

Springfield business journal

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Hotel renaissance

Three new facilities opening

Roberta Codemo,
Correspondent

Hoteliers are expanding into the local market, giving visitors to Springfield more options with two new facilities under con-

struction on Sixth Street and a new hotel on Stevenson Drive.

A La Quinta Inns & Suites and Comfort Suites will open on Sixth Street in 2014 while a Country Inn & Suites recently opened on Stevenson Drive.

Rakesh Patel, president of Tulsi and Siya Hospitality Group in Arcola, and his wife, Urvasi,

have broken ground for a \$5.1 million La Quinta Inn & Suites at 1121 Lejune Drive, across from the Walmart off South Sixth Street. The four-story, 65-unit property is scheduled to open in the fall of 2014.

The underground electrical and plumbing work has been completed. Patel expects fram-

ing to be completed within two months.

Taber Crane Construction Services, Washington, Ind., is the contractor and Donovan & Donovan, Vincennes, Ind., is the architect. Jason Goin, Jago

Continued on Page 13,
Hotels

From diamonds to lucky sevens



Giganti & Giganti Fine Jewelry is moving to Springfield's west side and 1601 Wabash will become a Subway restaurant and Lucy's Place, a video gaming establishment

Giganti & Giganti to relocate; Lucy's Place moving in

By Gabe House,
Correspondent

Giganti & Giganti Fine Jewelry has been a Springfield fixture since 1986 at the corner of Wabash Avenue and Leonard Street. The coming months, though,

will have the family-owned jewelry store move into the old Kiku at 3325 Robbins Rd.

Lucy's Place – a video gaming establishment with something of a café atmosphere – and a Subway restaurant will be the new tenants at 1601 Wabash Ave.

Carl Giganti, the eponymous store manager of the family business, said he had been looking for some time to relocate the

jewelry store – hopefully to the west side of Springfield – but a ready solution wasn't available in his price range until recently.

"I drove by that piece of property many times, and I've always liked the look of the building, and I happen to know the guy who owned it, Chris Stone," Giganti said of the building on Robbins Road. "Eventually, we put some things together and

that's kind of how it all came about."

Coincidentally, Stone is one of the owners of Lucy's Place, which currently has five locations in Springfield and 20 statewide. His partner, Bill Furling, is the owner of the Subway that will be going into the old Gigan-

Continued on Page 12,
Giganti

INSIDE NEWS THIS MONTH



The 2014 selectees for Best Places to Work are Levi, Ray & Shoup, Inc., Prairie Eye Center and The Real Estate Group. Join us in congratulating these successful companies.

P. 15-23

STARTUP WEEKEND

UIS will sponsor a forum, Jan. 31-Feb. 2, for developers, designers, marketers and product managers to share ideas, form teams, build products and launch startups.

P. 5 & 7

PROJECTIONS FOR 2014

Local business owners share their insights in anticipating slow and steady growth to continue for Springfield's economy in 2014.

P. 8-9

VILLAGE ENGINEERING

Villages surrounding the Capital City find it more cost-effective to contract out engineering work with a Springfield firm than to hire their own engineer.

P. 24 & 27

HIGH SPEED RAIL

Springfield isn't the only town in Sangamon County preparing for high speed rail service ... Chatham, Sherman and Williamsville are all planning as well.

P. 29 & 33

ARCHITECTS INDICATE

Local architects discuss the symbiotic relationship between architecture, construction as an early indication of where the local economy is headed.

P. 31 & 33

QUOTE OF THE MONTH – P. 49



"...remember that increased supply means lower prices, which in turns means lower heating bills, a competitive energy market and more opportunities for Illinois companies."

Douglas L. Whitley, president and CEO of Illinois Chamber

COMING NEXT MONTH...

COMMERCIAL CONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT

• The February issue will feature local news and information about the construction and commercial real estate industries. The lists:

- Commercial Builders
- CREN Members
- Labor Unions
- Mechanical Contractors
- Electrical Contractors



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• the rookery

Nudo Products acquires High Standard, Inc.

Nudo Products, Inc. announced the acquisition of High Standard, Inc., a full-service exterior architectural panel manufacturer and fabricator.

High Standard's line of window in-fill and exterior cladding panels will complement Nudo's range of interior wall and ceiling products. The combined companies will provide the building and construction industries an offering of interior and exterior panels. Nudo customers will now have access to porcelain-faced panels produced by High Standard. High Standard customers will benefit from the expanded capacities, fabrication capabilities and solid plastic core panels produced on Nudo's plastic sheet production lines.

"High Standard's reputation for quality architectural panels is well known within the industry," said Nudo Products CEO Darryl Rosser. "Tony Dalpos will be leading our business development activity in this segment of the market."

"Nudo has long been in markets such as agriculture and food processing, sign substrates and transportation, clean rooms and telecommunications," said Len Farrell, Nudo's senior vice president of strategic development. "The architectural panel experience High Standard brings to Nudo will add another market to Nudo's core."

UCB completes acquisition

United Community Bancorp completed the acquisition of Mercantile Bank in Quincy, Ill. This acquisition increases the number of UCB locations to 34 across downstate Illinois and northeastern Missouri. The acquisition increases UCB's presence in Quincy to six branches and 10 ATMs. Mercantile Bank has assets of \$360 million.

"UCB is excited to expand our presence in Quincy and increase our support of the community," said UCB Chairman Robert Narmont. "We look forward to becoming more involved in the community as we provide excellent service, new technology and the latest in financial products to our Quincy customers."

Nicoud allies with Mesirow

Nicoud Insurance announced the formation of an alliance with Mesirow Insurance Services, Inc., an independent insurance agency in Chicago.

Through this alliance, Nicoud can bring additional expertise and resources to its clients. Nicoud will continue to operate as usual, and draw upon Mesirow's capabilities and expertise in insurance and other areas, as opportunities arise.

"This alliance allows us to bring greater capabilities and resources to our clients, particularly given their specialty practice groups focused on the needs of school districts, health care providers and servicers, public sector entities and unions," said Nicoud President Jim Hillestad.

"Nicoud has a strong local presence and great reputation, and we are excited to explore opportunities in Central Illinois," said Mesirow Insurance President Norm Malter.

Local author releases first children's book

Local writer Courtney Westlake has written her first children's book, titled "That's How You Know." The book is available in the WestBow Press bookstore and other online book retailers.

"That's How You Know" (WestBow Press) is a Christian fiction story with a message about how special each child is

to God and reassures children of God's never-ending love.

Westlake is a native of Springfield and is author of a blog, Blessed by Brenna (www.blessedbybrenna.com). She is also copy editor for Springfield Business Journal.

Upcoming LLCC events

The Illinois Small Business Development Center at LLCC is conducting "Starting Your Business in Illinois" workshops in January for prospective business owners. The free workshop is available in Springfield and Jacksonville.

Workshop topics include preparing a business plan, financing a business, legal forms (proprietorship, partnership, and corporation), registering a business name and taxes.

The first workshop will be held on Jan. 9 from 6 to 8 p.m. in Montgomery Hall on LLCC's Springfield campus (5250 Shepherd Road). There will also be a workshop at the LLCC Capital City Training Center (130 W. Mason St.) on Jan. 15 from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. To register for either of those, call (217) 544-7232.

A workshop will also be hosted at Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce (155 W. Morton) on Jan. 27 from 9 to 11 a.m. Call (217) 245-2174 to register. Registration is required for all workshops.

LLCC also invites high school students, adult learners and family members to Campus Visit Day Monday, Feb. 17. The event is being held campus.

Campus Visit Day provides prospective students with information about the college. The theme is "It's OK to Look!" Morning and evening sessions are being offered. The morning session runs 9 to 11:30 a.m., and the evening session runs from 5 to 7:30 p.m.

Both sessions include a 30-minute presentation on admissions and the enrollment process, financial aid and student success. Following the presentation, guests can visit exhibits and speak one-to-one with LLCC representatives of academic programs and student services. Tours are being offered of Menard and Sangamon Halls, the Workforce Careers Center, and health professions labs and classrooms.

Refreshments at both sessions are being prepared by LLCC's Culinary Arts and Hospitality programs. To register for Campus Visit Day, visit <http://www.llcc.edu> or call (217) 786-2577.

DSI announces awards dinner

Downtown Springfield, Inc. will hold its Annual Dinner and Awards Ceremony on Wednesday, Jan. 22 at the Hilton Springfield, 700 E. Adams St. The event begins at 5 p.m. with cocktails and a silent auction; the program begins at 6:30 p.m.


The event honors individuals, businesses, organizations and projects for their service, accomplishments, and commitment to making downtown the place to live, work and play. An overview of DSI achievements and the Mayor's State of Downtown address will also be featured.

Reservations may be made online via PayPal at <http://www.downtownspringfield.org>, or made in person at the DSI office, #3 West Old State Capitol Plaza, Suite 15. Prices are \$70 for individual, \$560 for a business table and \$1500 for Corporate Sponsorship.

Proceeds from the event support DSI's mission, benefiting businesses and residents of downtown and enhance community events such as the Old Capitol Farmers Market, Taste of Downtown and Old Capitol Blues & BBQs.

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regular meetings •

Monday

- Springfield Luncheon Optimist Club, 11:45 a.m., (2nd & 4th weeks) MCL Cafeteria, 2151 Wabash Ave.
- Sertoma Club of Springfield, Noon, (1st & 3rd weeks) Hilton Springfield
- Noontime Toastmasters, Noon, Laurel United Methodist Church, Walnut & S. Grand Ave. West
- Rotary Club of Springfield, 6 p.m., Maldaner's Restaurant (upstairs), 222 S. 6th St.

Tuesday

- Jacksonville Sunrise Rotary Club, 7 a.m., Comfort Inn, 200 Comfort Dr., South Jacksonville
- Capital City Business Builders BNI, 7:30 a.m., Hickory Glen, 1700 West Washington St.
- Tuesday BNI, 11 a.m., Remax Building, 2475 West Monroe St.
- The Network Group, 11:45 a.m., The Sangamo Club, 227 E. Adams St.
- Rotary Club of Springfield-Mid-town, Noon, Inn at 835, 835 S. 2nd St.
- Kiwanis Club of Lincoln, Noon, Al's Main Event, 1230 Fifth St., Lincoln
- Springfield Noon Lions Club, Noon, Golden Corral, 1038 Le June Dr.
- Springfield Parkway Pointe Toastmasters, 12:05 p.m., AIG Building, 3501 Hollis Dr.
- Altrusa International of Springfield, 7 p.m., (1st & 3rd weeks) Laurel United Methodist Church, Walnut St. & S. Grand Ave. West

Wednesday

- Rotary Club of Springfield - Sunrise, 7 a.m., Hoogland Center for the Arts
- Central Illinois Referral Network, 7:45 a.m., The Real Estate Group, 3701 W. Wabash Ave.
- Westside BNI, 11:30 a.m. Scheels, 3801 S. MacArthur Blvd.
- Prospectors Referral Group, 11:30 a.m., (1st & 3rd weeks) American Harvest, 3241 W. Iles Ave.
- Rotary Club of Springfield-Westside, Noon, Brickhouse Grill & Pub, 3136 Iles Ave.
- Jacksonville American Business Club, Noon, Ponderosa Restaurant, Morton Ave., Jacksonville
- Kiwanis Club of Springfield-Downtown, Noon, Hilton Springfield, Manhattan Grille Room
- Capital City Toastmasters, Noon, IDOT Building, 2300 Dirksen Pkwy. Room 214 A & B
- Springfield Jaycees, 7 p.m., Jaycees Activity Center, 2525 S. 12th St.

Thursday

- Thursday Morning Business Builder BNI, 7:30 a.m., Coldwell Banker, 3201 Old Jacksonville Rd.
- Springfield Thursday Lunch BNI Chapter, 11:30 a.m., Lake Pointe Grill, 1386 Toronto Rd.
- Rotary Club of Springfield South - Noon, Centrum Coffee Cafe, 1370 Toronto Rd.
- Springfield American Business Club, Noon, Hilton Springfield, 29th Floor
- Kiwanis Club - Jacksonville, Noon, Hamilton's Catering, 110 N. East St., Jacksonville
- Lincoln Douglas Toastmasters, 6 p.m., Our Saviors Lutheran Church, 2645 Old Jacksonville Rd.
- Kiwanis Club of Chatham, 6:15 p.m., Chatham Library, 600 E. Spruce, Chatham

Friday

- Springfield Breakfast Optimist Club, 7 a.m., Atonement Lutheran Church, 2800 W. Jefferson St.
- Frontier International, Noon, Hilton Springfield, Manhattan Grille Room
- Jacksonville Noon Rotary Club, Noon, Hamilton's Downtown, 110 N. East St., Jacksonville

Do you have a regular business meeting to include?
Send your regular meeting to info@springfieldbusinessjournal.com

Professional Women's Calendar of Events

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

Illinois Women in Leadership (IWIL)

IWIL's first meeting of 2014: "Ch-ch-changes." Illinois Women in Leadership will hold its Monthly Luncheon from 11:30 to 1:00 pm on Thursday, January 16th at the Sangamo Club - 227 E. Adams St. in Springfield.

Mary Byers will be the speaker. Mary is an author, professional speaker and association consultant. She will present "Being on the Edge: Six Keys to Being Successful in a Rapidly Changing Environment." Learn how to be more of who you already are and how to capture the slight edge by being rather than doing.

Guests and potential new members are welcome to attend. The cost for members is \$18. Non-members and walk-ins are \$23. Reservation forms are available at www.iwil.biz. Reservations with payment must be received by 5 pm Friday, January 10th via the website or by mailing the registration form and payment to: IWIL, P.O. Box 5612 Springfield, IL 62705-5612.

Junior League of Springfield (JLS)

The Junior League of Springfield will hold a General Membership Meeting from 6:30 to 9:00 pm, Tuesday, January 14th in the Hoogland Center for the Arts Club Room, 420 S. Sixth St. in Springfield. Dinner/social begins at 6:30 pm, with the meeting starting promptly at 7:00 pm.

For more information, please visit jlsil.org.

Women Entrepreneurs of Central Illinois (WE-CI)

WE-CI's monthly meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 8th, from 5:30 am to 7:30 pm, at Indigo Restaurant, 3013 Lindberg Blvd., Springfield, Ill 62703.

Document destruction and changes in privacy law. Mr. Tom Schreyer of Affordable Shred, will educate us on these legal changes and their implications for business owners.

The cost for the meeting is \$22 for members, \$25 for guests, and \$30 for walk-ins. Reservations are non-refundable. Additional information is available by contacting Cherrill Lewis @ 217-622-0189. Please make your reservations at: reservations@we-ci.org. Credit card payments are now accepted on the WE-CI website.



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



after hours •

Learning a new subject

Scott Day

Profession:
Associate Professor;
Educational Leadership,
University of Illinois Springfield

Passion:
Bonsai

By Raegan Hennemann,
Senior Correspondent

It might seem like an unusual habit, but for Scott Day it's only natural to push back the dirt and look at a tree's trunk and roots when he is at a nursery.

Day, an associate professor in educational leadership at the University of Illinois Springfield, is a bonsai artist who is checking out a tree's trunk size and "interesting exposed roots."

It was Day's background in art, particularly ceramics and sculpture that gave him a good base for being successful in bonsai.

"A lot of the same principles that you would use in creating a sculpture with negative and positive space, you use the same principles in working with bonsai," he said. "So there was a nice connection there with art and that probably spurred my interest more than anything and then obviously the Japanese design concepts that they use. I've always had an interest in it."

His first attempt at styling a tree took place during a four-session class taught by a man who had worked at The United States National Arboretum in Washington, D.C.

"His job was to take care of the gifts from Japan to the United States, so they had quite an extensive bonsai collection," Day said. "He started bonsai on his own and then he taught this class and that's how I got started."

That was 20 years ago when Day was living in Pennsylvania. Today, Day has about 20 bonsai pieces in his collection. Some of the pieces are referred to as groves because they include multiple trees.

"You just continually get more and more trees as you go," he said.

Day is constantly learning about bonsai and trying new techniques. Early on he gained knowledge from reading, and today finds YouTube videos especially helpful. As a member of the Springfield Bonsai Society, Day annually attends a weekend workshop by a well-known guest artist from throughout the country.

"You sign up for a class to style a tree that you don't have in your collection. They all grow differently, so you learn growing habits and you learn what works best with design on a specific species of tree," he said.

Through the years, Day has styled at least 40 trees.

"Some end up dying, that's just a part of it. I've had a few that have died and that's mainly because of the harsh winter even though they are wintered over in the garage," he said. "They're like a regular tree in nature. If it's a pine tree they're outside right now with snow on them or ice on them. If it's a deciduous tree with leaves that fall, they're outside too. So those have to remain cold and the way new people, beginners, kill them is they'll buy a juniper somewhere that is styled and they'll bring it in the house. That kills it."

After the last hard frost in March or April, Day's bonsai trees are displayed outside. They will remain outside until it gets too cold, usually October or November, and then it's back to the garage. The tropical bonsai trees stay inside the house near a window that gets plenty of sun.

Day is preferential to pine trees, but also enjoys working on deciduous trees.

"There are several styles of bonsai and my favorite style is creating a grove with lots of trees in it to make it look like nature," he said. "Really a landscape setting is what you're making."

"This particular grove that I have, one of them, turns beautiful in the fall. The leaves all turn orange. It's just gorgeous."

There are different styling practices for pines and deciduous trees. Day said creating the branch structure for a deciduous tree is critical.

"You actually wire the branches like a splint. You're wiring it to move it into place where you want it to go. Then you have to cut the wire off when it's set in place, before it digs into the bark," he explained.

When it comes to displaying bonsai at a show, the container "is as important as the styling you do on the tree," Day said. "There are specific rules for the types of containers that you put a particular style of tree in."

For example, a pine tree should be displayed in a dark-colored pot. Bright-colored pots are used for tropical trees. The pot's shape is determined by the style of the tree. A cascade-styled tree is in a pot taller than normal because the top of the tree hangs below the base of the pot.

"The pot needs to fit the style of the tree. There's a connection there," he said.

With a large bonsai collection, it can be challenging to keep up with all of the trees, especially during the growing season.



Continued on Page 6, After Hours



COMMUNITY BUSINESS REPORT

sbj

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January 2014



Inside this Month: P. 15-23

Springfield joins Startup Weekend

UIS hosts innovative program

By Teresa Paul,
Correspondent

The Center for Entrepreneurship at University of Illinois in Springfield (UIS) will sponsor a new event, Startup Weekend, to Springfield and the third of its kind in Illinois, Jan. 31-Feb. 2 at the Public Affairs Center at UIS.

Startup Weekend, a 54 hour event, is a global network of passionate leaders and entrepreneurs on a mission to inspire, educate, and empower individuals, teams and communities. The event provides a forum for developers, designers, marketers, product managers, and startup enthusiasts come together to share ideas, form teams, build products and launch startups.

To date, there have been 1,068 Startup weekend events across the globe in 478 cities. Peoria held its first event November 2013 and Chicago will hold a Startup Weekend event February 2014.

The Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce supports the event with local business participation.

"The Startup weekends have been all over the United States, Mexico, Central America, Europe, South America, Africa, Japan, Russia, China, Australia, India and the Philippines," said Steward Sandstrom, president and CEO of the Great Springfield Chamber of Commerce.

Participants register for the entire weekend. The event begins Friday evening with a social hour at UIS and then with an open mike where business ideas are pitched.



Jeff Stauffer, seated at the head of the table while presenting to the Sangamo CEO students, is the owner of Mid-America Advertising and recognized by UIS Center of Entrepreneurship as one of the region's most dynamic entrepreneurs will be one of the coaches for Startup Weekend (photo provided by Sangamon CEO)

mer, lead professor of the Center for Entrepreneurship and Family Business in the College of Business and Management at UIS.

"This is a lot of pressure in 60 seconds to convince a group of people they possess a great idea that should be produced into a sustainable business," Sommer said.

Sommer is in his third year

top ideas. Once those top ideas are chosen, then members of the audience choose a team. The number of ideas accepted is dependent on the size of the crowd. The larger the crowd, the more ideas are accepted for team building.

"In any start-up company you need a variety of skill sets: a web developer, a marketing person, and a finance person," Sommer said. "Put these people together in a room and then divide them across different business ideas."

Sandstrom said: "You build your team and then begin developing your business plan that Friday evening. You continue to refine your plan going on into the night and picking the business plan up the next morning."

Each team is matched with volunteer coaches from the business community that have experience in their particular market or industry. On Saturday each team will conduct market research.

"On Saturday we have business coaches from all backgrounds: accountants, public

relations, graphic design and advertising, for not just one team but to help around the room," Sandstrom said.

One of the coaches for the weekend is Jeff Stauffer, owner of Mid-America Advertising.

"I was asked to get involved with Startup Weekend by UIS," Stauffer said. "I have been involved with many companies and have been a guest speaker in a variety of MBA classes at UIS, including entrepreneurship."

Stauffer was recognized by UIS Center of Entrepreneurship as one of the region's most dynamic entrepreneurs and is also the lead entrepreneur behind Sangamon CEO (sangamonceo.com).

"I will be a coach at the start up event and will help participating entrepreneurial teams make their business opportunities better and more viable while giving them advice on general mechanics of creating an attractive product and service, evaluating their market and forming a

• new businesses

• Caps Plumbing, 1613 Chriswell Gardens, Chatham, 62629, Dominic Carnduff, (217) 971-6456.

• Creative Catch, 5215 Deerwood Lake, Springfield, 62703, Emily Hilby, (217) 415-6799.

• Deep Rootz, Midwest, 2641 S. Sixth St., Springfield, 62703, Eric L. McCawley, Jonathan R. Leonard, (217) 679-1454.

• Delaney's 3rd Street Grub & Pub, 2249 N. Third St., Springfield, 62702, Steven Bergae, Michael Weakly, (217) 753-9210.

• Diversity Agreements, Procurement and Communications Solutions (PCS), 501 Kenyon, Springfield, 62704, Veronica Williams, (217) 698-2707.

• Elite Photo Booth, 192 Wisteria Drive, Springfield, 62711, Amanda Hubbard, Zach Hubbard, (217) 725-8978.

• Erin Brook Photography, 523 Karen Rose Drive, Rochester, 62563, Erin Balagna, (805) 338-5509.

• Extreme Clean Carpet Care, 6 Tamaroa Drive, Pawnee, 62558, Jonathan Gebhardt, (217) 931-2131.

• Free Yourself Fitness, 225 N. Grand Ave. West, Springfield, 62702, Kerry L. Hill, (217) 720-7205.

• Image Forward, 3800 Woodhaven Drive, Springfield, 62712, Karen Cunningham, (217) 816-6399.

• Joe Brown Lawn Care, 5673 Old Jacksonville Road, Springfield, 62711, Joe A. Brown, (217) 525-1424.

*Continued on Page 45,
New Businesses*

• index

The Rookery.....	3
After Hours.....	4,6
Regular Meetings.....	4
Women's Calendar.....	4
New Businesses.....	5,45
Building Permits.....	6
Airport En/Deplanements.....	6
Best Places to Work.....	15-23
Architecture/Engineering.....	24-35
Going Green.....	34
Dining with Success.....	36
Book Review.....	37
Business Lunch.....	38
Monthly Drive.....	39
Legal Filings.....	40
Law.....	41
Giving Back.....	42
Healthcare.....	43
Community Business.....	44-45
Media.....	46
Fast Tracks.....	47
Opinion.....	48
Op-Ed.....	49
Business Card Directory.....	50

*Continued on Page 7,
Second Front*

“You have a service, product or idea that does not exist but you think it should. You are given 60 seconds to pitch to the crowd your idea.”

*Steward Sandstrom, president
and CEO of the Great Springfield Chamber of Commerce*

An Illinois native, Anna Palmer, entrepreneur, founder and CEO of The Fashion Project, will be the featured keynote speaker.

"You have a service, product or idea that does not exist but you think it should," Sandstrom said. "You are given 60 seconds to pitch to the crowd your idea."

"Their whole goal is to find a management team to launch their business," said Bruce Som-

at UIS and he has been part of Startup Weekends in other parts of the United States.

"I have been a part of similar programs at other universities," Sommer said. "This is part of an international movement to capitalize entrepreneurship. The Startup Weekends are fairly common in other parts of the country and we wanted to bring an event to Springfield."

The audience votes on the

Building and Zoning Department - City of Springfield
Building Permit Report

	November		January - November	
	2013	2012	2013	2012
New Single Family Residence				
Permit	5	7	75	83
Valuation	1,205,000	2,105,000	21,154,000	24,463,800
Revenue	1,233.16	2,225.72	22,529.09	25,750.98
Dwelling Units	0	7	75	83
New Two Family Residence				
Permit	0	1	23	27
Valuation	0	450,000	6,901,000	7,667,000
Revenue	0	540.00	9,363.26	11,196.04
Dwelling Units	0	2	46	54
New Multi-Family Residence				
Permit	0	0	0	0
Valuation	0	0	0	0
Revenue	0	0	0	0
Dwelling Units	0	0	0	0
New Commercial				
Permit	1	0	36	21
Valuation	1,500,000	0	88,676,348	45,874,204
Revenue	5,440.20	0	268,425.66	154,649.02
Total (New, Remodel, Addition & Misc.)				
Permit	200	266	3,112	3,372
Valuation	54,050,223	8,200,878	293,275,265	147,810,822
Revenue	160,717.26	26,840.12	920,127.19	470,732.35
Dwelling Units	5	9	121	137

Abraham Lincoln Capital Airport – Springfield, Ill.
Total Monthly Enplanements and Deplanements

	November			Year-To-Date		
Airline Passengers Enplaning	2013	2012	Change	2013	2012	Change
American Connection	1,725	1,820	-5.22%	18,638	18,337	1.64%
United Express	2,999	3,015	-0.53%	33,512	35,354	-5.21%
Direct Air	0	0	0	0	5,294	0
Vision	0	0	0	0	2,496	0
Allegiant Air	1,347	924	45.78%	10,997	924	1090.15%
Sun Country / Honor Flight	0	0	0	956	798	19.80%
Sun Country / Riverside	0	0	0	701	231	203.46%
McClelland Aviation	3	8	-62.50%	37	34	8.82%
Charter - Other	0	0	0	0	244	0
Sub-Total	6,074	5,767	5.32%	64,841	63,712	1.77%
Airline Passengers Deplaning						
American Connection	1,802	1,767	1.98%	18,428	18,880	-2.39%
United Express	2,881	2,987	-3.55%	33,446	34,959	-4.33%
Direct Air	0	0	0	0	4,990	0
Vision	0	0	0	0	2,573	0
Allegiant Air	1,232	825	49.33%	11,339	825	1274.42%
Sun Country / Honor Flight	0	0	0	956	798	19.80%
Sun Country / Riverside	110	0	0	701	231	203.46%
McClelland Aviation	3	8	-62.50%	37	34	8.82%
Charter / Other	0	0	0	0	148	0
Sub-Total	6,028	5,587	7.89%	64,907	63,438	2.32%
*information provided by the Springfield Airport Authority						
TOTAL	12,102	11,354	6.59%	129,748	127,150	2.04%

After Hours, Continued from Page 4

“It’s constant observation. You can’t just leave these trees. You have to look at them. ‘Oh there are spots under this leaf, what’s going on here?’” Day said.

He gets a respite from practicing bonsai during the winter months as the majority of his trees are dormant. Once spring comes around, Day is busy repotting certain trees. It does not happen every year so he has to keep records.

“There may be some years I’ll do three or four and there will be some years I have to do 10 of them,” he said.

To help establish good roots, the tree is wired into the pot. The tree’s size is maintained because the roots are pruned.

“You have to or it would die. It would get root bound,” Day said. “Actually for the health of the tree, pruning the roots every couple of years keeps it vibrant.”

Day’s tallest bonsai tree is less than 3 feet tall. Most in his collection are about a foot tall.

Because of the shock repotting has on a tree, Day has to wait several weeks before he can apply wire to style the tree.

“You are wiring to move a branch to a place where you want it to grow as a part of the design of the tree, like a sculpture,” he said.

The wire is removed in July so it does not start growing into the tree’s bark. The trees are rewired every year “until you get it to where you want to go,” Day said.

“Wiring every branch on a tree, I’ve worked as much as six to eight hours on one tree. And then other trees it doesn’t take long at all. It depends on how big it is,” he said.

After 20 years of practice, Day has become quick at wiring trees. A beginner might need to go slower and be more deliberate.

“I’ve wired so many trees that I don’t even have to think about it,” he said. “You acquire those (skills) over time.”

