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Springfield-area hotels  
see pre-pandemic numbers



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# The real influencers

Reading this month's profile of Evelyn Brandt Thomas as she approaches her 100th birthday reminded me of my great-grandmother, who was a firecracker up until her death at the age of 99. I grew up calling her Susie, because she said being known as Grandma would make her feel old. We did not bake cookies or have tea parties together or any of the more traditional activities between a grandmother and granddaughter, but she imparted to me her love of history and traveling, along with her Quaker pacifism and a strong sense of social justice.

Susie earned a doctorate degree at a time when women were often discouraged from pursuing higher education. While she did marry and have children, she also went on to have an extensive career, initially getting her foot in the door because most of the men were serving in World War II. Likewise, Brandt Thomas was a trailblazer for women in the male-dominated field of agriculture.

While Brandt Thomas is still involved in the company she and her brother founded, institutional knowledge is getting harder to find. The first baby boomers reached age 62 in 2008, the earliest age for Social Security retirement benefits, and the last will reach full retirement age by 2031. In between, the COVID-19 pandemic led to a disproportionate number of experienced workers leaving their jobs. Goldman Sachs estimates that more than half of those who left the workforce during the Great Resignation were over the age of 55.

While our social-media-driven society often focuses on the latest trends and rewards so-called "influencers," the real influencers are those whose lives and careers have paved the way for today's young professionals. Most of us can point to at least one person who mentored us professionally early on, and it was almost always someone with substantially more life experience. Companies would be wise to strategize ways to retain their senior employees, at least long enough to impart some of that wisdom to the next generation.



*Michelle Ownbey, publisher*



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# EVELYN



# BRANDT



# THOMAS



# Iconic entrepreneur and philanthropist

By Jean Campbell

**E**velyn Brandt Thomas is a well-known business figure in central Illinois and beyond. She and her brother, Glen, co-founded Brandt Fertilizer Inc. in 1953. The company, now simply BRANDT, has grown to be an international giant in agriculture. She is also recognized for her community leadership and giving back through her philanthropic activities. And we would be remiss not to mention that Brandt Thomas is an outgoing, fun-loving person who can be seen bidding on cattle at the Illinois State Fair and attending NASCAR races to cheer on BRANDT-sponsored driver Justin Allgaier.

Brandt Thomas has two big reasons to celebrate this year. It is the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of BRANDT, and she will celebrate her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in August. “I don’t like surprises, so I am planning my own party,” she says with a smile. “I can promise there will be food, drinks and lots of people.”

Brandt Thomas was born and raised on the Brandt family farm in Salisbury Township with parents who emphasized a strong work ethic. She attended Springfield High School where she took two years of shorthand, typing and bookkeeping classes. Then she took accounting classes at Illinois Business College. At the same time, she was keeping records for the family farm.

Brandt Thomas’ formal education and hands-on experience prepared her to take on the financial management of the new company, while Glen focused on sales. Her husband, Gordon R. Thomas, who had earned an agriculture degree from the University of Illinois, also joined the company and was responsible for soil testing.

In the 1950s, there weren’t many women pursuing careers outside the home. “I was a pioneer at the time because I was a female business owner and was working in the ag industry,” she notes. “My strength was keeping records on everything. That earned me the nickname of ‘the Hawk’ because I sent the bills, collected the payments and held onto the money. Nothing got by me.”

Over the years, BRANDT built a reputation as an innovator in agriculture technology. “We started by selling liquid fertilizer when most farmers were using dry fertilizer,” she recalls. “When farmers saw how crop yields increased, they became believers and longtime customers.

That was just the beginning.”

Today, BRANDT manufactures and sells more than 300 agricultural products in 80-plus countries. The company began its international expansion in Mexico in the mid-1980s. Brandt Thomas was active in the expansion, traveling to Mexico, Brazil and Europe.

“Our goal has always been to help farmers grow new and better crops,” shares Brandt Thomas. It’s very rewarding knowing that we are contributing to food supplies around the world.”

Brandt Thomas lost her husband in 2003 and her brother in 2020, but she still has family helping her lead the business. Her nephew, Rick Brandt (Glen’s son), joined BRANDT in 1991 and was named CEO and president in 1995.



PHOTOS BY TERRY FARMER

During her career, Brandt Thomas has been lauded by many organizations for her business and civic leadership. She was one of the 2008 Women of Influence recognized by *Springfield Business Journal* and Security Bank. The next year, she received the Athena Award. In 2011, she was selected by Illinois Agri-Women as Outstanding Business Woman in Agriculture. She received an honorary doctorate degree from UIS in 2014 and was inducted into the Senior Illinoisans Hall of Fame in 2020. In 2022, she was named *The State Journal-Register* First Citizen.

The charitable work of Brandt Thomas and her husband has been recognized as well. The Association of Fundraising Professionals awarded the couple its 2002 Outstanding Philanthropist Award. Key aspects of their philanthropy

have been education and agriculture. Brandt Thomas established numerous scholarships with many named in memory of her husband. Scholarships are available to Pleasant Plains High School students, the National FFA Foundation, women in business at University of Illinois (both Champaign-Urbana and Springfield) and students enrolling in agriculture at Lincoln Land Community College. Brandt Thomas and The BRANDT Foundation also partnered with LLC on the Kreher Agriculture Center with funding for the simulation lab and the soil lab also named in memory of Gordon R. Thomas.

Beyond education, The BRANDT Foundation supports food banks, health care institutions and many other organizations. A special project for Brandt Thomas has been the Educational Center for the Visually Impaired.

Brandt Thomas became involved when the Lions Club held an event where it roasted her to raise funds to build the new center. The mission of ECVI is to improve the quality of life of individuals who are blind or visually impaired by providing education, training and development services and programs. With support from BRANDT, the center opened in 2018, adjacent to the company’s headquarters. Visual impairment is personal for Brandt Thomas because she was diagnosed with macular degeneration in 2000.

Brandt Thomas’ other passion is BRANDT’s sponsorship of race car driver and Riverton native Justin Allgaier. Earlier this year, at the NASCAR race in Daytona, she was thrilled to broadcast the announcement, “Drivers, start your engines.” Brandt Thomas says the sponsorship is not only fun, it helps expand BRANDT’s presence in many markets.

Even on the brink of her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, Brandt Thomas is not slowing down. She still goes into the office, visits employees at company plants, travels and is involved in the community.

“Staying busy is therapy for me,” she says. “This company is like a child I raised. We’re a family. Many employees have thanked me for sharing my values of honesty, integrity and work ethic with them.”

When asked if there’s anything on her bucket list, Brandt Thomas says a recent addition is to spend more time with old friends that she’s known for many years. “Other than that, I feel like I’ve been there, done that, and I’ll keep on going.” **SBJ**

# WOMEN



1.



2.



3.



4.

1. Shatriya Smith, her husband Eli Bernardoni, Vinod Gupta, Anjna Gupta and Don Shandrow
2. Carrie Ward, right, with nominator Marilyn Kushak
3. Aislyn Grant, Taryn Grant, Sean Grant and Aiden Grant
4. Anjna Gupta, Shashi Bansal, Jayanta Nandi, Chandana Nandi, Jharna Sinha and Sarita Varma
5. Marilyn Kushak, Val Yazell, Pam Molitoris

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

On Tuesday, May 9, Security Bank hosted a reception at Island Bay Yacht Club. Stephan Paul Antonacci, president and CEO of Security Bank, presented awards to this year's recipients: Taryn Grant, Chandana Nandi, Shatriya Smith and Carrie Ward.

PHOTOS BY LEE MILNER



5.





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# BEST PLACES TO WORK CEREMONY 2023



1. Sharon Riechers, Sr. Director of Global Sales Administration for BUNN, was the keynote speaker.

2. MJ Kellner Foodservice was named one of the 2023 Best Places to Work in the alumni category.

3. Conn's Hospitality Group was recognized as one of this year's Best Places to Work.

4. Left to right: Bob Narmont, chairman of United Community Bank, talks with Michael Kraft and Kent Kraft of Farmland Solutions.

The 2023 Best Places to Work were recognized at a reception and awards ceremony held on May 18 at United Community Bank, 1900 W. Illes Ave.

- American Metals Supply Company (51-100 employees)
- Conn's Hospitality Group (51-100 employees)
- Kuhn & Trello Consulting Engineers (16-50 employees)
  - MJ Kellner Foodservice (alumni)
  - Kerber, Eck & Braeckel (alumni)

Each year, employees have the opportunity to nominate their company to be recognized. In order to be considered, a company must have been in business at least two years, be based in Sangamon or Morgan County and have 16 or more employees (those with 15 or fewer are eligible for our small business awards program, 15 Under Fifteen). Visit [springfieldbusinessjournal.com](http://springfieldbusinessjournal.com) and click on the "awards" tab to see a list of previous selectees or make a nomination.





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Dr. Janet Gooch mingles with students during a welcome picnic held for her last year. PHOTO COURTESY UIS

## Janet Gooch completes first year at UIS

By David Blanchette

Janet Gooch has been the University of Illinois Springfield chancellor for one full academic year now, and she has come to appreciate the energy on campus that is fueled by the interaction between students, faculty and staff. Gooch hopes to build upon that energy as she enters her second year at the helm.

"There are a lot of different areas of the university that we need to be focused on, and that is why it is so important that I have a good team of people working with me," Gooch said. "We have several vice chancellor positions that we've searched for this year; some of them have been filled and some of them we are hoping to fill very soon. Having that good, quality team working together in the future I think only guarantees further success for our university."

Gooch wants to continue working with the area business community and political leaders to determine which career needs the university should address with its degree programs. This includes making sure that graduates are well-versed in the latest emerging technology, such as artificial intelligence.

"It's important that we adapt our curriculum and develop new programs, certificates and

learning opportunities so that our students are readily prepared to contribute to the workforce," Gooch said. "These new artificial intelligence apps are life-changing, and we have to make sure that as an institution of higher education we are right there with the change. We have to evolve to stay relevant and meaningful."

