

The background of the cover is a photograph of a three-story historic house with orange siding and green trim. Four people, two men and two women, are standing in front of the house on a lawn with fallen leaves. To the right is a black sign with a red square logo containing the letters 'MMA'. The sign lists the company name and services.

SPRINGFIELD Business JOURNAL

January 2025

50 years of Massie
Massie & Associates

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A road map for life

Whether or not you commit to New Year's resolutions, just the sight of a blank calendar is enough to make January feel like a fresh start. Soon enough the days will fill with commitments, but for now the possibilities seem endless.

One of my earliest business mentors was fond of saying, "If you don't have a plan, you're part of someone else's." This is particularly true when it comes to prioritizing your time. If you don't specifically carve out time for important people and tasks – whether for work or your family life – the daily minutiae will consume you, and you'll never find enough "free time" for the most important things.

Molly Berns, this month's Q&A subject, is retiring at the end of December as the executive director of the Springfield Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission (p. 6). Beyond urban planning, she says, "There needs to be some sort of a planning strategy associated with almost everything we do in life."

This issue of SBJ also includes profiles of Massie Massie + Associates (p. 8) and Resource One (p. 10), two companies that have made names for themselves by weaving together function and aesthetics to work within the client's guidelines, as Kent Massie said, whether in landscape design or office furniture.

Good design – and good planning – don't just happen, they must be intentional. The start of a new year is an excellent time to be more intentional about how we're going to get where we want to go.



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Q & A with Molly Berns

By David Blanchette

Molly Berns is a Sangamon County native who is retiring this month as executive director of the Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission. She joined the SSCRPC in 2008 as the senior planner for land use and was promoted to her current position in 2018. Berns has a bachelor's degree in communications and a master's degree with an emphasis on persuasive message strategies, both from Illinois State University.

She and her husband, Kevin, live in Springfield.

PHOTO BY JOSH CATALANO



Where were you born and raised, and what was your first job?

I was born at Springfield Memorial Hospital and raised primarily on a farm southeast of Rochester near Sangchris Lake until we moved to Rochester when I was in high school.

My first paying job was processing deer permits for the Illinois Department of Conservation. I worked for them for five summers. I'd get out of school on a Friday, start with Conservation on a Monday, and have no breaks whatsoever until I quit my job on a Friday and started school on a Monday. Back in those days, I earned enough to basically pay for two semesters of college tuition.

How did your career path take you to your role as executive director of the Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission?

I had previously worked with Norm Sims at the Department of Commerce and Community Affairs, now known as the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. When Norm became the executive director of the Planning Commission, he had a senior planner for land use position open, and they were looking for someone with critical thinking and public speaking skills. He called and said, "Hey, I'm putting the band back together," an old inside joke with former DCCA employees. I got the job in February 2008, and I've been here ever since.

The commission was formed in 1957, the year I was born, and I am only its eighth executive director, so it tends to have leadership that stays for quite a few years.

Have you always been a person who values a good planning strategy?

Yes, I have, and planning goes well beyond urban planning. I think it's important that people have a road map, whether it be for urban planning, transportation, a legislative agenda or how to run a newspaper or magazine. There needs to be some sort of a planning strategy associated with almost everything we do in life.

But we also need to make sure we are open to new ideas, because you never know when something new is going to hit you and make you think we ought to be pivoting a little bit and going in a different direction.

What was the most memorable planning project in which you were involved?

The two-year process to update the City of Springfield's Comprehensive Plan. We started it in early 2016, and it was adopted by the Springfield City Council in 2018. Norm and I went to all of the aldermanic meetings and heard from the citizens, and it was just a standard, textbook example of how you do a comprehensive planning process. We've also had some very interesting zoning cases through the years.



Is it true that citizens may not know good planning when they see it, but they can certainly spot bad planning?

Many people think that when you have a comprehensive or land use plan, within two years or so everything will be done. They don't understand that everything has to fall in place – it takes a combination of funding, coordination and synergy for something to come to fruition. Not many people know that consolidating the Third Street rail line was first recommended in the 1925 City Comprehensive Plan, and 100 years later it's just now happening.

I think that there ought to be people assigned in government to bring plans off the shelf every few months and say, "OK, how are we going to do X, Y and Z? What do we need to do to get to the next step?" My comprehensive plan is tattered and has notes all over it because I used it constantly during zoning analyses. So people do recognize bad planning when they see it, but they don't realize that good planning is going on every day.

How has the rise in green energy production impacted the commission's operations?

We work very closely with Illinois Department of Transportation and Springfield Mass Transit District on how federal government regulations are affecting them, where electric-vehicle stations might be located and whether what is planned for the city of Springfield in terms of green energy is, in fact, implemented. We also write the text for ordinances, and I think I'm on the third or fourth rewrite of the solar and wind ordinances for the county to make sure they are in compliance with state law.

Are there other new technologies or trends on the horizon that will affect community planning?

Battery energy storage systems, or BESS, are large battery fields that can store power that comes from a generating source and then onto the grid. It's a temporary place off of the grid to serve as backup for some of the grid systems. There is definitely going to be a land use component, making sure things that are placed in certain areas are compatible with adjacent land uses. It will be important to monitor that issue in the future.

What advice would you give to young people who are entering your career field?

You really need to focus on your tangible skill set rather than your college major. In urban planning, for instance, we need statisticians, researchers, geographic information system experts, grant writers, and even meeting facilitators and public speakers. Those skills are much more important to an employer than a specific planning-related field.

If you're not a critical thinker, you need to become one. Learn how to conduct solid research from multiple sources, evaluate data and communicate your findings to others. Those skills are so important in today's workplace.

What might people be surprised to learn about you?

I love doing genealogy research and it means I spend a lot of my free time in cemeteries. As an offshoot of that, I make decorative floral arrangements for the tops of grave markers. I did it to honor the birthdays of my parents, grandparents and great-grandparents, and it's kind of grown from there.



Neil Brumleve, JunFen Vilette, Sue Massie and Kent Massie in front of Massie Massie + Associates, 1210 S. Fifth St. PHOTOS BY DAVID BLANCHETTE

50 years of Massie Massie & Associates

Ownership and operations transitioning to Neil Brumleve

By David Blanchette

Kent and Sue Massie found a surprise when they designed and oversaw the renovation of the Lincoln Park lagoon in Springfield.

"We needed to excavate the ponds because they were filled with silt, and we discovered old bicycles and park light fixtures at the bottom of the lagoon," Sue said. "The old light fixtures had apparently either fallen or been pushed into the pond. So we discovered some treasures during that project," she added with a chuckle.

The husband-and-wife team of Massie Massie & Associates Inc. has seen many things during the firm's 50 years in business, includ-

ing 47 of those years in Springfield. Their landscape architectural design work is evident nearly everywhere you look in the city, and the Massies continue to be involved in some of the area's largest and most prominent public works projects.

Massie Massie & Associates is also in the midst of the changing of the guard, with the Massies gradually ceding ownership and operation to longtime associate Neil Brumleve, who has been with the firm since 2006. Brumleve assumed full ownership of the business on Jan. 1, 2024, but the firm's name has stayed the same for now and the Massies continue to

work on projects as needed.

"We'll stay on as long as Neil needs us," Sue said.

Massie Massie & Associates began 50 years ago in an 1832 building in Nauvoo. The young married couple had just completed college and an eight-month traveling fellowship in Europe, and Kent and Sue hit the ground running with several interesting jobs right off the bat. Their early work included designs for a 1,600-acre Girl Scout camp and major downtown improvements in Fort Madison, Iowa and Moweaqua, Illinois. But the Massies soon decided they needed to move to a larger

city and chose Springfield.

At first the business was located in a studio above their residential garage. The operation was later moved to a historic house, now painted blue, on Fifth Street just south of Springfield Clinic's main campus. The Massies then acquired and renovated the historic Kreider House before purchasing their current location, the historic, 1882 vintage Steele House on Fifth Street just north of South Grand Avenue.

Massie Massie & Associates was busy from the moment it opened shop in Springfield. Besides work on numerous local parks, including the Springfield Park District's Master Plan, it designed improvements for parks in Chatham, Rochester and Fairbury; designed trails in McDonough, Effingham and Franklin counties; designed an arboretum in Carbondale, and did work for the Illinois Tollway in northern Illinois.

"That was a time when there was a lot of money available for parks and open spaces," Sue said. "There were new community parks being developed, land was being purchased and smaller parks were being renovated."

The firm's work has not been limited to parks. Many public areas are a result of the Massies' design creativity, including the Illinois Governor's Mansion and the nearby Illinois Realtors' Bicentennial Plaza. The business works its design magic using the sometimes mundane sidewalks, pavement, lighting, outdoor furniture, planters and even trash receptacles that are part of park and streetscape projects.

As the firm's reputation has grown, many of the area's major institutions now use Massie Massie & Associates for their significant projects.

"In the past few years, we've been fortunate to work with all of the medical facilities in town, Lincoln Land Community College and University of Illinois Springfield," Kent said. "It's nice to be involved in the majority of projects that have occurred in the Springfield area."

Massie Massie & Associates provides a full range of landscape architecture services from preliminary concepts to master plans, and it routinely does on-site observation and coordination of the resulting construction projects. It places a priority on designing improvements that are accessible to people with disabilities. That has familiarized Kent and Sue with the parks and downtowns of many central Illinois communities including Jacksonville, Mount Pulaski, Galesburg, Monmouth, Macomb, Rantoul, Pittsfield, Rushville and Mount Sterling.

New owner Neil Brumleve took the lead on the massive, four-year downtown Decatur renovation project and is heading up the firm's effort on the downtown Bloomington renovation. He is also heavily involved in the north wing renovation project at the Illinois Capitol.

"It'll be quite the transformation. The entry

plaza will be at street level – which will be the main entry – and an oval sidewalk will lead to the upper level," Brumleve said. "We are trying

Brunleve said. "What landscape architects bring to the table are creativity, specific materials use, environmental and aesthetic



Kent and Sue Massie founded their landscape architecture firm 50 years ago. As of Jan. 1, they are transferring ownership to their longtime employee, Neil Brumleve, but plan to still help with projects as needed.

PHOTOS BY DAVID BLANCHETTE

to preserve as many trees as possible, and hopefully it will all look like it seamlessly fits into the Capitol landscape."

Both of the Massies treasure their 30-year design relationship with Lincoln Memorial Garden on Lake Springfield, the environmental masterpiece created by world-renowned landscape architect Jens Jensen in the 1930s. When they first became involved with the garden, the Massies convened a meeting with Jensen experts to fully understand what Jensen was trying to attain with his design. They also found inspiration from Jensen's original plans for the garden that were discovered in the garden's Nature Center attic during the 1980s.

The firm has used Jensen's famed stone council circle designs in several other projects such as the Route 97 and Route 123 wayside history installation near Petersburg and the Adams Wildlife Sanctuary in Springfield. Brumleve is also finishing up work on the Woodland Garden area at Lincoln Memorial Garden, and he's honored and humbled to have been associated with the Massies and with Jensen's legacy.

"This was my first job out of college, and Kent and Sue have been great mentors," said Brumleve, an Effingham native. "You quickly realize that there is always something to learn."

Brumleve said that landscape architecture has proven to be a very rewarding career, and he's proud to take the reins of a five-decade-old firm.

"As times change, designs have to adapt,"

awareness and the ability to incorporate all of that into meaningful designs."

