

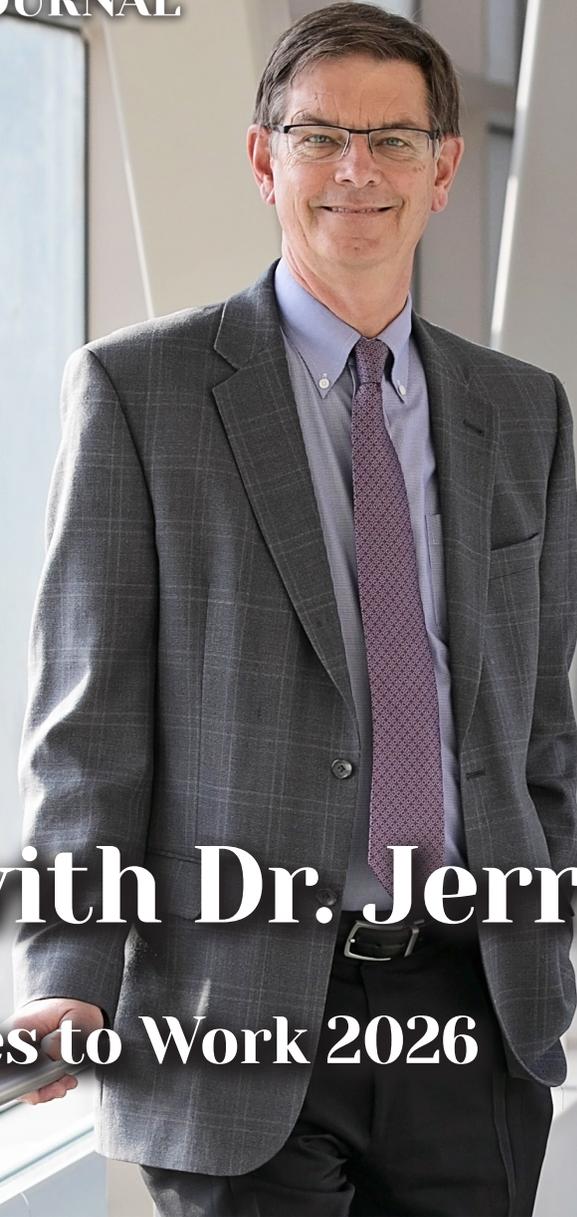


SPRINGFIELD

Business

JOURNAL

April 2026



Q&A with Dr. Jerry Kruse

Best Places to Work 2026

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Local Journalism Matters

CEO, executive editor chosen to lead new nonprofit organization

It's fitting that this issue of SBJ focuses on nonprofits, because as of April, the publication will be one of several under the umbrella of a new nonprofit, Local Journalism Matters.

Our sister publication, Illinois Times, celebrated its 50th anniversary in September with an announcement that plans were underway to transition to a nonprofit. Fletcher Farrar, the owner of Central Illinois Communications, the parent company of IT and SBJ, will transfer the assets of the company to the new nonprofit and serve as chair of the board of directors.

Other board members are Bernie Schoenberg, a former staff writer and political reporter for the State Journal-Register and Melissa Hamilton, owner of consulting company Synergetic Solutions. Additional board members will be added soon.

The Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln and the American Journalism Project have been assisting with strategic planning, including the CEO search process. Kate McKenzie has been chosen as the organization's first CEO.

McKenzie holds a master's degree in Public Affairs Reporting from University of Illinois Springfield. She worked for Shaw Media publications, where she was editor of the Joliet Herald-News and Morris Herald-News, before taking a job with the SJ-R as the editorial engagement editor. McKenzie then transitioned to a development and marketing position with UIS, and since 2022 has served as director of development for NPR Illinois.

I joined the company in January 2014, when Farrar purchased SBJ, and previously spent five years working for the original owners. I've held a variety of positions with both SBJ and IT, but will now become the executive editor.

Local Journalism Matters will serve as the parent organization for Illinois Times and its related publications, including Springfield Business Journal, Parent, Jobs and Capital City Visitor Guide. The 12-person staff will continue to operate out of the office at 1240 S. Sixth St. in Springfield.



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a
Q & A
with
Jerry Kruse

By David Blanchette

Dr. Jerry Kruse joined the SIU School of Medicine faculty in 1984 and has served the organization in many leadership roles, including the past 10 years as dean and provost of Springfield-based Southern Illinois University School of Medicine and president and CEO of SIU Medicine, the medical school's multispecialty group practice of doctors. Kruse has announced his plans to retire in August, although he said he doesn't plan to leave Illinois.

Kruse and his wife, Lois, live in Springfield and Quincy. They have three daughters and three grandchildren. In his free time, Kruse enjoys golf, wine, trumpet and humorous poetry.

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

I was born and raised in Salisbury, Missouri, a town about 100 miles east of Kansas City. My first job that ever paid me money was mowing yards. The second job was a warehouse worker for a chain grocery company.

Between my years in college, I was the recreational director for the Salisbury City Park, which meant I got to coach youth baseball and tennis, schedule the games, drag the field, get the umpires and all of that kind of stuff. It was actually my first teaching job, to tell you the truth.

What attracted you to the field of medicine?

I was a junior chemical engineering major at University of Missouri and at our fraternity the upperclassmen washed the dishes. I was washing with another guy, a psychology major, and he said to me, "Jerry, you ought to be a doctor." Later that night I went to visit a high school classmate's mother in the hospital. She was being treated for cancer, and as I was leaving the room she said, "Jerry, you know what? You should be a doctor." Both in the same night. That's when I began exploring it.

Regarding medical education, during my third year of residency at medical school we were obligated to give two grand rounds presentations that had to be thoroughly researched. After those grand rounds one of my residency mates came up and said, "Jerry, you really have a knack for this teaching. That should be a part of what you do." Shortly thereafter I was offered a position in the Robert Wood Johnson Academic Family Medicine Fellowship at Mizzou that put an emphasis on the development of leadership skills, and it gave me a broad picture of education and public health.

How has the process of learning to be a physician changed over the course of your career?

In the past, there was a lot of information in textbooks that you had to find and read, and a lot of information came from lectures given to a large number of people. You learned clinical medicine in the third and fourth years, and those were very long hours of intense care for patients.

Things started to change about the time I was a medical student, from 1975 to 1979. There is now more information at your fingertips with electronic devices, but you have to be much more of an expert in determining what is good information. SIU School of Medicine taught every medical school in

the nation, all 159 of them, that a different kind of education was better for medical students. There is much more learning in small groups with a tutor, and with standardized or simulated patients who simulate having a condition, and the students learn from that.

How can medical schools help address the shortage of medical professionals, especially in under-served areas?

We don't have a health care system with the incentives to do that. Part of it relates to how we're paid, the cost of medical education and who picks up the tab for that. Our students have a very high tuition and a lot of the decisions are made by for-profit companies in this country, which is not good for medical education at all.

Medical schools should be significant advocates lobbying for proper payment reform and the proper structure of the U.S. health care system so that these inequities do not appear. We're one of the few countries in the industrialized world that has a problem of this magnitude.

Will technology ever advance to a degree that patients no longer need to see physicians in person?

No, it never will. As a matter of fact, it will probably make that need even greater. We embrace the idea that patients have more information, but they clearly need guidance in determining which information is effective and useful for them and which information is just plain garbage. Recent studies point out the need to have a relationship with your doctor as the complexity of medical care increases and some types of care for patients are shifted more toward them.

What are some new practices for certifying the medical profession?

Medical board certifying agencies are no longer giving one big test every 10 years, but smaller and more frequent tests with a few questions that are very difficult, but they allow you to use any source you need to get the answer. Those tests train you to use electronic means to quickly identify information you need.

What future trends do you see in medical education?

We are seeing interest once again from for-profit and large nonprofit corporations to become more involved in medical education than they have before. Just this year we've seen the first interest in the executive branch of the federal government becoming more directly involved in medical education

with its interest in nutrition curricula.

There is probably going to be more education available from devices with more advisory roles from mentors and professors, which actually allows them to develop closer relationships with students as they move forward. You'll also see more students getting involved in various types of research, and we should be able to reach more populations and do a better job with population-based medicine with the data and experiences that are being developed now.

What advice would you give to young people who are considering medicine as a career?

They will always have a good job. There's no end in sight for the physician shortage. There are many types of things you can do with a medical degree. Many physicians may gravitate toward patient care but there are other opportunities in leadership, research, education and different fields that demand physician input. These opportunities will continue to grow with time.

Why is it important to give back to the community in which you reside and work?

In my fellowship I learned that physicians were among the three learned professions during the Middle Ages, the other two being clergymen and lawyers. There were five characteristics of professionals from that time that still resonate today. The first is a continued mastery of an extensive body of knowledge; second, teaching the next generation of professionals; third, keeping confidential relationships with your clients and fourth, understand that you might not be paid for a substantial portion of what you do.

The fifth characteristic is being a leader in your profession and your community. Physicians have a responsibility to use their skills to better their community. All of those who have this type of opportunity for learning and contact with people should be leaders who make the world a better place.

What might people be surprised to know about you?

I don't think that most people know that I write humorous poetry and like to do a little stand-up comedy sometimes. I like jokes and being light-hearted. Most people around me get to know that pretty quickly.

Can you tell us a favorite joke?

Most of my favorite jokes are lawyer jokes, and I'll leave it at that.



Springfield Business Journal holds a variety of awards programs throughout the year, but Best Places to Work is unique because it requires employees to nominate their own company for recognition. Instead of simply trading their time for a paycheck, these employees realize that their work is serving a larger purpose and they feel valued and appreciated for it, thanks to the culture created by the company's leadership.

As you peruse the profiles of this year's Best Places to Work on the following pages, you are bound to notice some common themes. From new employees to seasoned ones, entry level to management, there is a shared purpose and vision. Perhaps hearing their stories will inspire you to think about how you might improve upon your own workplace culture.

Our event sponsor, United Community Bank, hosts a reception and awards ceremony that is open to the business community. We hope you will join us in recognizing the 2026 Best Places to Work.

PLEASE JOIN US AS WE HONOR THE 2026



Reception & Ceremony
Thursday, April 30, 2026
5:30 - 7:00 p.m.

United Community Bank, Montvale
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Please RSVP by Wednesday, April 22
To Holly Whisler at Springfield Business Journal
Email: Holly@springfieldbusinessjournal.com

Modern Countertops



Left to right: T.J. Henderson, Richard Cunningham, Chris Barkley, Micheala Jones, Jeff E. Kinsel, Quinn Ward, Jacob Dresh (back row), Scott Keafer (front row), Mike Peace, Logan Patterson, Eric Briggs, Mike Crespi, Alex Dickerson, Matt Drury, Rick Dubose. Not pictured: Andrew Frey, Greg Foster, Chris Parker, Eric Gill, Hev Barbour, Gary Butler, Erik Lopez, Troy Bowen.

T.J. Henderson started Modern Countertops in a single-car garage in 2012. The early years focused on learning the craft and building strong systems. Over time, the company has grown into a 25-person team that completes nearly 100 projects per month across Illinois, Missouri, Iowa and Indiana.

"We've always believed that investing in equipment and systems should make work better for the people doing it," Henderson said. Along the way, we've navigated restructuring and leadership changes that ultimately strengthened our organization and clarified our standards."

Employees are a major reason for the success of Modern Countertops, as many team members have been with the company for nearly a decade.

"We are humans working with other humans. That applies to how we treat customers and how we treat our team," Henderson said. "We provide full health, dental and vision coverage, and we've implemented communication systems that protect employees' personal time, so their work doesn't follow them home unnecessarily. We invest in safety, training and tools that reduce physical strain and make jobs more sustainable."

The company is currently designing a formal apprenticeship and training center in order to structured career paths. The long-term vision is to build an apprenticeship framework that

could be adopted to help standardize training and elevate the industry as a whole.

"If we contribute to raising industry standards, that benefits customers, tradespeople and businesses alike," Henderson said.

This past year, Modern Countertops has focused on strengthening its foundation.

"We continued steady growth while maintaining strong profitability and operational stability," Henderson said. "We improved lead times to an average of nine business days – significantly faster than typical industry timelines – while keeping quality standards high."

The company implemented structured communication tools to protect employee work-life balance, expanded internal data systems to improve visibility and accountability and hired key leadership that elevated field operations.

"We also reached more than 60 five-star Google reviews and continued active involvement in the community through youth sports sponsorships, charitable donations and a give-back program tied to customer reviews," Henderson said.

Recently, the company began construction of a new design center focused entirely on customer experience.

"Buying stone can feel overwhelming, especially for first-time buyers," Henderson said.

"This space is designed to make the process clear, comfortable and collaborative. Our goal is to build design centers that function not only as customer-experience spaces but also as community hubs within each territory we serve."