While undergoing that evolution, Gooch said it's critical that UIS stays focused on the big picture, providing the best possible education for its students.

"We have a public service piece, and we have a customer service piece, just as any corporation does," Gooch said. "We have a product that we deliver, a high-quality education that will be transformative to students, and we have to constantly work to improve that product."

That educational product must be inclusive. Gooch brings a philosophy of diversity, inclusion and belonging to her role that she is working to engrain into every part of UIS life.

"We are intent on bringing diverse students to our campus and making them feel like they are welcomed and respected individuals here," Gooch said. "We are also hoping to promote increased diversity on our staff and faculty to

match the demographics of our students."

Gooch is a believer in community service. She has joined several community boards and organizations since arriving in Springfield and encourages UIS students to get out into the community as well.

"It's important that our students are engaged in the community in internships and service learning opportunities and that our staff and faculty also contribute to the community through volunteerism and shaping of policy and advocacy," Gooch said. "We all have a role to improve the Springfield community and the state of Illinois through what we do and how we serve our community."

If there is one mantra to Gooch's role as chancellor at UIS, it is "we are in it for the students." Gooch tries to set an example of that philosophy by being as visible on campus as she can be, whether it's attending student or faculty events.

"I feel that the more you engage, the more you personally get out of your experience, and the more you contribute to the experience of others," Gooch said. **SBJ**





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# A renewed focus on local networking

By Amy Figueroa

With economic concerns on the rise and so many recent shifts in the ever-evolving business landscape, area networking groups are taking center stage. Participating in networking groups and events provides professionals with an opportunity to build relationships, generate referrals and leads and increase overall visibility. It also presents a chance to support, mentor and build mutually beneficial collaborative partnerships.

In addition to these benefits, involvement with networking groups also plays a crucial role in personal development. Larry Hemingway, Sr., senior program manager for the Springfield Urban League, is also a longtime member and vice president of education for the League of Our Own Toastmasters Club. He stressed the importance of these developmental efforts, saying, "Communication and leadership skills are so important in a professional arena, for anyone and everyone. It encompasses everyone, regardless of age, race, sex or religion; we all have to continue working on improving our leadership and communication processes in order to thrive in a humanistic environment."

"Toastmasters International facilitates that growth process by providing a positive learning experience where members can really develop their communication and leadership skills in a way that naturally builds self-confidence," said Hemingway. "Every Toastmasters meeting focuses on communication and leadership, and we really work hard to create a loving, supportive environment for both personal and professional growth," he explained.

Jamie Stout, owner and designer of Sugar Creek Furnishings, and human resources manager of policy and compliance for Memorial Health, expressed a similar sentiment about her membership and participation as chairwoman of programs for Illinois Women in Leadership. "I joined IWIL because it was a great networking tool. I can walk into any professional room in Springfield, and I will know someone who is connected to IWIL. So if you're looking for someone in a professional area or career, you automatically have someone you can confidently reach out to," she said. "Many of these women have been references for me, they have helped me in my career along the way, and I would absolutely do the same thing for them. I love being a part of this kind of network," Stout said.



Other longtime members of IWIL agreed. "This organization has given me that platform to meet other women in my community," said Jen DeJong, president of IWIL and founder of Sicilian Encounters, a small business dedicated to planning and organizing cultural trips to Sicily.

"Despite working from home, I've been able to meet so many professional women, and I have gained so many friends and so many opportunities to serve in our community, which has been important to me. I really value that about IWIL," said DeJong.

Perhaps the greatest testament to the power of local networking groups comes from Desiree Logsdon, senior vice president of corporate citizenship for Bunn, a longtime resident of Springfield and member of IWIL. Logsdon had this to say about her experience: "I've been a member for nearly 40 years, and what I love most about IWIL is that throughout my entire career, IWIL has stayed relevant. They have been able to look at what professional women in our community need and provide those things, whether it was educational platforms, new ways to network or special interest groups. As long as

it was relevant, IWIL has met that need." She elaborated, "It's very unique that in almost 40 years there has always been something very valuable that you can harvest from this group."

It's clear business networking groups offer a myriad benefits that are invaluable to professionals, individuals and businesses alike. By fostering relationship-building, generating referrals, sharing knowledge, promoting collaboration, providing support, enhancing visibility and facilitating community involvement, these groups serve as indispensable platforms for ongoing personal and professional growth. Engaging with local business networking groups can contribute significantly to the success and sustainability of businesses in today's increasingly competitive landscape.

If prioritizing networking opportunities is something you're interested in incorporating into a marketing strategy this year, there are many great opportunities awaiting you right here in Springfield. **SBJ**





## The sky's the limit

LLCC receives \$500K grant to help train aircraft mechanics amid industry wide shortage

By Scott Reeder

To combat a national shortage of aircraft mechanics, the Federal Aviation Administration has given Lincoln Land Community College a \$500,000 grant.

"We earmarked over half of that money to be for student support: tuition, books and tools. We're also helping them pay for their testing that they'll do upon graduation," said Nancy Sweet, dean of the college's workforce institute.

She said the grant helps pay for up to 75% of the tuition for eligible students, plus tools and books, with an emphasis on recruiting women and students of color. Additional financial aid assistance is available for those who qualify.

There is a strong demand for technicians with these skills not only nationally but also locally, said Dave Pietrzak, director of the college's aviation program. Many graduates work for StandardAero, previously known as Garrett Aviation, at Springfield's Abraham Lincoln Capital Airport.

The program started in 2001 after Garrett officials expressed a strong desire for LLCC to train people to have the skills their business needed, he said.

StandardAero's Springfield location houses one of North America's top corporate jet service facilities. For more than 40 years, the operation with more than 220 employees has performed hundreds of modifications, major structural repairs, inspections, interior refurbishments, avionics installations and painted business jet aircraft.

Pietrzak said graduates of the program are now earning more than \$100,000 annually. He said this reflects the overall demand for people with skills in the aviation industry.

"There haven't been enough people to do everything that needs to be done," he said. "So now, every facet of aviation – every person who works in aviation, whatever the job might be, is in demand, whether it's the Federal Aviation Administration, whether it's the people who run the control tower, whether it's a ticket agent, a ramp agent, a pilot – they're all in great need. And we're just focusing in right now on teaching technicians to be what we call airframe and powerplant mechanics."

In a separate move, airport and local economic development officials have been in discussions with Southern Illinois University to create a pilot training facility at the airport. Eventually, the pilot training program may have more than 100 students, said Mike Murphy, president and CEO of the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce. He said he anticipates SIU making a formal announcement within two months.

Sweet said LLCC offers an 18-month program that certifies that its graduates are proficient in airframe and powerplant mechanics. The college also offers a two-year associate degree. Between nine and 14 students are enrolled in the program each semester, she said.

The shortage of skilled workers doesn't surprise

people in the aviation industry, Pietrzak said.

"Five years ago, we could definitely see the situation coming," he said. "Seventy-five percent of all the technicians were age 50 or older. And it's only gotten higher since then. Guys are retiring, and there are not enough people replacing them. I've been involved in aviation since 1974, when I first went to school. I have never seen such a demand for qualified individuals."

Most of the people entering the training are recent high school graduates, although they do have some older students as well, he said.

"I have seen the wages increasing almost exponentially in the last five years," Pietrzak said. "And it's become a pretty lucrative position. With our program, you only need 18 months of training. We have seen some of the starting wages go from \$15 an hour a few years back to \$30 an hour – at the same place. And there are places where there's even a little higher starting wage right out of school. Plus, of course, this is a job where they still offer benefits and there's a lot of future."

Open houses for students interested in this career will be held from 5-7 p.m. Tuesdays, June 27 and July 11, at LLCC's Levi, Ray and Shoup Aviation Center at Abraham Lincoln Capital Airport. **SBJ**

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## Springfield in the spotlight

PBS segment to highlight the capital city

*By Scott Reeder*

Public television viewers across the country will soon learn what Springfield has to offer, thanks to a television feature hosted by actor Dennis Quaid.

The *Big Easy* star hosts the Viewpoint Project, which specializes in short-form public television stories. Each story highlights specific industries, communities or topics around the world.

Producers from the show reached out to Springfield leaders wanting to produce a story about the capital city, said Amy Beadle, marketing manager of the Springfield Convention & Visitors Bureau.

"They were looking for a city in Illinois that would be willing to go through the process of getting this all arranged and then being available for a film crew," she said. "It's been a process that began last August. It's taken a little bit of time to get everything pulled together and see everything come to fruition."

She said the demographics of PBS's core audience is consistent with that of tourists who visit Springfield.

"The majority is going to be that 45 to 65-plus (age range)," she said. "They are that boomer gen-

eration – grandparents traveling with grandchildren. And so, we felt like PBS really had the level of professionalism, along with the audience that they attract for their viewership, that it made real good sense for us to take part in this project."

Beadle said the segment about Springfield is about five minutes long and will likely reach 60 million households during the next year. While filming for the PBS segment, work was also done for a one-minute commercial and a six-minute marketing video.

The one-minute commercials will appear not only on PBS but on CNN, BBC, MSNBC and other television channels, Beadle said. The six-minute marketing video will be used by the SCVB to attract conventions and visitors throughout the region.

The city of Springfield spent \$24,500 to underwrite the cost of the filming.

"Our advertising budget comes from the hotel-motel tax. So, it's not paid for by local residents," Beadle said. Beadle noted:

- Tourism is a \$483 million industry in Springfield and Sangamon County.

- At least 1 million people visit Springfield each year.
- 3,500 area jobs are supported by the tourism industry, accounting for a \$110 million annual payroll.
- Tourists pay about \$10 million in sales taxes locally each year.

Among the people interviewed for the short documentary was Ryan McCrady, executive director of the Springfield Sangamon Growth Alliance.

"The only story I have to tell is the truth, and it's a good one," he said. "I think that it's important for people to know that when you look at Springfield and when you look at what we have to offer, it's a great place to live and a great place to have your business."

