



PERSONALITY PROFILE

From soda jerk to the Sangamo Club, Angie Keefner-Grieser talks hospitality. P. 12



BUSINESS LUNCH

Bella Milano offers something for everyone, including our Lenten eaters. P. 14



REAL ESTATE & HOME BUILDERS

New legislation, new developments and new technology. P. 16-29



BUSINESS CONNECTIONS

Plans to launch Source Sangamon Challenge at 2013 Business Expo. P. 30-34

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BUSINESS. NEWS. PAPER.

Communities focus on economic growth

Q5 not for everyone; Chatham and Sherman work on their own initiatives

By Betsy Butler,
Senior Correspondent

Spurring economic development in the midst of a recession is not an easy task but communities like Chatham and Sher-

man are taking the initiative to make it happen.

In 2007, the Quantum Growth Partnership (Q5) debuted as the economic development function of The Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce. The ultimate goal of Q5, as stated on the Chamber's website is 'to grow Sangamon County by improving our ability to create jobs, attract talent and

make capital investment.'

The city of Springfield is the only municipality that is investing in Q5. According to Steward Sandstrom, Springfield Chamber president, there is no formal plan to solicit investments from neighboring areas. "We understand that there is a long list of initiatives and a much shorter list of resources," Sandstrom said. "We don't see a community that

pursues economic development on its own as a problem [for Q5]; we want to see economic development in the entire county."

But some area villages have opted out of Q5. The village of Chatham will soon have its own marketing plan for fueling economic growth. The village

*Continued on Page 10,
Communities*

PACE offers energy savings

Mall manager promotes financing program

By Joe Natale,
Associate Editor

Maureen Bluhm is on pace to improve energy efficiency in the Capital City.

The general manager of White Oaks Mall is advocating the adoption of a Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program in Springfield.

"PACE is an innovative program that focuses on energy efficiency," Bluhm said. "It is an alternative way of funding large projects."

PACE is a voluntary program for property owners to make energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings. Interested owners opt-in to PACE in order to receive private market financing for improvements that is repaid with an assessment on their property taxes.

PACE spreads cost of improvements, such as weather sealing, insulation, heating and cooling systems.

Upon transfer or sale of the property, the assessments are linked to the property and transfer to a new owner upon sale.

"The loan is paid over 15 to 20 years," Bluhm said. "The tax is on the property, not the individual. The tax goes with the property when it is sold."

While PACE was added to the Illinois Municipal Code in 2009, a specific PACE program has yet to be established in Illinois. "I

*Continued on Page 9,
PACE*

Difficult time for employers and job seekers

Local employers and candidates talk job market

By Gabriel House,
Correspondent

The recent recession is over – or at least very nearly so – depending on one's point of view. The masses who found themselves under or wholly unemployed are joining fresh-faced college graduates all clamoring for the jobs that will act as rungs on a precariously perched career ladder.

In addition, baby boomers are turning 65 at a rate of 10,000 per day and will do so at a similar rate for the next 19 years, according to the Pew Research Center. As they begin to retire en masse, their exodus may create sizeable holes that are often simply unable to be filled due to a dearth of experience and practical knowledge.

It all combined to create a perfect storm for Niki Kersey, 26, of Springfield. Kersey graduated from the University of Illinois

*Continued on Page 11,
Jobs*



Niki Kersey of Springfield graduated from the University of Illinois Springfield in May of 2011 with a bachelor's degree in business administration. She just recently found full-time with benefits employment to launch her professional career.

COMING NEXT MONTH ... TWO SPECIAL SECTIONS

EDUCATION

• The April issue will feature local news and information about educational institutions and opportunities in Springfield.

The lists will include:
- Colleges & Universities
- Independent Private Schools



The April issue will also feature a special feature section on Golf and related industries in central Illinois

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• the rookery

BNI hits 7 million referrals

Business Network International has revealed that in 2012 BNI members internationally passed 7.1 million referrals, generating more than \$3.3 billion dollars of business for its members. In the central Illinois area, BNI chapters passed over 3,000 referrals, resulting in \$15.4 million worth of business done by BNI members.

BNI held an introductory meeting of a new Springfield chapter in February. Local businesses interested in attending a BNI chapter can find a list of all Springfield chapters' meeting times and locations at: <http://www.bni-il.com/chapters.asp>.

BNI has more than 6,200 chapters worldwide in 49 countries. BNI is a driver of success for its member companies. In 2012, more than 3,000 referrals were passed by the Central Illinois BNI chapters' 400 members. These referrals represented \$15,440,975 worth of business done by BNI members in 2012. \$5.6 million of that business was generated by the Springfield BNI chapters. The value of this business averaged \$38,602 per member. Membership in BNI costs \$465 the first year and \$365 each year after that.

Each BNI chapter allows only one person per professional classification, but the Springfield introductory meetings and new chapter meetings are open to all interested business professionals. The average BNI chapter has 23 members and passes business leads between members, for sales opportunities both inside and outside the group.

Kerber, Eck & Braeckel LLP and Pritchard Osborne LLC merge

Kerber, Eck & Braeckel LLP announced that as of Jan. 1, the operations of Pritchard Osborne LLC have merged into KEB. As a result of the merger, David Pritchard, Paul Osborne and Steve Dumstorff have been admitted as partners with KEB.

Pritchard Osborne was founded in Litchfield, Ill. in 1981 and opened an office in St. Louis in 1993. Pritchard Osborne's St. Louis office has been combined with KEB's St. Louis office and is now located at One S. Memorial Drive, Suite 950. Pritchard Osborne's Litchfield office will remain at its current location.

KEB, founded in Springfield in 1931, now has 25 partners and more than 150 other employees. KEB now has a total of eight offices in the Midwest, with five locations in Illinois, two in Missouri and one in Wisconsin.

Chamber marks 144 years at gala

Before an audience of 700 members of Sangamon County's business community, The Greater Springfield of Chamber told the story of its 2012 achievements and recognized key individuals who made the past year successful during its 144th Annual Gala at the Crowne Plaza.

Outgoing Board Chair Lou Dixon of Crawford, Murphy & Tilly presented the Chairman's Award to Springfield Mayor J. Michael Houston and Sangamon County Board Chairman Andy Van Meter, for their work on the federal Record of Decision affirming Springfield's choice for rail consolidation along the 10th street line.

"Though rail consolidation has been a part of our city's conversation for decades, Mayor Houston and Chairman Van Meter elevated the fight for 10th street at a critical time to ensure that our city could ultimately go down the 'right track,'" said Dixon.

Steward Sandstrom, President and CEO of The Chamber, presented the annual President's Award to Ed Mahoney of RE/MAX Professionals, for his work in

chairing a committee of developers, engineers and public sector officials seeking to streamline the development process to make Springfield a more welcoming place to do business.

Barb Weatherford of Town and County Bank was also honored for the fourth time as Ambassador of the Year, having accumulated the most points toward Ambassador duties. Ambassadors serve as Chamber representatives in the community.

Incoming 2013 Board Chair Jeff Ball of Hanson Professional Services Inc. recognized the service of seven outgoing members of The Chamber board: Mike Pence, Maureen Bluhm, Doug Rahn, Sean Grant, Eugene Finley, Greg Lutchka, and Dan Sale.

Chamber supports infrastructure investment

The Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce reaffirmed its support for investment in infrastructure for the city of Springfield at a meeting of the Board of Directors in February. Sound infrastructure including streets, sidewalks and sewers, is a critical foundation of economic growth, promotes a good quality of life and improves public safety for our citizens and families.

Mayor J. Michael Houston met with The Chamber's Board of Directors to discuss the city's infrastructure needs and detailed a three-year \$86.6 million improvement plan that would bring our roads, sidewalks, storm sewers and traffic lights up to a good state of repair.

The mayor then discussed a \$22.5 million annual maintenance program that would maintain our city's infrastructure and also unveiled a 10-year \$55 million plan to address the backlog of repairs needed to our city's sewer system.

In 2009, The Chamber supported the Build Springfield Initiative that more than doubled the infrastructure investment in our community. Unfortunately, we knew at the time it would not keep up with future infrastructure needs and additional investment was needed to maintain our roads, sidewalks and sewers.

NFIB: wage increase would hurt small business

Kim Clarke Maisch, state director of the National Federation of Independent Business, released a statement in response to Gov. Pat Quinn's State of the State address and his call for a minimum wage hike:

"Our members had hoped Governor Quinn would use his State of the State address to talk about how Illinois can once again become a premier state to do business in. Unfortunately, he chose to embrace a minimum wage hike which will do little but cause small businesses to cut employee hours and jobs.

"Our members overwhelmingly oppose any plan to raise the state minimum wage or tie it to the Consumer Price Index, especially at a time when small business and our economy continue to struggle. It is ironic that a state that cannot pay its own bills or pension obligations and has seen its credit rating downgraded would now turn around and tell small-business owners how to run their shops – the mandate is ill-timed and frankly wrong.

"Small-business owners don't need politicians telling them how to run their businesses. If the General Assembly is serious about jobs and wages, it'll stay out of the way and let small-business owners try to grow and succeed without intervention. Politicians shouldn't determine people's pay, the marketplace should."

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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. Mariah's, 3317 Robbins Rd.
- 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

after hours •

The family that hunts together...

Mike Johnson

Profession:
Market President,
US Bank

Passion:
Elk Hunting

By Raegan Hennemann,
Senior Correspondent



As a young boy, Mike Johnson hunted deer in southern Wisconsin with his dad and two brothers. Those outings set the stage for his family's annual elk hunting expedition to western Colorado.

Since the mid 1990s, Johnson, market president of US Bank in Springfield, has spent one week during October trekking through Uncompahgre National Forest located on the western slope of the Colorado Rockies. The only year he didn't make the trip was when his third daughter was born.

"It's more mountainous terrain. It is much more expansive than anything we do around here in terms of the area we hunt," Johnson said. "We'll walk miles in a day looking for elk, so it's a challenge from that standpoint. We can get trucks to camp but then we'll walk from there and we hunt an area that has about a 1,000 vertical foot drop. So it's a lot of up and down, just something unique that you don't get to do around here."

The destination for the hunting trip came about after Johnson's parents and brothers moved to Colorado because of a job transfer. While Johnson remained in Illinois to attend college, his brothers and father took advantage of a local hunting opportunity – elk. His middle brother even spent time working with a guide in Uncompahgre National Forest.

"That's where he really learned the ins and outs of it, got to know that area. We've got the advantage of his expertise, which he then passed along to the rest of the group," Johnson said.

So after Johnson graduated from college in 1992, it was decided that they would reinstate their family hunting tradition in Colorado. Over the years a few others have joined the group, including a cousin and his son as well as a long-time friend.

"I enjoy the country out there," Johnson said. "I enjoy the tradition of being able to hunt with this same group every year, which of course my dad and my brothers are the important part. It's something we have in common. It's something we can do to get away and just spend time together."

It's not the type of family reunion most people would be interested in. There are no facilities so they sleep in tents and build their own toilet out of logs and a hole in the ground.

"We actually bring a toilet seat that we bolt to the top of it and stuff like that to try and make it more comfortable," Johnson said. "It's almost gotten to be a little bit of a game from that standpoint to try to make it a little bit nicer."

They primarily hunt male elk, which are called bulls. According to National Geographic, a bull elk can weigh as much as 1,100 pounds and have antlers that reach four feet above its head. The group leaves camp about 6 a.m. every day and returns around dusk. Sometimes they will regroup for lunch but otherwise they are walking around trying to find elk. Johnson said the group uses the spot and stalk method.

"We walk; it's kind of a still walk, a slow walk through different areas. It's a lot of up and down terrain, so you normally try to be up and you're typically looking across valleys," he said. "You'll get to a spot and you'll normally watch it for awhile to see if you can find some kind of a movement or just spot an elk."

Another way they try to find elk is by sound.

"During their rut, their mating season, they'll bugle. Typically by the time we're hunting, that time of the year it's kind of the later stages of the rut, but you can hear them bugle which is their mating call and that can provide you with some sense of where they're at," he said. "I use a cow call to try to attract them. It's called a Hoochie Mama, that's the brand name. It makes the estrus call, the call a cow that's looking for a partner would make."

Not only is the trip physically challenging, but the weather is an unknown factor from year to year.

"Where we hunt is about 8,000 feet above sea level, so depending upon the year, the weather conditions can vary quite a bit," he said. "We've hunted in 70 degree temperatures and we've hunted in 10 degree temperatures. We've hunted in all kinds of rain and we've hunted in a foot of snow. It was odd this year. When we came up that first night we got quite a bit of snow, but then it warmed up and it fogged in so bad

Professional Women's Calendar of Events

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

Association for Women in Communications (AWC)

"Women in Media, Yesterday and Today" with guest speaker Mary Bohlen. Wednesday, March 13th, at the Sangamo Club, 227 E. Adams Street, Springfield. 11:30 AM Networking, 12:00 – 1:00 PM Presentation, Lunch served as you arrive. \$16 members, \$10 students, \$21, non-members.

March is Women's History Month, a time to reflect and look toward the future. Ms. Bohlen will discuss how our courageous professional foremothers shaped our industry and overcame enormous odds, society's scorn, and a male-dominated journalism world to shape our current industry and roles.

Mary Bohlen is a past AWC president, former wire service reporter and emeritus communication professor at the University of Illinois Springfield. Among the many classes she taught in her 28 years at SSU/UIS was the graduate seminar Women and Media. Students in that class explored women media pioneers, women in the media profession today, media coverage of women and the effects of that coverage on society.

Illinois Women in Leadership (IWIL)

Illinois Women in Leadership will hold its Annual New Member Reception from 5:30 to 7:30 PM on Thursday, March 21st at the home of Julie Davis, 1400 Woods Farm Springfield, IL

Please join us for our annual New Member Reception. This is a time to honor and recognize our new IWIL members and a great social gathering for all members.

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 Thursday, 14th March via the website or by mailing the registration form and payment to: IWIL, 2821 Stony Point Springfield, IL 62704

Women Entrepreneurs – Central Illinois (WE-CI)

WE-CI; Women Entrepreneurs of Central Illinois's monthly meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 13th, from 5:30 PM to 7:00 PM at The Inn At 835, the South parlor of the old Inn; 334 South 2nd Street, Springfield, IL. 62702.

Program: Together We Grow. March is our annual membership event. This year WE-CI will plant the "seeds" to help more local women-owned businesses by reaching out to prospective new members. If you have considered membership, come to this event and learn how WE-CI can help you. This meeting features a series of round-table discussions on small business topics, cash bar, a door prize, and favors.

This dinner is free for guests. The cost for the meeting is \$22 for members, and \$25 for walk-ins. Please RSVP by noon, Friday, March 8, 2013. Reservations are non-refundable. Additional information is available by contacting L. Gay Davidson, 725-8500 or at reservations@we-ci.org.

Monthly meetings include guest speakers, workshops, and social functions. Fundraising events support scholarships for local women attending college and advanced training. Guests may request a meeting notice by contacting Maureen Williams maureenwms32@yahoo.com.

Coming in May



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



Continued on Page 7, After Hours


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March 2013

COMMUNITY BUSINESS REPORT



Coming in May...
Nomination forms inside

Très chic for less

Thrift store shopping in a trendy new environment

By Ashley Caldwell,
Correspondent

LaBelle Boutique in Chatham offers a new twist on the traditional Goodwill Store. Located at 75 West Plummer Blvd. next door to the Chatham Goodwill Store, the new retail outlet is a unique spin on the traditional Goodwill store.

The boutique, which opened on Oct. 12, 2012 by Land of Lincoln Goodwill, Inc. (LLGI), is part of a growing trend of Goodwill stores that provides customers an intimate shopping experience where they can browse new or gently used products—such as clothes, shoes, jewelry and other accessories—that lean toward the modern and trendy.

“There are some larger Goodwills that have implemented this type of store and have been very successful,” explained Land of Lincoln Goodwill CEO and President Sharon Durbin. “We decided to pilot the concept in two areas we felt it might do well,” with the first of these stores opening in Chatham and the second in Urbana.

The boutique locations, as with all Goodwill stores, are stocked with goods that have been donated by members of the



Inside LaBelle Boutique

ally identifies the type and quality that we are looking for to present in that environment,” explained Durbin. “We have a lot of products that are donated to us that are still new and have the price tags on them, so those will just naturally default to the boutique.”

Since opening the boutique, LLGI has worked to get LaBelle recognized in the community

nations and shoppers.

“We’ve been getting a lot of people wanting to donate a lot of nicer things,” said Kramer. “Then we get a lot of people coming in and looking for the nicer stuff. That’s everyone’s favorite part of Goodwill—finding an awesome deal.”

Having made it through a successful opening and a busy holiday season, LaBelle has built

draws near, LLGI plans to ramp up their marketing efforts for the boutique to, as Durbin stated, “bring attention back to the boutique, and the uniqueness of it.” As well, the retail team at LaBelle may offer some promotions or sales throughout the spring to draw customers in.

Regardless of marketing strategy or promotional events, the overall goal for LaBelle Boutique will remain the same—to generate revenue for LLGI, which encompasses not only the Springfield area, but a total of 37 counties (33 counties in Illinois and four in Indiana).

“The bottom line is that every piece of revenue that comes in through the boutique goes back to support our mission,” Durbin said. “This is just another arm of revenue that we generate that comes back to support everything that we do.”

If the pilot stores in Chatham and Urbana continue to be successful, it could be an arm of revenue that will expand in the future. With such a broad area covered by LLGI there are a number of other locations, other markets, which may work for a LaBelle Boutique down the road. “We have a lot of room to grow,” stated Durbin.



LaBelle Boutique located at 75 West Plummer Blvd. next door to the Goodwill Store in Chatham

community. As donations come in, they are examined and slated for either the Goodwill store or LaBelle Boutique.

“We have a team that actu-

and bring customers through the door. Thus far, according to LaBelle Boutique’s Kaylie Kramer, community reaction has been positive, in regards to both do-

up a regular client base from Chatham, as well as the surrounding Springfield area, noted Kramer.

Now, as the spring season

• new businesses

• Adams Guns & Ammo, 325 Partridge Pass, Sherman, 62684, Jeffrey S. Adams, (217) 414-7583.

• African Hut, 414 E. Monroe, Springfield, 62701, Roosevelt Pratt, (217) 691-5176.

• All Dressed Up Consignment, 10079 Bell Fountain Road, Bsmt., Dawson, 62520, Jody Adams Womack, (217) 685-5959.

• All out Cleaning, 610 Ridgely, Springfield, 62702, Julie A. Gibson, Rhea J. Maisenbacher, (217) 816-6755.

• Burgess Photography, 528 S. Church, Virden, 62690, James C. Burgess, Jr., (217) 965-9868.

• Capcitill Promotions, 1013 N. Park, Springfield, 62702, Ryne T. Goodrich, (217) 303-3120.

• Computers We Fix, 3309 Robbins Road, Suite 101, Springfield, 62794, Woodson Inc., (217) 787-9999.

• C.R.U. Beauty Supply & Clothing, 100 N. Grand Ave. West, Springfield, 62702, Drake Grimmer, David G. Hamilton, (217) 220-6830.

• C.R.U. Wireless, 100 N. Grand Ave. West, Springfield, 62702, Morris C. Hobson, (217) 481-5880.

• D and D Bath Remodeling, 67 Cinnamon Creek, Springfield, 62707, David Schober, Doug Schober, (217) 341-1911.

• Fairfield Inn by Marriott, 3446 Freedom Drive, Springfield, 62704, Group Two, LLC, (714) 412-8559.

• Fringe Hair Salon, 901 Clocktower #4, Springfield, 62704, Amanda Wiley, (217)

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New Businesses

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Ashley Caldwell is a freelance
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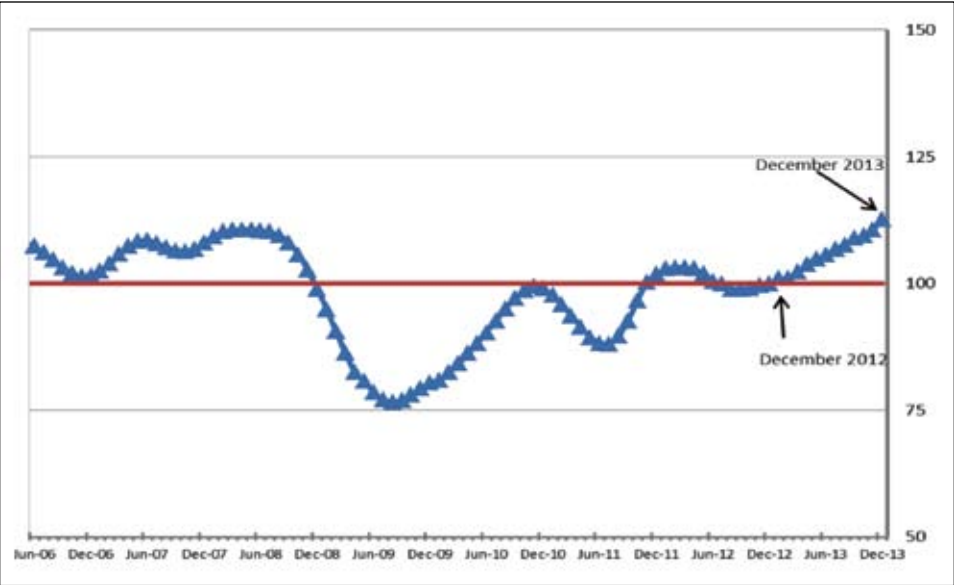
The December Springfield Enterprise Index suggests normal activity with an index of 100. The SEI steadily increases through the year with an index of 111 in November 2013.

The University of Illinois at Springfield announces that the greater Springfield Enterprise Index (SEI) for December is 101, which suggest a near normal level of economic activity. A SEI value of 100 indicates that the area economy is on its long-term growth trend. A SEI value less than 100 indicates “below average” activity.

Economic activity is slightly lower than one year ago with the index decreasing by two points. The forecast through the year suggests a steady increase in economic activity; with an index of 113 for December 2013.

Compared to last month the monthly forecasts for the year suggest slightly higher levels of economic activity. This increase is due to a slight increase in median housing prices and employment gains in December 2012 data compared to the November 2012.

Economic indexes for other Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA) in Illinois are also forecasted. These compare a local area to its own historical level of economic activity for that area. The Springfield pattern of increased activity through December 2013 is consistent with all the other MSAs combined. The Chicago area index shows little change. The Springfield area has higher levels of activity relative to its own economy than the other metropolitan areas in Illinois.



The index is developed by the Regional Economic Applications Laboratory, Institute of Government and Public Affairs, University of Illinois. The Greater Springfield Enterprise Index is a collaboration between The Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce, the Institute of Government and Public Affairs – University of Illinois and the Center for State Policy and Leadership – University of Illinois Springfield (UIS). For information contact Patty Byrnes, Center for State Policy and Leadership at UIS, 217-206-7783 or pbyrn1@uis.edu.



"#1 MORTGAGE LENDER IN MENARD COUNTY (5TH CONSECUTIVE YEAR)...
ATHENS STATE BANK!"

"MOST LICENSED MORTGAGE LENDERS (8)...
ATHENS STATE BANK!"

"LATEST DRIVEUP HOURS (7:00 PM AT PETERSBURG)...
ATHENS STATE BANK!"

"LATEST DAILY BUSINESS CUTOFF (4:00 PM)...
ATHENS STATE BANK!"

"MOST LOCATIONS IN MENARD COUNTY (3)...
ATHENS STATE BANK!"

"MOST CONVENIENTLY LOCATED BANKS OVERALL...
ATHENS STATE BANK!"

"THE AWARD FOR THE BEST BANK IN MENARD COUNTY GOES TO...
ATHENS STATE BANK!"

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Building and Zoning Department - City of Springfield
Building Permit Report

	January		January - December	
New Single Family Residence	2013	2012	2013	2012
Permit	1	0	1	0
Valuation	400,000	0	400,000	0
Revenue	364.84	0	364.84	0
Dwelling Units	1	0	1	0
New Two Family Residence				
Permit	1	0	1	0
Valuation	261,000	0	261,000	0
Revenue	367.60	0	367.60	0
Dwelling Units	2	0	2	0
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	3	2	3	2
Valuation	37,500,000	16,122,656	37,500,000	16,122,656
Revenue	111,470.60	52,959.18	111,470.60	52,959.18
Total (New, Remodel, Addition & Misc.)				
Permit	143	177	143	177
Valuation	45,757,458	18,110,936	45,757,458	18,110,936
Revenue	142,955.49	61,282.24	142,955.49	61,282.24
Dwelling Units	3	0	3	0

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

	January			January - December		
Airline Passengers Enplaning	2013	2012	Change	2013	2012	Change
American Eagle	1,666	1,523	9.39%	1,666	1,523	9.39%
United Express	2,533	2,621	-3.36%	2,533	2,621	-3.36%
Direct Air	0	2,084	0	0	2,084	0
Vision	0	0	0	0	0	0
Allegiant Air	1,279	0	0	1,279	0	0
Sun Country - Honor Flight	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sun Country - Riverside	0	0	0	0	0	0
Charter - Other	0	0	0	0	0	0
McClelland Aviation	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sub-Total	5,478	6,228	-12.04%	5,478	6,228	-12.04%
Airline Passengers Deplaning						
American Eagle	1,574	1,539	2.27%	1,574	1,539	2.27%
United Express	2,629	2,568	2.38%	2,629	2,568	2.38%
Direct Air	0	1,884	0	0	1,884	0
Vision	0	0	0	0	0	0
Allegiant Air	1,367	0	0	1,367	0	0
Sun Country - Honor Flight	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sun Country - Riverside	0	0	0	0	0	0
Charter	0	0	0	0	0	0
McClelland Aviation	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sub-Total	5,570	5,991	-7.03%	5,570	5,991	-7.03%
TOTAL	11,048	12,219	-9.58%	11,048	12,219	-9.58%

*Information provided by the Springfield Airport Authority

After Hours, Continued from Page 4

that, for the first two days you could see maybe 30 feet in front of you. So, there really wasn't an ability to hunt."