Each center is designed to pair local contractors, builders, designers and suppliers with area projects. The company plans to expand the model into additional territories throughout the Midwest, with each location operating as its own structured business unit supported by regional leadership.

"Growth for us isn't simply about scale," Henderson said. "It's about building a company that is financially disciplined, operationally strong, culture-driven and capable of providing long-term careers in the trades. If we focus on that, the rest follows."

For Henderson, the most meaningful part of his job is watching people build better lives.

"We've had several team members purchase their first homes while working here," he said. "Others have grown from entry-level positions into leadership roles. Many have significantly increased their income over time. Being in a position to support someone through a difficult season or see them reach a milestone they once thought was out of reach is incredibly rewarding."

PHOTO BY ZACH ADAMS



Xcessories Squared



Front row, left to right: Nick Carrigan, Randy Contreras, Dameon McKain, Alison Vice, Andrea Hanney, Tracy Audi, Traci Leahy Beck, Scott Beck, Matt Leahy, Larry Leahy (founder), Angie Leahy, Toni Leahy, Kim Leahy Reed, Zach O'Neal, Dalton Womas and Jon Piechowski.

Back row: Robert McNear, Owen Shuff, Lorrie Green, Tony Taylor, Tim Brewer, Joe Kunteimer, Brett Wiles (poster head), Brian Leanard, Scott Woodruff, Leean Reardon, Andrew Reinert, Erik Spoonmore, Mike Stephens, Vince Leahy, Todd Castleman, Frank Wiggins, Greg Kirchgerner (poster head), Dyllan Lewey, Brendon Horrichs, Austin Hamilton, Karl Yaker (poster head), Jared Malott, Tim McKain, Dennis Kraus, Jake Haley, Austin Castleman. Not pictured: Robert Brooks, Tricia Lynch and Jeffrey Patheal

PHOTO COURTESY OF
XCESSORIES SQUARED

Xcessories Squared, based in Auburn, has been a leader in the traffic and sign-support industry for nearly four decades. The company's origins date back to 1977 when founder Larry Leahy identified an opportunity to advance telescoping perforated square steel tube technology while working in highway safety. In 1982, after confirming there was not an existing design patent, he partnered with a manufacturer to bring the product to market.

Founded in 1988, Xcessories Squared initially focused on hardware and accessories that complemented the Perforated Steel Square Tube system, including post-to-anchor and sign-to-post components, anchor-driving tools and a slip-base system that all meet Federal Highway Administration crashworthiness requirements. "The company continues to manufacture products in compliance with the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials and FHA standards and collaborates directly with state transportation departments to support design, documentation and specifications," said Tracy Beck, vice president of Xcessories Squared development.

Along with its Auburn site, Xcessories Squared has a site in Surprise, Arizona, and a

distribution facility in Yoakum, Texas.

Today, Xcessories Squared offers a full line of signposts, breakaway and slip-base systems, bracing and related hardware. It is all manufactured, melted and assembled in the U.S. and shipped nationwide and to Canada. Innovative problem solving and product development remain core strengths, supported by decades of involvement with groups focused on roadside safety and crash testing.

Other systems used by the company include the Adjust-a-Sign Aluminum Brace System, which is made of adjustable bracing and brackets for ground-mounted sign support systems. The Kleen Break Sign Post Coupler System is a crash tested frangible base ground-mounted sign assembly and the Redi-Torque System is a ground-mounted slip base sign assembly.

Street sign hardware used by the company includes traffic sign mounting hardware, sign post bases and anchors, sign post installation tools, aluminum caps and crosses and galvanized steel caps.

"When you work with Xcessories Squared, you'll see that solving problems with innovative designs is one of our most important strengths,"

Beck said. "From slip bases to breakaway bases, sign posts to sign bracing and all clamps, brackets and related hardware, your total sign support product line starts here."

Andrea Hanney, who works in customer service at Xcessories Squared, believes the company boasts a true family environment. "Owners not only hustle and strive daily to give their customers great service, they also genuinely care by encouraging the team dynamic and each employee's personal and professional growth," she said. "This all comes with a lighthearted twist that makes for a great work environment."

"Auburn has been home to the company for nearly 40 years, and its recent expansion of an additional 95,000 square feet has more than doubled its manufacturing capacity," Beck said.

Xcessories Squared is still family-run, and Matt Leahy, who has served in multiple roles since joining in 1995, was appointed president in 2012.

"The company attributes its strong workplace culture and long-tenured team to its family-centered values and is honored to be named one of the Springfield Business Journal's Best Places to Work in 2026," he said.

Sacred Heart Convent of the Dominican Sisters of Springfield, Illinois



Sacred Heart Convent of the Dominican Sisters of Springfield has a history dating back more than 150 years.

"In 1873, six sisters were sent from Springfield, Kentucky, to Jacksonville, Illinois," SHC administrator Becky Woiwode said. "They carried with them the itinerant spirit of St. Dominic De Guzman of France, who lived and preached about God in the 13th century. Leaving behind the comfort and security of their Kentucky home, these women courageously journeyed into the unknown."

The group originally had hopes of one day returning to Kentucky, but an unexpected revelation led the sisters to believe they had been sent to establish a separate and independent congregation.

"With courage and faith, each sister freely signed her name to the document establishing a new congregation," Woiwode said. "What began in uncertainty became a bold act of trust and commitment."

In 1893, with the congregation growing, the sisters relocated their Motherhouse to Springfield where SHC remains today. To continue their ministry, the sisters became educators, principals, health care personnel, social workers, pastoral ministers, hospital administrators, nurses, canon lawyers, campus ministers, parish leaders and literacy center directors, to name a few. They also advocate for systemic change on the local, national and international levels.

At SHC, 83 coworkers assist the sisters so they can focus on their ministry and calling. The

Motherhouse Convent includes an infirmary where elderly sisters receive compassionate care from nurses and nursing assistants. In addition, coworkers serve as housekeepers, laundry personnel, cooks, dietary aides, maintenance and groundskeeping personnel, receptionists, IT professionals, human resource specialists, communications staff, finance personnel, archivists, administrators and mission advancement office staff.

"When coworkers are asked what they love about working at Sacred Heart Convent, the responses are remarkably consistent," Woiwode said. "They speak of the respectful, compassionate and appreciative way they are treated."

The sisters are deeply committed to their coworkers' growth and well-being. Programs are in place to support continued education to help coworkers advance in their chosen professions. This effort is fueled with encouragement and financial assistance from the sisters. Flexible scheduling allows coworkers to pursue education without sacrificing their livelihood.

"Sacred Heart Convent is a place where coworkers stay because it is fair, just and supportive," Woiwode said. "The pay and benefits reflect that fairness, but the true reward is the environment itself: peaceful, respectful and profoundly generous."

Even sisters who are technically retired continue to contribute with unwavering dedication. It's not uncommon to receive a daily blessing or hear a sister break into song during a visit to the office or infirmary.

"These moments bring joy, peace and a deep sense of belonging," Woiwode said.

One of the significant achievements this past year was the expansion of the sisters' SDART program, which stands for Springfield Dominicans Anti-Racism Team. The sisters also unveiled an effort to support their coworkers called Thrive.

"This initiative helps coworkers overcome obstacles in their personal and professional lives," Woiwode said. "Whether assisting with resource information, such as child care, transportation to work, housing support or payroll rent deductions, the sisters are committed to ensuring that every coworker has the opportunity to succeed."

Additionally, the sisters launched a free tutoring program for coworkers' children and grandchildren. This gift is deeply meaningful since many of them are retired teachers and principals.

Looking to the future, SHC remains committed to providing the care and services that will allow the sisters to continue their ministry for years to come. Together they stand ready to support women who discern a call to join the Dominican Sisters of Springfield, ensuring that this legacy of faith, service and community continues into the next generation.

PHOTO BY ZACH ADAMS



Springfield Urban League



PHOTO COURTESY OF
SPRINGFIELD URBAN LEAGUE

For nearly 100 years, the Springfield Urban League has stood as a pillar of advocacy, opportunity and empowerment for central Illinois. From the earliest days in the fall of 1926, the Springfield Urban League has been a steadfast companion to families navigating the tides of history.

“We’ve stood strong through the civil rights movement and the fight for the Voting Rights Act of 1965. We championed women’s rights and never wavered in our mission to ensure that every person, regardless of their socioeconomic background, could access education, find meaningful work, receive free health screenings and claim the opportunity to rise up,” said Zhavier Harris, marketing and communications manager.

The Springfield Urban League is a human service corporation and direct service organization that serves over 23,000 people each year. “The work we do truly matters,” Harris said. “Every day, we serve our community across health, education, workforce development, child care, justice and advocacy, meeting people where they are and walking alongside them through every stage of life. From the moment you enter the world until your golden years, the Springfield Urban League is there

with programs, resources and support designed to uplift and empower.”

For Harris, working for the Springfield Urban League means being able to highlight the stories of impact and witnessing change in the community. “As head of marketing, you get exposed to so much positivity and opportunity,” he said. “I’ve witnessed the Urban League’s impact firsthand.” In high school, Harris received the G.B. Winston Scholarship and attended the 2013 Historically Black College and University tour which led him to attend Hampton University.

During its near century of existence, the Springfield Urban League has enjoyed a number of accomplishments. In 2025, it was recognized as Springfield’s “Best Local Nonprofit” by Illinois Times. In 2024, the organization’s Children’s Defense Fund Freedom Schools program was awarded “Best Kids Summer Day Camp,” highlighting the powerful impact made in literacy, leadership development and youth enrichment. In addition, the Head Start and Early Head Start programs earned the title of “Best Daycare Center” in 2024 and 2025.

“Earning the Head Start awards was a testament to our unwavering commitment to early childhood education and family support,” Harris said. “These recognitions belong not

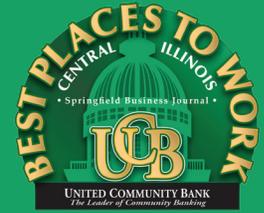
only to our leadership and staff, but also to our volunteers, partners, families and supporters who have helped carry the movement forward for 100 years.”

“Empowering Communities. Changing Lives” is the organization’s tagline, but according to Harris, it is so much more. “It will be a promise to actively live out every single day through the work that we do,” he said. “It will serve as a guiding vision, shaping how we uplift families, invest in opportunity and build stronger, more connected communities for generations to come. The most special aspect of the organization is how the people we empower also empower others. There’s something powerful about knowing your work changes lives.”

Looking ahead, the Springfield Urban League is committed to protecting early childhood education, strengthening workforce opportunities, navigating health crises and responding to the ever-evolving needs of the community. They are also anticipating a special 100-year anniversary dinner celebration in September.

“We will continue pressing forward with urgency, focus and determination as we move beyond our 100th year, knowing the work is far from finished and too important to slow down,” Harris said.

Springfield Clinic (alumni)



Pictured: The winners of Springfield Clinic's 2025 fourth quarter "SC Celebrates," a program that highlights the exceptional work of a number of employees each quarter. All Springfield Clinic team members can submit nominations for their colleagues, and patient feedback through patient surveys or online reviews is used to nominate employees as well. Recipients are selected through a blind review process by an interdepartmental committee.

PHOTO COURTESY OF
SPRINGFIELD CLINIC

Founded in 1939, Springfield Clinic is one of the largest physician-led multi-specialty medical practices in Illinois. With more than 650 physicians and advanced-practice practitioners, Springfield Clinic delivers care across more than 80 specialties and subspecialties in approximately 70 locations. The clinic serves patients in more than 20 counties across central Illinois, and its mission is to improve health, provide value and serve the Springfield and central Illinois community. Springfield Clinic also offers telehealth appointments connecting patients to their providers virtually from the comfort of their own home.

Patient care is extremely important, and enjoying a job goes a long way to providing the best in patient care.

"Springfield Clinic has built a culture where people genuinely enjoy coming to work, and it shows in how they care for patients," said Zach Kerker, chief brand and advocacy officer. "We are our own community, charged with caring for the community."

Kerker's favorite part about working for

Springfield Clinic is the people. "Springfield Clinic attracts individuals who care deeply about their community and each other, and you feel that the moment you walk through the door," he said. "Our mission of improving health and serving the community isn't aspirational language; it's something you see lived out in how teams support one another and rally around patients every single day."

Sonia Granger, an LPN and Springfield Clinic employee for over 20 years, has worked in the same department the entire time. "I have never wanted to change employers, because it is an exceptional workplace. I feel that upper management listens to our concerns and works hard to make it a great place to work," she said. "I feel like as a whole, the clinic goes above and beyond for all its employees. It is a wonderful place to work, and I plan on staying until I retire. I love my job."