Brumleve and new associate JunFen Vilette are currently the full-time designers at the firm, with Kent and Sue Massie continuing to help as needed.

"We have been fortunate over the years to have been involved with many wonderful teams as these projects become reality," Kent said. "We've been able to work with different engineers, building architects and construction firms and have developed quite a reputation for being able to work on just about any type of project."

Massie Massie & Associates has followed a simple business philosophy that has served them well for five decades. Kent Massie said that it's all about giving clients what they want and need.

"You need to listen to the client and know exactly what their goals are," Kent said. "Then you start to look at function and aesthetics and try to weave everything together to work within their guidelines."

Sue Massie said she has enjoyed her 50-year career.

"It's fun to take the lead on the concept and design, then work with the engineers to figure out how we can make it work," Sue said. **SBJ**



Left to right: Lauren Nevius, Cindy Davis, Chris Davis. PHOTO BY BETHANY PAYNE

BEST PLACES TO WORK ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT:

Resource^{one}

INTERIOR SOLUTIONS & DESIGN

By Holly A. Whisler

Resource One, 321 E. Adams St., is a full-service contract office furniture dealership established in 1987 by Cindy Davis. She serves as president of the company while her son, Chris Davis, is vice president of operations and her daughter, Lauren Nevius, is vice president of sales. The business was recognized as one of Springfield Business Journal's Best Places to Work in 2018.

Davis said of receiving the honor, "It's important to me because I started the company, and we've gone through ups and downs and ups and downs."

Davis said, "Our motto is improving lives by design, and we believe that design improves lives." She noted that when a workplace has a pleasant aesthetic, "it helps promote wellness and happiness. It's important to our customers and to us and our own teammates."

Nevius said, "It makes a difference to our clients when they visit our showroom and see a team of people who are happy and having fun. They are assured that we'll design their

workspace as a team and it will be an enjoyable process, because we have a good culture at Resource One.

"Design communicates culture," said Chris Davis. "We practice that here as well for our clients."

The management team at Resource One is intentional when it comes to creating a place where team members like to work and where they choose to stay and build their careers. Some of the 19 people on staff have been there for more than two decades, such as the installation manager (28 years) and the financial manager (24 years). Chris David said it's a place where staff can learn, grow and have a good time doing so.

Company culture is the enduring personality of an organization that can be felt when you walk through the door. It's a set of values, beliefs and practices that define how an organization operates. The management team at Resource One was looking for a way to im-

prove team members' work lives and improve the internal dynamic by setting expectations for what it means to be a part of Resource One.

Chris Davis and Nevius worked with Steve Thomas, a consultant who builds leadership, develops people and creates teams. They reviewed some of the best culture codes from companies such as Netflix, HubSpot and LinkedIn. "Not to copy them," Chris said, "but to see where these companies intersect with what we do."

Cindy Davis said, "We came up with nine elements of cultural guidelines, and Resource One-Ness was introduced at the company's annual retreat."

"It's not a code of ethics," said Nevius. "It's about how to communicate and make good judgments, and how that impacts everyone's lives. We are one company, and we want to take care of everyone. We are an innovative company that operates with mutual respect and excellence."



A big change at Resource One, said Cindy Davis, came after one of their distributors, Herman Miller, purchased Knoll, another distributor.

"We had been the only Knoll dealer between St. Louis and Chicago for 34 years. We took a full year to make the decision on whether to carry MillerKnoll or go with another company. We carefully weighed our options and agreed on Haworth, a family-owned company in Holland, Michigan," she said.


Lauren said, "Haworth's values aligned with ours, and they were expanding their collection, which opened doors for us and expanded our

horizons."

Chris Davis said that switching alliances helped provide a jumping-off point for making sweeping interior updates and internal upgrades. "We needed to turn our attention to our showroom, and it changed the way we feel about this place. We are proud to bring our customers here. It makes a good impression, and it's a great place to close a deal. It has a vibe that it didn't have before," he said.

"Your space should communicate your culture," Cindy Davis said. "When we present to a client, we are very intentional about how we present our culture."

Resource One has been located downtown since 1992, and the company's leadership has been active in ongoing revitalization efforts for both downtown and the larger community.

"We believe in Springfield," said Chris Davis. "We need to look at the possibilities for making this a place where there are more dynamic and exciting workplaces for our community. We participate in Sangamon CEO, and we give the high school seniors the (come back to Springfield) speech: Go out there, learn, travel and get your first job, and then come back and be a part of making Springfield amazing." 

Nominate your company for this year's Best Places to Work, sponsored by United Community Bank and *Springfield Business Journal*. The winning companies will be profiled in the March issue of *SBJ* and all employees will be invited to a reception and awards ceremony.

Criteria to nominate your company:

- Must have been in business at least two years
- Be located in Sangamon County or Morgan County
 - Have 16 or more employees (those with 15 or fewer are eligible for our small business awards program, 15 Under Fifteen)

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Ranked by number of licensed engineers in Springfield/Jacksonville.
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	NAME / ADDRESS	PHONE WEBSITE / EMAIL	EMPLOYEES LIC. ENG.	ENG. DIV. 1	PARTNERS/ PRINCIPALS	NOTABLE PROJECTS	YEAR EST'D
1	Hanson Professional Services 1525 S. Sixth St. Springfield, IL 62703	217-788-2450 hanson-inc.com marketing@hanson-inc.com	64	208	Sergio Pecori Jeff Ball Ronda Folkerts Dennis Hollahan Mina Biggs	Smart City applications; Distillery Lab, Peoria; Abraham Lincoln Capital Airport Terminal; Springfield Rail Improvement Project; Springfield Sangamon Transportation Center; Illinois State Fairgrounds Coliseum Rehab; Orlando International Airport Phase 1 Commissioning; Indianapolis Airport, JFK - Terminal-4 Energy Roadmap, BNSF Sandpoint, Idaho bridges, Fish habitat restoration bridge, Seattle; 3rd Street Greenway - Phase 1, Springfield; Abraham Lincoln Capital Airport: Smart Airport and regional Logistics Planning Project, Springfield.	1954
2	Crawford, Murphy & Tilly 2750 W. Washington St. Springfield, IL 62702	217-787-8050 cmtengr.com questions@cmtengr.com	42	126	Bill Bailey Roger Driskall Brad Hamilton Todd Young Kristy Allen Ali Williams Christy Stritzel Christy Crites	IDOT I-55 six-lane expansion and Sixth Street Improvements; Sangamon County Water Reclamation District Combined Sewer Overflow improvements; Abraham Lincoln Capital Airport Airfield Improvements; Public Works Facilities, Springfield, IL; Scheels Sports Park; Active Transportation Plan, Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission. Peoria, IL Stormwater Program Management; Joliet IL Alternative Water Source Program; Kansas City International Airport Master Plan; City of St. Louis, MO Transportation Mobility Plan; Runway Rehabilitations at Dulles and Ronald Reagan airports, Washington, DC; CSX Railroad Bridge, Jacksonville, FL.	1946
3	Quigg Engineering 2351 S. Dirksen Parkway Springfield, IL 62703	217-670-0563 quiggengineering.com lquigg@quiggengineering.com	27	65	Lori L. Quigg	I-74 Mississippi River Crossing between Moline and Bettendorf, IA, IowaDOT Chicago to St. Louis High Speed Rail, IDOT Bureau of Railroads I-294 (Tri-State Tollway) Mile Long Bridge Reconstruction, Illinois Tollway IL Route 4 - Meredosia Tied Arch Bridge, IDOT District 6 IL Route 75 - Rock River to IL Route 2, IDOT District 2 Interstate 55 Reconstruction: Toronto Road to Sherman Boulevard/Business 55, IDOT District 6.	2006
4	WHKS & Co. 3501 Constitution Drive, Suite B Springfield, IL 62711	217-483-9457 whks.com springfield@whks.com	20	31	Fouad K. Daoud William K. Angerman Scott D. Sanford Scott Sweet Cory Chamberlain Chad Hodel Derek Thomas Tim Hrushka	Bridge replacements for Drawbridge Road and Churchill Road in Springfield; Bridge replacements for Taylor Road, Grove Road, and Garfield Avenue in Decatur; Brush College Road realignment in Decatur; Farmington Road realignment in West Peoria; IL 84 over Apple River bridge replacement in Hanover; I-74 over the Mississippi River; IL 17 over the Illinois River bridge in Lacon; IL 3 over Nine-Mile Creek roadway Realignment in Randolph County; I-80/I-74 interchange reconstruction and bridge replacement in Henry County; Tub Girder bridge project in Champaign County; New Water Treatment Plant for Glen Carbon; IL Rt. 104 Water Transmission Main for Otter Lake Water Commission; Water Treatment Plant Operation Trial for Collinsville.	1948
5	Benton & Associates 1970 W. Lafayette Ave. Jacksonville, IL 62650	217-245-4146 bentonassociates.com info@bentonassociates.com	18	42	Reginald H. Benton Jamie L. Headen William J. Sleeman Kenneth E. Sturgeon Matthew B. Hardy Benjamin M. Spreen Douglas J. Erickson C. Cameron Jones Stefanie J. Ballinger	Jacksonville WTP; Taylorville water system improvements; new Taylorville WTP; US 67 Jerseyville Bypass; SNAWS rural water Round Prairie rural water Beardstown Sanitary District WWTP improvements; Jacksonville WWTP CSO; I-64 bridges - St. Clair county; I-55 bridges - Madison county; McDonough county transit facility; North Morgan rural water system; SMG Rural Water System; Beardstown flood damage improvements; Hayes residential/commercial development Jacksonville, Jacksonville WWTP, Pana Spillway, Intake & WTP Improvements, Taylorville West Main Cross Improvements, Taylorville East Main Cross Reconstruction, IDOT US 30-Stockton Resurfacing, IDOT US 30-Rock Falls Resurfacing, IDOT Bridge Repairs SIUE Entrance Road, IDOT IL 156-Waterloo Resurfacing and ADA Improvements. Astoria WTP Improvements, Industry Wastewater Improvements, Carrollton New Tank and Water Treatment Plant, Oldham County (KY) New WWTP, Sellersburg (IN) WWTP Improvements, Macon (MO) High Service Pump Station Improvements, Charlestown (IN) WWTP improvements; Kirksville (MO) WTP Clarifiers	1970
5	Hutchison Engineering, Inc. 1801 W. Lafayette Ave. Jacksonville, IL 62650	217-245-7164 hutchisoneng.com info@hutchisoneng.com	18	44	Gregg Mounts Joe Hutchison Jim Burke Shane Larson	L Rte 9 Reconstruction - Bloomington, I-74 Corridor Expansion - Quad Cities, Hilldale Avenue Reconstruction - Washington Ridge Road Reconstruction - Grundy County US Rte 51-Business Reconstruction - Bloomington & Normal Various City Street Reconstruction for Carle Health Development - Danville, IL Rte 3/IL Rte 150 Reconstruction & ADA Improvements - Randolph County 19th Street & Mississippi River Shared Use Paths - Moline Rock Island Parkway & 85th Avenue Improvements - Rock Island Subdivision Design Services - Swift Pork Company (Beardstown) East and West State Street Improvements - Jacksonville Pioneer Parkway and North University St Improvements - Peoria County Highway 15 Widening and Resurfacing - LaSalle County County Highway 9 and County Highway 11 Improvements - Marion County Glen Avenue Construction Services - Peoria Ford County Windfarm Road Use Agreement - Ford County Capitol Avenue Improvements - Mt Sterling Beardstown Bridge Improvements - Beardstown.	1945
6	Veenstra & Kimm, Inc. 2417 W. White Oaks Drive Springfield, IL 62704	217-544-8033 v-k.net vk@v-k.net	16	28	Mark Henderson Christopher Kohlrus Gene Arnold Mark Vasconcelles Shalya Pfaffe	Central IL: Chatham Road over Jacksonville Branch Creek, I-55/I-72 Interchange Bridge Rehabilitation, Drainage Improvements at Wabash Ave. and I-72, Springfield Clinic - Main Campus East, West and West Wabash ADA and parking lot improvements, Blessed Sacrament School Addition, Stone Creek Subdivision, White Oaks Mall/LA Fitness, Mt. Pulaski High School Addition, IL Route 125 Resurfacing and Intersection Improvements. Peoria IL: IL 116 over Kickapoo Creek, UP Railroad, and Kickapoo Creek Road; US-24 and IL 116 Interchange Bridge Rehabilitation, Main Street over Farm Creek Bridge Rehabilitation. Northern IL: Lake Le-Aqua-Na State Park Roadway Improvements, Rock Cut State Park Site Improvements, East Moline Water Treatment Plant (Ultraviolet Disinfection Process), East Moline WWTP Improvements, US 150 over BNSF RR Bridge Replacement and Roadway Realignment (Galesburg), Cambridge Commercial Park - East Oak Street (Cambridge). Southern IL: I-57 over Pond Creek, I-57 over Middle Fork of Big Muddy River, IL 148 over Wolf Creek.	1961
7	Kuhn & Trello Consulting Engineers 109 N. Seventh St. Third Floor Springfield, IL 62701	217-679-0044 ktengr.com kkuhn@ktengr.com	15	26	Kevin L. Kuhn Michael J. Trello	New Railroad Overpass - Williamsville, IL; Repair Multi-Purpose Arena - Illinois State Fairgrounds; Repair and Resurface Roadways - Illinois State Fairgrounds; Multi Use Trail - Williamsville to Sherman; New Rest Area - Trail Of Tears North and South Bound - Anna, IL; New Spider Monkey Exhibit - Henson Robinson Zoo; New Health Sciences Building - SIUE; Replace Cooling Towers and Chillers - Illinois Capitol Complex; Various District 186 School Additions - Grant, Franklin, Blackhawk, Sandburg, Jefferson, Washington; Department of Military Affairs New Readiness Center - East Alton, IL; New Car Wash Facility - Willard Airport U of I; Building Addition - Fire Services Building U of I.	2013