Day even has to weigh some branches down with guide wire to get them where he wants them to end up.

During the summer, Day fertilizes waters and prunes the tops of his trees. Because of the rocky soil that is used, watering frequency depends a lot on the summer temperatures.

“It’s not potting soil because that would be too wet for the roots. It would just stay wet constantly. You want the water to drain straight through it when you water it,” he said. “In August, and different times of the year, you have to water a couple times of a day because it’s so hot. They’re only in soil two to three inches deep.”

Fortunately for Day, bonsai is not a dead end hobby. Day is always on the lookout for new trees and he is eager to incorporate carving into his designs. He can use power tools or even hand-carve the tree’s bark to give it an aged appearance.

“It adds a lot of character to the design of the tree,” he said. That’s one of the things you try to do with the style – you try to make the tree look as old as you can even though it may be a fairly new tree. That’s part of the styling of it.”

Raegan Hennemann is a senior correspondent for Springfield Business Journal. She can be reached at info@springfieldbusinessjournal.com



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plan to execute, including marketing the business," Stauffer said.

"I would encourage anyone interested in learning how to start a business, anyone with a potential business idea and an interest in creating value for and capturing value from their customers to attend this event," Stauffer said. "I am very excited about being a part of such an exciting first time event in Springfield."

The business plan and the product for each team continue to get refined through the weekend with the final pitch on Sunday afternoon. The top three startup companies will be chosen Sunday by a panel of successful entrepreneurs.

Sandstrom said the chamber's Q5 initiative is a reason for its involvement with the Startup Weekend initiative.

"The reason the chamber is involved and is tied into Q5, our market street study done two years ago showed for a more robust entrepreneurship culture in the region," Sandstrom said. "The Startup Weekend exposes people to the process of

more likely to start businesses when they know others who have started businesses."

The track history of Startup Weekends across the world has created over 8,000 businesses.

"Nationwide from these types of programs, 36 percent of the companies started are still active today. We feel the success comes from the support the entrepreneurs receive afterwards. It takes a ton of advice and community support to really launch a business."

Bruce Sommer, lead professor of the Center for Entrepreneurship and Family Business in the College of Business and Management at UIS

creating a business. People who have not started a business before will be part of this process."

"This is critical learning," Sandstrom said. "Participants will network and meet fellow entrepreneurs. People are much

Entrepreneurship Week which had been held in May 2013 will be on hold. Pending the results of Startup Weekend held in January, organizers will determine if another Entrepreneurship Week will be held.

Coaches and the business community will continue to assist the startup companies birthed from the Startup Weekend throughout the year.

"Nationwide from these types of programs, 36 percent of the companies started are still active today," Sommer said. "We feel the success comes from the support the entrepreneurs receive afterwards. It takes a ton of advice and community support to really launch a business."

"Springfield has the event in common with other cities across the world," Sandstrom said. "Springfield is a town where you can start a business from scratch and be successful. We know how to do it. We know how to make it happen."

Teresa Paul is a freelance writer from Taylorville. She can be reached at info@springfieldbusinessjournal.com

MSF&W introduces FOIA software

Processing and tracking Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests will be easier with software developed by the Springfield-based company, MSF&W.

The product, called Libria (<http://www.msfw.com/libria/>), is a software solution that automates the FOIA request process and increase of efficiency of units of governments handling FOIA inquiries.

Sam Ganci, a MSF&W software development consultant, said by automating the FOIA process, MSF&W is responding to an unmet need. It replaces the "old fashion paper and pencil" method of handling a FOIA request, thus reducing staff time required in processing a request.

Features of the Libria software include security controls to manage user permissions and access; document import and scanning that combines electronic files and paper documents into one response packet; audit logging to view an audit trail of all user actions; customizable work flow specific to an agency through an easy-to-use interface; dashboard viewing of request status, outstanding volume, and approaching due dates; standard or ad-hoc reports to show FOIA requests by status, date range, and user; web requests are submitted requests are automatically captured and routed to work flow for processing; on-line tracking and publishing; gathering relevant documents from emails, documents repositories, or network directories. The Libria software can be hosted in a cloud-based solution or installed on a server.

"There has been a formal launch," Ganci said. "We've went to a trade show of county officials in Chicago recently. We're doing demos for government officials around the state."

Ganci said an advantage of Libria is that it is simple to use. There is a date associated with each request and the system prints out a response letter. "It puts some organization structure around a haphazard process for most people," Ganci said.

Gia Simmons, MSF&W director of sales, said the Libria is designed for entities that fall under FOIA requirements, such as city, state, counties and schools.

"We understand the burdens FOIA has, but at the same time, the public has the right to know public information," Simmons said. "A lot of agencies have full-time staff dedicated to FOIA."

Simmons said that even though units of governments are dealing with budget requests, they are mandated to comply with FOIA.

Simmons aid that initially, MSF&W, which has been in Springfield since 1991, is focusing on the Illinois market, but Libria is adaptable and can be implemented in other states.

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Local economic outlook for 2014

Business owners predict slow, steady growth this year

By Amanda Reavy Simhauser,
Correspondent

Though the new year will bring its share of challenges and uncertainty, local businesses anticipate slow and steady growth to continue for Springfield's economy in 2014.

"My outlook is cautiously optimistic," said Micah Bartlett, president and chief executive officer of Town and Country Financial Corporation. "It's not extreme optimism by any means, but 2013 ended up being quite frankly one of our best years in terms of lending.



"It's not extreme optimism by any means, but 2013 ended up being quite frankly one of our best years in terms of

lending. We'd like to see more of that result from companies building on and buying new equipment and things like that."

Micah Bartlett, president and chief executive officer of Town and Country Financial Corporation

"We'd like to see more of that result from companies building on and buying new equipment and things like that. We don't see as much of that as we'd like to see. But, I think at the local level, we've

got a very stable economy and I think we have a lot of good things going for us," Bartlett said.

This cautious optimism was echoed by several of Springfield's retailers, business owners and other professionals.

"We don't see (the local economy) driving up like a rocket, but slow and steady growth is the order of the day for our expectations," Steward Sandstrom, president and chief executive officer of The Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce, said.

In 2013, Springfield experienced the lowest unemployment insurance claims it's seen in almost a decade, with several months showing record lows. And results of an economic outlook survey conducted in partnership with The Chamber late last year showed that when asked about growth, respondents across all sectors were twice as likely to say they expected growth, he said.

However, local businesses feel less encouraged when considering state and national economic factors.

Uncertainty about federal regulations and taxes, including the impact of the Affordable Care Act on insurance rates, and the state's ability to meet its funding obligations and pay bills in a timely manner leaves many business owners feeling risk-averse and less confident outside their own businesses, both Bartlett and Sandstrom said.

"Whether it has a definite financial



"We don't see (the local economy) driving up like a rocket, but slow and steady growth is the order of the day for our expectations,"
Steward Sandstrom, president and chief executive officer of The Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce

impact on the bottom line and their ability to grow or whether it's just the perception, uncertainty is a dagger in the heart of growth and Obamacare certainly contributes to that," Sandstrom said.

Bartlett agrees. "The regulatory environment in our industry has a chilling

factor on economic growth. I think concerns about federal budgets and taxes is providing a chilling effect on economic growth, the concerns about healthcare costs and what that's going to look like a year out, particularly for companies that offer health care coverage," Bartlett said. "Both for our business and as well for our clients, I think those are factors that make them not take advantage of growth opportunities that are already there that they would have otherwise."

The healthcare costs also results in more investment in the Springfield's local healthcare infrastructure, which provides positive economic opportunities, he said.

Bartlett noted that the state's recent pension reform plan is a step in the right direction to ease local concerns.

"Whether you think that was good or bad or somewhere in between, the fact it's been addressed at all is a positive step and folks like Moody's and Standard and Poor's take note of that," Sandstrom said.

Here's how other local business leaders expect the economy to fare in 2014 and the challenges and opportunities they anticipate this year:

Jan Creasey, owner of Creasey Construction and president of the Springfield Area Home Builders Association – "The build-



"The building, remodeling and real estate market is strong in my opinion. All of our (subcontractors) and suppliers say the same thing."

Jan Creasey, owner of Creasey Construction and president of the Springfield Area Home Builders Association

ing, remodeling and real estate market is strong in my opinion. All of our (subcontractors) and suppliers say the same thing," he said. Creasey also notes that interest rates are still low and that commercial and residential growth is occurring across the city. "As far as the challenges, we are fortunate to have the SAHB (Springfield Area Home Builders Association) in our corner. They are constantly battling legislation that could increase cost to the consumer for little or no benefit, i.e. energy code and fire sprinklers. Most consumers are not aware these concerns exist. Another big issue is the cost of doing business, especially insurance costs," he said.

Cindy Davis, president and co-owner of Resource One – also expressed the "cautious optimism" expressed by others. "We do anticipate that higher education and healthcare will be a growth segment, at least for us, and we don't hold out too much hope that the state will change their ways and make it possible to do business with them based on its payment history," she said. "We are seeing more

corporate business from clients, but not tons." She also noted that the Business and Institutional Furniture Manufacturers Association forecasts a national six-percent increase in their industry in 2014, which is double from the previous year's predictions. That forecast is welcome as organizations and large corporations are allowing less square footage per employee in their real estate, which decreases the demand for office furniture dealerships



"We do anticipate that higher education and healthcare will be a growth segment, at least for us, and we

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Cindy Davis, president and co-owner of Resource One

such as Resource One, Davis said. She also co-owns her business' building in downtown Springfield and is encouraged that its commercial space is starting to fill up. Davis says efforts such as Downtown Springfield, Inc. including commercial space in its annual Upper Story Tour has helped secure new and potential tenants. "I also serve on a bank board, so I see it from the other side as well, lenders are very cautious... it makes it harder on new businesses starting out and for expansions," she said. "If we had corporations move into Springfield for all of the right reasons – the fact we're located on the highways and on the railway and we have a good base of educated employment possibilities for hiring – for all of those reasons, there should be more corporate and light manufacturing business in this town."

Mark Forinash, owner of Café Moxo – "We're very optimistic about 2014 and it's two-fold, because retail seems to be making a little bit of a jump, and we're optimistic because it seems Springfield in general has been getting a lot of publicity and good press," Forinash said, noting



"It could be an interesting year as it's an election year and us being a downtown establishment. It could go either

way. I'm not sure we're going to go on a limb and get a lot of stuff fixed in Illinois, so there's a high potential that people will be a little conservative in the next year, but the people who walk in our door day in and day out who live here, they feel good about the things going on here."

Mark Forinash, owner of Café Moxo

that the Savvy Stews named Springfield the best family destination of 2013. He thinks independent retailers and other business are starting to reap the rewards

Continued on Next Page

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Continued from Previous Page

of their hard work and that Springfield has a solid base of customers who want to support businesses that give back to the community. "It could be an interesting year as it's an election year and us being a downtown establishment. It could go either way. I'm not sure we're going to go on a limb and get a lot of stuff fixed in Illinois, so there's a high potential that people will be a little conservative in the next year, but the people who walk in our door day in and day out who live here, they feel good about the things going on here."

Henry Humphrey, owner of Humphrey's Market – "We've been here 79 years... and we're just a family operation and



"We try to push local products and it works. Twenty-thirteen was a pretty good year, it was pretty lean, but it was

good, but we grow a little bit all of the time. We've got more competition as there are more retail stores and groceries and new ones are opening all of the time."

Henry Humphrey, owner of Humphrey's Market

we wholesale and retail, and every year it gets a little tougher," he said. However, his market's emphasis on featuring Illinois products helps them carve a niche and stay competitive, Humphrey said. "We try to push local products and it works. 2013 was a pretty good year, it was pretty lean, but it was good, but we grow a little bit all of the time," he said. "We've got more competition as there are more retail stores and groceries and new ones are opening all of the time."

Mark Kuhn, chief administrative officer at Springfield Clinic – "We are bullish on 2014 being successful for us," he said,



"We provide employee physicals and pre-employment drug screens for many areas employers through our occupational medical division and there seems to be a relatively steady stream of new hires that we see."

Mark Kuhn, chief administrative officer at Springfield Clinic

noting that 2013 was a growing year with highlights including 54 new healthcare providers added to the clinic and 13 of its primary care physician locations formally recognized by the National Committee on Quality Assurance. In Springfield, the clinic is in the final stages of completing its new physical therapy building on South Sixth Street, which will be available in February, and is in the process of adding new equipment at its main campus. "2014 like any year presents challenges, from both the federal and state government and local municipality and employers, so there are constant pressures to reduce costs and reduce premiums to improve outcomes, to improve accountability for both the provider and the patient and to improve patient compliance, which is always challenging," he said.

Decreased funding for federal social insurance programs and regulatory changes also put pressure on the expense, volume and efficiency sides of healthcare, Kuhn said. However, there are increased opportunities and bright spots. "We provide employee physicals and pre-employment drug screens for many area employers through our occupational medical division and there seems to be a relatively steady stream of new hires that we see," Kuhn said. "There seems to be positive signs of increasing employment, and we are seeing busy activity in our physicians' offices." Kuhn also noted that as the baby boomers age, there is increasing demand daily from patients 65 and over who have more healthcare needs. Springfield clinic also has expansion plans beyond its traditional 12-county service area to meet the growing demand and provide ancillary services, including social work, auditory and dietician services, surgery centers, etc.

Steve Myers, president of Myers Commercial Real Estate, Inc., and president of the Capital Area Association of Realtors – believes there will be an uptick in home real estate in 2014 from where 2013 ended. "It appears the public is now looking at home building as a way to fulfill their dreams of home ownership," Myers said. The number of foreclosures is also down. Myers noted that according to real estate figures released in November, though interest rates were 1-percent higher than in 2012, total sales for 2013 were on par



"People are still buying, and that is an indicator of strong consumer confidence. It is still really inexpensive to buy a

home."

Steve Myers, president of Myers Commercial Real Estate, Inc., and president of the Capital Area Association of Realtors

He also pointed to a recent housing market study that found a demand for 400 residential units in the downtown area. On the commercial real estate side, new opportunities exist with the new The Outlets of Springfield outlet mall in the Legacy Pointe development. "The key to growing the local economy is having an opportunity for people to come here and buy things. If you can draw people from 40 to 50 to 60 miles away to come here and shop, that's where the growth can occur," Myers said.

Rae Roberts-Griffith, floral consultant at True Colors Floral Artistry – If 2013 was any



"For a while, those two years when the economy was really hurting and because we are a non-essential

business... the going was kind of tough, but over the next year, our business has been growing and I'm very pleased with how things have turned around, and I think next year is going to be more of the same."

Rae Roberts-Griffith, floral consultant at True Colors Floral Artistry

indication, 2014 should be a good year for True Colors, Roberts-Griffith said. "For

a while, those two years when the economy was really hurting and because we are a non-essential business... the going was kind of tough, but over the next year, our business has been growing and I'm very pleased with how things have turned around, and I think next year is going to be more of the same," she said. "I think here in Springfield we might be kind of a microclimate because of the type of businesses we deal with. We don't have a lot of manufacturing and it's more white collar, and I think just from seeing the numbers, I'm very hopeful and excited for what next year brings."

Lee Rupnik, commercial insurance broker, American Central Insurance – Rupnik also says he is cautiously



"The immediate industry outlook expects growing pains associated with the ACA to continue through 2014 and be-

yond. I think the uncertainty and complexity of the legislation contributes to a feeling of 'wait-and-see' among employers, which does not create jobs or generate increased revenue."

Lee Rupnik, commercial insurance broker, American Central Insurance

optimistic about Springfield's economic future but far less hopeful for sustainable economic growth in a state that has the fourth highest unemployment rate in the nation. "Through artificial economies of government and healthcare, Springfield has always enjoyed some insulation from economic downturn felt more profoundly in other areas of Illinois," he said, citing Springfield's unemployment rate of 7.1 percent, which is close to the national rate and significantly healthier than the statewide rate of 8.9 percent. However, Rupnik notes the far-reaching consequences of the Affordable Care Act present unprecedented challenges and obstacles to

growth. "The immediate industry outlook expects growing pains associated with the ACA to continue through 2014 and beyond. I think the uncertainty and complexity of the legislation contributes to a feeling of 'wait-and-see' among employers, which does not create jobs or generate increased revenue," he said. "Likewise, the costs of traditional property, business and auto insurance have continued to rise unchecked. Insurance carriers are seeing reduced returns on investments in stocks, bonds and other market-based funds, which result in a fundamental need to enhance the profit

center of their core operations." Rupnik also says the state's debt and "legislative crisis" shake confidence in the economy. But overall, he believes the local economy will continue to out-perform other areas of the state.

Brad Zara, owner of Zara's Collision Center – "I feel like the local economy is very

stable, so I don't anticipate it going way up or way down at all, and that's been the nature of our local economy relative to our specific business," he said. "We're not affected as much as some businesses by the economy because most of ours is insurance claims, so as long as people can come up with their deductible." He said the technology that now exists in vehicles presents a challenge as it re-

quires more training and more vehicles tend to be deemed total losses because of the cost of repair. "The whole healthcare issue will remain to be a mystery as to how it's truly going to affect us," he



"I feel like the local economy is very stable, so I don't anticipate it going way up or way down at all, and that's been

the nature of our local economy relative to our specific business."

Brad Zara, owner of Zara's Collision Center

noted. Meanwhile, the business is pursuing new vehicle manufacturing certifications to stay competitive and ahead of the curve on trends.

Amanda Reavy Simhauser is a freelance writer from Springfield. She can be reached at info@springfieldbusinessjournal.com

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personality profile •

An artistic cutting edge

By Eric Woods, Correspondent

Springfield –

What is your favorite part about living in Springfield? Shapiro has been in Springfield for eight years and loves the downtown area. “There is so much potential for something creative,” he said. He also enjoys the short distance from St. Louis and Chicago.

What is the worst part about living in Springfield? “We need people living downtown,” said Shapiro. “There is so much potential.”

The biggest issue Springfield currently faces is...? Shapiro believes that more professional people need to live downtown in order to get more businesses back. “We need creativity for downtown to get people to come here after work,” he said.

Employment –

“When I was 10, I wanted to be ... an actor and artist.”

First job? Shapiro worked at a clothing store part-time. “Fashion has always been a tremendous part of my life,” he

said. “When I go to Europe, I zoom in on it.”

Worst job? Shapiro has never had a job he disliked.

Current job and responsibilities? Shapiro has worked on hair for 40 years in two different continents. He has worked on Michigan Avenue in Chicago and will go to London to cut hair. J Design of Springfield is a very specialized, high precision and fashionable salon, according to Shapiro. “I wanted to bring something special to Springfield. It is the only one like this in town,” he said. “This is a salon that caters to a woman and makes her feel fantastic.” All clients need a lengthy consultation in which Shapiro can study the person and the hair.

This consultation will give him an opportunity to see what needs to be done in order to make each one feel stylish and attractive. He will not let anyone leave until the work is right on target.

Philosophical –

What do you want to know about the future? Shapiro wants to grow in Spring-

field as a designer and an artist. “I have a fantastic reputation for what I do in Springfield and the surrounding areas,” he said. Building a male clientele is also something to which Shapiro would like to focus.

Something you learned early in life and still use? Shapiro learned the meaning of dedication, discipline, and respect for what people are.

Advice –

Advice for someone seeking a career in your field? Shapiro comes from a disciplined background and believes others in this field need to be disciplined. “A true designer finds very talented people to work under with whom you respect,” he said. He is also a proponent of continuous training. “You will never go forward if you stop learning. Strive to make your work better and more creative.”

Best advice you have ever been given? “No matter how good you are, you never stop learning,” said Shapiro. He still travels to Europe to keep learning the craft.

Achievements –

As a kid? Shapiro was brought up to respect his elders. He also had elegant manners as a youth. “I am still like that today,” he said.

As an adult? Shapiro has facilitated numerous hair shows which have had



wonderful effects on people. “Someone who had come to one of my hair shows told me that I made her career as a hair designer fantastic,” he said.

Future –

Upcoming job news? Shapiro holds two photo shoots each year and will be looking for a model to put in the window. “This will be next spring,” he said. “A lot goes into a photo shoot.”

Any vacation plans? Shapiro will head back to Europe next year. “Maybe I’ll go to Amsterdam,” he said. “It is a very creative city. I just take my sketch pad and get lost in the world of fashion.”

I want to retire when I’m ... (age)? Shapiro never wants to retire. “There is too much creative mentality inside of me,” he said. “I love what I do. It is a seven day work week for me.”

Eric Woods is a freelance writer from Springfield. He can be reached at eric@springfieldbusinessjournal.com

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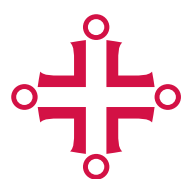


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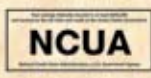
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Giganti, Continued from Page One

ti & Giganti. In a stroke of fortune for all parties involved, this quasi building swap seemed advantageous for everyone.

"About a year ago, I started looking at doing a remodel and tearing some of the building off and adding some parking," Giganti said. "When I put together the cost, I said to myself, 'I'm going to have the same old building, just newer looking.' Unfortunately, we've been very short on parking, and it's very hard getting in and out onto the busy street of Wabash. That's been a hindrance for a lot of years."

Stone, however, said a partial demolition is in the works for the former jewelry store as he and his partners prepare

those licenses, because they don't want the "riff-raff" that people tend to stereotype bar patrons as. Once people see what Lucy's Place is, it definitely gives them a different taste as to what we're trying to do, and I think they become more accepting. We don't have to deal with rowdy customers."

The Lucy's Place website uses words such as "upscale, relaxed and quiet" to describe its facilities. It all seems to cultivate an image of something akin to a coffee house that just happens to have video gambling on the premises. Also, it seems to be marketed toward a particular demographic.

"I will tell you that women tend to not like to go to bars. They also tend to like the places they go to ... to be cleaner," Stone said. "Interestingly enough, when



Giganti & Giganti Fine Jewelers will be moving west to 3325 Robbins Road

to move their businesses in. A drive-thru will be created for the Subway, and additional parking will be added as well.

"The building is shaped like an 'L' so we're going to take out that portion that juts out on the west side of the building in order to create that drive-thru," Stone said. "When you demo that side of the building, where that billboard is, you create space to put parking along that area. We anticipate that we'll be able to get probably 19 parking spots between the back, front and the side of the building."

Stone said they will actually be reducing the square footage of the building from nearly 3,800 sq. ft. to about 2,100, and he anticipates the building will be roughly 70 percent Subway and 30 percent Lucy's Place, which he hopes to have up and running by March. Although most Lucy's Place facilities serve a small menu of sandwiches and similar fare, Stone said they will likely attempt a new model here.

"We're going to try a co-habitation deal where Subway provides sandwiches and cookies to our customers, so we won't do any (of our own) food at the Jerome location," Stone explained. "In our model here, we'll be able to get our patrons soft drinks from the Subway too. It benefits them, it benefits us and it benefits the patrons."

In addition to soft drinks provided by the Subway restaurant, Lucy's Place will also serve its customers beer and wine. Lucy's Place has a four-drink maximum.

Stone explained the philosophy of Lucy's Place being a casual place to have a drink or two while playing a slot machine. It caters to people who typically aren't looking for a traditional bar atmosphere. When asked if such a business model often leads to greater acceptance from the communities Lucy's Place looks to move into, Stone readily said yes.

"I think it does help, especially in obtaining liquor licenses," Stone said. "A lot of people question the awarding of

you look at the demographics of our patrons, it's almost split 50/50. To be honest, we would've thought differently.

"We thought there would be more women, since they tend not to go to bars as much as men. But that's not really been the case, and I don't know how to explain it. We get just as many men as women. We want to take any and all patrons ... but good patrons, not rowdy patrons."

As far as competition from casinos, off-track betting establishments and traditional bars with video gaming on-site, Stone doesn't really see Lucy's Place as a direct competitor to such places. Most traditional casinos, he said, are a fairly lengthy drive for customers in the Central Illinois area. Additionally, patrons of bars and casinos are typically quite loyal to their favored establishments.

"Their patrons are loyal and it's a habit for them to go to the place they like," Stone said. "They'll play slot machines if they happen to be available. I think it's the same thing with casinos. Our places are for those people who don't like bars and don't want to drive to the casinos."

That kind of brand loyalty is something Stone would like to tap into, though. He said many casinos have reward programs for return customers and it wouldn't be surprising for more localized video gaming establishments – Lucy's Place included – to follow suit.

"A great thing they do to attract people is to get items for the amount of time the patrons play," Stone said. "You'll begin to see reward programs come up into the marketplace with these video game facilities, probably within the next 60-90 days. That could definitely increase the amount of patrons you see coming into facilities like ours."

Gabe House is a freelance writer from Auburn. He can be reached at info@springfieldbusinessjournal.com

Hotels, Continued from Page One

Engineering, is the engineer.

Patel purchased his first hotel in Arcola 17 years ago. He owns hotels in Arcola, Jacksonville, Litchfield, Springfield, Staunton and Urbana. He and his family plan to relocate to Springfield.

His original plans included purchasing a property in Prairie Crossing but that fell through. He next tried to buy an existing hotel but was unable to find one he liked in terms of price, property and location. "I decided to build a new one,"



Future site of La Quinta Inn & Suites at 1121 Lejune Drive, across from the Wal-Mart off South Sixth St.

said Patel.

Planning began in the spring of 2012. Patel spent three months searching for a suitable site in the local market. He purchased the 1.4 acre property for \$485,000 from Walmart, who has a contractual relationship with the brand.

The hotel is located off of Interstates 55 and 72. "The building will be visible



The former Super 8 hotel at 3675 S. Sixth St. is being remodeled into a Comfort Inn & Suites

from the interstate," said Patel. "The location will help drive traffic to the hotel."

Patel has a 20-year licensing agreement with La Quinta Inn & Suites. "La Quinta was looking at expanding into the area," he said.

"La Quinta is a hot market," continued Patel. "I wanted the best name I could find." There are 850 worldwide, with approximately 20 in Illinois. This will be the first in the Springfield market.

The hotel will have 22 suites. Additional amenities include a meeting room for 100, indoor pool and a whirlpool. It will employ approximately 25 to 30 employees, and Patel will oversee day to day management.

Once it opens, Patel expects to bring in annual revenues of \$1.4 to \$1.5 million.

Vik Patel, president of PPVV Hospitality Group, Inc., is remodeling the former Super 8 hotel at 3675 S. Sixth St. and plans to reopen in 2014 under the Comfort Inn & Suites flag. He purchased the two and one-half acre property from Illinois National Bank in 2011.

Vik Patel formed PPVV Hospitality Group, Inc. two years ago for this project.

He has been in the hotel business for 15 years and owns several mom and pop hotels in northern Illinois.

His company targets distressed properties. "We take property, convert it and turn it around," said Vik Patel. "This was a good opportunity to come in and do a remodel."

The hotel has been operating under the Rodeway Inn flag, which is part of the Choice Hotels group, before he closed it to make repairs without inconveniencing guests. "It needed a lot of remodeling," said Vik Patel.

Vik Patel has a 10-year licensing agreement with Comfort Inn & Suites. He was in talks with them for a little over a year.

"Comfort Inn is a good flag," said Vik Patel. "They stand behind their name."

He characterizes his relationship with the brand as fairly close. "They work with their franchisees," said Vik Patel. "They keep in touch with every aspect of the project."

The remodel began six months ago.

"It's been an adventure," said Vik Patel. "There's always something."

Vik Patel is overseeing the construction work and is working with ADL Architecture, Inc., who was recommended by La Quinta Inn & Suites. "There's plenty of work left to do," he said.

The underground duct work has been completed as well as structural work in the lobby area and second floor foyer. He is currently working on room tear down and needs to finish electrical and plumbing work and painting. "We took out several rooms," said Vik Patel.

The three-story, 80-unit hotel will have a pool and fitness room and offer guests a free continental breakfast, internet and cable. It will employ between 15 and 20 people, and Linda Turner

will serve as general manager and run the day to day operations.

Vik Patel said the first three years are difficult. "It takes time to establish a new name," he said. "Comfort Inns & Suites brings in business." A grand opening is planned for 2014.

David Swift, president and CEO of Swift Hospitality Group, Inc. in Freeport, saw his first Country Inn & Suites in Paducah, KY. while on a family trip to Florida. "I thought it was an interesting concept," he said.

After he returned, he contacted the Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group. He built the first Country Inn & Suites in Freeport in 1995. There are 31 in Illinois.

The company manages 14 hotels in Illinois, South Dakota and Wisconsin. This was its 26th project and ninth Country Inn & Suites.