Springfield Clinic has achieved a number of rewarding accomplishments over the past year. According to Kerker, the company produces a world-class patient experience

with a Net Promoter Score of 87, a widely used metric to measure customer loyalty and satisfaction.

"Over the past year, we've transitioned to a new electronic health record and patient satisfaction never dipped, despite the real disruption of making the most difficult change a health care organization can undergo," he said.

Springfield Clinic's online presence has kept up with the ever-changing technology. The website allows patients to locate their provider, the clinic locations and even schedule an appointment. Plus, the patient portal allows patients to stay up-to-date on their medical history by using the app on their phone.

Looking toward the future, Springfield Clinic is focused on continued growth that stays true to the physician-led model.

"We are expanding access to high-quality care across central Illinois while investing in the innovative treatments, digital technologies and modern facilities that our patients deserve," Kerker said.



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

United Community Bank is pleased to bring our community the Best Places to Work awards program. Since 2008, in partnership with the Springfield Business Journal, UCB has presented over sixty companies with this honor and hundreds more have been nominated by their employees. Enclosed on these pages is a look back at a decade of distinction.

2026



2025



2024



2023



2022



2021



2020



2019



2018



2017



For a full list of past recipients please visit: ucbbank.com/bptw

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Sources: IRS Form 990, Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax. Forms provided by Guidestar.org • Ranked by net assets.

NAME/ADDRESS	PHONE WEBSITE/EMAIL	NET ASSETS/ ANNUAL REVENUE	CALENDAR/ TAX YEAR	PRINCIPAL	MISSION	YEAR EST'D
Catholic Charities Diocese of Springfield in Illinois 1625 W. Washington St. Springfield, IL 62702	217-523-9201 cc.dio.org	\$32,728,584 \$14,909,426	7/1/2024- 6/30/2025	Steven E. Roach executive director	To extend to all the healing and empowering presence of Jesus.	1925
YMCA of Springfield 601 N. Fourth St. Springfield, IL 62703 4550 W. Iles Ave. Springfield, IL 62711 Lincoln YMCA 719 Wyatt, Lincoln IL 62656	217-544-9846 springfieldymca.org	\$31,332,743 \$9,629,808	1/1/2023- 12/31/2023	Angie Sowle, CEO	The YMCA puts Christian principles into practice through programs that build a healthy spirit, mind and body for all.	1874
Central Counties Health Centers, Inc. 2239 E. Cook St. Springfield, IL 62703	217-788-2300 centralcounties.org info@centralcounties.org	\$29,541,743 \$14,273,581	7/1/2024- 6/30/2025	Heather Burton president/CEO	Making quality care accessible.	1999
Girl Scouts of Central Illinois 3020 Baker Drive Springfield, IL 62703	888-623-1237 getyourgirlpower.org	\$20,644,655 \$5,968,109	10/1/2023 - 9/30/2024	Jennifer Sedbrook CEO	Builds girls of courage, confidence and character who make the world a better place.	1956
Abraham Lincoln Council, Scouting America 5231 South Sixth St. Road Springfield, IL 62703	217-529-2727 alincouncilscouting.org askabe@scouting.org	\$18,553,733 \$1,439,687	1/1/2025- 12/31/2025	Jeff Whitten scout executive/CEO	To prepare young people to make ethical choices over their lifetime by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law.	1920
Central Illinois Foodbank 1937 E. Cook St. Springfield, IL 62703	217-522-4022 centralilfoodbank.org foodlist@centralilfoodbank.org	\$17,050,695 \$20,264,591	6/1/2024 - 5/31/2025	Pam Molitoris executive director	Our mission is to provide food, and develop awareness of and creative solutions for food insecurity.	1982
Springfield Urban League 100 N. 11th St. Springfield, IL 62703	217-789-0830 springfieldul.org	\$12,996,480 \$15,461,854	7/1/2024- 6/30/2025	Marcus E. Johnson president/CEO	Empowering those who struggle to secure economic self-reliance, parity, power and civil rights.	1926
Ronald McDonald House Charities of Central Illinois 610 N. Seventh St. Springfield, IL 62702	217-528-3314 rmhc-centralillinois.org ak@rmhc-centralillinois.org	\$12,465,164 \$1,707,828	1/1/2024- 12/31/2024	Amber Kaylor CEO	To provide essential services that remove barriers, strengthen families and promote healing when children need health care.	1986
Midwest Mission 1001 Mission Drive Pawnee, IL 62558	217-483-7911 midwestmission.org office@midwestmission.org	\$7,260,901 \$2,618,511	1/1/2024- 12/31/2024	Chantel Corrie executive director	Bringing the hearts and hands of God's people together to transform resources into humanitarian relief.	1999
Land of Lincoln Goodwill Industries 1220 Outer Park Drive Springfield, IL 62704	217-789-0400 llgi.org info@llgi.org	\$5,552,925 \$30,366,580	7/1/2024- 6/30/2025	Ron Culves president/CEO	Strengthen communities by helping individuals overcome barriers to employment, offering work opportunities and skills development, and leading environmental sustainability.	1938
Senior Services of Central Illinois, Inc. 701 W. Mason St. Springfield, IL 62702	217-528-4035 centralilseniors.org	\$4,700,506 \$5,366,600	10/1/2023- 9/30/2024	Carol Harms executive director	Supporting and serving seniors with non-medical services to promote independent living and enrich quality of life.	1967
Safe Families for Children 700 N. Seventh St. Suite A Springfield, IL 62702	217-953-1141 Springfield.safe-families.org springfieldilchapter@safefamilies.net	\$4,369,854 \$10,879,471	7/1/2023- 6/30/2024	Luvi Sims director	Seeks to bring the church and community together to keep children safe and families together. Builds a network of caring and compassionate volunteers to support families facing social isolation.	2003
Habitat for Humanity of Sangamon County 2744 S. Sixth St. Springfield, IL 62703	217-523-2710 habitatsangamon.com csilas@habitatsangamon.com	\$3,885,994 \$3,413,688	7/1/2023- 6/30/2024	Candace Silas executive director	Dedicated to eliminating substandard housing and homelessness worldwide and to making adequate, affordable shelter a matter of conscience and action.	1989
Sojourn Shelter & Services 1800 Westchester Blvd. Springfield, IL 62704	217-726-5100 help4dv.org admin@help4dv.com	\$3,503,478 \$3,513,492	7/1/2024- 6/30/2025	Angela Bertoni, CEO	An emergency shelter, crisis management services, education and court advocacy for adult and child survivors of domestic violence.	1975



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HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Sources: IRS Form 990, Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax. Forms provided by Guidestar.org • Ranked by net assets.

NAME/ADDRESS	PHONE WEBSITE/EMAIL	NET ASSETS/ ANNUAL REVENUE	CALENDAR/ TAX YEAR	PRINCIPAL	MISSION	YEAR EST'D
Kidzeum of Health and Science 412 E. Adams St. Springfield, IL 62701	217-679-2123 kidzeum.org info@kidzeum.org	\$3,224,087 \$1,738,277	1/1/2024- 12/31/2024	Leah Wilson executive director	Create experiences of learning and discovery through play for children of all backgrounds and abilities.	2018
Family Service Center of Sangamon County 919 S. Spring St. Springfield, IL 62704	217-528-8406 service2families.com fsc@service2families.com	\$2,725,606 \$4,361,881	7/1/2023- 6/30/2024	Karen Cox executive director	Committed to improving the lives of families in central Illinois through foster care, adoption and counseling services.	1863
Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Illinois 430 W. Jefferson St. Springfield, IL 62702	217-544-0548 bgccil.org info@bgccil.org	\$2,237,952 \$4,592,733	7/1/2024- 6/30/2025	Tiffany Mathis Posey CEO/ executive director	To enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens.	1956
Compass for Kids 1201 S. Fourth St. Springfield, IL 62703	217-691-8103 compassforkids.org molly@compassforkids.org	\$1,990,209 \$4,891,579	6/1/2024- 5/31/2025	Molly Berendt Grogan, chief executive officer	To provide academic and social-emotional support to empower children and families underserved by our community.	2016
Mini O'Beirne Crisis Nursery 1011 N. Seventh St. Springfield, IL 62702	217-525-6800 miniobeirne.org	\$1,494,324 \$1,036,348	7/1/2024- 6/30/2025	Chris Wilson executive director	To prevent child abuse and neglect by providing emergency, temporary care, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, for children who may be at risk or whose parents are experiencing some type of crisis.	1988
MERCY Communities 1344 N. Fifth St. Springfield, IL 62702	217-753-1358 mercycommunities.org info@mercycommunities.org	\$1,135,336 \$1,269,966	7/1/2024- 6/30/2025	Amy Voils executive director	To provide housing and supportive services to foster the independence of homeless families.	1999
The James Project 907 Clocktower Drive, Suite C Springfield, IL 62704	217-546-3532 thejamesproject127.com office@thejamesproject127.com	\$1,187,857 \$338,136	1/1/2024- 12/31/2024	Olivia Hayse executive director	Recruits and supports dedicated foster parents through the provision of homes and services.	2011
Phoenix Center 109 E. Lawrence Ave. Springfield IL 62704	217-528-5253 phoenixcenterspringfield.org	\$1,056,500 \$957,268	1/1/2024- 12/31/2024	Teresa Silva executive director	To support and empower central Illinois' LGBTQIA+ community with programming that promotes equity, health, well-being, social and educational growth for individuals of diverse identities and backgrounds.	2001
Contact Ministries 1100 E. Adams St. Springfield, IL 62703	217-753-3939 contactministries.com	\$1,049,352 \$1,069,749	7/1/2024- 6/30/2025	Cindy Drum executive director	Providing emergency and transitional shelter with life skills and training, as well as food, clothing, financial assistance and referrals.	1979
Helping Hands of Springfield 2200 Shale St. Springfield, IL 62703	217-522-0048 helpinghandsofspringfield.org	\$951,339 \$4,648,069	7/1/2024- 6/30/2025	Robert Gillespie executive director	To provide shelter, support and housing for people at risk of, or experiencing homelessness in the community.	1989
Springfield Center for Independent Living 330 South Grand Ave. West Springfield, IL 62704	217-523-2587 scil.org scil@scil.org	\$919,133 \$558,266	7/1/2024- 6/30/2025	Pete Roberts executive director	A service and advocacy organization for anyone with a disability.	1985

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Sources: IRS Form 990, Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax. Forms provided by Guidestar.org • Ranked by net assets.

NAME/ADDRESS	PHONE WEBSITE/EMAIL	NET ASSETS/ ANNUAL REVENUE	CALENDAR/ TAX YEAR	PRINCIPAL	MISSION	YEAR EST'D
Rutledge Youth Foundation 151 N. Bruns Lane Springfield, IL 62702	217-525-7757 rutledgeyouthfoundation.org exdirector@rutledgeyouthfoundation.org	\$908,699 \$5,777,223	7/1/2023 - 6/30/2024	Martin Michelson executive director	To provide families with safe, supportive and stable homes through appropriate resources and support.	1952
Fifth Street Renaissance P.O. Box 5181 Springfield, IL 62705	217-544-5040 fsr-sara.org info@fsr-sara.org	\$826,015 \$3,832,554	7/1/2023- 6/30/2024	Penny Powell executive director	Dedicated staff assist underserved individuals and families in difficult situations by providing many housing and health services in Springfield and throughout Illinois.	1979
Inner City Mission 726 N. Seventh St. Springfield, IL 62702	217-525-3940 innercitymission.net	\$643,029 \$827,715	1/1/2024- 12/31/2024	Scott Payne executive director	Helping the homeless find their way home by giving what is needed to bring about lasting joy, peace and stability. Shelter, sustenance, clothing, teaching and Christian mentorship are all elements of the stable environment provided in order to expand joy and peace in each person's life, family and community.	1983
AgeInc 2731 S. MacArthur Blvd. Springfield, IL 62704	217-787-9234 agelinc.org	\$600,562 \$7,343,237	10/1/2024- 9/30/2025	Carolyn Austin CEO	To help older adults live and age well. We work to create an awareness of aging and caregiving issues and encourage development and coordination of services to address those issues.	1974
The Parent Place 314 South Grand Ave. West Springfield, IL 62704	217-753-8730 tppos.org bhammen@tppos.org	\$545,356 \$665,859	7/1/2024- 6/30/2025	Bridgett Hammen executive director	To teach positive parenting skills and techniques to nurture the families in our community and aid in the prevention of child abuse and neglect.	1974
Youth Service Bureau 2901 Normandy Road Springfield, IL 62703	217-529-8300 ysbi.com	\$523,624 \$1,228,751	7/1/2023- 6/30/2024	Katina Kooi executive director	Provides services to at-risk youth who are, or are at risk of becoming, runaway, abused, neglected and/or homeless.	1976
Community Child Care Connection 2801 W. Lawrence Ave. Springfield, IL 62704	217-525-2805 4childcare.org	\$506,538 \$2,363,751	7/1/2024 - 6/30/2025	Erica Romines executive director	Assisting families and child care providers in obtaining education, and quality, affordable child care to help children and families reach their greatest potential.	1994
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Illinois 928 S. Spring St. Springfield, IL 62704	217-753-1216 bbbscil.org	\$362,997 \$769,260	1/1/2024- 12/31/2024	Saramanda Hall CEO	To create and support one-to-one mentoring relationships that ignite the power and promise of youth.	1972
Prevent Child Abuse Illinois 528 S. Fifth St., Suite 211 Springfield, IL 62701	217-522-1129 preventchildabuseillinois.org	\$329,425 \$1,031,961	7/1/2024- 6/30/2025	Tarra Winters	To prevent child abuse by providing statewide leadership through education, public awareness, support for community initiatives, and advocacy.	1990
Prairie Center Against Sexual Assault 3 W. Old State Capitol Plaza Suite 206 Springfield, IL 62701	217-744-2560 prairiecasa.org	\$245,953 \$1,149,789	7/1/2024 - 6/30/2025	Jenn Dowd executive director	To alleviate the suffering of sexual assault victims and to prevent sexual violence by providing emergency room response, medical advocacy and trauma counseling.	1978
Solid Rock Youth Transitional Services, Inc. 620 N. Walnut St. Springfield, IL 62702	217-572-1269 www.solidrockyts.org info@solidrockyts.org	\$49,352 \$592,915	1/1/2024- 12/31/2024	Marscia Anderson	To provide housing and supportive services to youth and families impacted by the foster care system.	2022