"You have the ability to enjoy a top-notch community at a cost of living that is about 93% of the national average. We have a good, diverse set of career opportunities, which is important to families, because most families don't all work in the same place or the same industry." **SBJ**

*Scott Reeder a staff writer for Illinois Times can be reached at [sreeder@illinoistimes.com](mailto:sreeder@illinoistimes.com).*



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# MAJOR EMPLOYERS

Sources: Sangamon County Growth Alliance.  
\*State of Illinois number includes all state government agencies, including education institutions within Sangamon County.

	EMPLOYER NAME	NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES	PRINCIPAL	PRODUCT/SERVICE	YEAR EST'D	WEBSITE
1	State of Illinois	17,800*	JB Pritzker Governor	Government	1818	illinois.gov
2	Memorial Health System	5,238	Edgar J. Curtis President and CEO	Health Care	1897	memorialmedical.com
3	Hospital Sisters Health System	4,434	Damond W. Boatwright President and CEO	Health Care	1875	st-johns.org
4	Springfield Clinic	2,449	Ray Williams CEO	Health Care	1939	springfieldclinic.com
5	Springfield Public Schools #186	2,130	Jennifer Gill Superintendent	Education	1854	sps186.org
6	University of Illinois Springfield	1,642	Janet L. Gooch Chancellor	Higher Education	1969	uis.edu
7	SIU School of Medicine	1,470	Jerry Kruse Dean/Provost	Higher Education/ Health Care	1970	siumed.edu
8	City of Springfield	1,410	Misty Buscher Mayor	Government	1832	springfield.il.us
9	Horace Mann	1,024	Marita Zuraitis President and CEO	Insurance	1945	horacemann.com
10	Blue Cross/ Blue Shield	900	Stephen Harris President	Insurance	1929	bcbs.com





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# MAJOR MANUFACTURERS SANGAMON COUNTY

Sources: Springfield Sangamon Growth Alliance; the manufacturers  
DND - Did Not Disclose. Ranked by number of full-time employees

	NAME/ADDRESS	PHONE / WEBSITE/EMAIL	FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES	FACILITY SIZE (SQ. FT.)	PRINCIPAL(S)	PRODUCT/SERVICE	YEAR EST'D
1	<b>BUNN</b> Corporate Headquarters and International Corporate Office 5020 Ash Grove Dr. Springfield, Illinois 62711	800-637-8606 217-529-6601 bunn.com	550	100,000+	Arthur Bunn president and CEO	Manufacturer of a complete line of dispensed beverage solutions for coffee, tea, cappuccino, granita, juice, espresso, water filtration and more	1957
2	<b>Standard Aero</b> 1200 N. Airport Dr. Springfield, IL 62707	800-731-7371 standardaero.com	197	250,000+	David Pearman	Aircraft service, modification	1911
3	<b>Simplex, Inc.</b> PO Box 7388 Springfield, IL 62791	217-483-1600 simplexdirect.com	175	125,000	Amanda Hupp, president Thomas Debrey, CEO	Load banks, day tanks, fuel supply systems	1934
4	<b>BRANDT</b> 2935 S. Koke Mill Road Springfield, IL 62711	217-547-5800 brandt.co	155	125,000+	Rick Brandt, CEO	Fertilizers, crop protection, micronu- trients, spray adjuvants, seed	1953
5	<b>Nudo Products, Inc.</b> 1500 Taylor Ave. Springfield, IL 62703	217-528-5636 nudo.com	151	400,000	Stephen Adkins, president Andrew Wylie, vice pres. general manager	Manufacturer of wall, ceiling, floor, exterior, sign and transportation panels with a variety of finishes and substrates.	1954
6	<b>Arch Coal Viper Mine</b> 5945 Lester Road Williamsville, IL 62693	217-566-3000 N/A	120	DND	Jason Stockton production manager	Coal producer	1982
7	<b>DICKEY-john Corporation</b> 5200 Dickey John Road Auburn, IL 62615	217-438-3371 dickey-john.com	135	225,000	Jeff Schertz, vice pres. of operations	Electronic design and manufacture of systems controls for agriculture and public works	1966
8	<b>Solomon Colors, Inc.</b> 4050 Color Plant Road Springfield, IL 62702	217-522-3112 solomoncolors.com	100	250,000	Adam Solomon, president, Richard Solomon, chairman Charles Kreutzer, vice pres./CFO	Manufacturer of iron oxide pigments sup- plied to ready mix, mortar and concrete product producers. A full line of decora- tive products and dispensing equipment for metering iron oxide pigments	1927
9	<b>Mel-O-Cream Donuts Intl., Inc.</b> 5456 International Parkway Springfield, IL 62711	217-483-7272 mel-o-cream.com	80	70,000	Eric Larson CEO	Frozen dough products and frozen pre-fried donuts	1932
10	<b>Henry Technologies</b> 701 S. Main St. Chatham, IL 62629	217-483-2406 henry-group.net	55	110,000	John Murray, operations director	Components for HVAC/industrial and commercial refrigeration	1914
11	<b>Ace Sign Co.</b> 2540 S. First St. Springfield, IL 62704	217-522-8417 acesignco.com	75	42,000	Todd Bringuet, CEO	Manufacturer of custom signage and graphics	1940
12	<b>Cast Industries, Inc.</b> 580 North St. Springfield, IL 62704	217-522-8292 CastInd.com	55	DND	Ron Stevens, James Stevens	Manufacturer of lead fishing tackle	1987





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# MAJOR MANUFACTURERS MORGAN COUNTY

Sources: Jacksonville Regional Economic Development Corporation; the manufacturers  
DND - Did Not Disclose. Ranked by number of full-time employees.

	NAME/ADDRESS	PHONE / WEBSITE/EMAIL	FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES	FACILITY SIZE (SQ. FT.)	PRINCIPAL(S)	PRODUCT/SERVICE	YEAR EST'D
1	<b>Reynolds Consumer Products</b> 500 E. Superior Ave. Jacksonville, IL 62650	217-243-3311 reynoldsconsumerproducts.com	800	360,000 (west plant), 508,000 (east plant)	Clinton Thompson plant manager	Polyethylene bags and films	1962
2	<b>Perma-Bound Books, a division of Hertzberg-New Method, Inc.</b> 617 E. Vandalia Road Jacksonville, IL 62650	217-243-5451 perma-bound.com	300	320,000	James Orr owner/president Bill Hull plant manager	Prebound books for schools and libraries	1953
3	<b>Nestlé USA</b> 1111 Carnation Drive Jacksonville, IL 62650	217-245-9511 nestleusa.com	165	30 acres	Caryl Sanders factory manager	Non-dairy creamer	1970
4	<b>CCK Automations, Inc.</b> 500 Capitol Way Jacksonville, IL 62650	217-243-6040 cckautomations.com	140	100,000	Mark Stephenson CEO	Printed circuit board assemblies, industrial control panels, injection molded parts, engineering services	1999
5	<b>Bound to Stay Bound Books</b> 1880 W. Morton Ave. Jacksonville, IL 62650	217-245-5191 btsb.com	125	110,000	Bob Sibert, president Lori Smith vice pres./general manager	Prebound children's library books	1920
6	<b>ILMO Products Company</b> 7 Eastgate Drive Jacksonville, IL 62650	217-245-2183 ilmoproducts.com	102	40,000 (8 acres)	Brad Floreth CEO/president Elizabeth Standley executive vice president	Wholesale/retail distributor of industrial, medical, laboratory EPA protocol, propane and specialty gases and welding equipment sales and service	1913
7	<b>Jacksonville Machine Inc.</b> 2265 W. Morton Ave. Jacksonville, IL 62650	217-243-1119 jmimachine.com	55	42,000	Jeff Rodems president	CNC job shop	1919
8	<b>Pallet Repair Systems (PRS)</b> 2 Eastgate Drive Jacksonville, IL 62650	217-291-0009 prsgroupinc.com	32	50,000	Jeff Williams	Manufacturer of machinery	1989
9	<b>Rutland Products</b> 7 Crabtree Road Jacksonville, IL 62650	217-245-7810 rutland.com	30	60,000	Mike Linn vice pres. of operations	Manufacturer of stove and fireplace repair products	1961
9	<b>UGL</b> 550 Capitol Way Jacksonville, IL 62650	217-243-7878 ugl.com	30	43,000	Scott Knott	Home maintenance and repair items	1985
9	<b>BPC, LLC</b> 1933 Old Naples Road Meredosia, IL 62665	217-584-1110 N/A	30	75,000	Brian VandeStreek plant manager	Conducts comprehensive analytical testing of resin compounds and conducts trials and DOE to produce specially compounded materials and engineered resins	2012
10	<b>Eli Bridge Company</b> 800 Case Ave. Jacksonville, IL 62650	217-245-7145 elibrige.com	14	66,000	Patty Sullivan president, CEO	Amusement ride manufacturing and metal fabrication	1900
11	<b>Gaither Tool Co.</b> 2255 W. Morton Ave. Jacksonville, IL 62650	800-452-5010 gaithertool.com.	8	30,000	Richard Brahler II	Manufactures tools and systems to service and maintain tire and wheel assemblies	1988
11	<b>Tarps Manufacturing</b> 1000 State Highway 104 Meredosia, IL 62665	217-584-1900 tarpsmfg.com	8	28,000	Rich Ott	Construction containment tarps and roll tarps for trucking and agriculture	2003



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## Springfield-area hotels see pre-pandemic numbers

By Holly A. Whisler

Although hotels were among the industries hardest hit by the COVID shutdown of 2020, occupancy and revenue have returned to pre-pandemic levels. In 2019, the hotel industry in Springfield brought \$70 million to the city. In 2020, revenue dropped to \$37 million before climbing to \$59 million in 2021. Last year, revenue finally returned to pre-pandemic numbers, and this year it's still trending in the right direction.

"I am hopeful we will continue moving in a positive direction, as long as we do not see a recession," said Darin Dame, chair of the board of directors for the Illinois Hotel & Lodging Association and general manager of SpringHill Suites by Marriott, 3921 S. MacArthur Blvd.