Swift managed two properties for Glen Garrison, chairman and CEO of Garrison Group, Inc., in Champaign-Urbana. Garrison knew Jim Erkmann, president of Prehn Plaza, who held the lease rights to put a hotel on the site of the former Signature Inn at 3092 Stevenson Dr., which is owned by City Water Light and Power.

He knew from ongoing dialogues with the brand that they were looking for areas to develop. After conducting a development analysis, Swift said it was a good location.

It is next to the interstate and provides good access for travelers. Swift said the trilogy of hospitality is lodging, food and fuel. There is a new Jiffi Stop gas station and convenience store going up on the property.

"Country Inn & Suites is a strong midwestern brand," said Swift. The demographics of the brand work with the demographics of the Springfield market.

"We were the first to buy a license for Springfield," said Swift. He originally planned to build a Generation 3 1/2 property. However, when the brand announced plans to roll out its new Generation 4 prototype at its annual business conference, he made the decision to move forward.

Michelle Masters, regional vice president, said the brand's relationship with Swift Hospitality Group, Inc. goes back a long way. "He was a little ahead of the brand," she said.

"We wanted to take advantage of the opportunity," said Swift. "This is the first Generation 4 hotel in the world. It's a complete redesign."

His group was the developer and Sand Companies, Inc., Waite Park, Minn., handled design and construction. The four-story, 78-unit hotel took almost a year to complete.

The new Generation 4 exterior features a flat roof with sleek, straight lines and wood slats and stone accents. "We wanted a new look," said Masters.

"It's a complete 180 degree difference in design," said Swift. "It's a move away from the traditional Victorian farmhouse look."

"You build hotels for multiple generations of people," continued Swift. "Young people are the consumers of the future. We wanted to provide things they were interested in, in terms of aesthetics and service."

Key design elements include a stone and wood accent wall in the lobby and fireplace and soft seating area and business center. A den is located off the lobby where guests can relax. One new element is a breakfast area called the Servery with a separate seating area from the serving area.

Masters said the property continues

a tradition the brand launched several years ago and offers guests a Read It and Return lending library where guests borrow a book at one hotel and returns it at the next. "This is something that is very special to our guests," she said.

Among the amenities the hotel offers



Country Inn & Suites has completed construction at the former Signature Inn property at 3092 Stevenson Drive

are a pool, fitness center, complimentary hot breakfast, airport shuttle, a sundry shop and free wireless internet. Each room has spa-like bathrooms and oversized headboards in an eclectic color palette along with flat screen high definition televisions, microwaves and refrigerators.

The hotel has approximately 25 employees. Ragan Myerscough is the general manager.

"We're very happy with the way the hotel turned out," said Masters. "We want to continue to move in this direction."

Roberta Codemo is a freelance writer from Springfield. She can be reached at info@springfieldbusinessjournal.com

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personality profile •

Working on the edge, wisely

By Eric Woods, Correspondent

Springfield –

What is your favorite part about living in Springfield? Stott loves the people and places in Springfield. “I have made some really good friends here,” Stott said. The historical sites, the parks, and the downtown area are some of her favorites.

What is the worst part about living in Springfield? “There is a thinking here that great ideas accomplished elsewhere cannot be replicated or adapted here,” said Stott.

The biggest issue Springfield currently faces is...? Stott would like to see the revitalization of the downtown area continue. “We have a window, and I hope it does not close without having acted,” she said.

Employment –

“When I was 10, I wanted to be ... a writer.

First job? Stott was a babysitter at age 12. She was responsible for one family of five kids.

Worst job? “I never had a bad job,”

said Stott. “Every bad experience in a job teaches you things.”

Current job and responsibilities? Edgewise Consulting has been in business for a year and a half. Stott provides organizations with strategic communication assistance, project management, and problem solving initiatives. “I work with companies and assist with how they can achieve what they want,” she said. The business is very project oriented, and Stott enjoys being involved with multiple initiatives. “The basic theme is to get the message to the people you should be meeting.”

Philosophical –

What do you want to know about the future? Stott is hopeful that Springfield will take

advantage of building a residential downtown. “I hope to see a vibrant, exiting downtown with a number of young professionals down here,” she said.

How do you envision your life in 10 years?

“I hope to have a lot of fun and interesting projects with passionate clients,” said Stott. Attaining her master’s degree and finding more time to travel with her fam-

ily are also important. “My son will be 21, so I hope I will not be freaking out.”

Something you learned early in life and still use? “Take chances,” said Stott. “It is like acting. Try out and get positive feedback. You will learn that putting yourself out there is not so bad.”

Advice –

Advice for someone seeking a career in your field? “Finding a mentor who is on the same path is helpful,” said Stott. Reading up on the industry is also beneficial as is knowing about technology, although it is not a necessity to have the latest of everything, according to Stott.

Best advice you have ever been given? “What is the worst thing that can happen?” said Stott. “The worst is never really that bad. Sometimes you just have to go for it.”

Achievements –

As a kid? As a senior in high school, Stott was on the school’s speech team and made it to State in extemporaneous speaking. “I had a good run that year,” she said.

As an adult? “I chose a really good life partner, which is very important,” said Stott. “I also started running in my mid-30s. I am proud of that.”



Future –

Upcoming job news? “I have a fun client roster in 2014,” said Stott. “I look forward to working with all of them.” Stott would also like to develop a nucleus of people she sees regularly.

Any vacation plans? Stott is taking her family to Florida to see the Boston Red Sox in Spring Training.

I want to retire when I’m ... (age)? “I never want to retire,” said Stott. She may increase her number of volunteer activities and decrease her money-making activities, however. “I always want a challenge. Maybe I will finally write a novel.”

Eric Woods is a freelance writer from Springfield. He can be reached at eric@springfieldbusinessjournal.com



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Levi, Ray & Shoup, Inc.



Prairie Eye Center



The Real Estate Group



Springfield Business Journal is proud to join with United Community Bank in the "Best Places to Work" in central Illinois program for 2014.

This year's Best Places to Work acknowledges three companies in central Illinois who are dedicated to their employees' growth and a quality workplace.

The Best Places to Work program is open to all companies: public, private and not-for-profit located in central Illinois with 16 employees or more. Nomination forms were distributed in the October, November and December issues of Springfield Business Journal, at local United Community Bank branches and through the Springfield Business Journal's and United Community Bank's websites. More than 150 nominations were considered for 65 plus different companies.

The selection process involved careful review of the nominations. Each of the selected companies distinguished themselves for being dedicated to their employees in one form or another. Congratulations to the 2014 selectees for being recognized as one of the Best Places to Work in central Illinois: Levi, Ray & Shoup, Inc.; Prairie Eye Center; and The Real Estate Group.

A ceremony will be held to acknowledge these companies in January at the Montvale branch of United Community Bank. Charlotte J. Warren, Ph.D., president, Lincoln Land Community College, will be the keynote speaker.

Springfield Business Journal would like to express our appreciation to United Community Bank for sponsoring and underwriting the cost of the Best Places to Work in central Illinois program.

— Brant Mackey, editor and publisher,
Springfield Business Journal



2014



Levi, Ray & Shoup, Inc.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS

- **Address:** 2401 W. Monroe St.
Springfield, Ill. 62704
- **Website:** www.lrs.com
- **Year founded:** 1979
- **Gross revenue:** \$176,600,000
- **Type of organization:** Privately Held
- **CEO:** Richard Levi, 34 years
- **# of Employees / Demographics:**
full-time – 635
- **Unionized?** No
- **Bonus or Merit Program offered?** No, but bonus program for employee referrals.
- **Employee Stock Participation Plan?** No
- **Compensation & Benefits:**
Dental Coverage
Fitness / Wellness Program
Life Insurance
Medical Coverage
Paid Maternity Leave
Prescription Drug Plan
Short-Term Disability
Tuition Reimbursement
Vision Coverage
- **Hours a week to be eligible for benefits?** 24
- **Paid percentage of health care premium?** Varies by chosen plan
- **Paid time Off:** Yes
- **Maximum paid time off accumulation:** No maximum
- **Paid holidays:** 9
- **Length of orientation program:** 8 - 16 hours
- **Voluntary turnover rate in the last year:** 8%
- **Any layoffs affecting more than 2% of employee population in the last two years?** No
- **Employee recognition/appreciation program?** No
- **Employee suggestion box?** Yes

Levi, Ray & Shoup, Inc.



Levi, Ray & Shoup, Inc. is not a small company by any stretch of the imagination. In addition to the Springfield office, there are offices in 10 other U.S. cities, five in Europe and one in both Asia and Australia. All that taken into account, the employees at

The company is also committed to utilizing working managers who, according to LRS philosophies, should “lead by example and sacrifice.”

“We’re open and honest in our communications, good or bad,” said Heisler.

Mission Statement:

To deliver outstanding information technology solutions, products and services to its Customers, while making a profit; conducting business and operations in a professional, ethical and legal manner; and providing our Employees a workplace that values respect for others, hard work, honesty, initiative and achievement.

LRS are seen as more than faces in the crowd.

“Technology is constantly changing,” said Shannon Heisler, a senior manager in marketing services and corporate recruiting. “We do high-quality work and we take a lot of pride.”

The group at the Springfield office have many opportunities to bond and get together. LRS hosts a catered Christmas party where employees usually unwind with board games, a Texas Hold ‘em tournament or even a chance to show off their “Guitar Hero” prowess. Other events take place throughout the year, including a family picnic at Knight’s Action Park and a trip to St. Louis for a Cardinals baseball game. Other events occur among the company’s seven different departments, which could include potlucks or a gathering to recognize a service anniversary.

While the people at LRS may play games during their annual Christmas party, they don’t play games when it comes to sharing information with employees.

There is also very little bureaucracy when the need to make changes arise, something that Heisler sees as a major positive. LRS was started as the brainchild of Dick Levi, Roger Ray and Bob Shoup in 1979. Shoup sold his interest to the other two in 1980 and Ray sold his interest back to the company in 1993. Since then, Levi has been the sole shareholder. Because of this, there aren’t many hoops to jump through when something needs to be changed.

“The decision-making process is very lean,” Heisler said. “People aren’t bogged down by something that doesn’t work anymore. When you work in IT you consistently want the best of the best.”

That idea also plays into why LRS has written most of its own internal systems. Systems for things like payroll, expenses and travel requests are all written in-house, which puts LRS in a “unique position,” according to Heisler.

“It keeps us fresh and on top of technology,” she said.

But technology isn't all that LRS has to offer. The company is also highly involved in the community. Dick Levi gives to both national and local groups, including the Hoogland Center for the Arts, Sparc and Habitat for Humanity. LRS employees have also participated in building of Habitat homes, formed Relay for Life teams and raised money and purchased gifts for a family at the Sojourn Shelter during the holiday season.

The company also holds a casual Friday with a twist. To participate, employees contribute a \$5 donation to a different weekly charity. The charities range from animal shelters to the American Cancer Society.

On average, the company raises about \$750 a week towards the casual Friday charity of the week. Employees submit the name of a 501(c)(3) charity to human resources and that charity is put on the schedule.

"I think there are few charitable organizations in the area not touched by LRS and its employees in some way," said Heisler.

In addition to caring about the well-being of the community, LRS is also committed to the well-being of its employees. There is an extensive gym that includes free weights, a cardio area, a pool and two racquetball courts, one of which is also used for basketball and yoga. The gym is also available to employees' families and is open at all times, save for an hour each day for cleaning. Levi, Ray & Shoup also brings in professionals to teach swimming lessons for all ages.

"When you ask what makes LRS a great place to work, one of the things I think about is how we find a role where employees can succeed," said Kurt Windisch, a manager in the Information Services department. "I see that time and time again in personnel discussions, there's a genuine concern for finding the right role for folks. Someone may not be right for one role, but with our size we can often find a role where that person can truly flourish."

"To me, some places are dog-eat-dog and that's really the nature of the recruiting business, but integrity's important," said Kendra Lee, a technical recruiter for LRS. "My manager always talks about the need to maintain professional and personal integrity, and that if you say you're going to call someone back you need to do it."

"When I started here 23 years ago, it was smaller and it was a lot like family," said Dan Connolly, who is a senior software developer. "There are still a lot of those people working here now that I consider good friends. We have a lot of people who've been here a lot of years."

The development group I'm in, rarely does anyone leave us. I really have no intention of leaving."

The turnover rate at Levi, Ray & Shoup is fairly

NOTABLE NOMINATION

LRS is an awesome place to work. Fun co-workers, creative teams, and fantastic technology solutions that rank LRS the best at what they do. I've been with LRS for nearly 18 years and am still having a ball here. Casual days for charity each week; Habitat for Humanity, Relay for Life, United Way, etc....the list of community support from LRS and its employees is very long. Springfield HQ is a beautiful facility. State of art auditorium and classrooms, gym facility with pool, hot tub, nautilus and free weights. Great place to work in Central Illinois!

low. According to Heisler, the average tenure at the company is 9.7 years. On an employee's first day, he or she receives a Levi, Ray & Shoup, Inc. pin. Every five years they are given a new pin with a diamond in it that



LRS maintains a health club at its corporate headquarters offering a full line of Nautilus equipment, pool, sauna, whirlpool, free weights, racquetball courts and locker rooms.

represents their years of service. When an employee reaches 25 years, he or she receives a Rolex watch.

"Our people have seen each other get married and raise children," Heisler said. "The people, for me, makes LRS a Best Place to Work. We're like a family here."

For Heisler, the idea of LRS being a family is both figurative and literal. Her husband, sister and sister-in-law all also work for the company.

"Sometimes people do not recommend their workplace to their friends or family. For me, that is definitely not the case. The people here make this place pretty special," said Heisler.

Mitchell Ladd is a freelance writer from Springfield.



Dan Connolly
Senior Software Developer

This is going to sound like a cliché, but I like what I do, I like the people, and it's a good environment. There's a lot of freedom here in the way we approach our work. You know, the technology we're working with, we have good facilities, good access to information, and we have a lot of sharp people here.



Kendra Lee
Technical Recruiter

I feel like you get to be creative in your job. And your talents are recognized. Your differences are also recognized; they don't want you to be like everyone else. You're encouraged to think outside the box. For instance, if you want to join different technical groups in searching for talent, they say, 'We've never tried that, but if you think it will work, why not?'



Shelley Williams
Senior Marketing Assistant

Everyone is respectful here. I don't see any difference in the way I'm treated from Dick Levi on down. Everyone treats me with the same respect and that's why I love working for such a great company.



From the President
Dick Levi

Levi, Ray & Shoup, Inc. (LRS) is honored and humbled to have been nominated by our employees and selected as a "Best Place to Work".

As LRS has grown and attained many milestones over the years, we have been incredibly fortunate to attract and retain the quality people who make it up. Our people are the key ingredient to LRS' success. Each employee, through hard work and unique contributions, has helped LRS prosper.

Since 1979, our mission has been to deliver

outstanding information technology solutions, products and services to our customers while making a profit; conducting business and operations in a professional, ethical and legal manner; and providing our employees a workplace that values respect for others, hard work, honest, initiative and achievement. We remain focused on this mission 34 years later.

We know we can never predict the future of LRS simply by looking at our past successes. Instead, we determine our future by applying the knowledge and abilities that we have gained from past experiences. The people at LRS give us the competitive edge in our industry, and we thank each and every one of them for the commitment and passion they bring to LRS every day.

Thank you to the Springfield Business Journal and UCB for awarding LRS with this honor.



Kurt Windisch
Manager,
Information Services

What really makes LRS a great place to work is that you feel like you're part of the team, that everybody is working toward the same goal. When you come to work you feel like you're participating and not just clocking in every day. We do the right things for the right reasons, and that makes it fun to come to work each day.



PRAIRIE EYE CENTER

- **Address:** 2020 W. Iles St.
Springfield, Ill. 62704
- **Website:** www.prairieeyecenter.com
- **Year founded:** 1965
- **Gross revenue:** DND
- **Type of organization:** Privately Held
- **CEO:** Sandra Yeh, M.D.
- **# of Employees / Demographics:**
full-time – 92
part-time – 5
- **Unionized?** DND
- **Bonus or Merit Program offered?** Yes
- **Employee Stock Participation Plan?** Yes
- **Compensation & Benefits:**
Compressed Work Week
Dental Coverage
Fitness / Wellness Program
Life Insurance
Medical Coverage
Mentoring Program
Paid Maternity Leave
Paid Volunteer Time
Prescription Drug Plan
Short-Term Disability
Tuition Reimbursement
Vision Coverage
- **Hours a week to be eligible for benefits?** 28
- **Paid percentage of health care premium?** 100%
- **Paid time Off:** Yes
- **Maximum paid time off accumulation:** 160 hours
- **Paid holidays:** 7
- **Length of orientation program:** 80 hours
- **Voluntary turnover rate in the last year:** DND
- **Any layoffs affecting more than 2% of employee population in the last two years?** No
- **Employee recognition/appreciation program?** Yes
- **Employee suggestion box?** No

Prairie Eye Center



Patients are a virtue at Prairie Eye Center. According to Dr. Sandra Yeh, Prairie Eye Center wouldn't be where it is today without its patients, and the team tries to make it known to every person who walks through their doors.

general.”
Pets are also considered part of that extended family. The team at Prairie Eye Center have organized an in-house pet-sitting service so pet owners don't have to board their furry friends during long trips.

Mission Statement:
See the future with us.

“They (the patients) make it all happen,” said Jack Vinson, administrator for Prairie Eye Center. “They know they only have two eyes and they want the best people taking care of them.”
“It's about the spirit of the people here,” said Yeh. “We go the extra mile of compassion. It's a happy place and very upbeat. We don't believe in gloom and doom.”
That extra mile of compassion doesn't end with the patients, however. The employees at Prairie Eye Center also look out for one another.
“We are truly an extended family,” said Vinson.
The feeling of being an extended family spreads to other members of the staff as well. Good or bad, the staff at Prairie Eye Center comes together to help celebrate milestones in each other's lives such as an employee's child getting a driver's license. They also come together to support one another through hardships, such as the loss of a loved one.
“We share each other's day-to-day work life,” said Sarah Link, a technician for Dr. William Yang, a cornea specialist. “But we also share in each other's lives in

“We're always helping each other out,” said Yeh.
Respect is another reason that a lot of staff members see Prairie Eye Center as a Best Place to Work. People are treated equally and there's not a sense that one person's job is more important than another's.
“We work together to get the job done,” Link said. “Part of that starts with the physicians and the way they act with their staff. I think that makes a big difference.”
“You're always told when you're doing a good job,” said Brendon Boggs, optical manager for Prairie Eye Center. “It's really nice when someone does that.”
Boggs also mentioned the low turnover at the Center and appreciates the opportunity to get to know his co-workers.
“It's nice to develop a good rapport and friendship,” he said.
Prairie Eye Center is also committed to helping out the community. Yeh gives her doctors time off to provide free eye services at Catholic Charities and also assist low-income patients at SIU School of Medicine.
The group has also been involved in Memorial's

Festival of Trees, an annual event featuring decorated trees, wreaths and other holiday activities to benefit Memorial Medical Center. They also take part in St. John's Hospital's Toast of the Town program. Toast of the Town is a series of fundraising dinners to support St. John's Hospital. During the course of the program, Prairie Eye Center has hosted 10 of the dinners. Yeh has also participated in the Salvation Army's Red Kettle program, which aims to support people in need during the holiday season.

"She doesn't like to take credit but she does a lot," Vinson said.

Yeh has twice been involved in the American Diabetes Association's Kiss-A-Pig Gala. The event, which supports diabetes research and education, is a contest among members of the community. Whichever person raises the most money gets to, as the name suggests, kiss a pig. The last time she participated, she raised an estimated \$20,000, though that wasn't enough to kiss the pig.

After Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans, Yeh, at her own expense, took it upon herself to organize a fundraiser at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum to benefit the victims. Most recently, the staff at Prairie Eye Center came together to organize a drive for people affected by November's tornadoes in Washington, Ill. Because of the drive, coats, food and other necessary items were donated to those in need.

In 1986, Yeh graduated from Northwestern University School of Medicine. In 1990, she began working with Dr. Michael Walsh, who started his practice in 1965. When Walsh retired in 1990, Yeh had the opportunity to expand her practice.

That expansion led to the Center acquiring branches in Hillsboro, Jacksonville, Lincoln, Girard and Beardstown. It also led to the construction of a new building on West Iles Avenue in 1997. Vinson recalled the time Yeh was looking for a new location. When looking at West Iles, she knew her address had to be, appropriately, 2020. To accommodate that, she ended up purchasing a double lot.

Staying up-to-date on technology is also a big factor of Prairie Eye Center's success.

"Almost anything that ails the adult eye, we can fix it," said Yeh. "We have the newest and latest and greatest technologies. We want to make Springfield a referring hub in medical care."

Among the issues that Prairie Eye Center helps treat are cataracts, glaucoma and macular degeneration. Cataracts affect the lens inside of the eye, causing cloudiness and making it difficult for light to pass

through the lens. Over time, it can make everyday tasks such as driving or reading more difficult.

"We are the only office in Springfield to offer on-

NOTABLE NOMINATION

I am very proud to say that I am an employee of Prairie Eye Center. Not only are our doctors great with our patients, but they are great with the staff as well. We strive to work together to make what can be a not so great experience, to a good experience. Our doctors are invested in us and the future!

site laser-assisted cataract surgery which uses a laser to pre-divide and soften a cataract before surgery," said Yeh. "It offers a greater degree of safety and precision to our patients."

Prairie Eye Center also performs the most multifocal lens implants in the area. The procedure gives patients who have had cataract surgery the ability to read



without their glasses.

At the end of the day, for many at Prairie Eye Center, the best part of their job is to help others see clearer.

"Helping people is a quick reward," said Boggs. "You get to see that reward immediately."

"We work together to get the job done. I feel like what we do makes a difference," said Link.

Mitchell Ladd is a freelance writer from Springfield.



Margaret H. Gleeson
Contact Lens Technician

I have worked at Prairie Eye Center going on nine years and I truly feel that we offer the most extensive eye care in the area. We have service that no other ophthalmologist office offers. I am proud to say that I am an employee for the finest eye doctors in Springfield. Prairie Eye Center is a caring family that helps people see the world. Thank you, Dr. Yeh.



Jason Lang, CPC
Billing Administrator

When I started (going on 18 years ago) I was asked, "Where do you see yourself in 20 years, kid?" At the time I had no clue where Prairie Eye Center would take me, let alone where I would be. Over the years the business has grown and expanded with over 100 employees between the main office, remote locations as well as the Surgery Center. I tell people it's not just a job for me, it's a career. I personally enjoy working for Prairie Eye Center because of the stability and continuous growth of the organization as well as the relaxed family feel. Our boss Dr. Yeh has said, "because of the employees and our patients, Prairie Eye Center would not be what it is today without them." I'm not too humble to admit that without our boss Dr. Yeh, Prairie Eye Center would not be the same and I look forward to many more years to come.



Bobbi Sipes
Reception Manager

I really like working here at Prairie Eye Center; I always have a smile on my face. I work with great people and our patients are just wonderful. I have been here 17 years and it feels like family.



From the President
Sandra Yeh, M.D.

Prairie Eye Center is so very proud to be selected as a Best Place to Work. Over 20 years ago I only dreamed of having the talented and dedicated staff that we employ today and attaining this honor has made that dream a reality. Prairie Eye Center evolved from the solo practice I began many years ago to our present day organized and efficient practice which includes 16 doctors, six branch office locations and a support staff of 97 full and part time employees. Our mission goal of providing quality eye care to our patients is a daily task that each and every employee

takes seriously and without reservation. From its inception, Prairie Eye Center has focused on patient care that would instill confidence in our patients they can rely on and receive that extra special personal attention and dedication that we feel sets us apart as eye care professionals. Our dedicated team of doctors know that they can rely on their staff for patient care that is not only professional but also efficient and friendly. As our patients enter and exit our campus the building sign reminds them to 'See the future with Us.'

From myself, my partner, Dr. Fred Rauscher and all of us here at Prairie Eye Center, a big thank you so much to United Community Bank and Springfield Business Journal for taking time to recognize businesses like ours that make Springfield a truly wonderful place to live and work.



Patty Williams
Finance Manager

Prairie Eye Center offers great benefits and a good working environment that promotes excellent patient care. We have an exceptional staff that makes it fun while still being professional. Prairie Eye Center is a wonderful place to work. I have been here almost 20 years and it's amazing to look back at PEC's transformation. I can't wait to see what's next!



The Real Estate Group



- **Address:** 3701 W. Wabash Ave.
Springfield, Ill. 62711
- **Website:** www.thegroup.com
- **Year founded:** 1997
- **Gross sales revenue:** \$345,000,000
- **Type of organization:** Privately Held
- **Managing Broker:** Michael J. Buscher
Springfield, 5 years
- **# of Employees / Demographics:**
Licensed Brokers - 125
full-time – 5
part-time – 2
34% male / 66% female
- **Unionized?** No
- **Bonus or Merit Program offered?** Yes
- **Employee Stock Participation Plan?** No
- **Compensation & Benefits:**
Mentoring Program
- **Hours a week to be eligible for benefits?** 35
- **Paid percentage of health care premium?** N/A
- **Paid time Off:** Yes
- **Maximum paid time off accumulation:** None - fiscal
year vacation time
- **Paid holidays:** 5
- **Voluntary turnover rate in the last year:** 0%
- **Any layoffs affecting more than 2% of
employee population in the last two years?** No
- **Employee recognition/appreciation program?** Yes
- **Employee suggestion box?** Yes

Selling real estate can, at times, be a challenging task. That's why those at The Real Estate Group do what it takes to lighten the mood at the office.

"Internally, we try to keep it light and fun," said managing broker Mike Buscher. "When you come in

It's also not uncommon for the group to host summer gatherings and BBQs.

They also get involved in the community, with Buscher pointing out work The Group has done with Springfield Sharefest, a project giving "Extreme School

Mission Statement:

We place our client's needs and interest first, knowing that we are rewarded in direct proportion to our willingness to serve. We are honest in our dealings with each other and the public. We are self-motivated, goal oriented and we display High Moral Character. We will strictly follow the National Association of REALTORS Code of Ethics. We are innovative and strive for Success. We deal with our Partners and affiliates in such a way as to contribute to their growth while enhancing the continuity of the Real Estate Group business.

here we don't want to add to the challenges." To do that, The Real Estate Group's office on West Wabash is a hub of support and wisecracks.

"We're all very supportive," Buscher said. "My job is to be here to help. They (the brokers) have always got somebody to vent to. Having a network of support helps immensely."

Buscher said that a big part of his job involves being a sounding board for brokers. But he is not the only one that brokers and staff members can come to. With 23 owners, The Real Estate Group has a strong network of people to help, whether it's to bounce ideas off of one another or to have a couple laughs.

That sense of camaraderie doesn't end at the office. The Real Estate Group also hosts a large Christmas party for its 125 licensees and seven staff members.

Makeovers" to local schools in the most need. Two years ago, The Real Estate Group helped with the project at McClernand Elementary and helped at Jane Addams Elementary this year.

"Most of our help was manpower. Painting, cleaning, landscaping, etc.," said Buscher. "Most of our agents are involved in charities and community service programs. As independent contractors they choose their organizations."

The Real Estate Group started in 1997 with seven Springfield real estate brokers coming together. Each of the seven brokers had an equal share of ownership. In doing so, this gave the partners the opportunity to share expenses while keeping any earnings from their own practice.

In 1999, The Real Estate Group grew to 17 partners

to cover both residential and commercial markets. The Group went on to acquire Realty 100 in 2007 and Aspen Real Estate two years later. Since that time, The Group has grown into one of the most successful real estate companies in the area. Its licensees are independent contractors, which gives them the ability to make their own hours, among other perks. The licensed agents also do not report to a single broker-owner, which is a customary agreement.

Buscher gave a tour of the office and, in the process, had some staff members ask why they enjoyed working with The Group. As a testament to the office's lighthearted demeanor and to attempt to keep The Real Estate Group's designation as a Best Place to Work a secret for the time being, Buscher told his staff members that the unfamiliar guy with the notebook was anywhere from a representative at a rival real estate agency to a police officer. The others in the office agree that The Group's supportive environment is what makes the place special.

"It's a positive atmosphere and energy," said Sarah Grussenmeyer, a broker who has spent eight years with The Group.

"As a partner, you have a say in what goes on," said broker/partner Cindi Kruse, who has been with The Group for 14 years. "We like the additional training." There are, depending on the year, between two and four educational offerings offsite to help brokers hone their skills.

In some offices, regardless of the line of work, there's usually that one person that is not popular among the rest of the staff. According to a few people at The Real Estate Group, this is not an issue at the office.

