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Entrance to newly opened Dumb Records in Southtown.
Inset: Dumb Records co-owners Brian Galecki, left, and Cory VanMeter, right.

PHOTOS BY GINNY LEE



Young entrepreneurs revitalize Southtown neighborhood

By Scott Faingold

"It's one thing to fix up an old building or two," declares George Sinclair of Southtown. "Our mission has been more about bringing back the whole neighborhood."

Sinclair first came to Southtown in 1988 when he opened indoor skateboard park Skank Skates at 1101 South Grand Avenue East. A quarter century later, Skank Skates is not only still standing but is providing the unlikely cornerstone of what amounts to a complex of new, vibrant, youth-oriented businesses in the once blighted neighborhood.

Back in 2005, Kevin Bradford and three partners opened all-ages music venue Black Sheep Café next door to the skateboard haven, with a focus on independent and punk music, traditional favorite genres among skateboarders. His partners bailed

out soon after, but Bradford has kept the doors open, persevering through eight years of waxing and waning music bookings and audience interest.

Things were at a low point for the Black Sheep Café in 2011 when Brian Galecki moved back to his hometown of Springfield after graduating from the University of Illinois in Champaign. Galecki, now 24, had come of age as a regular patron of the all-ages music venue, which opened when he was 16 years old, and upon his return he involved himself in every aspect of Black Sheep's operations. In effect, Galecki's return helped usher in a new era for the business, and in the past two years, the Black Sheep has not only seen a surge in both concert attendance and local music bookings but has

also become a destination spot for national touring bands, playing host to performers from all over the country as well as from Europe and South America.

In January, the fresh-faced entrepreneurs of Southtown expanded their reach even further with the opening of a brand new music retail space - Dumb Records, owned by Galecki, Bradford and Springfield resident Cory VanMeter in partnership with Nathan Landolt of Champaign's Error Records - along with South Town Studio, a recording studio-cum-practice space, run by musician and engineer Brandon Carnes, 24, who reports having recorded eight projects in his first three weeks, with bookings already

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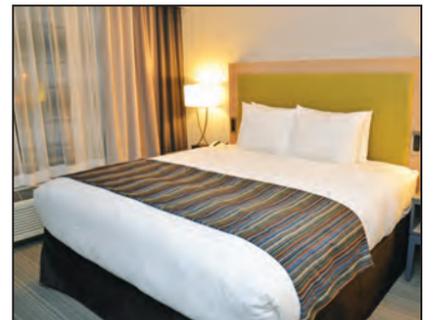
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Capital Airport serves more passengers in 2013

By Roberta Codemo

Recent data released by the Springfield Airport Authority reveal an uptick in the number of passengers flying in and out of Abraham Lincoln Capital Airport.

Total passenger activity on all air carriers combined increased 4.67 percent, from 138,480 to 144,963, in 2013 compared to 2012, according to the total monthly enplanement and deplanement numbers. Total passenger activity increased 34.20 percent, from 11,330 to 15,206, in December 2013 compared to December 2012.

"The numbers are on the rebound," said Mark Hanna, executive director: Abraham Lincoln Capital Airport lost passenger service with Direct Air in 2012. "We've started to turn a corner."

Hanna credits the across-the-board increase to additional services now offered from Abraham Lincoln Capital Airport to Orlando/Sanford International Airport on Allegiant Air. The carrier began offering flights to the Fort Myers-Punta Gorda area in 2012. He is in talks about adding routes to Las Vegas and Phoenix.

The added flights mean an increase in passenger numbers for Allegiant Air. Outbound traffic increased 138.48 percent in December alone from 1,141 to 2,721 between 2012 and 2013, while inbound traffic increased 135.05 percent from 1,070 to 2,515. The total year-end numbers show outbound service on Allegiant Air increased 564.31 percent from 2,065 to 13,718 between 2012 and 2013, and inbound

service increased 631.08 percent from 1,895 to 13,854.

"The future looks bright for leisure travel," said Hanna. Travelers now have two Florida markets to fly into.

"Allegiant will continue to return significant year-over-year increases until we compare years with similar capacity offerings," added Hanna, referring to the flight added to Sanford airport.

American Eagle began offering twice daily flights to the Dallas-Ft. Worth area in 2011. "We want to accommodate the business traveler," said Hanna. "Dallas is another hub to connect out of." The Dallas hub means business travelers can connect with flights across the south and southwestern United States.

Service is starting to show more traffic in recent months. American Eagle saw a year-end 3.56 percent increase in outbound traffic, from 19,913 to 20,622, between 2012 and 2013. There was a seasonal dip of .77 percent in inbound traffic from 20,485 to 20,327 between 2012 and 2013. "The numbers will smooth out over the course of the year," said Hanna.

Hanna would like to add one more flight from Abraham Lincoln Capital Airport to the Dallas-Ft. Worth area. Business travelers want to fly at times that are convenient for them. The December numbers show a 25.89 percent increase in outbound traffic to Dallas-Fort Worth from 1,576 to 1,984, between

Continued on page 4



United flight being readied for takeoff.

PHOTOS COURTESY ABRAHAM LINCOLN CAPITAL CITY AIRPORT



Aerial view of Abraham Lincoln Capital Airport.



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Main gate sign for the airport.

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TOTAL MONTHLY ENPLANEMENTS & DEPLANEMENTS

	December			Year-To-Date		% Change
	2013	2012		2013	2012	
Airline Passengers Enplaning						
American Connection	1,984	1,576	25.89%	20,622	19,913	3.56%
United Express	2,943	2,687	9.53%	36,455	38,041	-4.17%
Direct Air	0	0		0	5,294	
Vision	0	0		0	2,486	
Allegiant Air	2,721	1,141	138.48%	13,718	2,065	564.31%
Sun Country / Honor Flight	0	0		956	798	19.80%
Sun Country / Riverside	90	131	-31.30%	791	362	118.51%
McClelland Aviation	1	0		38	34	11.76%
Charter	0	0		0	244	
Sub-Total	7,739	5,535	39.82%	72,580	69,247	4.81%
Airline Passengers Deplaning						
American Connection	1,899	1,605	18.32%	20,327	20,485	-0.77%
United Express	2,961	2,989	-0.94%	36,407	37,948	-4.06%
Direct Air	0	0		0	4,990	
Vision	0	0		0	2,573	
Allegiant Air	2,414	1,070	125.61%	13,753	1,895	625.75%
Sun Country / Honor Flight	0	0		956	798	19.80%
Sun Country / Riverside	90	131	-31.30%	791	362	118.51%
McClelland Aviation	1	0		38	34	11.76%
Charter	0	0		0	148	
Sub-Total	7,365	5,795	27.09%	72,272	69,233	4.39%
TOTAL	15,104	11,330	33.31%	144,852	138,480	4.60%

Capital Airport
Continued from page 3

2012 and 2013 and a 18.32 percent increase in inbound traffic from 1,605 to 1,899.

United Express, which connects Springfield with O'Hare airport in Chicago, saw an overall year-end 4.17 percent decrease in outbound flights, from 38,041 to 36,455, between 2012 and 2013 and a 4.06 decrease in inbound flights, from 37,948 to 36,407, between 2012 and 2013. The December numbers show a 9.53 percent increase in outbound flights, from 2,687 to 2,943, between 2012 and 2013 and a decrease of .94 percent in inbound

flights from 2,989 to 2,961.

Hanna attributes the decrease in United's overall numbers to seasonal schedule adjustments between late fall and late spring. While United did add one additional month of service, they only offered three daily flights during that time, compared to last year's four.

"Chicago remains a powerful hub," said Hanna. He expects the route to continue to grow in small increments. "It's a mature, well-established route. We continue to have talks with United."

Hanna said the merger between American Airlines and US Airway opens potential new markets in Philadelphia and Charlotte. "There

has been a lot of interest in Charlotte," he said, referring to the fact that passengers will now be able to fly into Charlotte Douglas International Airport and connect with flights to Europe and up and down the eastern seaboard.

"We continue to meet face face to face with airlines," continued Hanna. "When they see trends of increased numbers flying to Chicago and Dallas, it means we hit a home run."

Air carriers want to fill flights at a competitive fare. There needs to be enough passengers to fill seats. If a carrier sees more opportunities, the number of flights will increase. It's important a regional airport connects to the right hub to serve the community.

"We want people to fly in and out with ease," said Hanna. The Springfield Airport Authority recently invested \$5.3 million in capital improvements to preserve and maintain the airport's infrastructure.

Transportation affects the quality of life in a community. "We do what we can each and every day," said Hanna. □

Roberta Codemo is a full-time freelance writer and started Codemo Writing Services in 2012. She works with small business owners to help create compelling online content and build their web presence. She can be reached at rcodemo@hotmail.com.

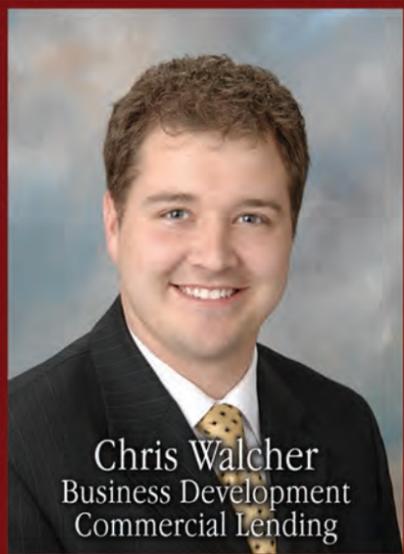
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Black Sheep Café proprietor Kevin Bradford.

PHOTOS BY GINNY LEE

Dumb Records

Continued from page 1

stretching into March.

The grand opening of Dumb Records on Saturday, Jan. 11, was a joyful affair, with acoustic musicians performing in the store's small, well-stocked space at 1107 South Grand as well as an exhibition of visual art in full swing next door at Black Sheep. Most of those in attendance seemed very young and there was a pervasive, cohesive sense of community. Like the adjacent skate shop and music venue, the new record store and recording studio both have a warm, homemade ambience, a kind of ramshackle charm, with hand-painted signage and an overall lived-in feel. According to Brandon Carnes, the lack of slickness is as much a statement of purpose as a matter of necessity.

"It's not about what we've got, it's about what we do with it and who we can affect with it," he explains passionately. "At Black Sheep, maybe the P.A. is not in great shape, but when a band comes, it's not about the sound system, it's about what they're saying, what they're doing, the fact that they're here. It's the same with my studio. I don't have crazy, state-of-the-art equipment but I do know how to make a record here that sounds like rock and roll."

In addition to Skank Skate, George Sinclair owns the properties where Black Sheep, Dumb Records and the recording studio all reside and couldn't be happier with these recent developments. "We've gone from getting good tenants to getting active tenants who are picking up where I'm leaving off as far as helping run the

businesses and bring back the economy," he says.

"It is grass roots urban renewal done by the people of the city," says Bradford, 31. "It's people who care about arts and music who are making it happen, it's not an outside investor opening a Jimmy John's on the corner, it's us doing it ourselves." Indeed, as the neighborhood continues to blossom, other locally owned Southtown businesses such as Clay's Popeye's Barbecue are likely to feel the benefit.

Sinclair has also recently begun working with local company genH to literally cultivate the neighborhood. "We plowed up a vacant lot on 12th and South Grand, and we're going to have an urban garden over there in the years to come." Directly behind the Black Sheep's parking lot, Sinclair proudly shows off the teaching garden where he conducts beekeeping classes. "It's about teaching people the basics of how to grow your own food and why you might want to do that," he says.

"We didn't go to business school and come in here with a five-year plan," says Bradford ("We didn't even have a five-week plan," Carnes interjects with a laugh). "We just did it. If you stick with stuff and don't give up, things can happen, as long people support what you're doing." □

Scott Faingold is associate editor of Springfield Business Journal, staff writer at Illinois Times, instructor in the UIS Communication Department and vocalist for Epsom. He can be reached via scott@springfieldbusinessjournal.com.



Southtown recording studio owner-operator Brandon Carnes performs at the grand opening of Dumb Records

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View of the Ferguson and Booth Facades from across Monroe Street.

**Looking for buckets of
 money for downtown**

**Design team addresses 2016 TIF
 expiration and Historic Tax credit issues**

By Scott Faingold

The Strategic Design Action Team (SDAT) is a volunteer organization assembled by Mayor Mike Houston in 2012 to help create a livable neighborhood in downtown Springfield. A large part of the team's job is finding ways to help secure continued funding for various development projects. One major source of funds has been the Central Area Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) district, which is set to expire in 2016. Another is the Federal Historic Tax (FHT) Credit District, which has proven somewhat problematic due to some seemingly arbitrary boundary lines.

"To keep the residential housing momentum going we would like a few more buckets of funding available to developers, whether they be local developers or national developers," says small business owner and fundraiser Lisa Clemmons Stott, co-chair of SDAT. "Springfield needs an answer, whether it's another TIF or different options, because the housing is probably not going to happen without it." Architect Charles Joseph Pell, Stott's co-chair, emphasizes the importance of having "a livable, walkable community downtown in order for other amenities to follow."

One might imagine that having a building included in the Federal Historic Tax Credit District might perhaps entail receiving a nice, gold-leaf embossed certificate in the mail, but it is much more than that, according to Pell. "Buildings in that district could be eligible for a 20 percent historic tax credit and that can be huge in terms of development." Typically, developers will sell their tax credits for between 80 and 90 cents on the dollar to create immediately usable funds, which can be substantial. "If I'm designing a million-dollar building and I get 20 percent historic tax credits, obviously

20 percent is \$200,000," he points out.

As for the odd physical parameters of the district itself, Pell says there had been a feeling over the last year or so that the district should be larger. "Why it ended up the size that it did, we don't know, but there are certainly other buildings that many of us feel are contributing." For example, developer Rick Lawrence owns both the Ferguson Building (which houses Café Brio) and the Booth Building, both located on the same block of Monroe. The problem is, the Ferguson is included in the Historic District while, two doors down, the Booth is not. "Lawrence's situation is not the driver for the issue," says Pell. "It's more like the poster child. We all know borders are tough, there's always going to be somebody on one side of the border and there's always going to be somebody on the other side. We just think that perhaps the Historic District could have a more logical border than it does now."

