominator Chief Kenneth Winslow.



Vernessa Glover with Eleanor Singleton.



# Going green

Area businesses and organizations recognized for sustainability efforts

BY KAREN ACKERMAN WITTER

At an awards ceremony held at Maldaner's Restaurant on April 25, Sustainable Springfield Inc. (SSI) recognized five entities for enrolling in the inaugural Springfield Area Green Leadership Program and presented four "Best of" awards. SSI is a grass-roots environmental organization that promotes responsible planning efforts by local government agencies and encourages Springfield area citizens and businesses to live and operate more sustainably.

The "Best of" awards are presented annually to recognize businesses, organizations and individuals demonstrating innovation or excellence in energy conservation, renewable energy use, habitat protection, waste reduction and environmental education. The Springfield Area Green Leadership Program is new this year.

"Enrollees in the Springfield Area Green Leadership Program demonstrate exemplary leadership, in addition to serving as role models for other businesses and institutions in the community that want to mainstream sustainable practices throughout their operations and programs," said SSI president Kevin Greene.

#### **Best in Area Pollinator Protection – Susan Helm and Francy Cobern**

Helm and Cobern are both master gardeners and dedicated community volunteers who worked with the Springfield Park District, local businesses and other volunteers to restore a native plant garden in Washington Park's lower lagoon area. They contributed over 400 hours of volunteer time and worked with other volunteers to plant more than 1,000 native plants. The area is now a designated Monarch way station.

#### **Best in Tree Canopy Preservation – Chuck Smith, Springfield Park District**

Smith is the superintendent of natural resources and district arborist for the Springfield Park District. He partnered with Friends of the Sangamon Valley to develop plans and seek grants for tree canopy projects in Carpenter and Gurgens Parks. Because the City of Springfield doesn't have a forestry department, Smith has taken on the extra role of forest preservation in the city, helping train volunteers for tree care, insect surveys and fire management projects.

#### **Best in Solar Development, Education and Training – Lincoln Land Community College (LLCC)**

LLCC worked with WindSolarUSA to investigate the feasibility of installing rooftop solar panels at its regional facilities. Solar projects will

be installed in June at the Jacksonville and Litchfield facilities, saving approximately \$400,000 in energy costs over 25 years. LLCC also created a renewable energy training curriculum to help prepare high school and college students for career opportunities.

#### **Best in Green Office Renovation – Illinois Environmental Council (IEC)**

IEC is a coalition of over 80 groups across Illinois that advocate on environmental and energy issues at the Statehouse. Last year, IEC purchased a building in downtown Springfield and incorporated green features throughout the renovation. Walls were painted with recycled paint, wooden conference tables were acquired from Springfield Reclaimed, a green purchasing policy was adopted for all office products and motion sensors were installed to turn off lights when not in use. IEC even selected a janitorial service that uses green cleaning products.

#### **Springfield Area Green Leadership Program**

Gold level members have created a green team, publicized their sustainability efforts and focused their sustainability efforts in at least five areas.

*Crawford, Murphy & Tilly (CMT)*

CMT created a sustainability committee and



Sustainable Springfield Inc. president Kevin Greene presenting a Green Leadership Program certificate to Steve Schroll, vice president at Crawford, Murphy & Tilly.

PHOTO COURTESY OF KEVIN GREENE

developed a formal plan. CMT recycles 20% of its office waste and has reduced building energy consumption by over 70% through building efficiency upgrades and a solar installation. CMT's



Kevin Greene presenting a Green Leadership Program certificate to Dave Cation and Becky and Bob Croteau, members of the green sanctuary team at the Abraham Lincoln Unitarian Universalist Congregation. PHOTO COURTESY OF KEVIN GREENE.

25 engineering professionals routinely counsel communities and clients on ways to incorporate sustainability elements into infrastructure projects.

*Maldaner's Restaurant*

Owner and chef Michael Higgins has installed solar panels on the rooftop as well as a beehive and native plant container garden to support pollinators. Energy use at the restaurant has been reduced by 20% over the last five years. Take-out orders are provided in compostable containers. Meals are made with locally grown foods and plastic straws have been replaced with paper straws.

*Abraham Lincoln Unitarian Universalist Congregation*

The congregation has a green sanctuary team that meets monthly to identify and promote sustainability initiatives. Lighting efficiency has been increased by 60%. A solar system was installed, with plans for expansion. A grove of trees was planted to provide shade, habitat and a carbon sink, and 20% of the mowed lawn on the property was replaced by prairie.

Silver level members have formed a green team, publicized their sustainability activities and focused sustainability efforts in at least three areas.

*Westminster Presbyterian Church*

Westminster formed an earth care team that educates the congregation on ways to be green at home and promotes eco-friendly practices at community events. Westminster recycles office paper and aluminum cans, Christmas tree lights, dry-cell batteries and printer ink cartridges. The church installed high-efficiency HVAC systems and LED lighting, incorporated native plants into landscaping, installed nesting boxes and bird feeders and phased out use of fertilizers and chemicals.

*Douglas Avenue United Methodist Church*

The church formed a green team that hosts meetings to discuss environmental topics. The team tracks electricity, natural gas and water use. They recycle fluorescent lamps and old paint, compost food waste and donate food scraps from events to a church neighbor who is raising chickens. The church uses non-toxic cleaning products, purchases recycled content paper products and uses a pest control service that minimizes toxic pest control measures. The church also established an area for a community garden. ♦

*Karen Ackerman Witter had a long career in state government working on natural resource issues. She is pleased to see local businesses and organizations incorporating sustainability practices.*

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# Outward bound

Nearly half of high school seniors leave Illinois to attend college

BY ROBERTA CODEMO

A report released by the Illinois Board of Higher Education shows 48.4% of high school graduates left Illinois to attend college in 2017, an uptick from 46.6% in 2016. Significant numbers of those who leave do not return home after college graduation, leaving the state bereft of qualified potential employees needed to attract new businesses here.

Jennifer Gill, superintendent of Springfield Public School District 186, said the district supports initiatives to retain students. Too often, the state focuses on pre-kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. “We need to focus at the university level,” said Gill. “We have a wonderful relationship with Lincoln Land Community College and the University of Illinois.”

Lynn Whalen, executive director of public relations and marketing at LLCC, said an average of 23% of high school grads in the LLCC district enroll at the school.

“We want to show high school students and their families the advantages of attending a community college close to home: an excellent education at a much more affordable price than attending an out-of-state four-year school,” Whalen wrote in an email.

Lincoln Land has expanded its dual credit and concurrent enrollment programs. During the past year, 1,844 students earned college credit while

still in high school. One innovative program is a partnership between LLCC and the IBEW, Local 193, to offer a class in solar energy at Southeast High School. Students who take the class can matriculate into LLCC following graduation.

Whalen further noted that LLCC works with local employers to offer relevant programs that address workforce needs. The college offers more than 20 health care career programs and hands-on career training in welding, HVAC, automotive tech and culinary arts. It has also expanded its programming in agriculture, aviation maintenance and cybersecurity.

For Springfield, health care has surpassed state government as the largest source of employment. Nationwide, there is a shortage of primary care physicians and physicians in certain sub-specialties. CEO Melinda Clark said HSHS Medical Group has been successful in recruiting new physicians and advanced practice candidates to the central Illinois market. During the past three years, HSHS has filled 300 vacancies. “We’ve hired 91 this fiscal year,” she said.

“This is a great place to live and raise a family,” she continued. Since the capital city is centrally positioned between Chicago and St. Louis and is home to Southern Illinois University School of Medicine, physicians have the opportunity to concentrate in sub-specialties that normally aren’t available in a community this size.

For students who choose to attend medical school out-of-state, HSHS offers a residency agreement that pays a stipend to students who come back home and helps with medical school loans. “A lot choose Illinois for their last four years,” said Clark. During the past 18 months, 10 students have signed residency agreements. “We love it.”

In 2009, Illinois established a goal of increasing the number of adults in Illinois with post-secondary degrees and credentials to 60% by the year 2025. Currently, the state is at 51%. “We’re not making enough progress, particularly among minorities or in rural areas,” said Nyle Robinson, interim executive director of the Illinois Board of Higher Education. “The budget impasse had a negative impact on higher education.” By fiscal year 2018, tuition was covering 65% of university costs and state funding covered 35%.

One of the factors driving Illinois students out-of-state is the Truth in Tuition law, which requires all 12 of the state’s public colleges and universities to freeze tuition for incoming freshmen for the first four years. “This puts an undue burden on state universities that are trying to be more competitive,” said Robinson.

“We want students to see the value in attending UIS,” said Natalie Herring, associate provost for enrollment management. The school is ranked as a top regional public university in the Midwest by *US News and World Report*.

Freshmen enrollment grew by nearly 14%, according to the fall 2018 census. “We are delighted to see an increasing number of first-year students choosing UIS for their undergraduate education,” said Herring. Most of the student population comes from Sangamon County. The number of freshmen students attending UIS from District 186 and Sangamon County is at its highest levels since 2014.