Four months after the most recent trip, it is obvious that there was definite foreshadowing in those weather conditions. For the first time in all of the years they've been hunting elk together, they were shut out – not one elk was harvested.

"It was the worst year we've ever had out there," he said. "That part was frustrating."

The group averages about three elk every year and their best year was a harvest of five elk. Over the years, Johnson has downed at least 10 elk.

After a successful shot, they field dress the elk and try to take as much meat off the bone as possible before packing it up and hiking back to camp. That is when Johnson is glad he increases his running workout at least three months prior to the trip – because carrying an additional 60 to 70 pounds of elk on your back for an extended distance, up and down mountains, can be strenuous.

Everyone in the group enjoys eating elk meat, so they have it processed into steaks and ground into burger.

"It's leaner than beef, much less fat content," Johnson said. "It's more of a red meat versus venison, which is deer."

Johnson's preferred method of preparing the elk steak is wrapping it in bacon and putting it on the grill.

"That's really our favorite way to do it in terms of the steaks. Now, the burger, we'll use in a number of different things, even spaghetti sauce," he said. "Most people wouldn't know that it's not hamburger, in terms of something like that. To me it's not as gamey as even venison."

In honor of his long-time tradition with his dad and brothers, Johnson had a chef prepare an appetizer made with elk for his wedding's rehearsal dinner in 2006.

Besides the meat, when they down a bull, they also keep the antlers and haul them back to camp.

"Anytime you're bringing a rack out it creates some challenges because you go through some tighter spots in terms of brush and trees and that kind of stuff," Johnson said. "That's what's so amazing, you watch an elk run through those tight areas out there, a bull will tilt their nose up to get their rack back and they just dodge their rack through the trees. It's a pretty neat thing."

Johnson hunts with a .300 Winchester Magnum that has a bipod mounted on the rifle for stabilization and a crosshair scope. He prefers to take shots within 400 yards and while he knows a scope is beneficial, he has a scar above his right eye to prove it.

"I was up on some rocks shooting out and I saw an elk. The sun was shining in my scope so I was trying to be able to see through the scope. When I finally got (the elk) in it, I pulled the trigger and the butt of the gun wasn't all the way against my shoulder so the scope hit me. It bled a lot," he said. "(The scar) is my reminder to make sure the gun is on your shoulder."

Although Johnson is an avid deer hunter during Illinois' bow and shotgun seasons, he always looks forward to the annual trip to the Colorado wilderness with his dad and brothers.

"Even this past year when we didn't get an elk, it was still a good trip because we got to spend time together and that's really the end goal and the reason why we continue to do it," he said.

Raegan Hennemann is a senior correspondent for Springfield Business Journal.
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CEC issues first year progress report

In its first year of work the Citizens' Efficiency Commission (CEC) called for "a new way of doing business" for local governments. The CEC issued its progress report, surveying accomplishments and announcing goals. They found that local governments need to engage in more data collection, performance measurement, information sharing, and long-term planning to strengthen their capacity and better equip them to work together.

While the CEC found that many governments in Sangamon County work to provide services to residents, few of these governments evaluate their efforts in terms of service efficiency and effectiveness. The CEC is working to help local governments to identify where they are now and how they are performing.

The CEC has made four recommendations for improving local government efficiency and effectiveness:

Creation of a Leaders' Peer Network—Regular meetings of local leaders in like positions should be established as a venue for cooperative actions. Some local leaders have re-established networks, such as the Sangamon County Township Officials Association. The CEC also brought regional mayors and village presidents together twice in 2012.

General Assistance Administration – Township Supervisors should examine existing cooperation opportunities similar to the Capital/Chatham Township inter-governmental agreement, and consider alternatives to the current structure for general assistance administration. Some

townships are already undertaking research in response to this recommendation.

Electric Aggregation—Sangamon County and municipalities not served by electric cooperatives or municipal utilities should pursue energy cost savings through electric aggregation. As a result of this recommendation, eligible residents in 15 municipalities and unincorporated Sangamon County voted and passed a referendum from the November 2012 election related to electric aggregation. The referendum in unincorporated Sangamon failed by five votes and Sangamon County created an opt-in program for those residents who wish to participate in electric supply cost savings program. The CEC has assisted these communities in starting a group aggregation effort.

Township Property Tax Collection—Townships should turn responsibilities for collection over to the Sangamon County Treasurer's/Capital Township Collector's office via intergovernmental agreement and vacate the position of Township Tax Collector in other townships. The CEC has received feedback that some townships intend to undergo the process of vacating their collector's position.

Many of the areas being addressed by the CEC came from two sets of public meetings, held in six communities where the public and governmental officials offered a host of concerns for CEC review and consideration. These include building codes and permitting processes, consolidation of garages and parts inventories and public education transportation.

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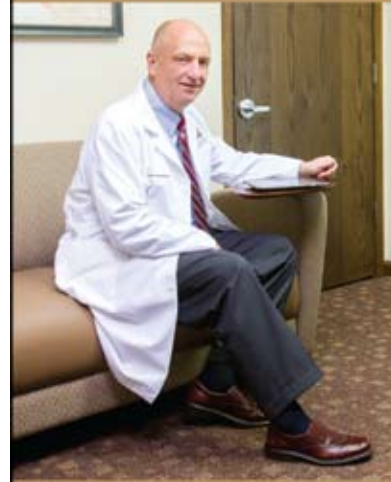


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Cutting edge of (office) technology

By Eric Woods, Correspondent

Springfield –

What is your favorite part about living in Springfield? “You are virtually 10 minutes away from a lot of activities,” said Allen.

“There is theatre, restaurants, movies, you name it.” Allen sees Springfield as a small city that has the best of both worlds.

What is the worst part about living in Springfield? The high taxes and the state economy are very unpleasant right now, according to Allen. “This is an issue for a lot of businesses,” he said. “It can be a hindrance.”

The biggest issue Springfield currently faces is...? “The debt of the state is the biggest hurdle,” said Allen. “It is a trickle-down effect.”

Employment –

“When I was 10, I wanted to be... a baseball player.”

First job? Having grown up in White Hall, Allen spent his summers working on farms. “I would walk the bean fields and cut corn out of beans,” he said.

Worst job? While he did not mind walking the bean fields, Allen did not enjoy detasseling corn. “It was good money, but it was not fun,” he said.

Current job and responsibilities? Allen has been with CDS Office Technologies

for 24 years, having worked on the service side repairing equipment for the first 10 years. The company is family owned and has been in business for 43 years. “We are a progressive company, and we have evolved over the years,” said Allen. The company has its own print shop but now also works with information technology, manages network services, cloud backup, and IP telephony services. Allen stays very busy handling appointments, phone calls, and installations to name just a few duties. Clients of CDS range from three-person offices to larger companies like St. John’s Hospital. “We make sure to treat everyone the same no matter the size of the business.”

Philosophical –

What do you want to know about the

future? Allen would like to know what type of fuels and transportation we will have in the future. “This affects so many people in so many ways,” he said. He is also curious as to how much more connected the world can get from a communication standpoint. “How much further can we go?”

How do you envision your life in 10 years? “It would be nice to be retired, but I do not foresee that,” said Allen. He does hope to slow down a bit but knows he will still be working to help his customers with solutions. “It is hard to see myself doing anything differently since I have been doing it for so long,” he said.

Something you learned early in life and still use? “Be a man of your word,” he said. “If you do not have integrity, you will not be successful no matter what you do.”

Advice –

Advice for someone seeking a career in your field? “Never stop learning,” said Allen. “That is important because things change quickly.”

Best advice you have ever been given? “Stand by your word,” said Allen. “That is all you have.”

Achievements –

As a kid? “Nothing really stands out to

me,” said Allen.

As an adult? Nothing has made Allen any prouder than the birth of his children.

Future –

Upcoming job news? “There is nothing out of the ordinary going on right now,” said Allen. “We are working on some big deals, but I do not want to jinx anything.”

Any vacation plans? Allen will be heading to Cancun with his family. It is somewhere he has been before and really enjoys.

I want to retire when I’m ... (age)? Allen feels that it would be great to retire at 65 but can see himself working as long as he still enjoys what he is doing. “I cannot see myself doing nothing,” he said. “I have to stay busy.”

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



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would like to see Springfield as the capital city to adopt," Bluhm said.

PACE has been implemented in California, and Bluhm said that Simon Property Group, owner of the Springfield mall, has benefited from the program in the Golden State.

Bluhm said White Oaks Mall could benefit from PACE since "our utility expense is the largest expense."

Bluhm explained it is up to the City of Springfield to chase a special assessment area, and while she would be happy if White Oaks Mall was established as a PACE pilot site, Bluhm said "we should think big" and make it citywide.

"I hope it would be the whole city," she said. "There are older buildings that need retro-fitting. This is a means of improving building stock. It relates to higher occupancy and higher values. It's a net gain if you do cost benefit analysis."

"Funding is through municipal bonds, there is no liability on city bonds," Bluhm said.

Claiming she is "not a political beast," Bluhm said she is building a coalition to get support for the project. For example, she met with the Commercial Real Estate Network on Jan. 25 to explain the PACE

“From the standpoint of Springfield – assuming all the legal steps are in place – it’s all upside. The only people paying the assessment are property owners. The city gets more energy efficient buildings. It’s a job creator.”

David Gabrielson,
executive director of PACENow

program.

David Gabrielson is the executive director of PACENow, a non-profit advocate for Property Assessed Clean Energy local government/community based initiatives that promote energy efficiency projects, especially in commercial buildings.

Gabrielson said Illinois is one of the 28 states that have enacted PACE legislation. "State governments said it makes sense to create incentives for energy efficiency," he said.

Gabrielson explained PACE laws establish the mechanism for local governments to allow individual property owners to assess and obtain financing for energy conservation projects. As an example of a PACE-related project, Gabrielson said a business installing solar panels could get financing up to 20 years.

"The longer the financial terms, the better for cash flow," Gabrielson said, adding that the cash flow is positive because the savings realized can off-set the costs of an energy project.

"It falls right to the bottom line and makes a property more valuable," Gabrielson said.

Joshua Collins, director of Government Relations for the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce, said that at this time, "the chamber does not have an official position on the local level."

Collins said the chamber supported the PACE legislation as it made its way through the Illinois General Assembly.

"We've done a lot of research and the benefits that can be realized by using it," Collins said. "It is a little bit more complicated in a situation with a municipally-owned utility."

"We do not know of a community with its own municipally-owned power plant (using PACE)," he said, adding the

city will have to take a lead role in the implementation of PACE.

Gabrielson said that Illinois has a "very, very broad" PACE statute, "but it does not flesh out what local government has to do." He said there is interest in amending the legislation, which could benefit a home rule municipality like Springfield.

"From the standpoint of Springfield – assuming all the legal steps are in place – it's all upside," Gabrielson said. "The only people paying the assessment are property owners. The city gets more energy efficient buildings. It's a job creator."

As for financing a project, Gabrielson said "the money can come from different places – not from the city of Springfield. The city could arrange financing, or the private sector could arrange it."

Bluhm has met with the city's Office of Planning and Economic Development

and City Water Light and Power. She intends to meet with other city officials,



Maureen Bluhm, general manager of White Oaks Mall

businesses and the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce as she moves

towards "educating the city council and getting an ordinance through."

Bluhm said that Springfield should look at other communities in the country that have established PACE areas, and use that template for Springfield. "We should make it easy for ourselves," she said. "Why reinvent the wheel?"

Joe Natale is associate editor for Springfield Business Journal. He can be reached at joe@springfieldbusinessjournal.com

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Communities,
Continued from Page One

contracted HPR Marketing to develop the plan.

"It [the marketing plan] is almost finished," said Tom Gray, Chatham mayor. "In addition to development of the marketing plan, we are bolstering our economic development efforts through work with an individual who has done legislative work for Wal-Mart."

Gray says Chatham has a lot to offer to businesses. "We know Chatham is a bedroom community but we [Chatham] are growing and have a lot to offer," he said.

Chatham will market its buying power, central location and high traffic counts to potential businesses. "It's the ultimate suburbia," Gray said. "The fact that we now have our own water source is huge too."

In the short term, Gray says Chatham is looking to add smaller establishments in hopes of eventually drawing in larger business developments like box stores.

As far as investment in Q5, Gray says it just was too Springfield-oriented. "In the beginning, they [Q5] seemed to be fixated on growth in downtown Springfield and that doesn't help Chatham," Gray said. "That being said, I do believe it is important that we all work together and support each other in economic growth."

Sherman is another Sangamon County village doing its own economic development. The combination of word of mouth and the addition of an economic development coordinator have spurred economic growth in Sherman according to Trevor Clatfelter, mayor of Sherman.

Following Clatfelter's election in 2007, a village administrator position was created. That individual also serves as the economic development coordinator. Additionally, responsibilities of an assistant development coordinator were added to the position of the village clerk.

As for Q5, Clatfelter said, "The village of Sherman is not currently investing in Q5 but we have a good relationship with the Chamber."

Clatfelter said word of mouth has really been the push behind economic development in Sherman. "In most cases we've been able to pick and choose what fits best for the area," he said.

As a part of the village's comprehensive plan update in 2007, a survey of every household was conducted. "We had an unbelievable response rate," Clatfelter said. "We were told that 10-15 percent would be a good goal; we had 48 percent of the town respond."

The number one request with regard to economic development was for a grocery store. Clatfelter said that 83 percent of the respondents requested a grocery

store. The second most requested business was a pharmacy.

"The survey was great political capital for bringing County Market to our community," Clatfelter said. "Had we not have had that kind of community push, it probably would have been seven to 10 years before anything like that happened here."

Sherman has three contiguous tax increment finance (TIF) districts which Clatfelter has pointed to as strong points for the village. "A mayor and town board need the right tools for economic growth," Clatfelter said. "TIFs are the key to everything. Farm Credit relocating to the south part of Chatham is proof that TIF funds really spur economic development," he said.

"We have an excellent board that sees the need to bring in new businesses to expand the sales tax base," Clatfelter said. "Spurring economic development is important but we are pursuing a moderate controlled growth level."

While Chatham and Sherman are not participating in the Springfield chamber's economic development initiative, Riverton has experienced some commercial growth as a result of Q5.

"We have certainly benefited from the efforts of Q5 and the Chamber," said Joe Bartley, village president. "We have some obvious spaces for commercial growth; the Chamber is a great resource for contacts in need of space for development."

In 2011, SIC Recycling, Inc., settled into an area along I-72 which has since been annexed into the village of Riverton.

As for the future of Q5, phase two of the initiative runs from 2012-2017. According to Sandstrom, there has been a focus on resetting and regaining traction. The Chamber is planning for roll out of a new challenge called 'Source Sangamon' in March.

"We'll be asking members and local business owners to look at where they are purchasing goods and challenging them to move five percent of purchase that are outside of Sangamon County, inside," Sandstrom said. "What that means for Sangamon County is job creation or the potential for it."

The Chamber has also launched a new pilot program. The Economic Gardening program is targeted at growing local businesses. At the end of the year, between 8-15 companies will be selected.

The company has to meet the following requirements-- for-profit, privately held



Joe Bartley, village president of Riverton

company headquartered and operating in Sangamon County for at least two years; annual revenue between \$1 million and \$50 million; 10 to 99 full-time equivalent



Trevor Clatfelter, mayor of Sherman

employees; demonstrated growth in either revenue or employees in two of the last five years; and provide products and/or services beyond the Springfield area.

"The perception is out there that we spend 360 days a year trying to lure the next Toyota plant to Sangamon County



Steward Sandstrom, Springfield Chamber president

when that really isn't the case; the majority of our time is spent working to grow local businesses," Sandstrom said.

Betsy Butler is a senior correspondent for Springfield Business Journal. She can be reached at betsy@springfieldbusinessjournal.com

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Springfield in May of 2011 with a bachelor's degree in business administration. Her job search only just recently bore fruit.

"I chose business administration because it was a catch-all, and I thought I'd always be able to find a job in it," Kersey said. "But I was wrong. It seems business administration is not specific enough for most places to work; they want something more catered and less general."

Kersey focused primarily on the central Illinois area in her job hunt as she bounced from interviews at Horace Mann Insurance to Blue Cross Blue Shield among others, but to little avail. In an attempt to find some sort of stability she avoided temp agencies as well.

"I had numerous interviews where I didn't have enough experience or I was under-educated because they wanted a master's degree," Kersey said.

A large contingent of fellow job seek-

ers makes matters more difficult, and that is not a recent development, according to Melanie Trimm, employment services manager for the University of Illinois Springfield. of education rises, the unemployment rate will decrease for that particular demographic. For instance, the Bureau of Labor shows that in January the unemployment rate for those with bachelor's degrees or higher was just 3.9 percent. High school graduates with no college education, however, had an unemployment rate of 9.1 percent.

Despite those telling numbers, though, it still took Kersey a large amount of time to find a job she felt could act as her launching pad. She started at One Main Financial as

an account executive early this year and at just the right time.

"You get 10,000 resumes each year and you have to touch each one. We filled over 200 positions last year, and we have close to 60 open positions now. It's one of those things that comes in peaks and valleys but we haven't had many valleys this past year."

Debbie Thompson, vice president of talent acquisition for Horace Mann

"I turned 26 in December so I lost my parents' insurance, and I needed some kind of 'big girl job', if you will," Kersey said. "It's full-time here with a (competitive) starting salary, full benefits from day one and they have a good reputation."

"Also, it's long term. A lot of the people here have been here for a number of years. It's a good long-term company to work for, and that was also something I was look-

ing for," Kersey said.

Kersey chalked her timely employment up to knowing the right people at the right time. Her poor luck at job conventions and career fairs weren't as important as simply knowing the right person, she said.

But finding a job appears to be a largely inexact science as Thompson and Trimm both stood resolute in their use of those very fairs and conventions – in addition to outside recruiters, among other methods – as integral ways to find talent.

"It's just one of those things where it's a tough market out there for job seekers and employers alike," Thompson said. "Everybody wants the best person. I just wish we had more jobs for people."

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

"Quite often you'll see an applicant interested in testing only for a position that is currently vacant, but now they may ask to take any and every exam they may qualify for."

Melanie Trimm, employment services manager for the University of Illinois Springfield

ers makes matters more difficult, and that is not a recent development, according to Melanie Trimm, employment services manager for the University of Illinois Springfield.

"We have received a large amount of applicants for the past several years, so that's not a new thing for us," said Trimm. "What we are seeing most recently is the number of civil service exams our applicants are requesting. That's been increasing quite a bit."

"Quite often you'll see an applicant interested in testing only for a position that is currently vacant, but now they may ask to take any and every exam they may qualify for," Trimm said.

The result, obviously, creates a hugely competitive market where potential employees will apply for scores of jobs at the same time, sometimes regardless of their qualifications.

It's that kind of fervor that makes job hunting a large time investment for employers as well. Debbie Thompson, vice president of talent acquisition for Horace Mann, can easily attest to that.

"You get 10,000 resumes each year and you have to touch each one," Thompson said. "We filled over 200 positions last year, and we have close to 60 open positions now. It's one of those things that comes in peaks and valleys but we haven't had many valleys this past year."

Thompson pointed to information technology as the field that often has the positions most difficult to fill. The specialized skill sets needed for specific jobs can lead to longer search times for an ideal candidate. And, again, it is a growing market seeing increased competition.

Trimm faces a similar situation with academic professional positions, she said. Searches for those positions can be lengthy due to the process itself, Trimm said, referring to search committees, applicant reviews and finally interviews of potential candidates. But, Trimm said, vacancies for such positions haven't been out of the norm in recent memory.

Their experiences seem to follow suit with findings on the Bureau of Labor's website regarding education versus unemployment rate. Typically, as the level

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Soda jerk to Sangamo Club

By Eric Woods, Correspondent

Springfield –
What is your favorite part about living in Springfield? “Springfield has been very good to me and my family,” said Keefner-Grieser, whose father used to own a pharmacy downtown. “I like the different local businesses that make Springfield what it is.”

What is the worst part about living in Springfield? The condition of the city’s roads, especially Chatham Road, is something that troubles Keefner-Grieser. “I travel Chatham Road every day to get the kids to school,” she said.

The biggest issue Springfield currently faces is...? “The city seems to lose events that help the economy,” said Keefner-Grieser. “Other towns are getting better musical acts. Why are they not coming here?”

Employment –

“When I was 10, I wanted to be... a nun early in life, followed by wanting to be a

mom, and soon hoping to be a nurse.”

First job? “I worked for my dad at the pharmacy when I was 11,” said Keefner-Grieser. “I was a soda jerk.”

Worst job? Keefner-Grieser used to deliver papers for The Shopper after school.

“I would see them piled up in a driveway and wondered if people even read them,” she said.

Current job and responsibilities?

Sangamo Club has been in existence for 122 years and in its downtown Springfield location for the past 50 years. Keefner-Grieser has been with the company since last September. She is responsible for seeking new members, maintaining memberships, hosting numerous events, and a number of administrative duties. “I am the membership contact person for

any questions,” she said. So far, the new job has been great, as Keefner-Grieser enjoys the interaction with the members. “There is so much history, and Sangamo Club has a great reputation. I love working for this type of business.”

Angie Keefner-Grieser

Title: Director of Member Services, Sangamo Club
Address: 227 E. Adams St., Springfield, Ill., 62701
Telephone: (217) 544-1793
E-mail: akeefnergrieser@sangamoclub.com

Born: May 9, 1969; Springfield, Ill.

Education: B.A. in communication disorders and sciences from Southern Illinois University Carbondale

Family: Children – Paul, Jane, and Drew

Favorites –

Hobby: Watching sports
Movie: The Shawshank Redemption
Sports team: St. Louis Cardinals

Tidbits –

Fan of James Patterson novels
 Wants to skydive
 Special Olympics volunteer

Philosophical –
What do you want to know about the future? Keefner-Grieser wants to know that her children are happy, healthy and successful. “I put a lot of effort into parenting so I can have my life back afterwards,” she said. “I really want to do more volunteering in the future.”

How do you envision your life in 10 years? “I see myself volunteering more since my kids will be grown and on their own,” said Keefner-Grieser. “I will also still be in the hospitality and marketing industry.”

Something you learned early in life and still use? “Treat others the way I want to be treated,” said Keefner-Grieser. “And smile often.”

Advice –

Advice for someone seeking a career in your field? Keefner-Grieser believes those wanting to enter the hospitality industry must be outgoing and approachable. “For this field, you need to be open to dealing with all types of personalities,” she said. “Have a passion for what you are selling. It will show if you do not.”

Best advice you have ever been given? “Don’t sweat the small stuff,” said Keefner-Grieser. “Pick your battles wisely.”

Achievements –

As a kid? When in 7th grade, Keefner-



Grieser won a school poetry contest.

As an adult? While her children are her greatest achievements, Keefner-Grieser was elected Homecoming Queen while a sophomore at Springfield College in Illinois even though the college did not have any sports at the time.

Future –

Upcoming job news? Currently Sangamo Club is running a promotion where the initiation fee is waived. “This is indefinitely running,” she said.

Any vacation plans? Keefner-Grieser has no trips on the horizon. “Times are tough,” she said.

I want to retire when I’m ... (age)? Keefner-Grieser would like to retire by age 65 but does not know if that will happen or not. “We will see,” she said. “Things change. You never know.”

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

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 9:30 am to 1:30 pm
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 Springfield, IL. Lower Level
Cost: \$25. Pre-register at <http://springfieldil.score.org>
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 Session #4: Financial Projections, Wednesday May 22, 1:30 to 3:30pm
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The Simple Steps series is designed to allow you, the entrepreneur, to reach a "Go" or "No Go" decision on your idea. Session #1 is FREE. Cost for Sessions 2-5 is \$125 for all 4. To register, go to <http://springfieldil.score.org>. To learn more about the Simple Steps series and what others have said, go to <http://bit.ly/ZxuVWO>. All sessions are at the UCB Bank, 1900 West Iles Ave., Springfield, IL.

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business lunch •

Bella Milano: A Lenten safe harbor

By Tom Collins

Springfield is quite the Catholic town – at least to my estimation. And, once a year, we Mackerel Snappers run into our Lenten obligation to abstain from eating meat on Fridays. Lenten Fridays can present a gastronomic challenge – especially for inter-faith business lunches. Not everyone wants to go to a fish fry.

Bella Milano, located in the Yellowstone Center on West Wabash, popped into my mind as a lunch venue that could accommodate about anyone.

My ecumenical group arrived at Bella

\$7.00 for the 9" and \$13.00 for the 16"). Sandwiches and entrée items are served with choice of small salad or side while pastas are accompanied by a small salad. Entrée salads are available in small and large portions. One guest commented that she would have appreciated the option of a half portion for the pasta selections.