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Sources: The engineering firms.
Ranked by number of licensed engineers in Springfield/Jacksonville.
Number of full-time employees in engineering division may vary from total employee count.

	NAME / ADDRESS	PHONE WEBSITE / EMAIL	EMPLOYEES LIC. ENG.	ENG. DIV.1	PARTNERS/ PRINCIPALS	NOTABLE PROJECTS	YEAR EST'D
8	Cummins Engineering Corporation 135 W. Lake Shore Drive Springfield, IL 62703	217-726-8570 cumminsengineering.com kim@cumminsengineering.com	11	23	Kimberly S. Cummins	Eighth Street Bridge Replacement near the Sangamon County Water Reclamation District, Sangamon Valley Trail from Centennial Park to Irwin Bridge Road. Staking and Roadway construction observation for wind farm projects in Macon, Logan, and DeWitt counties. Erection engineer for the 5th & 6th Street high speed rail overpass bridges. Restoration of the Vachel Lindsay Bridge, Interstate 55 Bridge Improvements at South Grand Avenue and near Lincoln. Design and construction inspection of Christian County CH 12 cold-in-place pavement recycling and overlay, west of Pana. Site plan and parking lot design for District 6 Sign Shop in Springfield. City of Clinton overlay and ADA ramp improvements on Center Street. Various bridge replacements in Sangamon, Christian, and Logan counties. Various surveys and right-of-way negotiations.	1998
9	Andrews Engineering 3300 Ginger Creek Drive Springfield, IL 62711	217-787-2334 andrews-eng.com marketing@andrews-eng.com	9	35	Kenneth W. Liss Douglas W. Mauntel Bradley J. Hunsberger	Various Illinois DOT-Statewide Hazardous: Advanced Contractor; US Dept. of Veteran Affairs; US D.O.E.; Residential development remediation Geneva, IL; Coal Combustion Residual (ASH) management/design under state and federal prgrams Central and Southern Illinois; RCRA, CERCLA, TSCA permits/corrective action south-side Chicago; IDOT-High Speed Rail corridor (construction inspection, health and safety, environmental).	1974
9	Hampton, Lenzini and Renwick, Inc. (HLR) 3085 Stevenson Drive, Suite 201 Springfield, IL 62703	217-546-3400 hlrengineering.com hlr@hlreng.com	9	16	ReJena Lyon Steven W. Megginson	St. Francisville Bridge on the Wabash River, Prosperity Infrastructure Design, Lake County Bridge Inspection and Rehabilitation Designs, Christian County Bridge Inspections, Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) Bridge Load Ratings and Evaluations, I-72 Bridge Replacements at IL 121/CNRR Decatur.	1965
10	Patrick Engineering 300 W. Edwards St., Suite 200 Springfield, IL 62704	217-391-3500 patrickengineering.com cburger@patrickco.com	7	13	Daniel P. Dietzler Patrick Cassity Chris Burger	FutureGen 2 pipeline and surface facilities (Jacksonville), ADM electrical projects in Decatur, CSX Railroad 14 bridges in East Central Illinois, wind farm siting assistance for Logan, Mason, Morgan, Livingston, Pike and Woodford counties; solid waste facility siting in Pike, Macon and DeWitt counties; mine subsidence monitoring near Williamsville.	1954
11	Greene & Bradford 3501 Constitution Drive Springfield, IL 62711	217-793-8844 www.gnbil.com kashifs@greeneandbradford.com	6	9	Kashif Syed Joseph Greene	IDOT-Traffic Studies for US 51 Business in Decatur; IDOT-Bridge Repairs for 8-Bridges on I-64 over various streams in Wayne County; IDOT-Construction Inspection & Surveying for Superstructure Replacement of 7-span Bridge on I-74 over Vermillion River, Three-Sided Culvert TR303 over Lake Fork, Pana; Bridge Rehabilitation on FAS 2583 Over LaMoine River, Schuyler County; Sunset Lake Spillway Inspection and Repairs; Girard; Menard Water Main Expansion Design and Construction Inspection, Menard County; Ward III Vollentines Addition of Storm Sewer in Taylorville; Lincoln Tower Apartments Structural Rehabilitation, Springfield; Woodlake Estates Dam Inspections, Springfield; Starbucks Site Development and Foundation Design, Lincoln; Rainstorm Car Wash Site Developments, Springfield; Various ALTA, LOT, Topo Surveys, FEMA Certifications, Property Surveys and Site Developments.	1972
11	Bacon Farmer Workman Engineering & Testing 421 South Grand Ave. West Suite 1A Springfield, IL 62704	217-679-6254 bfwengineers.com brotherham@bfwengineers.com	6	10	Ron Bacon Chris Farmer Mark Workman	I-55 Rehabilitation, north of Litchfield; IL 71 Widening & Reconstruction in Yorkville; IL 37 Shoulder Widening & Resurfacing north of Benton; I-64 Reconstruction, west of Mt. Vernon; I-70 Reconstruction/Rubblization, east of Effingham; I-57/I-74 Interchange Reconstruction (Champaign); US 150 (Bloomington Road), Mattis Avenue projects (Champaign), I-270 from I-55/I-255; I-55 Elkhart section rehab.	1996
11	Berners Schober Associates, Inc. 1 N. Old State Capitol Plaza #310 Springfield, IL 62701	217-528-6030 bemerschober.com info@bsagb.com	6	23	Ian Griffiths Darren Johnson John Miller Wendy Thorson Matthew Veriha Joseph Dettlaff Brian Meulemans	HEALTHCARE- HSHS St. John's Hospital: Fourth Floor Renovation, Electrophysiology Cath Lab Expansion, WCC Recladding + Remodel, Exterior Lighting, Madison Street Parking Ramp, Infusion Center & MedicalOncology Clinic; HSHS St. Mary's Hospital: Cath Lab Replacement, Intensive Care Unit Remodel, MOB Remodel; HSHS St. Francis Hospital: Domestic Water Booster Pumps, Patient Floor Remodel, Air Handling Unit Replacements, Emergency Generator Upgrades; HSHS Holy Family Hospital: Chiller Replacement, Infrastructure Improvements, Chapel Renovation; HSHS St. Elizabeth's Hospital: Interventional Radiology Suite, Fifth Floor Patient Rooms, Emergency Department Remodel; HSHS St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital: Sleep Lab and Diagnostics Relocation, Orthopedic Inpatient Remodeling, Cath Lab Addition -COMMERCIAL- Brother James Court; Lincoln Land Community College; Concordia Village; District 186 Schools; Springfield Park District; Capital Development Board.	1898
12	Feezor Engineering 406 E. Walnut St. Chatham, IL 62629	217-483-3118 dfeezor@feezorengineering.com	5	18	Daniel Feezor Jenny Feezor Aaron Karlas	Prairie State Energy Campus - Residuals Management, Bridgeton Landfill Heat Extraction System, West Lake Landfill Remedial Investigation.	2000
12	Martin Engineering Company of Illinois 3695 S. Sixth St. Frontage Road W. Springfield, IL 62703	217-698-8900 martinengineeringco.com mecmail@martinengineeringco.com	5	16	Philip G. Martin Steven R. Walker Adam R. Pallai Tyler K. Walker	Springfield: Scheels Sports Park, Premier Pickleball Center, Kiwanis Park improvements, Lake Springfield Area sanitary sewers, Southeast High School Athletic Complex, Green Hyndal, LLC Truck Driver Training Expansion; Rochester: Residences at Cardinal Hill Crossing, Rochester High School Tennis Courts, Athletic Complex and Science Wing; Decatur: Nelson Park Boat Ramp; Mount Zion: Village West/Traffic signals; New Berlin Junior/Senior High School; Edinburg: Sloan Implement.	1982
13	WSP USA, Inc. 3200 Pleasant Run, Suite A Springfield, IL 62711	217-546-7455 wsp.com	4	11	Jim Wolfe Kevin Lentz	Interstate 64 Wabash River Bridge, Mazonia Braidwood mine reclamation, Springfield downtown one-way to two-way street conversion analysis, Logan county bridge, Springfield Airport complex improvements, Illinois State Police Memorial Park, Sinnissippi Dam redesign.	1959

MAJOR ENGINEERING FIRMS

Sources: The engineering firms.
Ranked by number of licensed engineers in Springfield/Jacksonville.
Number of full-time employees in engineering division may vary from total employee count.