Advance Illinois releases education findings

by Cinda Ackerman Klickna

Advance Illinois has released its most recent findings about education in Illinois. "The State We're In 2025: A Report on Public Education in Illinois" presents data that should give us pause and spur action. These findings, coupled with major federal cuts in education, pose serious challenges for school districts and their students.

Advance Illinois is an organization whose mission states, "All students deserve equitable access to a high-quality education." The group focuses on an education system that strives for equity and supports the whole child from cradle to career by looking at five elements:

adequate funding and resources, data systems that foster continuous improvement, whole child support, high-quality and diverse teachers, staff and leaders, and rigorous instruction. Its work involves community engagement, policy and data analysis, legislative advocacy and coalition-building.

Robin Steans, president of Advance Illinois, said, "We have been hit with many things outside our control, but we can do things that are in our control." Advance Illinois applauds the work of teachers, support staff, administrators and school boards who work daily for the well-being of students.

Federal actions by President Donald Trump and Congress present many concerns. Illinois will face major challenges in taking on the responsibility for ensuring students and schools receive support.

"The State We're In 2025" presents Illinois-specific findings from early childhood through higher education and some stark realities emerge. Early childhood costs for families are high. According to the report, a median-income family pays 14.7% of earnings for child care; that figure rises to 41.2% for a family at the federal poverty level.

Illinois college tuition is \$4,000 higher than the national average, and families pay 65% of tuition while the national average is 40%. Illinois ranks 48 out of the 50 states in higher education funding. Colleges rely on federal grants for research; many have been cut or eliminated.

Currently, 11% of federal funding flows to Illinois schools. This equates to around \$2,500



The Advance Illinois 2026 Legislator Education Forum, titled "From Uncertainty to Opportunity: State Strategy," was held in Springfield in late February, bringing together partners to focus on early childhood education and student support. PHOTO COURTESY ADVANCE ILLINOIS

per student. With cuts in many areas within the U.S. Department of Education, the agency that serves as a unified source for schools across the nation with educational experts, and in cuts in federal funding support, students and school districts will be affected.

Federal grants have been canceled for teacher-preparation programs, mental health services, student nutrition and magnet schools. Others have been frozen in areas of child care, social services and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. Several court cases have been filed to keep some funds flowing or to reinstate funding. In the meantime, there is uncertainty for the future.

In addition, the U.S. Office for Civil Rights, which investigates allegations of civil rights violations, has been reduced and pending cases have been dismissed. Many of these violations affect students with disabilities; without the mechanism to file a complaint, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is in violation. The technical assistance center which offers resources and aid during emergency disruptions in schools has been shut down. Close to 130 staff at the National Center for Education Statistics were laid off. Although Illinois does a good job in collecting data, this means there is no national database to be able to compare Illinois student performance and progress to other states.

Other work handled by the U.S. Department of Education has been farmed out to four other agencies that have little or no expertise in areas such as title funding, career and technical education, rural-school programs, foreign language and education programs, child care services for low-income college parents and

Indian education and tribal colleges.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement actions have led families to keep children at home instead of going to school. Statistics show that losing even five days of instruction affects student learning. In Illinois, one in four students miss 18 days of school each year, which equates to almost a month of lost learning.

Federal reductions in the Institute of Education Sciences, the cancellation of \$1 billion in previously approved research grants and elimination of federal datasets mean the work to track student absenteeism and student

outcomes is lost.

Illinois schools receive some funding based on the number of low-income students. Rules have changed for students receiving the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Medicaid. Eligibility for those younger than 18 has been lowered to those younger than 14. This means families lose coverage and schools lose low-income student numbers; thus, funding to schools decreases. In addition, students miss out on the free-and-reduced-lunch program, which affects the well-being of families in our communities.

Illinois uses the Evidence Based Funding model. Since its passage in 2017, an increase of \$2.8 billion has been invested in K-12 schools. In 2017, there were 459 underfunded districts, which has fallen to 56 in 2026. Illinois is still \$3 billion short of meeting adequate funding levels.

As Illinois continues to combat various issues, Advance Illinois recommends additional school funding, developing an alternative model for calculating the number of low-incomes students and addressing civil rights protections. The organization also encourages those who care about education to donate to schools and universities, support legislative efforts, provide resources, and speak out for our students and get involved. 

Cinda Ackerman Klickna is a former Springfield teacher and past president of the Illinois Education Association. She has followed the work of Advance Illinois for many years.

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Central Illinois Golf Outings

2026

APRIL

11 – Cross Country Scramble, Piper Glen Golf Club, 217-483-6537.

11 – Rail Masters Tournament, The Rail Golf Course, 217-525-0365.

18 – Redbud Romp, Four-Person Scramble, Edgewood Golf Club, Auburn, 217-438-3221.

25 – Two-Person Triad, Piper Glen Golf Club, 217-483-6537.

MAY

2 – Bergen Parent/Child Scramble, Bergen Golf Course, 217-753-6211.

2 – Spring Swing, The Oaks Golf Course, 217-528-6600.

2-3 – The Rail Shootout, The Rail Golf Course, 217-525-0365.

2-3 – Ladies Spring Fling 2-Person Scramble, Bunn Golf Course, 217-522-2633, Lincoln Greens Golf Course, 217-786-4111.

4 – Italian Open, Panther Creek Country Club, 217-370-9998.

17 – Individual Low Net, Piper Glen Golf Club, 217-483-6537.

23 – Two-Person Red, White and Blue Tournament, Piper Glen Golf Club, 217-483-6537.

JUNE

6 – Mason County Democrat Outing, Country Hills Golf Course, Greenview, 217-632-7242.

6-7 – Central Illinois Amateur, Lincoln Greens Golf Course, 217-786-4111.

8 – Cigars for the Troops, 16th annual Golf Outing, The Rail Golf Course, 217-525-0365.

13-14 – Piper Cup, Piper Glen Golf Club, 217-483-6537.

14 – Red, White & Blue Individual Stroke Play, Bunn Golf Course, 217-522-2633.

20 – Night Golf, Two-Person Alternate Shot, Pasfield Golf Course, 217-698-6049.

20 – Athens JFL Outing, Country Hills Golf

Course, Greenview, 217-632-7242.

27-28 – Springfield Women's City Tournament, Bunn Golf Course, 217-522-2633, Lincoln Greens Golf Course, 217-786-4111.

25-28 – Memorial Health Championship presented by LRS, Panther Creek Country Club, 217-670-2910.

28 – Money Ball Scramble, Piper Glen Golf Club, 217-483-6537.

JULY

11 – Best Ball Shamble, Piper Glen Golf Club, 217-483-6537.

11 – Summer Swing, The Oaks Golf Course, 217-528-6600.

11-12 – The Challenge, Edgewood Golf Club, Auburn, 217-438-3221.

18 – The Rail Open, The Rail Golf Course, 217-525-0365.

18-19 – Players Invitational Tournament, Country Hills Golf Course, Greenview, 217-632-7242.

19 – The Mulligan, formerly the One-Person Scramble, Lincoln Greens Golf Course, 217-786-4111.

25-26 – Springfield Men's City Tournament, Bunn Golf Course, 217-522-2633, Lincoln Greens Golf Course, 217-786-4111.

AUGUST

1 – Greenview Firemen's Santa's Helper Outing, Country Hills Golf Course, Greenview, 217-632-7242.

1-2 – Springfield Men's City Tournament, Bunn Golf Course, 217-522-2633, Lincoln Greens Golf Course, 217-786-4111, The Rail Golf Course, 217-525-0365, Piper Glen Golf Course, 217-483-6537.

9 – Individual Low Net, Piper Glen Golf Club, 217-483-6537.

9 – Pasfield Parent/Child Alternate Shot,

Pasfield Golf Course, 217-698-6049.

21 – Ed Kane Memorial, Four-person 1 Gross 1 Net Ball, Bunn Golf Course, 217-522-2633.

24 – Senior Scramble, The Rail Golf Course, 217-525-0365.

29 – Night Golf, Two-Person Alternate Shot, Pasfield Golf Course, 217-698-6049.

29-30 – Club Championship, Piper Glen Golf Club, 217-483-6537.

SEPTEMBER

12-13 – Round The Town, Two-Person Team Event, Bunn Golf Course, 217-522-2633, Lincoln Greens Golf Course, 217-786-4111.

18 – Player of the Year Shootout, Piper Glen Golf Club, 217-483-6537.

19 – Henning Memorial, Country Hills Golf Course, Greenview, 217-632-7242.

27 – Arden's Revenge, Hard Course Day, Bunn Golf Course, 217-522-2633.

OCTOBER

1 – Hard Course Day, Piper Glen Golf Club, 217-483-6537.

18 – Chili Man 4-Person Scramble, Hard Course Day, Lincoln Greens Golf Course, 217-786-4111.

24 – Fall Classic (Formerly the Chili Bowl), The Oaks Golf Course, 217-528-6600.

31 – Halloween Horror, Edgewood Golf Club, Auburn, 217-438-3221.

NOVEMBER

7 – Hard Course Scramble, The Rail Golf Course, 217-525-0365.

7-8 – Hy-Vee 2-Person Turkey Shootout, Bergen Golf Course, 217-753-6211, and Pasfield Golf Course, 217-698-6049.

27 – Turkey Shootout Scramble, Four-Person Scramble, Edgewood Golf Club, Auburn, 217-438-3221.