As for the 2016 expiration of the Central Area TIF, Mike Farmer, director of Springfield's Office of Planning and Economic Development, which administers all city TIFs, feels that it has done its job. A TIF can be 23 years in length, by statute, and can be extended an additional 12 years, which this one was. "It has had a heck of a run and it's been a very productive TIF," he says, calling it "a textbook example of a good TIF." According to Farmer, OPED's most recent report to the comptroller's office showed the Central Area TIF generating about \$4.1 million a year in increment, meaning the growth in the taxable property value. "That's a pretty substantial increment and that annual amount goes up year after year because of increased equalized assessed



PHOTOS BY GINNY LEE

TIF funds were used judiciously and lots of improvements were made.”

Although the TIF expires in 2016, the county will take in the last payments that include what can be used for the TIF in 2017, leaving a sizable window of opportunity for SDAT to explore and cultivate alternatives. Furthermore, merely because common wisdom has it that there is not much left of the TIF, Pell urges developers who think their projects may be TIF-worthy not to be discouraged. “When they say there is not a lot left of the TIF, what they’re really telling you is that dollars have been committed,” he explains. “They *have* dedicated a lot of it but they also know that some projects won’t be realized. Other folks who want to do work in the TIF district and would like to go after some of those dollars shouldn’t be afraid to try.”

When the Central Area TIF does inevitably reach its end in a few short years, there are several possible scenarios for funding continued downtown development, some more concrete than others from the current vantage. Stott mentions the possibilities of a 10-year property tax abatement as well as setting up a Community Development Corporation (CDC), which she characterizes as “almost a private sector version of a TIF. It can attract other capital, other grants, federal grants. We don’t necessarily expect any money coming from the city or even necessarily the state.”

Pell says SDAT is working behind the scenes right now to “create a model for some sort of entity that really could take over when the TIF isn’t here. It would be hard for me to say what that would be called because we don’t even know yet, but we’re working with lots of great minds right now around the table including the Chamber of Commerce and their strategic leadership council.”

According to Mike Farmer, fashioning a new “amoeba-shaped” TIF district with a different geography from the existing one, incorporating many of the same areas as well as some that were left out of the expiring TIF, is a definite possibility. “Certainly we have to be both patient and cautious,” he says. “Obviously you can’t have two TIFs at the same time, so we have to wait for that 2016 period to elapse.” □

Scott Faingold can be reached via scott@springfieldbusinessjournal.com.

valuation,” Farmer says.

In order to gauge the true value the Central Area TIF has brought to the area, Farmer says, he only needs to cast his memory back to the downtown Springfield of the late 1970s and early 1980s compared to today. “I remember those days, and the downtown area was simply not the place to go, particularly for young people. They went elsewhere. But since that time there’s been an awful lot of investment and downtown has changed dramatically.” Despite the contraction of state government, Farmer points to factors such as walkability, attractive destinations for dining and entertainment and cosmetic changes like streetscaping, façade renovations, restorations and new buildings in place of blighted properties, all working together to allow downtown to become much more of a focal point for the city. “I think everybody could be satisfied that those portions of the



The Ferguson Building (foreground) is within the Federal Historic Tax Credit District, while the Booth Building (two doors to the right) is not.

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NEW BUSINESS



Scott Meyer of Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group, Leo Sand of Sand Architects, Country Inn & Suites general manager Ragan Myerscough, and David Swift of the Swift Hospitality Group take care of the ribbon cutting at the grand opening of Country Inn & Suites on January 16.

New Country Inn is first with contemporary style

By Ginny Lee

A new Country Inn & Suites hotel at 3092 Stevenson Dr. held a ribbon cutting and reception Thursday, Jan. 16. The hotel, which opened Nov. 21, is Springfield's first Country Inn property and is the first building featuring the chain's contemporary Generation IV style.

Country Inns are known for their homey feel, according to Bob Johnson of Sand Construction, which built the property. Generation IV designs have a more European and artistic style. "It features extensive wood

finishes, modern colors like grey for the walls, and splashes of red and green. Grey is the new beige," Thompson said. "Generation IV balances the country feel with a modern approach."

"We could not be more excited to launch the newest generation of our brand in Springfield," Scott Meyer, vice-president of the Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group, which owns Country Inn & Suites.

The rooms feature wide doorways, whitewashed oak, plush beds and plenty of electrical outlets. Generation IV is designed for a younger tech-focused business clientele as well as the traditional Country Inn customer. The spacious rooms are priced competitively: \$99 for a double queen or king room, \$104 for a studio suite, and \$114 for a king suite.

Country Inns are also known for a fireplace in each lobby and for a lending library. The 78-room Springfield Country Inn & Suites is among the newest properties of the 26-year-old chain, based in Minnesota. Country Inn & Suites Carlson Rezidor Group operates more than 470 motels.

The hotel is owned by Springfield Lodging LLC and was a joint venture between Sand Lodging Inc. and the Swift Hospitality Group Inc. Sand Construction of Waite Park, Minn., provided the construction, architectural and procurement services. Swift Hospitality of Freeport will manage the hotel. □



Even the bathrooms at the new Country Inn & Suites feature an art shelf and state of the art design.

Ginny Lee is a Springfield writer and photographer with an entrepreneurial spirit. She has been a contributor to the Illinois Times for many years.



PHOTOS BY GINNY LEE



Country Inn & Suites' studio suite features European style with grey walls, an art shelf and red accent chair.



Country Inn's new Generation IV design includes a spacious lobby with abundant art work and a modern color palette.



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BEST PLACES TO WORK



Dick Levi of Levi, Ray & Shoup, Inc., with "Best Places to Work" hosts Bob and Marsha Narmont of United Community Bank. PHOTOS BY GINNY LEE

What makes a 'Best Place to Work?' The people.

By Mary Beth Stephens

The *Springfield Business Journal* awarded three local businesses "Best Places to Work" awards at a reception hosted by United Community Bank, a longtime partner with the *SBJ* for this award.

Confucius says, "Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life." The employees at this year's recipients – Levi, Ray and Shoup, Inc., The Real Estate Group and Prairie Eye Center – would wholeheartedly agree.

Michelle Higginbotham, associate publisher for the *Springfield Business Journal* said the selection process for Best Places to Work recipients is difficult. "These

awards began in 2008, and the quality of the nominations has only increased. This year's awardees demonstrate not only how well the employees view these companies, but also how well their clients view these companies."

"It's the people," Brenda Eden of LRS said when asked why she enjoys her job at LRS. "I've been there from almost the very beginning, and the people I work with make every day worthwhile," she continued.

Tom Payne, also with LRS, echoed her sentiments: "The work is interesting, engaging, and we are an ethical business.



Springfield Alderman Cory Jobe with Todd Wise, president of United Community Bank.



Mike Buscher, The Real Estate Group, Charlotte Warren, president of Lincoln Land Community College, Rick Hanselman, The Real Estate Group and Todd Wise, United Community Bank.

If we say we are going to do something, we do it. I take pride in that."

Companies have particular 'cultures' – laid back, intense, competitive or perhaps collaborative. The owners, managers and other employees – the people within the organization – create these cultures. A common thread at the reception was the pride employees and owners took toward their businesses. They create a positive rewarding culture within which to work.

Dr. Sandra Yeh, president and founder of Prairie Eye Center, said, "Our staff is our family. We work together with one heart, one mind and one vision." Cheers erupted when Dr. Yeh was asked to come forward and accept their award, as they did with the other two awardees.

Owning and running a business is difficult work. Owners are responsible not only for their employees' livelihoods, but their families' livelihood. A business owner said recently that every time he sees his assistant it reminds him of the importance of doing his best and providing a good place to work every day. Not only his assistant but also her family is counting on that. This year's Best Places to Work recipients understand that too.

Charlotte Warren, president of Lincoln Land Community College, and the keynote speaker at the reception described how important the work environment is. "The ability of a business to make employees want to come to work every day not only helps the employees, but the community too." Businesses with dedicated employees

are better businesses, and make their community a better place.

"It's not just what is being done at a business, but how it's done, that differentiates a Best Place to Work from others," Warren continued.

Mike Buscher, managing broker and partner at The Real Estate Group, carried on this sentiment when accepting their award. "Our job is to sell houses, but as members of this community, we understand the emotional decision home buying is, and we strive every day to present the compassion home buyers need as they go through the process."

Randy Aldrich, a broker/associate at The Real Estate Group, said, "There is no better place for me to run my business. The dedication of the realtors and our staff makes it a pleasure to come into the office every day."

Throughout the room and the evening the theme was the same – the people the employees see at work every day and the environment they work in make all the difference. Richard Levi, a founder and president of LRS summed it up best, "It is extremely important to provide a place employees want to come to and are proud to be there."

Congratulations to this year's Best Places to Work recipients. □

Mary Beth Stephens is a freelance writer in Springfield and the Springfield High School Boys Swim Coach. She can be reached at 494-2613 or hmandmb02@gmail.com.



Dr. Fred Rauscher, partner, and Dr. Sandra Yeh, president and founder, Prairie Eye Center.

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Minority businesses want a bigger piece of the pie

Faith Coalition and IDOT work together for minorities and women

By Gabe House

The Faith Coalition for the Common Good wants to make sure Springfield's minority-owned businesses have every advantage, even if it means being labeled as disadvantaged.

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) administers the federally mandated Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program in an effort to provide contracting opportunities to small businesses owned by "socially and economically disadvantaged individuals," according to the Small Business Administration's standards.

To be certified means having the ability to bid on IDOT contracts, something many businesses would ideally enjoy. But becoming certified can be a confusing process, and this is where the Faith Coalition for the Common Good (FCCG) has stepped in.

IDOT and FCCG recently held a workshop in Springfield for minority-owned businesses to learn about – and start – the DBE certification process. Although IDOT already hosts a number of workshops related to the DBE program (and other IDOT programs), the majority of those are in larger metropolitan areas.

"We wanted to make sure our local minority business owners got a piece of this pie," said Shelly Heideman, the executive director of the Faith Coalition. "It's interesting because a lot of people in Springfield didn't think we had a lot of minority business owners here (in town), but 15 showed up."

Of course, simply being a minority business owner isn't a golden ticket to being certified. Among the myriad restrictions, there are size limits determined by gross receipts depending upon the business in question. At least 51 percent of the business must be controlled by what is termed as a disadvantaged individual. That individual, even after proving 51 percent of ownership, must also be able to show incontrovertible control of the company. There are nine pages of certification standards alone.

But Heideman wants to make sure Springfield's minority business owners are able to wade through the forms and standards, particularly as the city's railway relocation project picks up steam. Mayor Mike Houston,



Mary Wilson, owner and CEO of Michel Concrete.

PHOTO BY GINNY LEE

the Springfield Chamber of Commerce and IDOT all promised massive economic and infrastructure growth on Springfield's east side, Heideman said, as the railway is moved from Third Street to the 10th Street Corridor. Heideman and the FCCG want to see them make good on those promises as the \$315 million rail project moves forward.

"The reason why it's important to us, the last four years we've been working on this high-speed rail project, and we've developed a community benefit agreement," Heideman said. "In that agreement, we want local jobs, jobs for people of color, jobs for women, job-training opportunities and we also want opportunities for minority businesses to get contracts through the rail project."

Dexter Marshall, owner of Double D Construction in Springfield, was in attendance

at the recent IDOT/FCCG workshop despite already having been DBE-certified for a number of years.

"I was there to gather any information that could be valuable to my business," Marshall explained. "I think the Faith Coalition is great. I think they need to get even more in-depth with the department of transportation to educate the business owners what avenues to take."

Mary Wilson, owner and CEO of Michel Concrete, was also positive about the Faith Coalition and IDOT working together to further educate minority-owned businesses in Springfield. Although the certification process is supposed to take 90 days from receipt of application, Wilson said her certification took at least a year to finalize and was quite difficult.

"I'm not sure, at this point, if it was worth

the hassle. Maybe if I had had more training or assistance in filling it all out," Wilson said. "But when times are tough, like right now, it's best to open as many doors as possible."

Wilson said the DBE application form asks very specific questions. One section requires a breakdown of equipment owned and jobs that can be performed by the company in question. Wilson said Michel Concrete may rent equipment or even use a subcontractor for particular jobs. That obviously creates a conflict on the application; Michel Concrete shows that it can perform certain tasks but doesn't own the equipment necessary to complete said tasks.

"I can understand that, though," Wilson said in. "IDOT does a very good job of making sure a contractor is qualified for jobs."

Another potential gray area, Wilson said, is proving control of the company.

"You only have to own 51 percent for it to be a woman-owned business, but then you have to prove control. And control is subjective," Wilson said. "You can be the president, have all the votes on the board, but ... there needs to be supporting documentation showing the control."

"I ended up buying back my husband's stock to be a 100 percent owner ... because that helped the certifying agency understand I did have the control I needed to run the business."

This is why FCCG and IDOT working together is such a boon for local, minority-owned businesses. Stumbles are often expected when federal programs are being utilized. IDOT is required to do its due diligence in vetting potential DBE-qualified businesses, and those businesses have to be prepared to provide that documentation.

"There may be a process involved, but we want everyone not to be discouraged and to participate," Heideman said. "In Springfield, we need to see an increase in minority employees and minority-owned businesses receiving contracts in the state." □

Gabe House works in the lending department at United Community Bank. He can be reached at 217-787-3000 or ghouse@ucbbank.com.

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Therapist gets physical in building up child development center

By Eric Woods

Patti Naylor started working as a young girl, teaching swimming lessons at age 12. She kept that up until she was 23. She has had numerous jobs over the years, but her worst was as a typist at a funeral home where Naylor had to type up pallbearer thank you letters. "The programmable typewriter was pretty high-tech at the time, but even so, it was extremely tedious, frustrating, boring and repetitive," she said. "I had to go in after hours when all the other clerical staff had left for the day. On most nights the night shift embalmer and I were the only ones in the building, which was a little creepy at times."

As a child, Naylor wanted to be a veterinarian. While that did not come to pass, she has been a physical therapist for more than 20 years. Naylor has done everything from being a staff physical therapist to department director, to assistant professor at the university level. "For the profession of physical therapy, my advice would be to always remember that patients don't care how much you know until they know how much you care," said Naylor. "Pertaining to treating patients, and life in general, use what you know and exude confidence. Pertaining to teaching physical therapy students, your job is to teach them everything they know, not

everything you know."