Bella isn't cheap but given the portions and the quality of the meal we all commented that we felt we received good value for our money. We did see the dinner menu and noted prices for identical dishes were higher – no doubt because

Bella Milano

Overall Rating: ★★★★★

Atmosphere: ★★★★★

Service: ★★★★★

Food: ★★★★★

Price: ★★★★★

Suitability for Business Lunch: ★★★★★

Address: 4525 West Wabash,
Springfield, Ill. 62711

Phone: (217) 547-0011

Lunch Hours: Monday – Sunday,
11:00 a.m. to 2:30 pm

Website: www.bellamilanos.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

before noon to find the restaurant already more than half filled. Bella draws an eclectic crowd that runs the gamut from the business crowd to the social maven. We were promptly greeted and whisked off to our table. Menus appeared quickly and the server took our drink order.

At first glance one might assume that Bella is a national chain. While it does have other locations (Edwardsville and O'Fallon), Bella offers anything but a chain experience. Bella's decor is clean, bright and colorful. Plenty of natural sunlight streamed in courtesy of the many windows. However, Bella's acoustics leave something to be desired – we could imagine that it gets quite noisy when packed. On the plus side, we had little worry that our conversation could be overheard at the adjacent tables.

We appreciated the fact that our server knew that Bella's "red sauce" was Lenten friendly and contained no meat or meat stock. And, we were informed, the red sauce could be substituted in just about any dish in which Bella's "house made meat sauce" made an appearance.

That meant plenty of choices for those of us concerned with the status of our immortal souls. My one agnostic guest was likewise pleased that he could wantonly chow down on any number of dishes that contained meat – something he wasn't shy about broadcasting. In short, except for perhaps a Kosher alternative, Bella has a menu broad enough in scope to accommodate anyone and everyone.

Notable items on the special lunch menu include the Bella Trio (as an appetizer, zucchini sticks, calamari, and two roasted ravioli served with both red and meat sauce - \$9.95), the Strawberry Grilled Chicken Salad (accompanied by toasted almonds, walnuts, a cheese blend and poppy seed dressing - \$11.95), and the Brick Oven Turkey Club (with spinach, roasted peppers, mozzarella, and basil pesto served on focaccia - \$9.95). There are also a slew of pastas and chicken/eggplant dishes that range in price from \$8.95 to \$12.95, plus pizza (starting at

of larger portions during dinner service. One guest commented that he appreciated the separate lunch menu with more appropriately sized offerings and wished more restaurants followed suit.

My guests and I started out with an order of the Garlic Cheese Bread (\$5.95) and the Bella Trio (\$9.95). The Cheese Bread was wonderful and only lasted mere moments on the plate. The Trio didn't last much longer but suffered in comparison to the perfectly toasted bread.

For entrees, we opted for the Blackened Grouper Sandwich (8 oz. of blackened grouper, topped with smoked gouda, roasted peppers and a Cajun aioli - \$12.95), the Eggplant Parmigiano (\$10.95), the Fettuccine Alfredo (\$10.95, with shrimp an additional \$2.50), and the Chicken Stasilli for the fallen Catholic in our group (\$9.95, lightly fried chicken served in a lemon butter sauce with garlic, mushrooms and broccoli).

All dishes were appropriately sized, served at the same time, and fresh from the kitchen. The Eggplant was reported as tender on the inside, crisp on the outside and not swimming in excess liquid or grease. Unlike many of its peers, Bella's Fettuccine Alfredo was not a coagulated mess. The pasta, cooked al dente (to our surprise), was coated with a wonderful conglomeration of cheese and cream.

The Chicken Stasilli, was surprisingly light and offered a perfect blend of texture and taste. The only miss was the sandwich. The fish was slightly overcooked and we would have appreciated a bread with more bite – a baguette or focaccia would have provided the texture I craved with this dish. Still, the sandwich wasn't short on flavor and I'm sure the efficient wait staff would have arranged for a different bread to be substituted had a request been made.

When on Springfield's west side, plan to add Bella Milano to your restaurant rotation.

Tom Collins is a freelance writer from Springfield

• monthly drive

2013 Chevy Malibu LTZ: A contrasting mid-level sedan

By Jane Driver

It's freezing cold and the wind is gusting to 30 miles per hour; it must be time to test drive in February. I did get rewarded for my troubles, though, as I met one of the nicest salespeople yet – John Oder at Friendly Chevrolet.

He was personable, took a genuine interest in what I was doing, and made sure I had his cell number while I did my test drive in case I had any immediate questions. He even removed the sticker from the front passenger window. Thank you Mr. Oder.

I drove the Chevy Malibu which has been completely redesigned for 2013. Chevy even changed parts of the brochure so you could get visuals of the inside of each trim level, rather than just the chart checkmarks to differentiate each.

My LTZ with Atlantis Blue exterior and contrasting Cocoa/Light neutral seating is sticker priced at \$30,225.

This car is a study in contrasts during this month's test drive. The leather wrapped steering wheel felt good in my hands, but the hard plastic on the door felt cheap. The hidden storage area behind the center console touch screen was a nice surprise, but the tiny sunroof looked like an afterthought.

The trunk was huge, both wide and deep, but it had a high threshold you would have to pull heavy suitcases up over. The gear shifter was right-sized for my hand, but Chevy allows you to move

for some functions, but has kept its large dials for on/off /volume control, "tune menu," fan speed, and temperature settings. They are a visual contrast from the high tech, blue backlit touch screen.

Personally, I do not have much purpose for remote starts. However, Chevy has combined the "convenience" of a remote start with the regulation of a key. You can start the car remotely, but it cannot be shifted into gear until the key is inserted and turned. This is to allow you to heat or cool the car before you get in, but prevents theft.

To get 22 miles per gallon city and 34 highway, Chevy only offers a 4-cylinder engine on the Malibu, but kept a 6-speed transmission to keep the feel of power. I found the acceleration okay, the shifting obvious and the engine noise acceptable.

Manufacturers must be increasing usage of wind tunnels to streamline their vehicle profiles, reduce drag, increase mileage; all to create cars with similar silhouettes. This also reduces window size as the curved roof dictates window placement, shape and size. This holds true for the Malibu with oddly shaped, small front and rear windows. However, I never felt claustrophobic in the Malibu as I had plenty of room under the telescoping steering wheel and an open feel between the front seats.

The back seats were a bit cramped with the sloped ceiling and the back was difficult to exit, with a small door opening.

Contrast that with a large, wide-swinging front door and easy exit.

Wind gusts of 30-plus miles an hour weren't noticeable on my test drive either from buffeting or wind noise. Springfield's awful street conditions were heard but not felt. The Malibu swerved when I yanked the steering wheel, but settled immediately and it hugged the road on the turns. Parking will be a breeze in this vehicle with a very tight turning radius.

All in all, the Malibu could make a good choice for a mid-level sedan, even with the contrasts. And Mr. John Oder was a welcome surprise as a salesman.

2013 Chevrolet Malibu LTZ

Driven at:

Friendly Chevrolet
2540 Prairie Crossing Drive
Springfield, Ill. 62711
(217) 547-0700

friendly-chevroletspringfield.com



Sticker price as driven: \$30,225

MPG: 22 city; 34 highway

Notables:

Easy to turn/tight turning radius;
Excellent gas mileage;
Comfortable driver compartment;
Cheap-looking plastic components;
High trunk threshold; Tiny sunroof



2013 Chevrolet Malibu LTZ

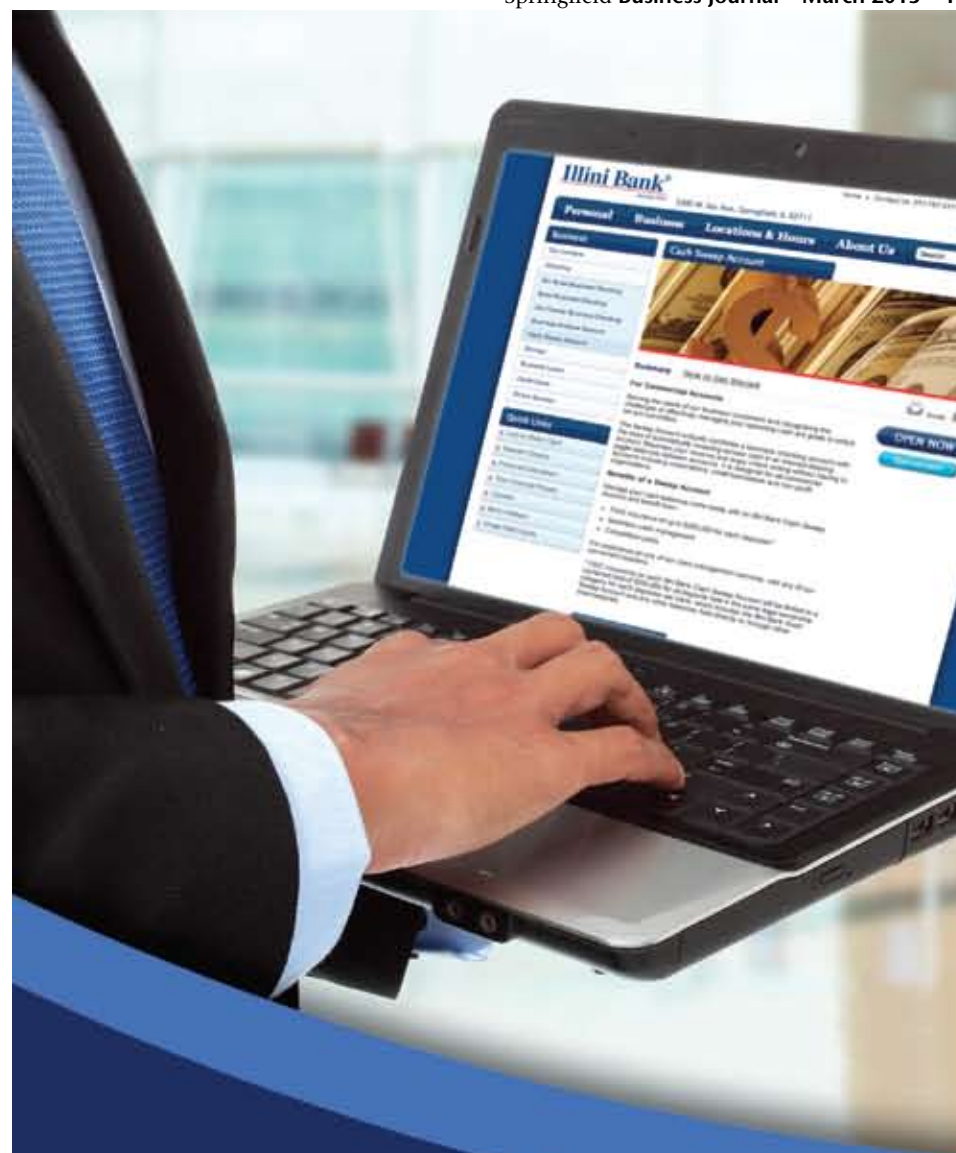
straight down into Manual mode from Drive.

My view out the front was quite nice, but adjusting the rear view mirror was difficult since it was placed so close to the ceiling.

Lumbar support was good, but the seat bottom wasn't quite as firm as I like. However, it definitely was not squishy.

Chevy has installed touch screen technology for the center media console, with redundancy on the steering wheel

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



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Illinois Supreme Court building

Mechanics Lien rights restored

Supreme Court ruling upended

By Roberta Codemo,
Correspondent

Mechanic lien rights that were in place since early statehood have been restored with HB 3636 being signed into law as Public Act 97-1165 by Gov. Pat Quinn on Feb. 11. The bill amends the Illinois Mechanics Lien Act and it redresses the Illinois Supreme Court's decision in LaSalle Bank National Association v. Cypress Creek 1, LP.

Dale Matthews, president of the Springfield Area Home Builders Association, said this was a victory for anyone who works in construction. "It gives us back our lien rights," he said. "The Supreme Court's decision overturned 170 years of precedent. It didn't make much sense."

The Illinois Mechanics Lien Act was enacted in the 1840s to ensure contractors whose labor and materials improved a property received fair compensation if the owner failed to pay on time. Section 16 stated lenders in a foreclosure action were preferred to the extent of the value of the land while contractors were preferred to the value of the improvements built on the property.

"The Mechanics Lien Act is the only protection a contractor has," said Louie

Giordano, executive director of the Illinois Mechanical & Specialty Contractors Association. "We had never had a situation like this before."

Giordano said it's the responsibility of the bank to do due diligence. "Banks know whether the developer is having financial difficulty," he said. "Contractors don't have the ability to do due diligence."

LaSalle Bank loaned \$8 million to Cypress Creek, LLP to develop 13.79 acres of land into senior apartments. The loan was secured by a mortgage, which was recorded on June 13, 2003. Eagle Concrete and Edon Construction were hired to work on the project. The bank funded eight construction draws before it determined there was not enough money to finish the project and filed to foreclose on the mortgage in 2005.

In November 2005, Eagle Concrete and Edon Construction recorded mechanics liens against the property. In 2006, a judgment of foreclosure and sale were entered against Cypress Creek, LLP. The bank purchased the property in 2006 for \$1.3 million. Eagle Concrete and Edon Construction filed to foreclose their mechanics liens.

The trial court found that the value

“It gives us back our lien rights. The Supreme Court's decision overturned 170 years of precedent. It didn't make much sense.”

Dale Matthews, owner of Matthews Custom Construction and president of the Springfield Area Home Builders Association

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residential real estate 2013

Continued from Previous Page

of the land before improvements was \$1,360,000 and that the value of enhancements totaled \$2,068,699. The court determined 40 percent of the foreclosure sale proceeds should go to the bank for the value of the unimproved land and the remaining 60 percent should be divided among the mechanics lien claimants for the value of enhancements. The court held the bank was entitled to share in the distributions for enhancement for the improvements it funded giving it equal footing with the mechanics lien claimants.

The Illinois Appellate Court for the Third District affirmed the trial court's ruling giving LaSalle Bank priority to the foreclosure sale proceeds attributable to the unimproved value of the land but reversed the trial court's ruling that the bank was entitled to receive the allocation of sale proceeds attributable to the improvements to the land. The appellate court ruled the bank was only entitled to priority for enhancement for the amount it had paid out for perfected mechanics liens.

In 2011, the Court ruled 5-2 that construction lenders were on equal footing with mechanics lien claimants in a property foreclosure and that construction lenders had priority both on the value of the unimproved land and on the value of the enhancement amount paid by the lender through draws on a construction loan and mechanics lien claimants only had priority to the value of their claims. The decision overturned Section 16 of the Mechanics Lien Act and reduced the payment owed to mechanics lien claimants in a mechanics lien foreclosure.

Matthews said the decision caught a

lot of people off guard. "Banks were given preferential treatment and the builders were left holding the bag," he said.

Bill Ward, executive vice president of the Home Builders Association of Illinois, said this was a complicated issue. "None of the justices had a firm grasp of what the mechanics lien law is about," he said.

Rep. Chapin Rose introduced HB3636 in February 2011 in response to the Court's decision. A number of contractors, subcontractors and union groups supported the bill.

The bill amended Section 34 of the Illinois Mechanics Lien Act and added a warning that failure to respond to a written notice within 30 days after receipt would result in forfeiture of the lien. In March, Rose added House Amendment 1 to amend Section 16 of the Mechanics Lien Act.

The bill was sent to the Senate in April. The original sponsor, Senator Wm. Sam McCann, withdrew his sponsorship of the bill because of a conflict of interest. Senator John G. Mulroe filed Senate Floor Amendment No. 1 in May and Senate Floor Amendment No. 2 in February 2012.

The amendment read when sale proceeds are insufficient to satisfy the claims of all parties, lenders shall have a paramount lien in the portion of the proceeds attributable to the value of the land and lien creditors shall have a paramount lien in the portion of the proceeds attributable to the value of the improvements made to the property.

The amendment passed the Senate and was sent back to the House. Rep. Kelly Burke filed a motion to concur in May and the General Assembly passed HB3636 in January 2013. The bill restores

the original intent of the Illinois Mechanics Lien Act.

Giordano said it normally takes three months to pass a bill. "This bill lived for two years," he said. "A lot of thought went into this legislation."

"The lender should be able to stand in the shoes of the paid contractors and join the line with everyone else waiting to share in the proceeds of the foreclosure sale."

Linda Koch, president and CEO of the Illinois Bankers Association

"We were lucky to have the sponsors that we did," he added. "It was worth fighting for. We dodged a big bullet."

Linda Koch, president and CEO of the Illinois Bankers Association, is not surprised the bill passed. "There were a lot of proponents," she said.

"This legislation will have a significant effect on the future of the construction industry," said Koch. "The governor didn't understand the consequences of this legislation."

The bill limits the ability of lenders to recoup the proceeds of their construction loans in a foreclosure action. "Lenders always lose money in a foreclosure sale," said Koch. "The lender should be able to stand in the shoes of the paid contractors and join the line with everyone else waiting to share in the proceeds of the foreclosure sale."

Koch said the law will adversely impact commercial lending. "Banks will have to figure out a way to make up for

commercial losses by imposing new fees. Contractors are going to pay more and have less access to credit," she said.

Financial institutions and commercial lenders have stringent underwriting standards placed on them by regulators to ensure appropriate standards are in place. This law will adversely affect the lender's ability to manage underwriting risks. It will tighten the underwriting standards to compensate for the lessened ability to recoup losses.

"This will definitely slow the economic recovery," said Koch. "Once the construction industry realizes the unintended consequences of this law, they may look for another way to address the issue."

Matthews said banks are saying this is going to change things. "A mechanics lien protects the bank," he said. "When a contractor files a mechanics lien, it gives contractors the right to have the lien satisfied after the sale closes. The liens have to be cleared before the property is sold."

"For the past 140 years banks have made loans," said Giordano.

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

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1	Buraski Builders, Inc. 3757 S. Sixth St. Springfield IL 62703	217-529-5172 217-529=9356	buraski.com buraskibuilders@yahoo.com	34	Frank Buraski, Pres.; Barbara Buraski, Sec./Treas. Jason Buraski, Heather Sobieski	50%	50%	1981
2	Moughan Builders Inc. 3140 Cockrell Lane Springfield IL 62711	217-899-5484 217-793=6013	moughanbuilders.com jim@moughanbuilders.com	21	James E. Moughan David P. Moughan	10%	90%	1992
3	Michael von Behren Builder, Inc. 3537 S. Douglas Ave. Springfield IL 62704	217-698-8484 217-698=8486	mvbbuilder.com mike@mvbbuilder.com	18	Michael J. von Behren, Pres. Cheri M. von Behren, Sec./Treas.	80%	20%	1982
4	Griffitts Construction Co., Inc. 1501 N. Dirksen Pkwy. Springfield IL 62702	217-522-1431 217-522=5809	griffitts.net griffitts@griffitts.net	12	Harry Griffitts Vicky Griffitts-Runyon	95%	5%	1953
5	Bobby Shaw Property Maintenance and Remodeling 3351 S. Sixth St. Frontage Road E., Suite 5 Springfield IL 62704	217-546-3973 217-546=6410	bobbyshawmaintenance.com bobby@bsmaint.com	10	Bobby Shaw, Owner	90%	10%	1987
6	Creasey Construction of IL., Inc. PO Box 9286 Springfield IL 62791	217-546-1277 217-546=1760	creaseyconstruction.com creaseyconst@comcast.net	9	Jan Creasey, Pres. Lisa Creasey	60%	40%	1983
7	Craig Ladage Builders, Inc. 14915 Kennedy Road Auburn IL 62615	217-438-9206 217-438=5706	craigladagebuildersandstorage.com clbuilders@royell.org	8	Craig Ladage Debbie Ladage	40%	60%	1977
	Roth Homes * 350 Williams Lane Chatham IL 62629	217-529-4535 217-529=4536	rothhomesinc.com	8	Terry Roth	10%	90%	1984
	Zinn Construction, LLC 1323 Hawthorne Chase Sherman IL 62684	217-496-3112 866-359=0816	zinnconstruction.com phil@zinnconstruction.com	8	Phil Zinn	10%	90%	2003
10	Evers Construction Inc. * 3900 Pintail Drive, Suite C Springfield IL 62711	217-787-3435 217-787=3436	eversconstruction.com jason@eversconstruction.com	7	Jason M. Evers	40%	60%	1992
	Illinois Builders & Contractors, Inc. 4120 S. Second St. Springfield IL 62703	217-585-9490 217-529=9456	ilbuildersandcontractors.com ilbuilders2@yahoo.com	7	Fred Pryor	90%	10%	2003
12	All-C Construction, Inc. 3004 Great Northern Drive Springfield IL 62711	217-787-1900 217-787=1901	allcconstruction.com allcconstruction@att.net	6	Frank Conder Paula Conder	20%	80%	1999
	Keith Moore Builder, Inc. 3204 Bowwood Drive Springfield IL 62712	217-529-0059 217-529=5509	keithmoorebuilder.com kmbuilder@keithmoorebuilder.com	6	Keith E. Moore Paula Moore	25%	75%	1977
14	D & S Builders 30 White Road Glenarm IL 62536	217-529-6288 217-697=8149	d-sbuilders.com todd@ or dan@d-sbuilders.com	5	Todd Dudley, Owner Dan Schrage, Owner	40%	60%	1995
	Hasara Construction Co. Inc. 125 E. Main St. Rochester IL 62563	217-498-1472 217-498=1472	hasaraconstruction.com j.stites@comcast.net	5	John H. Stites, Jr., Pres./Owner	5%	95%	1976
	McCann Construction Company * 264 N. Broad St. Carlinville IL 62626	217-854-6576 217-854=3591	mccann-construction.com info@mccann-construction.com	5	Sam McCann, Pres./Owner	85%	15%	1993
17	Coady Construction 143 Circle Drive Springfield IL 62703	217-502-0602	adamcoadyconstruction.com coadyconstruction@comcast.net	4	Adam Coady	20%	80%	2006
	Ryan Homes & Development, Inc. 500 W. Monroe, Suite 2W Springfield IL 62704	217-523-3976 217-523=3990	homesanddevelopment.com paula.ryan2321@gmail.com	4	Mike Ryan Paula Ryan	10%	90%	1974
19	J. Bavetta Building Systems, Inc. 2475 W. Monroe Springfield IL 62704	217-725-0974	jjbavetta@comcast.net	3	J. Bavetta, Pres.	10%	90%	1990
	Robert McCurley Contractor, Inc. 4152 Mt. Zion School Road Springfield IL 62711	217-670-0608 217-679=3533	robertmccurleycontractor.com kimccurley@comcast.net	3	Robert McCurley Ki McCurley	25%	75%	1975
	Timber Creek Home Sales, Inc. 2800 Via Rosso, Suite 1 Springfield IL 62703	217-585-8900 217-585=8908	timbercreekliving.com frank@timbercreekliving.com	3	Douglas Daniels, President Frank Hoover, Sales Manager	0%	100%	1999
22	Cation Construction Company * 3304 S. First St. Springfield IL 62703	217-585-1014	cationconstruction.com dcat1ion@gmail.com	2	David C. Cation	60%	40%	1979
	Homeway Homes Inc. 2561 Chuck Wagon Drive Springfield IL 62711	217-546-6658 309-447=6940	homewayhomes.com jonreynolds@homewayhomes.com	2	Jon Reynolds, Division Manager Jamie Loftus, Multi-Family & Commercial Dev.	2%	98%	2007
	Levi Home Construction, Inc. 5200 Crane Drive Springfield IL 62711	217-306-7445 217-787=7779	levihomeconstruction.com pchiles@thegroup.com	2	Phil Chiles Doug Cycholl	10%	90%	1999

Sources: Springfield Area Home Builders Association; The Builders and Remodelers.

* - Reprinted from the 2012-2013 Book of Lists

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• residential real estate 2013

SAHBA 2013 Home Expo

Attendees explore latest building technologies

The Springfield Area Home Builders Association's an organization made up of firms in the building industry that include builders, remodelers, developers

and associated businesses, held its 2013 Home Expo at the Prairie Capital Convention Center on February 22-24, 2013. The 2013 Home Expo showcased the latest technologies and innovations in building and remodeling in the building and remodeling community.



2013 home sales off to strong start

For the month of January 2013, the median home sale price for all single-family homes and condominiums in the Capital Area during January 2013 was \$113,000, an increase of 1.8 percent from the \$111,000 January 2012 price according to the Capital Area Association of REALTORS®. The number of homes sold was up 6.5 percent in January of 2013 with 196 homes sold, compared to 184 homes sold in January of 2012.


"The number of homes sold in January reflected the best January in six years with successive increases coming in each of the past five Januarys," said REALTOR Don Cave, CAAR president.

Sales pending in January 2013 amounted to 339, reflecting a 14.9 percent increase

over the 295 sales pending during the same time in 2012.

Statewide home sales in January 2013 totaled 8,502 homes sold, up from 6,484 in January 2012. The statewide median price in January was \$125,000, up 1.2 percent from January 2012 when the median price was \$123,500.

Fifty-nine of 102 Illinois counties reporting to IAR showed year-over-year home sales increases in January 2013. Fifty counties showed year-over-year median price increases including Sangamon, up 10.2 percent to \$135,000; Will, up 5.5 percent to \$152,990; Cook, up 3.1 percent to \$135,000; and Winnebago, up 0.1 percent to \$75,000.



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personality profile •

Building on a family tradition

By Eric Woods, Correspondent

Springfield –

What is your favorite part about living in central Illinois? Matthews thinks the area is big enough but not too big. “My kids live in Chicago, and I hate Chicago,” he said. “You can get anything you want here and get it in 15-20 minutes.”