UIS recently acquired Innovate Springfield, a business incubator and social innovation hub that supports local entrepreneurs working to create jobs in central Illinois. In joining UIS, Innovate Springfield became the first hub of the Illinois Discovery Partners Institute/Illinois Innovation Network.

The newly-created Land of Lincoln Economic Development Corporation is a public/private partnership focused on economic development in Springfield and Sangamon County. Its aim is to attract new businesses to invest in the region while helping existing businesses thrive.

“It’s important to reinvest in the community,” said president and CEO Eric Berglund. “We need to find a way to bridge the gap between 18 and 26-year-olds who are eager to leave home and explore the world while ensuring there are job opportunities available when they come home.”

“It’s all about talent,” said Berglund. “Talent drives everything.” ♦



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# MAJOR EMPLOYERS

Sources: The Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce. \* - State of Illinois number includes all state government agencies, including education institutions within Sangamon County. Ranked by number of employees.

	EMPLOYER NAME	NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES	PRINCIPAL	PRODUCT/SERVICE	YEAR EST'D	WEBSITE
1	State of Illinois	17,800	J.B. Pritzker, Governor	Government	1818	illinois.gov
2	Memorial Health System	5,238	Edgar J. Curtis, President and CEO	Health Care	1897	memorialmedical.com
3	Hospital Sisters Health System	4,434	Mary Starmann-Harrison, President and CEO	Health Care	1875	st-johns.org
4	Springfield Clinic	2,449	Ray Williams, CEO	Health Care	1939	springfieldclinic.com
5	Springfield Public Schools #186	2,130	Jennifer Gill, Superintendent	Education	1854	sps186.org
6	University of Illinois-Springfield	1,642	Susan J. Koch, Ed.D., Vice President and Chancellor	Higher Education	1969	uis.edu
7	SIU School of Medicine	1,470	Jerry Kruse, M.D., MSPH Dean/Provost	Higher Education/Health Care	1970	siumed.edu
8	City of Springfield	1,410	James O. Langfelder, Mayor	Government	1832	springfield.il.us
9	Horace Mann	1,066	Marita Zuraitis, President & CEO	Insurance	1945	horacemann.com
10	Lincoln Land Community College	900	Charlotte J. Warren, PhD., President	Higher Education	1967	llcc.edu



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# Need for truckers trends up

## Companies have more trucks than drivers

BY ASHLEY MEYER

Most of the goods purchased in America and around much of the world, from groceries to clothes to furniture, are moved by trucks; however, drivers with a Commercial Drivers License (CDL) are in increasingly short supply. The American Trucking Association anticipates the number of unfilled driver positions nationally will increase to more than 100,000 in the next few years. This is in spite of increased wages, benefits and more home time offered by many trucking and transportation companies.

"Here in Illinois, the industry could easily absorb a couple thousand more drivers," said Don Schaefer, executive vice president of Midwest Trucking Association. "The number one issue facing most trucking companies is finding good, competent drivers to put in the seat of their trucks."

Indeed, local companies both large and small echoed Schaefer's sentiment. Todd Donley, owner of Donley Trucking in Williamsville, has been spending time out on the road hauling loads himself because the company is short on drivers. "Often, we'll have two or three trucks that are just sitting because we don't have any drivers to drive them, even though we have the work," he said.

Rick Whalen tells a similar story. His company, Whalen Trucking in Waverly, runs a fleet of about 80 trucks. "We just hired two guys last week that haven't even started yet, and we still have about six or seven openings right now," he explained.

For smaller and medium-sized companies like Donley and Whalen, word of mouth and social media platforms have become the primary means of recruiting drivers.

Even larger trucking companies such as Dot Foods, based in Mt. Sterling, are feeling the impact of the driver shortage. Dot Foods is the nation's largest food redistribution company and the largest employer in Brown County, helping the county to consistently boast the lowest unemployment rate in Illinois.

"The ability to hire quality, professional drivers is the limiting factor to our growth here at Dot Foods," said Dave Ferrill, a driver recruiter with the company. Ferrill said that Dot focuses on retaining current employees with competitive compensation, high-quality equipment, a supportive corporate culture and flexible schedules.

"I think that the new job types we're offering,

the four-on-four-off or six-on-three-off, those have helped us to hire and retain drivers. It gives drivers the ability to pick a schedule with the amount of home time that suits them."

Ferrill described a warehouse-to-driver training program that's offered at Dot Foods, providing a career path for warehouse and garage workers to earn their CDL. Dot has a close working relationship with local community colleges and trade schools, including Lincoln Land Community College's truck driver training program as well as John Wood Community College in Quincy.

"It can be difficult for a young person to quit a job and go to school for a minimum of four weeks, and we have a program that helps take the sting out of that," Ferrill said.

Bob Howard, executive director of the Truck Driver Training program at LLCC, said that about 160 drivers graduate from the program annually. "The average student has four to five job offers before they leave here, and in all the years we've been running this program we've never had a student that did not get a job offer. Even folks with a less than 'squeaky-clean' record still get job offers and are able to find work with a livable wage. We're very proud of that."

"We focus on quality over quantity with the students we recruit here. I do about 100 one-on-one interviews with prospective students a month where I preach the negative aspects of the job and give them a realistic picture of what life on the road is really like, so when people do go out into the industry, our retention is very high. We're not interested in just hustling people through the program."

"The other side of this is that we maintain a 3-to-1 student to teacher ratio, and that quality also helps with our retention, because we're producing a good product. So the Secretary of State loves us, the funding agencies that pay love us, because people are going back to work, and the trucking companies love us because our graduates stay with them."

LLCC works with many local and national trucking companies to get drivers hired in both local and over-the-road jobs. "In the old days, just over-the-road positions were experiencing a shortage of drivers, but now it's bled over," Howard said. "We'll take about two to three calls per week from local companies saying they need drivers yesterday. They've got \$50,000-\$70,000 per year jobs that they're having difficulty filling. We've lost many of the salaried, factory-type jobs in this area where you could get a good paying job with no college



Bob Howard oversees the truck driver training program at LLCC, which graduates about 160 drivers annually. PHOTO COURTESY LLCC.

education and support a family. We're replacing those types of jobs. I get dislocated workers all the time, and this is the only way they can replace that wage they just lost at the factory."

"Over the years I've seen the faces of these folks changing," Howard remarked. "Folks with higher levels of education who can't find work in their original field, and we're seeing more ladies

getting behind the wheel of a truck. The need for truck drivers seems to just keep growing, no matter what the economy does." ♦

Ashley Meyer is a Springfield-based food writer and trucker's wife. She holds down the fort at home while her husband, a LLCC graduate, is on the road hauling groceries for Dot Foods.



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MANUFACTURERS – SANGAMON COUNTY

Sources: "Large Employers and Manufacturers" produced by the Quantum Growth Partnership; the manufacturers DND - Did Not Disclose. Ranked by number of full-time employees.

	NAME / ADDRESS	PHONE / FAX (=)	WEBSITE	FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES	FACILITY SIZE (SQ. FT.)	PRINCIPAL(S)	PRODUCT/SERVICE	YEAR EST'D
1	<b>Bunn-O-Matic Corporation</b> 5020 Ash Grove Dr. Springfield, IL 62711	217-529-6601 217-542=2827	bunn.com	500	DND	Arthur Bunn, president & CEO	Manufacturer of a complete line of commercial dispensed beverage equipment, paper filters and home coffee brewers	1957
2	<b>Arch Coal Viper Mine</b> 5945 Lester Road Williamsville, IL 62693	217-566-3000 217-566=3051	N/A	276	DND	Garrett Barton, general manager	Coal producer	1982
3	<b>Standard Aero</b> 1200 N. Airport Dr. Springfield, IL 62707	800-731-7371 217-541=3365	standardaero.com	219	250,000+	James Campbell, vice pres./general manager	Aircraft service, modification	1911
4	<b>Brandt Consolidated, Inc.</b> 2935 S. Koke Mill Road Springfield, IL 62711	217-547-5800 217-547=5801	brandt.co	209	25,000	Rick Brandt, CEO	Fertilizers, crop protection, micronutrients, spray adjuvants, seed	1953
5	<b>Nudo Products, Inc.</b> 1500 Taylor Ave. Springfield, IL 62703	217-528-5636 217-528=8722	nudo.com	181	400,000	Steve Adkins, president	Manufacturer of wall and ceiling panels with a variety of substrates	1954
6	<b>Simplex, Inc.</b> PO Box 7388 Springfield, IL 62791	217-483-1600 217-483=1616	simplexdirect.com	150	125,000	DND	Load banks, day tanks, fuel supply systems	1952
7	<b>DICKEY-john Corporation</b> 5200 Dickey John Road Auburn, IL 62615	217-438-3371 217-438=6012	dickey-john.com	135	225,000	DND	Electronic design and manufacture of systems controls for agriculture and public works	1966
8	<b>Solomon Colors, Inc.</b> 4050 Color Plant Road Springfield, IL 62702	217-522-3112 217-522=3145	solomoncolors.com	100	250,000	Richard Solomon, CEO Adam Solomon, president	Manufacturing of iron oxide pigments, color for concrete, mortar and concrete products	1927
9	<b>Mel-O-Cream Donuts Intl., Inc.</b> 5456 International Parkway Springfield, IL 62711	217-483-7272 217-483=7744	mel-o-cream.com	80	70,000	David Waltrip, president Dan Alewelt, director of operations	Frozen dough products and frozen pre-fried donuts	1932
10	<b>Henry Technologies</b> 701 S. Main St. Chatham, IL 62629	217-483-2406 217-483=2462	henrytech.com	52	DND	John Murry, operations director	Components for HVAC/industrial & commercial refrigeration	1914



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# MANUFACTURERS – MORGAN COUNTY

Sources: “Manufacts” produced by the Quantum Growth Initiative; Jacksonville Regional Economic Development Corporation; the manufacturers Ranked by number of full-time employees.