"I've never worked in a place where everyone gets along," said assistant Debbie Weeaks, putting a heavy emphasis on "everyone." Weeaks is a Texas native who has worked in many different offices and has been with The Group for a year.

"It is a fun place," said Chris Gifford, a listing coordinator who has worked for The Group for seven years. "We have a lot of credibility and integrity."

That integrity extends to others in the organization.

"We take pride in our company and we share in that pride," said Thao Le, office manager for the Killebrew team, who has worked for the company for

three years.

Many members of The Real Estate Group agreed on what made The Group special.

NOTABLE NOMINATION

I love my job at The Real Estate Group and look forward to coming to work every day. Outstanding management and friendly, knowledgeable administrative staff, this office is an incredible place to work for real estate agents of all levels and their support teams. It's a very welcoming environment with amazing camaraderie. It's the BEST place to work!

"The people and the environment," Le said. That attitude doesn't just stop with The Group's employees.

To be successful at The Real Estate Group, "You really have to like people," said Gifford.

In the end, a lot of what makes The Real Estate Group different is its ability to keep things exciting.

"Every day is a little different," said broker Ryan



Squires, who has been with The Group for about a month. "It keeps it from being monotonous."

"I tell everybody, it's the environment," said Buscher when asked about his favorite part of working with The Real Estate Group. "It's a very positive environment. We have really good people and they're really good at what they do and I'm not taking away from other companies. It's a lot of fun. It's as fun as real estate can be."

Mitchell Ladd is a freelance writer from Springfield.



Randy Aldrich
Broker/Associate GRI, CRS

I love running my Real Estate business here at the Real Estate Group! The professional staff and environment along with the incredible network of full time agents are second to none. It has always been my desire to make sure that I am a part of the best real estate company where myself and my buyer and seller clients have the greatest potential to reach our goals. The Real Estate Group is definitely that place!



Jane Hay
Broker/Partner

It's not only refreshing but it's energizing to come to work every day where people love their job and work hard for our clients. To be able to seek professional opinions, advice and friendship from other colleagues in our office (even though they could be the competition) not only creates a team feeling but also is a great benefit to our clients. The energy in our office is contagious and the friendships are priceless!



Troy Roark
Broker

I have been in Real Estate for the past nine years, and here at The Real Estate Group for the past five. I honestly can't imagine working anywhere else. There is a certain amount of care The Real Estate Group shows their agents, and subsequently their clients, that I don't think you get at other brokerages. I also appreciate the mix of young, eager agents with some of the best agents in the Springfield area. On many days, you can sit in on a training session, then take ten steps and join John B Clark for coffee in the kitchen. Those opportunities do not exist at other agencies in Springfield.



From the Partner-In-Charge
Mike Buscher

I enjoy pulling in the parking lot everyday. The people who work here create such a positive environment, it is fun to walk in the door and take on the challenge of "The Real Estate Business." Every person from staff to agents to management understands the value of working hard and having fun. The Real Estate Group has grown steadily almost every year since the doors have opened. To become the most successful real estate company in

Central Illinois in the short time we have been in business speaks volumes for the trust and faith the public has in our agents. That relationship with the public is our main focus. Doing business in an environment that is positive and supportive carries over to our ability to successfully complete the record number of transactions we do. Our success in helping our clients speaks for itself. Our success in having a wonderful work environment was just recognized. We are blessed with the best staff in the business and the hardest working agents you can find. I could not be more proud of this team. I am grateful to be part of it.



Cheri Shadis-Baker
Broker / Partner

The Real Estate Group is the Best Place to Work because it has the best support staff with lots of experience. The company continues to keep up with, and offers training for, the latest updates in the industry and has great networking among our agents and affiliate partners. We take much pride in our company appearance and participation of the community affairs.



United Community Bank's Best Places to Work in Central Illinois

2008 AIG American General

AIG offers an assortment of unique benefits such as a mentoring program, paid volunteer time, a subsidized on-site cafeteria, tuition reimbursement and more. AIG also encourages the overall health and wellness of its employees with a comprehensive fitness program.



2008 Crawford, Murphy & Tilly, Inc.

CMT is focused on the Continuous Improvement Initiative, a company-wide quality improvement program, that encourages employees in all units to work together for a more efficient work process. As Continuous Improvement Initiative projects are completed, teams are recognized and rewarded by management.

2008 H. D. Smith Wholesale Drug Company

H.D. Smith continues to grow as one of the nation's largest full-line, full-service wholesale drug companies serving retail, hospital, and institutional pharmacies. The company's philosophy remains centered around staying close to the employees and retaining a small, family-oriented company culture.



2009 Hanson Professional Services, Inc.

Hanson is committed to a culture that helps their employees develop personally and professionally. Training, mentoring, coaching and sharing are all hallmarks of Hanson's employee-owned philosophy. Their focus on people means they offer flexible work arrangements, encourage open communication, and foster a team-oriented environment.

2009 Horace Mann

In return for the dedication employees show to the community, clients, and coworkers, Horace Mann offers numerous benefits, including tuition reimbursement, a flexible work week, and a company wellness program. Horace Mann has also implemented a variety of employee recognition programs.



Horace Mann



2009 Sikich LLP

Sikich offices are "open door" facilities where top level management strives to always be inviting and encouraging. Their diverse and friendly environment fosters learning, creativity, and the passion to grow as a professional. Decisions are frequently made in a team setting where the views and ideas of both management and staff are given consideration.

2009 Springfield Electric Supply Company

Springfield Electric offers employees the chance to work in a team environment with great people who are dedicated to satisfying customers' needs. Springfield Electric encourages community involvement; employees volunteer with a number of charitable organizations, mentor school children, and provide Christmas gifts for needy families.



2010 Brandt Consolidated

The Brandt culture supports real people, core values and rewards forward thinking in an environment that feels more like an extended family than a corporation. Brandt is committed to promoting communication, self expression, and encouraging employees to reach their fullest potential.

2010 Lincoln Land Community College

Lincoln Land Community College (LLCC) considers its employees its greatest asset. LLCC offers a tuition reimbursement program that extends to immediate family and a unique "sick bank" for employees requiring additional time off. While LLCC offers competitive employee benefits, staff members feel most rewarded by the educational opportunities provided for students.





2010 Orthopedic Center of Illinois

OCI is dedicated to making all employees feel like part of the family by fostering a team based work environment in a state of the art facility. They offer flexible scheduling and employee recognition programs. OCI strives to offer employees a rewarding place to work by allowing them opportunities to give back to the community through many charitable organizations.

2011 BJ Grand Salon & Spa

At BJ Grand Salon & Spa, they feel education is the secret to their success. Owners, John and Gail Lorenzini, make company paid education and training a top priority to ensure all employees stay current in the latest trends and techniques. BJ Grand Salon & Spa is also dedicated to helping their employees achieve a work-life balance by offering flexible work arrangements.



2011 M.J. Kellner Foodservice

Bill and Julie Kellner, owners of M.J. Kellner Foodservice, embrace the philosophy of treating employees like family. They make sure that every decision is made with the big picture in mind so that staff members are looked after while keeping the business strong. The company recognizes and rewards employees by acknowledging birthdays, holding holiday parties and monthly company luncheons.

2011 Springfield Clinic

Springfield Clinic is in the business of caring for people, patients and employees alike. Their Commitment to Quality (CTQ) encourages employees to go above and beyond to enhance the patient experience. Springfield Clinic places a high priority on employee recognition. Employees are recognized with monthly "Employee Excellence Awards" and an "Employee of the Year Award".



2012 Express Employment Professionals

Express Employment Professionals values community involvement by establishing a philanthropic committee which designates funds to a variety of causes through the corporate giving program. This enables employees to help communities, organizations and individuals succeed on both an international and local level.

2012 & 2013 St. John's Hospital

St. John's Hospital believes that the power of people makes the difference in patient care. They strive to create a warm, family-oriented work atmosphere in order to provide the best possible care for patients. St. John's Hospital also provides the staff with the latest tools to deliver excellent care in professional and nurturing work environment.



2012 Systemax Corporation

Systemax prides itself on its reputation for quality, dependability, and knowledgeable service. The staff is encouraged to work with management daily to create a better customer experience. Systemax promotes a professional and fun work environment to encourage employee commitment to excellent customer service one solution at a time.

2013 Kerber, Eck & Braeckel LLP

Kerber, Eck & Braeckel operates under 21 partners and principal owners and includes more than 130 professionals. Although KEB focuses primarily on public accounting and management consultant services, it offers a wide range of other products to its clients including, but not limited to, information technology, retirement planning and even investment planning services.



2013 Sacred Heart-Griffin

Sacred Heart-Griffin's inception came from the merger of Sacred Heart Academy and Griffin High in 1988. In that time, much has changed. The school has expanded with classroom additions, facility renovation and even a new multipurpose athletics stadium. But the core principle, the marrying of academic pursuit with a literal religious adherence, remains the same.

UCB: Auburn Bunker Hill Bushnell Carlinville Chatham Colchester Divernon Gillespie Greenfield
Loami Macomb Palmyra, MO Pawnee Pittsfield Quincy Roodhouse Springfield Winchester
UCB Marine: Augusta Carthage Hamilton **UCB BCSB:** Golden Mt. Sterling



architecture & engineering •

Engineering a village

Local firms contracting for services

By Roberta Codemo,
Correspondent

Villages surrounding the Capital City find it more cost-effective to contract out engineering work with a Springfield firm than to hire their own engineer.

Tom Gray, village president, said Chatham has worked with Greene & Bradford, Inc. since the 1980s.

"We don't use an engineer every day," Gray said. "It wouldn't be economically feasible to hire an engineer in-house. We have a successful relationship with them. They appreciate the budgets of small communities." The firm bills the village on a hourly basis.

Michael Williamsen has been the planning and engineering coordinator for Chatham for the past seven years. He serves as a liaison between Greene & Bradford, Inc. and the village planning commission, staff and board.

Williamsen said part of his responsibilities include translating engineering speak into plain English. He keeps the village board and staff updated about the status of engineering projects.

The firm handles the day-to-day engineering needs for the village, working closely with the public works department, including reviewing proposed projects' scope and costs.

Joseph Greene, president of the engineering firm, said his firm started working with Chatham when Don Moore was the village president.

Greene said the firm is upgrading the village's comprehensive plan. "It's a visionary direction that the village wants to take," he said. The engineering work is handled by Stan Bersin, Gary Kuntzman and Don DeFrates of Greene & Bradford.

"Each handles different projects," said Greene. Chatham is looking for a location for a new water tower. Bersin recently completed a hydrologic model of Chatham and will present it to the board with his recommendation. The village plans to apply for a low-interest loan from the Environmental Protection Agency to finance the project.

"Municipalities don't have a lot of funds to spend," said Greene. "A one million gallon water tank can cost \$3 to \$4 million."

Kuntzman has submitted preliminary plans to Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) for a 1,398 foot road improvement project between Walnut Street and Route 4. The \$1.5 million project will be funded with tax increment finance monies and construction is scheduled to begin in 2014. Kuntzman is working on preliminary plans for an estimated \$1 million project on South Main Street.

DeFrates recently finished reviewing plans for the Ironbridge Estates 1st Addition, a \$1.2 million subdivision that

Moughan Builders hopes to have completed by mid-2014. DeFrates is reviewing plans for the Glendale 3rd Addition subdivision. The estimated \$650,000 project is scheduled for completion in early 2014.

Gray said the village may be in a position to hire its own engineer in the future. The public works director position needs someone with an engineering background.

"It's a good background to have," Gray said. "The village is growing. We need the financial wherewithal to do it."

David Armstrong, Rochester village president, said documentation dating back to 1935 or 1936 shows that Mr. Ray Tilly of Crawford, Murphy & Tilly, engineered and built the old water tower.

"Our relationship goes back to the 1930s," Armstrong said. "They do good work and provide the services we need. They hold down costs."

Timothy Sumner, project manager, joined the firm in 1991 and has served as village engineer since the late 1990s. The firm has a retainer agreement with the village. Each year, the board of trustees reviews and approves the agreement. Under the terms and conditions, the board goes over proposed projects and the scope of work.

Sumner's duties include administering and designing projects, placing bids and overseeing construction to ensure everything is done correctly. He also reviews plats for new subdivisions to make sure developers comply with the village codes.

The village has been making improvements to its sanitary sewer system. "We're replacing 4,000 lineal feet of the original system in the oldest part of town," said Sumner. The original system was constructed in the mid-1950s. The estimated total project cost is \$750,000.

The firm is also replacing two miles of the original water main. Completion of the estimated \$1.5 million project is scheduled for 2014. Funding comes from the enterprise fund, water fund and sewer fund.

Sumner wants to put before the board a proposal to elevate the existing sewage pump station in the park. Seventy-five percent of the total estimated \$300,000 project costs would be funded by a hazard mitigation grant through the Emergency Management Agency and the village would pay the remaining 25 percent.

"It's still early in the planning stages," said Sumner. Once the planning stage is over, he would work with the village to apply for the grant. He hopes to move forward with the design phase in early 2014.

One challenge facing the village is maintaining its roadway system, which is

*Continued on Page 27,
Village Engineering*



Timothy Sumner, project manager with Crawford, Murphy & Tilly, has served as village engineer for Rochester since the late 1990s



David Booher, chief structural engineer with Quigg Engineering, Inc. is the engineer for the village of Sherman



Kevin Kuhn, principal engineer with Kuhn & Trello, village engineer for Williamsville and Riverton, is also assistant engineer for the village of Sherman



Greene & Bradford, Inc. engineers (l to r); Stan Bersin, Gary Kuntzman and Joe Greene work with the village of Chatham

PROFILES:

Andrew Rath sack – P. 28

David McDow – P. 32

LISTS:

Engineering Firms – P. 26

Architecture Firms – P. 30



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Major Engineering Firms

(Ranked by Number of Full-time Employees in Springfield-Jacksonville Engineering Division)

	Company Name Address City, State, ZIP Code	Telephone (-) Fax (=) Website (www.) Email	Employees - Engineering Division ¹	Partners/Principals	Notable Projects	Year Established
1	Hanson Professional Services Inc. 1525 S. Sixth St. Springfield IL 62703	217-788-2450 217-788=2503 hanson-inc.com marketing@hanson-inc.com	166	Sergio Pecori, P.E., CEO John Coombe, P.E., S.E., COO Robert Cusick, P.E., S.E., CTO	Illinois High-Speed Rail Chicago to St. Louis program Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement; Springfield Rail Improvements Project, Springfield's Capitol Avenue streetscape, Illinois Tollway Interstate 90 (Jane Addams Memorial Tollway) widening and reconstruction, Kennedy Expressway reconstruction in Chicago, Indianapolis International Airport runway and taxiway rehabilitation, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' worldwide railroad and roadway contract, tactical video capture systems for U.S. Marine Corps bases worldwide, commissioning for Duke University's Keohane Quad, Alaska Railroad Corp.'s Northern Rail Extension Project, International Broadcasting Bureau worldwide contract (previously for Voice of America).	1954
2	Crawford, Murphy & Tilly Inc. 2750 W. Washington St. Springfield IL 62702	217-787-8050 217-787=4183 cmtengr.com raustin@cmtengr.com	130	Dan Meckes, P.E., pres., CEO Michael Doerfler, P.E., sr. vice pres., COO Lou Dixon, P.E., sr. vice pres.	St. Louis Arch River Park Over the Highway; CWLP Clearwell and Pump Station; Springfield Metro Sanitary District Plant Expansions, Memorial Hospital Expansion; Branson, MO Historic Streetscape; World Sports Park, Indianapolis; New Mississippi River Bridge Projects, St. Louis; Morgan Street Revitalization and Tied Arch Bridge, Rockford; New Passenger Terminal, Dubuque Regional Airport, IA; Airfield improvements at numerous civilian and military facilities nationwide.	1946
3	Hutchison Engineering Inc. 1801 W. Lafayette Ave. Jacksonville IL 62650	217-245-7164 217-243=0468 hutchisoneng.com ghutchison@hutchisoneng.com	59	Gary L. Hutchison, pres. Michael V. Meier, exec. v. pres.	Illinois: Macomb Bypass - Phase II McDonough County; I-80 Reconstruction - Phase I & II, Henry and Rocky Island Counties; I-57 / IL 50 Interchange - Phase III, Kankakee County; U.S. 50 Expressway - Phase I, Lawrence and Richland Counties; U.S. 30 Phase I, Kane and Kendall Counties; I-155 / I-74 Interchange Phase III, Tazewell County.	1945
4	Hurst-Rosche Engineers, Inc. 601 N. Bruns Lane, Suite B Springfield IL 62702	217-787-1199 217-793=1199 hurst-rosche.com	53	James Roth, P.E., pres. David Pool, AIA, RLA, vice pres. David Kimmle, P.E., treasurer Mark Reitz, P.E., secretary	Illinois: UIS; WIU; Central Counties Clinic; John Deere Road reconstruction, Moline; Co. Hwy. 20 over I-74 bridge, Champaign; Champaign Co. Park District; Springfield Housing Authority; Vermilion Co. Housing Authority; Bloomington Housing Authority; Ill. Community College building expansion; New Waterloo High School.	1937
5	Benton & Associates, Inc. 1970 West Lafayette Ave. Jacksonville IL 62650	217-245-4146 217-245=4149 bentonassociates.com info@bentonassociates.com	40	Reginald H. Benton, P.E., S.E. Jamie L. Headen, P.E. Shannon J. Howe, P.E., S.E. William J. Sleeman, P.E.	Illinois: Taylorville Water System improvements, US 67 Jerseyville Bypass, SNAWS rural water, Round Prairie rural water, Beardstown Sanitary District WWTP improvements, Jacksonville WWTP CSO, various IDoT projects, Jacksonville WTP Study, I-64 bridges - St. Clair County, I-55 Bridges - Madison County, McDonough County Transit Facility.	1970
6	Andrews Engineering Inc. 3300 Ginger Creek Drive Springfield IL 62711	217-787-2334 217-787=9495 andrews-eng.com marketing@andrews-eng.com	38	Andrew A. Rathsack, P.E., pres. Kenneth W. Liss, L.P.G., vice pres. of operations	IDOT Statewide Hazardous Contractor; Sangamon Valley Landfill (Sangamon County); Livingston Landfill (Livingston County); Equistar; Alton Quarry; US Dept. of Veteran Affairs, Danville., US D.O.E. Nevada.	1974
7	HDR Engineering, Inc. 5201 S. Sixth St. Road Springfield IL 62703-5143	217-585-8300 217-585=1890 hdrinc.com springfieldinfo@hdrinc.com	34	Matt Cochran Lincoln D. Cochran, P.E., LEED AP, C.E.M. Thomas L. Johnson	Chicago to St. Louis High Speed Rail Land Acquisition and Utility Relocation for Union Pacific Railroad and Illinois Department of Transportation. National Guard Various Projects Nationwide; Environmental Assessments for Various Energy Clients; Fisheries Production and Research Facilities Nationwide including Award-Winning Jack Hernandez State Fish Hatchery, Alaska.	1984
8	Fuhrmann Engineering, Inc. 2852 S. 11th St. Springfield IL 62703	217-529-5577 217-529=5575 feinc.biz OR fuhrmann-eng.com gfuhrmann@fuhrmann-eng.com	31	Gina Marie Fuhrmann, P.E. Mike Curtis, P.L.S. Jarod Bradfield, P.E.	MacArthur St. Extension; Construction Layout, Branson, Mo.; Airport Inspection, IL 8 over Kickapoo Creek, Springfield Vision Care, Prairie Vista Subdivision, Rock Falls Armory, Sparta Armory, I-55/ I-39 Construction Inspection, IDOT Various Structures, Family Video Statewide.	2002
9	WHKS & Co. 7018 Kingsmill Court Springfield IL 62711	217-483-9457 217-483=9458 whks.com springfield@whks.com	30	Fouad K. Daoud, P.E., S.E., pres., CEO Penny L. Schmitz, exec vice pres., COO, CFO Rick G. Engstrom, C.E.T., vice pres.; Michael A. Zelinskas, P.E., vice pres.; William K. Angerman, P.E., vice pres.; Scott D. Sanford, P.E., S.E., vice pres.	Illinois: US 20 over the Mississippi River Approaches and Local Road Improvements, IBEW Union Hall in Springfield - civil & structural, IL Route 10 over Prairie Creek bridge replacement in Logan Co., Farmington Road re-alignment in West Peoria, Pawnee Road bridge rehab, IL 84 over the Apple River bridge replacement - phase I and II, Seismic analysis for the I-70 Tri-level interchange analysis near St. Louis, Cedar Street gusset plate strengthening in Peoria, Historic truss relocation in Bureau Co.	1948
10	Quigg Engineering Inc. 2351 S. Dirksen Pkwy. Springfield IL 62703	217-670-0563 217-679=2204 quiggengineering.com lquigg@quiggengineering.com	24	Lori L. Quigg, P.E., pres. Rebecca L. Stocker, vice pres.	IL 116 near Media - Ph III, I-90 from South Beloit Toll Plaza to Rockton Road - Ph III, I-55 and I-74 around Bloomington - Ph III, US 34 from Sandwich to Plano - Survey and Traffic Studies, I-55 & I-72 near Springfield - Ph II, I-255 & Horseshoe Lake Road - Ph II MOT, Various Survey projects with the Tollway, Survey for City of Champaign, Signal Design for City of Mokena and along Harlem Ave in Palos, various Traffic Studies for District 1, Supportive Services for Technical Assistance to DBE Contractors, NPDES for IDOT and City of Belleville, Environmental Assessments for Southern Illinois Fiberoptics, Environmental assessments for high-speed rail from Chicago to STL.	2006
11	Coombe - Bloxdorf, P.C. 755 South Grand Ave. W. Springfield IL 62704	217-544-8477 217-544=8483 coombebloxdorf.com mcbdorf@coombebloxdorf.com	18	Mary Coombe Bloxdorf, P.E., S.E. William Coombe, P.L.S. Fred Coombe, P.E., S.E.	Illinois: Civil Design - Lincoln Challenge Academy, Rantoul; Gailey Eye Care Clinic; Toronto Road Ranger; Springfield YMCA; Meadowbrook Road Extension; UIS Public Safety, civil and structural; SMSD Operations Building, structural design; Main Street and Seminary Overpass structures, Galesburg; UIUC baseball facilities addition; structures at IL 94 over U.S. 34 and U.S. 34 over Henderson Creek; Windsor Road over I-57, Champaign.	1992
	Greene & Bradford Inc. 3501 Constitution Drive Springfield IL 62711	217-793-8844 217-793=6227 greeneandbradford.com mail@greeneandbradford.com	18	Joe Greene, pres.	Illinois: City of Taylorville, storm sewer project 12" to 84" sewers; IDOT, district 3, hydraulic study; South Sangamon Water Commission, water main transmission design; Village of Pawnee, water main replacement program; Buffalo Dawson Mechanicsburg sewer commission, 3 sanitary sewer pump stations.	1972
13	Professional Service Industries, Inc. (PSI) 480 North St., Springfield IL 62704	217-544-6663 217-544=6148 psiusa.com bill.pongracz@psiusa.com	17	William Pongracz, P.E., vice pres. James Gerloff, P.E., branch manager	CWLP Dallman Unit 4 Coal Power Plant, Springfield Metro Sanitary District Spring Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant, Memorial Medical Center Physician's Parking Ramp, Glenwood Elementary School, Abraham Lincoln Memorial hospital, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library & Museum, Scheels All Sports.	1961
14	Finley Engineering 3015 Stanton Ave. Springfield IL 62703	217-529-9362 217-529=9184 fecinc.com cei@fecinc.com	16	Michael Boehne, CEO Jeffrey Swan, director of operations	Providing telecom related solutions to various market segments, including energy, municipalities and private entities.	1953
15	Environmental Management, Inc. 1154 N. Bradfordton Road Springfield IL 62711	217-726-9468 217-726=9472 environmentalmanagementinc.net mkeebler@environmentalmanagementinc.net	15	Michael R. Keebler, P.E. Jeremy VanScyoc, P.E.	Illinois: Love's Truck Plaza, Lincoln Salem Crossing subdivision, Curry Ice and Coal, Prairie Crossing Retail, Site investigation/ remediation at leaking underground storage tank sites; Phase I and II ESAs in IL and MO for largest independent gasoline retailer and Brownfields.	1997
	Hampton, Lenzini & Renwick Inc. 3085 Stevenson Drive, Suite 201 Springfield IL 62703	217-546-3400 217-546=8116 hlrengineering.com hlrspfld@hlreng.com	15	Steven W. Megginson, P.E., S.E. Michael D. Cima, P.E., S.E.	Illinois: Kane County bridge inspection and bridge management system, IDoT - D9 & D3 bridge replacements, IDOT - Cedar St. bridge evaluation, U.S. 61 bridge evaluation at Cairo, Kendall County - Eldamain Road over Fox River Phase I, Sangamon Valley trail designs, Tazewell County Manito Road over the Makinaw River Phase I & II, Will County - Briggs St. bridge.	1993
	Rapps Engineering & Applied Science, Inc. 821 S. Durkin Drive Springfield IL 62704	217-787-2118 217-787=6641 rapps.net tlendy@rapps.net	15	Michael W. Rapps, P.E., pres. Terry A. Lendy, vice pres. Operations Marc J. Anderson, P.L.S.	Illinois: Newton Ameren power station - Jasper County, statewide landfill permits, Brownfields, LUST remediation, surveys, mining permits, hydrogeologic modeling investigations and research, real estate assessments, wetlands, water supply investigations, mold and asbestos investigations, construction inspection, NPDES permitting.	1978
18	Martin Engineering Company 3223 S. Meadowbrook Road Springfield IL 62711	217-698-8900 217-698=8922 martinengineeringco.com mecmail@martinengineeringco.com	14	Philip G. Martin, P.E., pres. Steven R. Walker, P.L.S., vice pres.	Illinois: Springfield: Legacy Pointe Town Center, Hy-Vee Grocery Store - Outer Park/MacArthur Blvd., The Outlets at Springfield, SHS Athletic Field, Schnucks East, Iles Park Place redevelopment, SIU School of Medicine parking lot, Maple Grove sanitary sewer project, LLCC - renovation of athletic fields and main entrance improvements, Blackstone Subdivision, Salem Estates Subdivision Phase 4; Sherman: Quail Ridge Subdivision 11th Addition; Chatham: Ironbridge Estates; Kincaid: Sanitary sewer design; Lincoln: The Christian Village sanitary sewer improvements; South Jacksonville: Prairie Power - new power pole yard and City street design; Macon: Macon-Meridian School District - new High School addition and athletic fields.	1982
19	Patrick Engineering Inc. 300 W. Edwards St., Suite 200 Springfield IL 62704	217-391-3500 217-391=3501 patrickco.com cburger@patrickco.com	13	Dan Dietzler, P.E., pres. Jeff Schuh, P.E., senior vice pres. Chris Burger, P.E., vice pres. Paul Lopez, P.E., vice pres.	Amtrak site modifications; Veterans Admin metering project; Smart Energy Design Assistance Center energy efficiency studies throughout Illinois ; Solar Energy assessments; Livingston County wind farm evaluations; FutureGen Alliance carbon dioxide sequester project siting and environmental assistance; Edison Mission Energy Wind Farm construction assistance; Powerton powerplant rail and infrastructure upgrades; Tazewell County landfill evaluation and design; ICG coal mine infrastructure design and subsidence monitoring.	1979
20	TRC Worldwide Engineering, Inc. 3171 Greenhead Drive Springfield IL 62711	217-793-2299 217-793=3311 trcww.com whuff@trcww.com	12	Bedi Mesbah, P.E., pres. Ed Capshaw, P.E. Winston Huff, CPD, LEED AP BD+C	University of Illinois Champaign/Urbana - various projects including Housing Life Safety Improvements , Burrill Hall Laboratory Renovations, Veterinary Medicine Building Renovations, Advanced Experimental Research Building, Eastern Illinois University various projects including a new building for Center for Clean Energy Research and Education, University of Illinois in Springfield various projects including Student Housing renovations, Cooling tower replacement, Sangamon Auditorium lighting controls, Illinois State University Capen Auditorium, OLOL Replacement Hospital, Lafayette, LA, New TESCO Stores in Turkey, UK and Poland, Parking structures for Martin Army Community Hospital Fort Benning, GA and VA Hospital, Dallas, TX.	1985
21	Allen Henderson & Associates, Inc. 907 S. Fourth St Springfield IL 62703	217-544-8033 217-544-3965 mark@ahaengineers.com ahaengineers.com	10	Mark Henderson, P.E., S.E. Christopher Kohlrus, P.E.	Springfield: Connor Company Distribution Facility, IL Municipal Electric Agency HQ, Drainage improvements at Wabash Ave. & I-72 - IDoT; Sangamon Co.: New City blackout over future Lake Springfield II; Menard Co.: 2.5 mi. reconstruction of C.H. 11 (Quarry Rd.).	1976
	Cummins Engineering Corporation 615 S. Fifth St. Springfield IL 62703	217-726-8570 217-523=2312 cumminsengineering.com mike@cumminsengineering.com	10	Michael D. Cummins PE., S.E., pres. Kimberly S. Cummins, PE. Philip L. Koeberlein PE. Nicholas A. Ketchum	Restoration of the Vachel Lindsay Bridge, Sangamon Valley Trail from Centennial Park to Stuart Park in Springfield, Veterans Parkway Resurfacing, Veterans Parkway Intersection improvements (dual turn lanes) at Old Jacksonville Road and Southwest Plaza Drive, Interstate 55 Bridge Improvements near Lincoln, Sangamon County bridges on Old Jacksonville Road, Farmingdale Road, Waverly Road, Black Diamond Road, Roadway Improvements to Pleasant Plains Road and Waverly Road.	1998

Sources: The engineering firms.