What is the worst part about living in central Illinois? Matthews could do without the cold weather. “It could be worse,” he said. “The older you get, the more you hate cold weather.”

The biggest issue central Illinois currently faces is... “The economy is on everyone’s mind,” said Matthews. There has been a huge decline in the construction industry on a national level. Matthews admits that it is starting to recover but it is still way down. “Construction job revenue in Illinois was at \$2.5 billion in 2005 and was at \$511 million in 2012.”

Employment -

“When I was 10, I wanted to be... a con-

tractor. I grew up in the industry.”

First job? Matthews started out where he is at today, at the company that was founded by his father. He also worked odd jobs at his grandparents’ farm when needed.

Dale Matthews

Title: President, Matthews Custom Construction

Address: 115 Roby Rd., Mechanicsburg, Ill. 62545

Telephone: (217) 364-4288

E-mail: dale@matthewsmcc.com

Born: August 24, 1952; Springfield, Ill.

Education: Tri-City High School

Family: Wife – Patty; Children – Amber and Rachel

Favorites –

Hobby: Gardening

Restaurant: Taste of Thai

Sport: NASCAR

Tidbits –

Wants to vacation in the redwoods of California

Played clarinet

Has a collection of coins and old furniture

Worst job? In high school, Matthews had a part-time job as a dishwasher. “That job lasted less than a year,” he said.

Current job and responsibilities? Matthews Custom Construction was started by Glenn Matthews and has been in business for 64 years. Matthews himself has been with the company 43 years. He handles bidding, billing, estimates, and even works in the field doing carpentry work and whatever else is needed. “I have not yet hung up the

nail apron,” he said. While the industry has been in decline, Matthews said that his company is still coasting along. “It is about the same as it has been the last four years. There is probably no big boom on the horizon.” Matthews is currently the president of the Springfield Area Home Builders Association and is also a mem-

ber of the National Federation of Independent Businesses and the St. Andrews Society of Central Illinois.

Philosophical –

What do you want to know about the future? “I want to know what the government is going to do to fix the problem,” said Matthews. “There are so many mandates that we do not know what to do with them. I have had meetings with the home builders association to deal with it.”

Something you learned early in life and still use? “You have to work,” said Matthews. He does hope to retire sooner than his father who stayed on until age 76. “Of course he is 91 and still going.”

Advice –

Advice for someone seeking a career in your field? Matthews stresses the need for education in geometry as well as basic math skills. “You need to have an interest in the field,” he said. “If not, do not just do it for a job.”

Best advice you have ever been given? “If you are going to do it, do it right or don’t do it at all,” said Matthews.

Who was your biggest influence? Matthews has learned a lot from his father who started Matthews Custom Construction.



Achievements –

As an adult? “Getting my daughters raised, through college, and out into the world has made me proud,” said Matthews.

Future –

Upcoming job news? Matthews has a number of remodeling jobs on the horizon, but that is it for the time being. “There is not a lot of big stuff going anymore,” he said.

Any vacation plans? “Most of my vacations involve work,” said Matthews, who recently returned from a builders show in Las Vegas.

I want to retire when I’m ... (age)? Matthews is targeting age 65 for retirement if that is possible.

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

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Residential construction perking up

3 west side developments planned

By Roberta Codemo,
Correspondent

Area developers are confident the Springfield economy is strong enough to support new residential construction. Work is scheduled to begin on three west side communities.

Don Cave, president of the Capital Area Association of Realtors, sees a modest improvement in the real estate market. In 2012, there were 129 new residential construction sales compared to 120 in 2011. New construction sales represented 3.7 percent of home sales.

Frank Buraski and Steve Zaubi purchased 30 acres of land next to the Knights of Columbus Hall, 2200 South Meadowbrook Road, from the Roman Catholic

lifestyle so they can enjoy other things," said Buraski.

At least one resident must be 55 or older. However, Buraski emphasized this is not a retirement community or an active seniors community. "This takes the concept of a neighborhood or a community and makes it something better.

"Springfield needs this," said Buraski. "We've done our research and the market is there."

Zaubi said the real estate market in Springfield is stronger than other places. "Springfield didn't feel it as bad," he said. Construction is scheduled to start on Seasons at Stone Creek sometime this year. Seasons is an independent senior living community designed for active adults age 62 and older.

"I believe in what I'm building," said Zaubi. Seasons is unique to the industry. It offers one or two bedroom, single-story private luxury apartments.

Seasons at Stone Creek will be located on 10 acres east of the Knights of Columbus Hall at the corner of Iles Avenue and Meadowbrook Road. There will be 60 to 75 units.

"This is an ideal location," said Zaubi. "It's highly visible and has good access to all the amenities.

"I'm doing this one a little more methodically," continued Zaubi. "We hold ourselves to a higher standard."

The industry is moving towards two and three bedroom units. "People don't want to give up their space," said Zaubi. "Yet they don't want the headaches of home ownership."

Seasons at Stone Creek will offer a mix of one and two bedroom or two bedroom apartments with a study. Zaubi said the design is constantly evolving. "I try to make each one a little bit better," he said.

Seasons at Stone Creek will offer all the amenities of his other locations. The commons area, which is the heart and soul of the community, includes a stone fireplace, game room, sitting room, library, exercise room and a kitchen for events and parties.

Zaubi wants to offer seniors the lifestyle they deserve and the freedom they still want. "I see a need for this in almost every community," he said. He would like to take the concept on the road.

Paula Ryan with Ryan Homes and Development said the residential market is driving the economy. She hasn't seen any huge highs or lows in the housing market. "It's stayed about the same," she said. "We're lucky to have the hospitals, H.D. Smith and state government."

She and her husband Mike purchased 46 acres of land from the Buckley family in 2007. Buckley Ridge Estates 2nd Addition recently opened off Meadowbrook Road. The 13 acre property adjoins Buckley Ridge Estates 1st Addition.

"We're really excited," said Ryan. "It's a gem of a little piece of property. There's nothing like it in Springfield."

She added it's a great location. "It's close to downtown, wooded, with rolling terrain."

Plans are to keep as many trees as possible. "Homeowners can't clear cut trees

on the back 20 feet of individual lots," said Ryan.

The second addition contains five lots ranging in size from approximately 1.53 acres to 3.84 acres. Lots are priced at \$175,000 and \$275,000. Single family home sales start at around \$350,000.

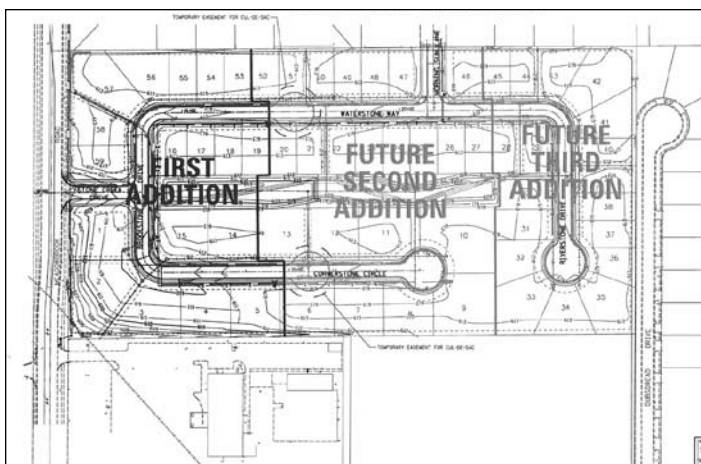
Each home will be custom built. "These won't be cookie cutter homes," said Ryan. "People want unique homes. Buyers will be able to choose their own builder." Ryan said she and Mike were builders before they became developers. "There was no place to build so we decided to do our own subdivisions. We were the first home

builders to become developers."

There's always going to be a need for upscale housing. "People want to build new homes," said Ryan. "They don't want to remodel old homes. The trend is towards more practical homes not McMansions."

Ryan said she and Mike like to drive through their developments at night and see all the lights on. "It's nice to know we created a home for families."

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



Land plat for The Homes of Stone Creek

Diocese. The developers are building two separate communities targeted for residents age 55 and up.

Greg Fleck, associate director for Building, Properties and Cemeteries for the diocese, said the land was not advertised for sale. "The Church no longer had need for the property," he said.

"The residential housing market has been depressed the past five or six years," said Jason Buraski. "We're starting to see signs that things are moving forward."

Buraski Builders recently broke ground on The Homes of Stone Creek. The development is located on 20 acres north of the Knights of Columbus Hall at the corner of Meadowbrook Road and Iles Avenue.

"We love the location," said Buraski, pointing out the site is close to shopping areas, restaurants and medical facilities. Also nearby are the YMCA, Knights of Columbus Pool and Pub and the Sangamon Valley bike trail.

"It's located in the heart of everything that's going on," said Buraski. "It's perfect."

The Homes of Stone Creek will have 44 single family homes and 14 duplexes. Lot sizes start at 7,560 square feet and there will be a private clubhouse and a commons area with walking paths.

Buyers can select from five different floor plans and four exterior home styles. The plans will be tailored around customer suggestions. Construction is scheduled to start in May.

Buraski said the response has been great. They have been able to engage potential customers through the website and learn what buyers want in a home. Customers want a large master bedroom and bath, lots of storage, an open kitchen and three bedrooms.

Residents will own their own homes without the hassles of maintenance, yard work or snow removal. "It frees up their

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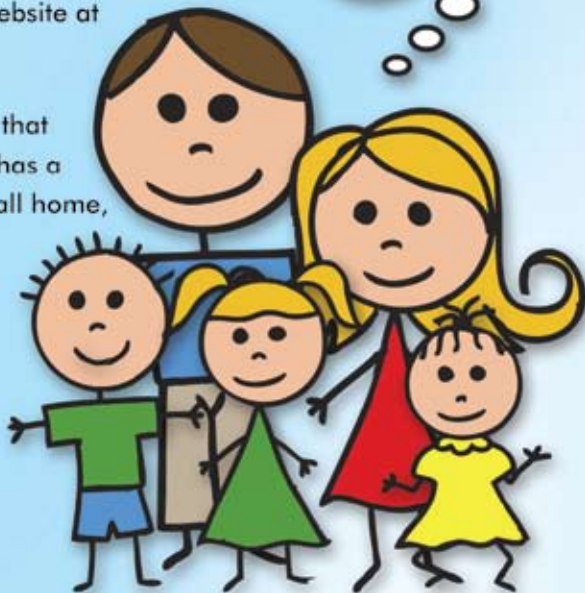
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safety •

Smoke detector awareness key to survival

This month's topic addresses residential smoke detectors, by far the easiest means available to us for protecting our families from the devastating effects of fire. Sadly, these are also the most overlooked and ignored. By not having these affordable, easily installed, and maintained devices in our homes, people can die. Statistics indicate our chances of surviving a fire where we sleep increase by half if there is at least one operational and properly maintained smoke detector installed.



Here is a scenario which happens too often. People are asleep in their beds and a small fire ignites, sometimes from a discarded cigarette in a trash can. These fires start small and produce smoke before flames. The smoke rises to the ceiling, spreading throughout the home. Eventually the contents of the can begin to flame, contacting a nearby curtain, towel, or other combustible item. This too begins to smoke, then flame, and this cycle continues until everything is burning fiercely. With no operating smoke detectors available, people sleeping in their beds are not aware of the fire, and by the time they wake up, if they do, escape may be cut off by the flames, trapping them inside.

This is a very real and more than occasionally documented story. People think they will wake up if they smell smoke. Sometimes this is true, but a large part of the population won't because the chemicals in smoke can make us drowsier. Carbon monoxide causes the oxygen we breathe to not mix with our blood cells thus excluding the oxygen to our lungs, brain and heart. This can make us sleepier, confused and disoriented. Plastics and foams in our furnishings emit cyanide gas among other things when they burn. This is very similar to the chemical used in gas chambers during executions.

If there are no sprinklers in the home to extinguish the fire before it consumes everything and everyone, we must rely and bet our families lives on the successful operation and early notification that comes from having working smoke detectors. And not only the earliest possible notification, but everyone who hears the alarm must react correctly and quickly. If you hear the alarm, no matter what time of day, where you are in the house, or what you are doing, GET OUT! Time is not on your side, especially in the middle of the night when we are groggy and disoriented.

Okay, so now that we understand we need smoke detectors in our homes, so what kind should we get? There are several to choose from, and depending on the features, vary widely in price. When buying a detector the first thing to look for is the Underwriter Laboratories (UL) label. This means the product has been tested and certified by this national recognized testing agency. There are some cheaper imported products on the market that are not UL tested and approved, so read the box.

The next choice is ionization or photoelectric. Photoelectric detectors have a beam of light inside the sensing chamber that detects the particles of the smoke and activates the alarm. These are the most

City Codes

Dale Simpson

prevalent because they are the cheapest. Ionization detectors have an air quality-sensing device in the chamber, which detects the chemicals in the smoke. Ionization detectors are more expensive, but provide better protection. There can be a significant difference in time between the two detectors sensing what they are designed to find. There are combination detectors that employ both sensing systems, providing the best protection. As fire more than doubles in size every minute it is not extinguished, again the earliest warning we provide our loved ones is important.

Detectors are powered by two different means. Either by battery only, or wired directly into the building electrical system. Some of the electrical powered detectors also have a battery as a back-up power supply during electrical outages. An electrician will be needed to install the necessary wiring if you opt for this type of smoke detector.

There are other features you can pick and choose from, small lights that come on when the detector is activated to show escape paths, dual purpose units with carbon monoxide detectors built into them, flashing and vibrating detectors for hearing impaired individuals, and many others. Remember to match the detector with your situation for the best protection.

The next consideration is where to install them. The code calls for detectors on every level of the home, outside all sleeping areas, and newly constructed living occupancies require them inside every room used for sleeping. For safety, detectors should also be installed in these areas in existing structures. For example, a three bedroom home with a basement, and a single hallway serves all three bedrooms, would need at least five detectors for adequate protection: one for each bedroom, one in the hallway outside the bedrooms, and one at ceiling level in the basement near the stairs to the first floor.

Develop an escape plan for your entire family with two ways out of every room, and a meeting place outside for accountability. Practice this plan using the smoke detector to start the evacuation. This familiarizes every one with the sound the detector makes when in alarm mode.

Finally, the most important regarding detectors are their maintenance. Change the batteries twice a year, usually when you change your clocks. Test the smoke detector once a month. Don't take out the battery for the television remote or any other item, even just for a few minutes. Vacuum the dust around it occasionally, and remember, all smoke detectors, electric or battery must be replaced every 10 years. The sensing chambers get dirt, grease and other contaminants in them over the course of time, affecting performance.

Dale Simpson is the former Fire Marshal for the City of Springfield. He can be reached at dale@springfieldbusinessjournal.com.

HVAC ... crisis averted?

The United States Department of Energy (DOE) has been working on standards to mandate increased efficiency in non-weatherized and mobile home gas furnaces for the past several years. Those efficiency standards were set to take effect mid-2013, until Jan. 11 when the DOE agreed to withdraw the standards in settlement of a lawsuit challenging the standards.



The term “non-weatherized furnace” means a furnace designed to be placed indoors. Therefore these standards would have ramifications for the systems that most of us rely on to keep our homes warm in the winter. The standards have a tiered applicability based on the region of the U.S. where the furnace would be installed—90 percent efficiency is the re-

“While it seems that the efficiency standards would have had a substantial impact on residential contractors in the central Illinois area, according to Tom Cappellin, Senior Mechanical Engineer with E.L. Pruitt Co., many of the HVAC systems that E.L. Pruitt installs are already 90 percent efficiency units.

quirement for the Northern region and 80 percent for the Southeast and Southwest regions. Elizabeth Tate, Government Affairs Manager with the American Public Gas Association (APGA), confirmed that Illinois is in the Northern region for purposes of the standards.

While it seems that the efficiency standards would have had a substantial impact on residential contractors in the central Illinois area, according to Tom Cappellin, Senior Mechanical Engineer with E.L. Pruitt Co., many of the HVAC systems that E.L. Pruitt installs are already 90 percent efficiency units. In fact, E.L. Pruitt has not been keeping a close eye on the litigation surrounding the standards. Instead, said Cappellin, “more attention is paid to local code changes.”

The current efficiency standard for non-weatherized furnaces in Illinois is 80 percent. That number means that, for example, a furnace taking in 100 btu of fuel must currently put out 80 btu of heat. Cappellin indicated that there is a 10 to 15 percent premium on price of a 90 percent efficiency HVAC system over one with 80 percent efficiency—something like an one percent increase in cost per percentage point in efficiency. The money savings in gas, however, would take only a few years to realize.

Cappellin noted one physical difference that comes with the higher efficiency systems: the change from traditional chimney exhaust, to a small PVC pipe vent used for both intake and exhaust for high efficiency units. Other than price and PVC, any change in efficiency standards would probably go unnoticed by the homeowner.

The lawsuit challenging the efficiency standards was initiated by the APGA in December 2011. The APGA's Tate indicated that the settlement is pending approval by the U.S. Court of Appeals for

Going Green

Chad Kruse

the District of Columbia Circuit. She also indicated that there has been only one filing in response to the proposed settlement. If the court were to reject the settlement proposal, the standards are set to take effect on May 1, 2013.

Court approval of the settlement, on the other hand, would send DOE back to the drawing boards for promulgation of efficiency standards. According to the trade group, Air Conditioning Contractors of America (ACCA), if the settlement

was approved by the court, the pending standards would be rescinded and DOE would restart a rulemaking to set new standards. After the rulemaking process had been exercised, the ACCA predicts that it may be 2020 before new standards would go into effect.

So, yes, the question mark in the title is intentional. It seems as though those in need of a new HVAC system may enjoy the luxury of choice between standard and high efficiency for a few more years, but that lies in the court's hands. However, as Cappellin indicated, any change in standards may be for the books alone as most consumers are already choosing

high efficiency.

For more information on the APGA, see www.apga.org. The ACCA's Hot Air! Blog was updated several times over the course of my research on this topic. It can be found at www.acca.org/archives/industry-resources/government-affairs/hot-air. Finally, E.L. Pruitt Co. can be found on the web at www.elpruitt.com.

Chad Kruse is a freelance writer from Springfield. He can be reached at chad@springfieldbusinessjournal.com.

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(Ranked by Sales Volume
from Jan. 1 - Dec. 31, 2012)

	Company Name Address City, State, ZIP Code	Telephone (-) Fax (=)	Web Site (www.) E-Mail	Managing Partner(s) / Owner(s)	Number of Licensed Agents	Total Transactions	Sales Volume	% of Board	Year Established
1	The Real Estate Group, Inc. 3701 W. Wabash Ave. Springfield IL 62711	217-787-7000 217-787=7779	thegroup.com info@thegroup.com	Michael J. Buscher, Managing Broker 24 individual broker/owners	120	1,979	\$310,082,829	33.18%	1997
2	Re/Max Professionals 2475 W. Monroe St. Springfield IL 62704	217-787-7215 217-787=8957	viewspringfieldhomes.com	Allan R. Young, Managing Broker / Owner; Linda Young	93	1,902	\$276,037,108	29.54%	1986
3	Coldwell Banker Honig-Bell 3201 Old Jacksonville Road Springfield IL 62711	217-547-6655 217-547=6659	cbhonig-bell.com	Don Cave	45	413	\$60,595,613	6.48%	2000
4	Re/Max Results Plus, Inc. 1046 W. Morton Ave. Jacksonville IL 62650	217-245-9613 217-243=7183	remax.com	Michael D. Oldenettel, Managing Broker / Owner	10	292	\$32,421,693	3.47%	1996
5	Grady Realtors Inc. 1501 S. MacArthur Blvd. Springfield IL 62704	217-753-2121 217-726=2211	gradyrealtors.com sold@gradyrealtors.com	Patrick Grady Betty Grady	8	146	\$21,996,951	2.35%	1969
6	Charles E. Robbins Real Estate Inc. 2144 S. MacArthur Blvd. Springfield IL 62704	217-525-2112 217-525=2275	charlesrobbins.com res@charlesrobbins.com	Art Seppi, Managing Broker	20	124	\$17,498,021 ⁽¹⁾ (2)	1.87%	1962
7	Kennedy Real Estate LLC 400 W. Market, P.O. Box 764 Taylorville IL 62568	217-824-8888 217-824=5080	kennedyrealestatellc.com info@kennedyrealestatellc.com	Helen Kennedy, Managing Broker	13	166	\$17,173,824	1.84%	2011
8	Campo Realty, Inc. 610 Sixth St. Pawnee IL 62558	217-625-4663 217-625=4664	camporealty.com nick@camporealty.com	Nicholas Campo	11	144	\$17,103,343	1.83%	2001
9	Do Realty Services Inc. 729 S. Ninth St. Springfield IL 62703	217-391-3636 217-391=3666	dorealty.net reo@dorealty.net	Stephanie L. Do	3	317	\$16,309,830	1.75%	2002
10	Grojean Realty and Insurance 360 W. State, P.O. Box 697 Jacksonville IL 62651	217-245-4151 217-243=7573	grojeanagency.com grojean@grojeanagency.net	Charles Grojean Tom Grojean	9	132	\$14,931,100	1.60%	1947
11	Steve Hills, REALTORS 900 S. Main St. Jacksonville IL 62650	217-245-9589 217-245=4198	stevehillsrealtors.com hills@jinc.net	Dianne Steinberg	5	142	\$14,828,795	1.59%	1965
12	Wrightsmen-Musso, Ltd. 159 N. Springfield St. Virden IL 62690	217-965-4115 217-965=5021	wmlrealty.com tmusso@wrightsmenmusso.com	Dom M. Musso Todd M. Musso	16	185	\$14,604,602	1.56%	1940
13	Century 21 Real Estate Associates 2030 Timberbrook Springfield IL 62702	217-789-7200 217-789=2600	reahouses.com kgraham367@aol.com	Kevin Graham	21	91	\$12,548,263	1.34%	2004
14	Blane Real Estate Inc. 703 Old Salem Road Petersburg IL 62675	217-652-7521 217-632=3813	blaneinpetersburgil.com homes@blaneinpetersburgil.com	Judy Blane-Olesen Peter Olesen	3	72	\$10,154,600	1.09%	1950
15	Curvey Real Estate, Inc. 611 Springfield Road, P. O. Box 677 Taylorville IL 62568	217-824-4996 217-287=2111	curveyrealestate.com curvey@ciitech.com	Bernard A. Curvey, Owner/Broker Joe Curvey, Managing Broker	11	82	\$8,258,000	0.88%	1985
16	The Real Estate Firm Inc. 1340 S. State St. Springfield IL 62704	217-547-5500 217-522=5906	dennislpolk@gmail.com	Dennis L. Polk	19	67	\$7,560,460	0.81%	1989
17	Snelling-Chevalier Real Estate Inc. 621 Seventh St. Pawnee IL 62558	217-625-2411 217-625=7513	snelling-chevalier.com gail@family-net.net	Gail Chevalier Zini	6	65	\$7,213,116	0.77%	1986
18	Craggs REALTORS, Inc. 904 Springfield Road, PO Box 109 Taylorville IL 62568	217-824-8131 217-824=9315	craggsrealtors.com skcraggs@aol.com	Stephen B. Craggs	7	84	\$5,604,270	0.60%	1971
19	Advantage Realty 933 South Grand Ave. West Springfield IL 62704	217-528-1000 217-528=1026	528-1000.com advantagerealty1@hotmail.com	Marty Benoit	10	47	\$4,644,000	0.50%	1987
20	Prudential Classic Properties 230 W. College Jacksonville IL 62650	217-243-0500 217-243=1580	pruclassicproperties.com jp@jamespate.com	James D. Pate	6	46	\$4,110,550	0.44%	2004

Sources: The real estate agencies; Illinois Association of Realtors website (<http://www.illinoisrealtors.org/>), MLS Firm Market Share Report. (1) - does not include commercial division. (2) - does not include properties solely owned and sold through the developer. *Out of Town Firm (agents having reciprocal agreements in this area) - 154 total transactions / \$18,102,133 sales volume / 1.94% of Board.

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Housing market picking up momentum

Economic aftershocks shake construction industry

By Job Conger,
Correspondent

As winter appears on the verge of surrender to spring and the new season of real estate marketing throughout central Illinois, real estate agencies are poised to make the most of changes, innovations and lessons learned over the past 10 years.

The thawing of the formerly frozen marketplace is in part to changes which permit more efficient use of time, technology and resources, as attested to by local realtors.

"When the Internet started, everybody ran to have a web page, a static advertising presence," Mike Buscher, managing broker at The Real Estate Group, said. "Today, it's much more of an interactive tool."

Buscher explained that the most advanced technologies are so accessible via the Internet, it's hard to offer tools and features these days that are unique to a particular firm or association. Among the more popular in recent years are seller reports, which, in demonstrating a firm's success, attract new properties to the realtor and into the market.

Another recent trend is the degree of anonymity an interested party has in accessing property information. "As a consumer, you can log into our website, set up a shopping cart and include nothing but your first name," Buscher said. "Oth-

er websites require more personal information including first and last names.

"Our listings are shared at our website, and so are all the other MLS listings. We want people to know what's out

“Consumers in today's world don't care whose listing it is as a general rule.”

*Mike Buscher, managing broker at
The Real Estate Group*

there. Consumers in today's world don't care whose listing it is as a general rule. If you're driving around and see a company's name on the 'For Sale' sign, some will call the realtor at that time," he said.