	NAME / ADDRESS	PHONE / FAX (=)	WEBSITE	FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES	FACILITY SIZE (SQ. FT.)	PRINCIPAL(S)	PRODUCT/SERVICE	YEAR EST'D
1	<b>Reynolds Consumer Products</b> 500 E. Superior Jacksonville, IL 62650	217-243-3311 217-479=1222	reynoldsconsumerproducts.com	800	360,000 (west plant), 508,000 (east plant)	Rick Villa, plant manager	Polyethylene bags and films	1962
2	<b>Perma-Bound Hertzberg New Method Inc.</b> 617 E. Vandalia Rd. Jacksonville, IL 62650	217-243-5451 217-243=7505	perma-bound.com	300	320,000	James Orr, CEO Bill Hull, plant manager	Prebound books for schools and libraries	1953
3	<b>Nestlé USA</b> 1111 Carnation Dr. Jacksonville, IL 62650	217-245-9511 217-479=2280	nestleusa.com	181	30 acres	DND	Non-dairy creamer	1970
4	<b>Bound to Stay Bound Books</b> 1880 W. Morton Ave. Jacksonville, IL 62650	217-245-5191 217-245=0424	btsb.com	125	110,000	Bob Sibert, president	Prebound children’s library books	1920
5	<b>ILMO Products Company</b> 7 Eastgate Dr. Jacksonville, IL 62650	217-245-2183 217-243=7634	ilmoproducts.com	100	40,000 (8 acres)	Linda Standley, CEO Brad Floreth, president	Wholesale/retail distributor of industrial, medical, laboratory EPA protocol and specialty gases, propane and welding equipment sales & propane	1913
6	<b>CCK Automations, Inc.</b> 500 Capitol Way Jacksonville, IL 62650	217-243-6040 217-245=4105	cckautomations.com	88	100,000	JJ Richardson, CEO	Printed circuit board assemblies, industrial control panels, injection molded parts, engineering services	1999
7	<b>Jacksonville Machine Inc.</b> 2265 W. Morton Ave. Jacksonville, IL 62650	217-243-1119 217-243=3631	jmimachine.com	55	40,000	Jeff Rodems, president	CNC job shop	1919
8	<b>Rutland</b> 7 Crabtree Rd. Jacksonville, IL 62650	217-245-7810	rutland.com	30	60,000	Faith Nergenah	Manufacturer of stove and fireplace repair products	1961
8	<b>UGL</b> 550 Capitol Way Jacksonville, IL 62650	217-243-7878	ugl.com	30	43,000	George Crollly	Home maintenance and repair items	1985
8	<b>BPC, LLC</b> 1933 Old Naples Rd. Meredosia, IL 62665	217-584-1110 217-584=1110	N/A	30	DND	Michael Krause, general manager	Conducts comprehensive analytical testing of resin compounds and conducts trials and DOE to produce specially compounded materials and engineered resins	2012
9	<b>Pallet Repair Systems (PRS)</b> 2 Eastgate Dr. Jacksonville, IL 62650	217-291-0009	prsgroupinc.com	28	50,000	Jeff Williams	OEM Machinery and job shop services, machining/fabrication	1989
10	<b>Eli Bridge Company</b> 800 Case Ave. Jacksonville, IL 62650	217-245-7145	elibridge.com	19	66,000	Patty Sullivan	Amusement ride manufacturing and metal fabrication	1919
11	<b>Helena Chemical</b> 1992 Old Grace Rd. Meredosia, IL 62665	217-584-1133	helenachemical.com	16	4 buildings including a 12,000 square ft. liquid fertilizer and chemical building	Jason Smith	Crop protection products, fertilizer and fertilizer application services, specialized nutrients, seed and seed treatments, financial services and precision agricultural services and software	1980
12	<b>Tarps Manufacturing</b> 1000 State Highway 104 Meredosia, IL 62665	217-584-1900	tarpsmfg.com	15	28,000	Rich Ott	Construction containment tarps and roll tarps for trucking and agriculture	2003



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# A vision for Route 66

BY CINDA ACKERMAN KLINKNA

The new Springfield Visitors Center has welcomed 2,872 visitors from 39 states and 26 countries just since January 29. Jeff Berg, the tourism manager at the Visitors Center located in the former Lincoln-Herndon Law office, said, "To realize that we have had so many visitors during the winter when we didn't have great weather is amazing. And, that only counts those who stopped in at the Center."

Many would say that Lincoln draws the most interest, but he is certainly not the only attraction. Berg said, "People from the U.S. come here for Lincoln, but what brings international visitors here is Route 66. People dream of driving the route."

Tour directors from many countries also come to Springfield to find out more about Route 66 so they can market Springfield back home and often stop for pictures on the one-and-a-half mile stretch of original brick cobblestone between Chatham and Auburn.

Jeff Fulgenzi and his family know firsthand about visitors. "Every day international visitors come into my parent's restaurant, Fulgenzi's on Peoria Road. Many are fulfilling their bucket list, which is to drive Route 66," he said.

Scott Dahl, director of the Springfield Convention and Visitors Bureau, said, "There has been discussion off-and-on for over 20 years to increase the efforts to promote Route 66. Now, with the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Route 66 approaching in 2026, more ideas are being discussed."

Dahl referenced the City of Springfield's recent purchase of the Sunrise Donut Shop sign that stood on a section of the original route on Ninth Street as "the lightning rod for further discussion."

The sign, which dates from 1947, is being restored at Ace Sign Company and will eventually be placed along one of the corridors of Route 66.

Individuals have also made efforts to highlight Route 66. Fulgenzi, a founding board member of the national Road Ahead Partnership, and his



The Fulgenzis purchased Mahan's Station at auction and relocated it next to the family restaurant. PHOTO COURTESY SCVB

wife, Annette, a Sangamon County Board member, bought Mahan's Station at an auction in 2016, saving it from being moved out of Springfield and instead relocated it next to Fulgenzi's restaurant. Mahan's was part of the former well-known Shea's Route 66 Museum on Peoria Road. Ron Metzger, long-time collector of Route 66 memorabilia, has opened Route 66 Motorheads Bar and Grill on Toronto Road, which serves as both a restaurant and a museum for his collectibles. Stacy Grun-

dy, Gina Lathan and Kenneth Lockhart recently opened the Route History Museum at 737 E. Cook St. with a focus on the African-American traveler's experience.

Fulgenzi said, "We have many assets in Springfield, but we have taken for granted Route 66 and the people who come here specifically because of it. We need to preserve, protect and develop Route 66, and we need leaders to come together to develop a plan."

He and others were part of the group pushing for the creation of a Peoria Road TIF, which was established in 2016. According to Val Yazell, director of Springfield's Office of Planning and Economic Development, "The area has aging commercial and industrial

will expire in 2039.

Fulgenzi said there is much that could be developed along the Peoria Road area. "The road is asphalt, but we know there is original brick under it," he pointed out. The Road Ahead Partnership group is lobbying Congress to designate Route 66 as part of the National Historic Trail. Dahl, too, sees potential and points to the Illinois State Fairgrounds with the "only giant slide on Route 66."

Dahl feels Pontiac has been a leading city in attracting visitors by establishing a Route 66 museum, which houses the bus formerly owned by Springfield artist and Route 66 enthusiast Bob Waldmire. He said, "Bloomington, too, has been developing itself as a Route 66 stopover. We have so much here in Springfield that can be promoted."

One of the ideas coming to fruition is a publication called Living Legends that the CVB hopes to launch by the end of 2019. It will present the history of notable sites and introduce the people who still live or own property along the road. Visitors will be able to use a passport-style book or a mobile app to participate, and Dahl said the hope is to use it for both domestic and international marketing efforts.

The vision for a vibrant 100th anniversary will take effort, but with so many wanting to plan and develop the Mother Road, ideas can become reality. We can just imagine more Route 66 enthusiasts cruising through our city, maybe even singing the lyrics Nat King Cole made famous: "Take the highway that is best, get your kicks on Route 66." ♦

Cinda Ackerman Klickna is a freelance writer who appreciates Springfield's many assets.



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# HOTELS

Sources: The Hotels.  
Ranked by number of rooms.