Hotels will be one of the industries to benefit from the \$175 million of grant funds available through the Back to Business program announced by Gov. JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity in March. Dame said these grant funds will help bolster payrolls, provide training or repay small loans that were necessary to get a hotel through COVID times.

Scott Dahl, director of the Springfield Convention & Visitors Bureau, said Springfield's hotel sector is solid, especially coming off of a pandemic. In 2022, the hotels in Springfield realized

more revenue than in 2017, 2018 or 2019.

"Our hotels are sustaining a 70% occupancy rate," said Dahl, "and we are on the cusp of the new sports market that Scheels Sports Park will attract, along with the continued return of conventions and an increasing number of visitors coming to see the sites of the capital city. These are indicators of a very promising future."

Dame added that Springfield-area hotels are heavily reliant on state government business, which is finally picking up since having to shut down in 2020. "Lobbyists are returning and so are small conventions, which were missing in 2021 and 2022. Although most conventions still offer the option to attend virtually, attendance numbers indicate that people are ready to gather in person. So far this year attendance is looking like it did in pre-pandemic years. It's also been good to see school groups and other visitors return to tour the Lincoln sites. We haven't seen that business since 2020," he said. Overall, Dame said business has improved tremendously.

Although Dame said it's great to have business bouncing back, he noted there are still some staffing challenges since the pandemic. Dame said that staffing levels are, for the most part, back to where they need to be, with the exception of banquet staffing.

Dahl added that there are also staffing chal-

lenges when it comes to room attendants and front desk staff, despite wages increasing above minimum wage. He said this was not an issue prior to the pandemic, and he thinks people found satisfactory remote work or a new career. Dahl said it is a nationwide issue, not anything unique to Springfield.

Dame commented that some jobs are always tough to fill and they are all necessary, so the hope is that they will bounce back. Salaried and leadership positions are mostly filled in the Springfield area, although Dame noted the hotel-industry job market on the whole has been difficult since the pandemic, even though salaries have increased tremendously. Hourly wages have increased up to 40%. A position paying \$10 an hour prior to the pandemic is likely paying \$14 now. "That's a good thing – jobs helping people get ahead in life," said Dame.

Springfield-area hotels have rebounded quicker than those in most cities, according to Dahl, and with the anticipated influx of sports tourism and the possible BOS Center expansion, demand for hotel rooms will increase. Currently, Springfield has a supply of 4,000 hotel rooms, including three major convention hotels, and Dahl said Springfield is in a favorable position for hotel expansion. **SBJ**





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Courtesy of Jill Gum Photography

# HOTELS

Source: The Hotels  
Ranked by number of rooms.

	NAME/ADDRESS	PHONE WEBSITE/EMAIL	NUMBER OF ROOMS	NUMBER OF MEETING ROOMS	ROOM RATE SINGLE/DOUBLE	GENERAL MANAGER
1	<b>Wyndham Springfield City Centre</b> 700 E. Adams St. Springfield, IL 62701	217-789-1530 wyndham.com	369	20	\$119 - \$229	Gosia Wray
2	<b>President Abraham Lincoln Springfield - A DoubleTree by Hilton</b> 701 E. Adams St. Springfield, IL 62701	217-544-8800 dtspringfieldil.com	310	17	\$109 - \$299	Christi Rios
3	<b>Crowne Springfield Convention Center</b> 3000 S. Dirksen Parkway Springfield, IL 62703	217-529-7777 cpspringfield.com	288	32	\$109 - \$229	Mary Newland
4	<b>Holiday Inn Express</b> 3050 S. Dirksen Parkway Springfield, IL 62703	217-529-7771 hiexpress.com	140	2	\$89 - \$165 (2 suites)	Mary Newland
5	<b>State House Inn</b> 101 E. Adams St. Springfield, IL 62701	217-528-5100 springfieldstatehouseinn.com	125	6	\$99 - \$399	Gregg Pearson
6	<b>Extended Stay America</b> 3185 S. Dirksen Parkway Springfield, IL 62703	217-529-1100 extendedstayamerica.com	108	0	\$75 - \$135	Ben Anthony
7	<b>Drury Inn &amp; Suites</b> 3180 S. Dirksen Parkway Springfield, IL 62703	217-529-3900 druryhotels.com	117	0	\$99 - \$199	Miranda Bergman
7	<b>Hilton Garden Inn Springfield</b> 3100 S. Dirksen Parkway Springfield, IL 62703	217-529-7171 springfieldil.gardeninn.com	117	7	\$119 - \$250 (13 suites)	Lenae Pilkington
8	<b>Candlewood Suites</b> 2501 Sunrise Drive Springfield, IL 62703	217-522-5100 candlewoodsuites.com gm.cwsuites@gmail.com	110	1	\$119 - \$134	Justin Roesch
9	<b>Residence Inn Springfield South</b> 2915 Stanford Ave. Springfield, IL 62703	217-527-1100 marriott.com/spiri	108	1	\$149 - \$199	Mark Vanhala
10	<b>Northfield Inn, Suites &amp; Conference Center</b> 3280 Northfield Drive Springfield, IL 62702	217-523-7900 northfieldinn.com	106	8	\$109 - \$139	Tony Curtis
11	<b>Route 66 Hotel and Conference Center</b> 625 E. Saint Joseph St. Springfield, IL 62703	217-529-6626 route66hotel@gmail.com	103	4	\$72 - \$249 (10 suites)	DND
12	<b>Motel 6</b> 6011 S. Sixth St. Springfield, IL 62712	217-529-1633 motel6.com	101	0	Based on availability	Aburva Patel
13	<b>Ramada Springfield North</b> 3281 Northfield Drive Springfield, IL 62702	217-523-4000 springfieldramada.com	97	2	\$109 - \$139	Mike Grant
14	<b>Hampton Inn &amp; Suites</b> 2300 Chuckwagon Drive Springfield, IL 62711	217-793-7670 hamptoninn.com	83	1	\$119-\$299	Phyllis DeRosear
15	<b>Staybridge Suites</b> 4231 Schooner Drive Springfield, IL 62711	217-793-6700 staybridge.com	82	1	\$100 - \$200 (all-suite hotel)	Kyle Johnson
16	<b>Comfort Inn &amp; Suites</b> 3675 S. Sixth St. Springfield, IL 62703	217-529-8898 comfortinn.com	80	1	\$90 - \$160	Sarah Dietrich
16	<b>SpringHill Suites Springfield Southwest</b> 3921 MacArthur Boulevard Springfield, IL 62711	217-789-0000 Marriott.com/SPISH	80	2	\$149-\$199	Darin Dame



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# Make your meetings memorable

## Plan ahead for catering business events

By Ashley Meyer

While it's true that meetings which include food tend to be better attended, there's more to organizing a successful business lunch than simply picking up a sandwich tray. After years of Zoom meetings, the connections that can be fostered over a meal are more important than ever. Whether you're looking to land a deal or thank your hardworking team, the food that's served is a subtle but powerful reflection of your professional brand.

Rather than making your guests feel appreciated, meals that are late or messy to eat waste precious time and distract from the task at hand. To avoid this and take your next professional event from stressful to superb, keep these tips in mind:

### Know your audience and your mission

Why are you hosting this event and who will be attending? What are you hoping to accomplish, and what impressions do you want your guests to leave with? These are important considerations when planning any event. A cocktail reception is ideal for a networking event but not necessarily for a recruiting situation that may be better suited to a sit-down lunch.

Demographics, cultural customs and even the timing and purpose of your event can help when planning a menu. Healthful, protein-rich options are great for a productive power lunch, while a pasta buffet may result in carb-induced afternoon stupor. Be mindful of religious holidays and customs that involve dietary restrictions, such as Ramadan, which restricts eating and drinking for some Muslims during daylight hours over the course of several weeks, or Lent, which limits consumption of meat for some Christians on certain days in the weeks leading up to Easter.

### Keep it local

"I always look for vendors that are locally grown and locally owned," said Kate McCulley, a Springfield-based enterprise account executive with ServiceNow. "It's easy to order fast-food sandwiches, but that's not very unique or special, and it doesn't do much to support the local economy. Going with a local restaurant or caterer really shows that you took the time to understand what's good and relevant in the client's market," said McCulley.

"Food is meaningful in our relationships and our ability to connect, so make it special. It doesn't have to be expensive, but take a minute to work



Café Moxo recently catered a lunch for 215 people and delivered labeled sack lunches in alphabetical order for easy distribution with special requests such as gluten or dairy-free items also noted. PHOTO FACEBOOK

with caterers who are locally sourcing, because it's conversational and textural."

### Plan ahead

For boxed lunches or smaller catering orders, 48 hours is generally sufficient notice; however, for a large, sit-down event you'll need to book your caterer and venue several weeks in advance. Visit the space ahead of time to scope out details such as parking, handicap accessibility and ambience. If you're organizing a meal in a conference room or office space, is there a place to set out food or refrigeration available?

### Choose a reputable restaurant or caterer

It's important to vet your caterer, whether it's from online reviews or word of mouth. "You want someone who is reliable and that you can count on to get it there on time," says Mark Forinash, the owner of Café Moxo, who can often be found there in the early morning hours working with his team to get hundreds of boxed meals ready to go out by 10 a.m. "It's important to use a caterer who is experienced and can handle the logistics."

It's also crucial to use a caterer that is able to satisfy a range of dietary requirements, whether it's dairy, gluten or nut-free. "We don't make a dairy-free cookie, but we'll work with other local businesses like Three Twigs Bakery to purchase vegan cookies or whatever else is needed by a client," explains Forinash. "Those sorts of touches can go a long way to making people feel valued."

Appearance is important, too. Is the meal haphazardly presented in a Styrofoam container or is it attractively packaged in reusable or compostable containers? As the event host, you need to be able to trust that the food you order will look and taste great when it arrives.