Another change is the reduction in time spent meeting with customers at the office or property site. "We used to spend face-to-face time with customers, drive them around to look at houses," Buscher said. During personal contact, including driving to homes of interest, there was time to "qualify" buyers, a term he dislikes today.

"I prefer the term 'educated.' As shoppers learn details from the Internet, most qualify themselves. From mortgage calculating features, most have a good idea of what they can afford before contacting a realtor," he said.

Buscher continued: "We will sometimes meet someone at a particular home to show it. By that time, the customer knows, from dealing with the finance process, that they are not going to be in-

terested in a property that is not a realistic option."

Sometimes The Real Estate Group has sold houses to customers who have never set foot in them. "Such buyers may be transferring to Springfield for a job," Buscher said. "They don't expect to live in the property long, they are looking at price and then they're looking at resale value. We meet them to show them what they already know. The real selling part kicks in when we show such a customer the house close to the end of the selection process."

Ron Duff, broker, manager, consultant for Re/Max Professionals, said that "the most expansive change has been in mobile technology."

"There are so many mobile devices that allow people to get information about properties that buyers are extremely well informed before they contact a realtor."

Duff is quick to note, however, that the process of closing that transaction has become much more complex.

“Government regulations regarding environmental issues, radon gas, paint, home inspections are much more a part of the transaction.”

*Ron Duff, broker, manager,
consultant for Re/Max Professionals*

"Government regulations regarding environmental issues, radon gas, paint, home inspections are much more a part

of the transaction," Duff said. "It used to be that the buying public simply wanted the Realtor to find a house. Today buyers want and need the protection of someone working on their behalf, to navigate them through the total transaction."

As home buying becomes more complex, the need for a realtor becomes more apparent, especially since the market downturn in the fall of 2008.

"In spring of 2009, there came huge adjustments in market values," Duff said. "That's a totally different subject. The issue of navigating foreclosure sales has become critical. The change called 'selling short,' that relieved the seller from owing taxes on property value in excess of the revised market value, has been a major change."

"It makes it easier to sell the house and relieves the holding bank of the burden of keeping a house on their inventory of unsold property. It saves a lot of time. There is a designation for Realtors specializing in foreclosures and short sales. Re/Max has a special division for those types of sales. The majority of our brokers are rated in those specialties," Duff said, adding other ratings specialties include e-sales (Internet sales) and environmentally friendly 'green sales.'"

Don Cave, managing broker at Coldwell Banker Honig-Bell and the 2013 president of the Capital Area Association of Realtors, said consumer confidence is a key component of a recovering housing market.

*Housing Market,
Continued on Page 27*



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personality profile •

A career with real (estate) passion

By Eric Woods, Correspondent

Springfield –

What is your favorite part about living in Springfield? Tarvin loves that there are so many familiar faces in Springfield. She is also happy that the cost of living in the city is affordable compared to other parts of the country. “That helps keep the dream of home ownership alive in Springfield,” she said.

What is the worst part about living in Springfield? “We need a Chic-Fil-A here,” said Tarvin.

The biggest issue Springfield currently faces is...? “There is a lack of new incoming businesses and jobs,” said Tarvin, who believes that new businesses would not only create more jobs but draw people into the community which in turn would create a stronger real estate market.

Employment –

“When I was 10, I wanted to be... an anesthesiologist or a news anchor.”

First job? As a senior in high school, Tarvin joined the co-op program and

worked as an office assistant at Ball Charter Elementary School.

Worst job? Tarvin has only had three jobs and has enjoyed them all.

Current job and responsibilities? Tarvin has been with The Real Estate Group for five years and specializes in the buying or selling of residential real estate in Springfield and the surrounding areas. “I show houses, negotiate contracts, write offers, and list and price houses,” she said. “We serve as a guide to people and offer advice.” Business has been good for Tarvin lately, and it looks to speed up more as spring approaches. She has been happy to have stayed busy even during the colder off-months.

Philosophical –

What do you want to know about

the future? “I would love to know how long the interest rates will stay as low as they continually are,” said Tarvin.

How do you envision your life in 10 years? Tarvin’s main goal is to be happy. As for her career, she hopes to see more growth in her business and eventually have her own real estate team.

Krystal Tarvin

Title: Realtor, The Real Estate Group
Address: 3701 W. Wabash Ave.,
Springfield, Ill., 62711
Telephone: (217) 787-7000
E-mail: ktarvin@thegroup.com

Born: Oct. 17, 1984; Decatur, Ill.
Education: GRI designation, broker’s license
Family: Not married, no kids

Favorites –
Hobby: Exercise
Movie: The Notebook
Restaurant: Baker’s Square
Sports team: Chicago Bears

Tidbits –
Wants to travel the world
Played the violin, cello, and piano as a child

Something you learned early in life and still use? “Always believe in yourself, because if you don’t, nobody will,” said Tarvin.

Advice –

Advice for someone seeking a career in your field? “Real estate is a 24/7 job, and you must be willing to work every day, including nights, weekends, or whenever your clients need you,” said Tarvin. Patience is another key to having success in the real estate industry, according to Tarvin. “This is the most expensive purchase in someone’s life. They often do not want to feel rushed.”

Who was your biggest influence? It was Tarvin’s mother who told her to take a real estate class, and she immediately fell in love with it and knew that was what she wanted to do. “My mom is the most special person I will ever know,” she said. “I look up to her more and more every day.”

Achievements –

As a kid? Tarvin was a very active child, playing three instruments, acting in plays, and taking dance lessons.

As an adult? Tarvin is proud to have started her real estate career with a successful first five years. “I am excited to see what the future holds,” she said.

Future –

Upcoming job news? “Spring and warmer weather is approaching, which means there will be more people in the market to buy or sell,” said Tarvin. “There are also grants available, including one for veterans and an additional one coming out in March.”

Any vacation plans? Tarvin has nothing planned in 2013 in order to focus on the growth of her career.

I want to retire when I’m ... (age)? “I cannot imagine ever wanting to retire,” said Tarvin. “Real estate has not only become what I love to do, but it is also a part of who I am.”



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

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• residential real estate 2013

Continued from Page 25, Housing Market

"Interest rates have been on a decline since 2008," Cave said. "But confidence has been critical and slow returning to the market. From a broker's standpoint, there are more challenges, but the numbers are looking better in the last three to six months."

Cave explained since the state law license law re-write, agents coming into the business have been required to get additional education prior to getting their license and more continuing education is required. Agents had to become brokers and brokers had to move up to managing brokers.

"Putting the additional requirements against the slow market, the transition for existing agents was a challenge," Cave

firm gets calls from potential customers all over the country who would not have even known about us 10 years ago," Olesen said.

This has opened up channels to customers wanting to live in a small community on "the road less traveled."

"We also appreciate the value from the Multiple Listing Service," Olesen said. "When our listing appears there, the whole world sees it. Before the recession there were very few repossessions on the market. Today there are a handful. Values have been pretty steady throughout."

Jon K. Broadbooks, director of communications for the Illinois Association of Realtors said being "Web savvy" has become a necessity for realtors.

The 41,000-member association educates members and non-members and

Web innovations slated to bloom in spring

Arriving with spring and blossoming expectations for a better real estate sales season are two new marketing innovations from outside the core brokerage sector.

The "Virtual Tour of Homes," slated for launch in March by Springfield Area Home Builders Association (SAHBA) will focus on new construction exclusively.

"We want to showcase our builders," said Lee-Ann Burgener, SAHBA executive officer. "With the economic situation, they aren't building as many spec homes as they used to (before 2008), so the annual new home tour event we held that invited people to visit new spec homes face to face has been discontinued."

Burgener said that previously, builders did not list new homes until they were completed.

"Our site will show pictures of homes during the construction," Burgener said. "The web site will allow interested customers to guide the finishing process of a home that appeals, to specify specific details (wood finishes, room colors, countertops and other amenities) that can be built in rather than modified after completion."

"Others may find a home that they like, but they may want it modified or built in a different location, perhaps at a later date," she said, adding that builders will pay a fee for each home, and their presence will be updated monthly, with complete site information, a mortgage calculator and estimated completion time.

Slated for introduction to the Springfield market after May 1 is LRS CurbAppeal from Levi, Ray & Shoup, a "soup to nuts" package available by monthly subscription.

Jeff Enlow, LRS Web Solutions Manager, said LRS CurbAppeal's variety of templates and emphasis on user-friendly communications were key elements in design and beta testing which began in October 2012.

"The major advantage is that all the elements of a visually appealing web presence can be assembled and published to the Web in a matter of days," Enlow said. "It offers maximum communication and search functionality between real estate company, buyer and seller."

Enlow indicated a "full-blown" roll-out of iPhone app for LRS CurbAppeal is planned during the Illinois Association of Realtors convention on May 8-9 in Collinsville.

said. "It reduced the rate of new sales people coming in."

Cave believes the changes in numbers of licensed agents at given companies from year to year is simply the nature of the beast. "Anytime you see a decline in the market you see fewer real estate companies," he said. "Springfield did not see a huge bubble burst the way it did in other parts of the country."

Cave is optimistic about the new year. "Early into 2013, I am receiving more calls from people interested in getting into the business," he said. "We'll probably see new companies," Cave said. "Our membership in Capital Area Association of Realtors is increasing. We had more than 700 in 2008/09, and now we're down to about 500, 525. Our membership numbers are growing. The supply and demand are leveling out. We have about a five-month supply of homes on the market."

Pete Olesen is broker and owner with Blane Real Estate, Inc., the only real estate business in Petersburg, whose firms deals mostly with real estate in Menard and Sangamon counties.

"Our part of the marketplace has been more stable than the national and Springfield," Olesen said. Even so, Blane's website is optimized for modern market shoppers with mobile devices. "People don't shop for houses on Sundays any more," Olesen said. "They shop in their pajamas at home."

With the Internet and mobile technology have come surprises. "The realty

helps those who aspire to become brokers and realtors to achieve that goal.

"You can get a real estate license in Illinois and not be a realtor, but the majority of brokers in Illinois are realtors," Broadbooks said. A growing requirement for regular, ongoing education for all brokers has come into play in recent years, and he indicated "Web savvy" is essential; not optional.

Broadbooks cites his association's planned series of webinars which will bring students all over Illinois with instructors in a virtual classroom.

"Online training is more popular than ever because it allows everyone to make the most efficient use of valuable time," Broadbooks said. "Real estate is not static. In February 2012, in Illinois, the median price of a house was \$118,000. The December 2012, the median price was \$131,000. The sales numbers were robust throughout 2012."

The realtors' positive outlook does carry the caveat that their optimistic "bubble" may burst if other factors, including pension reform, job retention and growth numbers fall short of expectations. All agree that reforms in real estate sales introduced in 2009 provide a firmer foundation for optimism this year and in the years to come.

Job Conger is a freelance writer from Springfield. He can be reached at job@springfieldbusinessjournal.com



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residential real estate 2013 • Hedging on dredging?

Should Lake Springfield be dredged again after 25 years?

By Gabe House,
Correspondent

Dredging Lake Springfield could be a component in preserving, conserving and expanding the community's water resources.

Lake Springfield was last dredged in a three-year, \$8 million project that spanned from 1987-1990 in which more than 3 million cubic yards of sediment were removed from the upper arms of the lake near the entrances of Sugar and Lick Creeks. The costly undertaking yielded 652 million gallons of lost water capacity according to City Water Light & Power (CWLP) materials on the history of Lake Springfield.

652 million gallons is obviously a great amount of water, but when one considers the lake's capacity in 1985 was tabbed at 17 billion gallons (roughly 13 less than when the lake was built in 1935), it seems like little more than a drop in the bucket.

Robert Gordon is adamant that Lake Springfield needs to be dredged. Gordon, sole owner of the Lake Springfield Marina and developer of the Water's Edge townhomes, has quite a vested interest in the wellbeing of the lake. He believes, without dredging, a number of areas in Lake Springfield will be impassable due to low water levels within a matter of years.

"The lake is getting low, and it's time to do something about it," Gordon said. "It takes a while for these things to get going, and in 10 years it will be too late."

"Dredging is a maintenance issue; it's not to reclaim large amounts of water," explained Ted Meckes, the water division manager for CWLP. "Bob Gordon and cove owners ... want to be able to boat. Sure, that's a great thing for Lake Springfield but for water, the value of water, that's not the alternative. For \$8 million that's pretty expensive to say, 'Hey, you can get your boat in here.'"

Of course, the cost is dependent upon the method of dredging as well. Meckes said they used hydraulic dredging in the 80s, a method where a boat is actually placed on the water, and a large cutting head effectively churns and vacuums the excess silt through a temporary pipeline to a predetermined location. Meckes said this method typically costs from \$9 to \$15 per cubic yard of removal.

An alternative is mechanical dredging whereby a backhoe or drag lines are utilized to bring up the excess silt and sedimentation. This is a far more expensive process because the soil must then be hauled somewhere.

Meckes did say that private individuals are welcome to dredge at their own expense, but it can be a trying situation. Cost aside, the cove owner wishing to dredge would need approval from the Environmental Protection Agency on the process to be used and where the excess soil would be placed.

"You can't just throw it back in the lake or let it roll back in from the shoreline," Meckes said. "(But) we allow people to dredge, we have allowed someone to do that and we probably would again, but they would have to have their ducks in a row."

"It's happened exactly once in my 26 years with CWLP," Meckes further offered.

Gordon, though, isn't embarking on

a fund-raising campaign through private individuals for his dredging effort. He believes the funds could be found elsewhere.

"We'll be looking for the city to fund it, because I don't know individuals that could put up the money to do it," Gordon said. "We're saying (the city) should be spending \$2 to 3 million a year to maintain the lake. There's money out there for stuff like this."

Gordon said he has looked at sedimentation reports from CWLP that identify nearly 60 coves that could benefit from dredging.

Looked at as a massive project, Gordon agrees the cost would be staggering if approached with a "get it done now" mentality. Instead, Gordon proposes, the dredging could be spaced out over a period of years to cut down on costs.

"They budget money to deal with Hunter Lake every year," Gordon said, re-



Lake Springfield

ferring to the proposal of a second lake that has been bandied about by CWLP since 1965. "It's time to give it up, and start doing something else. Dredging is a pretty inexpensive option compared to that."

As Meckes alluded to – and Gordon agrees – dredging would not be a viable option as far as an increase in water capacity. This is where the discussion of Hunter Lake becomes increasingly important. Gordon sees it as a financial burden, and its construction has some rather staunch opposition.

The Sangamon Valley Sierra Club is one such group that vehemently believes Hunter Lake, also known as Lake 2, would be a mistake.

"We've always said the research shows that a second lake is not necessary and not desirable," said Wes King, the chair of the Sangamon Valley Sierra Club. "We've been advocating that instead we focus on making sure Lake 1 is sustainable and using all property for Lake 2 to create some sort of open space, a nature preserve or maybe even a state park."

"All that property slated for a second lake could be something really positive. It could be a driver for this community."

Meckes agreed that building a lake is obviously no small undertaking and can have massive impacts, environmentally or otherwise. That being said, water capacity is of the utmost importance for CWLP and Springfield's future.

To compound matters, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and EPA recently told CWLP to actively look at alternatives and prove said alternatives would not provide adequate water before moving forward with Hunter Lake.

"We're looking at gravel pits near Buckhart and other wells," Meckes said. "Layne Hydro is performing a study for us. If it says we can get our daily demand during a drought without affecting (sur-

Continued on Next Page

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• residential real estate 2013

Continued from Previous Page

rounding community) wells, great. If we start affecting them, though, we won't be able to do that."

Meckes said he hoped the report by Layne Hydro would be completed in May and the results could go a long way in dictating the future of Hunter Lake. If Springfield could obtain 100 million gallons of water a day from other water sources, it's possible they'd sell the land set aside for Hunter Lake. Less capacity than that, however, could cause problems in the future, particularly in the case of a drought such as the one Springfield recently encountered.

"It's a difficult decision," Meckes said. "A 100-year drought seems to happen every 20 years. We don't want to say, let's go with this option and then in year seven we get a drought, and in year eight we're on water restrictions and the plant shuts down because we don't have enough water."

"What if Springfield continues to grow and we need 20 million (gallons daily). We want to know definitely that it will work and it will work great. We have to let the science tell us."

Regardless of an additional water source in the future, King stressed the need for water conservation in the present.

"We also think, in relation to that, we should be focusing more on how we can lower our water needs through conservation methods," King said. "Instead of saying let's just use water and build another lake, we need to build a more comprehensive approach."

Gordon said he has talked to both opponents and proponents of Hunter Lake.

He's talked to commercial leaseholders as well as homeowners on the lake. One thing everyone agrees on, he said, was the need to keep Lake Springfield viable so that people can and will continue to use it.

"It's clearly not an and/or situation; this has to be done," Gordon said. "Everyone I've spoken to think this is a great idea. There's just the caveat that it cannot be confused with a second water source."

Going hand-in-hand with secondary water sources and low water levels, one concern Meckes voiced was that the idea of dredging and, more specifically, Hunter Lake, always gains more prominence with the public in times of drought. And the wrong time to begin dredging, Meckes said, is when the water level is lower than its norm.

"If Bob (Gordon) wants to put a dredge on there, what he's going to be able to dredge now isn't what he'll be able to dredge at full pool," Meckes said. "The dredge won't float, and you need ample water to get that cutting head down there to suck that silt out."

As to whether or not Gordon has to wait to get his dredging project off the ground – or in the water, as the case may be – he strongly believes any amount of momentum at the moment is needed.

"Regardless of Hunter Lake, we've spent all sorts of money," Gordon said in reference to the city. "They found money to build a new water treatment plant, and now we need to spend some money making sure the water coming in is clean and the erosion is slowed down."

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

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1 p.m.: Ribbon Cutting

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BUSINESS CONNECTIONS TO HIGHLIGHT NEW BUY-LOCAL INITIATIVE

By Amanda Reavy Simhauser,
Correspondent

Source Sangamon Challenge – a new twist on the importance of buying local – will be rolled out at the 2013 edition of Business Connections on March 20 at the Prairie Capital Convention Center in Springfield.

The Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce's annual trade show will introduce the Source Sangamon Challenge, an initiative created by the Chamber's Quantum Growth Partnership (Q5) to encourage local

\$154 million in extra GDP (gross domestic product), \$48 million in additional payroll wages and over 1,000 new jobs," said John Parrish, research manager for The Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce.

He notes that these figures only focus on the business-to-business sphere and do not consider the potential impacts of a business-to-consumer buy-local initiative.

Source Sangamon evolved from a study performed by Market Street Services, an Atlanta, Ga.-based community, economic

region supplier," he said.

Source Sangamon aims to curb these leakages and increase local industrial outputs and jobs.

"When people talk about buy-local activities, they often only think in terms of retail and service sales," Swenson said. "What I try to help people understand is a much more vibrant and valuable component of sales leakage has to do with business-to-business losses – not just businesses buying desks from local distributors but also services, accounting, architecture."

Swenson's analysis found that Sangamon industries are importing about 60 percent of their required production inputs, which represents \$3.6 billion.

"That \$3.6 (billion) can be broken down into those types of commodities that are already produced here regionally. We're calling these disconnects," Parrish said. "If businesses are purchasing goods or services from outside the area when they could be buying it here already, perhaps they just don't know of this other supplier. There's just some sort of disconnect going on."

Such disconnects that exist in Sangamon County include real estate and related services, insurance agencies and brokerages, securities and investments, management and consulting services and wholesale distribution services.

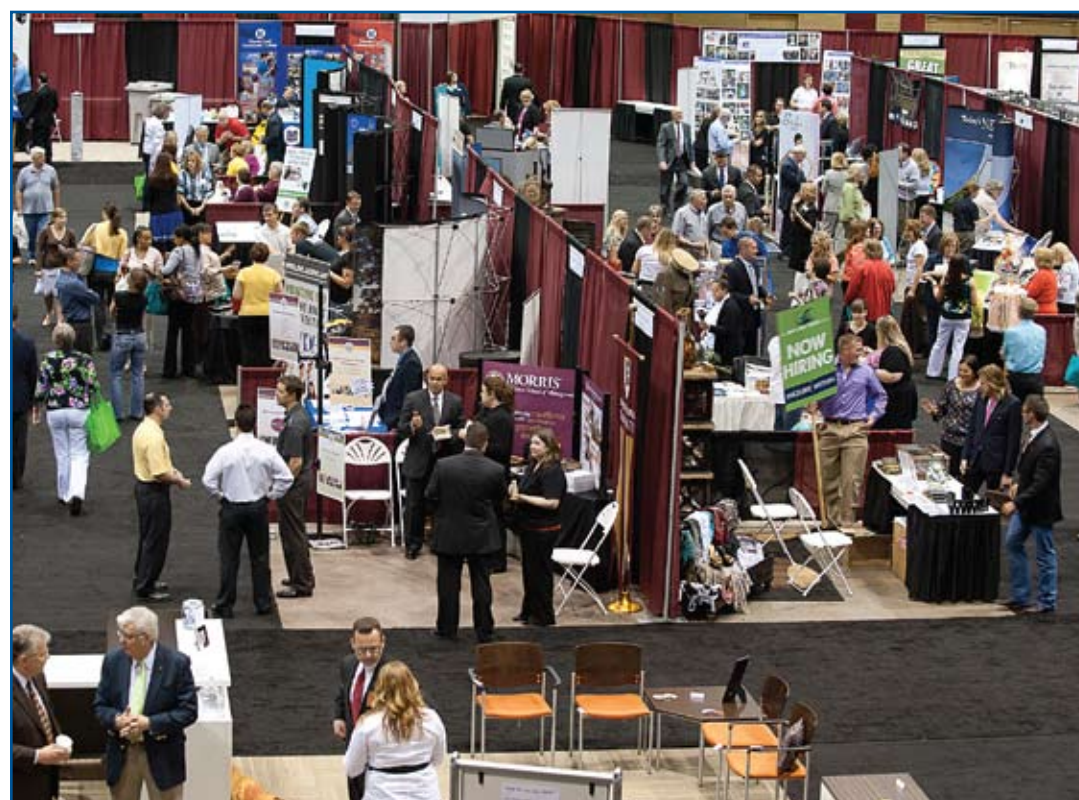
At Business Connections, The Chamber will try to bring businesses and suppliers together to decrease the amount of disconnects that are happening in the Springfield area.

"We'll try to kind of play like a dating service - I looked at my books, here's what I'm buying outside the area. Who here can sell that to me? So, we'll try to play that match-making role," Parrish said.

Swenson will present his study during Business Connections' VIP Client Lunch, an invitation-only luncheon for exhibitors and their clients. During the event, Parrish will also present a brief workshop on how to use the RFP Center on the Chamber's website to exchange products and services. The RFP Center is found at http://www.gsc.org/membership/Member_RFP_Center.aspx.

"Also, we have the list of top imports for the area. We will be mapping those goods and services that are being imported to the categories on our membership directory," Parrish said.

Participating businesses will be asked to



2012 Business Connections

businesses to purchase more of the goods and services they rely on within Sangamon County.

David Earhart, director of marketing and membership for The Chamber, said Business Connections is a great platform for launching the Source Sangamon Challenge.

"Over the years, this has been our premier event for business-to-business marketing and networking, so it's a perfect fit," Earhart said.

About 100 businesses are expected to participate and showcase their products and services, share ideas, develop new relationships and increase exposure. Businesses will also have an opportunity to learn about, sign up and commit to the Source Sangamon Challenge, which asks participants to identify and switch to a local supplier for at least one item they regularly buy from sources outside of the county.

"If our businesses shifted 5 percent of the things they're purchasing out of the area to those suppliers and service providers here in Sangamon County, it would amount to

and workforce development consulting firm hired by The Chamber and Q5 Partnership to analyze the region's state and help create a new economic development strategy, Earhart said.

"They recommended this type of business-to-business buy-local initiative, so we scanned what other communities did, what elements were involved in their initiatives and then we commissioned an analysis that would measure the potential economic impact of a similar program here in Springfield," Parrish said.

David Swenson, an economist at Iowa State University, conducted this economic impact analysis for the Springfield area. He used an economic impact model for Sangamon County to examine the goods and services imported by local businesses and compared those to the industries that are available locally. Swenson then used this data to identify sales "leakage."