	NAME / ADDRESS	PHONE / FAX (=) / WEBSITE	NUMBER OF ROOMS	NUMBER OF MEETING ROOMS	ROOM RATE SINGLE/DOUBLE	GENERAL MANAGER	AMENITIES
1	<b>Wyndham Springfield City Centre</b> 700 E. Adams Street Springfield, IL 62701	217-789-1530 217-789=0709 wyndham.com/hotels/49084	369	20	\$109 - \$209	Matt Sutherland	Full-service hotel featuring 369 guest rooms, including 36 suites, 50,000 sq. ft of meeting space, complimentary Wi-Fi in guest rooms and meeting spaces, complimentary shuttle to the Amtrak train station and Abraham Lincoln Capital Airport, award-winning Nick & Nino's Penthouse Steakhouse on the 30th floor, The Grille at City Centre, Pinnacle Club Lounge with a panoramic view of the city, Rise & Grind Café, heated indoor swimming pool, fitness center, located across the street from the Bank of Springfield Convention Center and within walking distance of Lincoln historical sites. Pets welcome.
2	<b>President Abraham Lincoln Springfield - A DoubleTree by Hilton</b> 701 E. Adams Street Springfield, IL 62701	217-544-8800 217-544=9607 dtspringfieldil.com	310	17	\$109 - \$209	Peter Marshall	Featuring 310 overnight guest rooms, 13,000 sq. ft. meeting space; complimentary Wi-Fi access in all guest rooms, complimentary shuttle to Amtrak and Abraham Lincoln Capital airport, connected to Bank of Springfield Convention Center, heated indoor swimming pool and 24-hour fitness center.
3	<b>Crowne Plaza Hotel</b> 3000 S. Dirksen Parkway Springfield, IL 62703	217-529-7777 217-529=6666 cpspringfield.com	288	32	\$109 - \$229	Alan Filer	All rooms and suites with refrigerators and free Wi-Fi, 32-versatile meeting rooms, 70,000 sq. ft of flexible renovated meeting space, Long 9 Restaurant, Long 9 Bar & Grill with video gaming, proudly bew Starbucks coffe shop, 14th floor indoor pool, sundeck, and Lifecycle fitness center, 24-hour business center, complimentary shuttle to Amtrak & airport, 850 complimentary parking spaces, great for outdoor events and motorcoach travel.
4	<b>Holiday Inn Express</b> 3050 S. Dirksen Parkway Springfield, IL 62703	217-529-7771 217-529=1777 hiexpress.com	140	2	\$89 - \$165 (2 suites)	Alan Filer	Mcrowaves and refrigerators in all rooms, daily complimentary hot breakfast, free Wi-Fi and fully equipped business center, on-site fitness center, guest laundry facilities, access to all facilities at the Crowne Plaza-including indoor pool, complimentary shuttle to and from Amtrak & airport, free street -level and bus parking, free local and domestic long distance calls.
5	<b>State House Inn</b> 101 E. Adams Street Springfield, IL 62701	217-528-5100 217-528=4358 redroof.com	125	6	\$89 - \$139	Scott McKay	Complimentary full hot breakfast buffet, business center, fitness center, lounge, complimentary on-site parking, complimentary in-room wi-fi, 3 blocks from Amtrak, 6,500 sq. ft. of meeting space.
6	<b>Wingate Inn</b> 3185 S. Dirksen Parkway Springfield, IL 62711	217-529-1100 217-529=1105 wyndhamhotels.com	124	3	\$99 - \$149	Ben Anthony	Complimentary hot deluxe breakfast, free wireless internet, indoor pool and fitness center, easy interstate access.
7	<b>Drury Inn &amp; Suites</b> 3180 S. Dirksen Parkway Springfield, IL 62703	217-529-3900 217-993=5787 druryhotels.com	117	1	\$99 - \$159	Josh Chadbourne	Free hot quickstart breakfast, manager's reception, hot foods, indoor pool/jacuzzi, exercise room, guest laundry room, micro/fridge combos, in-room coffee, wired & wireless internet, business center, free long distance.
7	<b>Hilton Garden Inn Springfield</b> 3100 S. Dirksen Parkway Springfield, IL 62703	217-529-7171 217-529=7172 springfieldil.gardeninn.com	117	7	\$95 - \$199 (13 suites)	Chris Fultz	Indoor pool, whirlpool, exercise room, free wired / wireless high-speed internet, restaurant and lounge open daily, free local calls, free business center with wireless printing from the rooms, Keurig®, refrigerator and microwave in every room, complimentary parking, Fit Club passes.
8	<b>Candlewood Suites</b> 2501 Sunrise Drive Springfield, IL 62703	217-522-5100 217-522=5101 candlewoodsuites.com	110	1	\$99.99 - \$129.99	Janie Deheve	Complimentary wireless high-speed Internet and full kitchens in spacious guest rooms for longer visits. Free laundry facilities, unlimited access to a state-of-the-art business center, an exercise room and the Candlewood Cupboard convenience store for meals and snacks, Green Certified hotel.
9	<b>Residence Inn Springfield South</b> 2915 Stanford Avenue Springfield, IL 62703	217-527-1100 217-527=1101 residenceinnspringfieldil.com	108	1	\$149.99 - \$199.99	Darin Dame	Studios, 1-2 bedroom suites (w/full kitchens, separate living space, work areas, sleeping areas), evening reception/social hour Mon.-Wed., 24 hr. fitness center, indoor pool, whirlpool, laundry facility, coffee in lobby, coffee/tea in-room, complimentary buffet breakfast, phone calls: toll-free, safe deposit boxes at front desk, pets allowed - contact hotel for details.
10	<b>Northfield Inn, Suites &amp; Conference Center</b> 3280 Northfield Drive Springfield, IL 62702	217-523-7900 217-523=7273 northfieldinn.com	105	8	\$89 - \$149	Marianne Zarndt	Free high-speed internet in guestrooms and conference center. 13,000 sq. ft. of meeting space, fitness center & business center. Free extended continental breakfast. In-room coffee makers, refrigerators, and microwaves. Jacuzzi suites, standard and accessible rooms available. Free parking and indoor pool.
10	<b>Motel 6</b> 6011 S. Sixth Street Road Springfield, IL 62712	217-529-1633 217-585=1271 motel6.com	105	0	\$39.99 - \$59.99	Neel Patel	Kids 17 and under stay free (with parents), pets stay free, outdoor pool, free morning coffee, free local and long distance calls, Wi-Fi, guest laundry, truck parking, expanded cable with two HBO channels and three ESPN channels.
11	<b>Route 66 Hotel and Conference Center</b> 625 E. Saint Joseph Street Springfield, IL 62703	217-529-6626 217-529=4666 rt66hotel.com	103	4	\$75 - \$199 (8 suites)	Jason Negri	Outdoor swimming pool, wireless internet service, in-room coffee maker, iron & hair dryer, on-site guest laundry, two-room suites available, free parking, jacuzzi suites available, fridge and microwave in every room, video gaming in lobby and restaurant and bar on-site.
12	<b>Ramada Springfield North</b> 3281 Northfield Drive Springfield, IL 62702	217-523-4000 217-523=4080 springfieldramada.com	97	2	\$89 - \$149	Marianne Zarndt	Complimentary deluxe continental breakfast, free Wi-Fi, all non-smoking hotel, newly updated guest rooms, indoor pool, fitness center, refrigerator/microwave in all rooms, business center, jacuzzi rooms, 32" flat screen TVs, guest laundry facilities.
13	<b>Comfort Suites</b> 2620 S. Dirksen Parkway Springfield, IL 62703	217-753-4000 217-753=4166 choicehotels.com	92	1	\$100 - \$149	Justin Hamilton	All rooms equipped with refrigerator, microwave, pull-out sofa bed, remote TV w/DVD upon request, free high-speed wireless internet access, separate work/leisure areas.
14	<b>Hampton Inn &amp; Suites</b> 2300 Chuckwagon Drive Springfield, IL 62711	217-793-7670 217-793=6522 hamptoninn.com	83	2	\$102-\$182	Darrin Thurman	Complimentary hot breakfast, indoor pool, 24-hr. fitness center, free high-speed internet, wireless internet, business center, 2-room suites, microwaves and refrigerators, Evening Sundowner Tues, Wed, Thurs in the reception area.
15	<b>Staybridge Suites</b> 4231 Schooner Drive Springfield, IL 62711	217-793-6700 217-793=6694 staybridge.com	82	1	\$100 - \$200 (all suite hotel)	Kyle Johnson	Complimentary hot & cold breakfast, free wireless & hard wired internet, free local calls, direct phone line w/ voice mail, indoor pool, 24-hr. fitness center, convenience store, business ctr., complimentary evening social (M-W 5:30-7:30) w/ soda, beer, wine & food), pets welcome, complimentary laundry facility, firepit, basketball court, grills.
16	<b>Comfort Inn &amp; Suites</b> 3675 S. Sixth Street Springfield, IL 62703	217-529-8898 217-529=4354 comfortinn.com	80	1	\$89 - \$134	Sarah Dietrich	Cable/Satellite TV, free local calls, hair dryer, in-room coffee maker, in-room microwave and mini fridge, Wi-Fi, indoor pool, continental breakfast, indoor hot tub, fitness center.
17	<b>Howard Johnson Inn &amp; Suites</b> 1701 J. David Jones Parkway Springfield, IL 62702	217-541-8762 217-541=8774 hojo.com	79	3	\$69 - \$89	Raj Zaveri	Complimentary continental breakfast, free local calls, outdoor pool, 24 suites, truck parking, free wireless.
18	<b>Courtyard By Marriott</b> 3462 Freedom Drive Springfield, IL 62704	217-793-5300 217-793=5300 www.marriott.com/spicy	78	1	\$109.99 - \$179.99	Nathan Biermann	All non-smoking hotel, heated indoor pool, spa, exercise room, lounge, in-room coffee, iron, free high-speed wireless internet, restaurant - The Bistro, Starbuck's coffee, HD-TV in all rooms.
18	<b>Country Inn &amp; Suites</b> 3092 Stevenson Drive Springfield, IL 62703	217-544-5151 217-544=5353 countryinns.com/springfieldil	78	1	\$119 - \$199	Joe Council	Complimentary hot breakfast, 18 suites, refrigerator/microwave in every room, heated indoor pool, free Wi-Fi, business center, free weekday newspaper, fitness center, Inn Case Market™, Read It & Return Lending Library™.