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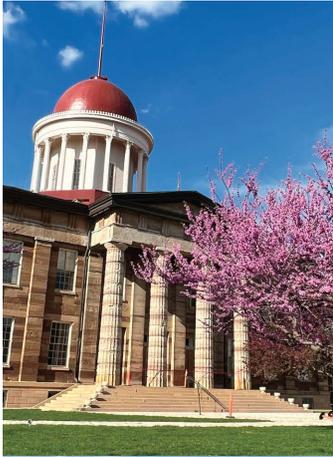
For more information on our 2026 rates + passes, call 217-786-4111 or visit:

WWW.SPRINGFIELDPARKDISTRICTGOLF.ORG

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

COMMUNITY SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

	NAME/MEETING ADDRESS	PHONE WEBSITE/EMAIL	MEETING TIME(S)	# OF MEMBERS	CONTACTS	DUES	MISSION STATEMENT	YEAR EST'D
1	Coalition of Rainbow Alliances AgeLinc, 2731 S. MacArthur Blvd., Springfield, IL 62704	217-726-7966 springfieldcoral.org coral.springfield@gmail.com	Second Sunday, 4 p.m.	803	Brian Sylvester	None	To build a LGBTQ-inclusive community that provides visibility and advocacy.	2000
2	King's Daughters Organization 205 S. Fifth St., Suite 530 Springfield, IL 62701	217-789-4431 kdospringfieldil.org kdo@cfl.org	Once a month	356	Cathy Boerke	Varies by circle	Empower and encourage our members to support the well-being of seniors in our community.	1893
3	American Business Club of Springfield Indigo 3013 Lindbergh Blvd. Springfield, IL 62704	217-725-6563 abcspringfield.com tntmpsn02@gmail.com	First and third Thursdays, 12 p.m., September through May	304	Trenton Thompson president	\$360 annually	Inspiring mobility and independence. In addition to the Amtryke program and local scholarships for therapist, ABC Springfield makes considerable-sized donations to local nonprofits and charities at the Spring and Fall Charity day giveaways.	1925
4	Junior League of Springfield 2800 Montvale Dr. Springfield, IL 62704	309-740-4087 jlsil.org admin@jlsil.org	Second or third Tuesday September through June	90	Kenzie Anderson	\$135 annually	An organization of women committed to promoting volunteerism, developing the potential of women and improving communities through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers. Its purpose is exclusively educational and charitable. Current focus is food and security in Springfield and the surrounding area.	1939
5	Rotary Club of Springfield - Downtown Maldaner's Restaurant (2nd Floor) 222 S. Sixth St. Springfield, IL 62701	217-566-4326 spiroatary.org	Mondays, 5:30 p.m.	45	Marty Michelson	\$360 annually	Service above self. Projects that promote literacy, combat hunger and meet other needs in our community, working with The Outlet and Rutledge Youth, sponsoring college scholarships and student participation in the Rotary Youth Leadership Awards and Rotary Youth Exchange Programs, volunteering for and providing grants to numerous nonprofits, and securing grants for community and international projects.	1913
6	Sertoma Club of Springfield Call for location	217-891-2782 spfldilsertoma.com album1@aol.com	First and third Mondays, 12 p.m.	42	Cheryl Pence	\$200 annually plus meals	SERTOMA = SERvice TO MAnkind. Areas of service: projects to benefit hearing impaired, including hearing aids for low-income seniors, assistive listening equipment for public venues; support for other community needs including Boys & Girls Club, Golden Laurel Awards, national heritage projects.	1954
7	Springfield Jaycees Scheels Training Center 3801 S MacArthur Blvd., 2nd Floor Springfield, IL 62711	springfieldjaycees.net spfldjaycees@gmail.com	Third Wednesday, 6:30 p.m.	40	Shadaye Hunnicutt	\$68	Young adults ages 18-40 develop leadership skills through community service to create positive change within the community. Notable projects: Holiday Lights Parade, Lawn Mower Clinics, United to Beat Malaria, Camp New Hope and World Clean-Up Day.	1939
8	Kiwanis Club of Springfield - Downtown Maldaner's Restaurant (2nd Floor) 222 S. Sixth St. Springfield, IL 62701	downtownkiwanis.org info@downtownkiwanis.org	Second and fourth- Wednesdays, 12 p.m.	38	Scott Reeder	\$156 annually, plus meals	Kiwanis is a unified group of members and partners dedicated to improving the lives of children in our community. Kiwanians impact our community through our service-leadership programs.	1922
9	Springfield Frontiers International American Legion Post 32 1120 E. Sangamon Ave. Springfield, IL, 62702	217-370-0541 springfieldfrontiers.org ahw128@gmail.com	First, second and third Fridays, 12 p.m.	37	Tony Williams	\$160 annually, plus meals	"Advancement through Service" by harnessing the cooperative influence and energy of the members and directing that influence and energy towards solutions to major issues which are civic, social, educational and racial in nature.	1953
10	Rotary Club of Springfield - South Golden Corral 1038 Lejune Dr. Springfield, IL 62703	rotarysouth-spi.org rotarycarl6460@gmail.com	Thursdays, 12 p.m.	36	Carl Affrunti	\$200 annually, plus meals	Service above self. We support youth participation in Rotary Youth Exchange, Rotary Youth Leadership Academy, Rotary Interact and other international projects; deliver meals for Senior Services; support Wreaths Across America; LLCC scholarships; Compass for Kids and many other nonprofits.	1966



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Sources: The individual service organizations.
 Ranked by numbers of members.
 Many groups are meeting online at this time.
 Contact the groups for more information.

COMMUNITY SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

	NAME/MEETING ADDRESS	PHONE WEBSITE/EMAIL	MEETING TIME(S)	# OF MEMBERS	CONTACTS	DUES	MISSION STATEMENT	YEAR EST'D
11	Springfield Noon Lions Club Visit the website for meeting information.	springfieldnoonlionsclub.com spfnoonlionsclub@gmail.com	First and third Tuesdays, 12 p.m.	34	Mike Garcia	\$125 annually, plus meals	Mary Bryant Home for the blind and visually impaired eyeglass recycling program, Camp Lions for Blind and Deaf Youth, Students Can See. Eyeglasses and exams for low-income students and adults.	1919
12	Rotary Club of Springfield - Sunrise Hoogland Center for the Arts 420 S. Sixth St. Springfield, IL 62701	615-512-7725 springfieldrotarysunrise.org springfieldrotarysunrise@gmail.com	Wednesdays, 7 a.m.	31	Isaac Freeman	\$340 annually	Service above self. Grants to local nonprofits that serve youth. Literacy projects at Graham School. This I Believe essay contest for high school youth in collaboration with WUIS - NPR IL. Rotary Youth Exchange. Support for Rotary Foundation efforts to eradicate polio and fund other international projects that change lives.	1987
13	Springfield Breakfast Optimist Club Cathedral Church of St. Paul 815 S. Second St. Springfield, IL 62704	217-638-2389 domer23297@aol.com	Fridays, 8 a.m.	25	Ron Omer	\$50 semi-annually	Friend of Youth. By providing hope and positive vision, Optimists bring out the best in kids.	1960
14	Rotary Club of Springfield - Westside Brickhouse Grill & Pub 3136 lles Ave. Springfield, IL 62704	217-836-6024 facebook.com/Springfield-WestsideRotary rotarywestside@gmail.com	Wednesdays, 12 p.m.	21	Ed Hart	\$165 quarterly with meals, \$80 without. Under age 36, \$55 without.	Service above self. Focusing on children and literacy.	2008
15	Zonta Club of Springfield Illini Country Club 1601 S. Illini Road Springfield, IL 62704	217-787-8680 zonta.org zontadistrict6.org borecky@earthlink.net	Second Wednesday, 5:30 p.m., August through June	15	Carol Borecky	\$140 annually, plus meals	Works to improve the lives of women and girls worldwide through service and advocacy. Local projects reflect that mission.	1939
16	Altrusa International of Springfield Laurel United Methodist Church 631 South Grand Ave. West Springfield, IL 62704	facebook.com/AltrusaSpringfieldIL altrusaspringfield@gmail.com	Third Monday, 6:00 p.m.	14	Janine Drew	\$90/ annually	Altrusa International provides community service, develops leadership, fosters international understanding and encourages fellowship by an international network of volunteers desiring to further the principles of the Association.	1948

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Women of Influence alumni spotlight – Dr. Charlotte Warren

2009 award recipient leaves a legacy at Lincoln Land Community College

by Lynn Whalen

In her third year as president of Lincoln Land Community College, Dr. Charlotte Warren was honored as one of the 2009 Women of Influence. At that time, she was preparing to grab a shovel and “dig in,” with groundbreaking ceremonies scheduled for three major construction projects.

Her two decades of stable and effective leadership have transformed not only the brick-and-mortar of LLCC’s campus and outreach centers, but the entire college. Her mission and the college’s mission are the same: “To transform lives and strengthen our communities through learning.”

Warren arrived at LLCC in May 2006, just in time to lead the upcoming celebration of the college’s 40th anniversary. Her first year was spent forging partnerships with legislative, business and community leaders in LLCC’s 15-county district, the largest geographically in Illinois. With a nursing, teaching and college administrator background, she advocated for LLCC and community colleges at the local, state and national level.

Warren led the finalization of the college’s strategic plan and spearheaded a partnership with local labor unions to form the HIRE education program, preparing students who faced barriers for careers in the trades. She renewed the college’s emphasis on workforce development and student success, with new academic delivery systems and expansion of accelerated, online and hybrid programs.

Then came 18 months of planning for a nearly \$34-million building campaign. Working closely with the LLCC Board of Trustees, a financing plan was developed to construct three new buildings without raising tuition or the LLCC tax rate. A Lincoln Commons, which connects two main campus buildings and provides multiple levels of student gathering spaces, opened in 2011, along with a new classroom building at LLCC-Taylorville. The expansive Workforce Careers Center, with state-of-the-art training facilities for hands-on careers, opened on campus in 2012. All became hubs for student learning and connections.

“In my opinion, the employment of Charlotte Warren is the best decision ever made by the LLCC Board of Trustees,” said then-board chair Craig Findley in 2016 on Dr. Warren’s 10th anniversary as president. “Anyone who knows, works or serves with Dr. Warren is familiar with her calm, steady and wise leadership. Her service to our college, state and nation is



PHOTO COURTESY LLCC

exemplary.”

In the next decade of her presidency, Warren was at the helm for the expansion of short-term, workforce and health care training programs; online degrees and certificates; transfer agreements with colleges and universities and opportunities for high school students to earn college credits. Her commitment to fiscally conservative budgeting helped the college navigate financial challenges with the ups and downs of state and federal funding.

At the college’s 50th anniversary celebration, Warren said, “LLCC is now, more than ever, a prominent presence in our communities, a respected partner of businesses and organizations, and a champion of the mission to which our legacy calls us.”

Spurred by a generous donor gift, LLCC’s expanded aviation center opened in 2017. Warren also was instrumental in securing an \$18-million gift, announced in 2018, to transform the college’s agriculture program with a new building, the Kreher Agriculture Center, and expanded opportunities for ag students. In partnership with Memorial Health, she secured a \$6.1-million gift to address the area nursing shortage, leading to growth in LLCC’s nursing program and construction of the Nursing Education Center on campus.

In March 2020, her leadership faced perhaps its greatest challenge with pandemic-mandated lockdowns. The college moved to remote operations in just two weeks. Looking back at that time, she noted, “The challenges

we faced brought out our collective creativity and determination. We rolled up our sleeves, collaborated, innovated and moved forward.”

Armed with new tools and methods of serving students, LLCC has since moved forward with expanded and updated facilities for emergency services, truck driver training, allied health and construction programs. In partnership with Roland Machinery, a new diesel technology program and lab launched in 2023. A new student support hub is now the one-stop shop for entering and current students.

Warren, LLCC’s sixth president and first female president, is the longest-serving current leader of an Illinois community college. “Dr. Warren brought and continues to provide visionary leadership and heart, ensuring LLCC is truly a comprehensive community college that serves local students and employers,” said Rep. Wayne Rosenthal, chair of LLCC’s board of trustees. “We thank her for her long service and dedication that have taken LLCC to new heights.”

The Women of Influence award honors local women for their contributions to the Springfield area community. In addition to leading an institution that positively affects thousands of local learners as well as the area economy, Warren served on and chaired boards including the United Way of Central Illinois, Mid-Illinois Medical District, Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce, HSHS St. John’s Hospital and the Springfield Sangamon Growth Alliance.

As she looks toward retirement this June, Warren shares her confidence in the dedication and talent of LLCC’s students, faculty and staff. “While I’ve begun reflecting on what possibilities to explore in retirement — my focus now remains on the college, on championing our students’ success and helping sustain the strong partnerships that drive our mission. I am deeply grateful for the extraordinary opportunity of serving Lincoln Land Community College. It has been the honor of my career to work alongside so many remarkable people who care so deeply about our students and our community. LLCC has great momentum, and I look forward to watching the college continue to grow and innovate.” 

Do you know an outstanding woman who should be considered for the 2026 Women of Influence? Submit a nomination at springfieldbusinessjournal.com by selecting the “awards” tab and choosing “Women of Influence.”

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COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Sources: The individual colleges and universities. Ranked by 2025 enrollment.