Naylor will continue to work as a home health physical therapist, but her main focus has shifted to starting The Little Gym of Springfield which she owns and where she will serve as the full-time gym director. The Little Gym has more than 300 locations worldwide. It is an experiential learning and physical development center for children ages four months through 12 years. Programs and classes include parent and child development, gymnastics, sports skills, dance, and karate.

While in high school, Naylor made National Honor Society, was Salutatorian, and was voted Most Likely to Succeed. Her success continued into her adult life, as she has been recognized in her profession multiple times. She was Physical Therapist of the Year in 2002 for the Illinois Physical Therapy Association. She was also appointed to the American Physical Therapy Association Government Affairs Committee and the Illinois Physical Therapy Licensing and Disciplinary Board in 2008. In 2010 she was Faculty Advisor of the Year for Maryville University School of Health Professions. Naylor's parents were a great influence. "My father died in 2002 and my mother in 2010, and I never realized how much I learned from them and how much

their personalities and experiences shaped me into the person I am, until after they were gone," she said. "There is so much that I wish I could go back in time and ask them about now, especially now that I'm raising my own children."

Naylor is a little leery of knowing too much about the future, though, as she would not want that knowledge to influence the choices she makes today. "Basically, I would just want to know that my kids are healthy and happy," she said.

The Little Gym opens Feb. 4, and until then Naylor will be involved in training her employees. With a new business, she has no plans for vacation soon. "I am just ready to start working 60 hour weeks instead of 80. I would love to take our kids to Disney World in the next couple of years, but the timing will all depend on how the business goes in the next several months," she said. Retirement is not in the near future for Naylor, but it is something she thinks about. "I want to be able to travel and enjoy my retirement. I do not have a specific age in mind, because you never know what curveballs life is going to throw you. We will have to wait and see what happens with The Little Gym." □

Contact Eric Woods at ericw93@aol.com.



Patti Naylor

Title: Owner and Gym Director, The Little Gym of Springfield, 3043 Hedley in Springfield
 Telephone: 217-546-8849
 E-mail: pnaylor@thelittlegym.com

Born: Feb. 26, 1967
 Location: Highland, Ill.
 Education: M.S. in Physical Therapy from Texas Woman's University
 Family: Husband - Rodney; Children - Wade and Peyton

FAVORITES:
 Book: *Beach Music* by Pat Conroy
 Restaurant: Osaka
 Sports team: LSU Tigers

TIDBITS:
 Doctoral candidate in health policy at Saint Louis University
 Would like to take six months off to hike the Appalachian Trail from start to finish
 Belongs to the Illinois Physical Therapy Association, American Physical Therapy Association, Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce, and Blessed Sacrament PSA

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Special events, baking and catering headline new banquet facility

By Eric Woods

Susan Shaw began working for the first time when she was 16 at McDonalds. Her favorite job experience was opening TJ Maxx in White Oaks Mall. That experience was much better than her least favorite job, as a telemarketer, a job she had for only six months. "You constantly have to bug people," she said. "I did not like that."

Shaw and her family currently live in Elkhart, where they moved in 2001. She loves the small-town atmosphere and the fact that it is close to her family. She could do without the ever-changing central Illinois weather, though. The current economic condition is where Shaw feels the area needs the most improvement.

Visiting wineries and watching the Food Network regularly should make her current profession no surprise. Shaw was the owner unclear whether she's the owner of the businesses now? of Central Illinois Event Catering, which split off into two businesses and is currently The Yellow Rose Banquet and Conference Center and Sweet Betty Jane's Baked Goods and Catering. The businesses are housed in Riverton, having relocated from Elkhart last fall. "We had a mini-kitchen in our home, but we outgrew it," she said. The new venue accommodates wedding receptions and rehearsal dinners

as well as special parties and events for holidays, anniversaries and graduations. One of the newer events offered is murder-mystery dinners. The first wedding reception at the new venue just happened to be for Shaw's daughter back in October.

Along with operating the facility, Shaw participates in weekly farmers markets, bringing in baked goods from Sweet Betty Jane's. "More than the money, I like to watch people enjoying my food," said Shaw. "We are also trying to push corporate catering. Unlike some others, we do not have a minimum number on the catering."

Shaw grew up wanting to be a teacher, and while she does not spend time in the traditional classroom, she does teach cooking classes that are currently running through the beginning of May. "We have bread-making classes, dessert-making, healthy cooking, soup classes and kids' cooking classes, to name a few," she said.

Shaw is enjoying the new facility and everything she can offer, but she does have a dream of building her own place someday. "I want to have a banquet facility with a café and bakery attached," she said. "Economic times make that difficult." It is important to get her name out there in order to be successful. Other hopes for the future

include more grandchildren, especially since two of her children were just married last year.

Shaw feels that it is important to start small in this field. "People will achieve success if they work hard," she said. "You have to start somewhere. A lot of kids do not know that. Many think they will get out of school and immediately own their own business or make \$25 an hour." Those interested in the hospitality industry could help themselves by knowing when to take advice.

"Brad Zara has always given me great advice," said Shaw. "He is a person who is successful in his business. He started small and worked his way up."

The success Shaw is currently having is proof that it is never too late to go to college. One of her greatest achievements was going back to school as an adult and doing very well. "I think you put more effort into school when you are an adult," she said.

This venture is what keeps Shaw from even considering retirement anytime soon. "I think I will always have my foot in the door for the business at some level," said Shaw. "The biggest thing will be having time for my grandkids." □

Contact Eric Woods at ericw93@aol.com.



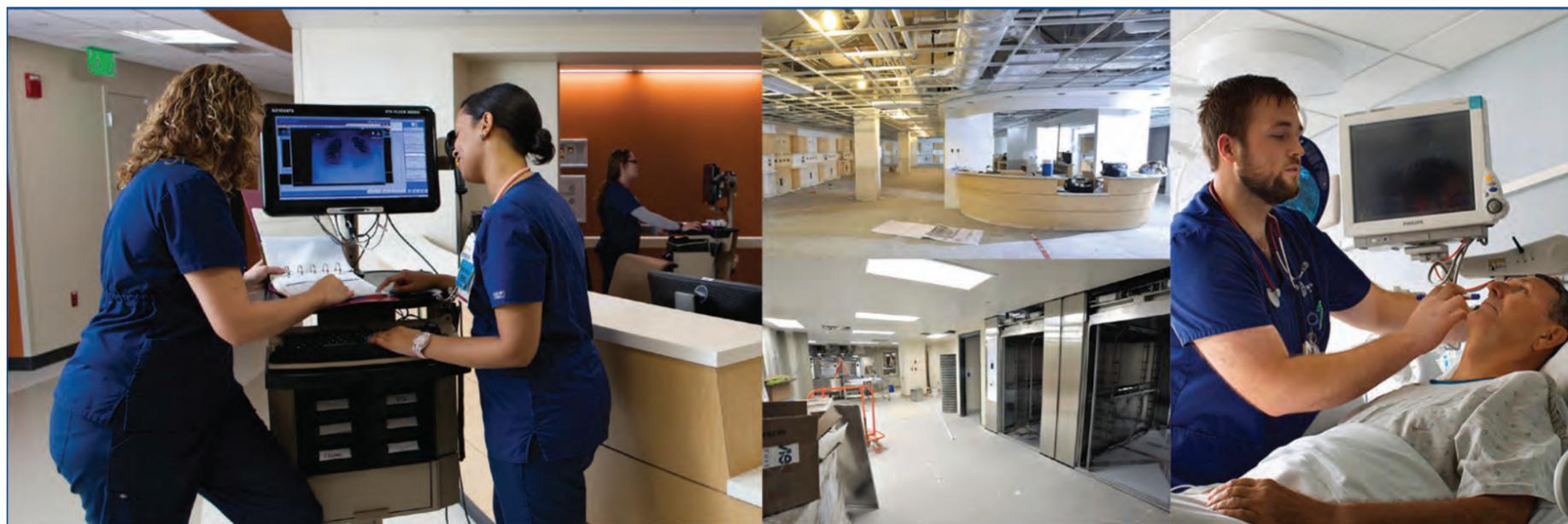
Susan Shaw

Title: Owner, The Yellow Rose Banquet and Conference Center
 Telephone: 217-314-9125
 Email: susanshaw@cicatering.com

Born: July 7, 1968
 Location: Milwaukee, Wis.
 Education: A.A. in Hospitality Management Services from Lincoln Land Community College
 Family: Husband - Ernest; Children - Ashley, Steven, Katie, and Pat; four grandchildren

Favorites:
 Hobby: Cooking
 Restaurant: The Drunken Fish
 Music: Country

Tidbits:
 Would love to take a trip to Italy
 Collects wine glasses
 Belongs to Illinois Women in Leadership (IWIL)



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Gregory Barnett, M.D. named executive medical director of surgical services at St. John's

St. John's Hospital has announced Dr. Gregory Barnett as the new Executive Medical Director of Surgical Services. Dr. Barnett is facilitating the transition to the newly constructed surgical suites set to open this year. "Dr. Barnett is a gifted physician who represents our vision as the best place to work, best place to practice and best place to receive care as we transition to one of the most state-of-the-art surgery centers in the region," according to Dr. Charles L. Lucore,, Vice President of Clinical Integration at St. John's.

Bariatric-surgery program at MMC Reaccredited

The American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery (ASMBS) has granted a three-year reaccreditation to Memorial Medical Center's bariatric-surgery program. According to Memorial Bariatric Service medical director Max Hammer, the reaccreditation "demonstrates that Memorial's bariatric program meets the needs of weight-loss surgery patients by providing multidisciplinary, high-quality, patient-centered care." Memorial was originally accredited in 2010 under the ASMBS Center of Excellence program, which has since combined with the American College of Surgeons to become the Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery Accreditation and Quality Improvement Program.

'Freedom From Smoking' classes offered to local businesses

Beginning in March, SIU's Simmons Cancer Institute will bring its popular smoking

cessation program to area businesses locations by appointment. The seven-week "Freedom from Smoking" course, created by the American Lung Association, offers group interaction and support to quit smoking. In addition, SCI will continue to offer the seven-week course periodically at the Cancer Institute. To register, call 217.545.7493 or visit www.siumed.edu/cancer and click on the "Freedom from Smoking" link. Registration is limited to 20 participants. Group rates are available.

Springfield Clinic makes donation to Kidzeum

Springfield Clinic's Orthopedic group has contributed \$50,000 to downtown's Kidzeum of Health and Science to fund the "Femur Rock Climb" within Kidzeum's Healthy Body gallery. The Femur Climb is described as "a rock-climbing wall built into the lower and upper leg of the 40-foot tall, three-story human child that makes up the Healthy Body Gallery." The educational focus of this exhibit is to "encourage physical movement as well as learning the skeletal and muscular system of the leg."

Comedian Scott Burton to headline cancer survivorship event

Scott Burton, a comedian and osteo sarcoma survivor, will be the keynote speaker for a free public symposium on cancer survivorship to be held Thursday, Feb. 6 at SIU's Simmons Cancer Institute. According to a press release, previous to his diagnosis, Burton had been "a headlining stand-up comic and world-class juggler" who had performed with Jerry Seinfeld and Jay Leno. The theme of his speech will be "Looking for laughter in all the

wrong places." The event is free and includes light refreshments. For more information, call 545-7493 or 545-3837 or visit www.siumed.edu/cancer.

SIU Medical School to celebrate Black History month with variety show and Ethnic Heritage Day

A Black History variety show will be held on Saturday, Feb. 1, in SIU's South Auditorium (second floor) featuring performers will include the African Ensemble of Central Illinois, Crisp and Rogers Word and Spirit FLC and Tebe Zalango. On Thursday, Feb. 20, an Ethnic Heritage Day celebrating African-American culture is scheduled from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. at IU's Pearson Museum (second floor), 801 N. Rutledge St. featuring a presentation entitled "Celebrating Cultures: Forging Ahead in the American Dream" by Dr. Wesley Robinson-McNeese along with samples of African-American foods. For more information about SIU's Black History Month programs, contact Dr. Robinson-McNeese at 217.545.7334 on weekdays.

Memorial Health System teams with SIU HealthCare combine forces to improve

Midwest Healthcare Quality Alliance, a new partnership between SIU Healthcare and Memorial Health System, is designed to "develop innovative solutions for improving health care access, quality, safety and community outcomes across the region." MHQA is a new Illinois nonprofit limited-liability corporation designed to leverage the combined strengths of the two organizations to boldly create new solutions needed to address the complex health care requirements of today and tomorrow,

according to organizers. It will be governed by a 10-member board of managers and is based in Springfield in the heart of the Mid-Illinois Medical District.

SCI Summer Intern Program Begins Sixth Year

Summer internships for undergraduate college students will be offered for the sixth summer at Simmons Cancer Institute at Southern Illinois University School of Medicine. Four positions will be awarded to qualified undergraduate college students who plan a career in medicine or research with a focus on cancer. Interns will have the opportunity to learn basic laboratory skills while working under the supervision of SCI faculty members. In addition, one position will be offered at the SIU Carbondale campus. The remaining three will be at the School of Medicine campus in Springfield. "Students will participate in the daily lab work that is at the core of cancer research," said Morris Cooper, Ph.D., SCI director for basic science. "This will allow the successful candidates for the internship to gain hands-on experience working with talented cancer researchers." Qualified undergraduate is defined as: 1) an individual who will not graduate from college prior to June 2014, and 2) an individual who has completed their freshman year of college by June 2014. Applications may be submitted by using PDF-formatted documents emailed to tcasson@siumed.edu or mailed to Morris Cooper, Ph.D., SIU School of Medicine, P.O. Box 19626, Springfield, IL 62794-9626. Email is the preferred method of submission. Deadline for submission is March 15, 2014. □

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NEWS AROUND THE CLOCK



Family man takes on assortment of management opportunities

By Eric Woods

David Plake is a good old-fashioned family man whose family loves baseball. Plake has coached traveling baseball teams for the past 15 years, both for the YMCA and high school teams. "Our family lives baseball," he said. In fact, when Plake was a 10-year-old, he wanted to be a professional baseball player when he grew up. In high school, he did end up lettering in golf, and while it was not baseball, he still had a lot of fun.

A recent undertaking for Plake and his wife, Regenia, was the launching of a new church in Sherman, known as Connection Point. "We are currently renting the Sherman Elementary School," said Plake. The family has lived in Sherman for more than four years, having moved from Springfield. They enjoy the community feel of the small town as well as the fact that it is so close to Springfield. "I like the opportunity to be in a community where relationships matter. Sherman is a little like Mayberry." If he had one complaint about the area, it would be the ever-changing central Illinois weather. Plake does plan to get away with his family this summer on a vacation to Washington, D.C.