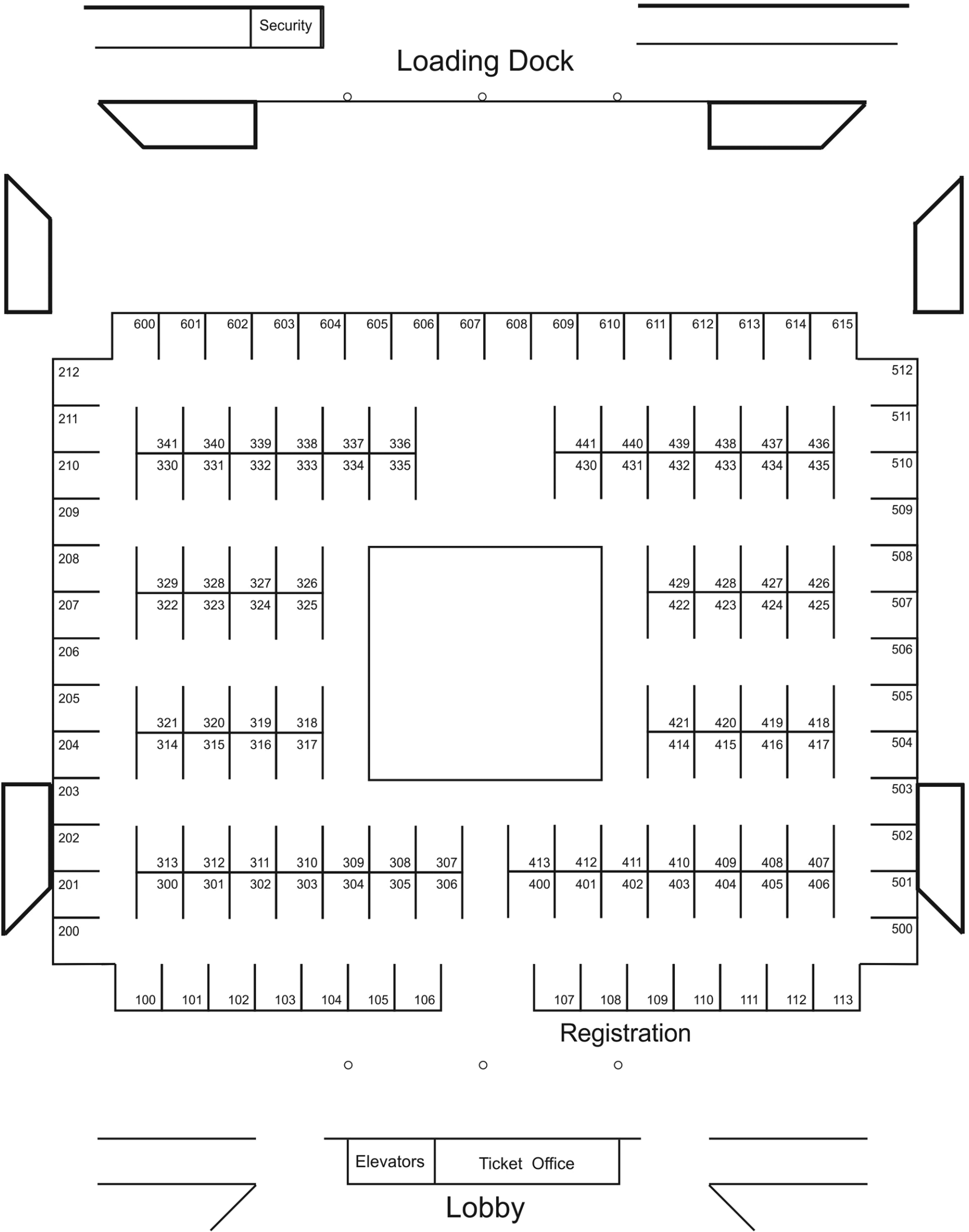
"Leakage is any time you buy something from outside of your region that perfectly well could have been purchased from an in-

**Business Connections Preview,
Continued on Page 34**

SHOP LOCAL.



business connections preview 2013 •



EXHIBITORS

The following is a listing of exhibitors participating in 2013 Business Connections as available on Monday, Feb. 25th (prior to publication). Booths are still available. For more information, contact Julie Donohue at (217) 525-1173.

of
booths Company Name

1	Advanced Dental Care of Springfield
1	Affordable Shred
1	Allied Waste Services of Sangamon County
1	American Cancer Society
1	Amtrak
1	Benedictine University at Springfield
2	Best Expo
1	CDS Office Technology
1	CEFCU
1	Celebrations Catering by County Market
1	Central Illinois Community Blood Center
1	Central Illinois Event Catering
1	Central Illinois Security
1	Chiropractors of Springfield
1	Cintas
1	City, Water, Light & Power
1	Color World of Printing
1	Comcast Business Class
1	Commercial Telephone System
4	County Market
1	Delta Dental of Illinois
4	Express Employment Professionals
1	FitClub
2	Fox 55
4	GFI Digital
1	Gone for Good
1	Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce
2	Harold O'Shea Builders
2	Heart Technologies
1	Illini Supply, Inc.
1	Illinois College
1	Illinois Lottery
1	Illinois WorkNet

of
booths Company Name

1	ITT Technical Institute
1	Johnson Development Company
1	Knight's Action Park & Caribbean Water Adventure
2	Land of Lincoln Goodwill Industries, Inc.
1	Laser Innovations
1	Lincoln Land Community College
1	MCL Restaurant & Bakery
1	Micropower
4	Mid-West Family Broadcasting
1	Midwest Records
1	Morris Graduate School of Management
1	NAI True - Commercial Real Estate Services, Worldwide
4	Neuhoff Media Springfield
1	Orkin Pest Control
1	Physicians Choice Wellness
1	Prairie Dental Group
1	Prospectors
1	Prudential
1	Qdoba
1	ServiceMaster By Evans
1	SPARC
1	Spinner Plastics
1	Springfield Airport Authority
1	Springfield Area Home Builders
1	Springfield Health Check
1	Springfield Jr. Blues
5	Springfield Mass Transit District
2	State Journal Register
1	style911
1	Terry Farmer Photography
1	Thirdwave Data/Com, Inc.
1	Westside Pain Clinic
2	WICS

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business connections preview 2013 •

**Continued from Page 30 ,
Business Connections Preview**

report back to the Chamber after they have identified and switched to a service or material provider.

Kayla Edwards, director of client services at Express Employment Professionals, a gold sponsor of this year's Business Connections, said she looks forward to Source Sangamon's introduction.

"Anything we can do as a community to come together and promote the economic growth of Springfield and Sangamon County is a good activity," Edwards said. "It's good to remind businesses that many products and services bought outside of Sangamon County can be purchased here without sacrificing quality."

The Springfield chamber's new Source Sangamon Challenge joins other business-to-business buy-local initiatives taking shape across the country.

Before deciding to unveil the challenge at this year's Business Connections, The Chamber looked at other communities that introduced similar programs.

In 2009, the Greater Omaha Chamber in Omaha, Neb. introduced a "Say Yes, Buy O!" campaign.

The Greater Des Moines Partnership then followed suit with its "Buy into the Circle" effort, said Swenson. Swenson analyzed the economic impact of a buy-local campaign targeted at business expenditures for both Des Moines and later the Springfield area.

"Buy into the Circle" evolved after Des Moines businesses expressed concern about losing business to companies outside of the region, Swenson said. Like Source Sangamon, "Buy into the Circle" asks local businesses to shift 5 percent of their purchases made outside the area to the local econo-

BUSINESS CONNECTIONS MARKS SILVER ANNIVERSARY

Sponsors of this year's Business Connections say the 25th annual trade show will provide valuable opportunities to build and renew lasting business relationships.

"It's certainly a branding opportunity and more importantly, it's an opportunity to meet new business contacts in more of an informal, fun environment and also reacquaint with past contacts," Kayla Edwards, director of client services at Express Employment Professionals, said.

Express Employment Professionals, a longtime exhibitor, is a gold sponsor.

"We do want to support Sangamon County, and The Chamber of Commerce is giving us the opportunity to be a good corporate citizen," Edwards said of the event.

The community partnership component of Business Connections is what prompted County Market to sign on for the first time as this year's presenting sponsor.

"Springfield is a great town for us to do business in. This is a way for us to get to know some of our customers," said Gerry Kettler, director of consumer affairs for County Market's parent company, Niemann Foods, Inc. "We're an associate-owned company, so it's a good fit for us."

This year's event on March 20 at the Prairie Capital Convention Center will once again kick off with the popular Speed Networking program at 9 a.m. Exhibitors are divided among tables of ten and each person at the table has an opportunity to make a two-minute presentation, Julie Donohue, event manager for The Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce, said.

Once everyone at the table has presented their business, product or service, they get up and move tables.

"It's a great opportunity to get in front of a lot of people in a short amount of time and exchange contact information," said David Earhart, director of marketing and membership for The Chamber.

Another popular event, the VIP Client Lunch, is returning. This complimentary, invitation-only luncheon is for exhibitors and their contacts from 11:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.

"The VIP Lunch gives us a chance to reacquaint with past clients but also include current clients. It's a nice opportunity to nurture our relationships with them," Edwards said.

After a ribbon-cutting ceremony at 12:50 p.m., the event's show floor will be open to the general public from 1 to 7 p.m.

Edwards said the ability to promote services and programs to a diverse audience is a big plus for local businesses. Express Employment Professionals, for example, will use the event to promote its Refresh Leadership Live 2013 event on April 17.

"There's a good array of businesses represented," Edwards said. "It's a great way to spread your message."

The event will conclude with a Business After Hours event from 5 to 7 p.m.

By Amanda Reavy Simhauser, Correspondent

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The Greater Des Moines Partnership reports that the "Buy into the Circle" campaign has brought nearly \$90 million back to the local economy, according to the campaign's website, www.buyintotheircle.com.

Swenson said his research does not provide a baseline for measuring the success of such efforts but instead shows the potential gains.

Parrish said it's too soon to say if Source Sangamon will develop into a long-term economic development strategy for the Springfield area. The Chamber will monitor its progress and go from there, he said.

Swenson said the success of Source Sangamon, like the Omaha and Des Moines campaigns, will depend on the amount of engagement from business leaders.

"This is an opportunity for business leadership. This doesn't work unless businesses develop the procedures and practices for sharing information and motivating people to consider a local purchase, even if it's more marginally expensive, because it's part of enriching the community's economic infrastructure," he said. "You have to have your business leadership carry this down the road."

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



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Every organization has its “issues.” Maybe the boss is breaking his own policies, a co-worker’s performance is below standard or someone isn’t keeping commitments. Whatever the issues are, sometimes they go unresolved or last longer than they should because of someone’s fear of having a crucial conversation that will bring about the needed change.



But as difficult as crucial conversations are, nothing changes without them.

The book indicates that when it comes to having crucial conversations, our DNA works against us. Our adrenalin levels spike, robbing the reasoning section of the brain. So, when we need our rational thinking lobes the most, our body says, "Not so fast – I'm getting ready for

Tom Fitch

The other challenge is that crucial conversations are often spontaneous and in the heat of the moment. It's hard to think on your feet in situations like this. And even if you have mentally rehearsed, the conversation probably won't go as you plan because of the emotions involved.

Many leaders get this wrong. They think leadership is all about organizational charts, utilization rates, policies and processes. But the authors' research begs to differ. They have found through their research that organizations that continually pursue new non-human performance goals fail more often than they succeed. They link this directly to their ability to connect with people on a human level and have crucial conversations when needed.

The authors' research also shows the connection between high performers and their ability to have crucial conversations. They can stand up to their bosses without committing career suicide. They have the

Dialogue is our most powerful – and misunderstood – tool in business. A common misconception people have about crucial conversations is that they have only two choices: tell the truth or keep a friend. But this is a fallacy. By having a crucial conversation the right way, you don't have to choose; you can be honest and maintain a positive relationship with that person.

It's also helpful to understand what "bad" dialogue looks like too. The authors list the common behaviors of "silence" and "violence" that occur during dialogue. We're all too familiar with these both in our professional lives and personal lives as well. Examples of these behaviors include things such as using sarcasm or snide remarks to express frustration; avoiding situations where a crucial conversation might be necessary; or

So to be good at crucial conversations, you need to have good dialogue skills. The authors talk about specific strategies and skills that you can use to become better at dialogue. This is how people can stay focused on their goals and not get caught up in a negative spiral in a crucial conversation.

Focus on what you really want. When you start moving toward silence or violence, stop and reflect on your motivation. Think about what you really want to happen as an end result of this conversation and the relationship you want to have with this person. Are you behaving in a way to support what you really want?

Make it safe. Often when discussions start to go bad, it is really someone's way of saying they don't feel safe in the conversation any longer. Remembering that,

*Continued on Page 38,
Book Review*



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Green Toyota/Scion donating car to high school student

Green Toyota/Scion is giving away a free 2012 Scion IQ Smart Car to a District 186 High School student at the end of the school year.

To enter the contest, students can visit Green Toyota/Scion at 3901 West Wabash with an adult. The staff at Green Toyota/Scion will convert student grades into free raffle tickets. Bonus tickets are available for perfect attendance and behavior. To learn more, visit driveyouriq.com.

Kidzeum invites you to join them on Saturday, March 23rd at the Inn at 835 in Springfield for an evening of drinks, hors d'oeuvres and dueling pianos with Robert and Sara. The doors open at 7:30 p.m. and the show starts at 8:00 p.m.

Robert and Sara have been dueling together for four years, and have played high-class clubs, fundraisers, and dive bars all over the Midwest. They bring a dynamic, fresh perspective to the traditional idea of dueling pianos, with a repertoire ranging from The Temptations to Queen to Lady Gaga.

In addition to three hours of music and laughter, the \$35 ticket includes two drink tickets and hors d'oeuvres. Sponsors for the event include **Diamond Residential Mortgage, Gates, Wise & Schlosser, Inn at 835 and Café Moxo**. Visit kidzeum.org for more information.

The community is invited to join Mini O'Beirne Crisis Nursery every 2nd, 3rd and 5th Friday of the month at Caritas Hall on 9th and Converse in Springfield to play bingo. Every pull-tab card you purchase will benefit Mini O'Beirne Crisis Nursery. Play begins around 6:00 p.m.

The mission of Mini O'Beirne Crisis Nursery is to prevent child abuse and neglect by providing emergency, temporary care, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, for children who may be at risk or whose parents are experiencing some type of crisis.

The 2013 Fight for Air Climb was held in February at the Springfield Hilton to raise funds for the American Lung Association in Illinois. Fight for Air Climbs are fundraising events for the American Lung Association. Teams and individual participants can use the event as a fitness target, a race, or as a way to be active and meet new friends. Participation raises the funds necessary to provide life saving education, research and advocacy so we can beat lung disease and soon find a cure.

Sponsors for the Fight for Air Climb included **CEFCU, Hilton Springfield, Health Alliance, Personal Mobility, Bunn, Enterprise, Kohls, St. John's Hospital, Memorial Home Services, Newton Manufacturing, Springfield Ski Club, FitClub, Neuhoft Communications, News Channel 20, Emerson Press and Fitness for All**.

Contact Ministries hosted the Grease Prom in February to raise funds to support the organization. Sponsors included **Dr. Eric and Vickie Lohse, Dr. Eric and Terri Woolbright, Zara's Collision Center, Isringhausen, Corporate and Endowment Solutions and UTG**. Contact Ministries is a faith-based, human and social service organization with a deliberate mission to provide free on-site program services and community resources to poverty level families and individuals to increase their economic self-sufficiency and reduce their dependency on public assistance.

Girl Scout cookies are now available for purchase in central Illinois. The Girl Scouts are using a direct sale format to sell cookies for the 2013 cookie program. Girls have packages of cookies in hand to sell door-to-door to family, friends, and neighbors. Girl Scouts exchange cookies and payment in one easy step. No more

Giving Back

Jean Jones

taking orders, waiting weeks, and then returning for the delivery and money collection. A direct sale program condenses all that work into one simple step.

The Girl Scout cookie program has grown into a leading business and economic literacy program that is run by and for girls. The Girl Scout cookie program provides leadership by helping girls develop five key skills including goal setting, decision making, money management, people skills and business ethics.

The Girl Scout leadership experience engages girls in discovering self, connecting with others, and taking action to make the world a better place. All Girl Scout experiences are designed to tie in one or more of the 15 outcomes of the Girl Scout leadership experience. The Girl Scout leadership experience encourages girls to take increasing responsibility for designing and implementing their own activities, which results in extensive opportunities for them to see how their actions can impact the lives of others.

Age-appropriate activities in Girl Scouting introduce girls to new concepts. Through these activities, caring adults

encourage girls to explore a variety of related topics, empower them with the ability to choose the directions they will take to accomplish a goal, and then support them as they put their ideas into action. The experience often illuminates a girl's personal skills and interests and gives them the confidence to make an impact with their words and actions.

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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There's work to be done.

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

- 01/18/13 - Steve Szamocki, Kathy Szamocki, Plaintiffs, Vs. Preston Morgan, Anita Morgan, Defendants, Contract.
- 01/24/13 - Enviromental Management Inc., Plaintiff, Vs. David Litt, Defendant, Contract.
- 02/05/13 - PNC Bank, Plaintiff, Vs. Bellatti Barton & Cochran LLC, Michael G. Barton, Defendants, Contract.

Chancery

- 01/18/13 - PNC Bank National Associates, Plaintiff, Vs. Maryellen Nifong, Village Green Condominium Association, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 01/22/13 - Bank of Springfield, Plaintiff, Vs. Lisa Bartulis, Springleaf Financial Services, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 01/22/13 - HSBC Bank, Plaintiff, Vs. Jeffrey Trumbo, Defendant, Foreclosure.
- 01/23/13 - US Bank National Association, Plaintiff, Vs. Robert D. Montgomery, Unknown Owners and Non Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 01/24/13 - Green Tree Servicing LLC, Plaintiff, Vs. Donna A. Murray, Personal Finance Company LLC, Unknown Owners and Non Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 01/24/13 - HSBC Bank USA, Plaintiff, Vs. Lisa M. Melton, Jeffrey L. Melton, Unknown Owners and Non Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 01/24/13 - Jacksonville Savings Bank, Plaintiff, Vs. Richard H. Freitag, Thomas Streder, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 01/24/13 - United Community Bank, Plaintiff, Vs. Jennifer M. McAnarney, Target National Bank, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 01/25/13 - PHH Mortgage Corporation, Plaintiff, Vs. Michael P. Landgrebe, Danielle L. Landgrebe, Unknown Owners and Non Record Claimants, Unknown Occupants and Owners, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 01/28/13 - Flagstar Bank, Vs. Doris J. Milslagle, Capital One Bank, Unknown Owners and Non Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 01/28/13 - US Bank National As-

sociation, Plaintiff, Vs. Robert K. Ewa, Grace B. Ewa, Sanogo Mahoua, US Bank National Association, Unknown Owners and Non Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.

- 01/28/13 - Wells Fargo Bank, Plaintiff, Vs. Jeffrey D. Kirkendoll, Erica R. Kirkendoll, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 01/29/13 - Bank of America National Association, Plaintiff, Vs. Joni Sprouse, Defendant, Foreclosure.
- 01/29/13 - JP Morgan Chase Bank, Plaintiff, Vs. Fiore S. Belmonte, Christine Belmonte, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 01/29/13 - JP Morgan Chase Bank, Plaintiff, Vs. Homer Hanshaw, Glenda Hanshaw, CitiBank, Unknown Owners and Non Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 01/29/13 - United Community Bank, Plaintiff, Vs. Robert P. Meredith, Deborah S. Meredith, City of Springfield, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 01/30/13 - US Bank, Plaintiff, Vs. Jesse Slupianek, Mortgage Electronic Registration, Unknown Owners and Non Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 01/31/13 - Federal National Mortgage, Plaintiff, Vs. Rick Schroeder, Leslie Weller, Unknown Owners and Non Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 01/31/13 - Illini Bank, Plaintiff, Vs. Sylvia L. Dickerson, Illini Bank, Ricky Dickerson, Unknown Owners and Non Record Claimants, Unknown Owners and Occupants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 01/31/13 - JP Morgan Chase Bank, Plaintiff, Vs. Patrick Klemaier, Sara Klemaier, Unknown Owners and Non Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 01/31/13 - Nationstar Mortgage LLC, Plaintiff, Vs. James Wright, Jennifer Wright, State of Illinois, Unknown Owners and Non Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 01/31/13 - RBS Citizens NA, Plaintiff, Vs. Estate of Edward F. Streit, Jr., Springfield Properties, LTD, Jacqueline A. Streit, Benchmark Bank, Olde Towne Associates, Unknown Owners and Non Record Claimants, Unknown Heirs and Legatees, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 02/01/13 - Deutsche Bank Trust Company, Leda White, Mary J. White, Citizens Equity First Credit Union, Unknown Owners and Non Record Claimants, Foreclosure.
- 02/01/13 - US Bank National Association, Plaintiff, Vs. Michelle L. Hagele, Brian J. Hagele, Twin Lakes Homeowners Association, Unknown Owners and Non Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 02/04/13 - JP Morgan Chase Bank,

Plaintiff, Vs. Douglas B. Tinch, Western Aire Condominium Association, Unknown Owners and Non Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.

- 02/04/13 - US Bank National Association, Plaintiff, Vs. Bryan B. Friedrich, Unknown Owners and Non Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 02/05/13 - Deutsche Bank National Trust, Plaintiff, Vs. Frank Shelton, Rose Shelton, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 02/05/13 - People of the State of Illinois, Plaintiff, Vs. Autocenters Nissan Inc., Defendant, Injunction.
- 02/05/13 - People of the State of Illinois, Plaintiff, Vs. George Weber Chevrolet Company, Weber Granite City Chevrolet, George Weber Chevrolet Waterloo, Defendants, Injunction.
- 02/05/13 - US Bank National Association, Plaintiff, Vs. Jose Castaneda, Rebecca Castaneda, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 02/06/13 - Bank of America, Plaintiff, Vs. Bruce A. Clifton, Bank of America, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 02/07/13 - Bank of America, Plaintiff, Vs. Robert Douglas, Unknown Heirs and Legatees, Unknown Owners and Non Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 02/07/13 - Bank of America, Plaintiff, Vs. Wesley G. Huston, June E. Houston, Unknown Heirs and Legatees, Unknown Owners and Non Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 02/07/13 - Flagstar Bank FSB, Plaintiff, Vs. Noble A. Woolard, Andrea J. Woolard, Unknown Heirs and Legatees, Timberbrooke Estates Homeowners Association, Illinois Housing Development Authority, Unknown Owners and Non Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 02/07/13 - JPMC Specialty Mortgage LLC, Plaintiff, Vs. Charles Eagan, Angela J. Eagan, Springleaf Financial Services, American General Financial Services, Unknown Owners and Non Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 02/07/13 - JP Morgan Chase Bank, Vs. Michelle L. Stratton, Defendant, Foreclosure.
- 02/07/13 - State Bank of Lincoln, Plaintiff, Vs. Van E. Valkenburg, Defendant, Foreclosure.
- 02/08/13 - Marine Bank, Plaintiff, Vs. John R. Vaughn, Illini Bank, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 02/11/13 - Wells Fargo Bank, Plaintiff, Vs. Christina Lowe, Unknown Owners and Non Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 02/11/13 - Quickens Loans Inc., Brandon Roberts, Amy Sayre-Roberts, Unknown Owners and Non Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 02/11/13 - Ruby Electric Inc., Plaintiff, Vs. Jamie Adaire, Defendant, Mechanics Lien.
- 02/13/13 - Flagstar Bank, Plaintiff, Vs. Judy A. Miller, Thomas F. Miller, Unknown Owners and Non Record Claimants, Defendants, Foreclosure.
- 02/13/13 - United Community Bank, Plaintiff, Vs. Dave Grady, Holly Grady, Illinois National Bank, Defendants, Foreclosure.

new businesses •

New Businesses, Continued from Page 5

- 414-1808.
- Game Changer Soft Plastics, 2332 Queensway, Springfield, 62703, Tom Draper, (217) 220-3606.
- Garage Experts of Central Illinois, 3419 Chatham Road, Springfield, 62704, Michael J. Brahler, (217) 836-6907.
- Grasshopper Drywall & Painting, 215 Ninth St., Pawnee, 62558, Wade Grieshaber, (205) 215-6610.
- Heather Howard Photography, 2403 Sussex Road, Springfield, 62703, Heather Howard, (217) 303-4816.
- Jamaican Taste, 901 E. Cook, Springfield, 62703, Vanburn James, (217) 523-0568.
- JP Gallery, 2300 Halifax, Chatham, 62629, Juliann M. Pennell-Heminghaus, (217) 725-5070.
- Judah Web Solutions, 2009 Stockton, Springfield, 62703, Don Hunt, (217) 585-1533.
- J.W. Motorsports, 1967 Stonehenge Road, Springfield, 62702, John M. Henton, Jr., (217) 816-6044.
- Kings of Blood Money Records, 1616 S. Seventh St., Apt. D, Springfield, 62703, Corey L. Hoskins, (217) 481-0658.
- Landmark Land & Lawn Co., 111 Pinecrest Drive, Williamsville, 62693, Jacob A. Witts, (217) 741-1520.
- Layrow Records, 916 E. Reservoir, Springfield, 62702, Larry E. Ross, (217) 381-2516.
- Max-Tax, 1044 N. Grand Ave. West, Springfield, 62702, Alan D. McCallister, (217) 549-2228.
- Military Reconnections, 2729 Queensway Road, Springfield, 62703, Christine Ewing, Michael Ewing, (217) 529-0383.
- MVP Multimedia, 3116 Sequoia Drive, Springfield, 62712, Daniel D. Lohmar, (217) 553-1602.
- Peking Chinese Buffet, 720 E. Jackson St., Auburn, 62615, Jing Lai You, (217) 438-5533.
- Prairie Agriculture, 22 Hyde Park, Springfield, 62703, Vaughn W. Henry, (217) 529-1958.
- Randy Squires Photography, 1536 W. Jackson St., Springfield, 62704, Randy Squires, (217) 546-2341.
- Sharkin Claim Services, 42 Wisteria, Springfield, 62711, David Harkin, Sylvia Harkin, (602) 989-7180.
- The Great Legacy of Frank Ryan, 1013 N. Park, Springfield, 62702, Ryne T. Goodrich, (217) 691-4695.
- Tower Loan of Springfield, LLC, 1540 W. Jefferson St., Springfield, 62707, Tower of Illinois, LLC, (601) 992-0153.
- Trea's Trading Post, 13973 Greeley St., Petersburg, 62675, Marguerite Morgan, (217) 414-5682.
- West on Sunset, 100 E. Lincoln St., Riverton, 62561, Bill Shaw, (217) 801-8293.
- Wheeler Steamer Carpet Cleaner, 2834 S. Walnut, Springfield, 62704, John Wheeler, (217) 662-4153.
- Wicked Customs, 14063 Moomey Road, Mechanicsburg, 62545, Jodi Snow, Scott Snow, (217) 622-3718.