¹ - Number of full-time employees in engineering division may vary from total employee count.

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• architecture & engineering

Village Engineering,
Continued from Page 24

funded with motor fuel tax monies. "The funding the village receives is based on population," said Sumner. Estimated cost of the project is between \$1.5 and \$5 million.

"There's not enough revenue coming in to maintain the roads," continued Sumner. He is looking for creative ways to fund and finance needed roadway improvements.

Armstrong said the village doesn't have enough business to hire a full-time engineer. "It wouldn't be cost-effective," he said.

Tom Rader, village mayor, said Riverton recently changed village engineers. "We were looking for fresh ideas," Rader said. "We interviewed several firms, but Kevin [Kevin Kuhn, principal engineer, with Kuhn & Trello] stood out."

The board was looking for someone who would work closely with the village and provide it with information about funding sources. "Kuhn stays on top of available grants and funding," said Rader. "He's very thorough."

Rader said if the village wants to continue to grow, it needs to update its infrastructure. Kuhn will be working with them to do that after the first of the year.

Kuhn, is also working with the Safe Routes to School program and is helping digitize the village maps.

The village will be replacing its four-inch water lines with six-inch water lines. Construction is also scheduled to begin on a 12-13 home subdivision in the spring of 2014.

Future infrastructure plans include building a third water tower, upgrading the second half of the water treatment plant and replacing the old water mains, which Kuhn estimates will cost several million.

Rader said there isn't enough projects for the village to hire its own engineer, pointing out that "it's more cost-effective to pay as we go."

The Village of Sherman contracts for engineering services. "When I was elected, I decided to let the current village engineer continue to serve in that capacity," said Trevor Clatfelter, village president.

Once he learned Tim Swanson was retiring, he wanted to make a transition. The board met with several firms and chose to continue working with David Booher, chief structural engineer with Quigg Engineering, Inc.

Booher handles the day-to-day engineering work for the village, which includes reviewing plans, zoning, roads and infrastructure.

"The timing was right," said Booher. "It's worked out well for both sides." He works with the village to secure funding from IDOT, complete the motor fuel tax paperwork and apply for grant funding.

"Sherman has a lot of development going on," continued Booher. The village needs assistance with reviewing subdivision plans to ensure developers comply with village ordinances. He also inventories and develops priorities for infrastructure projects.

One of the biggest projects Booher is involved with is the development of a 10-acre municipal park at Sherman Boulevard and Old Tipton School Road. The village purchased the land for \$908,000 from the estate of Leonard Sapp. Booher assisted with the planning and design, and Evan Lloyd Associates, Inc. was the designer.

Plans call for completion of an amphitheater, playground and a new village hall. The pond was recently completed

and served as a training project for Operating Engineers Local 965.

The site sits on 35 acres with 25 acres zoned for commercial development. The village wants to build a 10-foot wide, mile-long bike and hike trail around the perimeter of the 35-acre property. It is working with the developer to obtain an easement for the bike trail.

Sherman and eight other communities in the Springfield metropolitan area came together and applied for IDOT funds to replace street signs. Booher said the federal government has mandated that all signs have high visibility.

"Sherman has been the lead agency for this project," said Booher. The project is scheduled to conclude in 2014.

The biggest challenge facing Sherman is population growth. The village road system is 30 years old and needs resurfacing. The challenge lies in finding funding to repair the road system.

Booher said the village has done a good job with planning and development in anticipation of future growth. "It's kept up pretty well," he said.

The Village of Sherman created a secondary engineering position, as Kuhn has been the deputy engineer for four or five years and serves in a support role. Kuhn helps the village with hydrologic issues.

The Sherman village president said it doesn't make sense to hire a resident engineer. The private sector has the equipment and manpower to meet their needs. "It makes sense to contract out this type of service," Clatfelter said.

In addition to his work in Riverton and Sherman, Kuhn has been the village of Williamsville engineer for the past 10 years. He began working for the village when he was with Greene & Bradford, Inc.

"He has a history with us," said Tom Yokley, the village president of Williamsville, whose biggest engineering needs are sanitary sewer, water system, storm sewer and street work.

"We're very satisfied with the work he's done," said Yokley. "The board wanted to stay with him."

Kuhn said his role of working for small communities is to "guide them through the process."

"I try to be a resource for the community," said Kuhn, as he works with village attorneys and boards. He handles routine engineering projects including applying for motor fuel tax monies to oil and chip the roads and water and sewer line repairs.

Williamsville and Sherman are working together to construct a 4.5 mile-long multi-use trail along the old Interurban rail right-of-way that runs parallel to Interstate 55. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources is working with the village and Ameren. A \$269,000 federal grant administered by the Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program paid for the engineering work.

Construction is scheduled to begin in 2014 and additional funding sources are being investigated to help pay the estimated \$2.3 million construction costs.

Yokley said most small communities don't have enough work to employ a full-time engineer. "I can't imagine having our own engineer," Yokley said. "If we had our own village engineer, we would still have to reach."

Kuhn said you grow to care about the communities and their needs. "You develop a personal relationship," he said.

Roberta Codemo is a freelance writer from Springfield. She can be reached at info@springfieldbusinessjournal.com



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Ill. Primary Health Care Association
Ill. Secretary of State
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Internal Revenue Service
Island Bay Yacht Club
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Jefferson Middle School



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LLCC Career Center
LLCC Workforce Development Center
Love's Travel Stop
Martin Engineering Company
Mary Bryant Home for the Blind
Matheny-Withrow Elementary School
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Memorial Medical Center
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personality profile •

Engineering a satisfying life

By Eric Woods, Correspondent

Springfield –

What is your favorite part about living in Springfield? Rathsack has lived in Springfield since 1978. He enjoys the people more than anything. “They are friendly and interesting,” he said. “It has always been a comfortable place to live.”

What is the worst part about living in Springfield? Financial concerns affect the entire state, according to Rathsack, but he has no issues with Springfield.

The biggest issue Springfield currently faces is... “The municipality and the state are in a financial crisis,” said Rathsack.

Employment –
“When I was 10, I wanted to be ... an engineer.”

First job? Rathsack was a paperboy in junior high and followed up as a carhop in his mid-teens.

Worst job? The paperboy job was not one of Rathsack’s favorites. “I had to get up early, and it was often cold,” he said.

Current job and responsibilities? Rath-

sack was only the fourth employee to join Andrews Engineering in 1978. The company began handling only solid waste clients, and today that is still about 60 percent of the business, according to Rathsack. “We do about 35 percent remedial work, and the other five percent is traditional civil engineering work,” he said. There are five offices with the headquarters in Springfield. The other four are located in Pontiac, Naperville, Indianapolis, Ind., and Warrington, Mo. Rathsack handles most of the business and legal matters. He also handles the front end of each project, getting the agreements in place and handling the proposals.

Philosophical –
What do you want to know about

the future? “I am not sure I need to know anything,” said Rathsack. “I guess I would like to know what the stock market will be in a year.”

How do you envision your life in 10 years? “I want to be happy, healthy and active,” said Rathsack. “I would like to do more travelling while enjoying the outdoors.

Maybe I could go up to Canada for longer than a week.”

Something you learned early in life and still use? “Hard work pays off,” said Rathsack. “If the opportunity presents itself, take it. They are few and far between.”

Advice –
Advice for someone seeking a career in your field? “Work hard and stick with it,” said Rathsack. The industry is not easy, and Rathsack says that engineering school can be difficult. “There is no hand holding. You can spend hours a day doing homework.”

Best advice you have ever been given? Rathsack was taught to always do what is right. “Try and identify what is right in every situation, even if it is difficult,” he said.

Achievements –
As a kid? “I had a great childhood with perfect parents,” said Rathsack. “They gave me enough rope, but there were still boundaries.”

As an adult? A 40-year marriage and two kids are Rathsack’s biggest personal accomplishment. Professionally, he is proud of what he has achieved in the engineering world. “Growing up I would never have dreamed I would be president of a company. I achieved far beyond what I thought I would.”



Future –

Upcoming job news? There are many projects on the horizon, including ones in Nevada. The company is also teaming with Hanson Engineering on some relocation work they were given from the city.

Any vacation plans? Rathsack’s annual fishing trip to Canada will be in the summer.

I want to retire when I’m ... (age)? Rathsack is close to selling ownership of the company and hopes to close on it by the end of January. “I will continue to work full time for six months afterwards, then we will see what develops,” he said. “This will afford me to do more travelling and spend more time around the house.”

Eric Woods is a freelance writer from Springfield. He can be reached at eric@springfieldbusinessjournal.com



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All aboard

Sangamon County preps for high speed rail

By Roberta Codemo,
Correspondent

Springfield is just one of a handful of communities in Sangamon County preparing for high speed rail service.

Norm Sims, executive director of the Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission, said his office has been involved with analyzing high speed rail routes from an early stage. In 2009, the planning commission developed a strategic plan for the region, which includes how the communities of Sherman, Williamsville, Chatham and Springfield will be impacted by increased freight rail traffic.

Michael Williamsen helped develop the current Comprehensive and Transportation Plans for the village of Chatham. He represents the village on the Springfield Metropolitan Planning Organization's technical committee.

Chatham is part of the Springfield Area Transportation Study, which falls under the Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission. The group coordinates transportation activities in the area.

Williamsen is currently working with a team of consultants from the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) that

assists communities along the Chicago to St. Louis rail corridor with crossings. The engineering firm is EFK Moen and the engineer in charge is Mary Lamie.

Tom Gray, village president, said high speed rail will not have much impact on Chatham. "We're fortunate to have the Plummer Street underpass," he said. "When trains go through, everyone knows to use the underpass."

Gray estimates between 10 to 12 trains go through Chatham. He expects that number to increase to 16.

Most trains come through during the day. "We're a bedroom community," said Gray. "Not many work here during the day."

The village is relocating the Main Street crossing to Goldenrod Drive. The railroad replaced the track last year and installed concrete ties and steel track designed to handle high speed trains. "We've been waiting on funding,"

said Gray.

The 100-foot long Main Street has no room for cars to wait. "There's no holding capacity," said Gray. "If two cars turn onto Main Street, there's a backup."

Gray said the Goldenrod crossing is safer. Crossing upgrades include fencing and new quad gates. Goldenrod is a thoroughfare that runs straight to Route 4.

"It opens up economic development along Route 4," said Gray by relieving traffic and providing access to land set

aside for commercial development.

In Sherman, the Union Pacific railroad crosses Andrew Road and runs along Interstate Business 55. Residential and com-

to alleviate the congestion that results from lack of storage.

Trevor Clatfelter, village president of Sherman, said traffic congestion impacts



The village of Williamsville is planning to construct a \$7.2 million overpass, also building a new library and museum on Old Route 66. (photo by Nathan Dahl)

mercial development back up to the track. Plans call to upgrade the at-grade crossing and install fencing along the track.

David Booher, chief structural engineer with Quigg Engineering, Inc., said IDOT has been working with Sherman to redesign the Andrew Road intersection. The project will be funded with federal stimulus funds.

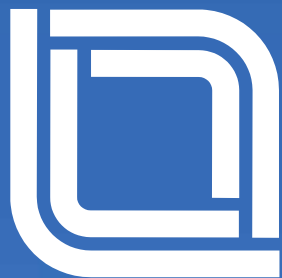
"IDOT has involved the village in the planning process," said Booher. Plans call

business development. It affects it more as the community grows. It could hinder future economic development projects.

"Economic development creates jobs," continued Clatfelter. The tracks pass through the center of town. The business area lies to the west of the tracks.

Tom Yokley, village president of Wil-

*Continued on Page 33,
High Speed Rail*



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1	FWAI Architects Inc. 1 NW Old Capitol Plaza Springfield IL 62701	217-528-3661 217-528=4717 fwai.com admin@fwai.com	5	13	Carl Fischer Paul Wheeler Jim Alberts	Springfield, Ill.: Blessed Sacrament School Expansion, Cent. Ill. Community Blood Center, LLC A. Lincoln Commons, UIS – various projects, H. D. Smith Corporate Campus, Sangamon County Building, Camp Lincoln – CSMS & Allied Trades, Crowne Plaza Hotel, INB Branches, St. Joseph’s Home Dementia Wing, The Hope Institute – Learning Center & Master Planning, Memorial Medical Center – various clinics, Springfield Clinic – various clinics; Urbana/Champaign, Ill.: UIUC English Building Renovations, UIUC McKinley Health Center Remodel, UIUC Assembly Hall Remodel & Addition; Waukegan, Ill.: Regional Corporate Data Center; Texas: Corporate Data Center.	1976
	Graham & Hyde Architects, Inc. 1010 Clocktower Drive Springfield IL 62704	217-787-9380 217-793=6465 grahamandhyde.com info@grahamandhyde.com	5	10	Thomas J. Hyde Jamie Cosgriff Kevin Handy Mike Zellers	Springfield, Ill.: Vachel Lindsay Elementary School, St. Agnes Church, Hoagland Center for the Arts, First United Methodist Church, Blessed Sacrement Church, Carrollton Bank, St. John’s Lutheran Church expansion, Christ the King Parish Center, Cathedral of Immaculate Conception renovation, Ridgely Elementary School, Ball Charter Elementary School, St. Patrick’s Church of Merna, Cherry Hills Baptist Church.	1968
3	Allied Design Consultants, Inc. 405 1/2 S. Sixth St. Springfield IL 62701	217-522-3355 217-522=5570 alliedarch.com alliedsn@fgi.net	4	6	William D. VanDusen Bruce M. Bollero Todd R. Hannah	Illinois: John F. Kennedey Middle School, Spring Valley; Public Library, Rushville; New Berlin Elementary School, New Berlin; Eureka School assitions; ISU, LLCC, UIS and SIU renovation projects; Security Bank renovations and new construction; Casey-Westfield High School addition and renovations; Springfield School District 186 renovation projects.	1984
	Steckel-Parker Architects, Inc. 2941 Happy Landing Drive Springfield IL 62711	217-793-6444 217-793=5434 steckelparker.com dave@steckelparker.com	4	5	David E. Steckel	Springfield, Ill.: Brandt Consolidated offices, IL Primary Health Care Association, Central IL Kidney & Dialysis Association offices, United Community Bank - multiple facilities, Town & Country Bank - Wabash & Dirksen facilities, Group Home at The Hope Institute, Pepsi Distribution Center, West Central Bank remodeling - Beardstown, Military facilities - Sparta & Marseilles.	1964
5	Evan Lloyd Associates Inc. 1630 S. Sixth St. Springfield IL 62703	217-789-7011 217-789=7101 evanlloydarchitects.com tsmith@evanlloyd.com	3	15	Timothy B. Smith Gregory T. Frazier	Springfield, Ill.: PCCC renovation and expansion, Engrained Brewery, Obed & Isaac’s, new Prairie State Bank, new Friar Tuck, County Market, The Outlets of Springfield, new Sangamon County Health Department, Connor Co. new distribution facility, new Illinois State Police Federal Credit Union, State Capitol, Waterways Building renovation, 4th Dist. Apellate Court, McGladrey & Pullen building; Jacksonville, Ill.: New Pathway Services facility; Sherman, Ill.: New Illini Bank and Community Center.	1969
	Melotte Morse Leonatti Parker, Ltd. 213 1/2 S. Sixth St. Springfield IL 62701	217-789-9515 217-789=9518 mmlpltd.com architect@mmlpltd.com	3	10	Ralls C. Melotte Richard R. Morse David J. Leonatti T. David Parker	Illinois: Shelby County Court House Restoration and Environmental Consulting, Shelbyville; New Matherly/Withrow Elementary School, Springfield, Fifth Street Renaissance Veterans’ Shelter; Goodwill Industries Retail Stores; Illinois School for the Deaf Remodeling, Jacksonville; Urban Park mold remediation / renovation of 24 apartments, Champaign; Steris Aseptic Filling Facility, Pagedale, MO; Hathaway Homes, Taylorville and Stonington; Glenwood Elementary School additions, Chatham.	1978
7	Ferry & Associates Architects 217 S. Seventh St. Springfield IL 62701	217-522-4100 217-522=4122 ferryarchitects.com bferry@ferryarchitects.com	2	5	Donald E. Ferry Bruce S. Ferry	Springfield, Ill.: Lewis Memorial Christian Village, various projects; Hickory Point Village, 47 bed and additional 17 bed additions; Washington Christian Village study; Springfield Developmental Center, interior renovation; PNC Bank, interior/exterior remodeling; Henson Robinson Zoo, new quarantine building; Old State Capitol, drum restoration; Howlett Building, historic plaster repair in Hall of Flags; Illinois Hospital Association, interior renovations.	1961
	J.H. Petty and Associates, Ltd. Architects 2920 Chatham Road, Suite B Springfield IL 62704	217-787-2844 217-787=2855 jhp@jhpa.biz	2	5	Joseph H. Petty, AIA	Springfield, Ill.: Illinois Principals Association, Illinois Health Care Association, Lincoln Land Community College Child Development Center, Springfield Service Corporation, St. John’s Rehab South, Fit Club South, Mid-America Advertising Headquarters, Sangamon County Farm Bureau office building; Jacksonville, Ill.: Corn Belt Bank; Lincoln, Ill.: West Lincoln Broadwell School; County Market, Pittsfield, Ill.; County Market, Monmouth, Ill.; AC Central School, Ashland, Ill.; Illinois: Virginia School District, Illinois Municipal League - remodel, Illinois Cable Association - remodel, Virginia Community Unit School District 64.	1994
	John Shafer & Associates 1230 S. Sixth St. Springfield IL 62703	217-744-9036 217-744=9039 shafer-arch.com john@shafer-arch.com	2	4	John Shafer	Illinois: LLCC Taylorville Classroom building, 1230 S. Sixth St., private residence - Lake Springfield, Springfield Clinic - various projects, Midwest Technical Institute, Terry Farmer Photography, Salvation Army, Village of Grandview offices.	1992
	Prather Tucker Associates Inc. 1111 S. Eighth St. Springfield IL 62703	217-789-4800 217-789=4844 prathertucker.com mtucker@prathertucker.com	2	4	William L. Prather, AIA Mark K. Tucker	Springfield, Ill.: Panther Creek Country Club, Panther Den renovations, new fitness facility and swimming pool upgrades and expansion; Illini Country Club, new Pro Shop and men’s locker room addition, new half way house, new pool bath house, new fitness center and food service facility; Springfield School District 186, various elementary and middle school renovations; Southwest Plaza, various tenant lease space improvements and façade renovations; IBEW, new union hall and training facility; Milford, Ill.: New Junior / Senior High School; Taylorville, Ill.: Midland Bank addition.	2003
	Walton & Associates Architects, P.C. 1227 S. Sixth St. Springfield IL 62703	217-544-5888 217-544=1851 waltonarchitects.com don@thewaltongroup.com	2	5	Don R. Walton David McDow	Springfield, Ill.: Erin’s Pavilion, Southwind Park, Springfield Park District; Jacksonville, Ill.: Illinois College - misc. projects; Georgetown, Ill.: First United Methodist Church, master planning Danville, Ill.: Danville Area Community College - Mary Miller addition and remodeling, Hoopeston Classroom Facility, Campus Architect; Lakeview College of Nursing addition and remodeling, Lakeview College of Nursing, Charleston and Danville.	1990

Sources: The architectural firms.


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Architects: economic indicators

Some markets more recession-proof than others

By Kaleigh Moore,
Correspondent

The relationship between architecture and construction is symbiotic—when architects are working, so are construction companies. But depending on the type of firm, architects can often sense an early indication of where the economy is head-



Paul Wheeler, FWA Architects Inc.

ed, as their work happens at the front end of building and/or renovation projects.

A positive nation-wide indicator comes from Ken Simonson, chief economist for the Associated General Contractors of America.

"Recent Census Bureau data showed an increase in architecture revenues by 17 percent from the third quarter of 2012 to the third quarter of 2013," Simonson said. "The American Institute of Architects' Architecture Billings Index has been signaling growth in architects' billings for over a year."

Locally, some firms have found their markets to be more recession-proof than others. But it appears the field as a whole has become more competitive in recent years, according to Paul Wheeler of FWA Architects Inc. He explained that with the decrease in available projects, larger firms have

has given some unique insight into the world of these graduates, who enter the workforce competing not just with those who have greater experience, but with computer systems who cut down on the people needed for the process.

Other local architecture firms have had varied experiences with the changing market, but most agree that the economy is slowly on the rise. The nature of the projects pursued has impacted the workload – for some more than others.

For Steckel-Parker Architects, Inc., its focus has been privately-funded projects in recent years. "We've seen the private market slowly come back a little, but the state projects haven't really made it back," said David Steckel.

In the past year, Steckel-Parker has worked on projects such as the Brandt Consolidated expansion, Dick Van Dyke, and the La-Z-Boy

Furniture store – all along Wabash Avenue. Steckel went on to explain the fact that businesses are willing to expand and renovate is a good sign, indicating peoples' returning feelings of security within the marketplace.

The length of this rebound time since



David Steckel, Steckel-Parker Architects, Inc.

the recession began in 2008, however, Steckel described as "very unusual."

"In the 40 years I've been working, we've only seen tough times like these in the 70s, but for a different reason. Interest rates had gone sky high. It's finally coming back...slowly," Steckel said.

Tim Smith of Evan Lloyd Associates, Inc. echoed the report on minimal state government projects as of late, but went on to discuss how their firm has supplemented with diverse projects ranging from residential to retail.

"In my 13 years as president, our firm has not been seriously impacted by the recession," Smith said. "We have been impacted by a lack of work from state government due to its



Tim Smith, Evan Lloyd Associates, Inc.

been competing for smaller bids.

Wheeler said that for college graduates in architecture, "the job market has become increasingly difficult as well."

Wheeler said time spent working with students at the University of Illinois

Continued on Page 33,
Architects: Economic Indicators



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personality profile •

Designing a career

By Eric Woods, Correspondent

Springfield –

What is your favorite part about living in central Illinois? Proximity is a major attraction of McDow to the central Illinois

area, as he remains close to his family, and it is close to St. Louis and Chicago. McDow lived in St. Louis for four years and also spent a year in Phoenix during graduate school.

What is the worst part about living in central Illinois? The cold central Illinois weather is not something of which McDow is fond.

The biggest issue Springfield currently faces is...? The struggling economy is a key issue for Springfield. "Government is a major component of Springfield," said McDow. "It is a state of Illinois issue."

Employment –

"When I was 10, I wanted to be... an architect."

First job? McDow mowed lawns during his early teenage years. "I had a dozen lawns or so," he said.

Worst job? While in high school, McDow had a part-time job in data entry. "The company was good, but the job was tedious," he said. "It was just sitting in front of a computer screen typing and typing."

Current job and responsibilities?

Walton and Associates Architects was founded in 1990. McDow is one of the two architects with the company and has been there for more than 13 years. His major duties include design work for numerous industries including higher education, religious organizations, and other commercial settings. "I see the job from conception to construction," he said. McDow is involved with color renderings, drawings, and visiting sites during

construction. As a small firm, McDow can be part of multiple aspects as opposed to being specialized, as is the case with many architects from large firms. "I can see more of the work from start to finish."

Philosophical –

What do you want to know about the fu-

ture? "I am all right with it being a surprise," said McDow.

How do you envision your life in 10 years? McDow plans to still be working in architecture as he is several years from retirement. "I am not sure where we will be at that point," he said. "Hopefully there will be kids."

Something you learned early in life and still use? Having character and moral values along with being real and genuine were learned at a young age for McDow.

Advice –

Advice for someone seeking a career in your field? "You need to have a passion for it," said McDow. "You will be a lot more involved than what is glamorized in pictures. There is a lot of hard work and long hours involved."

Who was your biggest influence? "My parents taught me good work ethics and values," said McDow. "They invested time in me."

Achievements –

As a kid? McDow is pleased to have stayed out of any major trouble growing up.

As an adult? Being an architect is what McDow wanted to be as a child. "My dad built some houses when I was a kid," he said. "I love the creativity and the math and science of it."



Future –

Upcoming job news? There are numerous projects under construction at Walton and Associates. The technology center at Danville Area Community College is one big project that should be complete by next fall, according to McDow.

Any vacation plans? "We are still in the planning process for our next trip," said McDow.

I want to retire when I'm ... (age)? "Architects seem to not retire young," said McDow. "It would be nice to get to a point where I would work when I want to. I would like the flexibility." McDow figures by his mid-60s he will likely be able to cut back.

Eric Woods is a freelance writer from Springfield. He can be reached at eric@springfieldbusinessjournal.com



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Architects: Economic Indicators,
Continued from Page 31

economic condition, but we have been fortunate to offset that loss with work from other sectors."

Another market that has remained resilient is that of long-term projects, which require frequent maintenance. For Ralls Melotte of Melotte Morse Leonatti Parker, Ltd., this type of work was a niche the firm pursued as part of their strategy when the firm was started more than 35 years ago.

Public projects such as housing developments and schools that require long-term maintenance removed much of the volatility experienced with the private market.

"We keep busy with long-term clients," said Melotte, "And renovation projects are safer in times of economic uncertainty."

Economic uncertainty continues to be

the consensus with national healthcare issues at hand combined with the state of the State of Illinois, but it seems local architecture firms would indicate business owners and consumers are starting to slowly returning to higher spending hab-



Ralls Melotte, with Melotte Morse Leonatti Parker, Ltd.

its. For the construction jobs that follow, this is a good sign.

Kaleigh Moore is a freelance writer from Jacksonville. She can be reached at info@springfieldbusinessjournal.com

High Speed Rail ,
Continued from Page 29

liamsville, said they expect to see an increase in rail traffic. "We've already seen an increase in freight traffic," said Yokley. The biggest impact on the village will be noise levels. "If you live in a small town that is built around a railroad, you adjust to it."

The village is planning to construct an overpass across the tracks. The \$7.2 million project will be funded through a \$2.2 million Illinois IDOT Railway-Highway Crossing Hazard Elimination in High Speed Rail Corridors grant. The village will provide \$100,000, and IDOT will cover about \$600,000 and the Illinois Commerce Commission will contribute \$4.3 million.

The overpass will provide access to both sides of town, making it easier for fire trucks and emergency vehicles to respond. Buses will no longer have to cross at at-grade crossings. Yokley said the village response has been positive.

The village is also building a new library and museum on Old Rt. 66. The project will be funded by bonds. The village needs to finalize the drawings and acquire land before breaking ground. Construction is scheduled to start in 2014. "There are still a lot of unanswered questions about high speed rail," said Yokley.

In Springfield, work is progressing on relocating the Third Street rail corridor to 10th Street. Work on the Carpenter Street underpass between Ninth and 11th streets is scheduled to begin in the summer of 2014.

This is the first stage of the Springfield Rail Improvement Project, which is part of the Illinois High Speed Rail Chicago to St. Louis program. Partial funding for the \$21.8 million project came from a \$14.4 million Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery grant. IDOT is funding \$1.4 million and the Illinois Commerce Commission is funding \$6.0 million.

The new underpass will eliminate train delays for emergency vehicles, improve east-west travel and improve access to hospitals from the east side.

James Moll, project manager for Hanson Professional Services, Inc., said the city wanted to move rail traffic off the Third Street rail corridor as early as the 1920s. "The city has always had problems with the three corridors being split into segments," Moll said.