### Confirm

"We confirm reservations for groups three days in advance, but it's always a good idea for the host to call the restaurant and confirm as well," points out Michael Higgins, who has owned Maldaner's Restaurant in downtown Springfield since 1997. A popular spot during busy legislative sessions, Maldaner's has a large upstairs meeting room that can be subdivided into smaller spaces.

"That's also a good time for the guest to reiterate any dietary concerns or special needs so that we can ensure a smooth experience," he said.

### Make it memorable

"A while back I did an event for a group of IT guys," recalled McCulley. "Instead of the usual lunch, I planned a breakfast and brought in crepes. I found a local place and ordered a variety of sweet and savory crepes. These guys teased me about it for a solid year, but it was delicious and memorable! They never forgot the vendor who brought the crepes." **SBJ**

Ashley Meyer is a Springfield-based chef with extensive catering experience.





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# CATERERS & FOOD TRUCKS

Sources: The caterers  
Listed alphabetically.

NAME/ADDRESS	PHONE WEBSITE/EMAIL	OWNER(S)	MIN/MAX SERVED	PRICE RANGE PER PERSON	YEAR EST'D
<b>Arena Food Service, Inc.</b> 993 Clocktower Drive, Suite D Springfield, IL 62704	217-698-2944 arenafoodservice.com info@arenafoodservice.com	Shaun Moore Sherri Madonia	25-5,000	varies	1985
<b>Bloom Hospitality &amp; Catering</b>	217-725-3451 bloomcaterers.com info@bloomcaterers.com	Gabi Thompson	Up to 500	\$15+	2023
<b>Ciara's Kitchen</b> Online	217-498-3656 ciaraskitchen333@gmail.com	Ciara Brooks	20-150	varies	2018
<b>Conn's Catering &amp; Events</b> 835 S. Second St. Springfield, IL 62704	217-523-4466 connscatering.net sales@inn835.com	Karen and Court Conn	Any size group	All events individually quoted	1947
<b>County Market Catering</b> 1099 Jason Place Chatham, IL 62629	217-577-1354 countymarketcatering@niemannfoods.com	Niemann Foods	Up to 300	\$8-\$17.99	DND
<b>Cured Catering</b> 110 E. McManus St. Buffalo, IL 62515	217-391-2380 curedcaterers.com curedcaterers@gmail.com	Brian and Melissa Reilly	25-1,000	varies	2017
<b>Fulgenzi's Catering</b> 2700 W. Lawrence Ave., Suite T Springfield, IL 62704	217-971-7517 fulgenziscatering@gmail.com www.fulgenziscatering.com	John John Fulgenzi	1-3000	\$10-\$30	1997
<b>Hamilton's Catering</b> 101 Main St. Franklin, IL 62638	217-675-2720 hamiltonscatering.com info@hamiltonscatering.com	Kyle Hamilton Gina Hamilton	50-5,000	\$12 and up	1913
<b>Hanger Management</b> 2501 Wabash Ave. Springfield, IL 62704	314-227-1792 hangermgmtcatering.com chefkeah@gmail.com	Keah Garner	Depends on event	Events individually quoted	2018
<b>Hy-Vee</b> 2115 S. MacArthur Boulevard Springfield, IL 62704	217-726-1001 1640cateringmgr@hy-vee.com Hy-vee.com	Hy-Vee	Any size group	All events individually quoted	2014
<b>Irie Jerk Chicken Truck</b>	217-820-3722 www.facebook.com/jamaicanmehungry876 kiddwilliam1961@gmail.com	Wayne Kidd	Any size group	\$2-\$20	2017





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# CATERERS & FOOD TRUCKS

Sources: The caterers  
Listed alphabetically.

NAME/ADDRESS	PHONE WEBSITE/EMAIL	OWNER(S)	MIN/MAX SERVED	PRICE RANGE PER PERSON	YEAR EST'D
<b>MJ's Fish and Chicken Express</b> 716 E. Enos St. Springfield, IL 62702	217-572-0257 j69641983@yahoo.com	Jerome Taylor	50-300	\$12-\$15	2016
<b>Nelson's Catering</b> 3005 Great Northern Road Springfield, IL 62711	217-787-9443 Nelsonscatering.com wanda@nelsonscatering.com	Josh Lindvall Troy Tamminga John Bale Miindy Beeler	25-10,000	Varies per event	1995
<b>Poe's Catering</b> 295 E. Andrew Road Springfield, IL 62707	217-487-7601 poescatering.com poecater@msn.com	Lance Poe Angela Poe	20-10,000	\$12.50 and up	1998
<b>Robert's Seafood Market &amp; Catering</b> 1615 W. Jefferson St. Springfield, IL 62702	217-546-3089 www.robertsseafoodmarket.com arobert@robertsseafoodmarket.com	Dean "Robbie" Robert Andrea (Robert) McLaughlin	Depends on the event	\$15 and up	1916
<b>Skippers Island Oasis</b>	701-630-4899 skippers777@yahoo.com	Jason Richardson	Up to 500	varies	2015
<b>Soul Shack</b> 2800 S. Walnut Springfield, IL	217-691-1795	Ashley Ward	20-200	varies	2019
<b>Twyford BBQ &amp; Catering</b>	217-370-2274 twyfordbbq.com randy@twyfordbbq.com	Randy Twyford	Any size group	All events individually quoted	2008
<b>Wafflelicious Cafe</b>	217-638-3063 www.facebook.com/Waffleliciouscafe/ zbistro@comcast.net	Abbas Zolghadr	50-200	\$6-\$10	2011



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# NETWORKING GROUPS

Source: The individual networking groups  
Ranked by number of members.  
Many groups are meeting online at this time. Contact the groups for more information.

	NAME MEETING ADDRESS	PHONE WEBSITE & EMAIL	MEETING TIME	NUMBER OF MEMBERS	CONTACT	DUES	YEAR EST'D
1	<b>Illinois Women in Leadership (IWIL)</b> Illini Country Club 1601 Illini Road Springfield, IL 62704	iwil.biz info@iwil.biz	Third Thursday of each month	300	Sarah Goleman	\$80 annually	2004
2	<b>Women Entrepreneurs of Central Illinois (WE-CI)</b> Meeting location varies	217-306-2005 wecispringfield.org christine@baileyfamilyinsurance.com	Second Wednesday of each month	70	Alyssa Furling	\$96 annually	2010
3	<b>The Association for Women in Communications</b> Meeting location varies	awcspringfield.org brandyrenfro@gmail.com	Meeting days and times vary	45	Brandy Renfro	\$25 plus national dues, various membership categories	1977
4	<b>Capitol Area Networkers (CAN)</b> Meeting location varies	217-313-0580 sarsanyse@sells@yahoo.com	First and third Tuesday 8:30 a.m.	27	Deb Sarsany	No dues	2018
5	<b>League of Our Own Toastmasters Club</b> Springfield Urban League, Inc. 100 N. 11th St. Springfield, IL 62703	217-789-0830, ext. 1301 1179206.toastmastersclubs.org lhemingway@springfieldul.org	Second and fourth Friday 11:30 a.m.	16	Larry Hemingway Sr.	\$12.50 monthly New members \$20	2008
6	<b>McBrian Lincoln-Douglas Toastmasters Club</b> Red School Mall 1275 Wabash Ave. Springfield, IL 62704	217-546-8624 mcbrianlincoln.toastmastersclubs.org randaln1@yahoo.com	Thursdays 6 p.m.	15	Nate Randall	Six months \$66 international new member \$20	1936
6	<b>Capital City Toastmasters</b> IDOT Building (Hanley Building) 2300 Dirksen Parkway Springfield, IL 62764 Currently meeting on Zoom	217-210-0185 1313356.toastmastersclubs.org president-1313356@toastmastersclubs.org	Wednesdays 12 p.m.	15	Brittany Henton	Six months \$75 12 months \$135	2009
7	<b>The Networking Group</b> The Sangamo Club 227 E. Adams St. Springfield, IL 62701	217-899-5099 kbrittin@springnet1.com	Second Tuesday of each month 11:45 a.m.	14	Kaye Brittinn	Lunch \$15 monthly	2000



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# Everything you ever wanted to know about liability of corporate directors

By Thomas C. Pavlik, Jr.

You've been asked to join the board of directors of a corporation – private, public or nonprofit. You should be rightfully proud. But do you know that serving on a board carries with it serious responsibilities and potential liabilities?

A board of directors is responsible for managing the affairs of a corporation. Of course, that doesn't mean that the board handles the day-to-day operations. Instead, it's often said that a board is responsible for ensuring adequate management of the organization. Said another way, a board sets the policy and the staff (generally officers), selected by the board, carries it out.

A true board of directors, as opposed to an advisory board, is the final authority for an organization and can be legally responsible for the work of the staff it selects. As such, a board of directors is expected to be informed, competent and cognizant of all actions taken in the name of the organization.

Indeed, certain statutory standards of accountability have been established for directors of publicly traded corporations. For example, under federal law, board members risk large fines, and even prison sentences, for malfeasance or failure to attend to board responsibilities, especially in the case of accounting crimes.

The primary duty of a director is that of good faith. This means that a director must perform his or her duties honestly, conscientiously and fairly. A director must act in the best interest of the shareholders or interested parties and not for the benefit of any particular group or individual.

That means that a director cannot use his or her position for personal gain to the detriment of the corporation. For example, a director cannot generally accept free products or services from the corporation. Nor can a director usurp corporate opportunity by using inside information to compete directly with the corporation. In other words, accepting a position as a director is not an excuse to line your own pockets, no matter how trivial it may seem.

The second general duty of a director is that of due care. At the very least, a director is required to see that a corporation is operated according to its own bylaws and the law. Part of the duty of due care is the duty to reasonably inquire. That is, a director must be informed about the condition of the organization and the conduct of its affairs. For this reason, a director



cannot generally claim ignorance as a defense to fraud when reasonable attention would have revealed the misconduct. This concept has been used to hold directors liable when they have delegated management functions to committees that have mismanaged the corporation.