	NAME / ADDRESS	PHONE WEBSITE / EMAIL	EMPLOYEES LIC. ENG.	ENG. DIV.1	PARTNERS/ PRINCIPALS	NOTABLE PROJECTS	
13	HDR Engineering 2040 W. Iles, Suite C Springfield, IL 62704	217-585-8300 hdrinc.com springfieldinfo @hdrinc.com	4	15	Matthew Cochran Tom Hein	Alton Water Treatment Plant improvements, Livingston Treatment Facility improvements, freshwater and marine fisheries production and research facilities across the country including the Little Manistee River Weir and Thompson State Fish Hatchery, Michigan; Roxbury State Fish Hatchery, Vermont; and State-Wide Fish Hatchery Facility improvements, Maine. Chicago to St. Louis High-Speed Rail Project, IDOT Long-Range Transportation Plan, city of McHenry Comprehensive Plan, Chicago Metropolitan Planning Agency, Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) Advisory Services and Grant Support.	1917
14	Prairie Engineers 2475 W. Monroe St. Springfield, IL 62704	217-605-0403 prairieengineers.com info@prairieengineers.com	3	13	Lisa Kramer Darren Forgy	Improve I-70; Columbia to Kingdom City, Mo.; US 24/II 9 Reconstruction; Natchez Trace Mobile LiDAR mapping; Cunningham Avenue Sidewalk and Lighting Improvements - Urbana; Upper Mississippi River Restoration Hydrographic Surveys.	2010
14	TRC Worldwide Engineering 975 S. Durkin Dr., Suite 205 Springfield, IL 62704	217-725-6262 trcww.com resttbc.com	3	2	Robert Boellner	University of Illinois in Springfield – various projects including the new student union, student housing renovations, cooling towers replacement, Sangamon Auditorium lighting controls; University of Chicago – various housing, HVAC and research laboratory projects; Illinois State University Capen Auditorium.	1985
15	Fehr Graham 2160 S. Sixth St., Suite 01 Springfield, IL 62703	217-544-8477 fehrgraham.com marketing@fehrgraham.com	2	1	Mick Groenewald	Moving Pillsbury Forward, Lincoln Correctional Center; U.S. 34 over 162 bridge replacements, Warren County; I-74 over French Creek bridge replacements, Knox County; Dixon ITEP bike pathy boardwalks/retaining walls; Mill Creek Estates, Phase II; Kreston Place Subdivision; YMCA of Springfield-Downtown site development; Meadowbrook Road extension; Structural design; Lincoln Tomb Receiving Vault rehabilitation; IDOT Hanley Building Plaza waterproofing; Springfield Housing Authority Office addition.	1973



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MAJOR ARCHITECTURAL FIRMS

Sources: The architectural firms.
Ranked by number of local registered architects.

	NAME / ADDRESS	PHONE WEBSITE / EMAIL	NUMBER OF LOCAL REGISTERED ARCHITECTS	NUMBER OF LOCAL FULL TIME EMPLOYEES	PRINCIPALS	NOTABLE PROJECTS	YEAR EST'D
1	Graham & Hyde Architects 1010 Clocktower Drive Springfield, IL 62704	217-787-9380 grahamandhyde.com info@grahamandhyde.com	5	15	Jamie Cosgriff Kevin Handy David Leggans Ben Dockter	Sandburg Elementary School addition, Black Hawk Elementary School addition, Fairview Elementary School addition, Southeast High School Auditorium, Ball-Chatham schools, North Mac athletic facilities and high school addition, Mount Pulaski High School, Sullivan High School, South Jacksonville, Jacksonville Eisenhower and Jacksonville Washington elementary schools, Lutheran High School, Vachel Lindsay and Ridgely elementary schools, Canton High School Culinary Arts & Science Lab, Farmington K-12 School Building, Beardstown Water Park, Cherry Hills Church, St. Agnes Church, First United Methodist Church, Christ the King Parish Center, Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, United Methodist Center, Carrollton Bank, Memorial Department of Human Resources, Memorial Medical Center Oncology Unit renovation, Hoogland Center for the Arts, Lincoln Trail College Technology Center.	1968
1	Farnsworth Group 3201 W. White Oaks Dr. Suite 100 D Springfield, IL 62704	217-528-3661 f-w.com ebroche@f-w.com	5	20	Paul Wheeler	Illinois State University School of Nursing, Illinois Treasurer - Chase Bank Renovation, Medics First, Memorial Daycare, Springfield District 186 school additions, Sangamon County Complex addition and renovation, Springfield Clinic Lab Facility, Springfield Clinic main campus renovation and addition, UIS Brookens Library renovation, YMCA Downtown Springfield.	1976
2	Crawford, Murphy & Tilly 2750 W. Washington St. Springfield, IL 62702	217-787-8050 cmtengr.com questions@cmtengr.com	4	126	Bill Bailey Chris Stritzel George Cain Todd Young Kristy Allen Ali Williams	New Public Works facility in Springfield, UIS Performing Arts Center entrance, Springfield; Plummer Sports Park Complex, Edwardsville; Executive Aircraft Hangar Complex, Bloomington; Pace Pedestrian overpass bridge/access buildings, Illinois I-90 Tollway, Hoffman Estates; Central Illinois Utility Operations Facilities, Peoria and Decatur; SMTD Bus Storage Renovation; Sangamon County Water Reclamation District, Sugar and Spring Creek Wastewater Plants; airport vehicle/equipment storage buildings, Peoria and Bloomington; Fiducial Office renovation, Springfield; Sorling Northrup, Ltd. office building renovation, Springfield; CWP new filter building addition; MidAmerica St. Louis Airport terminal expansion; administration building renovation, Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer Solids Management Facilities; Indy World Sports Park Pavilion, Indy Parks, Ind.	1946
2	Evan Lloyd Associates 1630 S. Sixth St. Springfield, IL 62703	217-789-7011 evanlloydarchitects.com tsmith@evanlloyd.com	4	12	Timothy B. Smith	BOS Center renovation and expansion, Centre @ 501 (Chamber office and apartments), Porsche Facility (Isringhausen); Altorfer Caterpillar facility, Illinois State Police Credit Union, Waterways Building renovation, Engrained Brewery, Obed & Isaacs and Wm. Van's Coffee Shop, Prairie State Bank, Friar Tuck, Sangamon County Health Department renovation, Connor Co. Distribution/Sales Facility, Horace Mann renovations, Springfield. Illini Bank, new park and amphitheater, County Market, Sherman. St. Marys School addition, Taylorville. Legence Bank corporate headquarters, Eldorado. National Bank and public library, Litchfield. Springfield Plastics expansion, Auburn. Blackburn College practice facilities, Carlinville. Several building renovations on the square in Jacksonville.	1969
3	Berners Schober Associates, Inc. 1 N. Old State Capitol Plaza #310 Springfield, IL 62701	217-528-6030 bernerschober.com info@bsagb.com	3	10	Ian Griffiths Darren Johnson John Miller Wendy Thorson Matthew Veriha Joseph Dettlaff Brian Meulemans	HSHS St. John's Hospital: Fourth Floor Renovation, Prairie Heart Electrophysiology Cath Lab Expansion, WCC Recladding + Remodel, Exterior Lighting, Madison Street Parking Ramp, Infusion Center & Medical Oncology Clinic, New Intensive Care Unit; HSHS Medical Group: Litchfield Primary Care MOB, Edwardsville Clinic Imaging, Springfield MOB; HSHS St. Mary's Hospital: Cath Lab Replacement, Intensive Care Unit Remodel, MOB Remodel; HSHS Holy Family Hospital: Infrastructure Improvements, Chapel Renovation; HSHS St. Elizabeth's Hospital: Interventional Radiology Suite, Fifth Floor Patient Rooms, Emergency Department Remodel; HSHS St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital: Sleep Lab and Diagnostics Relocation, Lab Equipment Replacement, Orthopedic Inpatient Remodeling, Cath Lab Addition; Springfield Plastics, Weststar Hangars, Auburn; Blackburn College practice facilities, Carlinville.	1898
3	Melotte Morse Leonatti Parker 213 1/2 S. Sixth St. Springfield, IL 62701	217-789-9515 mmlpltd.com architect@mmlpltd.com	3	7	David J. Leonatti T. David Parker	New elementary school in Springfield; multiple municipal projects, Carlinville; Franklin and Grant middle schools, Springfield; Addition and renovation of Illinois Board of Admission to the Bar, Springfield; Housing Authority upgrade and renovation projects in Springfield, Benid, Carlinville, Jacksonville, Decatur and others; New public works complexes in Fulton and Marshall counties; Mount Pulaski Courthouse Historic Site; Permanent Supportive Housing for Veterans, Springfield and Rock Island; Lincoln-Herndon office building renovation, Springfield; Renovate school and police buildings, Carrollton; 28 new housing units, Virden; Children's Garden Lincoln Memorial Garden, Springfield.	1978
3	J.H. Petty and Associates, 3220 Executive Park Drive Springfield, IL 62703	217-787-2844 jhp@jhpa.biz	3	6	Joseph H. Petty	Abraham Lincoln Capital Airport terminal expansion, LLCC Aviation Center classroom addition at ALCA. OSF clinics in Peoria, Urbana, Danville, Pekin, Rantoul, Morton Office building for Psychological Center. Elevate trampoline parks in Champaign, Milan and East Peoria. Pittsfield. New gymnasium and classroom addition for Villa Grove USD #302. Lake Land College president's office, conference center, new Alumni Center and new Work Force Building. New security entrance addition for Harmony-Emge School District 75, Helping Hands Homeless Shelter, new Sangamon County coroner's office and autopsy suite, new secured entrance for Auburn High School and Middle School, numerous projects for Belleville School District, and master plan for Robin Roberts Stadium.	1991
3	Steckel-Parker Architects 2941 Happy Landing Drive Springfield, IL 62711	217-793-6444 steckelparker.com dave@steckelparker.com	3	5	David E. Steckel	Levi Ray & Shoup office complex, Brandt Consolidated, Taylorville school district gymnasium, Dick Van Dyke Appliance World, Prairie Eye Lasik building, Pepsi distribution center and office, United Community Bank, La-Z-Boy Furniture Galleries, D'Arcy's Pint, Springfield District 186 projects, Pasta House, Jennings Auto Sales. Country Lane Memory Care, Riverton. Prairie Power, Jacksonville.	1964
3	John Shafer & Associates 1230 S. Sixth St. Springfield, IL 62703	217-744-9036 shafer-arch.com john@shafer-arch.com	3	4	John Shafer	NECA Office Building, Springfield and Central Illinois African American History Museum, Henderson Eye Center, Anderson Electric, ISD Jacksonville, Heartland Credit Union, Bunn Corporate Office, Illinois Education Assn., Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts, Illinois Baptist State Assn., Shelter Insurance, Novanis Building, Illinois Assn. of School Administrators, Illinois Times, Midwest Technical Institute - various locations, LLCC Taylorville, Tri-City Public Library, Springfield Priority Care, LLCC Montgomery Hall, AGCO-GSI Corporate HQ expansion, New Salem restoration, Jefferson Terrace renovation, LLCC Medical Center renovation, 629 E. Adams St.; LLCC Construction Training Lab.	1992
4	Cowdrey and German DESIGNED aRCHITECTURE 1305 Wabash Ave. Springfield, IL 62704	217-546-5730 designed-architecture.com cg@designed-architecture.com	2	3	Scott Cowdrey	Rolling Meadows Brewery, Nipper Wildlife Sanctuary, Nehemiah expansion. Downtown streetscape enhancement, Litchfield, Rexx Battery in Springfield and Jacksonville, Macoupin County Animal Shelter, Carlinville, Nature's Grace and Wellness Center, Vermont.	2007

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Renovations continue at Illinois Capitol

Senate chamber features new stained-glass skylight courtesy of Springfield artisan

By Karen Ackerman Witter

A massive \$300 million construction project is underway at the state Capitol. The entire north wing, including the Senate chamber, is being renovated. A beautiful new feature of the Senate chamber is an 18-foot square stained-glass ceiling with skylight, consisting of 105 individual panels and 6,566 pieces of glass. During construction the Senate met in the Howlett Building. The renovated chamber will be unveiled on inauguration day, Jan. 8, 2025.