Book Review, Continued from Page 36

skilled dialoguers keep focused on what they really want, they recognize their true goal is at risk and work to restore safety – so that the crucial conversations can continue.

Think about your own organization and how it could benefit from talking about those things that no one wants to talk about. How could things change as a

result? If these conversations would bring about much-needed change in your organization, then it's time to speak up. But first, read "Crucial Conversations – Tools for Talking When Stakes are High" to guide you in your conversation.

Tom Fitch is an avid book reader and business professional from Springfield

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Purchase a home at foreclosure – buyer beware

If you have ever perused the legal notices section of the classifieds, perhaps you have come across foreclosure notices. Although not the most interesting reading, these notices may contain hidden gems for those interested in purchasing residential (or even commercial) real estate. However, before you decide to get in on the action, it's best to do your homework.



Law

Thomas C. Pavlik, Jr.

foreclosure, it's probably a safe assumption that the property taxes have been sold. A foreclosure won't wipe those taxes out. The title commitment will show what taxes have, or have not, been paid and whether they have been sold. You can also use this information to help calculate your bid.

Keep in mind that foreclosure sales are also done on "as is/where is terms." Generally speaking, it's not possible to view the interior of the property. A simple visual street inspection, however, may give you some indication as to the property's condition. In most instances it's safe to assume that the inside is in the same condition as the outside. Talk to neighbors and ask what they know about the property. Call the city to check on dwelling code violations, or a lack thereof, which may provide you with some additional assurances or sufficient information to scare you off. In short, do whatever you can, short of trespassing, to gather as much information about the physical condition of the property as possible. Finally, make sure your budget includes some amount to fix whatever problems you do find if you are the successful purchaser at auction.

Having done what you can to verify the property's condition and the status of the title, it's time to calculate what to bid. The complaint, located in the court file, contains information on what money is owed to the mortgage holder and any other claimants. Use this information as your starting point. Call the attorney for the bank/mortgage holder (or more realistically find him or her just before the auction) and see if you can negotiate an amount that the bank will agree not to bid against. Also, consult the legal notice to find out how much of the successful bid must be paid at the auction. There's no hard and fast rule, so don't lose a good deal simply because you didn't bring enough money. Also, talk to your own bank about getting pre-approval of financing if you aren't paying cash.

Assuming you are the successful bidder, the sale needs to be confirmed by the court before you actually receive title. Usually the bank's attorney will file the appropriate paperwork. However, you will need to make sure your right to possession is appropriately addressed - especially if the property is still occupied. These issues can be tricky, and it's best to consult with your own attorney.

Even if you aren't the successful bidder at foreclosure, it's still possible to buy the house as "REO" ("real estate owned") from the bank after the auction if it ends up buying the house. If you are at all uncertain about the process, this may be a safer route as there's usually a real estate agent involved.

Buying a house at foreclosure is fraught with pitfalls for the inexperienced buyer. Do your homework, consult with your legal adviser, and it's possible that you may find some great deals.

For those who don't already know, a foreclosure is the usual end result when a property owner doesn't pay on a debt secured by a mortgage. The party holding the mortgage files a lawsuit asking the court to order that the property be sold, with the proceeds used to pay off the debt. The process generally ends with an auction that is held at the courthouse. Legal notices contained in the newspaper advertise these sales.

However, the simple truth is that these auctions are poorly attended - usually only by the bank. As a result, the bank typically ends up buying back the property at auction. But most banks have no interest in actually taking title to the mortgaged property. Rather than having to market and maintain the property that is taken back at auction, most banks would rather have cash and might even be willing to take less than the full amount needed to satisfy the debt. This is how the savvy buyer can find some good deals.

The first step, then, is simple - read the legal notices and see if any properties are in areas that interest you. The notices must contain the address of the property at issue as well as a contact person to call for further information. It's also a good idea to review the court file and to call the attorneys for the plaintiff and defendant. The court file is open to the public for inspection - just ask the clerk. The attorneys for the respective properties may also provide you with helpful information.

Now that you have found a property that you want to buy, what next? Your first concern should be whether you can obtain clear title at the auction. It's possible that the lawyer for the plaintiff failed to properly include all parties with claims on the property. In that event, you would end up purchasing property that still had a lien or claim that you would be subject to. The general rule is "caveat emptor" - there are no warranties of title provided at the auction.

The best way to protect yourself regarding title is to obtain an independent review. Contact a title company and ask for a title commitment. These reports (exclusive of title insurance) generally cost around \$125 and can be obtained from just about any title company with enough advance notice. The report will show all parties who have claims on the property. Check that report against the named defendants and make sure that all of the claims included in the report will be terminated through the foreclosure such that you will receive "clear" title. And, in any event, a bank would require such a report before lending money to purchase a foreclosed property.

The title commitment will also provide you with important information regarding taxes. If a property has gone to

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

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Burger named Employee of the Month

Passavant Area Hospital's February 2013 Employee of the Month is Sharon Burger.



Burger

She is the specialty service coordinator Surgery Department, and has been a Passavant employee for 25 years.

Burger's responsibilities include assisting the surgeons during surgery, bringing in new equipment for trials and serving as the specialty service coordinator for general, gynecological, and urology services.

The Employee of the Month at Passavant receives a cash award, an Employee of the Month lapel pin, wall plaque, engraved writing instrument, coffee mug, meal certificates for use in the hospital cafeteria, and a day off with pay.

Passavant elects new board members

Doug Awe and Kelly Staake were elected to the Passavant Area Hospital board of directors during a meeting of the hospital's board of governors.



Awe

Awe and Staake replace retiring board members Richard Johnson and Greg May who served on the board for 12 and eight years, respectively.

Current board members Steven Lillpop, M.D., and Nancy Spangenberg were re-elected to four-year terms. Dr. Lillpop is a pediatrician

affiliated with Jacksonville Pediatric Associates. Spangenberg is a retired Passavant nursing administrator.

Awe is the owner/general manager of Arends-Awe, Inc., an area John Deere dealership. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in engineering from the University of Illinois. He is a member of the Jacksonville Area Chamber of Commerce and the Chapin Lion's Club and has served on the Morgan County Fair board.

Staake is vice president/chief financial officer at the Farmers State Bank and Trust Company in Jacksonville. She earned an



Staake

associate degree from Lincoln Land Community College and a Bachelor of Science degree in accounting from the University of Illinois-Springfield. She currently serves on the Passavant Auxiliary and Jacksonville Country Club boards and is a member of the Jacksonville Rotary Club and the Art Association of Jacksonville.

Staake is a past president of the Prairieland United Way and Passavant Auxiliary.

Other Passavant Board members include Reginald Benton; Keith Bradbury; Ginny Fanning; Eric Giebelhausen, M.D.; Donald Headen; Gilbert Joehl; Phyllis Lape, Ph.D.; Greg Lepper; Michael Molyneaux, M.D.; Gary Scott; Jan Terry and Thomas Veith.

Watson earns distinction

Dr. John O. Watson of the Orthopedic Center of Illinois became registered with the American Registry for Diagnostic Medical Sonography by passing the inaugural musculoskeletal ultrasound examination.



Watson

This examination was the first of its kind offered in the U.S. This gives Watson a "Pioneer Member" distinction, a status obtained by a select group of 100 physicians in the country.

Watson has been with the Orthopedic Center of Illinois for five years. He specializes in musculoskeletal disorders, interventional spine, sports medicine, and electrodiagnostic testing. He utilizes ultrasound for both diagnostic and therapeutic interventions for common orthopedic conditions.

SIU professor receives grant

Dr. Michael Pranzatelli, an internationally recognized physician-scientist at Southern Illinois University School of Medicine in Springfield has been awarded a laboratory research grant from Questcor Pharmaceuticals, Inc., to study pediatric opsoclonus-myoclonus syndrome, a rare disease in children. The total budget of the grant is \$205,081.

OMS renders a previously normal child unable to talk, sit, walk, or sleep, causing uncontrollable shaking and eye movements. The disease is triggered by a neuroblastoma tumor, the most common solid tumor in children. The immune system, in attacking the tumor, injures the brain, which shares similar proteins.

Pranzatelli, SIU professor of neurology and director of the National Pediatric Myoclonus Center, is the principal investigator for the project, which will study spinal fluid and blood samples of pediatric patients to look at key inflammatory proteins. The

research will attempt to determine the role of chemokine inflammatory mediators and their receptors on lymphocytes in the brain inflammation that characterizes OMS. Results of this research could lead to new disease and treatment biomarkers, and the development of a more effective treatment for the disease. Pranzatelli, not the funding company, designed and controls the study.

Pranzatelli's research on pediatric myoclonus has received national funding for more than 20 years, which now totals more than \$4 million. He founded the National Pediatric Myoclonus Center, now based at SIU, which is the largest OMS research center in the world, receiving national and international patients. He has authored 161 publications in the medical and scientific literature. He joined the SIU faculty in 1999.

CMT's Whiston retires, Meckes named chairman and CEO

Brian Whiston retired as chairman and CEO of Crawford, Murphy and Tilly after the firm's board of director meeting scheduled in February. The Chicago native joined the Springfield-based engineering consulting firm in 1971, where he spent his 41-year career. Current CMT president, Dan Meckes, was named Whiston's successor.

"It's amazing when you look at how CMT has grown over the past two decades, and so much of that growth can be attributed to Brian's leadership," said Meckes.

Whiston began his career working on water and wastewater projects. In 1982 he was named co-manager of CMT's office in Aurora, Ill. Whiston was selected as firm

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Continued from Previous Page

president in 2001, a position he held until 2007, and was elected CEO in 2004. Under his leadership, the firm expanded its operations by adding offices in Indianapolis, Ind., Edwardsville, Ill., Columbus, Ohio, and Springfield, Mo.

Throughout his career, Whiston received honors from industry organizations for his individual accomplishments as well. He has served as chapter president for the Illinois Society of Professional Engineers, the American Society of Civil Engineers, and the American Council of Engineering Companies. Whiston - who is a licensed engineer/professional engineer in Illinois, Missouri, Indiana and Wisconsin - was also awarded the ACEC-Illinois' Distinguished Service Award in 1996 and the ISPE's Professional Engineering Management Award in 1997.

Meckes will retain the responsibilities of president, a position he has held since 2007. Meckes has become the fifth employee to lead the firm since its inception in 1946.

"Dan is highly respected throughout the engineering industry, and especially among our clients and staff.

With the leadership team that CMT has in place, the future looks very bright," Whiston said.

Meckes began his career at CMT in 1983 when his talents were focused on highway and bridge projects in Illinois and Missouri. In 1996, he relocated to CMT's St. Louis office to serve as co-manager and helped grow that office. In 2004, the St. Louis Business Journal ranked CMT's St. Louis office as the fastest-growing consulting engineering firm in the area.

In recent years, Meckes has led CMT's strategic planning efforts and continuous improvement initiative, while continuing to play a major role in public relations and client development. Continuing CMT's tradition of keeping senior leadership involved with clients' projects, he is actively serving as principal on "Park Over the Highway," a project that will enhance the connection between the Gateway Arch area and downtown St. Louis.

Throughout his career, Meckes has remained active with many industry and community organizations. He is currently serving as secretary treasurer for the American Council of Engineering Companies of Missouri.

Also at the board meeting, Senior Vice President Michael J. Doerfler was named Chief Operating Officer and Vice President William L. Bailey was named Secretary. New appointments included Roger A. Austin as Vice President and Raed A. Armouti, Director.

CMT's Herrin wins award

The American Society of Civil Engineers and its Transportation and Development Institute have awarded Stanley Herrin, PE, its 2013 Airfield Pavement Practitioner Award. The award is given to an engineering professional who has demonstrated expertise in the advancement of airfield pavement solutions, while providing leadership to younger members in the profession. Herrin was presented the award at the T&DI's meeting on January 13.

Herrin was nominated for the award based on his work on airfield pavements throughout his 40-year career. He has worked at airports of all sizes throughout the country, and has been involved in the development and testing of new pavement techniques. He has also authored several papers on the subject, and has served on

technical and research committees for various industry groups.

Herrin is currently serving as instructor of the Airport Facility Design course for the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign's Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering.

Svoboda joins Hanson Professional Services Inc.

Lauren Svoboda, engineer intern, recently joined Hanson Professional Services Inc.'s headquarters in Springfield, Ill., serving in the firm's power and industry market. She will assist the structural team with design and analysis. Her first project involves an airplane hangar at Fairfield Municipal Airport in Fairfield, Ill.

Svoboda has bachelor's degrees in architectural engineering and civil engineering from Missouri University of Science and Technology. She is a member of the Architectural Engineering Institute and the American Society of Civil Engineers.

Sikich promotes 12

Sikich LLP promoted 12 employees in the firm's Springfield office. Among the promotions is Joe Alsup, CPA, who was named a senior manager. He has more than 10 years of experience in public accounting, and holds a bachelor's degree in financial accounting from Illinois State University.

Six employees were promoted to manager, including Megan Cochran, CPA. She has seven years of experience in governmental audits and reporting, and holds a bachelor's degree in accounting from Kentucky Wesleyan University. Corey Davis, CPA, has nearly seven years of experience in public accounting and holds a master's degree in professional accountancy from Illinois State University. Greg Fiedler, CPA, has seven years of experience in public accounting and holds a master's degree in professional accountancy from Illinois State University.

Also promoted to manager is Lauren Groff, CPA, who has more than seven years of experience working with the not-for-profit industry and holds a bachelor's degree in accounting from Southern Illinois University. Nikki Lanier, CPA, has been with Sikich for five years and holds a bachelor's degree in accounting from the University of Illinois Springfield. Kim Rose, CPA, CISA, has six years of experience and holds a bachelor's degree from Western Illinois University.

Three employees were promoted to supervisor. Emily Ebert, CPA, has been with Sikich for four years and holds a master's degree in professional accountancy from Illinois State University. Drew Long, CPA, has seven years of experience and holds a bachelor's degree in accounting from Augustana College. Katy Neubauer, CPA, has five years of public accounting experience and holds a master's degree in professional accountancy from Illinois State University.

Jeff Bloomer, CPA and Craig Fiorito have both been named senior accountants. Bloomer has been with Sikich for nearly three years and holds a bachelor's degree in accounting from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Fiorito holds a master's degree in accountancy from the University of Illinois Springfield.

Hamill admitted into ACTEC

Thomas G. Hamill, partner with Harri-son & Held, LLP, has been admitted to The



Hamill

American College of Trust and Estate Counsel. ACTEC is a national organization of lawyers elected to membership by demonstrating integrity, commitment to the profession, competence and experience as trust and estate counselors.

CFL promotes three

The Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln, a philanthropic resource for charities and donors in central Illinois, promoted John Stremsterfer to president and CEO.

Also promoted were Stacy Reed to vice president for programs and Sandee Horn to office manager.

Gordon named director of HCFTA

Gus Gordon has been promoted to Executive Director of the Hoogland Center for the Arts, effective Feb. 1.

Gordon has been a supporter of HCFTA since its inception. His production of "Forever Plaid" was one of the first shows presented on the main stage at the Center in 2004. From 2004 until 2007, he produced shows at the Center under the Gordon Productions banner. He has worked for HCFTA in a part-time capacity since 2007, producing over 60 different special fund-raising events.

Gordon became Hoogland's Artistic Director last summer after retiring as chief meteorologist at ABC NewsChannel 20. He continues to serve as Artistic Director in his new position.

"Since Gus has been with us full-time, he has helped create a new adult education program as well as stewarding the two new kids' education groups: Hoogland Kids and Hoogland Teens under the direction of Matthew Vala. We are looking forward to having Gus help us move this great facility ahead while advancing the arts in our community," said Grace Nanavati, Vice President of the HCFTA board of trustees.

Nicoud adds Turner

Jim Turner has joined Nicoud Insurance as the Commercial Account Executive. He comes to the agency with more than 25 years of property and casualty as well as commercial and personal lines experience.

Turner attended Cal State San Bernardino. He has an associate degree in underwriting and in general insurance. Turner moved from Southern California in 1989 and has been a resident of Riverton for 14 years.

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community business •

Evans Construction celebrates 100 years

J. Clyde Evans started remodeling and building homes in Springfield in 1913, building the foundation of a construction company for the next 100 years.

Evans Construction Co. grew into the commercial, industrial and institutional fields with Donald Evans, fourth-generation family member, now currently managing the company.

Their business model focuses on the project at hand while working towards the long-term success of the customer. From initial consulting to ribbon-cutting and construction maintenance, the company has been carefully managed to ensure that Clyde's vision and values for the company continue.

Key projects over the years include the Illinois Building, Old State Capital Renovations, Illinois State Library, Horace Mann, St. John's Hospital Carol Jo Vecchie Women and Children's Center, Prairie Heart Institute, SIU Combined Lab and Simmons Cancer Institute.

The company is planning events during the year to celebrate its anniversary and recognize the partnerships that have contributed to its success.

Hanson participates in student bridge design contest

In recognition of National Engineers Week, Hanson Professional Services Inc. employees participated in the Illinois Society of Professional Engineers Capital Chapter's 35th annual bridge design contest on Feb. 22 at White Oaks Mall in Springfield. Jared Thoele, EIT, an engineer intern serving Hanson's infrastructure market, served as co-chair and judge for this event.

The contest featured 30 model bridges constructed from manila-file folders, carpenter's wood glue and rubber cement designed and built by high school students from Springfield, Morrisonville, Pleasant Plains, Riverton and Waverly. Students had two months to plan, design and construct their bridges. The structures were evaluated on innovation, creativity, originality, load-weight ratio and neatness. Students will receive cash prizes for the top three entries as well as awards for the best-constructed and most innovative bridges.

"This contest allows students to research engineering principles, use their creativity and ingenuity to design a model bridge and work as a team. We encourage students to work in teams because it mirrors real-world engineering practices," said Thoele.

National Engineers Week was held from Feb. 17-23 and celebrated engineers' contributions to society through various programs, including Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day, Future City Competition and DiscoverE Outreach.

CACC begins Women in Welding

The Capital Area Career Center, with the help of ILMO Products Company, has started a course in their Women in Welding class.

"I have such a great time teaching this class, probably because all of the women who attend are having fun and love learning how to make something new with metal. It can be very empowering and satisfying to complete a welding project," said CACC Welding Instructor, Steve Hoff.

Gailyn Cornell, Director of Corporate Outreach for ILMO Products Company, shares Hoff's said, "Welding provides a creative outlet and it saves money when you can repair something rather than throw it out and buy new."

As part of their 100th anniversary and

commitment to welding education, ILMO Products Company is supporting Hoff and the CACC with donations, as well as offering discounts at their Springfield store on Peoria Road store to all welding students.

From this course, beginners can develop skills to create garden ornaments, sculptures, and unique art. This class is also useful for those considering welding as a potential career, interested in a career change. Ultimately, every student will leave knowing that welding is not just for men.

LLCC hosts Transfer Fair

Lincoln Land Community College will host its annual Transfer Fair on Monday, March 25 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. in A. Lincoln Commons on the Springfield campus.

Representatives from 31 colleges and universities will be present to speak to students about transfer opportunities once they complete their degrees at LLCC. Members of the public are also invited to attend.

Representatives of the following universities will be in attendance: Eastern Illinois University, Governors State University, Illinois State University, Missouri University of Science and Technology, Northern Illinois University, Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville, University of Illinois-Chicago, University of Illinois-Springfield, University of Illinois-Urbana/Champaign, University of Missouri-St. Louis, University of Wisconsin-Madison and Western Illinois University.

Also in attendance will be these private colleges and universities: Benedictine University-Springfield, Blackburn College, Bradley University, Columbia College-Chicago, Eureka College, Greenville College, Illinois College, Illinois Institute of Art, Kendall College, Lakeview College of Nursing, Lincoln Christian College, Lincoln College-Normal, MacMurray College, Millikin University, Monmouth College, National University of Health Sciences, Robert Morris University and Quincy University.

LLCC hosts 1st Thursday Speaker Series

The Lincoln Land Community College Philip and Mary Kathryn Trutter Museum is holding its second annual 1st Thursday Speakers Series this spring. The first session of the two-part series is being held Thursday, March 7. "Architecture" will be held from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. in the Trutter Center at LLCC's Springfield campus, 5250 Shepherd Road.

The 1st Thursday Speakers Series features local experts discussing various topics that explore cultural diversity and current issues. Featured speakers for the March 7 session will provide an update on local architectural topics, including historic renovations and the impact architecture has on culture. Topics and speakers include: "Updates on the State Capitol Renovations" by James Richard Alsop, III, architect at Illinois State Capitol; "Historic Renovation Projects including Ronald Reagan's Boyhood Home in Dixon, Illinois" by Carl Fischer of FWAI Architects, Inc.; and "Downtown Springfield Past to Present" by Anthony Rubano, project designer/architect with the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency.

The second session of the Speakers Series is being held Thursday, April 4 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. in LLCC's Trutter Center and will feature speakers discussing their favorite world locations such as Kenya and Ashikaga, Japan.

Registration fee is \$7 (\$5 for LLCC Academy of Lifelong Learning members,

registered alumni and students) and includes dessert. Pre-registration is required by calling the LLCC Foundation at (217) 786-2785 or emailing llcc.foundation@llcc.edu.

LLCC to hold documentary screening

The Lincoln Land Community College Feminist Activist Coalition and Department of Arts and Humanities invite the public to a free private screening of the documentary "I Am a Visitor in Your World" Tuesday, March 19, at 7 p.m. in Menard Hall Room 2207 on the LLCC Springfield campus.

The film follows a young woman who keeps a cancer diary with her insights on life turning her ongoing pain into poetry.

In 2006, at the age of 25, Rebecca Babcock was diagnosed with genetic colon cancer. She began blogging as a way to come to terms with her "new normal." Out of those blog entries emerged a picture of her struggle. Fighting countless battles with her disease, treatments, surgeries, debt, loneliness, hope and despair, writing was her only outlet. Using her life as a canvas, her poetic words turned her pain into a brutally honest and sometimes harsh look at the realities of having cancer. While her words couldn't cure her disease, they clearly provided her readers with a completely new outlook on life.

Editor of the film is Scott F. Busch, a central Illinois native, former LLCC student and graduate of Columbia College Chicago. Music is by Joel Styzens of Springfield, a graduate of Millikin University.

LLCC's Community Learning offers travel opportunities

Lincoln Land Community College is offering several daytrips and overnight travel experiences as part of the Community Learning non-credit opportunities. Participants will meet for departure at the Trutter Center at the LLCC-Springfield campus, 5250 Shepherd Road.

An overnight trip through Missouri is planned for April 26-29 where participants explore multiple destinations including the hometowns of Walt Disney, General John J. Pershing, J.C. Penney and the town that Mary Owen moved to after she ended her engagement to Abraham Lincoln in the 1830s, among other stops.

On Saturday, June 8 LLCC culinary operations manager Nancy Sweet will lead participants on a daytrip that includes stops at Penzeys, Kakao Chocolate, Vom Fass, Salume Bedde, and Schaffly and Square One breweries.

Another overnight trip is scheduled for June 13-15. Participants will travel to Frank Lloyd Wright sites in Iowa, including the restored Historic Park Inn in Mason City, along with other locations such as the Figge Museum, Music Man Square and the Little Brown Church in the Vale.

An end-of-summer daytrip is planned for Wednesday, Aug. 28 which includes an afternoon cruise on the Spirit of Peoria, lunch at the Wittmond Hotel in Brussels and a stop at the Center for American Archeology in Kampsville.

Participants will travel to Arkansas from Sept. 25-27. LLCC co-hosts Christina Ramirez-Campbell and Ann Kramer will lead a group in this overnight trip to the Alice Walton-inspired Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville with a side trip to view architecture designed by one of Frank Lloyd Wright's most active students, E. Fay Jones. The trip also includes a stop in Eureka Springs.

LLCC also hosts trips to Belize. Two trips are planned for 2013, with one focused on Birding in Belize and the other on marine

life in the oceans near Belize.

Prices vary for each trip and all are open to the public. Members of the LLCC Academy for Lifelong Learning can receive a discounted rate.

For more information, visit the Community Learning website at www.llcc.edu/commed.

UIS professor publishes book on same-sex marriage and the Supreme Court

University of Illinois Springfield Associate Professor of Political Science Jason Pierceson has published a new book, "Same-Sex Marriage in the United States: The Road to the Supreme Court," with Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

The publication of the book coincides with the Supreme Court oral arguments on two same-sex marriage cases in March and the decisions that are expected to be announced in June.

This book explores the legal, political, and cultural setting of the movement for same-sex marriage and its opposition in the United States, setting the stage for the first engagement of the issue by the Supreme Court. In particular, the book examines the history of the movement, the philosophical and religious debates surrounding the movement and the opposition, developments around the world to put the U.S. movement in the proper context, state-by-state analysis of legal and political developments, and recent federal litigation paving the way to action by the Supreme Court. In doing so, the book highlights the role played by religion, political parties and federalism while arguing that litigation for same-sex marriage has achieved significant results, as well as creating a powerful backlash that will limit the national recognition of same-sex marriage in the short-term.