Nonetheless, the law recognizes that directors, most of whom devote part-time efforts, usually can't research every issue themselves. For this reason, directors are generally allowed to rely on the advice of professionals, such as accountants and lawyers. However, there is no right of reliance if a director has actual or constructive knowledge of information that makes reliance unwarranted. As long as a director's decision is made in good faith and with due care, directors are generally protected from claims of personal responsibility. This is commonly known as the business judgment rule. According to the rule, a board will not be held responsible for a business judgment: made by disinterested directors; within the scope of their authority; in good faith; with reasonable care; and not for their own self-interests.

For example, assume a director is using his or her position for direct personal benefit, as opposed to the general good of the corporation. In that event, a director cannot be able to claim the protection of the business judgment rule. Or, if a director fails to make a decision based

on all information reasonably available, or does so in a manner that is not reasonably in the best interests of the corporation, liability may well follow. As with most situations, those who use common sense and are honest won't have anything to worry about. Woe, however, to the dishonest or lazy director.

Because of the possibility of such liability, many corporations provide what is commonly known as D & O liability insurance. The well-advised director should insist that the company provide such insurance coverage, with separate coverage limits for themselves individually or as a group, to protect their private assets against claims of board negligence. Talk to your legal or insurance adviser to discuss the details. Likewise, many corporations provide regular training to help identify warning signs.

The best way to avoid liability is to follow three general principles. First, maintain your independence and guard against conflicts between your personal interests and those of the company. Second, hire and rely on qualified experts when analysis beyond the board's level of experience is required for an informed decision. Third, keep copies of all board minutes and agendas, which identify attendees of meetings and topics discussed, together with all information provided by outside advisers. **SBJ**

*This article is for informational and educational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice.*



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## HSHS St. John's unveils newly renovated critical care units



The HSHS St. John's Hospital leadership team at an April 27 unveiling of the newly renovated critical care units. PHOTO COURTESY HSHS ST. JOHN'S HOSPITAL

HSHS St. John's Hospital recently completed the renovation and expansion of its intensive care unit (ICU) and cardiovascular intensive care unit (CVICU). The multi-year, \$17.2 million project was completed by O'Shea Builders and resulted in 28 new ICU patient rooms, with a net addition of 10 CVICU and six ICU rooms. With new and existing rooms, St. John's now has 64 intensive care patient beds. The renovation encompassed 28,100 square feet.

"These state-of-the-art, beautifully updated units and expanded, airy rooms will be more comfortable and user-friendly for patients, visitors and colleagues," said Polly

Hohenbery, BSN, RN, director of adult critical care services at St. John's. "Despite a global pandemic, the project stayed on track, as we kept the needs of future patients in mind. We look forward to providing care in this new space."

The units were blessed by Father Ramesh Matta, St. John's priest chaplain, at a ceremony and unveiling held for hospital leaders, staff and media April 27.

The design phase of the project began in August of 2019 and construction began in May of 2021. The design centralizes ICU locations and nurses to one floor, creating

efficiencies and improved workflow. All updated patient rooms were modernized and enlarged, enhancing the patient and visitor experience with more amenities, and expanding workspace for staff.

"It's all about patient care," said Matt Fry, St. John's president and CEO. "Enhancing and improving the use of space for families and colleagues is so important to creating a better healing environment. More natural light, larger waiting areas and rooms, closer supply rooms, additional bathrooms – all these details improve comfortability and care for our patients, families and colleagues."

## Springfield Heart and Stroke Walk on June 25

The American Heart Association and hundreds of community members will join the fight against heart disease and stroke at the Springfield Heart and Stroke Walk on Sunday, June 25, at 1 p.m. at Erin's Pavilion at Southwind Park.

Participants can register for the Heart Walk

by visiting [www.SpringfieldILHeartWalk.org](http://www.SpringfieldILHeartWalk.org). From there, walkers can create personal fundraising pages, download the Heart Walk mobile app and encourage friends and family to join.

The theme of this year's walk is "I walk to save lives." Heart disease and stroke impact people in very personal and life-changing

ways. Through the Heart Walk, participants are invited to express, share and be inspired by the reasons why they walk.

The Springfield Heart and Stroke Walk is sponsored by Blue Cross Blue Shield, The Staley Family Foundation, Springfield Clinic and CEFCU.





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## the NOMINEES

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Compass for Kids, Inc.

**Kayla Graven**  
Downtown Springfield, Inc.

**Gus Gordon**  
The Hoogland Center for the Arts

**Olivia Hayse**  
The James Project, Inc.

**Chantel Corrie**  
Midwest Mission

**Jen McMillin & Jean Woodward**  
Mini O'Beirne Crisis Nursery

**Carol Harms**  
Senior Services of Central Illinois, Inc.

**Angela Berton**  
Sojourn Shelter & Services, Inc.

**Melissa Hansen Schmadeke**  
Springfield Memorial Foundation

**Marcus Johnson**  
Springfield Urban League Inc.

### NEW AND EMERGING

Business Owner of the Year

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B's Creative Studio

**Douglas Pope**  
Broadgauge

**Michael Kirchgessner**  
MK Sports Massage

**Audrey Kondelis**  
Pole Barn Chic Events

**Chad Fowler**  
Sangamon Tree Service

**Jamie Toole & Melissa Gaynor-Toole**  
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**Damon Priddy**  
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### SMALL BUSINESS

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Ashley Furniture Homestore

**Jessica Lance**  
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**Josh Flanders**  
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**Cari Claussen**  
Country Lane Memory Care Assisted Living

**Brian & Melissa Reilly**  
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**Alinda Hale**  
Eye Candy Boutique, Inc.

**Matthew Hamann**  
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**Tammy Larsen Tolley**  
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**Rebecca Knobloch**  
Kennedy Sue Gift + Home

**Danny & Sherri Paul**  
Paul Tree Farm LLC

**Brad Wike**  
Peerless Cleaning & Restorations Services

**Dr. Gina Lathan, Dr. Stacy Grundy  
& Kenneth Lockhart**  
Route History Museum

**Steve, Kim & Zane Zaubi**  
Seasons Senior Living

**Shawn Braley**  
Springfield Supportive Living

**Mark Cortesi**  
State Farm Insurance — Mark Cortesi Agency

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**Wade Kammin**  
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### LIFETIME AWARD

Business Owner of the Year

**Dr. Tanya DeSanto**  
Prairie Dental Group

**Leonard Naumovich**  
Primo Designs, Inc.

# Jacksonville Area Museum highlights town's history and industry

By Janet Seitz

Several global manufacturing companies have had a presence in Jacksonville, Illinois. It has earned notoriety as home of the Eli Bridge Company, manufacturer of Ferris wheels and other amusement rides. The town was once home to the J. Capps & Son Company, one of the largest manufacturers of textiles and clothing in the United States. Today, Coffee mate powdered creamer, Hefty trash bags, and other goods distributed nationwide are produced in Jacksonville.

Visitors to Jacksonville can learn about the town and Morgan County culture and history at the Jacksonville Area Museum through exhibits and artifacts, which include items of interest for children as well. The museum is also the new home of the MacMurray College archive collection, on long-term loan from the MacMurray Foundation for preservation, display and interpretation.

The museum is run by a board of volunteers and is a working committee under the auspices of the city of Jacksonville. The Jacksonville Area Museum Foundation, a 501(c)(3), supports the museum's funding efforts.

Prior to the museum's opening, David Blanchette became involved as a board member of what was then known as the Jacksonville Heritage Cultural Center a few years after he retired from Illinois state government in 2016. He was elected chair a year after joining the board and served in that role through the entire development and grand opening process of the Jacksonville Area Museum, which opened at the former Jacksonville Post Office in September 2021.

Although Blanchette stepped down as chair Jan. 1, he remains on the board and is overseeing the efforts behind the museum expansion. "It's like having a child that you've lovingly raised; you always want to be involved in that child's life," Blanchette said.

He said he enjoys "working with my tremendously talented, creative and hard-working fellow board members and our museum manager to accomplish what everyone for years claimed could not be done – to open, and keep open, a popular history museum in Jacksonville... It's the best way to preserve and interpret the Jacksonville area's unique heritage and culture. Plus, it's a great feather in the cap of the community because it helps to draw visitors



and promote what makes Jacksonville special."

McKenna Servis found a match for her special interests in the summer 2021 as an intern at the museum where she worked for both the museum board and the MacMurray Foundation and Alumni Association board.

"After two seasonal stints as an intern, the museum and the MacMurray Foundation expressed interest in hiring me as the first employee of the Jacksonville Area Museum," she said. "Over the winter of 2021, I went through the hiring process, and I began my position as manager of the Jacksonville Area Museum and coordinator of the MacMurray Archives and Collections on Jan. 2, 2022. After graduating from Illinois College in May of 2022, I began my master's program at the University of Illinois Springfield as I continue to work for both the museum and MacMurray Foundation."

Servis finds the most enjoyable part of being with the museum is the people with whom she works. "The museum doesn't exist without them. The most challenging thing, for me, is definitely the care of the artifacts. The museum houses things are in wonderful condition and things that have seen better days; finding an environment that works best for both of them can be difficult."

Visitors often take a strong interest in the museum's photo display, said Servis. "We have a collection of photos from the Jacksonville Journal Courier. We have pasted them on a large board where the public are given sticky notes and have helped us identify the people

in the photos. They also have a lot of interest in the retail and industry exhibits, often because they have fond memories of shopping at those places when they were kids. The industry exhibit highlights several different manufacturers. It is set up in a way that provides the basic information about the many manufacturers that have called Jacksonville home."

"I see a greatly expanded and even more compelling museum in the very near future," said Blanchette. As additional funds are raised, the museum aims to triple its usable space by expanding into the old mail handling and sorting area in the southern two-thirds of the building. The building's basement will also be transformed into archival, educational and office space.

Lifelong Jacksonville resident and current museum board president Allan Worrell added, "The museum has a great start and has had good success with local business displays, pictorial history of the area, etc. The fundraising campaign for an additional and expanded exhibit area will allow for significant growth and interest in the community. Our goal is to provide changing displays and focus with the ability to engage interest the rich history of this area."