If there is one issue facing the area, according to Plake, it would be the need to find ways to attract new businesses to the

area. "The infrastructure is a challenge," he said. "We need to create a climate that is business friendly."

Plake began working at a campground and retreat center in Carlinville at age 14. "I mowed the grass, plunged toilets, and mopped floors," he said. "I also learned how to use the floor buffer." Fast forward 30 years and Plake now serves as the director of the property management division for The Garrison Group. "People buy a property and want us to manage it," he said. Plake's division is responsible for leasing the properties, handling their finances, and taking care of the physical maintenance of each property. In October of 2009, when Plake came on board, the company managed six properties. Today they are near 30. They are proactively involved in each property, talking to tenants, inspecting buildings and trying to stay ahead of anything that might be needed. "We want happy tenants and business owners."

An exciting venture last year was taking over the management of the local FBI building in Springfield. "Our entire team had to get through national security measures," said Plake.

For those wanting to become involved

in commercial management, Plake advises to network with people. "Be interested, get involved and learn," he said. "If you enjoy helping others, this is a great field." He was advised himself to keep a sweet spirit but also not to burn any bridges.

While in college, Plake had a poster that stated "No Condo, No MBA, No BMW." His goal was to own all three out of college but later decided that did not matter. "God is guiding every day as I allow him to. I learned early that He had a plan for my life, and it impacts how I make decisions today," said Plake.

Going forward, Plake plans to continue building business at The Garrison Group as well as bringing in more families to Connection Point. He does not see himself fully retiring, although he may work at a different pace at some point in the future. "At some point I may not work as much and invest more time with church work," he said. "We want to plant more churches and invest in the lives of more pastors." Even Plake's son plans to assist with the church as he enters college.

"I want to make a difference in people's lives." □

Contact Eric Woods at ericw93@aol.com.



David Plake

Title: Director of Property Management, The Garrison Group, Inc.
 Telephone: 217-241-0202
 E-mail: david@garrisongroupinc.com

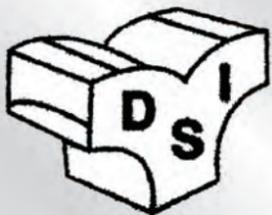
Born: June 21, 1965
 Location: Peoria
 Education: B.B.A. from Southern Illinois University - Edwardsville
 Family: Wife - Regenia; Children - D.C., Macenzie and Carissa

Favorites:

Movie: *Field of Dreams*
 Restaurant: Sam's II Pizza
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COMMERCIAL BUILDERS



O'Shea Builders' current Patient Care Tower project at Memorial Medical Center.

Commercial construction firms have contrasting views on 2014 prospects

By Scott Faingold

A whiff of cautious optimism is in the air for the commercial construction industry nationwide, with McGraw Hill's 2014 Dodge Construction Outlook report forecasting a 9 percent increase in construction starts and commercial buildings predicted to increase substantially. A 2 percent gain in institutional buildings this year is expected to halt the virtual freefall of the past few years, while manufacturing work is expected to see an 8 percent increase in 2014, compared to a 6 percent increase in 2013.

We asked some prominent area commercial construction leaders to reflect on their prospects for the coming year and found that this relatively sunny national view is at least in part being reinforced on the local front. Mike O'Shea of O'Shea Builders characterizes his firm's outlook as "very strong" as they continue working on extensive projects throughout the Memorial Medical Center campus. Regionally, O'Shea is also doing work on schools in Chatham, with upcoming projects for educational and medical facilities on the books for Pleasant Plains, Macomb and Staunton. "We're blessed

with a lot of work right now," he says. "I think the general consensus is optimistic. We are extremely grateful for the work that we've been able to procure through the health care systems. Through the downturn they've really carried the construction economy and they continue to have robust work for which we're very appreciative."

One technological trend which O'Shea credits with helping increase his firm's efficiency is Building Information Modeling. In this process, he explains, "traditional two-dimensional drawings are being replaced by three-dimensional models. We are trying to prefabricate as many pieces of a project as we can offsite, to expedite onsite construction." For instance, on the current Patient Care Tower project at MMC a vast majority of the piping systems will be prefabricated in racks in a warehouse, then transported and pieced together onsite. "That will reduce our overall construction time as well as create some efficiencies. The 3D modeling makes this possible."

Another positive trend O'Shea is



PHOTO BY GINNY LEE

noticing is an increase in contact from local small business owners. "From the end of 2008 through 2011, very, very few independent businesses were talking to us about expansion or renovation or new construction," he says. "It's an indication that local businesspeople have confidence in the economy that they're talking to us about making new expenditures on their business."

John Goetz of R. D. Lawrence Construction Co. Ltd. has noticed some of the same trends but is a bit more circumspect. "For us 2013 was a busy year and should be a profitable year," he says. "I think it was better than the year before, and looking ahead we have a little bit of work lined up, not a lot, coming into 2014."

As with O'Shea Builders, much of R. D. Lawrence's recent work is coming from the medical field. "I think that it can be said, if it wasn't for the health care facilities taking off like they are, I think we'd be in a world of hurt here locally," Goetz says. "At the same time, I'm mystified how they're going so gung-ho when we've got this Obamacare hangin' over our heads."

While his company puts finishing touches on a few major projects, including work at St. John's Hospital and a power plant in Kincaid, Goetz finds himself worried about the fate of the country as a whole. "We're bankrupting our nation," he says. "We were printing, up until last month, \$85 billion a month. What's that all about? Here I am, I'm 64 years old, been in the business for over 50 years, since I was 13, this is a time I ought to be thinking about sunshine and the sand but

with the state of our country and what's going on in the world it's scary times for people that are paying attention."

As an example, Goetz cites one of the trade unions R.D. Lawrence works with as reporting their hours having decreased by 20 percent. "If you've got a craft that's normally producing 10 million hours a year and they're down to 8 million hours, what does that tell you?" he asks. "I just know there's a big thud that's gonna come here - whether it's in the next five months or five years, I don't know."

Matt Reyhan of Sangamo Construction, specialists in bridge contracting with sidelines in street and roadside work, sees reason for hope on the horizon. "The city was just approved to offer their bond sale for infrastructure improvements over the next three years and those are the types of products that we sell. It's a very, very competitive environment but we're optimistic and just pleased to have the opportunity to look at some work here in town." Reyhan is also guardedly optimistic about the upcoming rail relocation program, which will bring considerable infrastructural work to the table.

In terms of highway construction, Reyhan says, things have been very slow. "Most firms are off on sales and as a consequence we're off on man-hours worked which directly leads to lowered employment numbers for our guys. That's just the state of virtually every industry right now." □

Scott Faingold can be reached via scott@springfieldbusinessjournal.com.

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COMMERCIAL BUILDERS

Sources: The builders. (Ranked by Number of Full-Time Employees)
Reprinted from the Book of Lists 2013-2014

	BUSINESS NAME STREET ADDRESS CITY/ST/ ZIP	PHONE (-) FAX (=) WEBSITE (www.) E-MAIL	NUMBER OF FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES	PARTNERS / PRINCIPALS	AREAS OF SPECIALTY % SUB-CONTRACTED	RECENT NOTABLE PROJECTS	YEAR EST'D
1	United Contractors Midwest, Inc. 3151 Robbins Road Springfield IL 62704	217-546-6192 217-546=1904 ucm.biz contact@ucm.biz	160	James P. Bruner, Pres; Mike Cullinan, Chairman	Asphalt Paving, Concrete Paving, Bridge Building, Earthwork	15 Illinois: Route 67 West of Jacksonville - concrete paving, bridge, earthwork; Route 29 Edinburg - asphalt paving, earthwork.	2001
2	Harold O'Shea Builders 3401 Constitution Drive Springfield IL 62711	217-522-2826 217-522=6586 osheabuilders.com mikeoshea@osheabuilders.com	115	Michael E. O'Shea, Pres; David L. "Bud" O'Shea, CEO	Design-Build, Con- struction Management, General Contracting, Pre-Construction Services, Remodels, Addi- tions and Maintenance	70 Illinois: Memorial Medical Center Expansion Project, Springfield Clinic 1st North, Brandt Consolidated Building Addition, Passavant Area Hospital, Abraham Lincoln Memorial Hospital, Taylorville Memorial Medical Center, Kerasotes Branch of the Springfield YMCA/Sportsare, Matheny-Withrow Elementary School, Springfield Pepsi Bottling Co., Central Illinois Foodbank, Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception Restoration Project, Orthopedic Center of Illinois.	1902
3	Halverson Construction Co., Inc. 620 N. 19th St. Springfield IL 62702	217-753-0027 217-753=1904 halversonconstruction.com stevenh@halversonconstruc- tion.com	80	Steven Halverson, Pres; Mary Halverson, VP; Larry Antonacci, VP; Kyle Zellers, VP; Wendiline Schluter, CFO	Gen. Contracting, Bridges, Commercial/Industrial Construction, Const Mgt, Steel Erection, Pre-Cast	30 Illinois: A. Lincoln Presidential Library Parking Garage, Union Station Restoration, MacArthur Blvd Highway Bridges/ Interchange/Extension, St. Joseph Home Dementia Wing Addn., Erin's Pavilion, Motomart Convenience Store Gas Station, SMTD - Springfield Mass Transit District, Camp Lincoln, Renovate Jacksonville High School, IHoP, CEFCU, County Market (2nd & Carpenter), PCCC phase 2&3.	1978
4	Jones-Blythe Construction Company 1030 W. Reynolds St. Springfield IL 62702	217-787-1640 217-787=1666 jones-blythe.com jblythe@jones-blythe.com	60	John F. Blythe	Design-Build, Gen Contractor, Construction Management, Industrial Construction	60 Spfld, Ill.: St. John's Hospital, Memorial Hospital, Hoogland Center for the Arts, 183rd Air Guard Composite Support Facility, Grant Middle School, Trans-Canada Pipeline.	1930
5	Sangamo Construction 2100 E. Moffat Springfield IL 62702	217-544-9871 217-544=9873 office@sangamo.net	50	Allan Reyhan, Jr.; Matthew P. Reyhan	Bridge/ Highway Construction	20 Illinois: Chatham Road bridge rehabilitation, I-55 / Lincoln - 12 bridge rehabs, IL 127 / Clinton County bridge rehab, US 51 / Assumption - 5 new structures.	1990
6	R. D. Lawrence Construction Co. Ltd. 603 N. Amos Ave. Springfield IL 62702	217-787-1384 217-787=3856 rdlawrence.com info@rdlawrence.com	45	John Goetz	General, Contracting, Design-Build	60 Illinois: St. Johns Hospital Patient Tower and Main Surgery structural steel package, site demo and mass exc.; Dominion Power Plant D.S.I. Project; J.P. Morgan Chase HVAC upgrades	1984
7	Newman-Alton Inc. 719 Estill Drive Springfield IL 62707	217-753-1986 217-753=1988 salton@newman-alton.com	21	Patrick Newman; Steve Alton	General Contractors, Non- Union Construction Man- agement, Design-Build	40 Spfld, Ill.: Illini Country Club, Panther Creek Country Club, Gold Center, Shell Jiffy Stop, Green Acres Hotel, Springfield College, Obed & Isaacs; Decatur, Ill.: BKD; Hillsboro, Ill.: McDonough-Whitlow; Lincoln, Ill.: Lincoln-Chrysler.	1992
8	Evans Construction 1900 E. Washington St. Springfield IL 62703	217-525-1456 217-525=2886 evansconst.com don@evansconst.com	20	Donald Evans, Pres	General Contracting, Construction Manage- ment, Design / Build, Commercial / Industrial Construction	40 Spfld., Ill.: Memorial Medical Center Renovations, SHG East / West Campus renovations, Illinois Community College Foundation build out, Jacksonville Ill.: LLCC - Science Lab and classroom renovations, Illinois School for the Deaf roof & restroom renovations.	1913
9	Siciliano Inc. 3601 Winchester Road Springfield IL 62707	217-585-1200 217-585=1211 sicilianoinc.com buildit@sicilianoinc.com	15	Richard E. Lawrence, Pres; Aubrie Megginson, CFO; Kim Lawrence, Sec	General Contractor, Restoration, Design-Build, Commercial/Industrial Construction, Site Work and Site Utilities	18 Spfld, Ill.: Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum, Crowne Plaza hotel, Dana Thomas House restoration; Jacksonville: Jacksonville Water Treatment Plant.	1968



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Medical expansion keeps electrical contractors busy

By Ginny Lee

Todd Brinkman of B&B Electric, Inc., says hospitals and the medical industry are the biggest source of business for electrical contractors for 2014 and beyond. In Springfield, St. John's Hospital, Memorial Medical Center and the Springfield Clinic have been expanding facilities for the past few years.

Billy J. Serbousek, executive director of the Illinois Chapter of the National Electrical Contractors Association, agrees. "The Medical District in Springfield has insulated our industry against the downturn of construction overall," he says. Serbousek predicts the local electrical industry will stay busy with work in the medical community for the next several years.

Another area of growth, according to Serbousek, is broadband Internet service. As broadband continues to increase, electrical contractors will have plenty of work in the area. Both wireless and hard-wired service are expected to increase, Serbousek says. □

Ginny Lee is a Springfield writer and photographer with an entrepreneurial spirit.



Springfield Clinic is one of the medical facilities that continues to expand and fuel the demand for electrical contractors.