Brooks Art Glass of Springfield was hired to produce this magnificent work of art. Steve Brooks is a craftsman who has completed hundreds of projects over his 40 years working

with glass. He is a master artisan who designs and fabricates new stained glass windows, restores old stained glass, etches glass and repairs glass windows. He has worked in historic buildings, churches, businesses, schools and residential homes.

Brooks got his start at Melotte Morse Stained Glass in 1984, which was part of the architectural firm now called Melotte Morse Leonatti Parker, Ltd. There he was the lead artisan involved with some very high-profile projects including restoration of the dome of the state Capitol in 1986 and the Dana-Thomas House in 1988. In 2001, he bought the stained-

glass business from Melotte Morse Leonatti and established Brooks Art Glass. He currently operates out of a studio at Ninth and Miller streets.

Restoring historical features of the state Capitol has been a priority in recent renovations. The House chamber was restored in 2006. An old photograph revealed there was once stained glass that was later replaced by decorative plaster. Brooks was commissioned to produce a 20-foot-diameter stained glass laylight window (lit by backlighting rather than a skylight) for the House chamber.

Historic photos also revealed that the



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The Coliseum (Springfield)



Fairview Elementary (Springfield)



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Left: The detail of a quarter section as part of a mockup provided for approval prior to fabricating the stained glass pieces. Center: Steve Brooks produced 300 rondels with variations from light to dark that were used for the inner circle.. Right: The panels laid into the framework. PHOTOS COURTESY B.A. HUDGINS PHOTOGRAPHY

Senate chamber once had a skylight above stained glass that was also replaced by decorative plaster. The old skylight was removed when the Senate chamber was redecorated in 1938. Now, almost 90 years later, the skylight is being recreated as part of the north wing renovation. Architect Phil Hamp of Vinci-Hamp Architects led the restoration project, with Brooks Art Glass responsible for creating the new stained glass pieces that are

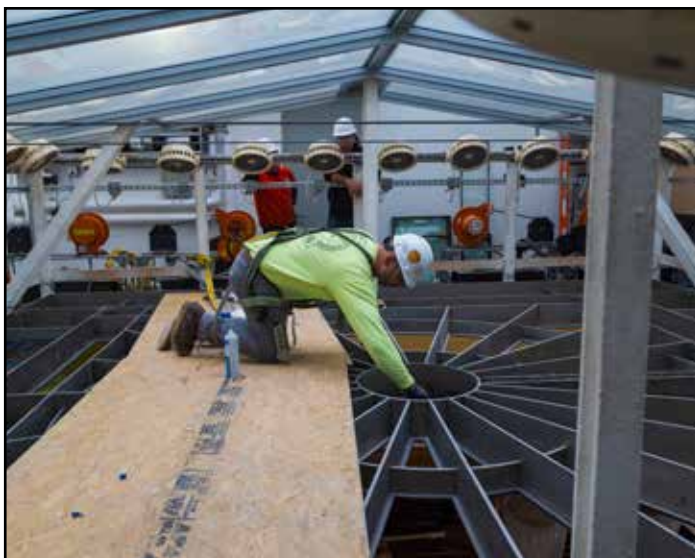
hand-blown, hand-made pieces of glass with a dimple in the middle. Brooks obtains the sheets of glass from Kokomo, Indiana, and the rondels, which are cut to size, from Monarch Glass in Kansas City.

Brooks was the master craftsman and coordinator for the \$300,000 project, but in addition to costs for materials and labor, many other individuals and businesses contributed to the project. This included Bacon & Van Buskirk

said Brooks.

Visitors to the Senate chamber will be able to see this spectacular new addition when the Senate is back in session in January.

The state Capitol is an impressive building with a rich history. Numerous renovations have taken place over the years, and not all have been sensitive to preserving the historic character of the building. The recent renovations are based on significant historical



Left: George Benedict from Bacon & Van Buskirk Glass Co. lays in the laminated glass with stained glass on top of it and a plastic diffuser panel. Right: The view from the Senate chamber floor looking straight up. PHOTOS COURTESY B.A. HUDGINS PHOTOGRAPHY

a reproduction of the 1880s-era design. Brooks was selected given his past experience at the Illinois State Capitol and unique expertise.

Brooks was provided a CAD drawing of the design for him to fabricate. He buys sheets of glass in specific colors, which he cuts and fits into panels through an elaborate process, which are then installed on site.


"It's a logistical nightmare keeping track," said Brooks. He explains it's like a puzzle, but numbered, with each piece, panel and color numerically coded. Included in the design are more than 300 rondels, which are circular,

Glass Co., which assisted with the installation and safety glass covering; Megan Smith and Lindsey Eddington, who assisted with cutting and building panels; Jeff Overright, who built some of the panels; and MMLP, which assisted with CAD work and administrative issues.

Brooks said the project turned out to be a lot harder than he anticipated. What he thought would be a three-month job turned into a six-month endeavor. Nevertheless, he said it has been very rewarding. His craftsmanship is evident throughout the state Capitol. "It's another feather in my cap, for sure,"


research and a commitment to modernize and meet the needs of today while honoring the past and recreating the significant architectural features of this remarkable historic building.

Karen Ackerman Witter worked in the north wing of the state Capitol in the mid-1980s as a natural resources policy adviser to Gov. Jim Thompson. She looks forward to seeing the newly renovated Senate chamber.



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<p>Anderson Electric, INC. Rodney Frey 3501 S. Stroh St. • Springfield, IL 62703 217-529-5471 www.anderson-electric.com</p>	<p>Gano Electrical Contracting, INC. Adrian Craddock 701 Caldwell • Jacksonville, IL 62659 217-243-1434</p>	<p>Senegy Electric, Inc. Matthew Giacomini 519 N. Elm St. • Williamsville, IL 62693 217-566-2826 www.senegy-electric.com</p>
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Springfield gets a city planner

But new hire's background leads to questions about qualifications

By Scott Reeder

Sean Pritchard is many things: 35 years old, a father of five, a lifelong northender and, as of this month, the first city planner in Springfield's 203-year history.

His appointment to the post within the city's Office of Planning and Economic Development, which garners a salary of nearly \$90,000, raised eyebrows among some in the planning profession.

"The typical planner in a mid-sized city of around 100,000 would be someone with a master's degree in urban planning," said Andrew Greenlee, a professor of urban and regional planning at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. "Many local government planners also choose to become certified planners and pursue the American Institute of Certified Planner's credential."

Pritchard doesn't have a college degree. He attended Lincoln Land Community College but never earned an associate's degree.

Stephanie Brown, president of the Illinois chapter of the American Planning Association, said the capital city has been an outlier among Illinois municipalities in that it has not had a planner on staff.

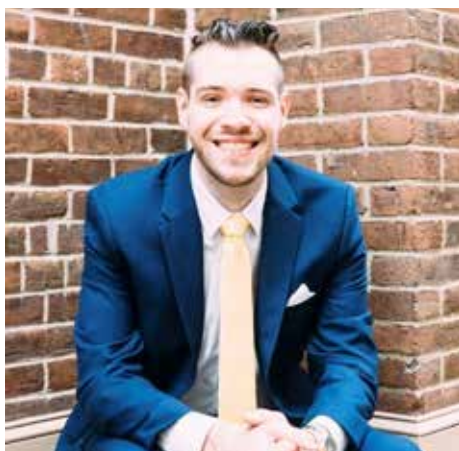
Since the 1970s, the city has contracted with the Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission for its planning work. The closest Springfield has come to having a city planner was when then-Mayor Tim Davlin hired Paul O'Shea in 2006 to serve as the city's planning and design coordinator. O'Shea, an architect who also had extensive experience in historic preservation, held the position until 2015. However, he was clear that his role was not the same as that of a true city planner.

In a Guestwork column O'Shea wrote for Illinois Times, he recounted the conversation he had with Davlin when he was first asked to come work for the city ("Springfield needs a city planner," June 2, 2016).

"...I'm an architect and I respect those who possess the education, formal training, experience and expertise of a city planner, so it's best for me not to assume the expectations of that role," O'Shea told Davlin, explaining why he didn't want the title of city planner.

Brown said there is no precise qualification to be a part of the profession.

"For the most part, we either have a four-year bachelor's degree in urban planning or a bachelor's degree in some related fields like geography, political science, architecture or



The city of Springfield has hired Sean Pritchard as a professional planner, working in the Office of Planning and Economic Development. PHOTO COURTESY CITY OF SPRINGFIELD

landscape architecture, and then a master's degree in urban and regional planning," she said.

But she added since urban planners are not a licensed profession, there are no minimum educational credentials that must be met, unlike architects or engineers.

"Urban planning is hard to define sometimes because it is so diverse... where people come from. It could be more the advocacy side of things to the technical economic development. You can have a wide range of backgrounds and still find your way into urban planning," Brown said.

"There are people who serve as urban planners across the state who did not get an education specifically in urban planning. But they kind of found their way into the profession one way or the other," she said.

Pritchard said he left college because he became a father at a young age.

"I started a degree, but I had a child at a young age," he said. "I'm so proud of her. She's going to be a freshman next year."

Early in his career, Pritchard sold insurance for Horace Mann and later did underwriting and internal audits for the company. In between stints at Horace Mann, he was a financial sales consultant at PNC bank and a business development manager at Barnes & Noble.

Pritchard joined the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity in February 2020. One of the positions he served in was acting deputy director of business development, where he played a role in

developing and managing incentive programs that generated business investments across Illinois. Pritchard also led the Advantage Illinois program, which supports small businesses by enhancing access to capital.

Pritchard noted that he has acquired "a multitude of designations" throughout his employment experiences.

"Not only do I have certifications in cybersecurity, but I have multiple designations and certifications across the gamut. I'm certified as a women's business advocate through one of the banks that I worked with. I'm an associate of customer service through what was called LOMA, a nationally recognized designation of insurance companies," he said.

Val Yazell, the city's director of planning and economic development, said she is not concerned that Pritchard does not have a degree. Both Yazell and Mayor Misty Buscher's chief of staff, Mike Disco, interviewed Pritchard for the job.

"For me, what was appealing was his experience with DCEO, understanding resources for the community, and he just kind of thinks outside the box, which is something that I think we need. We need to rethink how to approach development in the city," Yazell said.

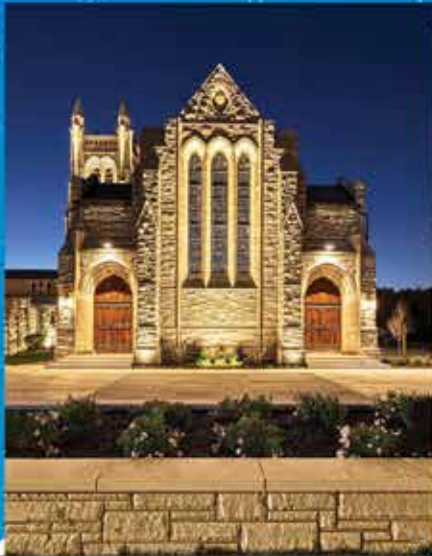
Pritchard said two priority areas for revitalization are Springfield's impoverished east side and the city's downtown.