# NETWORKING GROUPS

Sources: The individual Networking Groups  
Ranked by numbers of members.

	NAME / MEETING ADDRESS	PHONE / WEBSITE / EMAIL	MEETING TIME	NUMBER OF MEMBERS	CONTACT	DUES	YEAR EST'D
1	<b>Illinois Women in Leadership (IWIL)</b> Sangamo Club 227 E. Adams St. Springfield, IL 62701	217-788-7002 iwil.biz info@iwil.biz	11:30 am to 1 pm every third Thursday in the month except September, December, March, June, July- dates and times TBD	215	Linda Jones	Regular member: \$80	2004
2	<b>Women Entrepreneurs of Central Illinois (WE-CI)</b> Meeting location varies	217-299-1366 wecispringfield.org info@wecispringfield.org	2nd Wednesday of the month	71	Deb Ringer	\$96 annually	DND
3	<b>PRISM (Professionals in Springfield Metro)</b> Meeting location varies	website under construction contact@prismspi.com	1st Wednesday evening of the month Times vary	60	Blake DenHerder	None	2019
4	<b>The Association for Women in Communications</b> Sangamo Club 227 E. Adams St. Springfield, IL 62701	awcspringfield.org president@awcspringfield.org	2nd Wednesday of the month	40	Molly Hall	\$25 plus national dues, various membership categories	1977
5	<b>McBrian Lincoln Douglas Toastmasters Club</b> Our Savior's Lutheran Church 2645 Old Jacksonville Road Springfield, IL 62704	217-546-8624 mcbrianlincolndouglas.toastmasters.org randaln1@yahoo.com	Thursdays, 6 pm	28	Nate Randall	\$51/6 months	1936
6	<b>Prospectors Referral Group</b> Meeting location varies	217-546-7310 tammykayhearn@aol.com	Wednesdays, 11:30 am (1st & 3rd weeks)	20	Tammy Kaye Hearn	Lunch cost only	1999
6	<b>Noontime Toastmasters</b> Laurel United Methodist Church 631 South Grand Ave. West Springfield, IL 62704	217-414-7378 noontime.toastmastersclubs.org stormwolff@gmail.com	Mondays, Noon	20	Storm Wolff	\$53/6 months	1998
7	<b>The Network Group</b> The Sangamo Club 227 E. Adams St. Springfield, IL 62701	217-652-3686 217-496-3686 edclark@icloud.com	2nd Tuesday of the month, 11:45 am	19	Ed Clark	Lunch \$15/mo.	2000
8	<b>League of Our Own Toastmasters Club</b> Springfield Urban League, Inc. 100 N. 11th St. Springfield, IL 62703	217-789-0830 Ext. 1604 1179206.toastmastersclubs.org lhemingway@springfieldul.org	Fridays, 11:30 am (2nd & 4th weeks)	16	Larry Hemingway, Sr.	\$10.50/mo.	2008
9	<b>BNI of Central Illinois</b> 3603 W. Bennington Ct. Peoria, IL 61615	309-453-2463 BNI-IL.com jeff@bni-il.com	BNI Business Insiders – Wed 7:45 am Jay Davis Country Financial BNI Business Builders – Thurs 7:30 am Schnuck's on Iles BNI Thurs Lunch – Thurs 11:30 am Brickhouse Grill & Pub	15-25 per chapter	Jeff Ensinger	\$445/year. First year fee for books & training of \$150	2011 2000 2000
10	<b>Capital City Toastmasters</b> IDOT Building (Hanley Building) 2300 Dirksen Parkway, Room 214 Springfield, IL 62764	217-698-8767 1313356.toastmastersclubs.org kathybrennan77@yahoo.com	Wednesdays, Noon	15	Kathy Brennan	\$55/6 months \$100/12 months	2009
11	<b>Central Illinois Networking Group</b> Crowne Plaza Hotel 3000 S. Dirksen Pkwy., 2nd Floor Springfield, IL 62703	217-502-1077 kgilpin@yahoo.com 217-547-1370 jjoslin@ibankmarine.com	Every other Tuesday 8-9 a.m.	12	Keenan Gilpin, pres. Janet Joslin	\$50 annually	2010



# PRISM reflects diversity of the business community

BY ERIC WOODS

For years, members of the local LGBTQA community have been working to unite businesses and individuals who are not only part of the community but who are allies as well. In 2002, Coalition of Rainbow Alliances (CORAL) was formed as an offshoot of several other organizations in the area.

"Groups were struggling, so we decided to come together as one group," said Jim Barr, president of CORAL. "Since then, we have been a part of any organization that promotes the LGBTQA community."

This past January, CORAL helped form another new organization in the Springfield area known as Professionals in Springfield Metro (PRISM).

"A year ago, CORAL had a suggestion to see if Springfield had an interest amongst younger individuals in the LGBTQA community locally," said Rob Weis, a CORAL member who did the initial research to gauge local interest. It turned out there was indeed interest in forming a new organization, and on Jan. 31, PRISM was officially launched.

Paul Staab, director of Staab Funeral Homes, is a founding member of PRISM. He describes it as a membership-based organization of LGBTQA-affirming individuals and businesses dedicated to establishing and elevating the Springfield LGBTQA professional community through effective networking and communication between members of the Alliance. The main goals of the Alliance are to build professional relationships and community, foster diversity, develop leadership and collaboration and advocate for positive change.

"We meet the first Wednesday of each

month, and we will meet in different places but keep it local," said Staab. Currently, PRISM encompasses a core group of 12 individual members with another 60 people on the mail-

first event or found our Facebook page. We have had a successful word-of-mouth. There is an appetite for a group like this."

At the group's first meeting, each attendee

also got together to see who they thought would be good to represent the LGBTQA community."

At this year's PrideFest, CORAL maintained a booth, and members of PRISM were in attendance. They even held an event at Papa Frank's the night before the event. "We want to gauge the feedback from people who visit our booth and see what events they hope to see in the summer and fall," said DenHerder. "We are a program of CORAL. They provide us with financial support, organizational support and moral support. They were lighting the fire under us to get us going." The business side of running an organization is new to some of the members of PRISM, so they often depend on CORAL for motivation and assistance in moving forward.

Following the successful PrideFest event, PRISM will continue brainstorming a calendar of events for the future. Others have looked at developing a mission and vision to help determine who PRISM is as an organization.

"Leadership was ready to go from the start, and they picked up the ball much sooner than I anticipated. Once they related to each other, they began moving it forward. The young adults here are taking ownership and running with it," said Weis.

Chris Boyster, a member of the CORAL board of directors, is happy to see PRISM taking off as it has over the first half of 2019.

"There was a special niche of people who are like-minded in their thinking," he said. "We will work with all the other organizations in the LGBTQA community, and we can be complementary to them."

Those wanting to learn more about PRISM can visit the Facebook page, @PRISMspi. ♦



ing list as well as five businesses.

"We started with five or six people at the first meeting, which we held at Café Moxo. At meetings we work on strategic planning and coordination," said Blake DenHerder. "People got on our mailing list after they came to our

was given a set of questions in order to determine the level of interest. "We questioned if it would be welcomed in Springfield," said Weis. "We eventually wanted to work together as a collective, and initially people were selected to be a part of the organization. People in CORAL



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# CATERERS & FOOD TRUCKS

Sources: The caterers  
Listed alphabetically.