PHOTO BY GINNY LEE



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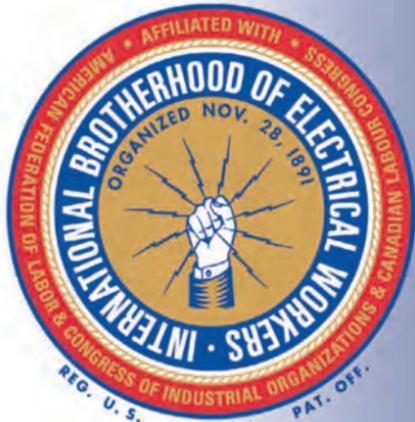
ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS

Sources: The Electrical Contractors. (Ranked by Number of Full-Time Employees)
Last printed in the Book of Lists 2013-2014

	BUSINESS NAME STREET ADDRESS CITY/ST/ ZIP	PHONE (-) FAX (=) WEBSITE (www.) E-MAIL	NUMBER OF FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES	PARTNERS / PRINCIPALS	UNION AFFILIATED	RECENT NOTABLE PROJECTS	YEAR EST'D
1	Anderson Electric, Inc. 3501 Sixth St. Hwy. W., Suite # 1 Springfield IL 62703	(217) 529-5471 (217) 529=0412 anderson-electric.com wesa@anderson-electric.com	240	Employee Owned	Yes	SIU Simmon's Cancer Center, Porta High School - Wind Turbine Project, Illinois Primary Healthcare, Concordia Village various projects, White Oaks Mall rehab, First United Methodist Church, SMTD, St. John's Hospital reroute systems and demo, Spring Creek Water Treatment Plant, CWLP contract 3 pump stations, Passavant Hospital medical office building, Meijer renovation, Ball Elementary addition - Chatham, Memorial Medical Center surgery expansion & patient care tower.	1918
2	B & B Electric, Inc. 3000 Reilly Drive Springfield IL 62703	(217) 528-9666 (217) 528=5481 bnbelectric.net todd@bnbelectric.net	88	Todd M. Brinkman	Yes	Springfield: State Capitol / Supreme Court / PCCC renovations, Central Ill. Food Bank, Kindred Healthcare, Memorial Medical Center, Springfield Clinic First - North, St. John's Sixth St. - Lincolnshire, New Orthopedic Center, LLC - Workforce Center, West Side Christian Church, Prairie Diagnostic Center, Capitol Community Health Care, New Vision Care, Sacred Heart-Griffin addition, YMCA, Glenwood Elementary School; Lincoln: A. Lincoln Memorial Hospital and Office Building; Jacksonville: Passavant Hospital; Taylorville: Taylorville Memorial Hospital and Medical Office Building.	1962
3	Egizii Electric 700 N. MacArthur Blvd. Springfield IL 62702	(217) 528-4001 (217) 528=1677 eeiholding.com paul@eeiholding.com	52	Robert W. Egizii	Yes	Dallman Generating Station (CWLP), President Abraham Lincoln Museum, Industrial Nuclear Power, Kennedy Space Center, Boeing Aircraft, Wilkes Barre, PA, Mitsubishi Motors Manufacturing, various lock and dam projects, Mars Pet Care, Memorial Stadium (U of I), Ft. Lauderdale Airport, Martin Marietta.	1948
4	Haenig Electric Company 2951 Stanton Ave. Springfield IL 62703	(217) 529-0454 (217) 529=4094 haenig.com deb@haenig.com	30	Debbie Marsaglia, Mike Marsaglia	Yes	Rochester Athletic Complex, Sangamon County Public health, Fit Club South, B. J. Grand Salon, Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, CVS (Springfield/Jacksonville), Walgreens, Regions Bank, Pittsburgh Pipe, IHOP, Illinois State Police Credit Union, Riverton CUSD #7, Girard Elementary School, Brandt Consolidated, Blackburn College, Capital Airport, Farm & Home, solar and Generac/Guardian Authorized Dealer and installer of permanent generators for home and business.	1904
5	Ryan Electrical Solutions 1305 W. Enos Ave. Springfield IL 62702	(217) 698-4877 (217) 698=8481 ryanelectricalsolutions.com dennis@ryanelectricalsolutions.com	25	Dennis Ryan	No	Various Commercial, Residential and Audio Visual Projects.	1995
6	Ruby Electric 341 S. Meadowbrook Road Springfield IL 62711	(217) 787-4949 (217) 787=2043 rubyelectric.com johnruby@rubyelectric.com	20	John Ruby	No	Various Commercial and Residential Projects, Standby Generator Systems Commercial and Residential.	1978
7	Lindsey Electric 3260 Terminal Ave. Springfield IL 62707	(217) 544-6789 (217) 544=9591 lindsey-electric.com lori@lindsey-electric.com	12	Catherine A. Lindsey - Pres., J. Michael Lindsey - V.P., Lori A. Lindsey Von Behren - Corp. Sec.	Yes	Various Commercial & Residential Projects.	1972
8	Mansfield Electric Co. 4425 N. Peoria Road Springfield IL 62702	(217) 523-0811 (217) 528=3111 ed@mansfield-electric.com	10	H. Edward Midden, III	Yes	Sangamon County Complex, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, UIS - University Hall.	1949
9	Carmean Electric Inc. 2863 Singer Ave. Springfield IL 62703	(217) 789-1155 (217) 789=9578 carneanelectric@gmail.com	6	Wayne Shephard	Yes	Various Residential and Commercial Projects.	1970



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Outlook fair to partly cloudy for mechanical contractors

By Teresa Paul

Some mechanical contractors are optimistic for a good year in 2014 while other mechanical contractors are unsure of the outlook for their industry in the year ahead.

A mechanical contractor is someone who installs and works on heating and cooling equipment, whether it is a pipe system with chillers and boilers or a rooftop unit and plumbing is included, said Steve Ethridge, executive vice president of Henson Robinson Company in Springfield.

"It is the part of the building that physically operates as opposed to a building just sitting there as a shell," Ethridge said. "They call it the mechanical system because of the operating nature of the equipment."

"The mechanical industry is not what it used to be," said John Pruitt, president and CEO of E. L. Pruitt Co. in Springfield. "Today our manufacturing equipment is mostly computer controlled and highly automated."

"We have spent in the neighborhood of \$1 million in the last four years retooling and upgrading aging equipment to take advantage of the enhancements," said Pruitt. "Temperature control systems are no longer just thermostats; they too are highly automated systems that control everything from comfort selections to parking lot lighting and building alarms."

Pruitt said he believes 2014 will be a robust year for the mechanical trades.

"There are grants available from the utilities and the state of Illinois for energy upgrades in existing commercial buildings, and people have begun to take advantage of those options," Pruitt said. "The local hospital expansions were also a very timely addition to the local economy."

"On a personal level, E.L. Pruitt Co. had its biggest year in our 43-year history in 2013, and I expect 2014 to be as good or better," Pruitt said. "We added a location in Decatur in 2011, and a location in Champaign in 2013. They are both exceeding my expectations and projections, and are a very important piece of our puzzle going forward."

Steve Ethridge, executive vice president of Henson Robinson Company in Springfield, said the beginning of the new year is going well for Henson Robinson Company.

"We are probably as busy as we have ever been," Ethridge said. "The weather in late December and first part of January did slow people down due to the cold temperatures and the snow. Mechanically, contractors like us are pretty busy; busier than what we have been in 10 years this time of year."

"Time will tell as to whether that will continue on into next year," Ethridge said. "Our bidding doesn't typically start until February and goes through April for next year's projects. We had a busy fall bidding season which makes our winter and early spring busy."

Chris Cisne, manager and part owner of Brennan Heating and Air Conditioning in Jacksonville is doubtful for his business in 2014.

"I do not look for an overly good year," Cisne said. "We have been falling in hours the last couple of years. I do not anticipate an upswing."

"We work for two industries in Jacksonville," Cisne said. "Those are Nestle Beverage and Reynolds Consumer Products."

"These businesses have been doing some renovating and keeping us busy but I do not see a lot out there to bid," Cisne said. "The state of Illinois keeps a lot of our contractors here in the Springfield area busy. With the state of the state and their budget, there is a lot of work not happening due to money constraints."

Cisne said Jacksonville has lost industry and the Jacksonville Developmental Center. Even though his business does a good share

of residential work, he sees customers doing repairs trying to hold off on their expenses, when they should replace their current system.

"Currently we are experiencing growth," said Chris Williams, owner and the president of Air Serv in Springfield.

"When the economy took the dive, most people got conservative with repairing, replacements and upgrades," Williams said. "I think people are getting pent up. Things that needed to be done have been put off long enough to where they have to get them done."

Williams said consumers are starting to feel comfortable with spending money on necessary expenses. Williams said he sees growth and expects to continue.

"The utility rates continue to increase and people not only want to be greener, but also energy efficient, to save money on their utility bills," Williams said. "The equipment that is available on the market today is much more efficient than anything that has been available in the past." □

Teresa Paul is a personal lines account manager in the Taylorville office for Dansig Insurance. She can be reached at 217-565-9535 or teresadawn1970@yahoo.com.

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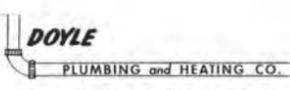
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Tom Doyle • 217-243-1013



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MECHANICAL CONTRACTORS

Sources: Mechanical Contractors Association of Central Illinois, The Building and Zoning Department - City of Springfield, The contractors. (Listed By Total Number of Employees - Peak Season)
Last printed in the Book of Lists 2013-2014

	BUSINESS NAME STREET ADDRESS CITY/ST/ ZIP	PHONE (-) FAX (=) WEBSITE (www.) E-MAIL	NUMBER OF FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES	PARTNERS / PRINCIPALS	TYPES OF SERVICES	RECENT NOTABLE PROJECTS	YEAR EST'D
1	E. L. Pruitt 3090 Colt Road Springfield IL 62707	217-789-0966 217-789=2694 elpruitt.com	310	John Pruitt	HVAC, Plumbing, Fire Protection, Architectural Sheet Metal	Memorial Medical Center, St. John's Hospital, Passavant Hospital, Millikin University, LLCC, St. Mary's Hospital, Crown Cork & Seal, Springfield School District-Variou Locations, Abe Lincoln Capital Airport, Hyatt Hotel in Champaign, IL, Ball Elementary, Hope Springs Apartments, Target Remodel-Springfield & Bloomington, Pathway Services, Walgreens-Bloomington, County Market-Springfield, Pepsi Distribution Center, Camp Lincoln, Gard Elementary-Beardstown School District, Meridian CUSD #15, IL Air National Guard, Northwest Elementary in Lincoln, IL, JP Morgan Chase Bank.	1971
2	Henson Robinson Company / Petersburg Plumbing and Excavating 3550 Great Northern Ave. Springfield IL 62711	217-544-8451 217-544=0829 henson-robinson.com hrc@henson-robinson.com	231	Dan Hoselton	Commercial HVAC, Roofing, Plumbing, Piping, Refrigeration, Architectural Sheet Metal, HVAC/Plumbing Service, Sewer and Water Mains, Excavation, Residential Heating and Cooling Installation and Service	Education: U of I Champaign, UIS, Blackburn College, Lincoln College, St. John's College of Nursing, Springfield College, Springfield Public Schools, Ball/Chatham, Rochester, Decatur Public Schools, Sacred Heart-Griffin, Carlinville, Morrisonville, Athens/Cantrall, Murrayville, Ill. School for the Deaf; Medical: Memorial Medical Center, St. John's Hospital, Springfield Clinic, St. Francis Hospital, Bloomington Orthopedic, Hospital Sisters; Government: Capitol Complex, CWLP, IDoT, Ill. State Fairgrounds, Ill. Air Guard, Ill. Supreme Court, various Prison Facilities; Private Business: Hyvee, LA Fitness, Dick Van Dyke, Illinois Plumbing, Caterpillar, Carlisle, Brandt Consolidated, Ergadoo, White Oaks Plaza, 5 Guys, Heritage Manor, Marine Bank, State Bank of Lincoln, INB, Simon Properties, ADM.	1861
3	F. J. Murphy & Son, Inc. 1800 Factory Ave. Springfield IL 62702	217-528-4081 217-528=4147 fjmurphy.com jpasko@fjmurphy.com	75	John Pasko	Plumbing, Heating, Cooling, Fire Sprinklers, Refrigeration, Restaurant Equipment, Ice Machines, residential, commercial, institutional, installation and repair	Illinois School for the Deaf, Jacksonville Development Center, Regency Nursing Home, Dept. of Agriculture, SEIU Offices, White House/Black Market, H.H. Gregg, White Oaks Mall, The Icing, Hot Topic, U of I Champaign, UIS, Western IL University, Eastern IL University, IL State University, Memorial Hospital, SIU Edwardsville, SIU Carbondale, Caterpillar Peoria, Preckwinkle Home upgrade, hundreds of small repair and remodel projects - residential and commercial.	1947
4	Prairie State Plumbing & Heating / Harney Electric 1499 W. State Route 29 Athens IL 62613	217-636-9000 217-636=8927 jerry.judd@sbcglobal.net	65	Jerry Judd	Plumbing, heating, cooling, electrical, mechanical, sitework, ventilation	Rochester Intermediate School, Rochester Athletic Complex, Mason District Hospital, Blessed Sacrament School, AT&T, Christian Homes, Springfield Metro Sanitary District, Palmyra Northwestern School, Springfield Pepsi, Brandt Consolidated, Prairie Capital Convention Center remodel.	
5	Mike Williams Plumbing and Heating 2403 South Grand Ave. East Springfield IL 62703	217-753-4545 217-753=4548 mikewilliams.net csr1@mikewilliams.net	40	Lewis Williams	HVAC, Heating, Air Conditioning and Plumbing	Primarily residential projects.	1976
6	Allied Plumbing & Heating, Inc. 1315 Wabash Ave. Springfield IL 62704	217-698-5500 217-698=5505 alliedpnh.com mark@alliedpnh.com	35	Mark Miller	Plumbing, Heating, Cooling, Ventilation, Service, Lawn Irrigation, Residential / Light Commercial, Replacement	Williamsville Christian Church, Quaker Steak & Lube, IHoP, Villas at Pine Creek, Road Ranger.	1977
7	Doyle Plumbing & Heating Company 225 N. West St. Jacksonville IL 62650	217-243-1013 217-243=9400	30	Tom Doyle	Commercial and Industrial Plumbing, HVAC, Mechanical Piping, Specialty Boiler Work	Lincoln Land Community College, Secretary of State, Capital Development Board, Springfield Area Business District.	1921
8	Johnson Controls, Inc. 4231 Westgate Drive Springfield IL 62711	217-793-8858 217-793=8759 johnsoncontrols.com	25	Corporate Owned	Commercial HVAC, Fire Security, Light Residential	University of Illinois - Champaign Post Genomic Institute, SIU School of Medicine Labs.	1885
9	Airmasters - Commercial Mechanical Contractor 1330 North Grand Ave. West Springfield IL 62702	217-522-9793 217-522=7293 theairmasters.com rmathews@theairmasters.com	17	Robert Mathews	Commercial Mechanical Contractor, HVAC/R, Sheet Metal	DDC Building Automation Controls upgrade at Park Place, Entire Refrigeration Installation at CVA-Taylorville, Sheet Metal Fabrication for St. John's Hospital.	1993
10	Aire Serv / HRI 560 North St. Springfield IL 62704	217-523-8594 217-243=7002 aireserv.com/cil aireserv@as-hri.com	13	Chris Williams, Jennifer Williams	Sales, Service, Installation & Commercial	Cargill, Jacksonville High School, Casey's General Stors, various Residential Projects.	1985
11	Tom's Heating, Air Conditioning & Plumbing, Inc. 2809 N. Dirksen Parkway Springfield IL 62702	217-525-8667 217-525=5926 tomsheatingandair.com tomshgt@sbcglobal.net	13	Tom Garners	Installation, sales & service - HVAC & Plumbing	Petersburg Veterinary clinic - plumbing, new residential construction, residential HVAC change outs and plumbing remodels, service / retail sales / geothermal systems, Family Dollar (S. Grand), Habitat for Humanity homes.	1982
12	Brennan Heating & Air Conditioning 619 E. Morton St. Jacksonville IL 62650	217-245-7181 217-245=0352 brennansheetmetal.com tinman95@mchsi.com	11	Chris Cisne	Residential and Commercial HVAC Installations, replacement and service, Industrial Fabrication	Nestle, Reynolds Consumer Products.	1942
13	Central Illinois York, Inc. 1210 E. Laurel Springfield IL 62703	217-522-3371 217-522=1341 centralilyork.com york321@aol.com	10	Frank Cole	Commercial, Industrial, Residential, Heating, AC, Ventilation, Sheet Metal	Midwest Technical Institute, Andrews Engineering, Kerasotes Theaters - Parkway Pointe; Midwest Technical Institute Peoria; Eagles Club, Riverton; Holiday Inn, Baton Rouge, Maryville Manor; City of Salem, Ill.; Staab Funeral Home; Kohls Department Stores.	1940
14	Bangert, Inc. Plumbing 450 North St., Suite A Springfield IL 62704	217-787-6560 217-544=5690 banginc@sbcglobal.net	4	Ryan Bangert	Plumbing Service and Remodel for Residential and Commercial Projects	Commercial and Residential service and remodel.	1993