Moving rail traffic from the Third Street corridor will eliminate the barrier between St. John's Hospital and Memorial Medical Center and open the area to economic development. "It made a lot of sense in the 1920s," said Moll.

In 2010, the Federal Railroad Administration and IDOT's Division of Public and Intermodal Transportation selected Hanson to conduct the Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement. The remaining phases of the \$315 million project will be completed as funding becomes available.

The next piece of the project includes building an underpass at Ash Street, which is an important east-west thoroughfare. "It provides a connection across the city," said Moll.

The Springfield Mass Transit District has purchased land for a multi-modal transit center on the Tenth Street corridor. Sims and his staff reviewed the literature and created an illustrative design of what a multi-modal transit facility would look like.

The proposed location lies along the 10th Street rail corridor and is bounded by Ninth Street on the west, 11th Street to the east and sits between Washington and Adams streets. Sims envisions a mixed-use commercial and residential development with linkages to the new Springfield Housing Authority's Genesis development.

Sims said a multi-modal transit station would have a positive economic impact. "It draws attention to the east side," said Sims. "It would help leverage additional development on the east side."

Roberta Codemo is a freelance writer from Springfield. She can be reached at info@springfieldbusinessjournal.com

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Small-scale solar: 4.5 billion years in the making

Solar energy has long been relegated to the hippies living in the geodesic home out in the woods or the weird “off the grid” guy at the end of the block whose 1988 pickup truck smells like a Chinese restaurant because it has been converted to run on used restaurant oil. Improvements in technology, changing attitudes about renewable energy sources and reduced investment costs, though, are resulting in boom days for solar energy projects.



Solar energy is part of the nation's effort to develop sustainable energy sources that produce lower carbon emissions and that reduce the country's reliance on foreign oil. Solar, bio-fuels, wind, natural gas and new, advanced design nuclear are part of the sustainable energy effort that has seen some successes and a few setbacks.

Large scale solar projects are gobbling up land (possibly to the detriment of farming) throughout the West as larger and larger installations add megawatts to the grid. There are burgeoning companies that are attempting to scale the cost of solar for the average business or homeowner. And, of course, there are companies that have flamed-out spectacularly like Solyndra that stuck U.S. taxpayers with \$535 million in loan guarantees.

Solar installations, though, continue to set records each year. The Solar Energy Industries Association estimates there is now enough solar electric capacity to

Going Green

David A. Kelm

power 1.7 million American homes and the residential solar market had one its best years in 2013. Solar array installations increased 27 percent over 2012 and overall costs dropped to approximately \$3 per watt, which is nearly the same cost of building a coal-powered plant.

As with every other segment of the energy economy, solar energy development, installation and maintenance results in more jobs and increased revenue. The Solar Foundation found nearly 120,000 U.S. jobs directly linked to solar or an increase of 13 percent since 2011. There are approximately 6,000 businesses in the U.S. devoted to solar energy. Additionally, community colleges and universities are beginning and enhancing training and education programs devoted to solar technology.

In Illinois, the Illinois Solar Energy Association reports that there are over 160 solar companies working in Illinois and Illinois ranked 13th in the nation for installed solar capacity in 2012. During the same year, solar energy saw a record \$27 million invested for solar installations at homes and businesses in Illinois.

Locally, it was announced in early November that Maldaner's restaurant installed solar panels on the downtown building's roof in a partnership with Lincoln Land Community College and the Illinois Green Economy Network. The effort, as reported in the State Journal-Register, was financed with grant money

from IGEN, a rebate from City Water, Light and Power and federal tax credits. CWLP's Solar Rewards program offers rebates for homeowners of up to \$7,500 in addition to commercial rebates of up to \$15,000.

While the Maldaner's install was largely supported with public funding and the support of LLCC and CWLP, there are on-going efforts to reduce the barriers and costs for businesses and homeowners to enter the solar energy market. A major hurdle for small solar efforts, such as a home or small business, has been the overwhelming cost to convert to solar. However, since 2011 the average price of a solar panel has dropped 60 percent. Additionally, a number of corporations are betting the small solar market will continue to grow as they ramp up panel production and add installers throughout the United States.

With solar technology costs dropping and more people seeking to install small arrays for home or business use, some states are beginning to review how excess solar electricity is handled and if aging grids can accept the growing solar watts. In Hawaii, where the sunshine is plentiful and the waves bitchin', solar energy capacity has doubled every year since 2005. In an article published in the International Business Times, it was reported that the Hawaiian Electric Company in September

informed customers that it could no longer guarantee that solar systems would be connected to the utility grid. The stated fear was that there is so much solar power being generated by residential systems; the grid might become unstable as solar power exceeds the power generated by local power plants.

“The Solar Foundation found nearly 120,000 U.S. jobs directly linked to solar or an increase of 13 percent since 2011. There are approximately 6,000 businesses in the U.S. devoted to solar energy.

Solar energy, particularly small-scale installations, appears to be one of the energy sectors to watch in 2014 and beyond. As energy consumers continue to look for alternative sources and governments take an “all-of-the-

above” approach to broadening the domestic energy portfolio, solar is poised to become a break out producer. In addition to further damaging regulations of the coal industry resulting in the closing of more coal production, solar production is becoming less expensive and technologically capable of producing usable, sustained electricity. More than likely, many more homeowners and business owners will join Maldaner's in taking advantage of solar electricity in the coming year.

David A. Kelm is an attorney from Springfield with experience in environmental law

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City authorized to proceed with Carpenter Street underpass

The Illinois Commerce Commission has issued an order authorizing the City of Springfield to proceed with the Carpenter Street underpass project. The ICC will provide \$4,939,000 from the Grade Crossing Protection Fund to help pay for the structure.

The order, which was issued on Dec. 18, begins the first stage of the \$315 million Springfield Rail Improvements Project. These ICC funds bring the total of federal, state and local commitment thus far to \$33 million.

The Carpenter Street underpass will replace the highway-rail grade crossing of Norfolk Southern Corporation's track, located between Ninth and 11th streets, and will provide improved access to the community's major medical facilities and reduce delays for emergency vehicles. Construction should begin in the late summer of 2014.

Preliminary plans for the underpass design were submitted to the ICC, the Illinois Department of Transportation, the Federal Railroad Administration, Norfolk Southern, Union Pacific Railroad Corp. and utility companies by Springfield-based Hanson Professional Services Inc., a firm that provides engineering, planning and allied services. The city selected Hanson to provide design, land acquisition, construction engineering and project management services for the Springfield Rail Improvements Project.

The underpass design includes safety features for motorists and pedestrians, including an elevated walkway that sepa-

rates pedestrians from vehicular traffic; high-visibility and accent LED lighting; stainless steel tensioned-cable railings for the railroad bridge and walkways; and retaining walls that are offset several feet behind the curb and gutter for increased motorist safety.

The estimated cost for the underpass is \$20.6 million. Funds for the Carpenter Street project will partially come from a \$14.4 million Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery grant secured with the support of our congressional delegation led by U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin. The city has proposed using \$1.2 million of available city funds toward land acquisition, preliminary engineering and utility relocation. The ICC will provide the remaining \$4,939,000 million needed for the project from the GCPF. The GCPF assists counties, townships and municipalities with paying for safety improvements at highway-railroad crossings on local roads and streets.

The order states that all improvements for the underpass shall be completed by Dec. 18, 2016. Hanson will submit final plans to IDOT in early 2014 for contract letting in June 2014 and groundbreaking in summer 2014. This timeframe is critical for the city to maintain its TIGER funding.

CMT contributes on new Mississippi River Bridge

In February, the Stan Musial Veterans Memorial Bridge will open to traffic in the St. Louis area. This project is the result of an effort between the states of Illinois and Missouri to improve traffic safety by constructing a new bridge to carry Interstate 70 across the Mississippi River. Crawford, Murphy & Tilly, Inc. assisted in the engineering design of this landmark project.

Dan Meckes, CMT president and CEO said, "CMT has a history of working with the departments of transportation in both states and it is an honor that they trusted our engineers to play such a critical role in the project's completion."

On the St. Louis side, the Missouri Department of Transportation selected CMT to design the new I-70 Interchange that provides access to the new bridge and serves as a gateway into the city.

The Illinois Department of Transportation also called on the services of CMT to design the approach bridges on the Illinois side of the river. Two parallel, two-lane bridges span 2,500 feet over two state highways and 17 sets of railroad tracks.

Illinois Governor Pat Quinn has lauded the Stan Musial Veterans Memorial Bridge, or Stan Span, as it is being called, for not only improving traffic safety, but also serving as a catalyst for economic development and job creation in the area.

Bridge opening celebrations will be Saturday, Feb. 8.

"Everyone at CMT is looking forward to the bridge's opening. Our people have contributed time and effort dating back to 2008. It will be satisfying to see those first cars make their way over the Mississippi," Meckes said.

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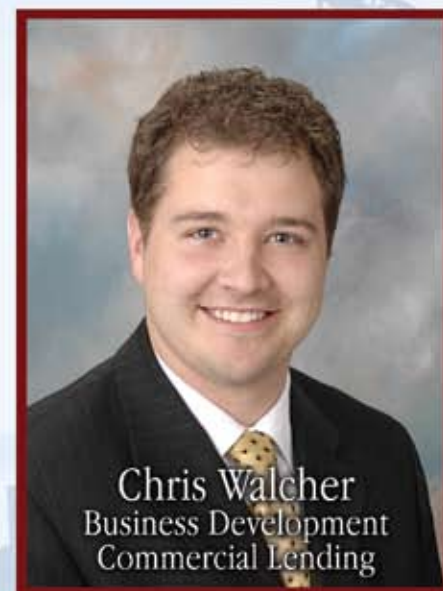
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business decisions •

Conlee: Getting things done

Editor's Note: This column by Courtney Westlake examines what drives successful business people. During a luncheon interview at Cafe Brio, these people give insight into their thought process, leadership skills and more, for our readers.

Ginny Conlee gets things done. That has been my impression as I've witnessed Conlee's work in her leadership roles for many years, though I've only just gotten to know her better personally in the last year. And after sitting down to lunch with her at Café Brio, I am more convinced of this than ever.

Conlee's impressive actions and follow-through can be noted in her long list of accomplishments and full resume, but what you won't see on that

"I see all this stuff I do, and it all connects. It's all about helping people who need help for one reason or another. I just try to do a good job wherever I am."

Ginny Conlee

list is how much she cares. Conlee always makes time to ask about others' lives because she is genuinely interested, and learning is a lifelong endeavor for her, as evidenced by the fact that she has two master's degrees – in international relations and an MBA – and she completed the Leadership Springfield program just last year.

"I was the oldest person in there by 30 years!" she laughs. "But it's kind of fun to shake it up every now and then."

When I asked Ginny about her background, she enthusiastically told me about each job in her career – from joining the Peace Corps and working in the Philippines after receiving her degree in education and music, to a long career primarily with the state in the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Department of Public Aid and Mental Health. Each job description was followed by "And that was really cool!"

"I was really scared of retirement (in 2002) because I didn't know what I was going to do," she admitted. She volunteered in a few roles and also worked as a "software tester" on an interim basis for a year with DCFS. But eventually, she was asked to join the board of directors at the Hope Institute. The decision to accept the position on Hope's board paved the way for the numerous volunteer leadership positions Conlee now holds.

"Then I knew about the crew that was thinking about starting a women's giving circle through the Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln (CFLI), so I became a starting member of that, and then I was asked to join the board," she said. "They're some of the nicest people you'll ever meet, and it's fun to be able to work on big issue things. We don't just fund stuff; we think about how to make the community better for everyone."

Though at first glance, Conlee's various roles seem unrelated, but it's clear that in each of her positions – from child abuse investigations to being a board member at St. Patrick's Catholic School – there is one common thing that drives her: the success of the future generation.

Ginny acknowledged that she has nev-

Dining with Success

Courtney Westlake

er had children herself, and I asked her why children have been such a passion in her life. Her mother being a kindergarten teacher certainly influenced her, but the simple personal fulfillment that Ginny finds in helping to give the youth in our community new opportunities is very obvious by the noticeable excitement in her eyes when she speaks about the positive work of the organizations she is involved with.

"So many kids don't even know there are opportunities out there," she said. "We need to help them have the skills to compete in the world and the knowledge

that there are opportunities available that they maybe didn't even know about or no one in their family has done before."

Ginny and I had a frank discussion about progress and how too many children and par-

ents live "just trying to make it through today," as she described. "How do we break that cycle?" I asked her.

"By starting early," she responded. "By getting (children) ready for school, by teaching families how to read to their kids, to talk to their kids and how to positively influence their kids' lives. Often, we need to work with the parents more than the children."

We talked about how interesting it is to be on the boards of organizations both with so much money to work with and so little money to work with, and she described how valuable it has been to bring people together from each of her positions – not just financially, but to have varying degrees of expertise to rely on with new initiatives and campaigns.

"I see all this stuff I do, and it all connects," she told me. "It's all about helping people who need help for one reason or another. I just try to do a good job wherever I am. I'm not interested in helping people who think they deserve to be helped. I'm interested in helping people who, in spite of all they're facing, want to keep trying."

With the primary goal of giving children better opportunities for success in life, Ginny finds a way to make things happen, and I expressed what a commendable quality that is to her.

"Nobody else is going to do it," she replied. "And I like to do it. I don't do things just because I should, but because I like them and find them interesting and I like learning."

By the way, I had the Brio Burger, and it was so enormous (and delicious) that I got to take home leftovers for my husband to enjoy.

Courtney Westlake is a freelance writer from Springfield. She can be reached at info@springfieldbusinessjournal.com



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Nudging towards decisions

There are a number of decisions that a person faces daily, most of which are automatic and inconsequential like what outfit to wear; what shoes to pair with that outfit; what route to take to work; what to eat for lunch. Presumably, most of these decisions come without reflection, but how much time does a person really spend considering which pair of shoes to wear to work?



Book Review

Chris Felchlia

ing.

In contrast, economists make thoughtful decisions based upon objectivity, facts, and empirical evidence. Moreover, they exhibit self-control, awareness, and deductive reasoning. In other words, economists share a less automatic, more reflective system for deducing solutions. Automatic thinking is great for everyday decisions, but again, what about complex problems?

"Practice makes perfect" is an aphorism, which holds true for just about any new activity. Obviously, some people have more talent than others to begin with, but the point is most of us can improve at various activities with a bit of sweat equity and some coaching. Sometimes, the activity is performed so often that the action becomes automatic. Examples include tying shoes, using the microwave and driving a car.

However, the limitation to solving most complex problems arises because a person usually cannot practice a solution for it. For these problems a "nudge" – or "choice architecture" – is a fantastic tool. Now, there may be some strong-willed readers thinking, "No one is making a decision for me." Another reader may be of the opinion, "This is great; I don't have to think anymore because someone is going to do it for me."

Obviously, the previous quotations are somewhat facetious, but the resounding idea is "choice architecture" results in the alleviation of some of the murkiness involved in complex decision-making without taking the freedom of choice away. So who makes nudges? The expert on the problem at hand can be considered the choice architect. He has the responsibility of choosing a solution that most humans can embrace somewhat readily without limiting the independence of the economist.

Consider the following illustration. Mary the map reader would like to travel from Springfield, Ill., to Anchorage, Alaska. However, Mary the map reader is a human, and contrary to her name, she cannot read a map very well; in fact, she is not even sure how to learn. She decides to have someone else transport her, but quickly realizes that she cannot decide which mode of travel (bus, train, or plane) suits her best. There are too many decisions for Mary to make, and as a result, Mary gives up entirely.

Immediately noticing a need, the knight in shining choice architect armor, otherwise known as Paul the Econ, makes a stand to help humans like Mary make travel choices. Paul usually solves his own problems, but decides to help Mary because he considers himself somewhat of a globetrotter. He contrives a system dependent on any number of travel variables (cost, distance of travel, length of stay) that magically provides Mary with an answer to her travel question. Additionally, Paul makes sure to educate Mary that this magic answer is merely a suggestion, and if she wishes, she still has the ability to make her own choice.

The authors provide plenty of realistic examples where choice restructuring or "Libertarian paternalism," as they call it, can be applied. Based on more than just speculation, the results of changing default choices are exemplified in the realms of money, health, and policy. "Nudges" can be applied to saving money or investing, or they can help direct seniors to choose better prescription drug plans.

An interesting example for the medical community concerns increasing organ donations. Organ donors are notoriously hard to come by and in the case of a catastrophe are severely needed. As of right now, if a person wishes to be an organ donor, the choice must be made to opt into the system for donation.

The idea of a "nudge" would be to change the default so everyone is automatically enrolled as a donor with the choice to opt out, thus resulting in proposed increases in the number of organ

donors. The authors continue the book by citing a myriad of other situations where "nudges" could be put to good use, and in the revised and expanded edition, they also include a bonus chapter about "nudges" for daily activities.

The brilliance of a "nudge" is in its simplicity, the likeness of which any person can embrace – human, economist or others. If your goal is "Improving decisions about health, wealth, and happiness," this book will not disappoint. It may even fundamentally change the way you think about the world. If you're a lawyer, an economist, an administrator of public policy, a polymath, or anyone else for that matter, I highly suggest this book. (After reading, a simple bit of irony became suddenly salient to me: Unfortunately, the reader must actually be a bit of an Economics to understand Thaler and Sunstein's take on "nudges.")

*Note to the reader: Growing lots of black walnut trees on a sizeable plot of land has become quite the retirement plan for some people. Consider that a very tall, very straight tree, which can produce some high-quality veneer can be sold to the right bidder for anywhere between \$7,000 and \$15,000, depending on the market of course. Not to mention, there are lots of yummy walnuts to eat for the 30 years it takes for the trees to grow. Now, that's a retirement plan anyone could eat up....

Chris Felchlia is an avid reader from Springfield.

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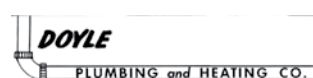
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business lunch •

Charlie R's worth the splurge

By Tom Collins

Business meals encompass more than just lunch. Whether a celebration with colleagues or dinner out with clients or prospective clients, dinner out is part of today's business climate. What better way to start Springfield Business Journal's expansion of its restaurant review than with a business dinner review of a steakhouse?

Charlie R's (formerly Gallaghers, but now Charlie R's thanks to trademark issues) is located on South Sixth Street just after the viaduct.

Charlie R's has somewhat of a split personality. In part, it's exactly what comes to mind when you think of a Midwestern Steakhouse. But, it also offers a vibrant

bleu cheese sauce).

All entrees include Charlie R's house salad and a choice of one side (which include baked potatoes, garlic fried potatoes, and buttered carrots). When compared to so many of today's steakhouses where everything seems to come a la carte, this was a pleasant surprise.

For those not interested in beef, there's a variety of seafood, pasta, chicken and pork dishes. Dishes that caught our eyes included the seared scallops (22.99), the lobster ravioli (market price), the whole fried catfish (\$15.99) and the chicken with wild mushroom champagne sauce (\$17.99).


Our group opted to start with the fried calamari (\$9.99) and the garlic cheese

Charlie R's Steakhouse

Overall Rating: ★★★★★

Atmosphere: ★★★★★
Service: ★★★★★
Food: ★★★★★
Price: ★★★★★
Suitability for Business Dinner: ★★★★★

Address: 2242 South Sixth St.,
Springfield, Ill.
Phone: (217) 522-8888
Hours: Tuesday – Saturday;
4:30 p.m. – 11:00 p.m.
Website: charleyrsteakhouse.com
Credit Cards: Yes
Wheelchair access: Yes
*Menu listings and prices subject to change



WHAT THE STARS MEAN:
(None) Poor to satisfactory
★ Average
★★ Good
★★★ Very Good
★★★★ Excellent
★★★★★ Extraordinary

bar scene. More on that later.

First, don't let the outside dissuade you. Yes, it looks a bit rundown. But, looks can be deceiving. In fact, my 2005 Volvo looked a bit rundown compared to the rest of the cars in the ample parking lot.

The interior is festooned with plenty of dark wood coupled with muted lighting. Charlie R's has a clubby feel. Walking in, the first time diner finds a large bar and separate seating area anchored by a piano. The night we visited we were grateful for that muted lighting – Charlie R's bar was in full swing and the karaoke crowd was into things. We figured the less we saw, the better.

I visited Charlie R's on a Tuesday night for a board meeting. Progressing past the revelers, we were quickly escorted into Charlie R's spacious dining room. My guests and I knew a majority of our fellow diners and a fair number of the bar crowd.

Our server quickly appeared to take the group's drink orders. That's an important part of the business dinner, and Charlie R's excelled in that regard. Drinks were not pushed but our server kept a good lookout on our group and always knew when to ask. Well done.

We also appreciated that our server understood that we had some business to transact. Rather than hovering over the table, he gave us space to attend to the business portion of the evening rather than crowding in to announce that evening's specials.

Once we progressed past the obligatory part of the meal, we had a chance to review the menu. Although not as expansive as its predecessor, there's plenty of variety on Charlie R's menu. And, I personally prefer fewer options done right than more variety done poorly. In short, quality rules over quantity.

Starters included crabcakes (\$12.99) and fried asparagus (\$10.99, served with

bread (not on the menu, but addictively good). The salads were unremarkable, but my guests who asked for bleu cheese commented that the quality of the cheese was a step above Charlie R's peers. The house Italian dressing won rave reviews.

But, what we really appreciated was Charlie R's 30-day-aged beef. Options included the filet, strip, ribeye and the prime rib. Prices started at \$17.99 (the 14 oz. sirloin) to \$26.99 (the 12 oz. filet). For the quality of food provided, we all concluded the Charlie R's prices were more than fair.

My fellow guests opted almost exclusively for a variety of Charlie R's beef offerings. I was the sole holdout and opted for the bone-in pork chops (\$17.99). The rest of the crowd raved about the quality of the beef. They particularly appreciated that Charlie R's understands that "rare" means red in the middle and not pink. Kudos to the chef.


My one guest commented that the beef came with a char, depth and tanginess that accentuated and amplified the beef's flavor. Although I couldn't match my fellow board members' way with words, I found the pork chops to be well seasoned and, again, a step above Charlie R's peers.

In terms of sides, the garlic fried potatoes were the clear winners. Although the fries were generously sized and well cooked, they paled in comparison to the delectable goodness of the well fried potatoes pared with just the right amount of garlic. A small complaint – the bread wasn't quite up to par. Steak screams for rolls with a more substantial crust.

Charlie R's faces an increasingly health-conscious clientele. But, for that business dinner when you want to splurge on a juicy steak, Charlie R's fits the bill.

Tom Collins is a freelance writer from Springfield

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Ram 1500 Laramie Longhorn: 21st century truck

By Jane Driver

James Driver is in town from college, so he and I drove to Green Dodge on West Wabash to test drive a 2014 Ram pickup. We chose the 1500 Laramie Longhorn Edition Crew Cab 4 x 4 in Flame Red with a Canyon Brown Light Frost Beige leather interior.

This is one large truck, with many comforts. Ludger Reed, my salesman, said Ram is marketing this truck to the person who needs the versatility of a truck but wants the comforts of a luxurious vehicle. This one fit the bill.

The front seats are both heated and cooled; the back seats are heated as well. The quick charge USB port can charge your cell phone in about half the time; the rear camera looks down on the trailer connector for easy backing, along with the power sliding rear window.

With all this masculinity surrounding me, I thought it odd that the gear "shifter" is a dial. It was hard to juxtapose this component with its environment. I'd rather have something to grip and move to get a better feel for what I wanted to do.

Dials and controls made sense and were easy to reach, and my view out the front was expansive from such height. I did not like having the roof support in my field of vision. The side view mirrors (all 4 of them) were incredible, giving me both the "short" or near view and the "long" view further back. Obviously this is necessary if you are hauling a trailer.

Along with multiple spots to place your beverage (including four on the

them further out. Being able to configure myself comfortably behind the large steering wheel made me more confident I would be able to drive this truck rather than it driving me.

This truck, with its laser etching western motif in the seats and around the dials was named the Official Truck of Texas for 2013. The western motif continues to the back seat pouches – saddle bags. But how well did it drive?

As James Driver said afterward: "I was a little nervous before we went on the test drive, since you had to slide out of the one in the show room. I didn't think I'd feel safe sitting in the back-seat."

His fears were unfounded as this truck drove more like a large sedan than a truck. Granted, I would not use this Ram 1500 as a getaway vehicle, but

it took turns well, and was smooth over the railroad tracks west of town. While it felt as if I took up more than my share of the road, the turning radius was surprisingly small. I was able to drive around an entranceway planting area with ease. Reed just smiled as I had previously commented I wasn't expecting much out of its turning ability.

The 5.7L hemi engine roared to life on acceleration, but this truck is also equipped with a system to shut off half of the cylinders at cruising speed to preserve some semblance of fuel economy. At 15 miles per gallon city and 21 on the highway, this is not a gas sipper.

The brakes were tight, and I never got a lurching feeling as the truck stopped as a unit, rather than the top half moving further than the bottom. When we returned, I did slide out of the truck onto the pavement. It's the only way I can get out in one piece. I also had to climb in, but it wasn't too difficult.

Ram has also developed an App so you can remotely lock and start the truck and you can set up a local wifi hot spot, for a fee. As I said earlier, this is a truck for someone

who needs a truck, but needs 21st century technology and convenience too. At \$51,090, it's also for someone willing to pay for those items.

The dealership has a nice sitting area with upholstered chairs, a couch, Pepsi products, coffee, tea and a glassed-in children's area completes the set up.

Jane Driver is a freelance writer from Springfield. She can be reached at jane@springfieldbusinessjournal.com

2014 Dodge Ram 1500

Driven at:

Green Dodge
3801 Wabash Ave.
Springfield, Ill. 62711
(217) 522-1222
Greendodge.net



Sticker price as driven: \$51,090
MPG: 15 city; 21 highway

Notables:

Handling; Interior well designed and comfortable; Expansive View;
Gear shifter at odds with surroundings;
Exit difficult for short people



2014 Dodge Ram 1500 Laramie Longhorn

floor), and numerous other storage areas for anything you need to bring with you, the Ram 1500 has two wet storage areas in the back, under the floor mats. It is a great idea, so long as you remember to remove the wet items before they mildew.

While the seats were oversized for someone my height, they were comfortable with good lumbar support, although the seat bottom dug into the back of my knees. However, Ram does provide those with shorter legs powered pedals to move

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legal filings •

The following information was obtained from the Sangamon County Circuit Clerk, and has not otherwise been verified by Springfield Business Journal.

This list of recent filings does not represent all matters filed with the Seventh Judicial Circuit Court for Sangamon County for the given time period, but instead represents those filings Springfield Business Journal, independently of the Sangamon County Circuit Clerk, believes will be of interest to its business readers.

Lawsuits

- 11/15/13 - Rochester State Bank, Plaintiff, Vs. Rochester Transportation Inc., E. A. Barber, Michael A. Dozier, Defendants, Replevin.
- 11/19/13 – CACH LLC, Plaintiff, Vs. John R. Goldsberry, Defendant, Contract.
- 11/22/13 – Williamsville State Bank and Trust, Plaintiff, Vs. Jennifer Gleeson, Defendant, Contract.

Chancery

- 11/15/13 – Bank of Springfield, Plaintiff, Vs. Jacob Burris, Kristy Burris, Wesley Corgan, Carter Bros. Lumber Co. Inc., Marine Bank, Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 11/15/13 – Marine Bank, Plaintiff, Vs. Shelley L. Husemann, Marine Bank, Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 11/15/13 – Bank of Springfield, Plaintiff, Vs. Christopher G. Caupert, Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 11/18/13 – Robert P. Gobel, Plaintiff, Vs. Danny E. Marquar, Cendant Mortgage Corp., Defendants, Partition.
- 11/18/13 – PNC Bank National Association, Plaintiff, Vs. Carteiz L. Fowler, Yolanda T. Fowler, City of Springfield, One Mortgage Partners Corp., Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 11/18/13 – PNC Bank National Association, Plaintiff, Vs. Anna R. Stuebs, Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 11/18/13 – PNC Bank National Association, Plaintiff, Vs. Steven Swenson, Fallingbrook Townhomes Owners, Jonathan Oldlittles, Unknown Heirs and Legates, Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 11/19/13 – Edward Harris, Plaintiff, Vs. People of the State of Illinois, Defendant, Injunction.
- 11/19/13 – Lloyd Saterfield, Plaintiff, Vs. Lisa Weitekamp, S. A. Godinez, Defendants, Injunction.
- 11/19/13 – Town and Country Banc Mortgage, Plaintiff, Vs. Peace C. Ikejiaku, Alexander U. Ikejiaku, Town and Country

Bank, Defendants, Foreclosure.