	NAME/ADDRESS	PHONE	WEBSITE/EMAIL	TYPE OF INSTITUTION	CURRENT ENROLLMENT	TUITION	PRESIDENT/CHANCELLOR	YEAR EST'D
1	Lincoln Land Community College 5250 Shepherd Road P.O. Box 19256 Springfield, IL 62794-9256	217-786-2200	llcc.edu admissions@llcc.edu	Community college	7,728	\$143.50/credit hour (in-district residents)	Charlotte J. Warren Ph.D., president	1967
2	University of Illinois Springfield One University Plaza Springfield, IL 62703	217-206-6600	uis.edu admissions@uis.edu	Public university offering bachelor's and master's degrees, one doctorate and graduate certificates in Springfield, Peoria and online.	4,364	\$9,957 per year (30 hours) undergraduate \$6,102 per year (18 hours) graduate	Janet L. Gooch Ph.D., chancellor	1969
3	Illinois College 1101 W. College Ave. Jacksonville, IL 62650	217-245-3030	ic.edu admissions@ic.edu	Four-year private, liberal arts college offering campus and online degrees.	1,011	\$36,870 and includes books. Room, board and fees \$10,864	Barbara A. Farley, Ph.D.	1829
4	SIU School of Medicine 801 N. Rutledge (main bldg.) Springfield, IL 62702	217-545-8000	siumed.edu admissions@siumed.edu	Public education for medical students, graduate students, medical residents.	922	\$37,800 per-semester tuition plus \$749 fees (no out of state)	Jerry Kruse, M.D., MSPH dean/provost	1970
5	Blackburn College 700 College Ave. Carlinville, IL 62626	217-854-3231	blackburn.edu admissions@blackburn.edu	Four-year, private, liberal arts work college, Presbyterian affiliated. Includes comprehensive transition program Blackburn & Beyond and online professional education programs.	508	\$30,820 tuition and fees \$10,900 room and board (\$8,000 tuition credit if participating in nationally recognized student-managed work program)	Larry K. Lee	1837
6	St. John's College 729 E. Carpenter St. Springfield, IL 62702	217-525-5628	sjcs.edu information@sjcs.edu	Private, nonprofit, upper-division, two-year Bachelor of Science in Nursing, LPN to BSN pathway, online RN to BSN, Master of Science in Nursing (MSN).	146	BSN tuition is \$795/credit hour or a flat rate of \$11,925 for 15 credits and up. MSN tuition is \$584/credit hour.	Dr. Traci M. Krause	1886

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The end of an era

Parents, teachers, react to St. Patrick Catholic School closure announcement

By Scott Reeder



St. Patrick Catholic School, 1800 South Grand Ave. East, was founded in 1910 but will close at the end of this school year due to financial challenges. PHOTO BY ZACH ADAMS

For 116 years, St. Patrick Catholic School has been an educational cornerstone on Springfield's east side – a small school with big ambitions for the children it has served.

At the end of this school year, its classrooms will fall silent.

School leaders announced this month that St. Patrick Catholic School, founded in 1910, will close because of long-term financial challenges. But while the building will close, leaders say the school's mission – providing affordable Catholic education to low-income families – will continue through a new scholarship program for students attending other Catholic schools.

"This decision was made with heavy hearts," said school board president Erik Woehrmann. "St. Pat's has been more than a school – it has been a family."

Today the school serves 52 students, most from working-class families on Springfield's east side. For decades, it has been one of the city's only Catholic schools serving a predominantly minority student population and families living at or near poverty.

Unlike other Springfield Catholic elementary schools, St. Patrick's is run by an independent nonprofit, rather than the diocese, and only educates students through fifth grade rather than eighth grade. The Springfield diocese does own the school building. Andrew Hansen, a spokesman for Bishop Thomas Paprocki, said there are no immediate plans for

the building.

Despite its small size, St. Patrick students have consistently performed well academically. Former educators and board members say the school's success was rooted in its intimate atmosphere and sense of mission.

"You walk through the door and there's just a sweet spirit there," said Carolyn Blackwell, a longtime educator and member of the school's board. "The classes are small, the teachers know the students, and the kids feel loved and respected."

Most classrooms had between 10 and 15 students, allowing teachers to give individual attention. But Blackwell said the school's culture mattered just as much as its size.

"It wasn't just a job for people who worked there," she said. "It was their passion."

Parents say that culture made the school feel like an extended family.

"I think it's more so the staff – the relationship between the staff and the students," said Latoya Cole-Williams, whose two daughters attend the school. "They hold the kids accountable and make sure they know right from wrong. That's one thing I just love about the staff."

Cole-Williams' oldest daughter is finishing fifth grade and had planned to continue at another Catholic school next year. Now the family is scrambling to decide where both of their children will attend school.

"It's a big inconvenience," she said. "I knew I

had to save for middle school, but now I have two children I have to pay tuition for."

The school's closure comes after years of financial pressure that leaders say finally became unsustainable.

Board members had explored multiple options to keep the school open, including professional fundraising analysis and long-term financial planning. But donations and fundraising events were falling short of what was needed to operate the school.

"Grants were going away, donations were down and some of the regular events weren't meeting their goals," Woehrmann said. "At the end of the day, the board had to make a financially responsible decision."

One of the biggest financial blows came when the Illinois Invest in Kids scholarship program ended, said Sister Marilyn Jean Runkel, a longtime board member who has worked with the school for more than three decades. Every student at St. Patrick's qualified for the program because of family income levels, she said, meaning the loss translated into roughly \$80,000 in annual funding.

The Invest in Kids program provided scholarships to low-income families seeking alternatives to their assigned public schools. At its peak, more than 15,000 students across Illinois received scholarships through the program.

"The scholarships primarily went to students who were low-income and couldn't otherwise afford schooling options outside of

their locally zoned public school," said Hannah Schmid, manager of education policy at the Illinois Policy Institute.

But the program ended in 2023 after lawmakers declined to renew it.

"Unfortunately, the biggest opponents to the program were the teachers' unions in Illinois, and they have a lot of sway over lawmakers and what happens in Springfield," Schmid said.

She said unions argued the program threatened public education funding, although the scholarships were funded through tax credits for private donations rather than direct public spending.

"Their public claim was that it diverts funds from public schools," Schmid said. "But the Invest in Kids program was a tax-credit scholarship. The only cost to the state was foregone income tax revenue."

Cole-Williams said the scholarship program had made it possible for many families to afford Catholic education.

"That blow – losing that scholarship – was huge," Runkel said. "If you're thinking about sending your kids to a private school and there's already a scholarship available, then yes, families will send their kids there."

Without that support, she said, keeping en-

rollment strong became much more difficult.

Even so, Runkel said the school remained academically strong and staffed by dedicated teachers.

"We probably have the best teachers and the best principal we've had in years," she said. "The students are doing phenomenally in their subjects. The discipline is good, the parent involvement is good. ... I've always called St. Pat's an icon in Springfield. It's helped many children who might otherwise have fallen through the cracks."

School leaders say their immediate focus is helping students transition to new schools next year.

Parents are meeting with staff to discuss options, including continuing in Catholic education or transferring to public schools.

Cole-Williams said one of her biggest concerns is losing the small classes and close relationships that defined the school.

"With St. Pat's you might have 15 kids in a classroom," she said. "That personal relationship with the teachers is something we're really going to miss."

Although the physical school will close, the nonprofit organization that operates St. Patrick's will continue. Its focus will shift to a St. Patrick Scholarship Program designed to help

low-income students afford Catholic education elsewhere.

The program will be funded through remaining school assets, endowment earnings and continued fundraising.

"Our commitment to this mission does not end here," Woehrmann said. "Through our scholarship program, we'll continue investing in students and families."

Blackwell said that while the closing marks the end of a historic institution, she believes the lessons students learned there will endure.

"Those kids know what they got at St. Pat's," she said. "They know how they should be treated and how they should learn."

For Cole-Williams, the news still feels raw.

"It's just a huge blow and a huge disappointment," she said. "I'm literally distraught. I've been in deep prayer hoping the decision we make next for our kids will work for our family."

For many who have been part of St. Patrick's story, the loss will be deeply felt.

"It really is a love story," Blackwell said. "Just a precious little place." SBJ

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

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INDEPENDENT PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Sources: The individual schools.
Ranked by current enrollment - Fall 2025.

	NAME/ADDRESS	PHONE	WEBSITE/EMAIL	CURRENT ENROLLMENT	PRINCIPAL/DIRECTOR	GRADES	AFFILIATION	YEAR EST'D
1	Sacred Heart-Griffin High School 1200 W. Washington St. Springfield, IL 62702	217-787-1595	shg.org saner@shg.org	548	Dr. William Moredock president Teresa Saner, principal	9-12	Catholic	1895
2	Springfield Christian School 2850 Cider Mill Lane Springfield, IL 62702	217-698-1933 217-787-7673 (Preschool)	scs.school	483	Racheal Thurman jr high principal Bryan Konieczka elementary principal	Kindergarten-8	Christian	1951
3	Christ the King School 1920 Barberry Drive Springfield, IL 62704	217-546-2159	ctkcougars.com	472	Jill Seaton	Preschool-8	Catholic	1957
4	Blessed Sacrament Elementary 748 W. Laurel Ave. Springfield, IL 62704	217-522-7534	bssbruins.org	417	Beth Shade	Preschool-8	Catholic	1925
5	Little Flower Catholic School 900 Stevenson Drive Springfield, IL 62703	217-529-4511	little-flower.org	322	Jennifer Killian	Preschool-8	Catholic	1948
6	Our Saviour School 455 E. State St. Jacksonville, IL 62650	217-243-8621	oursavioursham- rocks.com	282	Amy Evans	Preschool-8	Catholic	1872
7	Calvary Academy 1730 W. Jefferson St. Springfield, IL 62702	217-546-5987	caspringfield.org	208	Jessica Smith	Preschool-12	Christian Nondenominational	1977
8	St. Agnes Elementary 251 N. Amos Ave. Springfield, IL 62702	217-793-1370	stagnes- catholicparish.org	200	Rachel Cunningham	Preschool-8	Catholic	1897
9	Trinity Lutheran School 515 S. MacArthur Blvd. Springfield, IL 62704	217-787-2323, Ext. 1	trinity-lutheran.com	195	Alicia Klug	2 years old - 8th grade	Lutheran	1860



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INDEPENDENT PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Sources: The individual schools.
Ranked by current enrollment - Fall 2025.

	NAME/ADDRESS	PHONE	WEBSITE/EMAIL	CURRENT ENROLLMENT	PRINCIPAL/DIRECTOR	GRADES	AFFILIATION	YEAR EST'D
10	Our Savior's Lutheran School 2645 Old Jacksonville Road Springfield, IL 62704	217-546-4531	oursaviors-school.org	185	Carmen Yagow	Preschool-8	Lutheran	1962
11	St. Aloysius Elementary 2125 N. 21st St. Springfield, IL 62702	217-544-4553	saintaloyusius.org	136	Denise Reavis	Preschool-8	Catholic	1928
12	Lutheran High School 5200 S. Sixth St. Frontage Road E. Springfield, IL 62703	217-546-6363	spiluhi.org	115	Zachary Klug	9-12	Lutheran	1979
13	Rouff Catholic High School 500 E. College Ave. Jacksonville, IL 62650	217-243-8563	rouffcatholic.com	105	Danielle Evans	9-12	Catholic	1902
14	Montessori Children's House 4147 Sand Hill Road Springfield, IL 62702	217-544-7702	montessorispringfield.org	50	Sue Harris	Preschool-6	Nonsectarian	1977

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MAJOR ASSOCIATIONS

Sources: The Associations.
Ranked by numbers of members.