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Growing a family while working at a growing company



Aubrie Megginson grew up in Springfield before moving away for a brief period of time. She lived for two years in Terre Haute, Ind., before returning to Springfield in 2000. She loves the variety of outdoor activities in the area, including the new Southwind Park as well as Centennial and Washington Parks. "I climbed that hill at Centennial many times," she said. If there is one concern she has, it is the financial stability of the city.

Megginson had always wanted to be an accountant, even when she was young. She did have several jobs along the way, starting with an after-school job at Baskin

Robbins at age 15. She also worked in fast food, which she says was her least favorite job experience. "It was not horrible. I got to work the drive-thru," she said. "That was better than the register." She graduated both high school and college with honors, and on her third try, she passed the CPA exam.

While in Terre Haute, Megginson was hired for her first accounting job working at an airplane manufacturing plant. "I always wanted to do private accounting," she said. "I never had much interest in public accounting." Her desire was to stick with a company that she could watch grow.

After returning to Springfield, Megginson began working for Lincoln Land Oil Company. Nine years ago she began at Siciliano, Inc., where she remains today, serving as the company's chief financial officer. "I handle all the financial aspects of the company," she said. "A lot of it is job costing. I look at the jobs and see whether we will meet the estimate." Cash flow, job billings and invoices, and company payroll are other responsibilities that Megginson handles. The company has been in business since 1968, beginning as an excavation contractor. Today they handle commercial and industrial construction, restoration, underground utilities work, site development and demolition. There are currently 22 field employees and four office workers.

For those hoping to jump into the accounting field, Megginson stresses that hard work is a necessity. "It is not an 8 to 5 job," she said. "You must enjoy doing it. If you do not enjoy it you will not be fulfilled by it. If you do things you enjoy and that make you happy, it will carry over throughout your life."

Megginson feels she will be with Siciliano for many years to come, as she enjoys watching the company grow. She also hopes to see her husband's farm, Megginson Farm Enterprises, growing as well. One thing that will not be growing, after the impending new addition, is her family. "They will be older in 10 years but we are not growing because we are done," she said. Looking ahead on a broader scale, Megginson is curious about where the national economy and political system will be. "What will we look like?"

Because of the baby on the way, Megginson and her family will not be traveling anytime soon. "My vacation will be staying home with a new baby," she said. "We are now going to have to figure out how to vacation with two kids." □

Contact Eric Woods at ericw93@aol.com.

Aubrie Megginson

Title: CFO, Siciliano, Inc.
Telephone: 217-585-1200
E-mail: amegginson@sicilianoinc.com

Born: Feb. 12, 1976
Location: Springfield
Education: B.A. in Accounting and Finance from Western Illinois University
Family: Husband - Todd; Children - Tadd and one on the way

Favorites:
Hobby: Reading
TV Show: "Blacklist"
Restaurant: Charlie R's
Sports team: St. Louis Cardinals

Tidbits:
Loves traveling to Jamaica with her family
Wants to someday skydive
Was a fan of math in school



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COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE

Sources: As listed on the Capital Area Association of Realtors website: http://seebuildings.com/fs_crenmembers.php

(Members Listed Alphabetically)

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AGENT	BUSINESS NAME	ADDRESS	EMAIL	PHONE	MOBILE	FAX
David Barber	Illini Properties	22 Virginia Lane, Springfield IL 62712	davidbarber2@gmail.com	217-529-1236	217-652-1064	217-529=8358
John Clark	Real Estate Group	3701 W. Wabash, Springfield IL 62711	johnbclarkrealtor@yahoo.com	217-787-7000		217-787=7779
Bernard Curvey	Curvey Real Estate, Inc.	611 Springfield Road, P. O. Box 677, Taylorville IL 62568	curvey@ctitech.com	217-824-4996		217-287=2111
Jerome Drewes	Landmark Real Estate, Inc.	3085 Stevenson Drive #101, Springfield IL 62703	landmark.re@sbcglobal.net	217-529-1200		217-529=1235
Jason Evers	Real Estate Group	3701 W. Wabash, Springfield IL 62711	jevers@thegroup.com	217-787-7000	217-899-8864	217-787=7779
Tom Frost	Real Estate Group	3701 W. Wabash, Springfield IL 62711	thomas_frost@sbcglobal.net	217-787-7000	217-652-8972	217-787=7779
Glen Garrison	Garrison Group, Inc.	1999 Wabash Ave., Ste. 202, Springfield IL 62704	glen@garrisongroupinc.com	217-241-0202	217-241=4202	217-241=4202
Kevin Graham	Century 21 Real Estate Assoc	2030 Timberbrook, Springfield IL 62702	KGraham367@aol.com	217-789-7200	217-638-5100	217-789=2600
Sandra Hamilton	Re/Max Professionals	2475 W. Monroe, Springfield IL 62704	sandyhamilton@gmail.com	217-787-7215	217-778-1010	217-787=8957
Richard Hohmann	Hohmann Agency	1850 W. Morton, Jacksonville IL 62650	Rich@HohmannAgency.com	217-245-6166		217-245=6167
Kirk Jefferis	Cityscape Real Estate, Inc.	2160 S. Sixth St., Springfield IL 62703	capitalideas@sbcglobal.net	217-522-8800	217-971-2258	217-522=8808
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John Kilroy	John Kilroy REALTORS	829 S. 11th St., Springfield IL 62703	john@kilroyrealestate.com	217-241-0205	217-816-5788	217-391=4415
Rick Kramer	Springfield Real Estate, LLC	410 S. Grand Ave. West, Springfield IL 62704	rkramer1983@gmail.com	217-525-2288	217-306-0999	217-535=4179
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Betty Webb	Webb & Associates Realty	920 S. Spring, Suite 2400, Springfield IL 62704	bettywebb@realtor.com	217-726-8000	217-341-4924	217-744=8090

TRADE UNIONS

Sources: Central Illinois Building and Construction Trades Council; The Unions.
(Ranked by Number of Local Members)
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	UNION NAME	STREET ADDRESS	PHONE (-) FAX (=) WEBSITE (www.) E-MAIL	NUMBER OF FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES	PARTNERS / PRINCIPALS	# OF IL COUNTIES REPRESENTED	YEAR EST'D
1	Teamsters Local 916	3361 Teamster Way Springfield IL 62707	217-522-7932 217-522=9492 teamsters916.org sues@teamsters916.org	4,412	Tony Barr, President	10	1943
2	International Union of Operating Engineers, Local 965	3520 E. Cook St. Springfield IL 62703	217-528-9659 217-528=9060 iuoe965@org operators@comcast.net	1,550	Michael D. Zahn, Business Manager	15	1931
3	Local 477 LIUNA Laborers	1615 N. Dirksen Parkway Springfield IL 62702	217-522-0014 217-522=0090 local477.com	1,400	Brad Schaive, Business Manager; Kirk Kellus, Secretary Treasurer	7	1903
4	United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America, Local No. 270	211 W. Lawrence Ave. Springfield IL 62704	217-528-7571 217-528=9364	1,400	Jeff Burnett, President	19	1887
5	Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers, Local No. 8 of Illinois	3301 Boardwalk Drive Champaign IL 61822	217-356-0419 217-356=0694 bac8il.org mlanders@egix.net	1,200	Dave Toenjes, President; Mark Landers, Field Rep. - Springfield	65	1865
6	Plumbers & Steamfitters, Local 137	2880 E. Cook St. Springfield IL 62703	217-544-2724 217-744=6855 ualocal137.org	950	John Haines, Business Manager	18	1895
7	International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local No. 193	3150 Wide Track Drive Springfield IL 62703	217-544-3479 217-544=0193 ibew193.com ibew193@comcast.net	940	Glenn Baugh - Business Manager	9	1901
8	Plasterers and Cement Masons, Local 18	40 Adloff Lane, Suite 6A Springfield IL 62703	217-585-4221 217-585=4222 lpcmia18.org sclementlocal18@yahoo.com OR mwinkletlocal18@yahoo.com	900	Steve Clement, Business Manager; Mark Winkler, Business Agent	32	1864
9	Sheet Metal Workers, Local 218	2855 Via Verde Springfield IL 62703	217-529-0161 217-529=6005	750	Paul Hayes, Business Manager	21	1969
10	Boilermakers, Local 363	2358 Mascoutah Ave. Belleville IL 62220	618-234-8843 618-234=7301	650	William M. Mulconnery, Business Manager	57	1903
11	Insulators and Allied Workers, Local No. 1	3325 Hollenberg Drive Bridgeton MO 63044	314-291-7399 314-291=6993 insulators.org	349	John J. Stiffler, Business Manager; Jerry Donovan, Bus. Agent/Financial Secretary; John Farrell, Business Agent	36	1895
12	Iron Workers, Local 46	2888 E. Cook St. Springfield IL 62703	217-528-4041 217-528=9046 ironworkers46.org iwaustin@sbcglobal.net	327	Shane Austin, Business Manager	20	1908
13	Millwrights, Local 1051	602 Keokuk St. Lincoln IL 62656	217-735-1051 217-732=1051 millwrightlocal1051.com millwright@local1051.com	296	Jeff Bort, Business Representative; Nate Hodgson, Business Representative	41	1987
14	International Union of Painters and Allied Trades, District Council 58, Local 90	3100 S. 11th St. Springfield IL 62703	217-529-6976 217-529=6658 dc58iupat.net alauher@sbcglobal.net	287	Allan Lauher, Business Representative	9	1899
15	Glaziers, Architectural Metal and Glassworkers, District Council 58, Local 1168	234 W. Cerro Gordo St. Decatur IL 62523	618-781-9546 217-422=5793 bfeller@dc58iupat.net	125	Bryan Feller, Business Representative	25	1937
16	Elevator Constructors, Local 55	400 NE Jefferson, Suite 210 Peoria IL 61603	309-671-5085 309-671=5095 iuec55@ameritech.net	107	Rod Gilles, Business Representative	45	1919
17	United Union of Roofers, Waterproofers and Allied Workers, Local 112	PO Box 13426 Springfield IL 62791	217-529-2229 217-529=2298 rooferslocal112.com office@rooferslocal112.com	86	Ray Wake, Business Manager	14	1930

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Professional Women's Calendar of Events
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The Junior League of Springfield (JLS)
The Junior League of Springfield invites Springfield area children and their families to participate in our 2014 Kids in the Kitchen (KITK) event, to be held on Saturday, February 1, 2014, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. in the Student Union of Lincoln Land Community College (5250 Shepherd Road in Springfield). Children from Kindergarten to 5th grade are encouraged to attend and explore this year's health and nutrition theme while engaging in fun cooking activities. This event will include kitchen activities and a presentation on children's health and nutrition by Amanda Figgie, Registered Dietitian. This popular annual event is free and open to the public. For registration information, go to <http://jlsil.org/community/kids-in-the-kitchen>.

Women Entrepreneurs of Central Illinois (WE-CI)
Women Entrepreneurs of Central Illinois will hold its monthly meeting on Wednesday, February 12th, from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm at The Inn At 835. The address is 835 South 2nd, Springfield, Ill 62704.
Program Topic: Style Tips & Tricks to Look Your Best At Work & Beyond. Ms. Lucy Dalton-Lackie, of style911, will speak on building an effective wardrobe for the workplace, and teach techniques for enhancing individual style. A professional appearance builds the foundation for gaining a client's trust, closing a sale, or networking outside the workplace. Join us to put your best foot forward in 2014!
The cost for the meeting is \$17 for members, \$22 for guests, and \$25 for walk-ins. Reservations are non-refundable. Additional information is available by contacting Cherrill Lewis @ 217-622-0189. Please make your reservations by 2-7-14 at reservations@we-ci.org. Our website can now take payments by credit card.
Monthly meetings include guest speakers, workshops, and social functions. Fundraising events support scholarships for local women receiving advanced professional training. Guests may request a notice be sent to them by contacting Maureen Williams: maureenwms32@yahoo.com.

Illinois Women in Leadership (IWIL)
February Luncheon "Born to Run" Sarah Phalen, President of INB: Lessons learned & my career path to the C-Suite. February 20, 2014 at 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM at the Sangamo Club 227 East Adams Street.