"(I) want to focus on the east side and downtown – piggybacking off of the work of the Medical District plan – just understanding how we can bring more businesses, more affordable housing to both downtown and east side," he said.

Yazell, who will retire at the end of this month, described the planner as someone who will "fine-tune" the vision for the city.

"I think this is someone who will be working in economic development but also help the mayor fine-tune her vision, focus on the areas where she's putting out fires. ... This will be someone who will have a dedicated amount of time to spend looking at the city and evaluating where land development should be (and) analyzing some of the data that we have that, unfortunately, sometimes just sits on the shelves."

Scott Reeder, a staff writer for Illinois Times, can be reached at sreeder@illinoistimes.com.



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EPA prepares to move to White Oaks Mall

After four years and \$80 million, renovation of former Sears wing is nearly complete

By Scott Reeder



The state of Illinois has spent four years and \$80 million repurposing the former Sears department store at White Oaks Mall. The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and two other state agencies are scheduled to move in, but the price tag for renovations has drawn criticism from some who believe the state should have repurposed a vacant office building downtown. PHOTO BY MICHELLE OWNBEY

The new Illinois Environmental Protection Agency headquarters is expected to be completed this month – 18 months behind schedule and with a price per square foot more than double that of other new commercial construction projects in Springfield.

The \$80 million price tag for repurposing the 186,000-square-foot former Sears department store at White Oaks Mall has raised the eyebrows of elected officials and area contractors.

"If there's not something on the books where it is a crime, we should make it a crime," said state Rep. Dan Ugaste, R-Geneva. "Spending taxpayers' money in such a way shows lack of responsibility and lack of care for what people are having to pay in Illinois, one of the highest tax states in the nation. We should be overseeing every tax dollar very carefully to

make sure we're getting the most out of every dollar that we can."

The Capital Development Board, which oversees state construction projects, said the state spent \$430 per square foot on the EPA building. The general contractor for the project is S.M. Wilson & Co. of St. Louis.

In comparison, typical commercial construction costs in Springfield are less than half that, in the \$180 to \$200 per-square-foot range, according to Corky Joyner, president of Joyner Construction Services/

Joyner said he uses both union and non-union labor for his work but added even for a government project where prevailing wages must be paid, the amount the state is paying for the EPA building seems high.

CDB spokesperson Lauren Grenlund said there are a number of reasons why the EPA

building costs more than private construction in the community.

"State-funded projects are subject to strict quality standards, procurement regulations and rigorous energy-efficiency requirements, which are not typically mandated for private commercial construction," she said. "Additionally, this project underwent a competitive bidding process and was bid in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to significant supply chain disruptions."

As for why the project, which was initially slated for completion in July 2023, is so far behind schedule, Grenlund cited unexpected difficulties.

"Several unforeseen conditions were discovered during construction. These included extensive deterioration of concrete slabs, the need to replace the building's underground

storm and sanitary sewer systems, structural steel challenges and the full abatement and replacement of a metal roof deck," Grenlund said.

"These issues were not identifiable during the initial design and purchase phases. As a result, they caused delays to the project schedule, especially given the long lead times for metal roof decking at that time. Moreover, two recent incidents of vandalism further delayed the project as inspection and remediation efforts are currently ongoing," she said.

Ward 7 Ald. Brad Carlson, who represents the neighborhood that includes White Oaks Mall, said vandals entered the future EPA building, stopped up the floor drains and set off the building's sprinkler system.

Springfield Police Chief Ken Scarlett said the incidents happened Nov. 13 and Nov. 17.

"All indications are that it's juveniles who are committing a senseless crime that they probably don't have an understanding as to the magnitude that this damage can in fact cause," he said. "There is great security footage from the incident as well as physical evidence that was recovered as a result of our ongoing investigation. I'm confident this will, in fact,

lead to those responsible for this."

The state purchased the Sears building in 2020 for \$3.5 million and announced plans to relocate the EPA headquarters from its current location on North Grand Avenue. The majority of the complex now occupied by EPA will be demolished to make room for the expansion of the nearby railroad corridor.

Some have questioned the wisdom of moving 559 EPA employees as well as additional workers with the Illinois Pollution Control Board and Department of Innovation and Technology to the city's west side rather than to the downtown, which has a great deal of vacant office space.

"There's so many vacant structures in downtown Springfield that they could move into, and maybe they would need some rehab, but at a reasonable rate," Ugaste said. "I'm not saying we do any favors to any individual, but we have existing property owners (who) I'm sure wouldn't mind having a constant source of rental income – let's take advantage of that. When the government shut down in Springfield during COVID, it decimated the downtown area even worse than what it already was"

Chris Nickell, who owns a number of

downtown properties, said the state could have moved to the downtown and rented office space for less than \$14 per square foot. He said he previously reached out to state officials in hopes they would consider the downtown area for the EPA headquarters.

"I didn't reach out because I had a property they could use. I was just reaching out as a downtown advocate, saying, 'Come on guys. We've got all these empty buildings downtown. Why can't you use one of them?' ... It would have been an unbelievable benefit," Nickell said.

"One of the main struggles that we have downtown is just the lack of foot traffic and so many empty buildings. (If) you bring all those state jobs back downtown, just think what that does for all the little stores and restaurants (that are) suffering because the state has taken so many jobs away from downtown over the last 15 years," he said.

Scott Reeder, a staff writer for Illinois Times, can be reached sreeder@illinoistimes.com.

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Rail project receives final piece of federal funding

Overpass, underpass in the works for North Grand

By Dean Olsen



North Grand Avenue proceeds over Norfolk Southern and Illinois Midland railroad tracks in this architectural rendering depicting a view from the north of a planned overpass between 11th and 19th streets in Springfield. Robin Roberts Stadium, immediately north of the overpass, is in the foreground. Created by RDG Planning and Design for Hanson Professional Services Inc

Construction on the only overpass in Springfield's rail improvements project is expected to commence in early 2025 after federal officials announced \$157 million in final grant funds.

The federal allocation, announced by U.S. Rep. Nikki Budzinski, D-Springfield, and by U.S. Sens. Dick Durbin, D-Springfield, and Tammy Duckworth, D-Hoffman Estates, also will help pay for construction of the transportation center known as The Hub – with train and bus access – immediately north of the Sangamon County Building.

Attached to the Hub will be a four-level parking deck with 600-plus spaces.

"This is the last piece of funding for the project," Sangamon County Board Chair Andy Van Meter, a Springfield Republican, told Illinois Times. "We can say with confidence that it will happen."

Completion of the entire \$471 million project, designed to alleviate rail congestion in Springfield by consolidating Third Street corridor rail traffic along 10th Street, is now expected in fall 2027.

Work on final parts of the project was delayed when local officials were unable to secure \$138 million in federal funding a year ago. The amount of money needed to complete the project has risen since then because of inflation, Van Meter said.

Construction bids for eventual contracts

paid for with the new influx of money will be solicited in the next 60 to 90 days, he said.

Most of the project is being paid for by the federal government. County government will pay for about \$40 million of the total, funded with low-interest borrowing that won't result in any tax increases, Van Meter said.

Springfield city government contributed about \$2.5 million to the overall cost, and several million came from the Illinois Department of Transportation and Illinois Commerce Commission, he said.

Durbin said in an Oct. 25 news release: "Connecting communities is at the heart of transportation, and today's announcement of federal funding for a new Amtrak station, rail improvements and track realignments in Springfield will better connect passengers between St. Louis and Chicago. The Springfield Rail Improvements Project is dramatically changing downtown Springfield by reducing rail congestion, creating jobs and improving safety for passengers, drivers and pedestrians."

Budzinski added, "This investment, and the new 1908 Springfield Race Riot National Monument along the project's route, will honor our history and build a bright future for our city."

The overpass will carry North Grand Avenue over Norfolk Southern and Illinois Midland railroad tracks from 11th to 19th

streets. The overpass will reach a height of about 30 feet, according to Mike Mendenhall, senior structural engineer at Hanson Professional Services Inc. Hanson is providing design and engineering services for the overall project.

The overpass will be adjacent to Robin Roberts Stadium, which is about the same height as the highest part of the planned overpass, Mendenhall said.

The latest round of federal grant funding also will allow construction of an underpass that will route North Grand under Union Pacific tracks between Ninth and 11th streets, according to Nate Bottom, Springfield's chief city engineer.

A second set of Union Pacific tracks will be installed as part of rail improvements to accommodate increased rail traffic along the 10th Street corridor, Bottom said.

The Hub will cost \$129 million and will include an indoor, air-conditioned County Square atrium near the entrance, with a "grand stair" going up three stories and elevators for those who don't want to use the steps.

The atrium will have seating for people to gather, enjoy food and drinks sold by a built-in cafe and view free entertainment, Van Meter said. Once completed, The Hub will provide the new public entrance to the County Building, replacing the current entrance along Ninth Street.

County continues expansion, renovations

County government, using some of the funds from low-interest borrowing, is in the midst of a renovation of the first and second floors of the County Building at 200 S. Ninth St. The goal is to make “public-facing” services more convenient and make the more than 30-year-old structure more accessible for people with physical disabilities, Van Meter said.

Traffic Court, part of the circuit clerk’s office and the offices of the treasurer, recorder and supervisor of assessments are being moved from upper floors to the first floor of the building.

The county purchased the former State Journal-Register building, immediately south of the County Building, in 2021 and is renovating the 135,000-square-foot structure with funds from the low-interest borrowing and federal American Rescue Plan Act for the sheriff’s department and county coroner’s office.

The first and second phases of work for the sheriff will create a larger evidence storage



area and new office areas, costing a total of \$5.7 million.

The almost-complete \$9.2 million in renovations for the coroner’s office will include the county’s first-ever county-owned morgue, autopsy suite and offices for the

coroner and the office’s forensic pathologist.

Coroner Jim Allmon has said his office’s expanded facilities will become a resource for the central Illinois region.

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Critical thinking jiu-jitsu

Have better conversations with less judgment

By Kelly Gust

In my son's jiu-jitsu practice, coaches help competitors remain calm under pressure. In fact, emotional outbursts in a match result in disqualification. Once your emotions take over, you've lost the ability for rational problem-solving and decision-making.

This is advice I'm leaning heavily into these days (takes deep breath). It seems like any conversation is just one or two sentences away from ending up in an argument. One wrong turn into the topic of politics and all too often we walk away feeling that our friend, colleague or family member is ignorant or even hateful about a topic we feel strongly about. This happened to me at a family dinner recently. An aunt shared her thoughts about a recent shooting and the need for gun control, and a cousin responded in defense of the second amendment. Things quickly escalated into name-calling and judgment.

To be clear, the fear and anger we feel when someone threatens our very existence is justified. There are active attempts to roll back women's rights, minority rights, health care access and more. While we're right to advocate for our beliefs, we will likely find that the majority of people in our lives are moderate – dare I say normal – people who are also merely trying to navigate these challenging times. While it's tempting to leave an emotionally charged conversation by putting someone in their place and stomping away high on indignation and moral righteousness by calling them an idiot or worse, the fact is that doing so closes the doorway to communication. We miss opportunities to see issues from the other person's perspective, and we end up increasingly isolated and frustrated.

In important conversations, avoiding an emotional reaction or judgment will improve our critical thinking skills and allow us to approach problems rationally, make more informed decisions and foster creative solutions. So, because it's one of the ways I'm coping in today's polarized and tense world, I'm sharing a few ways that help me understand difficult topics and challenging (sometimes even infuriating) opinions. I hope it helps you, too.