	NAME / ADDRESS	CATERER/ FOOD TRUCK	PHONE / WEBSITE/ EMAIL	OWNER(S)	MIN/MAX SERVED	PRICE RANGE PER PERSON	MENU SPECIALITIES	TYPES OF EVENTS CATERED	YEAR EST'D
1	<b>5Flavors Catering</b> 3086 Normandy Rd. Springfield, IL 62703		217-787-4654 5Flavors.com Info@5Flavors.com	Chip Kennedy	30-2,000	\$25-\$100	Playful spins on old classics to cutting edge contemporary cuisine and custom menus created just for you.	Intimate gatherings to fundraising galas and everything in between including weddings and corporate events.	2009
2	<b>Arena Food Service, Inc.</b> 993 Clocktower Dr., Suite D Springfield, IL 62704		217-698-2944 arenafoodservice.com info@arenafoodservice.com	Shaun Moore and Sherri Madonia	25-5,000	varies	Fully customized event services featuring modern renditions with a strong culinary foundation.	Galas, fundraisers, corporate and private events, weddings, class reunions.	1985
3	<b>Artisan &amp; Company</b>		217-717-5530 artisanandcompanylocal@gmail.com	Shannon Matheis	Any size group	varies	Upscale customized.	Private dinner parties, executive and corporate dinners, charity fundraisers, political functions.	2017
4	<b>Conn's Catering</b> 835 S. 2nd St. Springfield, IL 62704		217-523-4466 connscateringandevents.com sales@inn835.com	Karen and Court Conn	Any size group	All events individually quoted	Full variety of catering options available, including hand-carved meat stations, plated or buffet meals, breakfast bars, and more.	Corporate, farm retreats, fundraisers, weddings.	1947
5	<b>Cooper's StrEATside Bistro Food Truck</b>		217-415-3852 www.cooperstreatside.com info@cooperstreatside.com	Justin and Kendra Cooper	20 and up	\$8 and up	Fresh local ingredients when available. We focus on customized menus and event design.	Community, business, luncheons, reunions, weddings, dinner, cocktail.	2014
6	<b>County Market Catering</b> 3001 Veterans Parkway Springfield, IL 62704		217-717-0360 countymarketcatering@niemannfoods.com	Niemann Foods	15-300	\$8-\$17.99	Taco bar, pulled pork, fried chicken.	Weddings, business lunches, school events.	DND
7	<b>Cured Catering</b> 2005 Barberry Dr. Springfield, IL 62704		217-494-2425 curedcaters.com curedcaters@gmail.com	Brian Reilly	25-1,000	varies	Full scale catering with an eye towards presentation. Gourmet hors d'oeuvres, soups, salads, entrees.	Specializing in weddings and custom events.	2017
8	<b>Hamilton's Catering</b> 101 Main St. Franklin, IL 62638		217-675-2720 hamiltonscatering.com info@hamiltonscatering.com	Kyle Hamilton Gina Hamilton	50-5,000	\$8 and up	Prime rib, pork loin with bourbon/peach glaze, parmesan crusted chicken, fried chicken.	Weddings, holiday parties, business parties, family events, etc., and complete off-premise bar service.	1913
9	<b>Hy-Vee</b> 2115 S. MacArthur Blvd. Springfield, IL 62704		217-746-1001 1640cateringmgr@hy-vee.com Hy-vee.com	Hy-Vee	Any size group	All events individually quoted	Variety of catering options available. Customized menus available.	All	2014
10	<b>Irie Jerk Chicken Truck</b>		217-820-3722 www.facebook.com/ jamaicanmehungry876 jamaicanmehungry876@gmail.com	Wayne Kidd	Any size group	\$2-\$15	Traditional Irie jerk chicken, Jamaican curry chicken, Caribbean style fish, Irie jerk pork, traditional Jamaican sides and sodas.	All	2017
11	<b>McCormick's Catering</b> 1510 N. 15th St. Springfield, IL 62702		217-793-1183 www.mccormicksrestaurant.net mccormickssmokehouse.com	Jared and Sarah McCormick	10-2,500	\$15	Specializing in house crafted award-winning meats and bbq, fresh baked breads, wide variety of hot and cold sides, salads and soups and desserts.	Business luncheons, house parties, hog roasts, full wedding services including bar and consulting.	1994
12	<b>Nelson's Catering</b> 3005 Great Northern Rd. Springfield, IL 62711		787-9443 Nelsonscatering.com Info@nelsonscatering.com	Josh Lindvall, Jeff Lindvall	10-10,000	\$8-\$75	Menus tailored to your event. Grilled items, chicken, pork and steak, breakfast, boxed lunches, appetizers and full bar service.	Weddings, galas, fundraising, private parties, small business meetings, large corporate events, delivery and on-site catering.	1995
13	<b>Poe's Catering</b> 295 East Andrew Rd. Springfield, IL 62707		217-487-7601 poescatering.com poecater@msn.com	Lance and Angela Poe	20-10,000	\$9.50 and up	Prime rib, fried chicken, ribs, smoked meats.	All	1998
14	<b>POUR Bars</b> 3086 Normandy Rd. Springfield, IL 62703		217-679-2709 www.facebook.com/PourBars info@5flavors.com	Chip Kennedy	30-2,000	varies	Bar service for your formal wedding, backyard party, or anything in between. Poured wine with your dinner, specialty drinks, and professional bartenders.	All	2013
15	<b>Robert's Seafood</b> 1615 W. Jefferson St. Springfield, IL 62702		217-546-3089 www.robertsseafoodmarket.com info@robertsseafoodmarket.com	Dean "Robbie" Robert, Jr., Pamala Robert, Andrea (Robert) McLaughlin	25-500	\$7 and up	Variety of freshly prepared seafood, meats, veggies, seasonal dishes, pasta, grains, soups and more. Authentic Lowcountry shrimp boils available.	Public events, festivals, private parties, business and corporate lunches, weddings, shrimp boils, golf outings, fundraisers, etc. Small or large events.	1916




	NAME / ADDRESS	CATERER/ FOOD TRUCK	PHONE / WEBSITE/ EMAIL	OWNER(S)	MIN/MAX SERVED	PRICE RANGE PER PERSON	MENU SPECIALITIES	TYPES OF EVENTS CATERED	YEAR EST'D
16	<b>Secret Recipes Catering</b> 3086 Normandy Rd. Springfield, IL 62703		217-585-1100 SecretRecipesCateringCo.com Info@SecretRecipesCatering.com	Chip Kennedy	30-2,000	\$15-\$30	American home style cuisine. Chicken romano and our cheesy potatoes are fan favorites.	All	2003
17	<b>Turasky's Catering</b> 1020 West Jefferson Springfield, IL 62702		217-626-2803 turaskycatering.com tony.turasky@live.com	Tony Turasky	50-5,000	\$8 and up	On-site grilling, stuffed pork chops, roast beef top round with au jus gravy, marinated grilled chicken breasts, pulled pork, Italian beef, ribeyes and ribeye sandwiches.	Wedding receptions, golf outings, company picnics, company parties, corporate events, banquets, fundraisers, etc.	1978
18	<b>Twyford BBQ &amp; Catering</b> 2562 Twyford Rd. Jacksonville, IL 62650		217-370-2274 217-370-6353 twyfordbbq.com randy@twyfordbbq.com	Randy & Marla Twyford	25-500	\$10-\$50	BBQ ribs, brisket, pork, whole hog roasts, pork loin, chicken.	Food truck locations, festival vending, drop off, buffets for corporate events and employee appreciation, weddings and other social events.	2008
19	<b>Wafflelicious Cafe</b>		217-638-3063 www.facebook.com/Waffleliciouscafe/ zbistro@comcast.net	Abbas Zolghadr	50-200	\$6-\$10	Belgian waffles & wings, waffle dogs, nutella and fruit waffle.	All	2011
20	<b>Yum Yum Hibachi on Wheels</b>		217-331-4031 www.facebook.com/baindecock	Faustino Dekock, S. Hartawan	Up to 50	\$8	Chicken, chicken noodle, hibachi shrimp, salmon, steak, vegetables, eggrolls, pot stickers and spring rolls.	All	2017



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# Firing a problematic employee

BY SARAH DELANO PAVLIK

Illinois is an “employment at-will” state, which means that an employer can terminate its employees at any time without warning, and for any reason, or for no reason at all. As long as there is not an employment contract in play, Illinois employers are allowed to freely fire their employees at-will. There are, however, several limitations that protect Illinois employees that an employer should consider first.

By way of example, although it is not illegal in an at-will employment state to terminate an employee because they wear ugly ties to the office or cheer against Notre Dame football, it is illegal to fire an employee for discriminatory purposes or for reasons that violate employment statutes and/or public policy. The law says that an employee cannot be fired for things like race, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, disability, military status, sexual orientation or pregnancy – those reasons are illegal. It is also unlawful to terminate an employee for exercising rights under certain federal statutes such as the Family Medical Leave Act, the Fair Labor Standards Act and the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, or if an employee “blows the whistle” on an employer’s illegal activity, is called away from work to perform jury duty, or exercises workers’ compensation rights.

If a terminated employee suspects that she was fired for any of the foregoing illegal reasons, Illinois law provides that she must exhaust all administrative remedies before initiating an actual lawsuit against her former employer. This means that the employee has to notify an appropriate government agency such as the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) or the Illinois Department of Human Rights (IDHR), who will look at the circumstances surrounding the termination to determine if the employer broke the law. If the investigating agency concludes that the employer broke the law, it could order that the employer pay the employee compensatory damages, punitive damages, attorneys’ fees, expert witness fees, court costs, and, in cases of especially malicious or reckless acts of discrimination, back pay.

Should the EEOC or IDHR rule in the employee’s favor and grant the employee administrative relief, the law says that the employee cannot then turn around and file her own lawsuit against the employer. However, if the agency concludes its investigation and is unable to find that the employer broke the law, it will send the employee a document called a “Notice of Right to Sue” (in the case of the EEOC), which is basically a permission slip saying that the employee has already sought administrative action and been denied, so now she is free to file her own lawsuit.