For more information about the museum and how to support it, visit [jacksonvilleareamuseum.org](http://jacksonvilleareamuseum.org). **SBJ**

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



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**WOMEN'S EVENT CALENDAR**

Join the Association of Women in Communications on Wednesday, June 7, for an awards recognition and social hour from 5:30-7 p.m. at It's All About Wine. The annual Communicator and Chapter Star awards will be presented following the social time. Non-members and guests are always welcome.

There will be no July meeting and then professional development meetings will resume, typically held the second Thursday of each month from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Sangamo Club. Visit [awcspringfield.org](http://awcspringfield.org) for more information on membership or upcoming events.

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# Change your words, change your culture

## Avoid these dirty words of business

By Kelly Gust

There is a lot of sensitivity these days around word choices, and rightly so. Words are powerful, with the ability to inspire, reward, hurt or motivate. Words are the primary way in which our thoughts and feelings get translated to another person. And sometimes, despite our best efforts, the translation can get lost. Word choices matter.

At work, the words we use are an integral part of translating and interpreting our organization's culture. Do the word choices used in your organization motivate and unite, or is your culture mired in corporate jargon that creates division, separation and status differences?

Thirteen years ago, I had the privilege to work at the headquarters of a nationwide, rock 'n' roll mall retailer. It's one we have right here in Springfield. This is a brand associated with punk, goth-type music, pop culture and all things edgy. As the company grew from selling band tees out of a garage to a national retailer, the brand knew that maintaining the punk-rock culture needed to be done intentionally. As part of this effort, all new hires went through employee orientation, which included training on what we called The 7 Dirty Words (a nod to the late comedian George Carlin) which helped people understand exactly how to live their tolerant and accepting, yet hard rockin' brand. These dirty words were words and phrases that were contrary to the type of culture that the organization was trying to create, and therefore not permitted in spoken or written communication.

First on the list: Corporate. The word corporate is used within organizations to indicate the mother-ship where all important decisions are made, but rarely where the products are sold, the customers served or the widgets produced. The word invokes

bureaucracy, status, and ultimately, disconnect from the front-line workers. When most people hear the word corporate, they think of a cubicle-lined stale environment buried in unnecessary layers of decision-making. If this resonates with your organization, consider banishing this word immediately.

The second dirty word was executive, which implies someone who gets paid an exorbitant sum to eat lunch in fancy restaurants, play golf and slow down decision-making, while complaining that the people who do the actual work cost too much. Very un-rock 'n' roll, if you ask me. This retailer also prohibited calling its store employees, many of whom did tend to be young adults, kids. These so-called "kids" sold millions of dollars of T-shirts, body jewelry, accessories and other pop-culture merch and basically kept the company afloat. Referring to them as kids was viewed as disrespectful. Beware if your organization uses similar condescending terms such as "boys" or "girls" in your business.

Must is the next word one mustn't say in an empowering and motivating culture. Must invokes position power, as in, "You kids must do this because I'm the corporate executive, and I said so." (See what I did there?) Relying on position power means bossing people around rather than using personal power to build trust, communicate the reason for a decision and get buy-in. Rather than dictating rules and procedures (even if they are ultimately required), slow down and communicate the why behind important policies to your employees, and you'll benefit from better overall cooperation and compliance.

Close behind in the list is a phrase – no exceptions. When dealing with humans there are always

exceptions. Such close-minded thinking robs people of autonomy and initiative and relegates employees to doing only what they are told, rather than being taught to think for themselves. Strike this form of black-and-white rule-making from your vocabulary wherever possible, and instead work on teaching people how to navigate important decisions.

The final frowned-upon phrases are ones that create division: My/mine and they/them. Very little in a company is mine, including my team, my customers or my products. Unless you own it, feed it or built it yourself without the support of anyone else, you might want to consider replacing "mine" with better words such as "ours" or "the team I'm a part of."

Last but not least, they/them – not in the non-binary sense, but rather as in, anyone outside my team who is different from us and therefore, must be working against us. They/them is used within organizations to refer to the location across town, the team acquired in the merger, the corporate executives, another department or sometimes just the people who sit on a different floor of your building. Creating a sense of us vs. them in a company is divisive. Replace the word "they" or "them" whenever you hear it with "our colleagues" or "our team members," to remind people that you're all working toward the same goal.

If you want to improve the culture of your organization to create more autonomy, better decision-making and less division, take the rock-and-roll approach and change some of your word choices. Replace status-enforcing, divisive words with words that unite. **SBJ**

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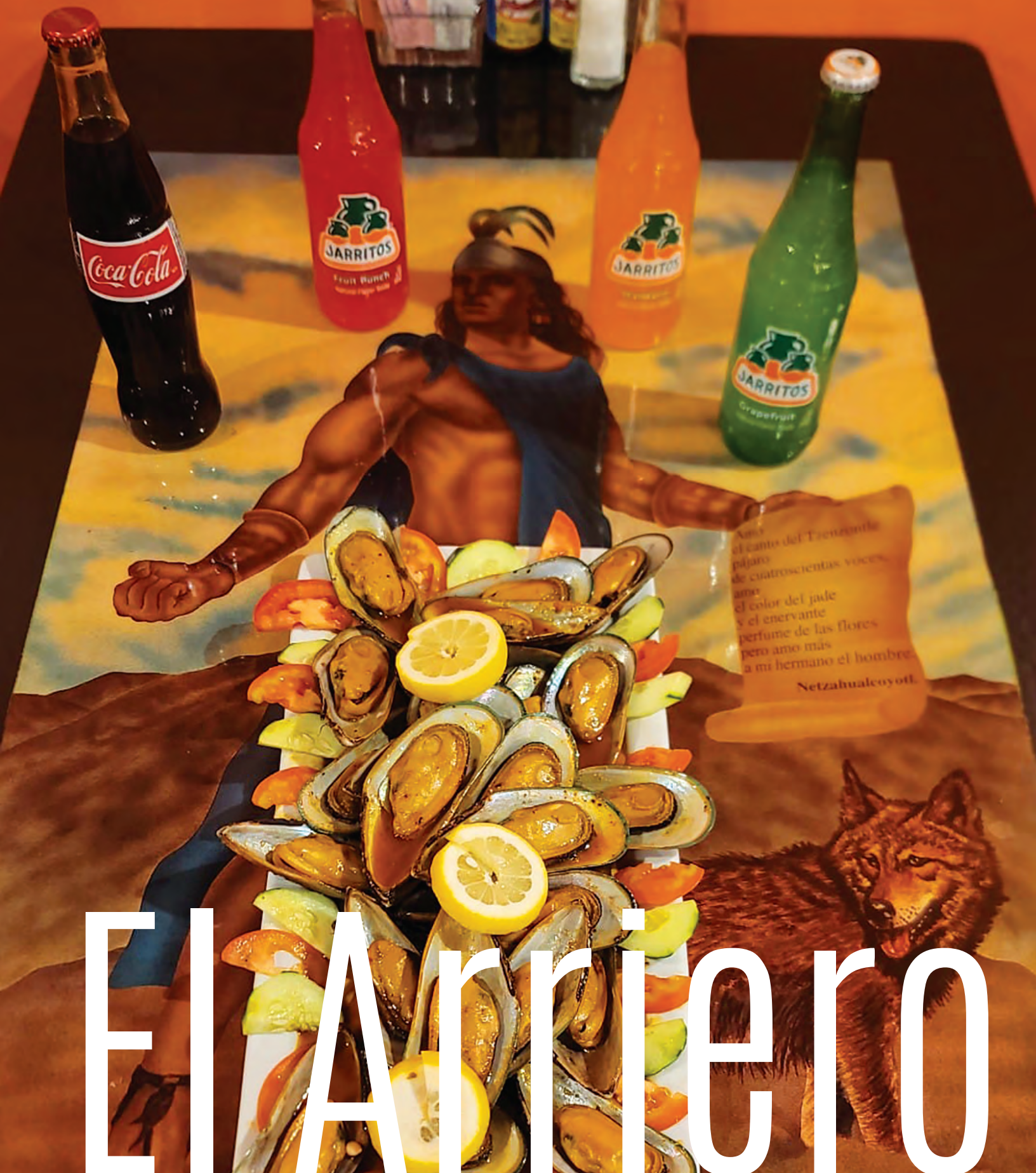
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# El Arriero





Quesadilla fajita and queso dip



Fajita chihuahua

By Thomas C. Pavlik

El Arriero, which means “someone who drives mules,” opened up just under a year ago on West Wabash close to Archer Elevator Road. It serves fresh, authentic, homestyle Mexican food with great service and excellent salsa.

There’s lots to like here.

Although it’s in a strip center, El Arriero did a nice job on the interior. Dark wood rustic booths, a color scheme that reminds one of a hacienda, and several bull skulls help create a welcoming ambiance. There’s bar seating, several tables and a row of booths. A full-length window in the front finishes off the space.

My guests and I arrived just as El Arriero opened at 11 a.m. The place was immaculate, and it was obvious that management takes pride in the space. Although we visited on a business day for lunch, any other time I generally like to wash down my meal with a margarita or ice cold Tecate. So if you’re in the mood to start day drinking, El Arriero has a full bar.

El Arriero’s menu is quite expansive, including a separate lunch menu where prices range from \$8.50 to \$14.99. There should be something on the menu that satisfies most anyone. The taco salad fajitas (\$10.99) and the huevos rancheros (\$9.50) caught our eye. The dinner menu contained the usual suspects.

We started with the queso (\$3.99) and some salsa and chips. The queso was par for the course – nothing special, yet satisfying. I felt it would have benefited from the addition of some peppers. The chips were

house-made and the regular salsa had a nice consistency (not too runny) and tasted freshly made. We all thought it was one of the better salsas in Springfield. It was also easy on the spice. Not so with the hot salsa we asked for. That had some zing and managed to hit all the right flavor notes. It might be too hot for some, but my guests and I had the hot bowl refilled a few times. Nicely done, El Arriero.