- 11/19/13 – United Community Bank, Plaintiff, Vs. Melissa S. Pieper, CitiBank National Association, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 11/20/13 – Bank of Springfield, Plaintiff, Vs. David C. Freeman, Tina M. Freeman, Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 11/20/13 – PNC Bank National Association, Plaintiff, Vs. James R. Cass, Kelli S. Cass, Portfolio Recovery Associates, Springfield Financial Services, Midland Funding LLC Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 11/20/13 – Nationstar Mortgage LLC, Plaintiff, Vs. Julia K. Lawrence, Joseph D. Lawrence, Any Known Owners, Brookside Village Condominium, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 11/20/13 – Southern Financial Group LLC, Plaintiff, Vs. Maulding Development LLC, Forest Park Office Condo LLC, First Southern Bank, Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 11/20/13 – Town and Country Banc Mortgage, Plaintiff, Vs. Ronald P. Walsh, Defendant, Foreclosure.
- 11/20/13 – US Bank National Association, Plaintiff, Vs. Melva J. Norman, Louis Norman, City of Springfield, Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 11/21/13 – PHH Mortgage Corporation, Plaintiff, Vs. Joseph M. Cloyd, Janine Cloyd, Burdette Cloyd, Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 11/22/13 – CPSRMOF II 2012 A Trust, Plaintiff, Vs. Holly M. Moore, John Doe, Unknown Owners Generally, Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 11/22/13 – PNC Bank, Plaintiff, Vs. Cassandra L. Beverly, Stanley Morgan, Heartland Credit Union, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 11/22/13 – PNC Bank, Plaintiff, Vs. Daniel E. Hollis, Opal M. Hollis, Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 11/22/13 – PNC Bank National Association, Plaintiff, Vs. Paul J. Speller, Stephanie L. Speller, Irisdale Homeowners Association, PNC Bank, Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 11/22/13 – United Community Bank, Plaintiff, Vs. Nicholas P. Christ, Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 11/25/13 – PHH Mortgage Corp., Plaintiff, Vs. James J. Root, Janna Root, Beneficial Financial I Inc., Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, Defendants,

Foreclosure.

- 11/25/13 – PNC Bank National Association, Plaintiff, Vs. Jeffrey D. Suver, Laura L. Suver, National Association, Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 11/26/13 – Floor Covering Central Inc., DBA Flooring America, Plaintiffs, Vs. Panther 4700 LLC, United Community Bank, Defendants, Mechanics Lien.
- 11/26/13 – Floyd D. Vetter, Plaintiff, Vs. Panther 4700 LLC, Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, Defendants, Mechanics Lien.
- 11/27/13 – HSBC Bank USA NA, Plaintiff, Vs. Fornaldo Walker, Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 11/27/13 – PNC Bank National Association, Plaintiff, Vs. Darrell S. McConnell, Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 11/27/13 – US Bank National Association, Plaintiff, Vs. Tina M. Scott, Richard E. Honorable, Samuel J. Carter, Cora J. Carter, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 12/02/13 – HD Smith Wholesale Drug Co., Plaintiff, Vs. Camarato Drug Inc., Logan Professional Pharmacy, Matthew Camarato, Stephanie Camarato, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 12/02/13 – PNC Bank National Association, Plaintiff, Vs. Deborah K. Koua, JP Morgan Chase Bank, Washington Mutual Bank, Bank of America, LaSalle Bank, Kpangni Koua, Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 12/03/13 – Green NIS Inc., Plaintiff, Vs. Marine Bank and Trust, Defendant, Foreclosure.
- 12/03/13 – JP Morgan Chase Bank, Plaintiff, Vs. George E. Rembert, Ann M. Rembert, Unknown Owners, Occupants and Non-Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 12/03/13 – PNC Bank National Association, Plaintiff, Vs., Christopher J. Kelso, Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 12/04/13 – Marine Bank, Plaintiff, Vs. Marielle Sanders, Michelle Pansa, Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 12/05/13 – Bank of Springfield, Plaintiff, Vs. PR Investment Corporation, PR Investment and Profit Sharing, Patrick M. Rotherham, City of Springfield, Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 12/05/13 – Bank of Springfield, Plaintiff, Vs. PR Investment Corporation, PR Investment and Profit Sharing, Patrick M. Rotherham, Foreclosure.
- 12/05/13 – JP Morgan Chase Bank, Plaintiff, Vs. Susan S. Schmal, Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 12/05/13 – PNC Bank, Plaintiff, Vs. William H. Wikoff, Illinois National Bank, Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 12/05/13 – Residential Credit Solutions Inc., Plaintiff, Vs. Homer L. Coleman, Crystal C. Coleman, Midland Funding LLC, Mike Williams Plumbing and Heat-

ing, Comanche Village Pond Association, Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.

- 12/05/13 – Williamsville State Bank, Plaintiff, Vs. Alma Nerone, Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 12/06/13 – Dustin R. Coleman, Plaintiff, Vs. People of the State of Illinois, Illinois Department of Corrections, Defendants, Injunction.
- 12/06/13 – James Smith, Plaintiff, Vs. People of the State of Illinois, Defendant, Injunction.
- 12/09/13 – PNC Bank, Plaintiff, Vs. Maichari Chance, Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 12/11/2013 – Bank of Springfield NA, Plaintiff, Vs. Susan R. Thompson, Gregory Thompson, Unknown Heirs, Legatees of Susan Thompson, Legatees of Gregory A. Thompson, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 12/11/13 – Marine Bank, Plaintiff, Vs. Michael W. Koleske, Donna K. Koleske, Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 12/11/13 – PNC Bank National Association, Plaintiff, Vs. Estate of Theresa Jane Lewis, Carol Lewis, Unknown Heirs, Legatees of Theresa Jane Lewis, Beneficial Illinois Inc., First Resolution Investment Co., Heartland Credit Union, Non-Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 12/12/13 – Erick Falconer, Plaintiff, Vs. Illinois Department Financial and Professional Regulation, Manuel Flores, Jay Stewart, Defendants, Injunction.
- 12/12/13 – PNC Bank National Association, Plaintiff, Vs. Judith Faulstich, Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 12/12/13 – PNC Bank National Association, Plaintiff, Vs. Timothy R. Lynch, Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 12/12/13 – Wells Fargo Bank NA, Plaintiff, Vs. Laura Happenny, Broc Happenny, Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 12/13/13 – PNC Bank National Association, Plaintiff, Vs. Carmen DeJesus, Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 12/16/13 – Bank of America NA, Plaintiffs, Vs. John C. Stroop, Renee F. Stroope, Illinois Department of Health, Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 12/16/13 – PNC Bank National Association, Plaintiff, Vs. Joshua Epperson, Rebecca L. Epperson, Citi Financial Services Inc., All Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 12/16/13 – Seneca One LLC, Plaintiff, Vs. Marco Hawkins, Defendant, Specific Performance.
- 12/16/13 – Kirin Consulting Inc., Plaintiff, Vs. Capital Strategies Inc., Accounting.
- 12/16/13 – Wells Fargo Bank NA, Successor by Merger to Wells Fargo, Norwest Bank Minnesota NA as Trustee for First Franklin, Plaintiffs, Vs. Cheryl Warren, John Warreb, Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 12/18/13 – PHH Mortgage Corp., Plaintiff, Vs. Steven M. Cooper, Melissa J. Cooper, Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.

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Residential Landlord-Tenant laws

Is your residential lease up and you want to move? Is your lease not up and you want to move? Or, are you a landlord and want to evict a troublesome tenant?

What are your options?

First, as with any question regarding a document, you need to read your lease.

You should always have a lease, although an oral lease may be enforceable for a time period of less than one year. As with all oral agreements, however, the problem is proving the terms of the agreement.

Termination of a Lease. Assume a tenant's lease is set to terminate on Jan. 31, 2014. If the tenant wants to terminate the lease, he generally must give written notice within a specified time period. Thirty days' notice is a common lease provision. If the tenant does not provide notice, the lease may continue as a month-to-month lease.

If a lease is not for a specific term, it may be terminated by either party with proper notice. The type of lease will generally be determined by the payment of rent. If rent is due once a year, the lease is year-to-year. If rent is due once a month, the lease is month-to-month, and so forth. If the lease is year-to-year, either party may terminate the lease by giving sixty days' written notice. The notice must be given after the sixth month of the lease and before the beginning of the eleventh month. If the lease is week-



Law

Sarah Jane Delano Pavlik

to-week, either party may terminate the lease with seven days' written notice to the other party. Most other leases can be terminated with thirty days' notice.

Return of a Security Deposit. If the rental property consists of five or more units, after the tenant vacates the property, the landlord must return any security deposit or, within thirty days, send to the tenant an itemized statement of the damage allegedly caused to the property and the estimated or actual cost for repairing or replacing each item on that statement, attaching the paid receipts, or copies thereof, for the repair or replacement.

Delivery of the itemized statement must be in person, by mail directed to the tenant's last known address or by email to a verified email address provided by the tenant. If the landlord makes any of the repairs himself, the landlord may include the reasonable cost of his labor to repair such damage. If estimated costs are given, the landlord must send the tenant copies of paid receipts within thirty days from the date the itemized statement was sent. If the statement and receipts are not furnished to the tenant, the landlord must return the security deposit in full within forty-five days of the date that the tenant vacated the property.

If a court finds that a landlord has refused to supply the required itemized statement or has supplied the statement in bad faith, and has failed or refused to return the security deposit, the landlord

will be liable for an amount equal to twice the amount of the security deposit due, together with court costs and reasonable attorneys' fees.

Terminating a Lease for Cause. If either party breaches a lease, the lease is not automatically terminated. Either party may sue the other for damages. In addition, each party has certain other rights.

If a tenant does not pay the rent, the landlord may evict him. The landlord must send the tenant written notice demanding payment of the rent. If the rent is not paid in full within five days after the notice, the landlord may file suit to evict the tenant. If a landlord wishes to terminate a lease for a reason other than failure to pay rent, he must serve written notice on the tenant to correct the breach.

For example, if a lease provides that no pets are allowed in an apartment, and the tenant has a dog living there, the landlord can serve the tenant with notice to remove the dog. If the dog is not removed within ten days, the landlord may file for eviction. Landlords should be careful however. Depending on the breach, if the landlord accepts a rent payment after giving the ten days' notice, he may have waived his right to terminate the lease.

If a landlord breaches the lease by failing to maintain the property in livable condition, the tenant may claim "constructive eviction," i.e., that because he cannot safely live in the unit, the land-

lord has essentially evicted him. In that case, the tenant may be able to vacate the property and terminate the lease.

Small repairs and repairs that are not made immediately will not constitute constructive eviction. Likewise, housing

code violations do not automatically constitute constructive eviction.

Before leaving the property and terminating the lease under the

theory of constructive eviction, a tenant should consult an attorney. As long as a tenant remains in the unit, he is obligated to continue to pay rent, and may be evicted for failing to do so. Therefore, a tenant will want to consult an attorney before withholding rent.

Abandonment. If a tenant abandons the property, the landlord may be left with the tenant's personal property. A lease should have a provision regarding abandonment allowing the landlord to re-lease the property and dispose of any personal property. Abandonment generally consists of being absent from the property for at least thirty-two days and failing to pay the rent.

Whether you are the tenant or the landlord, you will want a written lease specifying each party's duties and responsibilities to avoid potential disagreements or misunderstandings.

“Abandonment generally consists of being absent from the property for at least thirty-two days and failing to pay the rent.”

Sarah Jane Delano Pavlik is an attorney from Springfield

Caring for Customers...

Brian Murphy began working in the funeral industry when he was 16 years old. Seeing his career opportunity, he worked his way up from cutting the grass to funeral director. In 2004, he purchased Vancil Memorial Funeral Chapel, which was renamed Vancil-Murphy Funeral Home in 2007.

As Springfield natives, Brian and his wife Adrienne value serving the families in their community. As unfortunate as the death of a loved one is, their clients can appreciate working directly with the owners in every aspect of the funeral process. For more information on the wide variety of services Vancil-Murphy Funeral Home provides, visit vancilmurphy.com.

Knowing the importance of customer care, the Murphys value banking with First Bankers Trust Company. Brian appreciates that, "First Bankers conducts their business the way we do. Their attention to detail is just superior." When they visit the bank on Wabash, he says, "We walk in, and everyone knows 'the Murphys!' That means a lot to us." Adrienne

adds, "We call it *The Cheers* of banking!" They value working with Greg Curl and Nancy Richards. Adrienne appreciates that, "They are always available whenever we need something."

Because the couple puts a lot of time and effort into their business, Adrienne appreciates being able to bank on the go. She says, "Mobile banking is great! I can do it wherever I'm at!"

Today, Brian still cuts the grass at the funeral home; and as a small business owner, he adds, "With First Bankers, you get more personalized service. Sometimes being smaller is better." He is pleased to say, "We continue to promote them – personal or commercial. They are just a great bank."

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Prairie Art Alliance to move Gallery II

The Prairie Art Alliance will expand its H.D. Smith Gallery inside the Hoogland Center for the Arts by moving Gallery II, located on the Old State Capitol Plaza, to its new location on 420 S. Sixth St. Plans for 2014 also call for expanded hours.

The gallery expansion comes in time for the first exhibit of the year called "Natural Surroundings," featuring the artwork of Dick Folse (oil painting, photography), Jane Frey (acrylic/oil painting) and Liz Drake (gourd art, mixed media). The exhibit runs Jan. 10 through March 1, with an artists' reception set for Saturday, Jan. 11 at 5:30 p.m.

Edgar's Coffee House & Book Nook to open in Chatham

Land of Lincoln Goodwill Industries opened a new Edgar's Coffee House & Book Nook in the Goodwill Plaza on West Plummer in Chatham.

The coffee house has a selection of fresh ground coffees, brewed teas, specialty coffee drinks and fresh-baked pastries, cookies and cakes. Edgar's also offers breakfast sandwiches and luncheon sandwiches, wraps, soups and salads. Hours are 6:30 a.m. – 9:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 6:30 a.m. – 10:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday; and 11:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. Sunday.

The new location also features a 1,600 sq. ft. Goodwill Book Nook and conference room. The Nook is complete with comfortable seating and couches, free Wi-Fi, a performance stage, fireplace and a 650 sq. ft. community conference room.

The Book Nook contains donated

Giving Back

Jean Jones

books, DVDs and other media for purchase at typical Goodwill prices.

The Goodwill Plaza on West Plummer also has a Goodwill Retail store and donation center, Goodwill's LaBelle Boutique, and the Goodwill Holiday Store.

CFLL-YP grant to Mini O'Beirne

Mini O'Beirne Crisis Nursery was the recipient of a \$7,000 grant from the Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln's Young Philanthropists initiative.

This is the eighth year the Young Philanthropists have given such a grant.

The 2013 grant award was presented to Mini O'Beirne for the purchase of formula and diapers for the Nursery and families in need. A portion of the funds will also be used to assist families with transportation costs with bus tokens or cab fare.

Young Philanthropists began in 2006. The members create a "giving circle" where annual donations are pooled together to enable a larger gift for charities. A portion of each contribution goes to the Young Philanthropists endowment fund, called the Future Fund, to supplement the grant money available annually.

Zara's gives away two vehicles

Deanna Logan, a former Contact Ministries resident and Luke Ridge, a Make-A-Wish Illinois recipient received vehicles courtesy of the Zara's Collision Center Benevolence Program.

Logan and her five children were presented a 2003 Chrysler Town & Country van while Ridge, 20, whose goal is to overcome lymphoma, received his 1993 Mustang completely refurbished.

In 15 years, Zara's has given away nearly 30 vehicles.

The Benevolence Program is supported by Zara's vendors, employees, friends, family, and insurance agents. Approximately 40 donors contribute items such as vehicle repair, paint material, mechanical work, gift cards, and monetary gifts. Bob Thompson, owner of Bike Tek, also donated five refurbished bikes for Logan's children.

OCI participates in Operation Walk

The Orthopedic Center of Illinois joined forces with 120 volunteer orthopedic surgeons in 32 states for Operation Walk USA. This resulted in a new hip for an OCI patient who lives in Jacksonville.

Operation Walk USA, an independent medical charitable organization, works with private practices and hospitals to coordinate knee and hip replacements. The procedure and care is at no cost.

Surgeons from OCI heard about Operation Walk and wanted to provide this opportunity to a patient in central Illinois. This individual was suffering with persistent pain and had no insurance. Even making his way to office appointments was difficult, requiring an interpreter and someone to drive him to his visits. He fit the criteria to participate in Operation Walk, and received his new

hip on Dec. 3.

The patient is recovering well following surgery and has already noticed a decrease in the chronic hip pain he suffered with for years.

Cookie sales get early season

Girl Scouts of Central Illinois are taking pre-orders for cookie sales. Direct sale will begin on Feb. 3, 2014.

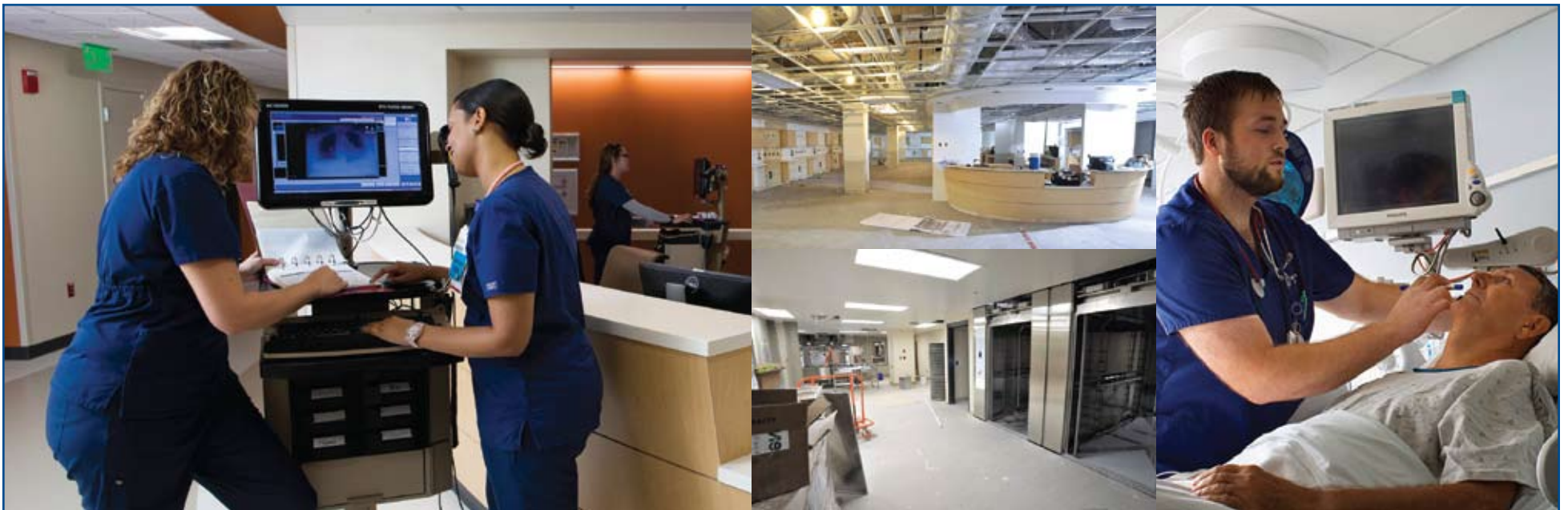
With the opportunity to take pre-orders, cookie customers are able to ensure supply of Girl Scout cookies and troops get a base of how many boxes they need to order to fulfill demand.

The new cookie this year is Cranberry Citrus Crisp. Cookie lovers can also place their orders early for Thin Mints, Shortbread, Peanut Butter Patties, Peanut Butter Sandwiches, Caramel deLites, Lemonades, and Thanks-A-Lots.

GSCI will also participate in Operation Cookie Share. The effort to provide cookies to military troops domestically and overseas started in 2010. Since then, GSCI has provided more than \$825,000 worth of Girl Scout cookies to the women and men in our armed forces.

Jean Jones is a freelance writer from Springfield.

If your organization has an item that you would like Jean to include, email information and details to her at info@springfieldbusinessjournal.com



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HSHS names president of medical group

Following a nationwide search, HSHS Medical Group has selected an internal candidate Dr. Loren Hughes to serve as president of its medical group. He has been with HSHS Medical Group since July 2011, practicing family medicine at HSHS Medical Group Family and Internal Medicine Collinsville.



Hughes

"Dr. Hughes has demonstrated success with our dyad leadership model and has been effective in building relationships in his division," said CEO Melinda Clark.

Prior to joining the Collinsville practice, Hughes served as medical director of the emergency department and full-time staff physician at St. Joseph's Hospital in Breese, Ill. He was also medical director and full-time emergency department physician St. Francis Hospital in Litchfield, Ill.

Hughes attended Southern Illinois University School of Medicine in Springfield and completed his residency at the Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee. He is board-certified in family medicine and licensed in both Illinois and Missouri.

OSCI receives patient satisfaction award

The Orthopaedic Surgery Center of Illinois, Memorial Health System's and the Orthopedic Center of Illinois' ambulatory surgery services at Koke Mill Medical Center, has been named a 2013 Guardian of Excellence Award winner by Press Ganey Associates.

The award recognizes top-performing facilities that achieve the 95th percentile of performance in patient satisfaction among Press Ganey clients in the U.S.

"OSCI has worked hard to develop a culture of excellence over the past several years by focusing on building a solid foundation for customer services," said Dr. Leo Ludwig, OSCI's medical director. "Each and every staff member contributes to the patient experience. This award is a reflection of their dedication to make sure our patients have a positive experience."

Press Ganey partners with more than 10,000 health care facilities, and more than half of all U.S. hospitals, to measure and improve the patient experience.

Passavant names two new appointments, employee of the month

Passavant Area Hospital made appointments to their Imaging Services and Pastoral Care Departments.

Patti Brown is the new administrative director of Imaging Services. Brown is a graduate of the Lincoln Land Community College Radiology program. She earned a bachelor's degree in Healthcare Management from Ottawa University. Brown is a 17-year Passavant employee, and most recently served as department supervisor.



Brown

Rev. Jim Harper is Passavant's new associate chaplain. He will work on Thurs-



Harper

day and Friday each week. Harper comes to Passavant from First Baptist Church, Jacksonville. He'll continue to be the church's minister. He has also served as a volunteer chaplain at Passavant since 1993. He is a graduate of Northern Baptist Theological Seminary in Oak Brook, Ill.



Staake

Passavant Area Hospital's December 2013 Employee of the Month is Glenda Staake, Three South.

Staake is a certified nurse assistant on the Three South nursing unit. She has been employed at Passavant for 11 years and says her responsibility is to care for the patient's need and provide support for the nurses.

LLCC accepting registration for dental assistant program

Registrations are being accepted for Lincoln Land Community College's upcoming dental assistant training program, which begins Jan. 28. The five-month program is being held at LLCC-Capital City Training Center, 130 W. Mason St., Springfield.

The dental assistant program provides an introduction to general dental settings and office procedures as well as covering the principles of microbiology, disease prevention and infection control procedures. Students will gain knowledge of the anatomy and physiology of the mouth as it relates to dental function, plus learn the use of dental instruments and equipment. Students also will learn legal and ethical responsibilities of the dental health care worker, how to record patient assessment data, and about pharmacology and anesthesia as it relates to dentistry.

The course includes classroom lecture and supervised practice in a clinical setting. The classroom portion of the program meets Tuesdays from 6 to 9 p.m. and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to noon; lab is held Fridays from 9 a.m. to noon. Clinical hours are contingent on location.

Students must be at least 18 years of age and have a high school diploma or GED. Cost for the program is \$3,500, which includes books and supplies. LLCC's payment plan is available.

SIU receives grant to study prostate cancer

A research scientist at Southern Illinois University School of Medicine in Springfield has been awarded a three-year federal grant from the Department of Defense – U.S. Army Medical Research to study prostate cancer tumor formation and progression. The total budget for the grant is \$545,445.

Daotai Nie, Ph.D., associate professor of medical microbiology, immunology and cell biology, is the principal investigator for the project. He is also a member of the Simmons Cancer Institute at SIU.

Based on data from a previous study, Nie believes the tumor pseudogene Oct4 is a possible driver of prostate tumor formation and progression. Using a combination of cell culture and animal models, the newly-funded study will determine whether Oct4 can be targeted to pre-

vent prostate cancer from advancing and spreading. Results of the study may lead to the development of a future treatment for prostate cancer.

Two graduate students on Nie's research staff, Man-Tzu Wang and Hongmei Jiang, conducted the previous study.

Nie's research has been funded for 15 years by various agencies including the National Institutes of Health and the U.S. Department of Defense and now totals \$3.4 million. His research has focused on the cellular and molecular alterations in the malignant progression of tumors.

Nie joined the SIU faculty in 2005. He earned his doctoral degree at the University of South Carolina in Columbia in 1977 and his master's degree at the Institute of Genetics, Chinese academy of Sciences in Beijing in 1991.

SIU Medical School names student class officers

Fifteen fourth-year medical students have been elected officers, representatives and committee members for the Class of 2014 at Southern Illinois University School of Medicine in Springfield.

The SIU School of Medicine Class of 2014 officers are: Richard Austin, elected chair of the senior class; Douglas Juvenal, elected vice chair of the senior class; Terah Cheatham, elected secretary of the senior class; Rachel Day, elected treasurer of the senior class; Jonathan Ken, elected as class representative to the student general assembly; and Jacob Parke, elected as class representative to the student general assembly.

The Class of 2014 also named committee members, including Katherine McKenna, elected to serve on the admissions committee; Christopher Miedema, elected to the community service committee and to serve as volunteer coordinator for the class; Lisa Boucek, elected to serve on the doctoring committee; Daniel Sadowski, elected to serve on the library advisory committee; Joseph Raab, elected to the parking committee; Jonathan Ken, elected to the traffic appeals committee; Jacob Varney, elected to serve on the Year 4 curriculum committee; and Kirk Thompson, elected to serve on the Year 3 curriculum committee.

Also, 16 third-year medical students have been elected officers, representatives and committee members for the Class of 2015 at SIU School of Medicine.

The SIU School of Medicine Class of 2015 officers are: Bryan Kidd, elected chair of the junior class; Katherine Lowry,

elected vice-chair of the junior class; Michael Gibson, elected secretary of the junior class; Rachel Wang, elected treasurer of the junior class; Mykel Sepula, was elected class representative to the student general assembly; Rustin Meister, elected class representative to the student general assembly; and Emily Perkins, elected as a member of the Organization of Student Representatives.

Class of 2015 committee members include: Tim Daugherty, elected to serve on the admissions committee; Kathryn Filson, elected to serve on the doctoring committee; Andrew Mitchelson, elected to serve on the educational policy committee; Lyndsey Heise, elected to serve on the library advisory committee; Jared Mitchell, elected to serve on the student progress committee; Whitney Thorpe-Klinsky, elected to serve as volunteer coordinator for the class; Karen Bertels, elected to serve on the Year 4 curriculum committee; and Kelli Kreher, elected to serve on the Year 3 curriculum committee.

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SAHBA holds annual banquet

The Springfield Area Home Builders Association held their installation banquet and gave out awards for members, along with installing their new board members for the upcoming year of 2014.

A Presidential Citation was presented to Dean Graven of Knob Hill Landscape and Steve Sturm of Truss/Slater; Associate of the Year was presented to Lindsey Staff of Staff Carpet; Member of the Year was presented to Steve Sturm of Truss/Slater; Remodeler of the Year was presented to Dale Matthews of Matthews Custom Construction; and Builder of the Year was presented to Mary Wilson of Michel Concrete Construction.

Along with the awards, the association installed the new 2014 board members. The slate of officers for 2014 consists of President Jan Creasey – Creasey Construction; First Vice President Mary Wilson – Michel Concrete Construction; Second Vice President Heather Sobieski – Buraski Builders; Secretary Steve Sturm – Truss/Slater; Treasurer Jim Lauwerens – United Community Bank; and Immediate Past President Dale Matthews – Matthews Custom Construction.

New directors include Terry Day, CAPS, CGR - Day & Co.; Dean Graven, CAPS, CGR - Knob Hill Landscape Co.; Rick Patton - Wells Fargo Home Mortgage; John Fidler – Heartland Credit Union; Tom Kissell – Bank of Springfield; and Chris Mikus – Safeguard General Contracting.

New associate vice presidents include Royle Campbell – Glenn Brothers Garage Doors; Fiore Belmonte, CGP – Prairie Insulation, LLC.; and Becky Luzinski – Illinois National Bank.