It is worth knowing that an employer is always allowed to terminate an employee “for

cause.” Some obvious examples of termination for cause would be poor job performance, embezzlement, constant tardiness, extreme insubordination, creating a hostile work environment or failing a drug test. Depending on the severity of the problem, any of these actions would be acceptable grounds to fire an employee for cause.

In the event that an employee is terminated for cause, it is always advisable for an employer to document the reason for the firing in writing and to send a letter to the employee explaining why he was let go. This is because if an employee is terminated without cause, they are entitled to seek unemployment insurance benefits from the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) under certain circumstances. In the event that unemployment benefits are sought, and the IDES determines that the reasons given by the employer for the termination allow for unemployment benefits, the employer’s Illinois state unemployment tax contribution rates will increase.

A common way for employers to fight an unemployment benefits claim is to allege that the terminated employee committed misconduct during his employment – which would be a disqualifying condition. Of course there are other situations that would keep an employee from getting unemployment benefits, like when the employee voluntarily resigns.

When it comes to unemployment benefits, there is no one-size-fits-all legal definition of employee misconduct, and each case is decided on its own merits. However, when analyzing misconduct as grounds for termination, Illinois courts tend to look at three things: (1) whether there was a deliberate and willful violation of a business rule or policy; (2) whether the rule or policy was reasonable; and (3) whether the violation either has harmed the employer or was repeated by the employee despite previous warnings. If all three of these conditions can be shown by the employer, it is likely that unemployment benefits will be denied and the employer will not be stuck with a higher tax bill as a result.

In situations where an employee is under contract with the employer (which includes most union employees), the above principles of the employment at-will doctrine can be superseded by any conflicting contractual terms. With this thought in mind, all Illinois employers with contracted employees would be wise to review the terms of their employment contracts before making termination decisions. And, as with all major business decisions, it never hurts for employers to contact a lawyer before taking action. That’s what we are here for. ♦

*Sarah Delano Pavlik is an attorney with Delano Law Office in Springfield. She can be reached at [sdpavlik@delanolaw.com](mailto:sdpavlik@delanolaw.com).*

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## MEDICAL NEWS

### SIU Medicine hosts golf outing to benefit Camp COCO

SIU Medicine invites golfers to form teams for the annual charity golf outing benefiting the Camp COCO Children's Cancer Fund. A shotgun start will begin the game at 12:30 p.m. on Friday, June 7, at The Rail Golf Course in Springfield. H.D. Smith is the presenting sponsor of the four-person scramble. HSHS St. John's Children's Hospital is a double eagle sponsor. Eagle sponsors are Bunn and LRS.

An entry fee of \$125 per player includes greens fees, golf cart, lunch by Twyford BBQ, dinner by Robert's Seafood Market, on-course beverages, games and prizes. Sponsorships at various levels of support, including golf carts dedicated in honor or memory of a family member or friend, also are available.

Now in its 34th year, Camp COCO, which stands for Children's Oncology Camp Organization, is a summer camp sponsored by the SIU Department of Pediatrics. The camp enables kids with cancer and blood

disorders as well as their siblings to spend a week enjoying typical camping activities. The COCO Children's Cancer Fund supports the camp and other projects for young patients.

Camp COCO is entirely supported by donations so that families do not have to pay to send a child to the medically supervised camp. An estimated 100 downstate Illinois children are expected to attend Camp COCO this summer at a cost of about \$750 per child. The campers receive special attention from SIU's pediatric staff and health professionals as well as various community volunteers.

This year's camp will be held June 24-29 at Timber Pointe Outdoor Conference Center on Lake Bloomington.

Send checks for the outing or sponsorships, payable to either Camp COCO or SIU Foundation, to the SIU Foundation, P.O. Box 19666, Springfield, IL 62794-9666, or call the SIU Foundation office at 217-545-2955 for information. ♦



An open house and blessing ceremony was held on May 9 for the new HSHS Medical Group facility in Taylorville. PHOTO COURTESY HSHS

### HSHS Medical Group opens new Taylorville facility

On May 13, HSHS Medical Group opened a new facility at 1304 W. Burnett Dr. in Taylorville which will be home to HSHS Medical Group Multispecialty Care and Prairie Cardiovascular.

Providers caring for patients at the new location will include Richard Del Valle, MD, FACP, internal medicine; Wendi Campbell, APRN, internal medicine; and Madhu Dukkipati, MD, FACC, FSCAI, cardiovascular disease and interventional cardiology. Other visiting specialists will join the practice in the future.

"The Del Valle family has a 60-year legacy of providing compassionate health care in the

Taylorville community. We are excited to welcome Dr. Rick back to care for patients in his hometown again," said Melinda Clark, CEO of HSHS Medical Group. "This new location is nearly 14,000 square feet – large enough to accommodate primary care, onsite lab and imaging services and a partnership with Prairie Cardiovascular. We are proud to increase access to high-quality, patient-first care in communities like Taylorville."

An open house and blessing ceremony was held on May 9. HSHS Medical Group Multispecialty Care will be open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. ♦

### Professional Women's Calendar of Events

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

#### Association for Women in Communications (AWC)

On Wednesday, June 5, AWC will hold a networking social at The Kreative lounge, located in Suite 115 of White Oaks Mall. Hors d'oeuvres, wine and other beverages will be provided. Cost is \$10 per person and guests are welcome. For more information or to make reservations, visit [www.awcspringfield.org](http://www.awcspringfield.org).

#### Illinois Women in Leadership (IWIL)

On Thursday, June 20, IWIL will hold an annual meeting and dinner at the new Papo's Café at 5:30 p.m. Registration is \$30 per person on or before June 14, \$35 after June 14 or at the door. Each year, Illinois Women in Leadership members gather for a brief annual business meeting to update by-laws and approve organization officers. Following the meeting, we will have time to eat, announce the 2019-2020 program theme and recognize IWIL volunteers.

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

WE-CI was created with the goal of supporting women entrepreneurs through promoting economic development, creating innovative changes in business culture and building strategic affiliations. Our monthly meetings are designed to promote networking and feature speakers with topics relevant to women in business today. For more information on upcoming monthly programs, visit [weci.wildapricot.org/events](http://weci.wildapricot.org/events).



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



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# Saputo's serves up Italian classics

BY THOMAS C. PAVLIK JR.

In chatting with my editor, I was a bit surprised (and chagrined) that I had never reviewed Saputo's for the *Business Journal*. After all, it's long been a staple of the downtown dining scene – the menu proudly proclaims that it's been family-owned since 1948. This month, we resolved to rectify that oversight.

I consider myself a bit of a foodie, but have never really dug into the different cuisines of Italy. And with Saputo's self-identifying as serving Southern Italian dishes, I had to educate myself. At its most basic level, Northern Italian food tends to focus on cream sauces, polenta and stuffed meats. Southern Italian cuisine, on the other hand, embraces tangy tomato sauces, olive oil, peppers, fresh vegetables (like eggplant) and loads of fresh herbs. I couldn't sum up Saputo's any better than that.

The old-fashioned neon sign over the door is the first clue that you're stepping back a bit in time. Saputo's is everything you'd think an Italian joint is. There's the requisite dark-wood bar with counter seating and two person tables against the wall. Walls are covered with wainscoting and dark colored wallpaper, and the floors are a burgundy carpet. A handful of large mirrors help lighten things up. Saputo's really does scream family Italian restaurant.

If you're part of a larger group, there are several banquet rooms in the back that can be set up in different configurations.

We visited right in the heart of the lunch hour to find Saputo's largely filled. We were lucky to snag a four top – had I been thinking, I would have made reservations, as there have been several times where I've had to wait a few minutes for a table to open up.

Saputo's has a discreet lunch menu, which appears to mirror the dinner menu. The big difference is that the lunch menu has a sandwich section and a special section with smaller portions of some of Saputo's classic dishes.

While we noshed on the cracker basket

(including the small garlic bread sticks – nice touch), we had some hard decisions to make. In any event, the three of us decided to split the Saputo's Antipasto as a starter (\$16.50 – cheese bread, toasted ravioli, salami, cheese, olives and peppers). It quickly appeared and was a staggering plate of food – we had clearly over-ordered for lunch. But it didn't stop us from digging in. Everything was spot on, especially the cheese bread.

For our lunch items we went with the meatball sandwich (\$8.50, served with Italian fries), the tortellini Alfredo (\$8.95), and a small cheese pizza (\$16.25 for a 12 inch, \$1 for each extra ingredient).

Saputo's pizza is often overlooked in discussions of Springfield's best pie. That's a shame. It's not thin crust, nor is it particularly thick. It does, however, have a wonderful chew to it that really



On the corner of Eighth and Monroe streets.

makes the pizza pop. My guest, a first-timer for Saputo's pizza, appreciated the nice balance of cheese to sauce to crust



A few of Saputo's signature dishes.

– nothing was out of whack and everything worked in harmony. I noted that it wasn't undercooked and was more on the well-done side, which I think is preferable.