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To have your event added to the Women's Calendar of Events, Please fax your information to (217) 726-8300 or e-mail to info@springfieldbusinessjournal.com



BOOK REVIEW

The thread that binds us together

By Bridget Ingebrigtsen



Maurice Mazyck, left, and Laura Schroff, right, with their DreamCatcher Awards. Their amazing journey together is chronicled in *An Invisible Thread*.

An Invisible Thread, by Laura Schroff and Alex Tresniowski, is not a business book, *per se*. It doesn't include the secret to landing sales or show you how to lead a winning team.

But what it does do is illustrate the need for balance in a business person's life, and that feeding the soul and helping others are just as important as filling a resume or a pocketbook. That's what I took from it.

This *New York Times* bestseller recounts the true story of an 11-year-old panhandler, Maurice, and a busy sales executive, Laura, who meet one day on the busy streets of New York City. Set in the 1980s, Laura is a sales executive who is trying to get the new *USA Today* newspaper off the ground. On her way to a meeting, Laura encounters Maurice, who asks her for some spare change to buy food. She passes him up – and then for some reason not even known to her, she stops and goes back to him.

An Invisible Thread, by Laura Schroff and Alex Tresniowski, published by Howard Books, a division of Simon & Schuster, Inc., 2011. 252 pages (paperback) \$15.99.

Instead of giving him change, she offers to bring him to McDonald's for lunch – an offer he accepts. The two enjoy their lunch together so she asks him to meet her for lunch next week. And the next week. And the next week.

And so their relationship begins. Two people from different generations, different cultures and different socioeconomic backgrounds soon find that they have a lot in common. Maurice lives in public housing with his mother, who is in and out of jail and drug rehab, and other family members who deal drugs to survive. His father walked out on his family, only to show up later dying with HIV. Needless to say, no one watches Maurice or cares about him at all.

On the other hand, while Laura's upbringing was more traditional and

"normal" in comparison, she had an alcoholic father who was abusive and domineering. As a result, she struggles in her personal relationships. She gets divorced twice and regrets the fact that she never had children of her own.

As the story progresses, it becomes clear that these two wounded people are put together for a reason. They each fill a void in the other person's life – he needs a mother figure, and she wants to give him the innocent, happy childhood that she never had.

Of course, the relationship is not without its challenges. People warn Laura to stay away from Maurice because of his background, and Maurice's family tells him to stay away from the "rich lady" out of fear that she is going to report them to the government. And while a few bad things happen as a result of their two different worlds colliding, it's not as many as one would think.

They both choose to ignore the advice of others, instead going with their gut instincts that they can trust one another. And while I won't give away how the story transpires, I will say that their relationship continues today.

In an interview with the author following the story, she writes, "... I believe in destiny, and I believe that's why Maurice and I found each other – to not only help each other, but hopefully to touch other people as well."

Clearly, a greater power brought these two people together – an "invisible thread," as the authors described it. I think all of us are given these types of opportunities, but do we stop long enough to see them the way that Laura does in *The Invisible Thread*? I think it's a question worth pondering. □

Bridget Ingebrigtsen is Marketing and Communications Leader at Harold O'Shea Builders. She can be reached at 522-2826 or bridget@osheabuilders.com. For reviews of other leadership books, visit the company's business book blog at www.osheabookshelf.com.

Let the lessor beware

Commercial leases from a tenant's perspective

By Thomas C. Pavlik, Jr., Delano Law Offices, LLC

All too often, a commercial tenant signs a lease without an understanding of its basic terms, let alone the ramifications of provisions buried deep in a lease's boilerplate. The smart tenant negotiates more than just rent – he or she knows what he or she is signing and the implications of each and every clause.

There are four general categories of commercial leases: gross, modified gross, triple net and absolute net. In a gross lease, the tenant does not reimburse the landlord for any of the building's expenses, including those associated with common area maintenance ("CAM"). With a modified gross lease, the tenant will typically pay base rent together with some amount of the landlord's costs of operation over and above a stated amount.

The majority of leases, however, are so-called triple net or absolute net. With a triple net lease, the tenant must reimburse the landlord for CAM, real estate taxes and the landlord's insurance. In other instances, leases described as triple net may include other "pass-through" costs which a tenant is asked to pay (utilities, for example). The most extreme is the absolute net lease which requires the tenant to absorb all costs of operating and maintaining the property. These leases are generally used when the tenant is the sole and 100 percent occupant of the property.

Commercial lease terms run the gamut from 5 to 20 years, generally with fixed escalations in base rent. Depending on the property and the landlord, lease terms and base rent may be negotiable. Remember, everything is negotiable and if you never ask, you won't know.

CAM, pass-throughs and other charges reimbursable under the lease are the primary source of tension in the modern commercial landlord/tenant relationship. The tenant wants the certainty of knowing what his rent and charges are going to be on a monthly and yearly basis. The landlord wants protection from unexpected rises in taxes or the costs of providing services to the property. The key: read your lease and know every charge you will be faced with once your tenancy begins.

Another key aspect of any commercial lease is the services that will be provided by the landlord, and the tenant's reimbursement of those expenses. Make sure you know what's not being provided, because otherwise it's going to be an out-of-pocket expense. Further, unless the lease is gross, the landlord should identify the components that constitute the costs of operating the "common area" for which it seeks reimbursement. CAM definitions vary from lease to lease based on landlord preference, the type of property, and the negotiations of the parties. The wise tenant should negotiate the items to be included in CAM, the items that will not be included in CAM, and an annual cap or limit on expenses that the landlord may attempt to pass through to tenant.

Make sure you understand exactly what you are leasing. For example, with retail space a lease will usually be based on "rentable square feet" which is typically larger than usable square feet. Resolve discrepancies prior to executing a lease or you might be faced with paying unforeseen costs, since most expenses are based on

rentable square feet as opposed to usable square feet.

Many landlords offer tenants a "build-out allowance" as an inducement to lease the premises. A landlord's payment of the allowance, however, is tied to specific conditions in the lease. For example, if the tenant abandons the premises prior to the end of the lease term, the tenant may have to repay the build-out allowance, along with landlord's other damages. Tenants should make sure they understand when and under what circumstances the build-out allowance will be paid.

A tenant should also understand what constitutes default and the consequences of any event of default. There are two kinds of defaults – economic and non-economic. Economic default provisions deal with failure to pay sums due under the lease. Non-economic default provisions typically refer to other provisions in the lease – use of the property, hours of operation, or failure to provide services required by the tenant under the lease. It is essential that the tenant have a full understanding of (1) what constitutes an event of default; (2) tenant's right to cure, if any; and (3) landlord's

remedies for tenant's default.

Subletting is another important aspect of commercial leases. If a tenant sells his or her business or merges into another, lease provisions regarding subletting become very important. Many leases provide that the tenant may assign or sublet the premises with the consent of the landlord, which consent "shall not be unreasonably withheld." Obviously, the more flexibility the tenant has in its assignment and subletting provisions, the more flexibility the tenant will have in the conduct and prospective sale of its business.

Assuming your business is run as an entity (corporation, LLC, etc), landlords will typically want the individual owners to guaranty the tenant's obligations. If required, the guarantors need to understand the ramifications of such a guaranty. For example, if the company goes out of business after year one of a five-year lease, the guarantors will be responsible for making lease payments until the landlord can rent the space again. Consider asking for a cap on the amount of guaranty. You don't get it if you don't ask.

Additional points for a tenant to

consider:

If you are the tenant in a multiple tenant building, consider asking for a clause that prohibits your landlord from leasing to another tenant that might compete with you.

Address what signage is permitted. Consider having a diagram and examples.

Make sure you will have adequate access to parking spots for you and your customers.

Understand use requirements – some leases require tenants to be open seven days a week.

Most commercial leases will also address the parties' responsibility for accidents and personal injury, casualty, damage to the building, and eminent domain. A tenant should review these provisions thoroughly with counsel to see if they meet the tenant's risk expectations.

There is no one "standard" form of commercial lease. The terms and provisions are, in general, only limited by the parties' creativity and negotiating skills. As with any other contract, know what you are signing and remember that the only promises that count are those that are put in writing. The consequences of signing a "bad lease" can be devastating. □



Your guide to becoming Engrained

A visit to a Springfield microbrewery

By Thomas C. Pavlik, Jr.

Engrained Brewing Company is one of Springfield's new microbreweries. Opened in the early fall of 2013, it's located in Legacy Pointe just south of Scheels.

A quick suggestion for first-time visitors to Engrained - if approaching from the north, don't take the first right turn prior to Scheels. Trying to navigate the byzantine traffic pattern to get to Engrained will fry your brain. Proceed past Scheels and take the second right. You'll thank me.

Engrained holds itself out as a locally owned restaurant and microbrewery - its website advertises that "our goal is for every guest to enjoy the Engrained experience of unique quality beers, an exceptional natural menu, and outstanding service inside a brewery ambiance." This being a business lunch review, it's probably best to focus on the last two claims.

Engrained's physical plant is quite appealing to the eyes. There's plenty of natural light and appealing architectural treatments. We particularly liked the muted industrial ceilings and natural wood walls. The walls were repurposed from an abandoned barn - nicely done. Engrained prides itself on the fact that its building was designed with sustainability in mind. For those bored with the lunch-time conversation there are plenty of TV's to provide distraction.

There's plenty of seating - at the bar, at a number of high-top tables and at booths. For such an open and airy space, acoustics were good. Ambient noise was minimal, and there's little fear of your lunch conversation being overheard.

Engrained's menu is predictable and contains the usual gamut of pub fare. Notable exceptions that caught our collective eye included the Southwest Wonton as a starter (\$7, black bean and cod with a chipotle tequila dipping sauce), the Beef & Beet Salad (\$12, grilled steak, roasted beets, goat cheese, red onion, candied pecans and an orange vinaigrette), and the short rib sandwich (\$13, beer-braised rib, horseradish crème fraiche, chopped lettuce and roasted tomato). Sandwiches come with your choice of cole slaw, veggie of the day, house salad or fries. Traditionalists shouldn't worry - Engrained has its own version of the

horseshoe served with (not surprisingly) beer cheese sauce (\$10.50).

There are gluten-free options. And, our server took care to point out that all of Engrained's meat came from local family farms and is hormone-, antibiotic- and steroid-free. Kudos to Engrained for embracing the "straight from the farm" philosophy.

My guests and I opted to start with an order of the cheese curds (\$8, from a farm in Normal, Illinois). The curds were the highlight of the meal. Unlike the fare served at the State Fair, these curds were gossamer nuggets of lightly fried goodness. The Siracha flavored ranch sauce offered just the right touch of heat and acid.

For entrees, my one guest selected a cup of the chili (\$4) and the Greek salmon salad (\$12, greens, olives, red onion, pepperoncini, feta, tomatoes and a balsamic vinaigrette). Unlike our profligate friend who ordered up, knowing that lunch was on the *Business Journal*, my other guest and I each opted for the "Pick 2" lunch where you select two items from a predetermined selection of soups, salads and sliders (\$8, including soda, iced tea or coffee - soup and salad combos served with roll, sliders with fries). We opted for the hamburger slider and the Italian beef.

The salad was reported as "excellent," with a generous portion of warm and moist salmon. We all tasted the chili and found it a bit sweet for our taste buds, but otherwise acceptable and loaded with fresh ingredients.

My other guest and I started with the beer cheese soup and the bear-brat soup. The beer cheese soup suffered from a certain raw element - I detected unpleasant notes of uncooked flour throughout. At least it wasn't canned. My guest found the roux in his bear-brat soup a bit thicker than he preferred but, as an aficionado of thicker soups, he advised he would order it again.

The sliders were appropriately sized. I found the Italian beef to be flavorful, if a bit light on the heat. My other guest commented that the ground beef hit the correct flavor notes. Although he appreciated the soft roll, I would have enjoyed something with a bit more bite, or at least something toasted.

Service was attentive. Our drink glasses were well monitored and our special requests were accommodated. However,



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Thurs - Sat, 11 am - Close
Wheelchair access: Yes
Credit cards: Yes

Atmosphere: ★★★★★
Service: ★★★ (slow on the food)
Food: ★★★
Price: ★★★★★ ("Select 2" Lunch a good bargain)
Suitability for business lunch: ★★★★★
OVERALL: ★★★★★

given that Engrained wasn't slammed the day we visited, we were surprised at how long it took for our food to arrive. Thankfully, we had plenty to talk about.

Our fellow diners were almost exclusively the business crowd. Collectively my guests and I knew at least half the diners.

Since Engrained is a brewery, we opted to go wild and order one beer. The four-ounce sampler glass (\$1.50) made it an easy decision. We selected Engrained's Irish Red Ale. Its complex taste would have paired well with our heavier selections. We also liked that Engrained's beer selection (including beer not made on premises) seems to change periodically.

One final note - thanks to Tom Collins for writing the business lunch review for many years. Tom's ever-increasing waistline dictated an early retirement. We wish him well. □

Thomas C. Pavlik, Jr. is an attorney from Springfield.



Brent Schwoerer, owner and founder of Engrained

PHOTOS BY GINNY LEE

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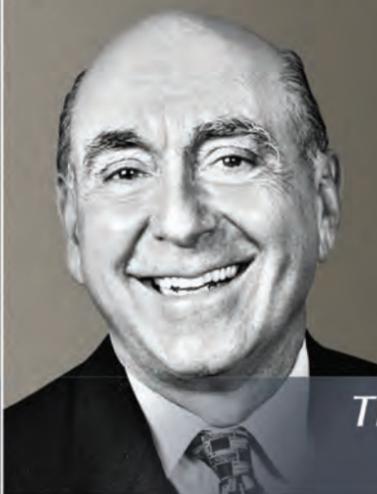
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The road that led me here

By Scott Faingold, associate editor

As the new associate editor for the *Springfield Business Journal*, I am excited for the opportunity to continue providing the unique focus on local business and outreach to the business community which loyal *SBJ* readers have come to expect.

I was born in Skokie, Ill., and first came to Springfield at age five when my father, Dr. Carl L. Faingold, was hired as part of the initial faculty of Southern Illinois University Medical School, where he continues to teach and conduct research while acting as chair of the pharmacology department. I graduated from Southeast High School in 1984 and earned my undergraduate degree in communication from Sangamon State University (now UIS) in 1988.