Understand common types of bias

Bias actually helps our mind be more efficient, but left unchecked, biases can limit our thinking and result in our thoughts and actions becoming more polarized. Bias is



like an algorithm for our brain and comes in many different forms. Recognizing different forms of bias helps to break the pattern. Some common types of bias that affect our thinking include:

Confirmation bias: Humans seek out information that confirms our existing beliefs while tending to ignore contradictory evidence. Both social and traditional media lock us into confirmation bias by showing us more and more of the things we like, follow and subscribe to. Once we're locked in, an algorithm presents us with similar content which reaffirms our beliefs. Instead of going with the flow, seek out conflicting information; search for contradictory evidence or opposing sources to challenge your thinking and break the algorithm.

Anchoring bias: This bias causes us to rely too heavily on the first piece of information encountered about a topic, even if it's not fully accurate. It's like a first impression bias that causes us to have a difficult time unhearing or unseeing a shocking headline once it has entered our brain. Again, do a little research and consider whether the opposite might be true.

Availability heuristic: We tend to overestimate the importance of information that is easily accessible or recent, often resulting in skewed conclusions. Humans tend to overestimate the likelihood of tragic events such as plane crashes – because examples of them are newsworthy and memorable – while underestimating our chances of more common events such as automobile fender benders – which happen more often but are less newsworthy. Because something

controversial happened once, it can be tempting to feel that such controversies are all around us, even when they are rare.

These biases are just some of the biases in our thinking. But because they operate unconsciously, they are challenging to overcome. By identifying and understanding bias, we can begin to spot these dysfunctional patterns in our thinking.

Foster open-minded thinking

Did you know that open-minded people tend to be happier? A world full of possibilities is a happier place than a world where we feel others are hateful, out to get us or going crazy. Take the time to understand another person's reasons for feeling differently about a topic than you do, and you'll feel less resentment, fear and anger.

Play devil's advocate: When confronted with a difficult topic (let's say gun control or abortion rights), ask yourself: What reasons would lead a rational person to believe what this person believes? Considering the situation from another person's perspective encourages us to look at the problem from multiple angles, helps uncover potential pitfalls in our own thinking and prevents us from disregarding other people's opinions as hateful or ignorant.

Question assumptions: Ask yourself questions such as, "What assumptions am I making about this topic or person?" or "Is there evidence that contradicts my conclusion?" Doing so can prevent blind spots and encourage deeper analysis.

In our rapidly changing and tense world, critical thinking is a requirement. By understanding common biases and fostering more open-minded and reflective thinking, we can better understand our own beliefs, find common ground with people we care about and maintain the inner calm that is going to be needed in the times ahead. Like a jiu-jitsu warrior who keeps his emotions in check, we'll feel more resilient and better poised to tackle complex challenges with clarity and confidence. **SBJ**



Kelly Gust is the CEO of HR Full Circle, a Springfield-based consulting firm that provides talent management and human resources consulting to organizations of all sizes and stages.



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Supporting redevelopment in downtown Springfield

Downtown Springfield Heritage Foundation and Haxels both have new projects

By Janet Seitz

The June 19 fire that destroyed a building and impacted multiple businesses in the 400 block of East Adams Street left a hole in the downtown landscape, further challenging the area with finding ways to engage the community and grow. But with loss comes potential for renewal. A recently released master plan for rebuilding and redeveloping the city center and the Mid-Illinois Medical District reveals the needs, ideas and potential for reshaping the area. With that plan is a call for support of area organizations and citizens.

The Downtown Springfield Heritage Foundation is a nonprofit organization which supports, enhances, promotes and preserves the historic, architectural, artistic and cultural heritage of Abraham Lincoln's hometown through education, preservation and beautification. "Currently, our efforts involve assisting the Adams Street property owners affected by the fire in any way we can," said DSHF board member Scott Troehler. "Included in that is ensuring no other buildings on the block are demolished."

Over the past few years, DSHF has accelerated part of its mission with cultural activities and beautification, including partnering with Downtown Springfield Inc. Board members have included well-known community leaders in the fields of architecture, development, business, tourism and marketing.

Troehler said, "One of our most popular saves was the 125-year-old Bunn-Sankey House," which became the new home for the Wolter, Beeman, Lynch & Londrigan law firm in 2010. It was built in 1883 by George W. Bunn, whose family founded Bunn Capitol Wholesale Grocery Co. and Bunn-O-Matic Corp.

In 2019, DSHF played a key role in facilitating the redevelopment of 312 E. Adams St., now owned by Martin and Laurie Haxel. The long-vacant property was donated to DSHF, which then issued a request for proposals and sold the building at nominal cost to the Haxels, based on their renovation plans. In 2023, Downtown Springfield Inc. recognized the Haxel's 312 E. Adams Street apartments with the Best New Renovation award. The lower level is occupied by The Keep Store.

"Our experience with DSHF was wonderful," said Laurie Haxel. "We are thankful that the



Martin and Laurie Haxel have their offices at 310 E. Adams St. Over the past five years they have acquired four adjacent properties, including 312 E. Adams St., which was purchased from the Downtown Springfield Heritage Foundation. PHOTO FROM FACEBOOK

previous owners worked with the Heritage Foundation and that our proposal was accepted. Otherwise, we would not have been able to develop it into commercial space and townhouses." Haxel continued, "We would encourage anyone to work with DSHF in support of their mission. Truthfully, we also had a lot of support from many others in the downtown community. Those with experience in rehabbing were kind enough to guide us through many of the processes that we were unfamiliar with. We're happy to pay it forward by sharing our experiences."

The Haxels are now planning to tackle the long-vacant building at the corner of Fourth and Adams streets. "We bought the building ourselves without involvement of the Heritage Foundation," said Haxel. "We are interested in the property because it's a beautiful building with solid bones. We want to support and invest in the neighborhood and downtown."

The Haxels have renovated the properties at 310-316 E. Adams St. on their own, but because there is so much to be done to the building at 322 E. Adams St. the couple has requested \$1.5 million in TIF money toward the projected \$3 million renovation costs. The Springfield Economic and Community

Development Commission reviewed a request at its Nov. 21 meeting but it has not yet been presented to the city council.

As the building was vacant for 30-plus years, basic systems such as plumbing, HVAC, electrical and the elevator must be updated to make it usable for tenants, said Haxel. "There is water damage inside, and we've already replaced the roof to prevent structural damage. Since it is a historically significant example of mid-century architecture, we intend to maintain the façade and character, including the impressive gold lighting in the entryway. If TIF funds are approved, we plan to rehabilitate all three floors."

Troehler said DSHF is currently involved with a project to help restore Springfield's Black firehouse, located at what is now 1310 E. Adams St. In 1902, Springfield created an all-Black firehouse to segregate Black firefighters from their white counterparts. Firefighters from that building responded to blazes of the 1908 Springfield race riot. DSHF donated funds for the façade restoration and is looking for grants to help cover additional costs.

"We've also been in touch with the owners of the Ridgely building," Troehler continued, referring to the 12-story building at the southeast corner of Fifth and Monroe streets. "Our efforts involve assisting them in either selling (the property) or possibly donating it to us. We would like to see that building adaptively repurposed into apartments," he said.

Troehler said another DSHF initiative is part of an effort to increase homeownership. "We've been exploring a small homeownership program with housing near downtown. We envision property owners donating property to DSHF, thus receiving a tax credit. We then would rehab and renovate the houses, then sell to owners who would occupy them," he said.

The Downtown Springfield Heritage Foundation contributed financially to the master plan through DSI, and Troehler said the board is excited about the direction and opportunities it puts forward.

Janet Seitz is a local communications professional, writer and artist. To share your story, contact her at janetseitz1@gmail.com.

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Springfield Clinic CEO Ray Williams will retire effective Dec. 31



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PHOTO COURTESY SPRINGFIELD CLINIC

Springfield Clinic CEO Ray Williams will retire effective Dec. 31 after serving in that role for eight years.

"Making the decision to retire was not easy, but my family must come first at this stage of life," Williams said. "It has been an incredible honor to serve as Springfield Clinic's CEO, working alongside such talented and dedicated physicians and professionals. Together, we've built a stronger organization, and I'm confident that Springfield Clinic is well-positioned for a bright future."

Williams eight-year tenure included overseeing key milestones such as Springfield Clinic's re-

sponse to the COVID-19 pandemic, the resolution of a major insurance dispute with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois and the successful implementation of a new electronic health record.

In preparation for this transition, Springfield Clinic has named Jen Boyer as acting CEO, effective Jan. 1. Boyer, who was recently promoted to chief operating officer, brings over 27 years of health care experience, including more than a decade with Springfield Clinic.

"I am deeply honored to take on this role during such an important time for Springfield Clinic," Boyer said. "Ray's leadership has been inspiring,

and I will continue to build on his vision while ensuring our patients receive the exceptional care they expect and deserve."

Boyer's journey in health care began as a volunteer at a local hospital during her school years and evolved into a career that has included work in public health and emergency room leadership. She joined Springfield Clinic in 2012 as a nurse navigator, rising to the role of senior vice president of operations before her current appointment.

Springfield Clinic's board of directors will conduct a national search for a permanent CEO in the coming months.

UIS researchers partner with SIU School of Medicine to study how cancer spreads

Scientists at University of Illinois Springfield and Southern Illinois University School of Medicine are teaming up to investigate how certain cells in the body connect and encourage the spread of cancer.

The project, led by Natalya Zinkevich, UIS assistant professor of integrated sciences, and Sophia Ran, SIU professor of medical microbiology, immunology and cell biology, focuses on two types of cells – immune cells from bone marrow and specialized cells from the lymphatic system – and how these cells interact.

The team uses fluorescent microscopy to observe these interactions. One cell type glows red and the other green. When the cells fuse, they produce a yellow fluorescence, which helps scientists observe how often fusion occurs, its role in tumor formation and how potential cancer therapies might impact this process.

"Our goal is to understand how cancer spreads and identify ways to prevent tumor growth," Zinkevich said. "As part of this project, students will also gain hands-on experience in cell culture techniques at UIS, preparing them for additional research opportunities at SIU during the summer."

Ran described the partnership as an opportunity to extend research collaboration between UIS and SIU while providing valuable training for three undergraduate students.

"I think this collaboration will open a new avenue for research training for UIS undergraduates and advance an important scientific discovery that can change our understanding of tumor spread mechanisms," Ran said.

UIS sophomore biology major Frankie Molitor, who plans to attend medical school to become an anesthesiologist, emphasized how the research has advanced her academic and career goals.

"This research has provided valuable hands-on experience with cell culture techniques, allowing me to gain skills that are essential in cell biology and research," Molitor said. "The work will help me understand how cellular signaling influences important processes like cell division and tumor suppression."

Senior pre-med biology major Isabella Wade started working on the project this semester and is excited to play a role in cancer research.

"Just knowing that we could make even a small contribution to fight this disease is a fulfilling opportunity," she said.

The Caryl Towsley Moy, Ph.D., Endowed Fund for Collaborative Research is funding the research. It supports team-based research between UIS and SIU School of Medicine faculty through a competitive selection process. Moy's family established the fund to honor her work at both institutions.

WOMEN'S EVENT CALENDAR

Join Women Entrepreneurs of Central Illinois from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 8, at the Illinois Educators Credit Union for roundtables on two different topics: Future Planning for Your Business and Showcase Prep.