	NAME/ADDRESS	PHONE WEBSITE	MEMBERSHIP	PRESIDENT	MISSION	YEAR EST'D
1	Illinois Education Association 100 E. Edwards St. Springfield, IL 62704	844-432-1800 ieanea.org	135,000	Karl Goeke	To effect excellence and equity in public education, to be an advocate for public education employees and to serve as a voice for our students across the state.	1853
2	Illinois Federation of Teachers 700 S. College St. Springfield, IL 62704	217-544-8562 ift-aft.org	103,000	Stacy Davis Gates	Members fighting powerfully for a strong union and the future we all deserve.	1936
3	Illinois REALTORS® 522 S. Fifth St. Springfield, IL 62701	217-529-2600 IllinoisRealtors.org	49,000	Tommy Choi	We protect property rights and advance the real estate profession.	1916
4	Illinois State Bar Association 424 S. Second St. Springfield, IL 62701	217-525-1760 isba.org	28,000	Bridget Duignan	Promote the interests of the legal profession and improve the administration of justice, the quality of members' professional lives and their relations with the public.	1877
5	Illinois CPA Society 524 S. Second St., Suite 504 Springfield, IL 62701	217-789-7914 icpas.org	20,700	Brian J. Blaha, CAE	To enhance the value of the CPA profession.	1903
6	Illinois State Medical Society 600 S. Second St., Suite 200 Springfield, IL 62704	217-528-5609 isms.org	12,000	Richard C. Anderson, M.D.	To educate, advocate for, and support the health and wellbeing of the people of Illinois and the physicians who care for them.	1840
7	National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB) 600 S. Second St., Suite #403 Springfield, IL 62704	217-504-8868 nfib.com/Illinois	10,000	Noah Finley state director	The voice of small business, advocating on behalf of America's small and independent business owners, both in Washington, D.C., and in all 50 state capitals. NFIB is nonprofit, nonpartisan and member-driven.	1943
8	Illinois Principals Association 2940 Baker Drive Springfield, IL 62703	217-525-1383 ilprincipals.org	6,900	Dr. Angie Codron	To develop, support and advocate for innovative educational leaders.	1971
9	Illinois State Dental Society 3100 Montvale Drive Springfield, IL 62704	217-525-1406 ids.org	6,300	Dr. John Kozal, D.D.S.	Ensuring professional success of our members and optimizing the oral health of Illinoisans through education, legislation and communication.	1865
10	Mid-West Truckers Association 2727 N. Dirksen Parkway Springfield, IL 62702	217-525-0310 midwesttruckers.com	4,544	Don Schaefer president and CEO	MTA promotes the safe and economic operation of trucks through safety training, drug and alcohol testing, insurance, licensing, permit services and regulatory guidances.	1961
11	AIA Illinois 201 East Adams St., Suite 1A Springfield, IL 62701	217-522-2309 aiaill.org	4,400	Eric Klinner, CAE executive vice president	Empowered by members to champion the profession of architecture.	1946
12	Illinois Manufacturers' Association 220 E. Adams St. Springfield, IL 62701	217-522-1240 ima-net.org	4,000	Mark Denzler	The IMA is the unifying voice for manufacturers in Illinois working to strengthen the business climate for innovators and creators in the manufacturing field. The IMA is boldly moving makers forward.	1893
12	Illinois Nurses Association 911 S. Second St. Springfield, IL 62704	312-419-2900 illinoisnurses.com	4,000	Tori Dameron	To work for the improvement of health standards and availability of health care services for all people in Illinois, foster high standards for nurses, stimulate and promote professional development of nurses and advance their economic and general welfare.	1901
13	Illinois Chamber of Commerce 215 E. Adams St. Springfield, IL 62701	217-522-5512 ilchamber.org	3,500	Dan Wagner, interim president	The Illinois Chamber is the independent voice of Illinois businesses, advocating for policies that foster a competitive business climate for all sectors. The Chamber's agenda is decisively pro-growth, pro-business and pro-Illinois.	1919
14	Illinois Trial Lawyers Association 401 W. Edwards St. Springfield, IL 62704	217-789-0755 iltla.com	2,000	Timothy J. Cavanagh	Achieve high standards of professional ethics, uphold laws and secure and protect the rights of those injured in their persons or civil rights.	1952
15	Illinois Funeral Directors Association 3 Lawrence Square, Suite 2 Springfield, IL 62704	217-525-2000 ifda.org	1,388	Ronald A. Kurza Jr.	Advancing the funeral service profession through advocacy and value.	1881
16	Engineering Society of Illinois 100 E. Washington St. Springfield, IL 62702	217-544-7424 illinoisengineers.com	870	Tyler Nelson, P.E.	Advance and promote the public welfare in connection with construction, environment, licensing, public health and transportation.	1886

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Making tomorrow better than today

Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln provides many ways to give back

By Janet Seitz

Three Springfield banks created the Sangamon County Foundation in 1924 to provide financial resources to local charitable causes. As those causes grew, the board of directors saw the need to evolve to better serve area residents. The board voted to reorganize as the Sangamon County Community Foundation in December 2002.

At the time, John Stremsterfer was working at University of Illinois Springfield for the University of Illinois Foundation when one of the Sangamon County Community Foundation's board members encouraged him to apply for a position to lead the new entity. "I had no idea what a community foundation was at the time," Stremsterfer said, "but after researching what community foundations do, I was captivated by what it could mean for our community, so I threw my hat in the ring."

Stremsterfer has been at the helm since April 2003. The organization changed its name to Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln in 2011 to expand its service area. As president and CEO, Stremsterfer has led the Community Foundation from \$800,000 to more than \$100 million in assets and oversees the development, grant making, expansion and leadership activities.

"There are consistent challenges in getting the word out to the community of how we can assist philanthropic-minded people in creating charitable funds," Stremsterfer said. "However, more and more people seem to be finding their way to us, as we've seen tremendous growth over the past few years. On the grant-making side, it is always a challenge to figure out how to make a meaningful and lasting impact with the funds we are entrusted to steward."

The Community Foundation has awarded approximately \$15 million in grants and scholarships over the past two years across its eight-county service region, which includes Cass, Christian, Logan, Macoupin, Menard, Montgomery, Morgan and Sangamon.

Last year alone, the Community Foundation awarded more than \$540,000 in grants to support programs serving older adults. Those



John Stremsterfer, president and CEO of the Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln, right, presents a \$20,000 check to Jerry Costello, director of the Illinois Department of Agriculture, and Rebecca Clark, manager of the Illinois State Fair. The grant, intended to help make the fair more accessible to all citizens, was part of \$100,000 awarded to the State Fair and eight county fairs in the CFLL's service area to mark the 100th anniversary of the organization. PHOTO COURTESY CFLL

included The King's Daughters Organization Endowment Fund's grants of \$310,000 to 24 programs in Sangamon County supporting services such as utility, prescription and food assistance and home repairs for seniors. The St. Joseph's Home Legacy of Care Fund provided \$235,000 to 11 organizations across the foundation's eight-county region, funding services such as respite care for senior caregivers, food assistance and training for seniors who have lost all or part of their eyesight. It also awarded a \$2 million grant to the Animal Protective League through the Shaffer Family Fund, a field-of-interest fund established by the late Carla Shaffer to support animal welfare in Sangamon County and the American Red Cross of South & West Central Illinois. The funding is supporting construction of a new APL facility.

"The rewards come all the time," Stremsterfer said. "Meeting generous human beings who want to help others and working with local nonprofit organizations who are on the front lines of improving our community is humbling and inspiring. We get to see a really positive side of humanity at the Community Foundation."

Stremsterfer sees a lot through his involvement in statewide organizations. He was appointed board chair of the Alliance of Illinois Community Foundations last August, an organization with which he has long been involved. "It has been rewarding to see our whole field mature over my career, and I see our collective work having a greater impact throughout the

state in the coming years. Community foundations can be an incredible force for good. I'm proud to be chairing our association at such a dynamic time," he said.

He is also a cochair of the Philanthropy Roundtable in Illinois, along with the leaders of the Chicago Community Trust and Polk Brothers Foundation. This effort, in cooperation with the governor's office, aims to better coordinate philanthropic and governmental efforts to support people throughout Illinois.

Stremsterfer has experienced many changes in the charitable landscape during his tenure. Among those are the creation of Innovate Springfield, collaborating with donors and other community partners for Heartland Housed to support area homeless, and the foundation's recent work on Press Forward Springfield to build back local news and information ecosystems. Those are "some of the more rewarding projects I've had the privilege to participate in," he said. "It was also a proud moment when our collective assets topped the \$100 million mark over the past year or so."

In living out the foundation's mission of "connecting people who care with causes that matter," the Community Foundation builds permanent charitable resources for the community based on a combination of the donor's wishes and the needs of our community.

"Other than government," Stremsterfer said, "I can't think of any other type of organization that has the potential to be involved in such a variety of issue areas. Our potential is only limited by the resources we are able to build through the generosity of our friends, neighbors and ourselves. From my first day on the job to today, there is nothing I love more than talking to someone about the legacy they wish to leave to our community. Anyone who is interested in giving back to make this place a little better tomorrow than today should give us a call." **SBJ**

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

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Nonprofit basics

by Thomas C. Pavlik Jr.

We've written before about issues potential board members should consider before joining the board of a nonprofit, but we've never really looked at some of the broader legal issues that are unique to nonprofits.

As the nonprofit sector continues to play an ever-increasing role in communities across Illinois (think of recent developments with our own *Illinois Times* and *Springfield Business Journal*), nonprofits are tasked with navigating an increasingly complex legal environment. From regulatory compliance to risk management, nonprofits face a myriad legal considerations that can significantly impact their operations and long-term sustainability.

Many of these considerations are born of legitimate concerns, while others all too often stem from knee-jerk reactions to one-off situations or from political grandstanding. Nonetheless, all must be dealt with.

The bare minimums

Proper corporate formation and tax-exempt status are the fundamental legal requirements for any nonprofit. In Illinois, nonprofits must register with the secretary of state and obtain 501(c) designation from the Internal Revenue Service. In many situations, filings with the Office of the Illinois Attorney General are also required. The process can be nuanced, with specific documentation and filing requirements that vary depending on the nonprofit's purpose and structure.

Beyond the initial setup, nonprofits must also maintain their tax-exempt status through annual reporting and adherence to IRS regulations. Failure to do so can result in significant penalties and the potential revocation of 501(c) designation. Likewise, once formed, all nonprofits must register with the Illinois secretary of state on an annual basis in order to preserve corporate existence.

Governance and compliance

Other critical legal considerations for nonprofits are establishing robust governance structures and ensuring ongoing compliance with state and federal regulations. This includes developing comprehensive bylaws, maintaining proper board oversight and implementing sound financial controls. If your nonprofit doesn't have dedicated legal counsel, look into adding a lawyer to the board to assist with these issues.

Nonprofits must likewise be vigilant about

governance – issues in this area can expose the organization to legal liabilities. Things such as board member conflicts of interest, improper use of funds and lack of transparency can all lead to serious problems. At a bare minimum, nonprofits should adopt a conflict-of-interest policy and have board members execute a written acknowledgment.

In addition to internal governance, nonprofits must also comply with a range of external regulations, such as employment laws, fundraising and solicitation rules (particularly at the state level) and reporting requirements. Staying up to date on these evolving regulations and adopting policies accordingly is essential for maintaining legal compliance.

Risk management and liability

As nonprofits engage in a broader variety of programs and activities, they must also be mindful of potential legal risks and liabilities. Things like volunteer management, event planning and property ownership all carry potential liabilities that must be addressed. Although we've touched on this topic in previous articles, it bears repeating: Nonprofits should ensure appropriate insurance coverage, implement risk management protocols and understand the scope of director and officer liability. Talk to your agent to make sure you understand the scope of your coverage and think twice about joining a board that doesn't have directors' coverage as part of its insurance package.

In addition, nonprofits should have clear policies and procedures in place to handle issues such as whistleblower protection, sexual harassment and data privacy. Failing to address these concerns can expose the organization to costly lawsuits and reputational damage.

Are you, as a nonprofit director or potential director, now a bit worried? It's not all doom and gloom. The law recognizes that directors, most of whom devote part-time efforts, usually can't research every issue themselves. For this reason, directors are generally allowed to rely on the advice of professionals such as accountants and lawyers. (Note, however, that there is no right of reliance if a director has actual or constructive knowledge of information that makes reliance unwarranted.)

As long as a director's decision is made in good faith and with due care, directors are generally protected from claims of personal responsibility. This is commonly known as the business judgment rule. According to the rule,

a board will not be held responsible for a business judgment:

- made by disinterested directors,
- within the scope of their authority,
- in good faith,
- with reasonable care and not for their own self-interests.

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

Partnerships and collaborations

Many nonprofits rely on partnerships and collaborations with other organizations, businesses and government entities to achieve their goals. However, these relationships can also carry legal implications that must be carefully navigated.

Terms and conditions must be clearly defined and must protect the organization's interests. Issues like intellectual property rights, liability allocation and termination clauses can all become points of contention if not properly addressed.

Nonprofits should work with legal counsel to review all partnership agreements and ensure they are in compliance with applicable laws and regulations. This can help mitigate risks and preserve the integrity of the collaborative relationship.

Staying ahead of the curve

As the legal landscape for nonprofits continues to evolve, nonprofits need to be proactive in staying informed and adapting their practices accordingly. This may involve regular reviews of policies and procedures, ongoing training for staff and board members, and maintaining strong relationships with legal counsel.

By prioritizing legal compliance and risk management, nonprofits can better focus on their core missions and continue to make a meaningful impact in the community. With the right strategies and support, these organizations can navigate the legal landscape with confidence and ensure their long-term sustainability. 



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SIU Medicine completes demolitions

A dozen single-family homes near the main campus have been demolished

Heavy equipment has been at work near the headquarters of SIU Medicine, but the medical institution says it's part of an overall cleanup effort, rather than immediate plans for new construction.

Demolition permits were filed at the beginning of February for single family homes at 529 and 539 Hay St., 700, 704, 714, 716 and 718 N. Walnut St., 1034 and 1042 N. Franklin St. and 422 W. Calhoun Ave. At the end of February, additional demolition permits were filed for homes at 640 Herndon St. and 712 N. Walnut St.

SIU Medicine is headquartered at 801 N. Rutledge Ave., with several other clinics and departments located nearby. According to Sangamon County tax records, SIU acquired the recently demolished homes between November 2024 and June 2025.

"SIU Medicine is being thoughtful and strategic about our campus footprint, both for today's needs and for the long-term future of the institution. The removal of these houses near the School of Medicine is part of that planning process," Steve Sandstrom, a spokesperson for SIU, wrote in response to an inquiry from SBJ.



SIU Medicine is in the process of demolishing multiple homes it has acquired near its main campus.