My journalistic career began while still a student at SSU when *Illinois Times* published an unsolicited music review I had submitted on a whim. I thereafter became a regular contributor to that paper until 1991 when I relocated to Chicago. In the intervening years I continued to write, publishing a novel (*Kennel Cough*, Post-Traumatic Press, 2000) and working as a section editor at the *Houston Press* and later director of publicity at the Lakeshore Theater.

Upon returning to Springfield in order to pursue a master's degree at UIS in 2010, I re-established my relationship with *Illinois Times*, contributing feature stories and initiating the blog "Faingold at Large" in which I have covered subjects ranging from elementary school storytelling programs to hip-hop music. I was honored to be asked to join the *Business Journal* as associate editor shortly after the first of the year.

In addition to my duties here as associate editor, I will continue to work as a staff writer for *Illinois Times* and have begun teaching in the communication department at UIS. In my spare time, such as it is, I read contemporary fiction, provide vocals and lyrics for the rock and roll band Epsom and devour the streaming Criterion Collection of foreign, independent and classic films via HuluPlus.

My personal goal in my role at the *Business Journal* is a simple one. I intend to use my experience as a writer and editor, in conjunction with my long personal history in Springfield, to expand on the solid foundation provided by my predecessors. □

Contact Scott Faingold at scott@springfieldbusinessjournal.com.

An open letter to the next president and CEO of The Chamber

By Tom Fitch

On Jan. 17, the board chair of the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce, Tom Fitch, announced that the organization had parted ways with Steward Sandstrom, who had been president and CEO of the Chamber since the summer of 2012. In light of Sandstrom's departure, the Springfield Business Journal asked the Chamber to reflect on what is ahead for the area's premier business group.

The board of directors of the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce has never been more confident or optimistic about the organization's future, despite parting ways last month with our CEO.

By now, you've probably heard that we intend to "go local" for our next CEO. We have a wealth of homegrown talent in Sangamon County, as District 186 has reaffirmed with its recent hire of Jennifer Gill as superintendent and Memorial has enjoyed for years with Ed Curtis at the helm; as nonprofit leaders like John Stremsterfer and Jackie Newman prove as stewards of the community good; and as the Brandt, Bunn, HD Smith, Hanson and Kellner families demonstrate. And this short list of success in the national and world markets only scratches the surface.

Interestingly, the state's other Five Star Chamber, the Naperville Chamber of Commerce, recently announced that a longtime local business owner and native would become its new CEO.

With a well-defined set of strategic goals already outlined for the coming three years (see sidebar), the board seeks an energetic business or association executive who possesses an intimate knowledge of Sangamon County's business community and climate, plus a few other key traits.

Energy and passion for our members

The Chamber's chief executive is a people person. Of course you'll enjoy vacation days, but in a position as visible and important as The Chamber job, there is little time to be "off." You'll need an innate passion for our community and the people who work to make it strong. Our members will want to see you out at community events and gracing their doorways as often as possible.

Connections, communication and teamwork

Relationships are key to the success of The Chamber's CEO. Whether working with the city on economic development, responding to business needs, or coalescing Q5 members toward a common objective, the

abilities to clearly communicate and forge authentic connections will be required skills.

Focusing on what's important

To better focus on our members' needs, the new CEO will assess Chamber services with fresh eyes and, together with the board, prioritize them. Our reaffirmed goal is to super-serve our members, which may mean eliminating activities that are better executed by other local organizations.

Are we describing your capabilities, or

the talents of someone you know? Interested executives should submit a confidential letter of interest and résumé to Express Employment Professionals by mail to 3000 Professional Drive, Springfield, IL, 62703 or by email to jim.britton@expresspros.com. □

Tom Fitch is the 2014 Chairman of the board of directors for The Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce and the director of business development at Harold O'Shea Builders.

Chamber and Q5 strategic goals for 2014-2016

Economic diversification: Increase private sector jobs in the greater Springfield area

- Provide direct services to accelerate employment growth and business success.
- Target job growth in our targeted industry sectors.
 - Health care and medical development
 - Finance and Insurance
 - Agribusiness
 - Tourism
 - Logistics
- Assist in the community effort to implement rail consolidation.

Workforce sustainability: Grow, retain and attract qualified people to meet workforce demand

- Work in partnership with area schools and other stakeholders in education to develop an adequate supply of qualified workers.
- Retain highly mobile and talented workers.
- Attract talent in our targeted industry sectors.

Community impact: Be an advocate to improve the quality of place in our region

- Work collaboratively with a broad group of stake holders to revitalize downtown.
- Implement efforts to improve the community's aesthetics and enhance pride in our region.
- Assist in the community effort to implement the Record of Decision for rail relocation and plan for the 3rd street corridor.
- Work within collaborations that strive to grow the number of visi-

tors to our region.

Diversity development: Assist the community in its pursuit of inclusion and be more welcoming to all

- Enhance business opportunities and quality residential offerings in East Springfield, primarily in the Neighborhood of Hope.
- Expand business mentoring and micro-loans for entrepreneurs, primarily the disadvantaged.
- Increase diversity among leaders of boards and commissions in our community.

Leading voice: Advocate for an economic environment that is more conducive to capital investment and job growth

- Be the recognized expert on issues affecting our members.
- Develop public policy to improve the local business environment.
- Develop and encourage individuals to run for office.
- Facilitate connections between our members and policy makers.

Member services: Provide valuable products and services exclusively to members that makes membership an essential business tool

- Develop and enhance member connection opportunities that help expand their markets.
- Create offerings for members that reduce their costs of doing business.
- Enhance programming to increase member business knowledge.
- Effectively and continually communicate the value of our programming to members.

How I got involved

By Michelle Higginbotham, associate publisher

I was not born and raised in Springfield. When I first moved here it was by far the largest city I'd ever lived in, and I didn't know anyone. I remember wondering how I would meet people and get involved since I had no friends or family living here.

I grew up in Collinsville and graduated from Illinois College in Jacksonville. After college, I worked briefly for the *Jacksonville Journal-Courier* while doing freelance writing for several publications, including the *Springfield Business Journal*. I got to know the owners, and when their advertising manager left I was offered the position. I then moved to Springfield and worked at the *SBJ* from 2001-2006.

I knew I needed to get involved in the local business community, so I became an

ambassador for the Chamber of Commerce and started attending ribbon cuttings, Business After Hours, and other events where I had the chance to meet new people. I was invited to join a networking group that met for lunch on a monthly basis to share leads, and I eventually created several of my own networking groups that were more specifically focused. I saw an article about Habitat for Humanity looking for volunteers and offered my services. They soon asked me to serve on their board of directors, and I realized there were many nonprofits looking for young, energetic people who were willing to share their time and skills. I've had the opportunity to serve on a number of charitable boards now, and in each case

I've not only felt good about the organization that I was helping but also made some great friends and contacts.

When the original owners sold the *Business Journal* in 2006, I obtained my real estate license and began working as a commercial realtor at Coldwell Banker Commercial Devonshire Realty. I was able to continue working with many of the same people I had known during my time at the *SBJ*, and my focus was still on working with local business owners.

One of the people I've had the privilege to get to know during my time in Springfield is Fletcher Farrar, who is responsible for my involvement with the Enos Park neighborhood. When he asked me if I would

consider coming back to work at the *Business Journal*, it was an opportunity I simply couldn't resist. There is already a great foundation in place for the *SBJ* and the new ownership continues the tradition of being a locally owned publication, unusual in this day and age of media conglomerates. While it will remain a separate publication from *Illinois Times*, I believe being able to utilize the existing resources and staff will only improve on the quality that our readers have come to expect from the *Business Journal*. I'm very pleased to be a part of the next chapter in the *SBJ's* future. □

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General Assembly finally takes action on public employee pensions

By Douglas L. Whitley

Taxpayers, employers and observers should be encouraged by what happened in Springfield in December to respond to the state's \$100 billion unfunded public employee pension obligations. It has been years in the making, but at long last the General Assembly has taken action to confront the state's single biggest obstacle to restoring fiscal sanity to Illinois government. The adoption of new pension laws for public employees was a major accomplishment.

The Illinois Chamber actively lobbied in favor of the legislation to change the public employee pension laws in a meaningful way. The legislation not only represented substantial change, but was acknowledged to be the best chance for success given current political circumstances. If the bill failed there was little confidence the General Assembly would get around to voting on a similar measure anytime soon. Doing nothing to affect the pension obligations was not acceptable, because it would only allow a very bad situation to deteriorate even further.

Under the new law, employees and retirees will experience future benefit reductions that amount to approximately \$90 billion, primarily due to limiting growth of the annual cost of living adjustments and additional working years for younger employees. The employer's contributions to the pension funds will be accelerated by approximately \$70 billion. The combined effect, coupled with continued employer and employee contributions, plus earnings, is expected to temper the overall pension obligation by \$160 billion and reach solvency over the next 30 years.

THE POLITICS OF PENSIONS

There are approximately 295,000 active public employees who depend upon the state of Illinois to make the employer's annual contributions into five separate state retiree pension funds. The largest of these is the Teachers' Retirement System that provides pension benefits for all local school districts, except for the Chicago Public Schools. In addition, there are approximately 226,000 retired public employees who expect to receive retirement income from the five pension systems. The self-interest and activism of thousands of voting constituents who are personally affected by legislative actions directed towards pensions was felt by all members of the General Assembly.

Even so, Illinois' elected leaders, including a Democratic governor and Democratic-controlled legislative chambers, withstood the wrath of public employee unions and retirees in order to corral pension costs and thus reduce the future obligation of taxpayers. The fact that many elected officials of the majority party were willing to deny the wishes of one of their most important donor and voter constituencies should not be taken lightly. Ironically, many members of the Republican Party who have long been champions of balanced budgets, fiscal integrity, spending restraint and limited government proved susceptible to the appeal of the public employees and retirees by voting against the measure.

The Democratic leaders Madigan and Cullerton deserve kudos for delivering a difficult and important legislative accomplishment. However, we would be remiss if we did not single out Sen. Dan Biss and Rep. Elaine Nekritz for the exceptional efforts they put forth over many months



to help bring this measure to a boil. They were among the chief legislative catalysts who energized colleagues and continuously pressed for action on pension matters.

Gov. Quinn can rightfully take claim for a major, much-needed, fiscal policy victory that he has aggressively championed. On this matter he has been an unwavering pillar in the media arena. He has consistently demanded legislative action and has helped educate the public about making pension changes a priority. However, despite the governor's prominence as chief executive and media focal point, the pension victory is primarily an achievement of members of the General Assembly.

THE SUPREME COURT

The action concerning Illinois public employee pensions now moves to the courts. Opponents to the law will present the argument that the Illinois Constitution of 1970 provides ironclad protection against any changes in the benefits due public employees and retirees. A straightforward reading of the Constitution suggests the argument against legislative change is strong.

The legislature's response is reflected in part in the law's compelling preamble that goes into great detail describing the fiscal crisis and circumstances that requires the General Assembly to take extraordinary measures to save the pension funds and the state from insolvency.

The matter of constitutionality has been both a barrier to action and an excuse for legislative inaction. The consequence of finally approving a new law takes away the guesswork and the speculative constitutional excuses offered by lawyers and non-lawyers alike about why the General Assembly should do nothing in regard to pensions except raise

taxes to pay for them. The Illinois Supreme Court will rule on the matter. The worst thing that can happen is that the court voids the law and offers absolutely no guidance. No one expects such an outcome.

If the Supreme Court declares the law unconstitutional there are three logical courses for the General Assembly to follow: 1) respond to the court's guidance and adopt a new law that is more likely to be upheld; 2) raise state taxes to the degree necessary to restore solvency to the pension funds; and 3) put a new constitutional amendment before the voters that will redefine the state's pension obligations.

SILVER LININGS

Unlike the gridlock in Washington that is so detrimental to the nation's economy, Illinois' political leaders have demonstrated that respectful, bipartisan and bicameral compromises can result in much-needed progress towards fixing and resolving major public policy issues. At least where the pension matters are concerned, the General Assembly has demonstrated an ability to deflect and ignore some of the partisan posturing and rhetoric in order to accomplish big things.

The adoption of the pension bill proved Illinois' elected officials could overcome a lot of inertia and fix problems that many observers assumed to be insurmountable. The action also communicates to the Wall Street rating agencies, financial centers around the globe and to the rest of the country that Illinois' political leadership is working towards mending its reputation for dysfunctional government. □

Douglas L. Whitley is president and CEO of the Illinois Chamber of Commerce.

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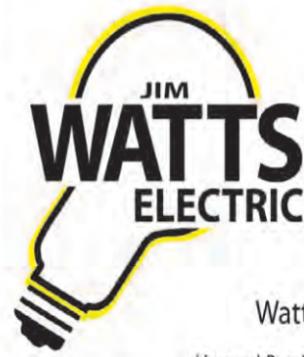
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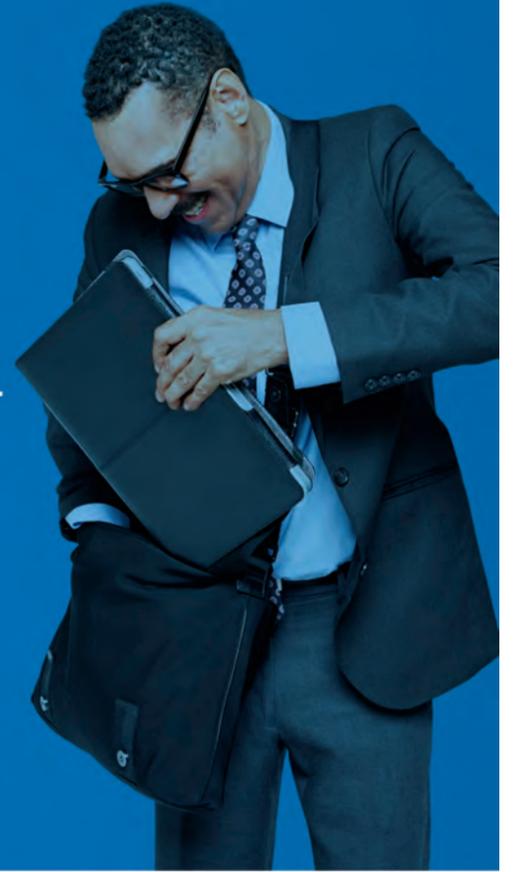
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