For entrees, we opted for the lunch fajitas (\$11.99), the dinner carnitas (\$16.50) and the pick-three combination lunch (\$14.99). These were hard decisions, as the menu is big and there were other tempting dishes like the Capital Shrimp (\$16.99, grilled shrimp with bacon sautéed in a sweet and spicy sauce, served with rice, beans and tortillas) and the burrito verde (\$14.25, a flour tortilla filled with pork carnitas and covered with salsa verde, served with rice, beans and pic de gallo).

I tend to judge a Mexican restaurant by its carnitas, which literally interpreted means “little meats.” It’s made by simmering pork bits in liquid (traditionally lard), which can take four hours or more. The result is tender and juicy meat that’s packed with flavor and eaten with tortillas and the usual fajita accompaniments. El Arriero nailed it – the dish was loaded with flavor, and the pork was fall-apart tender. I was also impressed with the guacamole, which added a pleasant brightness to the dish.

The lunch fajitas (beef) were tasty, but perhaps the portion size was a bit small for the price. I get it though, the cost of

ingredients has gone way up, especially for meat. My guest, a fajita aficionado, declared himself pleased and mentioned that he planned to come back.

The combination meal consisted of three picks from a list of burritos, tacos, enchiladas, tamales, tostadas, cheese quesadillas and chile rellenos. Rice and beans accompany your picks. My guest went with a ground beef taco and enchilada and a chicken burrito. The taco was my guest’s favorite; he requested a corn tortilla. It was very simple in the best of ways – ground beef, onion, cilantro, lettuce and cheese, and nothing more. When paired with the hot salsa it was the perfect street taco. The burrito and enchilada were also reported as tasty and were smothered with a deep and rich sauce.

Service was excellent across the board – our chip bowl was well attended, and our drinks never ran out. Our one suggestion – get a website, or please put the menu on the Facebook page. Guests shouldn’t have to hunt for the menu.

El Arriero is a most welcome addition to the Springfield dining scene with some fun twists and other authentic dishes. Job well done, El Arriero. **SBJ**

Address: 4233 Wabash Ave. Springfield  
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Hours: Monday-Thursday 11 a.m. to 9 p.m., Friday and Saturday, 11 a.m. to 9:30 p.m., Sunday 11 a.m.- 8 p.m.

# Calendar

# JUNE 2023



## **Grit and Thriving in the Midst of Adversity**

Wed., June 7, 4:45-6:30pm

Keynote speaker Austin Hatch will share lessons learned from unimaginable loss, his extensive health care journey and his road to recovery and triumph with the end goal to inspire others. Presented by Springfield Clinic and Central Illinois Customer Service Association. Pre-registration required. President Abraham Lincoln Hotel & Conference Center, 701 E. Adams St. 217-528-7541.

## **Researching Real Estate in Springfield**

Wed., June 14, noon. One of a series of workshops for business owners and entrepreneurs hosted by the Springfield Growth Alliance and Lincoln Library. The series showcases library tools and resources available for businesses. Lunch will be served at the beginning of each 40-minute presentation. Other workshops are scheduled July 12 and Aug. 9. For more information and to register, go to [ThriveInSPI.org/Events](http://ThriveInSPI.org/Events). Multipurpose room, Lincoln Library, 326 S. Seventh St.

## **Small Business Awards 2023**

Tue., June 20, 11:30am-1pm. Crowne Plaza Springfield Convention Center, 3000 S. Dirksen Parkway, Springfield. The event recognizes area small businesses for outstanding achievement in four different categories. Admission is \$55 for Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce members, \$85 for nonmembers. Tables \$550. Email for more information. [mhorn@gssc.org](mailto:mhorn@gssc.org).

## **Computer class: Organizing Your Google Drive**

Sat., June 24, 10-11am. Chatham Area Public Library, 600 E. Spruce St., Chatham. From search techniques to color-coded folders, learn From search techniques to color-coded folders, learn easy-to-apply strategies for Google Drive organization. Bring your own laptop. A limited number of laptops will be available. 217-483-2713.

## **Memorial Health Championship presented by LRS**

Thu., June 29, 6 am-7pm; Fri., June 30, 6am-7pm; Sat., July 1, 6am-7pm and Sun., July 2, 6am-7pm  
Free. The path to the PGA Tour starts here on the Korn Ferry Tour. The four-day competition presented by LRS features more than 150 players from around the world vying for a total purse of \$1 million. Free. Panther Creek Country Club, 3001 Panther Creek Drive. 217-670-2910. [memorialhealthchampionship.com](http://memorialhealthchampionship.com).

## **Capitol Area Networkers**

First and third Tuesday of each month, 8:30-9:30am. Meeting location varies. Email for information. [sarsanysells@yahoo.com](mailto:sarsanysells@yahoo.com).

## **The Networking Group**

Second Tuesday of each month, 11:45am. Sangamo Club, 227 E. Adams St. [kbrittin@springnet1.com](mailto:kbrittin@springnet1.com). 217-899-5099.

## **Capital City Toastmasters**

Wednesdays, noon. Temporarily meeting via Zoom. Email or call for more information. [president-1313356@toastmastersclubs.org](mailto:president-1313356@toastmastersclubs.org). 217-698-8767.

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

Second Wednesday of each month. Meeting location varies. Email or call for more information. [christine@baileyfamilyinsurance.com](mailto:christine@baileyfamilyinsurance.com). 217-441-2342.

## **McBrian Lincoln-Douglas Toastmasters Club**

Thursdays, 6pm. The club is dedicated to the development of communication and leadership skills. Red School Mall, 1275 Wabash Ave. 217-546-8624.

## **The Association of Women in Communications**

Meeting days and times vary. An organization for empowering women with the strength, support and tools for elevating their careers and becoming agents of change in the industry. Email for meeting place and time. [brandyrenfro@awc-springfield.org](mailto:brandyrenfro@awc-springfield.org).

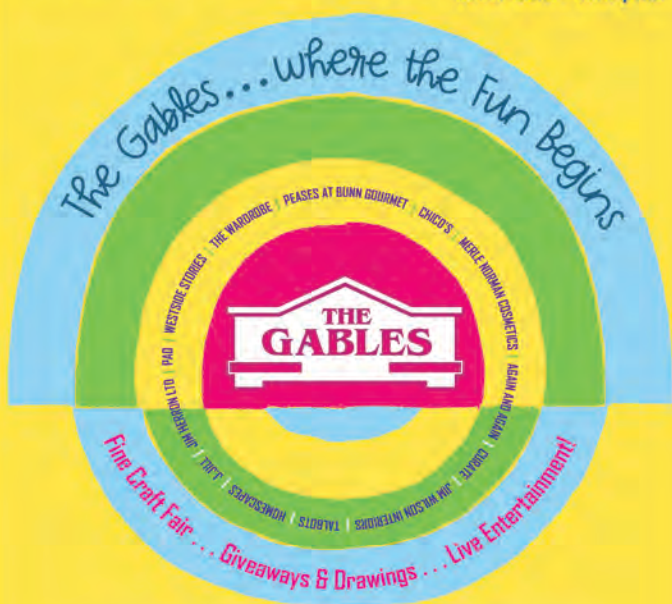
## **League of Our Own Toastmasters Club**

Second and fourth Friday of each month, 11:30 a.m. Support in developing communication and leadership skills in both personal and professional lives. Call 217-789-0830 ext.1301 or send an email to [lhemingway@springfieldul.org](mailto:lhemingway@springfieldul.org) for more information about attending a meeting in person or online.

Visit [springfieldbusinessjournal.com](http://springfieldbusinessjournal.com) to add your event to the monthly calendar.



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# New businesses

Sangamon County new business registrations, April 16 – May 15, 2023

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**Travel With Watkins**, 1000 E. Kinzie St., Lot 40, Riverton. 303-4068. Erica Anne Nunes.

**Transform Fitness and Wellness**, 4178 Old Route 36. 971-2725. Jennifer McCarthy.

**Allday Rentals**, 1916 E. Jackson St. 761-5618. Victor O. Day.

**Community Green Leaf**, 4110 Camomile Lane. 572-6444. Yolanda L. Mckinney, Bobby L. Mckinney.

**JCM Handyman Services**, 1905 Fairfield Drive. 572-2060. James P. Marsaglia.

**MPIT LLC, THUNDERCATS Sports**, 1008 S. Third St. 721-3383. Manuel L. Pitts Jr.

**Bralyn Bobcat**, 2201 Montgomery Lane. 272-5966. Steven B. Wright.

**Cleaning Care Solutions**, 2812 S. 11th St. 773-329-1769. Olivia Taylor.

**The Gym**, 1823 Camp Lincoln Road. 801-6778. The 8th Street Gym, Inc.

**Weekend Love**, 2825 S. 15th St. 816-2122. Christopher Liddell.

**Louis Kink Tax Service Inc.**, 363 Fitzgerald Drive. 553-4137. Louis W. Kink.

**Abe Lincoln Hospitality LLC**, 212 N. Sixth St. 913-340-9132. Frank Pikus.

**The People's Insurance Group**, 2501 Chatham Road, Suite 4492. 527-2160. Taneka Adams-Ottah.

**Massage By Danielle**, 915 S. Durkin Drive, Suite B. 622-9364. Danielle Boller.

**BR Travel Agent – Key to the World Travel**, 401 Red Bud Lane, Auburn. 691-9293. David Brett Rutherford.

**Grocery 2 Hermanos**, 60 Mesa Road. 350-3471. Suleyma Dalila Morales Munoz.

**Eastco Construction**, 406 N. Constant St., Dawson. 836-5875. Matt Tanner.

**JL Construction & Remodeling LLC**, 4814 Dickey John Road, Auburn. 697-6195. Laedon Ray Landers.

**Nekkid Parking Lot Striping**, 115 Buckingham, Chatham. 860-8350. Joseph Urbanski.

**Nami Poke**, 916 South Grand Ave. 414-3776. Hau Nguyen.



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