Take time to explore what goals you hope to achieve with your business in the coming year and what steps you need to take to achieve those goals, or start planning for your table at the Women's Business Showcase (March 13 at the Crowne Plaza) and think about how to promote your products or services and encourage participation.

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New laws in 2025 will affect Illinois employers

By Thomas C. Pavlik Jr.

Starting in 2025, there will be quite a few new laws that will affect Illinois employers. Changes include wage transparency obligations in job postings, inclusion of family responsibilities and reproductive health decisions as protected categories under the Illinois Human Rights Act, stricter record keeping

and access requirements under the Personnel Records Review Act and additional employer responsibilities when employing minors.

As a result, employers may need to amend employee handbooks, employment contracts, hiring guidelines and other employment policies and practices. Here are some of the highlights:

Salary transparency in job postings

Recent amendments to the Equal Pay Act provide that employers with 15 or more Illinois employees must now include salary and benefit information in job postings for covered positions. This law will apply only to jobs that "will be physically performed, at least in part, in Illinois," or will be performed outside Illinois that report "to a supervisor, office or other worksite in Illinois." Job postings must include a pay scale that "the employer reasonably expects in good faith to offer for the position" and a general description of employee benefits. Posting a link to a general description of benefits on the employer's website will satisfy this new law. If you use third-party sites to post positions, they will also be subject to these requirements. Finally, the amendment mandates that employers notify current employees of externally posted promotional opportunities within 14 days of posting.

Human Rights Act

The Illinois Human Rights Act prohibits employment discrimination, harassment and retaliation based on protected classes. These classes include, among others, sex, race, marital status, disability and citizenship. Beginning in 2025, amendments to the Act will extend its protections to two new categories: family responsibilities and reproductive health decisions. Illinois employers will now be prohibited from discriminating against



employees or prospective employees based on reproductive health decisions, defined as "a person's decisions regarding the person's use of contraception; fertility or sterilization care; assisted reproductive technologies; miscarriage management care; health care related to the continuation or termination of pregnancy; or prenatal, intranatal or postnatal care." Under this amendment, employers cannot terminate an employee for using fertility treatments, having an abortion or accessing in-vitro fertilization assistance.

Similarly, Illinois employers may not take adverse action against employees or prospective employees based on their family responsibilities. "Family responsibilities" is defined as an employee's "actual or perceived provision of care to a family member, whether in the past, present or future." Employers who, for example, "refuse to hire," "engage in harassment" or "discharge" an employee based on family responsibility will be committing a civil rights violation. While the law prohibits employer bias against family caretakers in important employment decisions, it does not prohibit employers from requiring employees to fulfill their employment duties.

Personnel Records Review Act

The Illinois Personnel Records Review Act provides employees with the right to inspect their employee file. Recent amendments to this Act have expanded the types of documents an employee may inspect.

Current and former employees now have the right to inspect their pay stubs. Employers must comply with written requests within 21 calendar days. Employers must retain pay stubs for a minimum of three years after payment.

Employees now have the right to access more categories of documents, including records relating to employee benefits, handbooks, policies, procedures and

agreements. The information must be provided within seven days. In some cases, employers may take an additional seven working days to comply.

Worker Freedom of Speech Act

Another new law bans mandatory, employer-sponsored meetings that are "designed to communicate

an employer's position on religious or political matters." "Voluntary" meetings that communicate such content are still allowed.

In this context, "voluntary" is defined as not being "incentivized by a positive change in any employment condition" such as "compensation" and "benefits," nor compelled by "threat of a negative change for non-attendance," such as demotion or termination. Employers are barred from retaliating against employees for failing to attend such meetings or exercising their rights under the new law. Additionally, and of some significance, employers are required to post a notice detailing employee rights under this act.

Child Labor Law

If you employ someone under the age of 16, there are a host of new requirements. As a threshold matter, employers must provide the minor with a letter of intent to hire, which, along with an application for an employment certificate, must be submitted to the minor's school. Employers are also responsible for maintaining certain records, including the "name, date of birth and place of residence of every minor who works for that employer, notice of intention to employ the minor and the minor's employment certificate." These records must be kept for at least three years after employment termination. In addition, an employee over 20 must supervise the minor at all times, and the minor must be given a 30-minute meal break for every five hours of work.

Minors may not work in certain industries such as food processing, manufacturing and construction. Further, during the school year, a minor may not work more than 18 hours a week. Outside of that the limit is 40 hours a week. In no instance may a minor work more than eight hours during any 24-hour period.

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Fairlane Diner

By Thomas C. Pavlik Jr.



I grew up in Cleveland, where the phrase rock 'n' roll was first coined. And I even went to the epic celebratory party when Cleveland was awarded the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. So yes, I've got a bit of affinity for it starting all the way back in the 1950s, which is why I decided it was finally time to give Sherman's Fairlane Diner a shot.

Fairlane is all about paying homage to Route 66 and the concept of a 1950s diner, albeit with the layout of a fast-food restaurant and, naturally, video gaming. The décor matches the themes and even slightly reminded me of the central gathering point in my childhood sitcom, "Happy Days." We were told that until an expansion a few years ago, the seating consisted of those iconic red and white chairs, booths and period tables. Currently, the tables and chairs are really the only things that don't scream 1950s.

Even the exterior is meant to look the part; on pulling in I almost expected a carhop on roller skates to greet us and take our order. But I guess with Fairlane's busy drive-thru, carhops

just weren't in the cards. During more temperate weather, there is also outdoor seating. All and all, it's nicely done and evokes a whole host of nostalgic emotions.

Patrons order at the counter and there are a bunch of monitors that display Fairlane's bill of fare. Once you order and pay, you are given a number and when the food is ready it is bussed out. The day we visited it felt like it came out super-fast, even with Fairlane about 75% full. Most of our fellow diners appeared to be retirees and the construction crowd, who obviously know where to go for good food.

Fairlane's menu consists mostly of sandwiches, although there are some more substantial dinner options. For those looking for something healthier, there are about a half-dozen salads, including a gyro salad (lettuce, cucumber, croutons, feta and black olives) and a salmon salad (salmon, lettuce, tomato, cucumber, croutons, cranberries and pecans.) Given that under current winter hours Fairlane

does not open until 11 a.m., there are no breakfast options.

Burgers, whether a single or triple, all come plain but can be customized to include lettuce, tomato, onion, pickles, ketchup, mustard and cheese. Veggie, pork and turkey burgers are also available. Other sandwiches included a turkey or ham club, chicken salad and grilled cheese. There are also a variety of hot dogs if one is inclined to go that way, including a chili dog and a Chicago dog.

Order your sandwich as a combo and it comes with fries or tots and a 20-ounce drink (fill yours at the soda fountain). Onion rings can be substituted for an extra \$2.89 while a slice of cheese will run you 50 cents. Lunch prices for a combo ran from \$10.50 (grilled cheese or a regular hot dog) to \$13.75 (double pork burger).

Beyond sandwiches, Fairlane offers your typical appetizers (think fried mushrooms, cheese curds and stuffed jalapeño nachos). For the dinner crowd there are some more

substantial sandwiches (Reuben, Philly cheesesteak, etc.) along with traditional dishes like a 12-ounce pork chop, salmon and popcorn shrimp. All dinners come with fries or tots and a drink along with a choice of cheese. Combo prices started at \$11.99 (popcorn shrimp) up to \$12.99 (the majority of dishes).

I decided to go with a basket – specifically, the Black and Blue basket, which consisted of a six-ounce patty, blue cheese and Cajun seasoning. All baskets come with fries or tots and a drink. The patty was, predictably, a smashburger. It appeared to be seasoned with just salt and pepper (we admired the restraint) and had a rich, beefy taste with crunchy and deeply caramelized edges. The blue cheese added even more richness (in a good way) such that I had to go back to the counter to ask for pickles and onions as I needed a shot of acidity to counterbalance all that richness. I went with waffle fries, which were nothing spectacular but were well cooked and well-seasoned. I would order it again.

My other guest went with the double cheeseburger with all the fixings, other than ketchup and mustard, and tots. She appreciated it as much as I did the basket. However, she commented that it could have been elevated had the bun been toasted or grilled on the griddle, adding another texture component and further slowing the disintegration of the



Turkey club sandwich. PHOTO VIA FACEBOOK

soft bun. We have no doubt that Fairlane would accommodate this request on a future visit.

For those who still have room, Fairlane has a substantial dessert menu, including homemade cheesecakes, floats, shakes and sundaes. I jumped the gun and decided to wash down my basket with a 16-ounce milkshake. It was one of the better milkshakes I've had in recent memory. It was a nearly perfect harmony of creamy,

chocolaty and slightly sweet, with every sip leaving you craving more.

Fairlane Diner isn't a fancy restaurant, nor is its food. But it's fresh, made with quality ingredients, at reasonable prices and with generous portions.

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Chili dog. PHOTO VIA FACEBOOK

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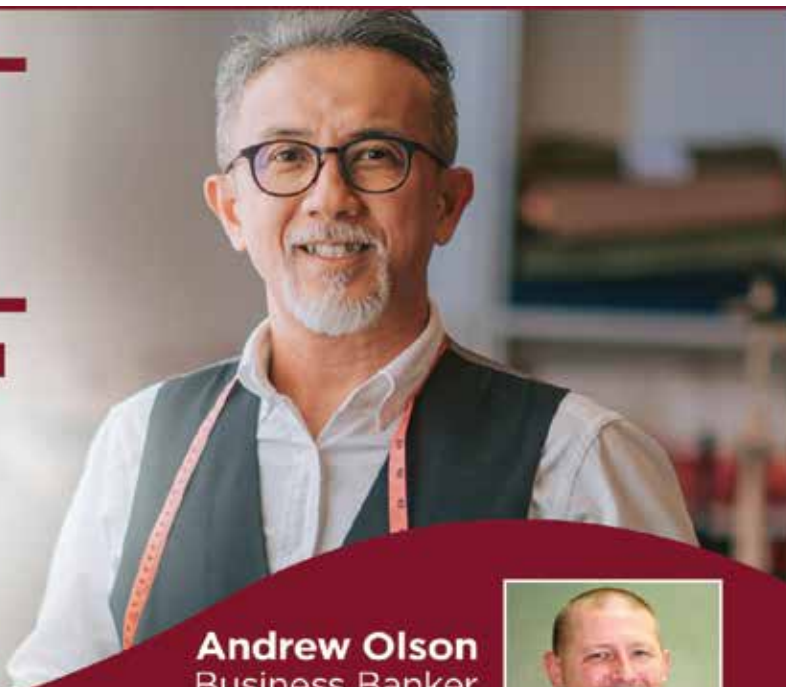
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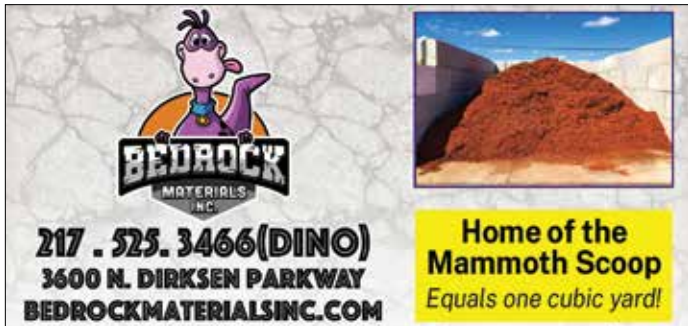
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