PHOTO BY ZACH ADAMS

Taylorville Memorial Hospital names new president



Aaron Puchbauer has been named president and CEO of Taylorville Memorial Hospital, effective March 30. He replaces Kim Bourne, who retired in December.

Puchbauer has extensive leadership experience at rural critical access hospitals, including as president and CEO of HSHS Good Shepherd Hospital in Shelbyville and HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital in Breese.

He is a graduate of the University of Missouri – Columbia, where he earned bachelor's degrees in agribusiness management and business administration, finance and banking, as well as master's degrees in health administration and business administration.

"Aaron has a strong commitment to rural health and a wide range of experience helping critical access hospitals grow and better serve their communities," said Memorial Health senior vice president Dolan Dalpoas, who leads the health system's rural hospitals. "His leadership will help TMH continue its tradition of excellent care and explore new ways to meet the needs of our patients."

"TMH has a strong reputation as one of the top rural hospitals in our region," Puchbauer said. "I'm looking forward to being a part of that team."



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The introvert's revenge

How quiet professionals are winning at work

By Kelly Gust

A few weeks ago, I took a DISC assessment. This is something I've done many times over the years, but this time, the result surprised me. For the first time, my leading trait was extroversion.

It wasn't wrong, exactly. I can be outgoing. I speak publicly, lead workshops and enjoy connecting with people. But being labeled an extrovert triggered something unexpected: a wave of renewed appreciation for introverts.

Because as I sat with my DISC profile, I realized something important: while I may score as an extrovert on paper, many of the traits I admire most in colleagues and leaders today are distinctly introverted ones. And increasingly, they're the traits shaping the future of work.

Welcome to – the introvert's revenge.

The quiet power shift

For years, workplaces have rewarded visibility. Those who jump in the conversation quickly and confidently were considered natural leaders. But today's environment has flipped that logic.

Hybrid work, constant digital communication, business uncertainty and heightened emotional demands mean that organizations need more than energy and charisma. They need clarity, steadiness and thoughtfulness. In other words: introverted strengths.

As I reflected on my DISC results, half amused, half confused, I found myself admiring colleagues who speak less but say more. The ones who sit quietly in a meeting, listening and synthesizing, then offer a single insight that reframes the whole discussion. The ones who don't grab attention but command it through calm presence.

In a fast-twitch, fire-drill workplace, intro-

verts are becoming the counterbalance many organizations need.

An undervalued leadership edge

Every team has that one calm person who doesn't get swept up in false urgency. These individuals:

- Stabilize tense conversations
- Make decisions from logic, not adrenaline
- Observe dynamics others miss

In my own work, I've noticed how often people gravitate toward the calm person. Not the loudest, but the steadiest. Their composure quietly shapes culture.

Calm is contagious. A single steady presence can reset the tone of an entire team. In uncertain environments, the professional who stays grounded becomes the emotional thermostat for everyone else.

The ways introverts are thriving

1. Hybrid work favors intentional communication. Influence is built through clarity, writing, preparation and thoughtfulness, not spontaneity. Introverts excel here.

2. Deep thinking is a premium skill. We're drowning in information and starving for insight. Introverts specialize in the latter.

3. Noise has lost its charm. After years of Slack pings, endless meetings and video-call fatigue, thoughtful brevity is a relief. Quiet leaders create space, not clutter.

4. Psychological safety drives performance. Employees want leaders who listen, notice and respond with empathy. Introverted leaders do this naturally.

Rethinking "extrovert advantage"

I used to believe being extroverted helped me lead. And sometimes it does. But the older I get, and the more chaotic work becomes, the more I admire the professionals who don't need to fill space to hold authority: The ones who speak deliberately, think before they act, remain grounded when things feel unstable and embody (rather than just perform) leadership.

It's about recognition

The "introvert's revenge" isn't about getting even. It's about being seen, and valued, for what they've always brought to the table.

They're not winning because extroverts are losing. They're winning because the world has changed in a way that highlights their strengths.

A final reflection

My DISC assessment told me I am an extrovert. But my admiration for introverted strengths, and my desire to cultivate them, has never been stronger.

If we want workplaces that are thoughtful, humane and resilient, we need the quiet ones more than ever. Maybe the real leadership evolution is learning how to bring a little introvert energy into all of our work, no matter what any assessment says.



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Soy Oaxaca has opened downtown in the space that formerly housed Augie's Front Burner and, more recently, MaryFlor Mexican Restaurant. PHOTO BY ZACH ADAMS

Soy Oaxaca, which translates from Spanish to, "I am Oaxaca," is also the name of downtown Springfield's latest restaurant. Soy Oaxaca itself is both a state and a capital city in southern Mexico. Some call it the culinary capital of Mexico (especially with respect to mole) but all agree that its United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization-listed ruins and colonial archi-

ecture provide a wonderful backdrop to any meal. And that's what Soy Oaxaca wants to do — to bring a little flavor of Oaxaca to Springfield.

The space was occupied for years by Augie's Front Burner and was recently the home of a short-lived Mexican restaurant. Since Augie's closed, I've only been in the space once and that was to be totally ig-

nored by wait staff of Soy Oaxaca's immediate predecessor. Good news — that vibe, and more importantly the service, have both been altered for the better.

First, the space has undergone a complete redo. There's new flooring, a bar and decorations. To my eye, the new owners treated the space like a blank canvas. The contemporary hues skew toward grays,

browns and whites and there's nothing that screams "Mexican restaurant." Still, the space was welcoming, clean (literally and figuratively) and immaculate.

Second, the service was great. We were pleasantly greeted and shown to our table. Staff were quick to sense when service was required but were in no hurry to hustle us out. They also had some good insight into the menu, which was appreciated.

My guest and I arrived just around 11:30 a.m. We were among the first diners, but a steady stream of visitors kept the space just under half full. Still, given all of the bad news for downtown restaurants these days, we're hopeful that Soy Oaxaca develops a steady and regular crowd, something that some more publicity might help. At least Oaxaca makes its menu readily available online.

Soy Oaxaca's menu is quite expansive and includes just about everything you would expect. There's a special lunch section as well as a section devoted to a handful of Oaxacan specialties like empanadas and banana leaf-wrapped tamales. Dishes that caught our eye included the birria (slow-braised beef ribs in a rich braising sauce for dipping, served as tacos and as a dinner item itself), the caldo de res (Mexican beef soup with veggies) and the molcajete (sizzling volcanic stone bowl with steak, chicken, shrimp and chorizo).

We started with the guacamole and some salsa and chips. The guac was nothing special (seemingly pre-made), yet satisfying. I felt it would have benefited from the addition of some more peppers. The chips were not house-made, but the salsa had a

nice consistency (not too runny) and tasted freshly made. We all thought it was one of the better salsas in Springfield. It was also easy on the spice.

For entrees my guest and I both opted for the dinner menu. I went with the carnitas (\$17), and he decided on the Baja fish tacos (\$18).

Each dish came with generous helpings of refried beans and Spanish rice. Neither of the offerings stood out, and the rice was a bit dry. But most people don't come to a Mexican restaurant for the sides. We counted ourselves among that crowd, and we were both pleased with our main items.

For me, it was the carnitas, which is how I tend to judge Mexican restaurants.

Carnitas, literally interpreted, means "little meats." It's made by simmering pork bits in liquid (traditionally lard), which can take four or more hours. The result is tender and juicy meat that's packed with flavor and eaten with tortillas and the usual fajita accompaniments.

Soy Oaxaca's version (which also came with a dollop of guac to help brighten up the dish) had plenty of flavor but fell a little short in terms of tenderness and juiciness. The best version of carnitas has crispy and caramelized edges with the main portions being deeply browned but with a juicy interior. Mine weren't dry but they were not quite juicy. Should Soy Oaxaca fix that slight glitch, it will have a winner on its hands.

My guest, who went



The Baja fish tacos, served on flour tortillas. PHOTO BY ZACH ADAMS



Tlayuda, a giant crispy tortilla with refried beans, Oaxaca cheese and your choice of meat, is a regional specialty. PHOTO BY ZACH ADAMS

with the fish tacos, was also pleased. Baja fish tacos are an iconic Mexican coastal dish featuring beer-battered, deep-fried white fish served on warm corn tortillas (in our case, flour). They are defined by a contrast of textures and flavors: crispy fish, crunchy cabbage, creamy white sauce and zesty lime, creating a light yet savory, fresh and slightly spicy flavor profile. Soy Oaxaca's versions checked all of these boxes. The fish was reported as crispy on the outside and succulent on the inside, all of which was heightened by the crunch of the cabbage and the acidity of the lime and white sauce. I didn't get to sample any, but it looked great.

Soy Oaxaca is a welcome addition to downtown. Service was great, and it's one of the few places in the immediate area that still has traditional table ordering and seating. Throw in some food that's in line with its peers, and we hope it results in a winning combination that gives downtown a desperately needed win. So, tell your friends and make sure to give it a try.

Address: 109 S. Fifth St. Springfield

Phone: 217-280-5178

Website: soyoaxacadowntown.com

Hours: Monday-Sunday 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.

New businesses

Sangamon County new business registrations, Feb. 16 – March 15, 2026

Aurea Esthetics, 901 Clocktower Dr., 309-929-9210, TaBrea Spivey
Hugginbutt Creations, 223 Dickinson Road, 217-416-7444, Jonathan H. Edgecomb, Kendra S. Edgecomb
Harvatin Law Offices, P.C., 1100 S. Fifth St., 217-525-0520, Theodore J. Harvatin, Todd M. Goebel
Harvatin & Goebel, 1100 S. Fifth St., 217-525-0520, Theodore J. Harvatin, Todd M. Goebel
DNB Services, 8 Willow Lane, 217-741-5186, Dustin G. Beggs
JC Media, 2501 Chatham Road Suite 6292, 309-309-2793, Joseph C. Hale
Shark Pest Control, 3842 Tuxhorn Road, 217-480-2072, Mark King
Black Dog Lawn Care, 216 Appomattox Drive, 217-741-4148, Jamie L. Sprinkle, Brad L. Sprinkle
Dirty South Inc. dba Unique's Bar & Grill, 1231 E. Cook St., 217-718-0480, April Joiner, Anthony Sims, Debra Pool
Coady's Computer Images, 21 Longview Drive, 217-414-2560, Gregory Alan Coady, Mary Jo Coady
Revive Marketing Springfield, 1914 Keys Ave., 217-503-7273, Austin Evans
Aaron Shane's Property Care, 1005 W. Leland Ave., Apt. C, 309-215-3547, Aaron Shane Stockman
One More Found, 725 Hackberry Drive, Chatham, 217-638-0639, Justin M. Barney, Jessica A. Barney
Marcelo Seminara, 1718 Devonwood Drive, 217-220-1951, Marcelo Seminara
Bailey Contracting & Land Acquisition, 121 N. 8th St., Auburn, 217-306-3936, Theodore Bailey
Paloma Hair Braiding, 2030 Austin Drive, 312-530-4154, Vivian Njein
ReFrame Wellness, 2620 Varsity Court, Apt. B, 309-929-9116, Talon File
Traci Marlow Travels, 2 Ivy Glen Drive, 217-341-8425, Traci Ann Marlow
Sherman Vintage Collectibles, 409 Charter Oak Drive, Sherman, 217-503-5677, Ryan Michael Bolar
Studiolomprez, 2800 Ridge Ave., Lot 114, 217-986-0184, William R. Lomprez, Zachary Tyler Lomprez
Honayz, 2029 E. Lawrence Ave., 217-203-8721, Lamar T. Reese
Moonlight Journey LTL, 3500 N. Dirksen Parkway, Lot 204, 217-725-8453, Jason Richardson
Scrap Metals & Clean Outs, 35 Anchor Road, 217-685-4767, Nathan D. Ahlers
Bang Bang Pressure Washing, 37 Knollwood Drive, Sherman, 217-473-8294, Dylan Landes Bangert
BestBundlesCollections, 1614 S. Spring St., 217-602-4924, Darryl D. Perkins Jr., Dominique Dampier
Gordon&MCAC, 1135 N. Second St., 217-481-4334, Veradene Garrett-Bridgeford
TriLumination, 901 S. Second St., Suite 201, 303-565-0731, Dana Blahnik
DC Pool Service, 3148 Woodward Ave., 217-361-9357, Dalton Cave
Dbgdataworks, 2309 Sylvan Road, 217-836-6066, Darrin Bishop
A.B.E. Cleaning, 217-717-6820, Erick Stapleton
Fun Guy Realty, 499 Blane Court, Dawson, 217-638-7374, Phillip Anderson
BroadCare Insurance Services, 2604 Tennyson Drive, 217-414-5319, Joel Christopher Andrews
Kindred Heirlooms, 6505 Telstar Road, Riverton, 618-889-5203, Mary Reis

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