WUIS introduces Food Desk

WUIS announced the creation of the WUIS Food Desk. Bill Wheelhouse will become executive editor for the Food Desk in a move he initiated after nearly eight years as general manager of the station. Current development director Randy Eccles will now serve as general manager.

The WUIS Food Desk is the result of a "Desk Initiative" to increase local reporting. The expansion is being funded through a combination of grants, business support, and major gifts. GROW-MARK has been one of the first businesses to participate. WUIS continues to seek additional funding to sustain the Food Desk initiative, and hopes to secure funding to hire a reporter for an Education Desk as well.

"The addition of the Food Desk to our Statehouse and local news coverage will help listeners make informed choices about what we eat, and better understand one of the biggest businesses in central Illinois," said Eccles.

SIU School of Medicine to hold employment open house

Opportunities for clinical jobs will be highlighted at an employment open house on Tuesday, March 12, from 4-6:30 p.m. sponsored by Southern Illinois University School of Medicine in Springfield. Those interested in nursing and medical assistant positions, including students, recent graduates and alumni, are invited to the open house at the Office of Human Resources, 327 W. Calhoun St.

Prospective employees can get a head start in the hiring process by complete an

Continued on Next Page

Continued from Previous Page

application online at www.siumed.edu/jobs. The nursing addendum for RNs and LPNs are also posted online. Copies of any necessary licenses or transcripts should be included.

Department representatives will be on hand to talk to applicants about nursing, medical assistant and other clinical job opportunities. Benefits and employment counselors from SIU Human Resources also will be available. Parking is available next to the building.

SIU Fertility and IVF Center ranked among top fertility clinics

The SIU Fertility and IVF Center at Southern Illinois University School of Medicine in Springfield has been ranked among the top five fertility centers in the nation by FindTheBest, a data-driven comparison search engine. FindTheBest gave SIU its "Smart Rating" of 94, the highest of all fertility centers in Illinois and its surrounding states.

"This ranking highlights the successes of our fertility center and the multidisciplinary nature of the care we provide," said Dr. J. Ricardo Loret de Mola, chairman of obstetrics and gynecology at SIU and medical director of the center.

FindTheBest gathers its information from public databases, primary sources and expert sources. A team of researchers reviews all third-party edits before they are approved.

Infertility is a common medical condition. One in every nine couples of childbearing age has a problem conceiving. Recent medical advances make pregnancy possible for most couples wishing to undergo treatments to have a baby.

SIU Breast Center receives perfect score

The National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers has rated the Breast Center at the Simmons Cancer Institute at Southern Illinois University School of Medicine in Springfield as 100 percent compliant on all 27 evaluation standards for accreditation used by the NAPBC.

The NAPBC is administered by the American College of Surgeons and was established to ensure that accredited institutions provide the most efficient, effective and up-to-date care available for patients.

The team of cancer specialists, including surgeons, radiologists, radiation oncologists, pathologists, oncologic psychologists, nurses and other medical staff meet on a weekly basis to discuss the patient's diagnosis and to formulate detailed and coordinated treatment plans.

"This results in saved time for the patient while providing a clear, comprehensive and non-contradictory plan of action," said Dr. Robert Mocharnuk, director of the Breast Center.

Among the 27 evaluation standards of the NAPBC, there is a requirement that breast centers provide patients with information about ongoing cancer clinical trials and new treatment options.

Other standards include access to prevention and early detection programs, cancer education and support services. The NAPBC also requires that programs conduct regular self-assessments to monitor outcomes while constantly seeking out ways to provide better service to the community.

Medical Innovators Program

highlights 11

A selection of innovative medical professionals working in Sangamon County will present their achievements in medical treatments, research and community service at the 2013 Medical Innovators Program. The event will be held on March 7 from 5:30-8 p.m. at the James T. Dove M.D. Conference Center at Prairie Heart Institute, 619 E. Mason St. The Sangamon County Medical Society, Southern Illinois University School of Medicine and The Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce are hosting the event, sponsored by The Illinois State Medical Society.

Springfield Mayor J. Michael Houston will present the Mayor's Medical Innovation Award and issue a proclamation at the event.

The 11 professionals recognized include physicians, surgeons and researchers working in Sangamon County on a variety of projects to improve the health care of the community. Their innovations include basic science research findings, leading-edge clinical trials, new patient care treatments, and community service projects. This year, the event also recognizes "Young Innovators," individuals aged 21-40.

The medical professionals recognized are Dr. Jeffrey L. Bennett for his development of neurostimulatory treatments for mental disorders, Dr. Michael Brenner for his hearing loss research, Dr. Kathleen Campbell for her research in prevention of noise-induced hearing loss, Dr. Stephen Hazelrigg for his advances in the surgical treatment of emphysema, Dr. Judith Knox for her efforts to educate the public about the dangers of indoor tanning, Dr. Gregory J. Mishkel, M.D., St. John's Hospital, for his treatment for patients with critical aortic stenosis, Ayman Omar, M.D., Ph.D., SIU School of Medicine, for his novel approaches to treat brain and spinal cord tumors, Dr. Stephen D. O'Marro for his clinical trials of Hepatitis C, Khaled J. Saleh for his clinical trial of pain coping interventions to improve outcomes following knee arthroplasty, Dr. Christina M. Vassileva for her studies of ischemic mitral valve surgery and Dr. Andrew C. Wilber, Ph.D., SIU School of Medicine, for his research into gene therapy for severe hemoglobin disorders.

"Cutting-edge medical research and technology development are key determinants of the potential for economic benefits to accrue to the central Illinois community and to enable the Medical District to fulfill its mission," said Michael Boer, president of the Mid-Illinois Medical District.

The Medical Innovators program first began in 2006 as "Medical Miracles" and again in 2009 as "Medical Innovators." The event is free and open to the public. For more information, contact SCMS Executive Director Carol Harms at (217) 726-5106.

Memorial Home Services Hospice launches speakers bureau

Memorial Home Services recently launched a hospice speakers bureau available to community groups throughout central Illinois.

There are many myths and misconceptions about hospice care," said Ronda Dudley, director of Memorial Home Services Home Health and Hospice. "Our goal is to educate the community in the true meaning of hospice and understand the services we offer patients and their families."

The speakers make their presentations in the 14 counties served by Memorial Home Services Hospice: Mason, Cass, Menard, Logan, DeWitt, Macon, Scott, Morgan, Sangamon, Christian, Greene, Macoupin and Montgomery as well as

portions of Shelby County. Staff members with Memorial Home Services Hospice are available for presentations.

For more information or to schedule a speaker, individuals may visit Memorial Home Services' website at www.Memorial-HomeServices.com to complete an online request. Individuals and organizations may also call Amy Evans at (217) 788-3870. Memorial Home Services suggests that requests for a speaker be made at least two weeks before the event date.

Express Employment Professionals marks revenue growth

Express Employment Professionals announced that franchisees generated more than \$2.3 billion in sales in 2012, up 10 percent from \$2.1 billion in 2011. Since 2009, Express franchisee's temporary staffing sales are up 101 percent as staffing companies have become a significant driver of the nation's job growth.

"The company's ongoing growth is indicative of a fundamental shift in hiring practices as employers increasingly rely on temporary workers for flexible staffing solutions that can respond to real-time market conditions," said Jim Britton, franchise owner of the Springfield Express office.

In 2012, Express helped more than 367,000 workers find employment, up from 341,000 the year before. Express anticipates growth of 10 percent in 2013 based on continued strong demand for temporary workers, a view supported by industry experts.

The January 2013 American Staffing Association Staffing Index measuring employment in the U.S. staffing industry rose 3.7 percent for the month versus a year ago. Additionally, a September 2012 report by Staffing Industry Analysts forecast six percent growth for staffing in 2013 and predicted demand for several segments, including information technology, engineering and industrial, would hit all-time highs.

The Express hiring trends survey also revealed that employers plan to continue hiring in the first quarter for these same segments, as well as commercial and administrative positions. According to 323 employers across the United States and Canada, 31 percent of respondents are planning new hires for commercial and light industrial jobs. The survey indicated 16 percent of respondents plan to hire administrative and office clerical staff.

Illinois CPA Society offers tax tips

While many Americans were spared a tax increase with the resolution of the fiscal cliff, understanding a complex tax code system has become even more challenging. The Illinois CPA Society has a rundown of available credits and deductions that could save on your 2012 tax bill:

Child Tax Credit: Parents may be eligible for a credit of up to \$1,000 for each qualifying dependent child who was under 17 at the end of 2012. The credit begins to phase out at the \$75,000 income mark for single-filers or \$110,000 for joint-filers and is reduced by \$50 for every \$1,000 a taxpayer is above these amounts.

Child and Dependent Care Credit: Filers who have an eligible child who was under 13 at the end of the year or dependent that required care may qualify for a credit of up to \$3,000 (or up to \$6,000 for two or more qualifying children). Care to the child or dependent must have been provided so you or a spouse could work or look for work.

Adoption Tax Credit: Families who adopted a child during the 2012 calendar

year and paid out-of-pocket for the expenses may be eligible for a credit of up to \$10,000. The amount of credit available to you is dependent on your expenses. The credit will phase out for taxpayers starting at an income of \$189,710.

American Opportunity Tax Credit: Taxpayers may be eligible for a credit of up to \$2,500 per eligible college student for qualifying tuition, fees and course material expenses. Individual students may be eligible for the credit if no one claims them as dependents. You can claim the credit for up to the first four years of a student's post-secondary education.

Teacher's Classroom Expense Deduction: Kindergarten through 12th grade educators who have qualifying unreimbursed classroom expenses in 2012, including books, supplies and computer equipment, may be eligible for a deduction of up to \$250.

Mortgage Interest Deduction: Any mortgage interest payments made during 2012 may be deductible. Homeowners can deduct the interest on up to \$1 million in home acquisition debt and up to \$100,000 of a home equity line of credit.

Mortgage Debt Forgiveness Act: If you had mortgage debt forgiven as a result of a mortgage adjustment, foreclosure or short sale in 2012, this act allows for your qualified debt income of up to \$2 million to be excluded from your total income.

Residential Energy Efficient Property Credit: If you made energy-efficient home improvements to your principal residence in 2012, including adding insulation or new energy-efficient exterior windows or heating systems, you may qualify for a credit of up to 30 percent of the cost of all qualifying improvements, up to \$500. This \$500 is a lifetime credit, so if you've claimed the credit in the past you are unable to take again this year.

Traditional IRA Contribution Deduction: Contributions to your Traditional IRA may be deductible. If you have an IRA through your employer, your deduction amount may be limited based on your income. If you make \$58,000 or less (\$92,000 or less for married filers), you are entitled to a deduction of your full contribution amount up to the limit. If your income is higher in either category, you will see a phase-out of the deduction eligibility. If your plan is not sponsored by your employer, your deduction is the full contribution amount with no income phase-out. In general, your contribution amount is limited to the greater of earned income for the year or \$5,000 (\$6,000 if you are 50 or older).

Health Savings Accounts: You can contribute to your Health Savings Account until April 15, 2013, and still deduct your contributions from your 2012 gross income up to the contribution limits of \$3,100 for single-filers and \$6,250 for families. Taxpayers 55 and older can increase these amounts to \$4,100 and \$7,250 respectively. Contributions are deductible even if you don't itemize your return and any interest earned on the account is tax-free.

Charitable Donations Deduction: Donations such as monetary gifts, the value of materials or food donations or the out-of-pocket expenses you incur while volunteering are deductible on your 2012 return. Be sure you have documentation to back up your claim.

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

OPINION

Open letter to legislators

The ongoing public employee pension crisis is a huge barrier to restoring confidence and trust in our government and our state's future prosperity.



Douglas L. Whitley

Letter to Editor

Employers, business owners, investors and financial decision-makers tell me that their disappointment and frustrations with the state's inability to adequately deal with fiscal challenges continue to influence their investment and hiring decisions.

Restoring the state's fiscal integrity is the single most important issue before the 98th General Assembly. Fixing the pension crisis is at the center of the problem and is perhaps the biggest challenge ever to confront an Illinois General Assembly.

Some business leaders with whom I have spoken liken the state's financial situation to a bankruptcy workout plan. In essence, the task before you and your fellow members of this Legislature is to come up with a workout plan for the State of Illinois.

Sadly, your predecessors who served the people of Illinois in the 97th General Assembly failed to fix the broken and unsustainable public employee pension liabilities that have grown over decades to become the largest in the country. However, like it or not, every Illinois resident now looks to you to solve this problem and assure their children a brighter future.

Business leaders tell me what they must see to continue to invest in our state is a well-defined, multi-year financial plan that guarantees resolution and certainty that Illinois is on a course to solvency. Without that, some say they are reluctant to make business plans that include Illinois. Private sector employers expect you to implement a rational and fiscally responsible solution to the public employee pension problems.

Indeed, some employers are struck dumbfounded by government's inability to directly and effectively address the state's financial obligations. This is especially confounding to them because those unaddressed financial obligations are suppressing the very economic activity that would generate greater tax revenues for Illinois. The vicious cycle of deficit spending and poor credit ratings must be broken.

The Illinois Chamber supports and applauds the bipartisan effort organized by Senator Dan Biss and Representative Elaine Nekritz that set a reduction target in excess of \$30 billion. Our desire is to see the 98th Illinois General Assembly approve legislation that is similar in scope. Undoubtedly, this requires more than a token gesture. You must make hard choices that will be painful for recipients to bear and almost universally unpopular. However, such changes are not unprecedented.

It would be worse to adopt an inadequate solution that proves insufficient and forces you to re-visit these monumental problems again and again.

There are those who would plant doubt in your mind by suggesting any substantial and bold solutions you might enact would be ruled unconstitutional by the Illinois Supreme Court. I urge you to keep in mind that naysayers who prefer inaction do so to thwart true leadership

by those who honor their pledge to the public interest. Second-guessing the justices is irrelevant to your fiduciary responsibility of assuring the state's financial solvency.

Any pension law changes will undoubtedly land before the Supreme Court for resolution. Yet, the Supreme Court cannot rule until the General Assembly acts. The General Assembly must venture a thoughtful and justifiable approach to restoring the state's fiscal health.

Nobody thinks this will be easy, and most everyone agrees that the consequences of solving the state's enormous pension liability crisis will adversely affect tens of thousands of individuals. There is never a good time to inform employees and retirees that their benefits will be reduced or that their contributions will increase. However, not acting will only make matters exponentially worse for everyone.

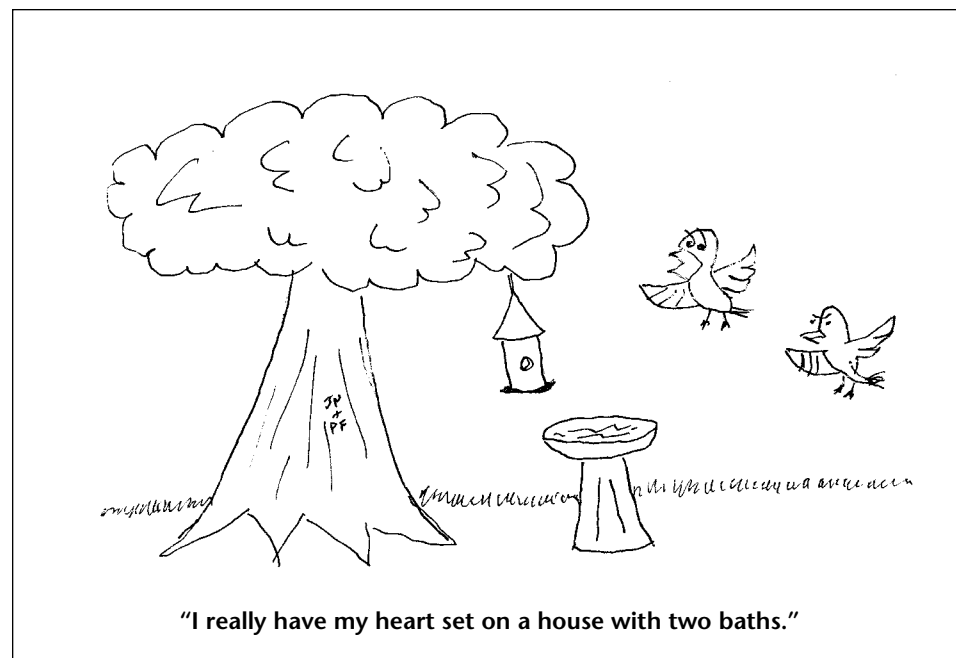
Private sector employers have confronted and addressed similar pension issues every year for decades, because accounting standards have made it abundantly clear that yesterday's retirement plans are unsustainable. It has been a rough road, but private sector employers and their employee unions have restructured pension and health care plans to ensure survival – and have moved on.

You and your colleagues are equipped to embrace and adopt a path to fund solvency, balanced budgets and making payments in a timely manner. The key elements to pension cost reduction are well known, but you must find the political will to create a majority.

Certainly, you and other members of the 98th General Assembly would prefer to be remembered as the Legislature that solved the seemingly unsolvable, rather than be saddled with the legacy of past lawmakers, who carry the infamy of accumulating the largest unfunded pension obligations of any state. I urge you to demonstrate the courage to reverse our state's current dire circumstances, which include:

- A pension debt load of almost \$100 billion and growing by nearly \$2 million a day.
- Retiree funds that may well reach insolvency, without changes.
- An Illinois pension funding ratio of only 45 percent, which is the lowest among the states and woefully short of the recommended 80 percent level.
- A magnitude of annual pension claims (approaching 20 percent) on the budget that limits the state's ability to adequately support other fundamental responsibilities, such as education.
- The fact that the annual growth to adequately and appropriately satisfy the actuarial requirement for pension funding alone exceeds the estimated annual growth in tax receipts.
- An Illinois bond rating that has been downgraded 11 times since 2003, and is the lowest rating among the 50 states.
- Increasingly higher interest rates on debt, due to poor bond ratings, which diminishes funds for basic needs, such as human services.

With such a situation, how does one seriously dispute that unprecedented and drastic measures are not required? The Illinois General Assembly must be fearless in undertaking dramatic changes that undoubtedly will fire the emotions and generate the ire of constituents. Even so, I urge you and your fellow lawmakers to be undaunted in fulfilling your duty as the



Pass GO; collect \$3,427

Sequestration? Who cares. Meteors falling? Yawn. Nukes? Same old, same old. Monopoly tokens? Now you're talking real news.



Joe Natale

WORKING BLUE

I'm okay with the cat. In fact, it looks a lot like our cat. I doubt I ever select it as a game token. I shun the top hat as a display of conspicuous consumption. I usually pick the shoe, humble person that I am.

Hasbro certainly patted itself on the back for its marketing coup. All the company had to do was create prototype tokens of a cat, robot, guitar, helicopter and diamond ring; set up a website and issue a press release, and it had the media eating out of the palm of their hand.

While tokens come and go, the one thing that has not changed in Monopoly is the monetary amounts of its currency to reflect the times.

The game was created in 1934, and for years, the amount of money issued in each game was \$15,140. According to the

Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index Inflation Calculator, that amount is equivalent to \$259,406 in 2012 dollars. In newer games, \$20,580 is issued, which is \$352,615.

In September 2006, a Monopoly Here and Now game was released that multiplied monetary values by 10,000. In that version of the game, a player collects \$2,000,000 instead of \$200 for passing GO. The luxury tax is \$750,000 instead of \$75, which would probably prompt a player to not only hurl their top hat in a fit of rage, but to relocate to the Caymans.

Here are some other Monopoly costs adjusted for inflation: Each player would receive \$25,701 instead of \$1,500 at the start of the game; \$857 instead of \$50 to get out of jail; and \$8,052 instead of \$470 to mortgage Illinois Avenue with three houses.

Worst case scenario: Landing on Boardwalk with a hotel means forking over \$34,267 instead of \$2,000, unless you're too big to fail. Then the government will bail you out. Consider your top hat as collateral.

Joe Natale is a freelance writer from Springfield. He can be e-mailed at: joe@springfieldbusinessjournal.com or follow Joe on Twitter at twitter.com/workingblue

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.

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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

stewards of the state.

On behalf of the members of the Illinois Chamber of Commerce and the millions of Illinois citizens who understand financial discipline must be restored, we urge you to take the necessary votes that will ultimately restore the state's fiscal integrity. We trust you are up to the task.

We thank you in advance for your courage and perseverance, which we all know is necessary to reverse our fortunes.

Sincerely,
Douglas L. Whitley
President & CEO
Illinois Chamber of Commerce

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Keeping the home ownership dream alive

There are many things to consider when building or remodeling a home. Some questions you might be asking include: Where do I start? Who do I call? Why is one bid so much more expensive?



Lee-Ann Burgener

OPINION

My first suggestion would be to check out the local Home Builders Association (HBA) website to find reputable contractors and subcontractors. Members of the HBA are up to date on codes and regulations at the local, state and federal levels.

There are several laws that have been implemented in the past few years which affect the cost of a job.

The lead paint law went in to effect in 2009 which requires a remodeler to follow certain steps when working on a home that was built prior to 1978. New energy code requirements went in to effect Jan. 1. This changes the materials that a builder must use; these required materials are additional costs compared to past requirements. The thermal envelope requirements have changed, so again, make sure your builder is up to date on the energy codes.

Get bids, but make sure you compare apples to apples and oranges to oranges. Don't just go with the lowest bid – look at why the bid is so much cheaper. Do the bids include the same options, or does one include upgrades? Do the bids all take in to account the new laws, codes and ordinances related to building? A reputable and trustworthy contractor will also be willing to provide references.

If you are not sure that now is the time to start a project, remember that prices will only increase for both materials and labor. And here is something else to think about – homebuilding is an industry that has a huge impact on the economy. For every new home that is built, three permanent jobs are created. Constructing 100 new homes would create more than 300 full-time jobs, \$23.1 million in wage

and business income and \$8.9 million in local, state and federal tax revenue. If you are wondering how one industry can have such an impact on the economy, it's because of the ripple effect.

When a home is being built, the builder is purchasing supplies from a local business. The workers are also going to local restaurants and gas stations. When the home is sold, the new homeowner will purchase furniture, decorations and other things for the new home, again pumping money in to the local economy. They are also shopping at local grocery stores, restaurants, gas stations and movie theaters. The ripple down effect is that all of these purchases are putting money in to local

taxes which benefits schools, roads and hospitals. This benefits everyone in our community.

New home construction and remodeling currently account for about 15 percent of the nation's total economy. Included in that total are new construction of single-family and multifamily homes, remodeling and the countless products and services that are related to those activities.

The employment effects of new home construction and remodeling extend far beyond the actual structure. About half of the jobs created by building new homes are in construction. They include framers, electricians, plumbers, finish carpenters and all of the other workers who contribute to preparing the land and building the home.

The rest are in housing-related industries that produce building materials and provide services to both home builders and home buyers. They include: furniture, lighting and appliance industries; metal products industries; plastics and carpeting production; architecture and

engineering; real estate agents, brokers and appraisers; wood products industries; concrete, gypsum and paint production; manufacturing construction equipment and other products; selling, moving and storing products; management, administration, government, law, finance and insurance.

New homes and apartments don't arrive here on container ships from other countries, and most of the products used in home construction and remodeling are manufactured right here in the United States.

Home ownership is the American dream. Everyone wants to own their own home and most Americans

consider home ownership to be the single best long term investment and a primary source of wealth and financial security. While the housing market has seen substantial improvement over the past year, we need to keep the momentum moving forward. So go ahead and start planning that remodel, or building a new home. Just make sure to do your homework first.

If you still have questions there are resources available, such as the Springfield Area Home Builders Association (www.springfieldareahba.com) and the National Association of Home Builders (www.nahb.org). Check out the articles on various topics related to home building and remodeling, or search for a member to assist with your project. We are here to help, and want to help you build your dream home and live the American Dream.

Lee-Ann Burgener is executive officer of Springfield Area Home Builders Association

“Constructing 100 new homes would create more than 300 full-time jobs, \$23.1 million in wage and business income and \$8.9 million in local, state and federal tax revenue. If you are wondering how one industry can have such an impact on the economy, it's because of the ripple effect.”

ROSES and THORNS

A Rose – To Kiku for breathing new life into the former Damon's building on Lindbergh Drive, which has sat vacant since the 2006 tornado.

A Thorn – To businesses leaving Illinois due to poor economic climate. Obviously we can empathize but we need businesses to stay and help solve our problem(s), otherwise there will be no one left.

A Rose – To Maureen Bluhm for spearheading efforts improve energy efficiency in the Capital City with the PACE program.

A Rose – To the NAACP for celebrating the 92nd Annual Lincoln-Douglas Banquet and to Teresa Haley for her leadership with the NAACP.

A Rose – To the bedroom communities surrounding Springfield in boosting their economic development efforts. Their success will result in a stronger Sangamon County.

LOOKING BACK

5 years ago in the Business Journal (March 2008) ...

- Foreclosures were on the rise, but only slightly in Springfield compared to the national average.
- Isringhausen's was planning the opening of their new BMW facility on Madison Street in mid-March.
- Landscapers discussed preparing for the fast and furious season ahead of them.
- Some local REALTORS® discussed the benefits of using a team approach in listing, showing and selling homes.
- Local auto glass repair shops talked about innovations in their industry.
- Springfield chili enthusiasts discussed the "Super Bowl of Chili," a four-day chili tour.

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: Colleges and Universities, Independent Private Schools, Golf Courses, Golf Outings

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