Other officer titles consist of Officer

and Home Expo Director Lindsey Staff – Staff Carpet; Officer and State Association Vice President Jon Reynolds, CGB – Homeway Homes; and Officer and National Director Allan Anderson, CGP, CAPS – A. Anderson Building Systems.

November homes sales down slightly

Unit home sales for single-family homes and the median home sale price both decreased in the Capital Area during November 2013, according to the Capital Area Association of REALTORS.

For the month of November 2013 there were a total of 270 homes sold as compared to 278 homes sold in November 2012, reflecting a decrease of 2.9 percent. Year-to-date home sales through November of 2013 totaled 3,464, reflecting a 6.2 percent increase over the 3,263 sales during the same time in 2012.

“Although down from November of 2012 sales during the month were historically high,” said REALTOR Steve Myers, president of the Capital Area Association of REALTORS.

According to CAAR, the median home sale price was \$100,000, reflecting a decrease of 6 percent from the November 2012 price of \$106,000. The year-to-date median sale price through November 2013 was \$111,500, reflecting a decrease of 2.2 percent from the \$114,000 price during same period in 2012.

“We continue to see a downward effect on the median home sale price caused by the brisk foreclosure sales that have been prevalent throughout 2013,” said Myers.

The 46 foreclosure sales in November 2013 represent 17 percent of all sales and is up slightly from the 44 foreclosure

sales during the prior November. Year-to-date through November 2013 there have been 553 foreclosure sales, an increase of 34.9 percent over the 410 sales during the same period in the prior year.

The average cumulative days on market for all home sales was 101 in November, up from the 86 days in October of this year and 88 days in November 2012.

Total housing inventory at the end of November rose to 1,641 listings, down from the 1,687 listings at the end of November 2012. The 1,641 listings available at the end of November 2013 represent a 5.3 month supply at the current sales pace, down from 5.9 months in October.

Sales pending for November reflect 288 properties where there is a contract in place and waiting to close, up 6.6 percent over the 270 sales pending during this time last year.

The Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corp. reported that the national average commitment rate for 30-year, conventional, fixed-rate mortgages was 4.26 percent in November 2013, up from the 3.35 average rate during November of 2012.

Statewide, the Illinois housing market saw November median prices rise 7.4 percent over previous-year levels while statewide home sales dipped 1.8 percent, according to the Illinois Association of REALTORS.

Statewide home sales in November 2013 totaled 10,624 homes sold, down from 10,820 in November 2012. Housing inventory in November was down 19.7 percent compared to a year earlier, dropping from 77,109 homes for sale in November 2012 to 61,882 this year.

The statewide median price in November was \$145,000, up 7.4 percent from November 2012 when the median price

was \$135,000.

“This is a classic case of supply and demand,” said Phil Chiles, ABR, CRS, GRI, SRES, president of the Illinois Association of REALTORS and Broker-Associate with The Real Estate Group in Springfield. “The low number of homes on the market is forcing consumers, who very much want to buy, to pay a bit more. There’s still a lot of interest in purchasing a home despite the lower selection.”

Home sales for the first 11 months of 2013 were 19.5 percent ahead of 2012. Year-to-date median prices were 7.6 percent ahead of 2012 levels.

ALPLF updates website

LRS Web Solutions has redesigned the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Foundation website. The redesign makes it easier to make donations or become a member of the nonprofit organization.

The online forms for donation and membership were restructured to reduce the number of steps within the donation process. Visitors now save time by filling out information on a single page without being redirected to a third-party site to process payment.

“Previously it was confusing to be sent to a different website to complete the transaction,” said Carla Knorowski, CEO of the ALPLF.

In addition to the usability enhancements to online forms, the updated website now includes banners that rotate on the home page and an e-newsletter sign-up form.

ALPLF staff can now update news and events In-house management of the site eliminates payment to an outside ven-

Continued on Next Page

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Continued from Previous Page

dor for content updates, which saves the organization money. The new site is AL-PLM.org.

Airport files financial report

For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2013, Abraham Lincoln Capital Airport received a "clean opinion" of its financial report from the CPA firm of Eck, Schafer & Punke.

According to the audit, the airport's net assets, total assets minus total liabilities, was essentially the same as last year at \$61.8 million. The Authority had a net loss of \$279,000 in accordance with applicable accounting rules and regulations, compared to a net income of \$4,839,000 in 2012. The primary reason for the decrease in net income was a \$5.3 million decrease in federal and state grants.

In an effort to provide a more realistic picture of the financial posture of the Airport, the exclusion of depreciation expense of \$4,640,000 and grant revenues of \$2,783,000 would result in a positive net income value of \$1,578,000. This is the highest net income excluding depreciation expense and grant contributions in the last seven years.

LLCC recognized as "Storm-Ready" at meeting

Lincoln Land Community College was recognized as the first downstate college certified as a StormReady site by the National Weather Service.

Ed Shimon, a forecaster with the National Weather Service, presented a plaque to LLCC board of trustees chair Justin Reichert and LLCC Police Chief

Brad Gentry, honoring the college's commitment to preparedness and safety of all individuals on the main campus, Capital City Training Center, Aviation Center and LLCC locations in Jacksonville, Beardstown, Taylorville and Litchfield.

"To be recognized, LLCC had to meet a long list of criteria, including 24-hour warning systems, multiple means of communication, detailed preparedness plans and clearly designated shelters," said Shimon. "LLCC has demonstrated it is prepared to protect life and property in the event of weather emergencies."

Trustees also approved a policy developed as a result of passage of Illinois' concealed carry law. The policy prohibits the carrying of concealed firearms on any LLCC property or grounds. Individuals with an Illinois concealed carry permit may store their firearm in a secured container within their vehicle while on campus.

Trustee Kent Gray complimented LLCC staff for preparing and trustees for approving a policy that is consistent with state law.

In a routine action, the Board approved the 2013 tax levy that is expected to result in an LLCC district tax rate at or near the current rate of approximately 46 cents per \$100 of equalized assessed property value.

LLCC ag students receive awards at PAS conference

Lincoln Land Community College agriculture students participated in competitions at the Illinois Postsecondary Agricultural Student Organization fall conference in Peoria.

The Illinois PAS provides opportuni-

ties for individual growth, leadership and career preparation and is one of the 10 career and technical student organizations that has been approved by the U.S. Department of Education as a part of career and technical education.

Kane Austin (Mt. Vernon Township High School), William Milashoski (Fieldcrest High School) and Ashley Leer (Fairfield Community High School, Ind.) won first place as the overall livestock specialist team. Austin was high individual and Milashoski placed second.

Jacob Rotherham (Athens High School) placed fifth in the ag discussion meet and second in employment interview event, ag sales category.

Krissy Simmons (A-C Central High School) was second in employment interview, fertilizers and agrichemicals category.

Kortney White-Watts (Sangamon Valley High School) placed third in employment interview, livestock production category.

Chelsea Coers (Lincoln Community High School) was second in employment interview, ag machinery category.

Leer also placed fourth in employment interview, ag education category.

The students will compete again at the National PAS Conference to be held in Minnesota in spring 2014.

Does your company have an announcement, new hire, employee promotion and/or award?
Springfield Business Journal invites you to share it with our readers.
Send your announcement to info@springfieldbusinessjournal.com

New Businesses, Continued from Page 5

- Lowrates.com, 18303 Gridley Road, Cerritos, 90703, Sun West Mortgage Co. Inc., (800) 453-7884.
- Mom & Daughter Store, 3812 Grouse Road, Springfield, 62707, Jamie Britz, Jordan Britz, (217) 670-1129.
- Morolake Auto Exports, 9B Guilford, Springfield, 62711, Olushola A. Famuwagun, (217) 220-3795.
- Mortgage Possible, 18303 Gridley Road, Cerritos, 90703, Sun West Mortgage Co. Inc., (800) 453-7884.
- North Grand Auto Service, 2501 N. Grand Ave. East, Springfield, 62702, Dennis J. Vandermeersch, (217) 528-2290.
- Obsessive Whitetail Disorder / OWD, 302 S. Olive, New Berlin, 62670, Matthew R. Lindsey, (217) 414-0306.
- Quinns's Closet, 1712 Sangamon Ave., Springfield, 62702, Quinn Mulks, (309) 825-6952.
- Rentschler Farms, 9999 Old Decatur Road, Dawson, 62520, F. Otto Rentschler, (217) 836-6886.
- Robert J. Herron, Inc., 3224 Dorchester, Springfield, 62704, Robert J. Herron (407) 595-0432.
- Shepardo's, 1066 E. Ash, Springfield, 62703, Deborah Rogers, Joe Badorski, (217) 744-8118.
- Snow Dozers, 3425 S. Lincoln Ave., Springfield, 62704, Dennis L. Harris, (217) 381-7615.
- Sweet Cake Creations, 2141 Sutherland Court, Springfield, 62702, Dena M. Wassell, (217) 741-5972.
- Works Construction, 126 S. Second, Pawnee, 62558, Michael Worker, (217) 891-4554.



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CHANGE YOUR LIFE IN 2014 WITH THE Y

Media matters, so make it work for you

12 steps to better media relations

Telling your business's or organization's story is a must, and one means of doing so is through the media. The way you interact with the media – regardless of whether it is print, radio, television or anything else – will impact the quantity and quality of coverage you and your company will receive.

Here's a 12-step program on how to improve your company's relationship with the media:

1. Meet your media people. If you haven't scheduled an appointment with an editor, reporter or news person to introduce yourself then do it. It does not need to be a lunch, as a matter of fact don't try to buy them lunch. It does not even necessarily need to be a face-to-face either. A phone call is good – better than an email – take a few minutes to introduce yourself.

2. Send press releases. These are regular communication of what is going on with you and your company and more importantly, news people do read them. If you have something in particular that you would like to bring to their attention then try to personalize it with a greeting and explanation or summary when sending it to the media outlet.

3. Show respect. Good communications people read publications, listen to local radio talk shows, watch local television news, follow local blogs and other social networks. They subscribe or pick up everything in town. They can speak knowledgeably to news reporter about

Media

Eric Stratton

what is going on in the community and what the media is covering.

4. Share information freely. The media is in the news business. If you share general or specific information with them they will value the relationship.

5. Empower your people. News reporters don't always want to speak with the communications person at your company. There is a concern that the communications contact just wants to put a positive spin on everything, which is, in fact, their job. Media wants access to people within the organization. You need to determine who is capable and willing to speak with the media and trust and empower them to do it. Don't try to control the media – they don't like it.

6. Always return contact. If you receive a phone call from the media make your response a top priority. It will help make them feel important. Plus, most media are on a deadline and need to speak with sources right away. First come, first serve. But even if you can not comment at least return the call so that they know that.

7. Take advantage of whatever opportunities you are offered. Occasionally the media will reach out to you, whether it be as a source for a story or to pen a column or opinion piece. Do your best to respond. They may not be sourcing a story you particularly wanted them to cover or they may be giving you a short turnaround time on the column. Don't use these as excuses not to respond. An opportunity is

an opportunity; period. Take full advantage. In addition, the media remembers who is likely to be counted on at crunch time. Therefore in the future you might be on the short list to contact or the media might be more open-minded when it comes to your story suggestions.

8. Do not always be self-serving. This kind of ties back to #4, except it is linked to a specific story. If you hear a story that is genuinely newsworthy but does not necessarily involve your company or organization you still might make contact the media about what you

have heard. News reporters respect and appreciate people who are not always out for themselves.

9. Don't ask – just inform. This is important. Many journalists are cynical and skeptical by nature. Instead of selling your story, just provide the information and hope for the best. If you have to try to convince the media to do it in the first place then it most likely is not going to work. In a sense, try to make it their idea, not yours.

10. Don't offer a trade. It will leave a bad taste in their mouth if you approach them with the idea that if they do a story then you will buy an ad or worse that you bought an ad so you expect a story to sup-

port it. In addition, if you find out the media already are doing a story, do not necessarily rush to purchase advertising as a "thank you" or try to tie it in. It only hurts their credibility. Treat news and advertising separately altogether.

11. Participate in the process. Write a letter to the editor or call into a radio station. This can be one of the most effective means of using the media but unfortunately is probably the least often used. Legitimate news outlets not only respect, but appreciate, reasonable criticism and sensible, sound input. Yes, it takes

some extra effort on your part but that also lets them know that you are serious.

12. Finally, "off-the-record." You can always feel free to tell a reporter anything if you preface it with "off-the-record." The golden rule for reporters is that if a source says that they do not want to be quoted then the reporter cannot use them for any reason. Professional reporters do adhere to ethics, and they will respect your wishes to go off-the-record; although, if they did not at least try to coax you to go on the record, they're not doing their jobs.

“You can always feel free to tell a reporter anything if you preface it with “off-the-record.” The golden rule for reporters is that if a source says that they do not want to be quoted then the reporter cannot use them for any reason. Professional reporters do adhere to ethics, and they will respect your wishes...

Eric Stratton is a media professional from Springfield



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Two celebrate service anniversaries at Hanson

Craig George, senior technician, celebrated 30 years of service while Casey White, accounting clerk, celebrated 15 years of service at Hanson Professional Services Inc.

George joined the company in 1983 and serves the infrastructure market. He has per-



George

formed computer-aided design and drafting and inspection services for the Lincoln Home restoration, Illinois State Fairgrounds coliseum restoration, Madison Street corridor project, Interstate 55 bridge over Lake Springfield, MacArthur Boulevard extension and Springfield Rail Improvements Project and the Paducah and Louisville Railroad relocation for the Kentucky Dam lock addition on the Tennessee River in Kentucky.

George earned an associate degree in architectural and construction design in 1982 from Lincoln Land Community College.

White joined the company in 1998. Her responsibilities include performing accounts-payable work and inputting and reviewing data for project startups.



White

She also coordinates billing and is an administrative assistant to Executive Vice President Robert Cusick, P.E., S.E., for Federal Emergency Management Agency projects.

White earned an associate degree in

accounting in 1998 from Parkland College. She serves as chairwoman for Hanson's Children's Miracle Network Committee.

Milburn joins Giffin Winning, Sherer recognized

Giffin, Winning, Cohen & Bodewes, P.C. announced the addition of Attorney Steven A. Milburn to the Springfield law firm.



Milburn

Milburn graduated from DePaul University College of Law in 2013. During his law school career, he was a fellow in the Health Law Institute and had the opportunity to clerk

at the Cook County Public Defender, the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services Office of General Counsel and in a private commercial litigation firm. Milburn's legal coursework focused on corporate and transaction law.

He plans to concentrate his practice in the areas of corporate law, government affairs, estate planning, and real estate, while building experience in litigation and all of the firm's practice areas.

Attorney Chris Sherer, of Giffin, Winning, Cohen & Bodewes, P.C. was selected to join the American Society of Legal Advocates, an invitation-only, nationwide organization of lawyers who possess legal credentials with a proven commitment to community engagement and professional standards.

Sherer was chosen as one of the Top 40 Under 40 Family lawyers in the State of Illinois for 2014. According to the ASLA, the Top 40 Under 40 designation "identifies and recognizes lawyers demonstrat-

ing leadership and talent early on in their careers, not only in their practice, but in exemplifying the characteristics that will demonstrate the best that the legal profession has to offer."

In addition to the ASLA, Sherer is also a member of the Sangamon County Bar Association, the Montgomery County Bar Association, the Illinois State Bar Association, and the Missouri Bar. He has also been active in giving back to his community by providing pro bono services to Sangamon County domestic violence victims and to Montgomery County residents through the Land of Lincoln Legal Assistance Foundation.

Sherer joined Giffin, Winning, Cohen & Bodewes, P.C. as an associate in 2004. He made partner in 2012 and became the firm's managing partner in 2013. In addition to his concentration in the area of family law, he also practices in the areas of local government law, general litigation and appellate practice.

Horace Mann announces officer appointment, two employee service anniversaries

Horace Mann Educators Corporation President and CEO Marita Zuraitis announced that Scott Christensen has been appointed vice president, contact center operations.



Christensen

Christensen will work with property, casualty, annuity, life and group business lines to strengthen the customer-centric experience at all contact points at Horace Mann. He will also be directing

the implementation of infrastructure to support a transition to a complete state-of-the-art contact center.

Christensen has knowledge of contact center strategy, design and development in the insurance environment. He comes to Horace Mann with more than 30 years of leadership experience at Allstate.

Also, two Horace Mann employees marked their service anniversaries in October.

Bobbie Hale, financial services analyst in the human resources division, celebrated 35 years with Horace Mann.

Lisa Hobson, planning and expense analyst in the finance and planning division, marked 25 years.

Paul named acting CEO at Hope

As the result of the hospitalization of Karen G. Foley, President and CEO of The Hope Institute for Children and Families, Clint W. Paul, CPA, has been named Acting President and CEO.

Foley was hospitalized on Monday, Dec. 2. While Ms. Foley's condition is expected to improve, her road to recovery is likely to take some time. The announcement of Mr. Paul's appointment was made by Ginny Conlee, chair of The Hope Institute board of directors. Paul will also continue his Chief Operating Officer duties.

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SCORE's most popular workshop series, Simple Steps to Start Your Business, will walk you through each step to make a "go" or "no go" decision. Network with other new business entrepreneurs. Registration fee is \$125 for the 5 workshop series. Pre-pay electronically using Paypal (a Paypal account ID is not required if using a credit card).

Free one on one small business mentoring is also available.

For information or to register go to: <http://www.springfieldil.score.org>

OPINION

Mac versus PC

About 30 years ago one of the most hotly debated questions was which was "better," a Mac or a PC?



Brant Mackey

Back in the 80s it was all the rage to argue the advantages and shortcomings of each. Mac users were clearly in the minority and fiercely loyal while PC users simply thought the Mac-minions were crazy to spend so much money on a toy. Thankfully I think we are finally past that discussion.

Around year 2000, when I was working for IBM, I recall a heated squabble between my sales manager and one of the sales staff. The manager wholly believed Act!® was the best customer contact software solution while my colleague believed Goldmine® was the only way to go. Their disagreement was settled when another, and calmer, co-worker pointed out that the two solutions basically provided the same functionality and that is was really only a matter of personal preference.

For the last few years my business partner has steadfastly been encouraging us to make use of our Salesforce® subscription. By all accounts it is by far the most innovative CRM solution on the market.

Personally I have not been able to find anything that is as reliable, functional and easy-to-use as a calendar on my desk. That's right. I still write down all of my appointments, events, meetings, etc. in my Staples® monthly planner. While I can almost hear the collective groan from the technology crowd, I will tell you that it works for me.

I will also admit a contributing factor to my using it is that it represents simplicity, at least in my own mind. For some unknown reason I believe if my schedule and life gets so complicated that I have to manage it electronically that I will have graduated to a higher level of business and stress that I do not wish to achieve.

By the way, I am one of very few people I know of that still uses a Blackberry® rather than a smartphone ... another collective groan.

While it does not translate easily, I often think about how characteristics like quality, reliability, functionality and ease of use coverts to publishing a monthly community business publication. I suppose these are attributes that all business owners should consider in delivering their product.

Brant Mackey is publisher and editor of Springfield Business Journal. He can be emailed at: brant@springfieldbusinessjournal.com



EDITORIAL

Startup Weekend

It's time to brush up on your elevator speech if you are planning to attend the Startup Weekend at the University of Illinois-Springfield (UIS) on Jan. 31-Feb. 2.

The UIS Center of Entrepreneurship is participating in an international initiative. To date, there have been 1,068 Startup weekend events across the globe in 478 cities.

The event includes many components of immersive professional continuing education: a 60-second sales pitch, team building, networking opportunities, and business "coaches" in accountants,

public relations, graphic design and advertising.

The Startup Weekend initiative has been successful with over 8,000 businesses started worldwide; and participants are left to flounder when the weekend concludes. Coaches and the business community will continue to assist the startup companies birthed from the Startup Weekend throughout the year.

Startup Weekend is a new and innovative approach in promoting entrepreneurship which can pay great dividends for the community.

Letter to the editor

I was pleased recently to help put in place reasonable procedures at Lincoln Land Community College regarding our students, faculty and guests that may possess Illinois Concealed Carry permits beginning in 2014.

The new law prohibits bringing weapons into college and university buildings anywhere in Illinois, but it also allows individual elected college Boards to put in place additional restrictions regarding licensed firearms on campus.

Last Summer, some northern Illinois colleges enacted very onerous rules, above and beyond what was required by the new Concealed Carry statute. Proposals included requirements that Concealed Carry permit holders would have to specially register with the school, be forced to meet with a campus police officer every time they came to campus with their firearm and park in a remote area of the school's parking lot. These struck me as attempts purely to inconvenience lawful

citizens.

When we began the discussion of how to treat Concealed Carry permit holders at Lincoln Land, I wanted to make sure we welcomed them and respected the fact that they will have gone through one of the most stringent application processes in the country to be able to defend themselves, their families and the public. I spoke several times with representatives of the Illinois State Rifle Association and also spoke with gun show attendees about what they thought were best practices.

In the end, the policy adopted by the LLCC Board of Trustees enforces the new state law, while protecting the rights of trained, law abiding CCW permit holders.

Sincerely, Kent Gray
Trustee and Former Chairman,
LLCC Board

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Springfield Business Journal welcomes all letters to the editor. We look forward to providing an open forum for you to express your views. Please include your name, address and telephone number for verification. Please send them to: Editor, Springfield Business Journal, P.O. Box 9798, Springfield IL 62791 or e-mail them to info@springfieldbusinessjournal.com. Letters may be edited for clarity, space or libel.

HOW TO CONTACT THE PRESIDENT

Office of the President and Vice President: The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington, D.C., 20500; main telephone number: (202) 456-1414; comment line: (202) 456-1111; e-mail: president@whitehouse.gov

Coming in from the cold

April – so said the poet – is the cruelest month. I don't know if that's a reference to paying income taxes or



Joe Natale

not; but to my way of thinking, January is certainly the coldest month.

This is really old news, but the month of "January" is named in honor of the Roman god, Janus, who is depicted as having two faces as he looks to the future and to the past. So, let's warm ourselves up by taking a look back at 2013 and look ahead to 2014.

Locally, the story with the biggest long-term impact is the federal government signed-off on the plan to consolidate freight and rail traffic along the Tenth Street corridor. That was good news for those who feared more train traffic along the Third Street would have turned downtown Springfield into an urban sink hole of apocalyptic proportions.

For now, Amtrak will continue to run its soon to be high speed trains along Third Street since it will a number of years before it moves to Tenth Street complete with an inter-model facility; but, as they say, Rome wasn't built in a day.

Nationally, the big story was the revelation that the National Security Agency (NSA) was collecting and storing data on virtually every phone call, text message and Internet activity of Americans as part of its terrorists surveillance program.

For all the harrumphing of civil liberties being threatened by NSA's action, that news wasn't really much of a surprise. After the terrorist attack in 2001, the general consensus was we needed to be more aggressive in monitoring terrorists' chatter in order to avoid another such incident.

Actually, NSA wasn't listening to calls about ordering more toner for your printer, paying your bills on line, or texting your wife to check if you were supposed to pick a carton of one percent or two percent milk at the grocery store. NSA was running logarithms and analyzing data and key words in order to zero in on potential threats. I could go into more details about how it was done, but I'm not going to go all meta on you.

Enough about 2013. Now let's look at what's in store for us in 2014:

YIKES!!!

Joe Natale is a freelance writer from Springfield.

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Natural gas powers commercial vehicles

What has been lost during the ongoing debate on hydraulic fracturing in Illinois and across the country is the "other side of the coin."



Douglas L. Whitley

OPINION

What do I mean by that? When it comes to increased natural gas production, the other side of the coin is the increased demand and opportunities for businesses of all sizes in our state and beyond. With natural gas production climbing there has also been a corresponding lowering in price and an increase in companies looking at natural gas as a strategic business decision to lower production energy costs and decrease fleet fuel costs for the long-term.

Illinois companies are taking advantage of the new natural gas opportunities and others are showcasing that innovation and advancements in the use of natural gas are moving at a rapid pace. Want some examples?

The presence of fleet vehicles fueled by compressed natural gas (CNG) continues to increase in Illinois. Testa Produce (wholesale restaurant produce distributor), UPS (What can Brown do for you?) and Ozinga (concrete trucks) are three examples out of many that are switching all or some of their fleet trucks to CNG. The fuel saves them money and lowers overall emissions.

Ozinga is even branching out from its core concrete business to offer CNG fueling stations – building the infrastructure companies need and providing consulting services on the benefits of moving to CNG vehicles.

Waste Management has more than 100 CNG refuse trucks in Illinois and they dedicated the largest commercial CNG fueling facility in Illinois. These stations are beginning to pop up in strategic places so these vehicles have places to fuel up. Clean Energy Fuels is working to promote CNG or liquid natural gas (LNG) stations across America's interstate network so our long-haul trucks have the opportunity to

switch to natural gas.

Does this mean diesel-fueled vehicles are on the way out? No. Switching works better for some companies than for others. But that's not the point. It's a value add to have more than one kind of fuel to choose from when deciding on transportation options. Companies like choices and they are taking a hard look at what might work for the cars and trucks they put on the road every day.

And there are more uses on the horizon.

Several railroads have already embarked on pilot projects to develop natural gas engines for both the economic benefits and to meet expected emissions regulations. There is also a rapid rise in the number of drill rigs being powered by natural gas.

Lastly, manufacturing companies throughout the country are looking at expanding or re-shoring (bringing back jobs from overseas) their operations as they see the potential of marrying the quality American workforce with lower energy costs coming in part from the increased availability of natural gas.

Technology and productivity advances in drilling, engines, and logistics costs have helped make the U.S. a more competitive location.

In Illinois's case, the vast array of underground pipelines that traverse through our state plus the lower-cost raw material (natural gas) as a fundamental feed stock for manufacturing production of all kinds make Illinois a good bet for production and good profits.

According to the Chemical Industry Council of Illinois, chemical related product sales in our state went from \$5 billion in 2007 to \$8.5 billion in 2011. Much of that increase in production can be attrib-

uted to the availability of cost competitive natural gas.

Morris, Illinois based Aux Sable Liquid Products has a facility that processes 2.1 billion cubic feet per day of natural gas (the largest in the Lower 48). The growth of natural gas supply and demand has meant huge growth for the company, going from 45 employees in 2001 to more than 185 today - with more growth opportunities projected in the near future.

The Bottom Line: In the past, the price volatility of natural gas has kept business from making major capital investments that would tie the company to relying on the energy source. No one can predict the

“So as you keep reading about the growth of hydraulic fracturing to recover natural gas and encounter criticism of the industry, remember that increased supply means lower prices, which in turns means lower heating bills, a competitive energy market and more opportunities for Illinois companies. That's a trifecta we can all live with.”

future, but as you look at the price stability of oil, natural gas and electricity going forward, natural gas is on a level playing field. A growing number of businesses are making investments with that in mind which brings choice to the marketplace and jobs to our state and country.

So as you keep reading about the growth of hydraulic fracturing to recover

natural gas and encounter criticism of the industry, remember that increased supply means lower prices, which in turns means lower heating bills, a competitive energy market and more opportunities for Illinois companies. That's a trifecta we can all live with.

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

ROSES and THORNS

A Rose – To Best Places to Work; congratulations to Levi, Ray and Shoup, Inc., Prairie Eye Center and The Real Estate Group and thank you to United Community Bank for generously sponsoring the program.

A Rose – To Knights Action Park for their flashy display of lights on the ferris wheel along Interstate 72.

A Rose – To the Springfield Area Arts Council for hosting the 27th annual First Night.

A Thorn – To gradual economic recovery. We are ready for full-on growth in 2014.

A Rose – To architects and engineers staying busy. When you are working so is the economy.

A Rose – To Startup Weekend.

LOOKING BACK

5 years ago in the Business Journal (January 2009) ...

- As the economy struggled, Springfield churches offered financial planning and fiscal responsibility for their parishoners.

- Springfield's planner, Paul O'Shea discussed historic preservation, Springfield's Blueprint, R/UDAT and more.

- Businesspeople and county officials chimed in on how they believed the new Obama administration would affect county planning and roads.

- Community Bankers talked about remaining resilient during the mortgage crisis.

- The gas plant remediation on the 200 block of West Washington downtown was underway.

BOOK OF LISTS

In each issue of the Business Journal, we publish at least one or more lists of local businesses by major business categories. In the month prior to publication, we announce which lists will be published the following month. If your business is included in our monthly and annual lists, take a moment each month to check our upcoming list(s). If you have changes, additions, deletions, etc., e-mail us at: info@springfieldbusinessjournal.com. NEXT MONTH: Commercial Builders, CREN members, Labor Unions, Mechanical Contractors and Electrical Contractors.

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