The sandwich came with three generously sized meatballs nestled in a toasted hoagie bun covered with red sauce. The meatballs themselves were tender, not dry and very flavorful. It's a bit messy to eat, and because I was wearing a white shirt I resorted to knife and fork. My favorite part of my meal, however, was the Italian potatoes – thin cuts of potatoes pan-fried and then covered in a wonderful garlic and oil concoction. These things are addictively good. Make sure to dip some of the bread that comes to the table into the remains.

The tortellini was reported as cooked perfectly with just a bit of bite to it. She noted that they were not too heavily sauced and that the Alfredo itself was well-balanced and nuanced.

Our fellow diners were a mix of downtown business workers (of which we collectively recognized at least half) with the rest appearing to be tourists.

Service was good and efficient. We

appreciated that we were in and out in under an hour. And, I got the sense that had we decided to linger that we wouldn't have been pushed to leave. All in all, it was a yet another visit to a Springfield classic. ♦

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PHOTO COURTESY SAFE FAMILIES

# Keeping kids and families safe

BY JANET SEITZ

Shortages of care and agencies to protect children from abuse and neglect have made for plenty of recent headlines.

"As we seem to keep hearing about struggles in our DCFS system every week," said Beth Yockey, a volunteer with Safe Families for Children, a nonprofit national network of local chapters, "I think Safe Families presents a great opportunity for concerned citizens to support families in crisis."

"The parents we serve are socially isolated," explained Ryan Mobley, the downstate Illinois director for the organization. "They have little to no healthy, supportive relationships in their lives. Social isolation is a common thread through most cases of abuse and neglect. So, by coming alongside these parents before things get too overwhelming and break down, we're able to help prevent child abuse and neglect, deflect kids from having to enter the foster care system unnecessarily, and provide a great opportunity for families to strengthen and stabilize. The most common crisis that parents come to us with revolves around homelessness, medical issues, job loss, addiction recovery, or simply being overwhelmed as an isolated single parent."

"We surround these parents with caring, compassionate community by providing volunteer host homes for children and mentoring relationships for parents," Mobley continued. The faith-based organization works with local churches to recruit, train and develop volunteer teams for "circles of support." The Springfield chapter launched in 2015 and has helped some 130 kids to date.

Mobley, whose background is mainly in local church ministry, said the organization partners with area churches including Calvary Church, Hope Church, Springfield First United Methodist, and First United Methodist in Lincoln.

"I believe that the local church can mobilize and unleash their families to really love others in their community who are lonely and desperate, and in doing so through Safe Families, we can reduce child abuse and neglect and keep kids out of foster care," he said. "Those are measurable things that improve our whole society that can be linked back to the church loving their neighbor, like the Bible teaches."

Safe Families also works with organizations that provide referrals, such as Contact Ministries, Kumler Outreach Ministries, Sojourn Shelter and Services, Springfield School District 186, HSHS St. John's Hospital and DCFS. "We work collaboratively and also refer the parents we're serving to other community agencies as they work on their goals during the time that their child is hosted," said Mobley. "We're always working to bring on new churches and new volunteers to meet the needs of families in crisis."

"Additionally, we're a nonprofit that has to raise funds to do our work. Having individuals, churches, businesses and other community organizations become financial partners with us is always challenging work."

The organization recently held a fundraiser for members of the business community called 30 Minutes to Keep Kids Safe. It also conducts monthly orientations online (<http://sfdownstateil.eventbrite.com/>) and holds orientations and trainings in partnership with churches.

As with any nonprofit, businesses and community members can get involved by donating, Yockey pointed out. "Safe Families has very minimal overhead, but they still have overhead. This is a great way for businesses to support family in a very real way in our community."

The volunteer families are key, and Mobley and Yockey both said their families have participated as such. "In

my role as missions pastor at Hope," Yockey said, "I am currently recruiting and seeking to ramp up a team at our church so that we can be a Safe Families church -- providing the entire circle of support. As a family, we have served as Family Friends and as a host family."

A Family Friend partners with a parent in crisis to provide support and community, she explained. That can be helping with babysitting, helping find resources, having the family over for dinner, coffee or just generally befriending the parent. A host family provides a safe home environment while the parent is dealing with an issue.

Mobley added, "What I love most is when I talk with a volunteer family who has maintained a connection and built a relationship with a parent and children they served through Safe Families. When I hear stories of how they just had the kids over again, went to dinner with the family, attended church together or spent a holiday together outside of a formal Safe Families hosting, I feel a deep sense of gratitude and satisfaction because community has developed, and an isolated family isn't isolated anymore."

"My prayer is that we see more and more families in our community rise out of crisis because of the care they receive from the community around them," said Yockey. "Whole, healthy families produce the kind of citizens that we want to fill our city with. Helping these families in crisis remain intact is going to create those healthy families. This is the preventative measure to a whole lot of issues -- drug addiction, more child abuse, mental illness. If we can keep families intact, we have a better chance of avoiding a whole lot of pain for these kids." ♦

*Janet Seitz is a local communications professional, writer, and artist. To share your story, contact her at [janetseitz1@gmail.com](mailto:janetseitz1@gmail.com).*





# Grandma’s Smokehouse

BY STACIE LEWIS

Angela Griffiths and Joshua Edmonds have opened Grandma’s Smokehouse at 1420 E. Cook St. A large selection of smoked meats including pork, turkey and chicken is the high-light of the menu. The dishes include slabs of pork ribs, pulled sandwiches, whole and half chickens and wings and legs. Sides such as cornbread and greens with smoked turkey are also on offer. Seating is limited, but takeout is available, as is delivery and a catering

service. In addition to the restaurant, Griffiths and Edmonds plan to open a small candy shop and also a barbershop and beauty salon in two other spaces within the building. The candy store will be primarily geared toward younger shoppers and will feature penny candy and store-made candy, but will also offer some baked goods. The opening of the barbershop and beauty salon is awaiting equipment purchases. Grandma’s Smokehouse is open Mon.-Sat., 11 a.m.-8 p.m. For more information, call 679-5650. ♦

## Sangamon County new business registrations

**Grandma’s Smokehouse, Candy Store and Barbershop/Salon**, 1420 E. Cook St. 503-3034. Angela R. Griffiths.

**Surge King – IMC**, 1913 Creighton Rd. 718-0335. Jerry Rothenberg.

**Diamond Brow Studio**, 917 Clocktower, Suite 250. 819-1424. Shyneice Brooks.

**Salute to Service Lawn Care**, 6211 North Walnut Street Rd. 638-0682. Joseph Genovese.

**Brammer Tree Service, Inc.**, 1051 W. Calhoun St. 691-5736. L & M Service, LLC.

**Love, Springfield**, 422 S. Walnut St. 691-9671. Veronica Brown and MacIntyre Brown.

**Pruitt Performance Co.**, 500 N. Oak St., Williamsville. 331-8145. Melissa Pruitt.

**Monster Tree Service**, 801 Carroll St., Pawnee. 622-8855. Dylan Adams.

**ALL PAINT**, 3308 E. Sangamon Ave. 220-5334. Jenny Suttill.

**Jackpot Gaming, LLC**, 402 W. Jackson St., Auburn. 685-9323. Billy Brand.

**Whimsy Tea Company**, 15 S. Old Capitol Plaza, 2nd Fl. 441-1586. Gordon Davis and Laura Davis.

**Lawncrafters**, 4170 Camp Butler Rd. 801-7314. Quinten Gines.

**A Cheap Tire, Inc.**, 1300 East Cook St. 670-1596. John Matthew Sinovich.

**B’s Affordable Lawncare**, 825 N. Milton Ave. 415-3051. Bryan Sexton.

**Journey Jewelry**, 1900 Lowell Ave. 341-9479. Phyllis Nichols.

**Kindred Herbs**, 801 S. Grand Ave. W. 801-8704. Amy Seagle.

**Nothing Fancy Sustainable Products**, 1179 Yankee Town Rd., Pleasant Plains. 741-0222. Colleen Flinn.

**WLS Coaching**, 85 Island Bay Lane. 761-4489. Michael Thomas.

**Griffitts Racing**, 40 Country Town Rd. 494-0853. Steven Griffitts.

**Ishmael Land Improvements, LLC**, 6491 S. Cantrall Creek Rd. 341-6032. Chad Ishmael.

**Skillz Barber Shop**, 610 S. Martin Luther King Dr., Suite 1A. 816-1923. Broderick Brady.

**TNT Tree Service**, 3147 S. Hoover Ave. 761-7198. Thomas McBride and Natasha Mercer.

**Amy’s Family Child Care**, 106 W. Railroad St., Mechanicsburg. 481-0602. Amy S. Billbe.

**Krownd Headz Hair Extensions**, 1126 E. Reynolds St. 717-6943. Angela Ridgley.

**Tanya Beatty Photography**, 3091 Brickler Rd. 299-1941. Tanya Beatty.

**Rick’s Place “4” Pooch**, 3013 Somerton Rd. 502-9627. Richard Mundy.

**Arrowroot Coffee Co.**, 1417 Mossman Ave. 414-1478. Jacob Dinardo.

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